

# Nicholas Hunnius

## Epitome of Faith



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# EPITOME CREDENDORUM

BY THE

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CONTAINING

A CONCISE AND POPULAR VIEW OF THE DOCTRINES

OF THE

**LUTHERAN CHURCH.**

(First edited in 1625.)

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

PAUL EDWARD GOTTHEIL.

*„Καὶνὰ καὶ παλαιά.“*



NUREMBERG, 1847.

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# PREFACE

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM LOEHE

MINISTER OF NEW DETTELSAU, BAVARIA.

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The attempt which is hereby made, to present to those of our countrymen, who have settled in North America, and to whom the english language has become the means of communication, an english translation of the *Epitome Credendorum*, will not appear to them an unprofitable one, and will, we trust, be considered by them as a partical testimony of the love and attachment which we still bear towards them: We are the more led to think so, when we consider the great want which they must experience of such theological writings, the authors of which have had in view the maintainance, in all their parts, of all the fundamental doctrines of the Lutheran Church. We are aware that, especially in more recent times, our North American brethren have shown a desire for making known to the clergy and laity of their adopted fatherland, the most approved lutheran authors; but we, on our part, are convinced that besides the symbolical writings, nothing would serve more to silence and shift the intricate manifestations of contending opinions, than an approved dogmatical work, in which every point of our faith is fully considered and represented agreeable to

the true sense of scripture. We would have preferred it, — and indeed it would have been more honourable to our fatherland — had we been able, instead of the work of *Hunnius*, to have selected one of a more recent date; but amongst the great number of writings of this nature, we have not been able to discover one, which was compiled in such a manner as would show more, that its Author was determined firmly to preserve all the doctrines of our confession and the principles of practical life consequent thereto, and that by all its perfections had been written with more simplicity of styl, — than that of *Hunnius*. We admit that there are, in this work, many points to be found, which have not been treated with that conformity to scripture and that clearness which might appear desirable, — but as we would not, and indeed could not, undertake an entire reconstruction of the work, we preferred leaving it as it was, and giving it in its original shape.\*) Every dogmatical writing which we might have chosen for our present purpose, would have been more objectionable than that of *Hunnius*. It would be well if a great many of our brethren beyond the seas did but return to the views maintained in this work — and on this regained ground a full the development of the truth will, in due time, not be wanting. —

This translation has been made by a theologian who is well acquainted with the two languages, and who has also directed the printing of it. This latter occupation has been quite as tedious as the translation itself, which, owing to the great unclearness and conciseness of the original, has offered no small difficulties and not few stumblingblocks. And if the reader should be astonished at the Errata which he might happen to meet here and there (the most important of which he finds collected on the last page of book) he is requested to consider the great difficulties, which a composer, who is quite ignorant of the english language, must have to

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\*) A few passages, which the reader finds distinguished from the context by brackets, he is requested to consider as an attempt which has been made, to augment the usefulness of the book.

encounter in composing a work in that tongue, though we must do the Printer the justice to say, that he has exerted himself to the utmost of his power to render the work as perfect as possible, — and the obstacles, even the most experienced reviser must have to contend with, under these circumstances.

After the printing of this work had had already been commenced, we had occasion to see the „*Lutheran Observer*,“ and to find that its Editor promised to give a translation of the *Epitome* in its columns. We were at once rejoiced and surprised to find, that the new edition of the *Epitome* (in the german language) which had been recently undertaken by a dear friend of ours, for the benefit of the german Lutherans in North America, had been so favourably received by the Editors of the „*Standard*.“ And indeed we cannot allow this opportunity to pass, without expressing our great satisfaction at observing the „*Lutheran Standard*“ still to have retained so many elements which evidence it almost to a certainty, that he is not willed to depart from the confession of our church and the practical life agreeable thereto. And though it would appear as if the time for the *Ohio-Synod* — whose organ we believe the „*Lutheran Standard*“ to be — to call herself a „german lutheran Synod,“ was past; yet might it have perhaps fallen to the lot of this very Synod, to become a centre for all those, who, though they have yielded already to the influences of the english language, are yet determined not to give over the communion of faith and confession, by which they feel themselves still united to their german brethren. It is always with great pain that we read, that in any part of North America the hope of retaining german language and nationality is past; but we are far from believing that the *German Lutheran Church* is to stand or fall with the german language. And just this would be our only comfort, on seeing the german elements rapidly disappear from so many parts of North America, to see these our brethren more and more return to the full truth of the Lutheran Church, and, in another tongue, confess themselves of the same faith and of the same hope with us. May the *Ohio Synod* and all those of our

brethren, whose hearts have not yet turned from the confession of our church, be guided in all truth, by the Spirit of all truth, and may they be pleased to accept of this token of love and affection, which with this *Epitome Credendorum* we send them across the seas!

New Dettelsau, June 1847.



To this the *Translator* begs leave to add but a few words. He had been requested to render a *faithful* translation of the *Epitome*. Such, he trusts, it will be found to be, and as such and nothing else, he begs this translation to be considered. And accordingly, if now and then the reader should meet with a passage, which is not as clear, and its reasoning not quite as obvious, as might be expected, — he is kindly requested, not to put this circumstance altogether on the translator's account, but to remember what the Rev. Gentleman, who prefaced this treatise, has stated about the nature of the text, — though the Translator is far from believing this his labour to be altogether faultless, but, on the contrary is fully convinced, that the whole has been accomplished amidst much weakness and infirmity.

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# The Author's Introduction.

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**I**T is said in scripture, „that the just shall live by *his* faith“, Habak. 2, 4. It is therefore incumbent upon every believer, to acquaint himself with the means by which he might acquire a right perception of God, and of the faith and confidence which are due to Him. And for all this he must be able to adduce proper evidence, which might strengthen him to confess the Son of God boldly before the world, and be ready alway to „give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the faith, that is in him“ Pet. 3, 15; and finally that he might be enabled effectually to resist the enemies of his creed and to defend his own faith. But this is especially called for at times, when either in the days of healthful enjoyment, or on departing this life, he is assaulted by the great Enemy of the human race with divers temptations and doubts.

It is therefore of great importance to give to the humble Christian the sincere milk of the divine word; that is, a statement of the *saving faith of Christianity*, in its purity as de-

duced from the word of God; not, as if thereby it was intended to say, that every Christian is bound to engage in religious controversies, but in that, under circumstances, he might be furnished with proper reasons concerning his faith, and also for the purpose of enabling him to be guarded against unscriptural teaching and against the wilful attacks of Satan.

In order, however, that this book might also be of service, to the more humble Christian as well as to those of younger years, it is proposed to give as concise and simple as possible, an Instruction on all the important points of faith.

God grant, that this undertaking may bring honour to his name and that it may serve, especially to the more youthful and to the pious Christian reader, for a blessed edification. Amen!

## Chapter I.

All Doctrines, which a Christian has learn and to believe, for the purposes of his souls salvation, to are only to be drawn from the Bible, that is, from the prophetic and apostolic scriptures.

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1. We are able to deduce it *from nature*, that a severe judgment for condemnation is prepared for those, who in their lifetime have given themselves to iniquities; their thoughts are accusing or else excusing one another in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, Rom. 2, 15. 16. Their conscience telling them, that every man has set before him, life and death, salvation and condemnation, according as every one would find the right way unto salvation, or else miss it.

2. There exist, on this head, *divers opinions and perceptions* among the different nations, so that some of them have undertaken to find this way by means of their own reason; as, for instance, the *heathens* of old, of which every one has attempted his own fancies on the subject, by the help of which he meant to please God, and after his death to be admitted into His presence, professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and God gave them over to a reprobate mind, Rom. 1, 22. 28.

3. Thus, the *Turks* have their *Mahomed*, whom they honour as a great prophet. They maintain to be able, to find in the *Koran* all that is requisite for their eternal salvation.

4. The (modern) *Jews* have the scriptures of Moses and the prophets, but besides them also the traditions of the elders (Matth. 15, 2.), out of which they have composed the *talmud*, to which they, in the hardness of their hearts pay more regard, than to the writings of Moses and the prophets.

5. We, who are distinguished by the name of *Christians*, believe and confess, the writings of the apostles and prophets (which together are usually called the *Bible*) to be *the only pure word of God, and the only means by which men could receive instruction from God*, as to what was necessary for them to know concerning their souls Salvation, and their eternal welfare. And for the purpose of a clearer perception of this subject, three points are to be attended to:

*Which books are to be comprised under the expression „Bible.“*

*Whether those books, which are now recognized to be a part of the Bible, really are the word of God;*

*Whether this written word of God is so complete, as to contain all is that which is requisite for us to know.*

6. As regarding the first of these questions, *which books namely are to be comprised under the expression „Bible“,* the following distinction is to be kept in view. There are, among the books, which are to be found in the Bible, some which have *undoubtedly* been written by the prophets and apostles themselves; of *others* it is *questionable*. We have certainty concerning those books of the *Old testament*, which have been composed in the language of the Jewish nation, namely in the *Hebrew*; or, during the Babylonian captivity, in the *Chaldee*; of such books, accordingly, as have not been composed in that language, we may rest assured that they are not from God. For he has committed his infallible word, and all that he has spoken, unto the Jews, in a language which they understood, Rom. 3, 2.

7. Such *undoubted* books are: the five books of Moses, the book of Joshua; Judges, Ruth, the books of Samuel, the books of kings, the Chronicles, the books of Nehemia, Esra, Esther, Hiob, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Salomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah and his Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micha, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephania, Hagai, Zechariah, Malachi; *the rest*, as, the wisdom of Salomo, Judith, Tobias, Jesus Sirach, Baruch, the books of Maccabees, and a piece of Esther, have, because they have been composed *in the greek language*, not been committed to the Jews. They are therefore annexed to the bible, only as being *useful* books and as a means of improving and guiding us in our earthly pilgrimage, because they are not of a sufficiently sure *foundation*, to enable us to rest our faith solely upon them, as the fact is not established, of their having been written by the prophets.

8. In the *New testament* those books are looked upon as constituting part and parcel of the Bible, which have been handed down, by the apostles, to the primitive Church. They have therefore at all times been recognised as apostolical writings, and as such never been doubted. They are: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the Acts of the apostles, the epistle to the Romans, Corinthians (2), Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians (2), Timothy (2), Titus, Philemon, the first Epistle of Peter, and the first Epistle of John. Concerning the remainder, as, the

second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistle of John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of James and Jude, and the Revelation, there have sometimes been started doubts as to their being really the productions of the apostles, but without any *reason whatsoever*. They are indeed, because of the accomplishment of the prophecies which they contain, as also because of the internal characteristics of the holy spirit, which they bear, to be considered as being apostolical, and as written by inspiration.

[From the preceding remarks it appears evident that such parts of the New testament, concerning which there have been started some doubts as to their identity, are not to be put on a parallel with the books of doubtful origin, which are frequently found annexed to the Old testament, and which are generally called the *Apoerypha*. They are, on the contrary, together with those parts of the Old and New Testament which are of established identity, — because of their having been given by inspiration — to be considered as *canonical* writings. — The whole complex of inspired writings is designated by the term „*Canon*“, because of its having been given to us as the only rule and guide by which our faith and conduct are to be directed. The question as to what has a right to a place within the Canon of the Old testament has been decided by the New testament; as to that of the New testament, the primitive Church and their own intrinsic quality have irrevocably pronounced.

Human reason, which has no faith and is enmity against the word of God, has, in recent times, exerted all its ingenuity and all its learning to question the genuineness of almost every one of the books contained in the bible. But the result of all these attacks has been different from what has been expected; for they only tended to bring to light their own contradictions, and to strenghten, if possible, the argument in favour of the scriptures. Whereby the saying of the Psalmist. — of which every believer is convinced before hand, — has been proved again to be truth „*The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times,*“ Pslm. 12, 6. \*)]

\*) That the Bible is, like a great building, a well connected, in all its parts properly joined together whole, of which no cornerstone, or any other member could be separated without destroying the whole, has been proved perhaps by no author more succesfully, than by Dan. Joach. Koeppen, in a work, decidedly the most important with regard to the evidences, which the lutheran church has produced, and which has the title „*The bible, a work of divine wisdom*“. (Die Bibel ein Werk göttlicher Weisheit) 2 Vol. 3. edit. Lipzig 1837.

9. The truth of the second question: *whether namely the books, which are acknowledged to make up the bible, really are the word of God*, can be established upon the following grounds.

A. *Because that there exists, besides the biblical writings, nothing that could be acknowledged to be word of God.* God has created men with a disposition, which naturally compels him, to seek for a God, to acquaint himself with His nature and to pay Him divine honours. It is remarkable that there is none among all the existing nations, and there never existed one which did not profess and honour a God. And history moreover teaches us sufficiently, that nations, as long as they were without a divine revelation, preferred the worship of an *unknown* God, Acts. 17, 23. to their existing without an object of veneration. Yea, they have even, that they might not be altogether without a God, worshipped insensible animals, oxen goats, or the sun and the moon, the stars, the fire, herbs and garden fruits, wood and stones. Which observation convinces us that God has created man to the end that he might know and worship Him. —

10. But that man might be able to know and worship Him, it was necessary for God to reveal Himself unto him and to teach him, how and by what means He desires to be served. „for He dwells in a light which no man can approach unto“, 1 Timot. 6, 16.

11. If we then look about us, for the word of revelation in which God *might* have revealed himself, we find either an *Old*, which derives its origine from the oldest times, or a *New word*, which had been revealed but recently [a *pretended* or a *true word*.]

12. When we look more particularly to the *Old*, we might find it either to be the voice of the Oracle, which, in olden times, responded to the questions of the heathen, and concerning which their priests impressed them with the notion, that they had received it from the Gods; or it must be *the word* which God has spoken unto the fathers, and, by means of which, He has made Himself known more and more unto the Jewish nation; more especially to the fathers of the same, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which the prophets has afterwards acquainted them with, until it has pleased God, perfectly to explain the same to the Apostles by His Son, and to cause their being reduced to writing and thus preserved. There is, consequently, no third revelation to be found, which has in any way laid claim to being a revelation of God.

13. The true word of God can certainly not be that, which the heathen of old were in possession of, and which dated its origin from a few hunderd, or perhaps thousand years after the

creation of the world; which would mean as much, as that God, for a long space of time had not been known, or worshipped by any men. Moreover, from the circumstance of its falling into disuse 1800 years ago, we would have to infer, that God, ever since that time has not been known and worshipped by men.

14. It can therefore not be doubted, that that word by means of which God has revealed himself of old, is that in which he has spoken to the fathers, to the people of Israel, to the prophets, through Christ, and his apostles for the purpose of revealing Himself unto mankind, and which He has caused to be reduced into writing, and collected into the bible.

15. If we turn to the New, or to that which has recently been professed to contain the word of God we meet with five different pieces :

- a) *the jewish Talmud,*
- b) *the Koran of the Turks,*
- c) *the traditions, which the Papists profess to possess, along with the decrees of the popes and councils,*
- d) *the revelations, which in our days some profess to have been favoured with,*
- e) *the prophetic and apostolic scriptures, which we call the bible.*

[The bible is at once the oldest and the newest revelation; with its conclusion revelation has ceased for ever. There has been none before that mentioned in the bible, there is none besides it, nor shall there ever come to pass one after it.]

16. a. The *jewish Talmud*, acknowledges the prophetic scriptures which we call the Old Testament to be the true word of God. It contains nothing, but different comments upon prophetic writings, along with many fables, the invention of the Jews of old. The prophetic scriptures are therefore, according to the admission of the Talmud itself entitled to a precedence before the latter, and is to be pronounced upon, in accordance with the first.

17. b. *The Koran* is a compound of biblical phrases, jewish superstitions and ceremonies, and Arian heresies. It admits the writings of Moses and the Prophets to be the word of God, and Christ to be a great prophet and the Son of God. But although by this confession it bears witness to the sayings of Christ and the prophets, and thus evidences, that mankind have been taught by them previous to its own existence, the Koran is nevertheless not to be preferred to the scriptures.

18. c. *The traditions*, which are professed by the papist, they themselves consider merely as a supplement, which ought to be added to the biblical writings, for the better understanding of the same; and thereby acknowledge the bible

to be the word of God. But as for these traditions, the papists are unable to adduce any proofs of their really having a divine origin, and as they are found frequently to contradict the word of God, we are prevented from recognizing them to be the word of God.

19. d. *The papal law* is a human institution which frequently contradicts the word of God, but confesses nevertheless the holy scriptures to be the word of God. It is therefore not to be looked upon as the word of God, much less to be preferred to the Bible.

20. e. What has been produced in our days from some *visionaries*, can in no way mislead us, inasmuch as they all admit the Bible to be the word of God, and as they all consent to have their visions adjudged upon biblical grounds, whether they be really of God, or of some other being.

21. f. We may therefore rest assured, that among all those communications, which pretend to lay claim to being a divine Revelation, non can possibly have any title to this distinction; but the prophetic and apostolic writings; for all those books, which pretend to the character of being the word of God (though they are in reality not so) agree in the testimony, that these biblical writings are to be considered and honoured as a divine revelation.

22. *That these biblical books are in reality the word of God is evident also from the fact,*

**B.** *That the New Testament is proved by the Old Testament to be the word of God, and even so the Old Testament by the New.* The Bible is divided into two parts, namely the Old and New Testament, the relation of which to each other is of such a nature, that the one forcibly testifies the other. For the prophets of the Old Testament have prophecied concerning the Lord Messiah, that he should spring from the house of Abraham, Judah and David; that he should be born of a virgin at Bethlehem, at a period, when the 69 weeks, spoken of by Daniel, should have been completed (chap. 9, 24. 25.); that he should be a great teacher; that he should accomplish many signs and wonders, in consequence of which he was to be despised by his own; that he should be sold for money, spitefully mocked, beaten, yea even put to death. But also that he should rise again from his grave, ascend into the heavens, and sit on the right hand of God, there to govern, until he his return to the final judgement; that, in the mean, time he should cause his peace to be preached to every creature, and gather many nations around him; whilst his own people which had rejected him, he was now to reject, and instead of them gather the heathen into his inheritance.



23. Now, to predict completely and circumstantially facts which were to come to pass after the lapse of several centuries, can only be possible to him, to whom all things are known, even the thoughts and works of those men, which are to come into existence after hundreds or thousands of years, which is the only, the true, the living God. It is true, that a man also is sometimes able to predict something which is to come to pass at a later period as is done by the devil (who has also sometimes predicted the like); but such a prediction must always be doubtful and resting upon suppositions, which may easily prove a failure. And it is for this, that the prophecies of the oracles have always been enveloped in doubtful words, thus deceiving its votaries; and that also all the predictions which are attempted in our days turn out to be more fallacies than truth.

24. It is therefore certain that the word, or the scripture, which has predicted something at a period, for which it had then not the least possible clue or indication, and in so doing had entered upon the *greatest minutiae*, which had afterwards actually come to pass, — that such writings must indeed contain the words of the omniscient living God, and that is to be esteemed as such.

25. Now every prediction which by Moses and the Prophets concerning the Saviour of the world, at a period in which not the remotest suspicion regarding it could have existed, has all proved to be infallible. For it is impossible to produce even the most insignificant fact, the fulfilment of which can be shewn to be wanting in the history of Jesus of Nazareth. And thus, the writings of the prophets are shewn evidently to be an emanation of the Omniscient, living God, and are therefore to be looked upon as *His* word.

26. Jesus of Nazareth, has moreover been a prophet, for he „had given him the tongue of the learned“, Isa. 50, 4; whom God has anointed to preach good tidings. Isa. 61, 1; and he has been granted us with the command, that unto him we should hearken, Deut. 18, 15, 19. It has been testified, that he was the promised teacher, by the accomplishment of all the things, which the prophets had predicted, and it is therefore evident that the word of this heavenly, divine and great prophet is to be regarded as the word of God; and also that the writings of the Apostles are of divine origin, for Jesus expressly says concerning his apostles „he that heareth you, heareth me“, Luk. 10, 16.

27. And it is especially not to be omitted, that this testimony is confirmed on the part of the most zealous enemies of Christianity. The Jews are in possession of the prophetic scriptures. We may rest assured from their bitter animosity to-

wards Christians, that they themselves would have neither written nor spoken anything in favour of the Christian creed. And yet the Christians appeal, in their controversies with the Jews, to this very word, which is in hands of these their enemies; for just those scriptures testify, that Jesus of Nazareth is a great teacher, whom God has sent, that he might still more reveal His Word, and those documents accordingly which he has caused to be committed to writing by his disciples, are the infallible word of God.

28. That the biblical books are indeed the word of God, is also evident from the fact, that

*C. God has supported His word by miracles.* God gave, along with His word, also miracles. This took place at the time, when he gave unto Abraham, contrary to the course of nature, a son and made a covenant with him, Genes. 17, 7; 18, 10. As He was about to grant unto the children of Israel His law and His word, He prepared them for it by many miracles, with which He redeemed them from the bondage of Egypt, Exod. 7, 9. 16. He fed them with the bread and the meat from heaven, Exod. 16, 13. 14. 15. We read moreover of the miracles, which were performed in the history of Elijah 1. Kings 17, 6. 18; 36. 1—38; and of others prophets. But all this has been ordained by God to come to pass, because He would not leave his word without sure proofs, but would testify in favour of it by divine works, that every man might be convinced by them, that it is indeed the word of God.

29. And that there might be no doubt, as to the genuineness of the miracles performed by Moses and the other prophets, due care has been taken by divine Providence, that the bitterest enemies of the Jews from the heathen world should bear witness to the credibility of the same.

30. Moreover no attempt has ever been made to deny the signs and wonders, performed by the Lord Jesus and his apostles, as recorded to us in scripture. The jewish historian Josephus himself, has borne ample witness in favour of the same, and they are, besides by other historians, acknowledged also by the Jews themselves in their talmud; [P. Galatino de Arcanis catholicae veritatis lib. 8. cap. 5).

31. We are thus enabled to establish the following conclusion. That *that* word, which is supported by miracles, must indeed be the word of God, and that the contents of prophetic and apostolic scriptures, after they have been duly supported by the miraculous working of divine power, must indeed be the word of God.

32. Some might object, that these wonders have been wrought, merely for the support of the subject matter which

is contained in the bible, but not at all for the purpose of evidencing that the bible itself is the word of God. But there have also been wrought a sufficient number of miracles to the end, that they might evidence the holy scriptures itself to be the word of God. Thus we know, that:

33. a. Although they have been written, in a *language so simple*, as to be scorned by the world; and although their *teaching* appeareth to be *enmity* and *folly* to the human reason, they have nevertheless been accepted and defended by a great many nations. Many among them have preferred submitting cheerfully to the most ignominious death, ere they consented to part with the scriptures, which fact can only be caused by the power of God.

34. b. This word has been preserved in spite of the *manifold persecutions* to which it has been subjected. Thus at the period the Israelites were subjected to the Philistines Moabites, and other nations, Judges. 2, 14. 3; 8, 12. especially during Israel's captivity in Assyria, as well as, Juda's in Babylon; during disturbances which took place under the reign of the Maccab. and subsequently under that of the Romans, during which latter the Jews were dispersed, fearfully persecuted, spoiled and sold as slaves, to other nations. Subsequently, the Christians also have been subjected to severe persecutions on the part of the Roman emperors. During all these persecutions nothing in the world has been persecuted, with more determination, than the holy scriptures which yet God has preserved, in spite of all human efforts; — all which is to be looked upon as an evident miracle of divine Providence.

35. c. *That it is the word of God alone, which is able to cherish and comfort our souls*, for even the perusal of all the writings of all the heathen philosophers and savans, is not able to give a lasting peace to a mourning and troubled conscience. Whilst on the contrary the holy scriptures are so replete with comfort, that there can be no trouble, to the alleviation of which there could not be found in it a remedy and that but from them a powerful and heartfelt peace is really to be obtained. Which proves this word to be work of Him, to whom every desire and every necessity of men is known, as well as the remedies of the same. But this again belongs neither to men nor to angels, but alone to God.

36. d. That those, who have withstood this word or *blasphemed* it, have been visited with *evident punishment* from the divine hand. As for instance, Antiochus, 2. Maccb. 9, 5; Herod, Acts 12, 23; the Roman Emperors Nero, Maxentius, Diocletianus, Julianus and others; concerning all of whom God,

who alone is able to subdue man, has evidently manifested His will to preserve His word in spite of all the artifices which man could devise.

37. e. That men undeniably stand in need of such a word, which might teach them all that was requisite for them to know concerning their *Salvation*, as also for the defeat of every *heresy*, which might possibly be broached; for the purposes of an *honest and godly life*, of *pure worship* and to their comfort in cases of sickness, persecution, demise of friends, and in the time of their own death etc., to produce such a word is quite impossible for men's wisdom, it is only in the power of Him to whom the only means are known, by which man can assure himself of his eternal salvation; — of him to whom all heresies are known before hand; who is a discerner of hearts. Who alone knows the worship with which He Himself is well pleased, who is able to satisfy all our wants, and to comfort the mourning heart even in the hour of death; and who is able to provide help in every time of need. But all this is *only* possible to the true and living God.

38. The holy scriptures or the Bible is a book which abundantly provides us, with the knowledge of all that concerns our salvation, the defeat of all heresies, the worship of God, a godly life and all the comforts we stand in need of. Concerning all these points nothing can be pointed out, as betraying an insufficiency in the holy scriptures; but they have, on the contrary, been made use of by thousands of Christians for their comfort, and who have found them to be sufficient in every respect, which is still the case. Which proves that the holy scriptures are indeed the word of God.

[Besides the testimonies adduced already in behalf of the assertion, that the scriptures are indeed the word of God, we propose here to state, somewhat more explicitly than has been the case in the preceeding argument, the testimonies which the scriptures assert in their own behalf. This testimony, in accordance with divine and human right takes the first place amongst the evidences produced in behalf of scripture. The scriptures, though a means for the good of man, are yet to be regarded as the word of God, as is proved by St. Paul, 1 Thess. 2, 13: „When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the *word of men*, but as it is in truth, the *word of God*.“ — God himself also testifies that He has put His word into the *mouth* of the prophet, Isa. 41, 21 ff.; 2 Pet. 1, 21: „For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were *moved by the holy ghost*.“ Matth. 10, 19 the Lord says to his disciples. „When they deliver you up, take no thought

how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; *for it is not you that speak but the spirit of your father which speaketh in you.*“ Likewise 1 Cor. 2, 12. 13: „We have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; which things we also speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which *the holy ghost teacheth.*“ Which proves that all which has been said by the apostles and prophets, even to the very words they made use of in giving utterance to that which had been shewn them by the Holy ghost, had been inspired by the latter, and that all their words are to be looked upon as the word of God; „He that heareth you heareth me“, says Christ to his disciples, Luk. 10, 16.

All that has been said concerning the word of mouth, holds also good with regarding to the written word; for we know that the latter, after the immediate messages of God had ceased, was to be the only infallible truth, that should endure for all times and be free from every error. The apostle accordingly writes to Timothy, 2 Chap. 3, 16: „All (that is the whole) scripture is given by *inspiration of God*, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof.“ etc. It is true that this saying has immediate reference to the Old Testament; but there is no reason for its not also holding good with regard to the New. — It follows therefore, that the whole volume of scripture has been inspired by God; and that it contains nothing, ever so insignificant, that has not been inspired by God, and that there is no doubt of its containing in all parts the pure and undefiled truth.

This testimony scripture produces on its own behalf, has a convincing power on every *soul that loves the truth*, and that is willing to submit itself to the influence of that spirit, which is speaking to us out of the same; 1 John 5, 6: „And it is the spirit that beareth witness (that is: to the heart, and convinces) because the spirit (that is: the testimony of the spirit, as laid down in the written word), is truth.“ — Wherever these internal and external testimonies do agree with each other, there always result a confidence and a faith, which cannot be shaken by any argument which unbelieving, human reason is able to produce.]

39. Concerning the third question: *Whether, this word is so complete, as to contain every thing, which is necessary for us to know*, we answer in the affirmative. For it will be shewn in the sequel, that all we ought to know concerning our faith can be established from holy scripture; [be it either expressly mentioned in scripture, or deduced from its statements].

40. The scriptures, moreover, have been granted to us, that we might be instructed by them concerning our *faith* and *godliness* [and that by it, as by a touchstone, we should try and adjudge the merits of every thing.] For the Lord Jesus says: Joh. 5, 39. „Search the *scriptures*, they are they which testify of me.“ And Abraham recommends the rich man, as the means of preserving his brethern from eternal condemnation „they have *Moses* and the *prophets*; let them hear them,“ Luk. 26, 20. St. John concludes his Gospel with the following admonition, 20, 31. „but these (things) have been written, that ye might have *life* through his name,“ 2. Timoth. 3, 16. We are told that „all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works; and in the verse preceeding, „from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures which are able to *make thee wise unto salvation*.“ We would accordingly do best unflinshingly to adhere to this directory of our faith, and therefore refuse to listen, as to what the Pope, or the assembly of the councils etc. determine upon, considering that they are all men even like others, whose teachings and thoughts ought to be directed by the holy scriptures; remembering the solemn declaration and admonition we read, John 4, 1. „*Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God*, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.“

[If scripture is to be to us the only rule of faith and life, it must be, in all things *which it is necessary for us to know for our salvation*, so clear and explicit, that we might be able by it to come to such a knowledge. Thus St. Paul writes 2. Timot. 3, 15: „From a child thou hast known the scriptures, which are able to *make thee wise unto salvation* through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Besides, God did not intend to leave us in darkness with regard to our salvation, and the way leading thereto. That the Bible nevertheless has met with so many different, frequently contradictory explanations, is not the fault of scripture, but a consequence of the blindness of human reason, which is anxious to find in scripture a confirmation of its own errors. — For a right understanding of the scripture it is necessary for us to have the assistance of the Holy spirit, and an humble mind, and to compare single passages with the whole tenure of scripture. Nor ought we to forget the rule that the more difficult and intricate passages do frequently receive their light from such parts of scriptures, as are clearer and more accessible to our understanding, and that the first ought therefore to be made to agree with the latter.

Every one therefore who studies the scripture, as he has been bid to do by the Lord himself John, 5, 39. is sure to find in it Christ and in him life eternal, as has been the case with the *orthodox church of all ages.*]



## Chapter II.

The whole work of our salvation comprises man's original righteousness, his fall, God's merciful purposes, and the means by which He will have us come to salvation.

41. As the whole work of our salvation is intended to be treated of in this treatise, it will be necessary for the christian reader to turn his attention to the following essentials which we purpose to lay before him.

God has created men, Adam and Eve in a state of *perfect righteousness and true holiness*; and if they had continued to be obedient to their creator, and in all the holy walk consistent with His laws, which He thought fit to lay upon them, God would have preserved them in their immortal state, and the wellbeing of their souls and bodies.

42. But in that man had been induced, *being tempted by the devil*, contrary to the express will of God to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he has sinned against God, and has become unrighteous and unholy. Whereby he has lost his original righteousness and holiness, and has become subject to the punishment of God, as well as to the service of Satan.

43. This deplorable state he has transmitted to his descendants. For his children are subject to sin and to the divine curse, and that not only because of the unrighteousness which they have inherited, but also because of the sins, which they are committing daily. They are therefore as well as their children unholy; and thus the whole human race has become subject

to the judgment and condemnation of God, whose righteousness cannot but condemn each and all, as disobedient children to utter destruction.

44. But in spite of His just indignation, God has yet shewn His *mercy* to the human race, and has purposed to help and restore them again into His kingdom.

45. But such could not take place unless the divine righteousness had been before satisfied. But it was in the power neither of men, nor of angels, nor of any other creature in heaven or upon earth, to propitiate divine justice for all the sins of mankind. There remained therefore no other refuge for mankind but God alone, and that He should reconcile them unto himself.

46. This has been accomplished; the Son of God came from the father, and took upon him *the nature of man* (yet without sin); he has appeared instead of men before the judgment seat of God, has yielded that obedience to the Law which God requires of mankind; he has borne the punishment of the divine wrath, which we have deserved; has offered himself as a propitiation for all our sins upon the cross, and paid a ransom for his people with his blood and his death. For the righteousness of God has now no other claim upon us, on account of our transgressions, for we appear before the throne of God just as pure and holy, as if we had never been sinners.

47. Now the work of redemption is just like the state of certain captives, whose liberty has been already bought with the necessary ransom. Suppose that at the instance of their liberty being announced to them, some of them do accept of their redemption, believe that they have been thus ransomed for, consequently gain their liberty, and thus actually enjoy the work of redemption. But if some among them should either imagine, that they were not at all in captivity and had therefore no need of a ransom being paid for them, or that they were themselves best fitted to affect their liberation and did therefore not at all care for the ransom, another had paid for them; or suppose, they put their confidence in other people by whom they hoped their liberation could be accomplished, and had therefore no desire whatsoever after him, who had actually redeemed them, nor after his proffered redemption; or that they reason by themselves that „though the redemption belongs to those few, who have left already the prison, yet it has no reference whatever to themselves, and can therefore derive no benefit from the same“, or that they look upon the news of their liberation, as a concoction of folly and untruths,



as merely intending to raise vain hopes in their hearts; all prisoners of such a description would, of course, remain in their prison, go to destruction and actually not enjoy the redemption, which yet has been completely affected in their behalf.

48. Accordingly, the Lord Jesus has paid a ransom for our sins, and causes such to be *preached* to us in his gospel, giving us the seal of the same in his sacrament, — and if, therefore some individuals imagine that they are holy and without sins, and therefore do not stand in need of the Lords ransom, or if others desire to propitiate their sins in the face of God with good works, so that they should owe God not even the least farthing; or again if some put their trust in departed saints, the mass of the priests, upon cloisters, or the works of monks and nuns; or if the conscience of some is on no occasion troubled on account of their sins, and who, therefore, in the midst of their transgressions, are leading a happy and quiet life, being deaf to the preaching of the cross, having no desire after a righteousness, which is better than their own, or who imagine that Christ may have atoned but for a few, and will not admit, that it has been done for them also; or if some laugh to scorn the truth, because of its appearing foolishness unto them, looking upon all that has been told them concerning sin, the grace of God and of Christ (as weak hearts, and the children of this world are wont to do,) as a parcel of lies — such could not possibly, as long as their minds remain unchanged partake of the merits of the Lord Jesus; nor, if they should die in their unbelief, could they have any claims upon this assured redemption. And this is the *unbelief*, in consequence of the adherence to which even those who, as we shall see, have been completely redeemed by the blood of Christ, are subjected to the wrath of God and to eternal destruction.

49. But if, on the other hand, others again attend to, and understand, the preaching of the cross to the end that, as to all men has been preached forgiveness of sins, their own salvation is also included, and that they need therefore not doubt it to be the will of God, that they should be free from sin and thus saved; that Christ has washed away their sins; — if such find peace for their consciences upon the assurance that they possess a mighty Redeemer and a merciful God, who after this life, will grant them eternal salvation — such have the *true faith*, whom God loves, within whose souls He delights to dwell and whom after departing this life, in confidence upon Him and upon Christ, He will receive in His eternal kingdom; whose bodies He will raise again on the last

day from the dead, to glorify them, and to unite them again with their souls, that they might rejoice unceasingly in an eternal existence. This is the sum of the whole christian faith, upon which rests our eternal welfare and salvation, the farther illustration of which shall now be attempted.



### Chapter III.

God, with whom our salvation originates, is a spiritual Being, Eternal, Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Infinite, True, Merciful, Holy and Just.

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50. All that can be said concerning our well-being rests upon these three points, viz :

*the knowledge of God,*  
*the will of God, and*  
*the works of God,*

the first of which points is to occupy as now, that we might be enabled to know that God, to whom we owe our existence, and who is the only and principal source of our happiness.

51. *The knowledge of God* forms an important part of the christian religion, it being an earnest of a future life, as we find it designed in book of Wisdom. 15, 3: „for to know thee, (God) is perfect righteousness; yes to know thy power is the root of immortality.“ And the Lord Jesus says: „And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,“ John. 17, 3.

52. During this our earthly existence this knowledge can be but imperfect and in parts, „for now we see through a glass, darkly, 1. Cor. 13, 9. 12. It is nevertheless, our duty, in as far as it has pleased Him to reveal Himself, to make ourselves acquainted, with His character. We have therefore to inquire:

- a) *what is the nature of God?*
- b) *whether there is more than one God?*
- c) *who is the true God?*

in order that we might not be tempted to „change the glory of the

incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man“, Rom. 1, 23, (or to „give His glory to another“, or „His praise to graven images“, Isa. 42, 8.

53. Concerning the first question „*what the nature of God is*“ there is with this in reality another question expressed, namely, what are we to imagine, when we think of God? To give an answer to this question is by no means easy, since our conceptions are mostly accessible but to earthly subjects, and such as can be comprehended by our senses.

We learn in His word as much concerning God, that He is a *Spirit, Eternal, Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Infinite, True, Merciful, Holy and Just*. More we are not able to learn. Nor are we at all fit to comprehend any thing of God, except by His *attributes*, of which a great many are mentioned, but out of which the selection of the following ten will suffice.

54. **A.** God is a *Spirit*; He has nothing like flesh and bone; „a spirit hath no flesh and bone“, Luk. 24, 29. Now God is a Spirit, as we are taught by the Lord Jesus, Joh. 4, 24; and, accordingly, when speaking of a Spirit it is implied, that with reference to God we are not to imagine anything bodily; but that we should divest our mind of this Idea. For just as the Angels, as well as the human souls, are spirits, divested of every thing bodily, so God is also a Spirit, though one of greater purity and perfection than either of them. [A Spirit is a Being, which is possessed of reason and will, and which is conscious of its own existence; this is applicable, to God in the highest sense of the word: He is the Spirit of all Spirits, the living and personal God].

55. **B.** God is *Everlasting*; this attribute is given to Him, Genes. 21, 33. Abraham called upon the name of the Everlasting God. The divine Being is called, Rom. 1, 20: the *eternal Godhead*, Rom. 16, 26; 1. Timoth. 1, 17. The word *Eternal* includes three things:

*a.* That, with God, there is no beginning; Palm. 40, 2: „Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, *even from everlasting to everlasting*.“ He therefore calls himself the *first* and the *last*, before whom nothing has been formed, Isa. 41, 4; 43, 10; 44, 6; 48, 12.

*β.* That with God there is no end; He inhabites eternity, Isa. 57, 15; He „alone hath *immortality*“, 1. Tim. 6, 16. He is „an *everlasting king*, Jerem. 10, 10; — Psalm. 102, 26. 27 „they (the heaven and the earth) shall perish, but thou remainest; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou remainest, and thy years shall have no end.“ Da-

niel. 6, 26 „the God of Daniel is a living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that, which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be ever unto the end.“

γ. *That God is not subject to the changes of time or of age; therefore Pslm. 40, 4. „for a thousand years in thy sight, are but as yesterday when it is past.“* Now the Yesterday, is passed, and therefore [to us, as it were] as no time at all, and thus a thousand years are before God like no time at all. This is still more clearly expressed in the 2. Epistle of Peter 3, 8: „one day is with the Lord like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day,“ which would have no meaning at all, if God had not been without the limits of time.

If we therefore say that God is *Everlasting*, we express with this: that with God there neither beginning, nor end, nor change of time; His nature remains unchangeably the same, throughout all ages.

56. **C.** *God is Almighty.* This is frequently mentioned in scripture, Genes. 17, 1; 28, 3; 35, 11; 43, 14; 48, 3; 49, 25; Exod. 6, 3; 2. Cor. 6, 18; Revel. 1, 8; 16, 7. This attribute is expressly declared to belong to God alone, Numb. 11, 23; Isa. 50, 2; 59, 1. „the hand of the Lord is not shortened“ etc. „He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,“ Eph. 3, 20; „His hand and power, who can hinder him,“ Job. 11, 10; Isa. 14, 27; Acts. 11, 17. „He giveth to whom soever he will,“ Daniel 4, 32. From this we learn, that in the case of God's teaching, promising or threatening anything, we ought not to measure his power according as nature appears to us; and although the accomplishment of the same might appear impossible to us, we ought not consider it to be so to God, Zach. 8, 6; Mat. 19, 26; Luk. 1, 37.

57. **D.** *God is Omniscient,* that is:

α. All future events are known to him; „thou understandest my thoughts afar off,“ Pslm. 139, 2. The prophet Isaias accordingly, concludes from the fact of the idols not knowing the things of the future, that they were no Gods, 41, 22. 23: „let them bring them forth and shew us what shall happen; let them shew the former things, what they may be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us the things for to come; shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods.“

β. *There is nothing hid from him,* whatever may take place; be it done hidden or openly, so that He is even able to discern the innermost parts of our hearts and know even that which man is most desirous to keep secret, „men looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart,“ 1. Sam. 16, 7; „the righteous God trieth the hearts and the reins,“ Ps. 7, 9;

„O Lord of hosts, that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart,“ Jerem. 20, 12; „the eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times *brighter than the sun*, beholding all the ways of men, and considering the most secret parts,“ Eccles (Sirach). 23, 19; „*He that planted the ear, shall he not hear, He that formed the eye shall he not see?*“ Psal. 94, 9.

58. **E.** God is *Omnipresent*, Jerem. 23, 23. 24: „Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Do not I *fill heaven and earth*?“ 1. King 8, 27: „Will God indeed dwell on the earth? *behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee*?“ Ps. 139, 7. ff: „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 they hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.“

59. But with this assertion it is not attempted to say, that God can be any how *included* (circumscribed) within any of His creatures, as little as He can be said to be entirely *excluded* from them. We are not able to comprehend how it can be said of God, that He is *Omnipresent*, since it is established that He is a Spirit, and can therefore possess neither substantial parts nor members. But is it not our conviction, that the human soul is a spirit, which although it cannot be made subject to division, is yet present in every part of the body, without our being able to assign a sufficient reason for it? Why should we then object to the doctrine, that the divine Being is *Omnipresent*, although we might not be able to discern and express exactly how this could possibly come to pass.

It follows naturally that, as God is *Omnipresent*, He is also

60. **F.** *Immeasurable and Infinite*; which expressions imply that the divine Being cannot be circumscribed; for whilst every creature is liable to the influences of measure and boundary, no limits whatsoever can be put to the divine Being.

61. **G.** *God is True*; because He always fulfils all His promises, Rom. 3, 4: „let God be true, but every man a liar;“ Ps. 33, 4: „the word of the Lord is right, and all his works *are done in truth*;“ 1. Sam. 15, 29: „the Strength of Israel *will not lie, nor repent*; for he is not a man that he should *repent*;“ Heb. 6, 18: „*It was impossible for God to lie.*“ — Thus Joshua, on the occasion of his alluding to the promises, which God had given to the people of Israel, extols his God in the following manner: 23, 14, „*Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you and not one thing hath failed thereof.*“

We should therefore never for a moment suppose, that God would deal with us unjustly. And as He gives us in His word assurances of his mercy, we need not suspect, that with reference to this point He has secretly formed a different determination — as did, for instance, Cain, when speaking kindly to his brother, at the moment he meditated his destruction.

62. **III.** God is *Merciful*; this gives frequently a subject of praise to scripture. „I know that thou art a *gracious God*, and *merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness* and repentest thee of the evil,“ Jon. 4, 2; — Exod. 34, 6; Nehem. 9, 17; Ps. 103, 8; Joel. 2, 13; Micha 7, 18. 19. „Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea;“ Lament. 3, 22. 23: „It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his *compassion, fail not*; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness; Eccles. (Sirach), 2, 23: „*for as his majesty is, so is his mercy.*“

63. **II.** God is *Holy*; Levit. 19, 2: „ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am also holy;“ 1. Sam. 2, 2: „*there is none holy as the Lord*;“ Rev. 15, 4: „Who shall not fear thee O Lord and glorify thy name? *for thou only art holy.*“ — Upon this attribute is founded the song of the Angels and the redeemed, who are crying one to another „*holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts*;“ Isa. 6, 3; Revel. 4, 8.

64. God is *Just*; Ps. 11, 7: „For the *righteous Lord loveth righteousness*;“ Ps. 119, 137: „Righteous art thou, O Lord, and *upright are they judgments*;“ Deutr. 32, 4: „He is a rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are *judgment*: a God of truth and without iniquity, *just and right is he*;“ Ps. 7, 11: God judges *the righteous* etc.“ — And it is for the same reason that Solomon writes in the Proverbs. 17, 15. „He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord.“ These are *some of the principal attributes*, by means of which we might acquire some knowledge, respecting the divine Being, and concerning the question, what God is. Although a number of others are also spoken of in the Bible, yet those which have been adduced seem to be sufficient, to confer a correct idea concerning all that is requisite to be known respecting God and His nature.



## Chapter IV.

This Everlasting, Almighty etc. God is also the Only God, so that nobody ought to recognise any other God besides Him.

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65. The second essential, which it becomes us to acquaint ourselves with, is the *Unity of God*. The heathen have fabled of many and divers divinities, which, counted together, would amount to thirty thousand. But a few of the wise and learned among them have nevertheless, by the light of nature been brought to the conviction, that there can only be one God, who has created heaven and earth, and who is the Governor and Preserver of the same.

66. God has moreover revealed Himself in a manner as to prove, *that besides Him there is no other and that He must needs be the only God*, Exod. 20, 3: „*Thou shalt have no other Gods before me;*“ Deut. 6, 4: „*Hear O Israel the Lord our God is one Lord;*“ Mrk. 12, 29; 1. Cor. 8, 6: „*To us there is but one God; the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him;*“ Isa. 44, 6: „*I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God;*“ v. 8. „*Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea there is no God; I know not any.*“

67. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon this subject because of its never having been doubted on the part of any Christian. The New Arians, (which call themselves Photinians), [Socinians, Rationalist, Unitarians] insist upon it, that we have in the New testament two Gods, namely the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; and we intend the next Chapter to be occupied with this inquiry, in the course of which we hope to prove the Lord Jesus, along with the Father and the Holy Ghost to be the Only true God, and that they are not three gods, but the only living God.

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## Chapter V.

This only, true God is the creator of the world, the God of Abraham etc. the Jehovah and the Lord, which has revealed Himself, as the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

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68. After having answered the inquiry concerning God's nature, the third question presents itself to us, namely, *who is this only living God?* There have been carried on, concerning this question, at all times great and dangerous disputes, so that Jews and Heathen and Christians, have contended and persecuted each other for the sake of this inquiry, in as much as each of them pays his homage to another Being, which he regards as his, and as the true and only God.

But that we might be able to discern, who is to be considered as the true and only God, we shall be obliged to turn our attention to the different *Revelations*, by means of which it has pleased Him, to make Himself known. Of such revelations there are four:

70. I. The *first* revelation took place, at the moment in which God *created heaven and earth*; as it is explained by St. Paul, Rom. 1, 19. 20: „Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them (the Gentiles); 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.“ And this same Apostle, being about to exhort the Athenians on account of their idolatry, and to shew them which is the true God, directs their attention in the very outset, to *the work of creation*; „whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you: *God that made the world and all the things therein*“ etc, Act. 17, 23, 24. And the prophet Jeremiah looks upon the work of creation, as a direct proof, by means of which the true God might be distinguished from other Gods; for his message to the heathens runs thus: „*the Gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens*; He (God) *hath made the earth by his power he that established the world by his wisdom,*“ Jerem. 10, 11. 12. And the Lord Himself in that He created the world, has proved Himself to be the true God; „*Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people*



upon it, and spirit to them, that walk therein," Isa. 42, 5; „thus saith the Lord thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself," Isa. 44, 24. This is therefore the first revelation, which teaches Him to be the only and true God, who hath created heaven and earth.

71. II. Now the heathen do also ascribe to their imaginary Gods the work of creation; but the true God has, besides this, revealed himself to the children of Israel, as well as to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. —

Thus he led Abraham out of Ur in Chaldea, and made a covenant with him, Genes. 12, 1. ff; 17, 2. ff. Thus he promised unto Isaac and Jacob that their seed should be so large that it could not be numbered, a seed which the Almighty also promised to redeem from a heavy bondage. In the accomplishment of which promises God has revealed Himself to be Almighty, True and Merciful. In the same way revelations are to be met with, by means of which He hath made himself known to Isaac and Jacob, as the history of the Jews abundantly proves.

71. The true God is therefore, as it were, properly designated when he is described as the *God of Abraham* and as *the fear of Isaac*, Genes. 31, 42; as *the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob*, Exod. 3, 16; 1. Kings 18, 36; Math. 22, 32; as *the God of the Fathers*, Exod. 3, 13; Deutro. 1, 21. Wisd. 9, 1; 1. Chron. 30, 18; as *the God of the Hebrews*, Exod. 5, 3; as *the God of Israel*, Jos. 7, 13 ff; as *the God of all the families of Israel*, Jerem. 31, 1.

73. III. The third revelation consists in the fact of God's making known his real name, and *this more especially unto Moses*. For when this latter was about to be sent unto Pharaoh, upon his inquiring who might be that God, that thus commands him to go to the children of Israel, he receives the reply: „thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, *I AM* hath sent me unto you," Exod. 3, 14. This was still more explained to him, as we read, v. 15. „thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: *the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob* hath sent me unto you, *this is my name fore ever*, and this is my memorial unto all generations;" Exod. 6, 2. 3: „I am the *Lord* (Jehovah); and I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by the name of God Almighty, but *by my name JEHOVAH* was I not known to them;" Isa. 42, 8: „I am the *Lord*, that is my name and my glory will I not give to another."

74. This latter revelation also informs us of the true,

appropriate and essential name, wherewith God desires to be called. For even so as the heathens used to distinguish their different Gods, by different names, calling them Baal, Astharoth, Moloch, Jupiter, Neptunus etc. — so also is it the desire of the only God to be distinguished by his own proper name (Jehovah, Lord) from all that which is no divinity.

75. It is, therefore „Jehovah“ (or as it is translated in the Bible, Lord), the appropriate and essential name, of the Only God, as has been shewn by reference to the different passages. Nor is this name, in holy scripture, applied to any of the imaginary divinities, or to any other creature. —

76. IV. The fourth revelation took place, in that God (this Jehovah) makes Himself known as a plurality of persons, thereby teaching, that Jehovah is, and that He is called, *the Father*, who has created a *Son* from eternity; the *Son*, who has been created from the *Father* in all eternity; from both of which (Father and Son) *the Holy Ghost* proceeds.

77. For the purpose therefore of disposing of the question, viz: *who may be that true God?* the surest way will be to put together these four different revelations and to say: *the only true God is the Creator of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham of Isaac and of Jacob, the Jehovah or Lord, which is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ Jesus the Son of the Father, and the Holy Ghost, which proceeds from the Father and the Son.*

78. Concerning the three first mentioned revelations all those who bear the christian name are agreed. But the doctrine regarding the three distinct persons in the one divine Being, or (in the language of the primitive Church) of the Trinity, has, been, from the very beginning of the christian Church, attacked by man different heretics; as for instance by the Ebionites, by Cerinthus, by Macedonius, Sabellius, Paul of Samosate, especially by Arius. This latter revived again the doctrine, which was maintained by the Photinians so called after the old heretic Photinus.

79. In stating his conviction it ought to be left to the option of every christian, either to employ the mode of expression which had been made use of in this controversy with these heretics (namely: in the one divine Being there are three persons, or the only God consists of three persons); or simply to express his belief thus: *the only, true God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.*

80. But in order that the phraseology, which the Church makes use of against the heretics, be more clearly understood, it will be requisite to put it down as a sure and impregnable principle: *that under no circumstances whatsoever*

more than One God is to be acknowledged or spoken of. For if we shall subsequently succeed in proving that the three different persons constitute the same one God, it must be evident that there are, in this one God, three distinct persons.

81. Although this might be a proper place for giving a clear definition of the term Person; yet, as this definition would have to be drawn from Philosophy, the elucidation of which would be of little profit to the humble inquirer, the following will, we hope, suffice.

82. a. *For a person it is necessary, to have a substance and a nature.* Accordingly the human reason cannot be said to be a person, because it has no substance; but man is a person because of his having his own nature. Just upon the same principle, God the Father is said to be a person, for he is a substance; whilst the power, eternity as well as other attributes of God cannot be called persons, because of their not having a substance or a nature.

83. b. *Whatever is to be called a person, ought to have a perfect substance and nature of his own, and not only a part of the same.* Therefore neither the human body, nor his soul, on being separated, can be called a person, because of the body being only part of the human being. But man, as he is constituted of body and soul, is a person, for he is an entire being, not making a part of any thing else.

84. c. *Whatever is to be called a person, must be alive;* therefore an Angel is called a person, in consequence of his being alive; but a stone cannot be called a person, because their is no life in it.

85. d. *Whatever is to be called a person, ought to be endued with reason.* Thence a man or an Angel are each a person, because of their being furnished with reasoning powers; whilst on the other hand a lion, ox or horse etc., cannot be said to be persons, because they are destitute of reason.

86. e. *Whatever constitutes a person, cannot be common to different individuals.* Accordingly the human nature of man, being equally met with in every individual cannot be called a person, for, reason of its being common to many. But Peter is a person because no other individual can be this self same Peter.

87. It is in this way, that the Church speaks of the divine nature, which although having an entire substance and nature of its own, and although it is alive, and endued with reason, is yet *no person*, because of its being in common to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. But the Father as well as the Son, as also the Holy Ghost are persons, be-

cause of their being alive, and endued with reason, and because of their substance not being common to any other. For there is no other being which is called the Father, or the Son or the Holy Ghost.

88. But as this way of speaking (*of the holy Trinity, or the three persons in God*) is not to be found in scripture, [that is, not in express words, though in the whole tenure of the same], but has only been adopted by the Church of old, for the purpose of repelling the heresies of Arius and others, no body is bound to make use of the same. It is by no means necessary for any Christian to adopt them, and to trouble himself as to how he was to understand the term „person“; or how the one divine Being could possibly be believed to consist of three different persons. For the humble minded inquirer it will suffice to know and to believe, that *the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are the only, true and living God*; but regarding the possibility of this we ought not to trouble ourselves, seeing that in this life we know only part, and are only able to comprehend the things of God as through a glass, darkly (1 Cor. 13, 9. 12.). We may therefore humbly await the issue, till we pass into life eternal, where we shall see the Lord as He is, and „know Him, even as we are known of Him,“ (1 Cor. 13, 12; 1 Joh. 3, 2.)

89. But that the Christian might be able to give an account to God and men concerning his faith, in as far as it is founded upon scripture, three different points are to be proved:

I. *that there is in God more than one person;*

II. *that there are three persons in God, and*

III. *the distinction which is to be observed between the three persons of the Godhead.*

90. I. That in God there are more than one person, the holy scriptures prove in three different ways:

a. *God speaks to Himself, as one spake to another*; thus Genes. 1, 26: „Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;“ *ibid.* 3, 22: „Behold the man is become like one of us;“ *ibid.* 11, 7: „go to, let us go down. and there confound their language.“

b. *God is speaking of Himself, as one speaks of another*, Isa. 48, 16: „I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was there am I; and now the Lord God and his spirit hath sent me;“ Jerem. 23, 5. 6: „Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign, and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In this days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and

this is his name whereby he shall be called: „THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;“ Hosea 1, 7: „But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah and will save them by the *Lord their God*;“ Zach. 2, 10. 11: „For lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know, that the Lord of hosts, he hath sent me unto thee;“ Zach. 3, 2: „And the Lord said unto Satan: *the Lord* rebuke thee O Satan; *even the Lord* . . . rebuke thee.

92. *The holy scriptures speak of God as a plurality*, Genes. 19, 24: „then *the Lord* rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from *the Lord* out of heaven.“ For which also many other instances might be adduced.

93. As therefore Jehovah, the only God, in all the instances referred to, is speaking to Himself as to a plurality (for nothing can be imagined to be more important to Him, than to avoid giving to men the least occasion for imagining that there is more than one God); and since He speaks to Himself in such a way: „let *us* make men,“ „Adam is become as one of *us*,“ „let *us* confound the languages,“ — all which can not possibly be addressed to an Angel or any other creature, but to God alone; — it must be certain that there are more persons in the Godhead, which are referred to in making use of the Plural forms, *us*, *our*, etc.

94. In the same manner Jehovah, the only God says of Himself, that He hath been sent by the Lord; that Jehovah would raise up a seed unto David, which should also be Jehovah; that Jehovah would help Judah again, in this same Jehovah; and in the same way Jehovah says to Satan, Jehovah rebuke thee Satan. In all this, two distinct persons must needs be understood to be spoken of, each of which is yet called Jehovah; (for there is one, which sends, and another which has been sent; one who raises a seed unto David, and that seed which has been raised; one Jehovah, which says unto Satan: the Lord rebuke thee, and another the Lord which is to rebuke). But on all occasions both these two persons are Jehovah the Lord, which is the true and real God, and always remains the only one Jehovah, and the only one God. Which demonstrates, that in this Jehovah and Lord there are more than one person, which are thus designated (Lord Jehovah and God), and that several persons are intended by these terms.

95. II. Again we are to learn, *that in the divine Being there are three distinct persons, namely: the Father, the Son,*

*and the Holy Ghost.* This can especially be proved from that principal reason, that three distinct persons, namely the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, have each of them revealed themselves to be the only true God. From which circumstance we are to infer: that although scripture pronounces it to be the principal reason and the foundation of all saving knowledge, *that there be but one true God, and yet evidently teaches that there are three distinct persons, each of whom is the only true God,* it must obviously be acknowledged, that in the divine Being there are three distinct persons.

96. Whatever has been advanced in the last chapter concerning the unity of God, has never been doubted. Nor has all that, which scripture testifies concerning the Father, that is, that He is the only and real God, ever been questioned. But it is necessary to prove, that there are three such persons in the Godhead, as well as that the Son and the Holy Ghost are such persons.

97. In the first place, St. John testifies, as well of the Son, as also of the Holy Ghost, that they are One with the Father, in the following very decided expressions, 1. Ep. 5, 7: *„there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are One.“* It can therefore not be denied, that the Holy Ghost is not to be looked upon as a mere creature, apart from God. Concerning the Son, we are in possession of his own testimony, John. 14, 9. 10. 11: *„He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, shew me the Father? Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?“*

98. From which we draw the following conclusion: that such persons, who are equal with the Father in such a way that whosoever seeth them seeth the Father, the same are of one substance with the Father; and therefore with Him the only true God. The Son and Holy Ghost are one with the father, and therefore in Him, so that, whosoever „seeth the Son, seeth the Father“ also; (which can equally be said, of the Holy Ghost, which is even acknowledged by our adversaries to be God). The Son therefore and the Holy Ghost are of one substance with the Father, and consequently together with Him the only true God.

99. *That the Son is the same only God as the Father,* can be proved as follows. He to whom we find ascribed:

*the name of God  
the divine character and attributes,  
God's work, and  
the honour that is due to Him alone,*

the same is the supreme, the true, the everlasting God. Such proofs must suffice us for this reason, because we are only able to convince ourselves of the fact that the Father is God, from the divine name, attributes and honours being ascribed to Him. If then, very justly, it can be concluded from the latter circumstance that the Father is God, the same should also satisfactorily convince us of the divinity of the Son. Now to the Son, there are ascribed the divine names, character, works and honours, consequently the Son is the supreme, the true eternal God. These four points remain now to be proved.

100. I. The second person in the Godhead, is the true and everlasting God, *because to the Son are applied the divine names*, which alone belong unto God. There are three such names to be found in scripture.

101. The first of these names is „*God*,“ this is the proper name that is due to the only true God; for although it has been applied by way of ridicule to heathen idols, as for instance Exod. 12, 12: „Against all the *Gods* of Egypt I will execute judgment;“ and although it has been applied to worldly authorities and judges (Ps. 82, 6.); yet it remains properly due but unto God; Deutr. 32. 39: „See now, that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me;“ Hos. 13. 4: „Thou shalt know no God but me.“

102. In the same sense the name of God is attributed to the Son, John. 1, 1: „the word was God“ (namely that word, which had become flesh); Rom. 9, 5: „Christ came, who is over all *God blessed for ever*;“ 1. Timot. 3, 16: „And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness: God was manifest *in the flesh*;“ Act. 20, 28: „The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,“ which blood however is not of the Father, but of the Son; cf. Ephes 1, 7; 1. Pet. 1, 19. 1. Joh. 1, 7.

103. Another of God's names is „*Lord*;“ And although it is also given to man, as Gen. 3, 16; 24, 35; Act. 25, 26; Col. 3, 22; yet it properly belongs but to God; Acts. 16, 14 „Lydia . . . whose heart the *Lord* opened; 2. Thes. 3, 5. „the *Lord* direct your hearts into the love of God;“ Ephes. 4, 5“ „One *Lord*, one faith, one baptism.“ He to whom, this term „*Lord*“ in its supreme and most appropriate sense is due, the same bears God's own name.

104. This term *Lord* is applied to the Son in its highest, and most appropriate signification, Luk. 2, 11: „for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is „*Christ the Lord*;“ Maleach. 3, 1: „the *Lord* whom ye seek shall suddenly come.“ And that the term *Lord* is applied in the highest sense, according to which the supreme God is cal-

led Lord, can be proved from the Adjectives with which it is found conected. For he is called: „*the One Lord Jesus Christ*,“ 1. Cor. 8, 6; „*the Lord from heaven*,“ *ibid.* 15, 47; „*the Lord of glory*,“ Cor. 2, 8; „*the Lord of Lords*,“ Rev. 17, 14; 19, 16; all of which are God's own attributes, and not applicable to any creature.

105. The *third* of those names is that of *Jehovah*. In which way God applies the same unto Himself has been shewn §. 73. He therefore to whom this name is given, to him Gods own name is applied.

This name *Jehovah* is ascribed to Christ in many passages of holy writ, especially on occasions, when the Old and New testament are brought to bear upon each other, of which only two instances shall be mentioned in this place. The prophet *Isaiah* saw the *Glory* of the Lord, and spoke to Him, concerning the wickedness of the Jews. That Christ, or the Son, is that same Lord and *Jehovah* is testified expressly by John. 12, 41: „*these things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him*.“ Isa. 15, 3 that prophet is promised, that was to prepare the way of *Jehovah*, (the Lord) „*the voice of him, that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord*;“ and that the Lord and *Jehovah*, for whom the way was to be prepared, was the Son is known from the evangelical records. John was this prophet and preacher, Mat. 3, 2. 3; Joh. 1, 23; he directed the people to go to Jesus, saying. Math. 3, 11: „*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*;“ John. 1, 29: „*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world*;“ *ibid.* 3, 29. 30: „*My joy therefore is fulfilled; he must increase but I must decrease*.“ And thus has John prepared the way for no other but for Christ; who is therefore that *Jehovah* and Lord, for whom this preacher was to prepare the way.

106. II. The second person must be God, because to to the Son are ascribed the *divine attributes and characters*. Now the Being to whom *divine attributes* are ascribed, attributes belonging to God alone, must be the one supreme and true God; and as to the Son there are ascribed *divine properties*, which belong only to God; the Son must be the same only supreme, true and everlasting God.

107. This can be proved by the following argument. He who is Omniscient, and Omnipresent, is entitled to a divine character. Now the Son is Everlasting, Almighty, and Omniscient, and he is therefore in possession of divine attributes; for the Son is:

108. A. *Everlasting*. He was before John „*He it is, who*



coming after me is preferred before me," John. 1, 27; he was also before Abraham, John. 8, 58: „Verily, verily, I say unto you. Before Abraham was, I am.“ He was before every other creature, John. 1, 1: „In the beginning was the word.“ v. 3: „All things were made by him“ (the word). He was before the beginning of the world, John. 17, 5: „O Father glorify thou me, with thine own self with the glory, which I had with thee before the world was;“ Coloss. 1, 17: „He is before all things.“ He stands therefore out of, and beyond all time, and is consequently Everlasting. The Son of God is also:

109. **B. Almighty.** Almighty power has been given to him even in the days of his flesh, Matth. 28, 18: „All power is given unto me in heaven and upon earth;“ John. 3, 35: „the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.“ Besides this, his almighty power has come to light by the works he performed, in the creation of the world, and in many other respects. Whosoever accomplishes almighty works, must certainly be possessed with almighty powers. The Son of God is:

110. **C. Omniscient;** Joh. 21, 17. Peter says to him „Lord thou knowest all things;“ he knows what is in man, Joh. 2, 25: „He needed not, that any should testify of man, for he knew what is in man;“ he is able to discern the thoughts of man, Matth. 9, 4; he shall judge the secrets of men, Rom. 2, 16; he will bring to light the hidden things of God, 1. Cor. 4, 5. He searcheth the reins and the heart and he will give to every one according to his works, Rev. 2, 23; Future things are known to him, ere they have yet come to pass; thus he predicted to his disciples all the persecutions which they should have to suffer; Matth. 10, 17. 18; John. 16, 2. He pointed out before hand him who was to betray him, before even the heart of the betrayer had itself conceived the idea, to do so, John. 13, 11; and he predicted the flight of his disciples, as well as the denial of Peter, Matth. 26, 31. 34.

[**D.** Christ is also Omnipresent; he says, Matth. 18, 20: „Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;“ and Chapt. 28, 20: „Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.“ Of which, he has given abundant proofs to his disciples, after his resurrection, in order that they might have faith in his promises, at times when he shall have ceased to be visibly present with them.]

111. **III.** That the second person is God, is also evident from the fact, that to the Son there is ascribed the power of performing divine works. Which leads us to conclude, that to whom the power of performing divine works is attributed,

the committal of which is alone in the power God, such a one is the supreme only, and true God. Now we have seen, that to the Son there is *ascribed the power of performing divine works*, and therefore he must necessarily be the only, supreme, true and real God. Of such works, we find two different kinds taken notice of, viz :

- aa) *general works*, and
- bb) *special works*.

aa. Of the first kind we intend to mention four different instances :

112. *α. The work of creation of heaven and earth*, which God ascribes to Himself in such a manner, that nobody besides Him, can have partaken in the same. Nevertheless we find this creation ascribed to Christ, John. 1, 3: „All things were made by him (the word, the Son), and without him was not anything made, that, was made.“ Also Coloss. 1, 16: for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him.“

113. *β. The preservation and governing of the whole creation*; which attribute can be due to none but unto God, because He alone is able to govern the world, who has created it; as it is clearly expressed by the Apostle, Acts. 17, 28: „In him we live, we move, and have our being;“ the preservation and governing of world is directly ascribed to Christ, Coloss. 1, 17: *By him all things exist*;“ also John. 5, 17: „My father worketh hitherto, and I work; and Heb. 1, 3: *Up-holding all things*, by the word of his mouth.“

114. *γ. The working of miracles*; the Lord Jehovah shews Himself to be the true God, in that He performs miracles, Exod. 7, 17: „Thus saith the Lord, by this thou shalt know, that I am the Lord; behold I will smite with the rod, that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river and they shall be turned into blood;“ *ibid*: Chap. 8, 10: „the frogs shall depart from thee, that thou mayest know, that there is none like unto the Lord our God.“ And the Son has performed miracles in order to prove, that he is in the Father, and the Father in him, John. 14, 11: „Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or also believe me for the very works sake.“

115. But these miracles have not been wrought by Christ in such a way, as for instance Moses and the Apostles etc. performed them, namely merely as being authorised for this purpose by any other power, of which they were but the channel. Christ the Son of God has performed them out of his

own power. This is evident, partly because he *has been able to give to others the power to work them*; Matth. 10, 8: „go... heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils;“ Luk. 9, 1: „he gave them (the twelve) power over all devils and to cure diseases“: which power neither the prophets nor the Apostles were able to bestow; — partly also from the fact that *he in whose name miracles are performed, must be the chief cause of the same, and cause them to come about by his own power*. Thus Moses performed his miracles in the name of the Lord, in order to prove the Lord to be the principal and only cause of the same. But on the other hand the Son of God never performed a miracle but in his own name; Luk. 7, 14: „Young man, I say unto thee, arise;“ Mark. 5, 41: „Damsel I say unto thee, arise.“ The Apostles again wrought miracles solely *in the name of Christ*; Acts 3, 6: „In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk;“ *ibid.* 4, 10: „by the name of Jesus of Nazareth . . . doth this man stand here before you whole;“ *ibid.* 9, 34: „Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole“ etc. „For the Lord (was) working with them, and confirming the word with signs following,“ Mark. 16, 20.

116. *δ.* *The work of the covenant*, which God has made with men, by means of baptism. Baptism is called „the answer (covenant) of a good conscience towards God, 1. Pet. 3, 21. Now this covenant is always made with the Son of God, as can be shewn from his own words, Matth. 28, 19: „baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.“ Man therefore, in receiving baptism is admitted into the covenant of mercy, not only by the Father, but also by the Son, as well in his own name, as in that of the Father. Consequently the Son is, like the Father the true and living God.

117. *bb.* As to *the special works*, which are ascribed to the Son of God, not a few instances are to be met with, which, though in the Old testament they are ascribed to the God of Israel, are yet, in the New testament attributed, by the Apostles and Evangelists to the Son of God. Thus it is exulted in, as the work of God „*thou (Lord) hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts of men.*“ His ascension, along with all its consequences is spoken of as being accomplished by Jehovah. But this Jehovah is the Lord Jesus, to whom Paul expressly applies this passage, Ephes. 4, 8: „*Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?*“ etc.

In the same Psalm, he who is said to have ascended up

on high, is also spoken of as having delivered his people out of Egypt, and as having given them in a glorious manner his law, v. 7, 8: „God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God.“ Now these are two great, divine works, which can be ascribed to none but the Lord. But as the Son is that same Lord, which has ascended up on high etc.; it follows that he must also be the same, who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and who has given them the law; and that, having performed divine works, he must necessarily be the true God.

118. IV. That the second person in the Godhead is the true God, is also finally evident, because that *to the Son divine honours* are paid. Isa. 42, 8: „*my glory will I not give to another.*“ All Christians, moreover, are bound to offer unto him divine worship, John. 5, 22. 23: „for the Father judgeth no man but he hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men *should honour him even as they honour the Father.*“ Now to the Father there is divine worship offered, which has been stated to be also due to the Son. The honour which belongs unto God is twofold, viz :

119. a. *Worship*; Deutr. 10, 20; Matth. 4, 10: „thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.“ Of the Son, we read, Heb. 1, 6: „when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world he saith, *And let all the angels of God worship him.*“ It is said of him, that he is to be worshipped on the great day of judgment, „Every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God,“ Rom. 14, 11. This latter act is one of adoration to which no other is entitled but God, Isa. 45, 23.

120. b. *Faith* and the highest confidence, which the human heart can put in his God, and which God alone deserves, „cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm“. Blessed is the man that *trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is,*“ Jerem. 17, 7. 9.

Such a confidence and such a faith is to be put in the Son of God, as he himself says „ye believe in God, believe also in me,“ Joh. 14, 1. Accordingly the real saving faith is called: faith in Jesus, Rom. 3, 26.

Thus we have, by means of the preceding inferences established, and by the adduced passages proved the fact, *that the Son is, like the Father, the only true and living God.*

121. It now but remains for us to show, that *the Holy Ghost is the only, true and living God.* But in this inquiry we take it for granted, that the Holy Ghost *is part of the divine Being.* And if we therefore succeed in proving, that the Holy

Ghost is not merely a property, power, or energy of God, — but a person, then we establish thereby also the fact that the Holy Ghost is a divine person, and therefore very God.

For the better establishing of this part of the christian doctrine, we proceed to prove the two following points:

A. that the *Holy Ghost* is a person, and

B. that the *Holy Ghost* is the true, real God.

122. A. The first proposition, that the *Holy Ghost* is a person, can be proved from the following arguments: whosoever, we say, is entitled, and gets ascribed to him a) *personal names*, b) *personal works*, c) *personal revelations and appearances*, d) *personal accidents and occurrences*, that same must indeed be a person. For these are the characteristics, by means of which alone we are able to perceive that man or angel, or God the Father are persons. Wherever, then, these characteristics are to be met with, there we must conclude having met a person.

123. To the Holy Ghost are due, and there are ascribed to him:

a. *personal names*. The term „God“ is applied to him, which is the name of a person (of §. 130); as also that of „another Comforter“ which are also significations of persons etc.

124. b. *Personal works*, more especially:

1. The creation, Job 33, 4: „*the spirit of the Lord hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*“ Psal. 33, 6: „*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*“
2. The governing of the Church; Acts. 20, 28: „*The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,*“ etc. 1. Cor. 12, 11: „*All these (gifts, healings, miracles) worketh that one and selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*“
3. The mission and the anointing of the Messiah; Isa. 61, 1; Luk. 4, 18: „*the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor.*“
4. The bestowal of spiritual gifts, 1. Cor. 12, 11: „*dividing to every man severally as he will.*“
5. The delivering of Israel from Egypt. Isa. 63, 11. 12: „*Where is he that put his Holy Spirit, within him, that led them by the right hand of Moses?*“
6. The knowledge of divine counsels, 1. Cor. 2, 10: „*for the spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.*“
7. The divine teaching; Luk. 12, 12: *for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour, what ye ought to say.*“ Joh. 14, 26.
8. Prayer and intercession; Rom. 8, 26: „*the spirit also 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."

9. The Holy Ghost is introduced as *speaking*; Acts. 1, 16: "the Holy Ghost spake before by the mouth of David," Luk. 2, 26: "It was revealed unto him [Simeon] by the Holy Ghost;" John. 16, 13: "Whatever he (the Holy Ghost) shall hear that shall he speak."

It is not to be denied that in some parts of scripture such works are spoken of as having been performed by divine wisdom and Omnipotence. Nevertheless we consider this point, just as it is, strong enough for our purpose, if put together with the rest of our proofs.

125. There are also applied to the Holy Ghost:

c. *Personal revelations and appearances.* Of this there are especially two instances recorded; the first took place on the occasion of the baptism of Christ, and is described by Luk. 3, 21. 22: "It came to pass that Jesus also being baptized and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape like a dove upon him." This appearance St. John described as being a visible one, (1, 32.) "I saw the spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it abode upon him."

The second revelation of the Holy Ghost took place on the day of Pentecost. That the Holy Ghost on that occasion appeared in a visible shape, may be gathered from the fact which is recorded, "that it sat upon each of them." "It is impossible for all this to be said merely concerning a divine power or property, but it must most assuredly refer to a person, which as such, is alone able to render itself visible.

126. To the Holy Ghost there are also ascribed:

d. *personal properties*, namely *reason and purpose.* And that the Holy Ghost is in possession of divine reason and purpose is evident from the works, which have been stated to have been ascribed to him, such as the creation, the governing of the world, imparting of spiritual gifts etc. [1. Cor. 12, 2: "severally as he will;" 1. Cor. 2, 10.]

127. Finally there have been ascribed to the Holy Ghost c. *personal occurrences*, as:

α. The Bible speaks of a *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, Matth. 12, 31; a sin of which it is said, that it never shall be forgiven.

β. The Holy Ghost *dwells in the saints as in his temple*, "know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. 3, 16.

γ. The Holy Ghost *is tempted*; Acts. 5, 9: "How is it, that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"

δ. *He is resisted*; Acts. 7; 51: „ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.“

ε. *He is grieved*; Eph. 4, 30: „Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.“

ζ. *He is rebelled against and vexed*; „they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit,“ Isa. 63, 10.

η. *He is along with the Father and the Son spoken of as aperson*; Matth. 28, 19: baptize in the name of the Father“ etc.; 2. Cor. 13, 14: „the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ“ etc.

All of which it is impossible to ascribe to a mere power or property; it could only be applied to a person.

128. **B.** That the Holy Ghost is truly God can be proved as follows: whosoever is possessed of

- 1) *divine nature,*
- 2) *divine names,*
- 3) *divine powers,* and
- 4) *divine honour,*

the same is the true and only God. Such has never been doubted. Now of the Holy Ghost all this has been testified, and therefore the Holy Ghost is the very true God.

129. 1. That the Holy Ghost is of a *divine nature* nobody will attempt to deny. And 1. Cor. 2, 11, we find ascribed to the Holy Ghost a knowledge of the divine counsels, because of *His being in God.*

130. 2. *Divine names* are ascribed to Him, as „God“ and „Lord;“ Acts. 5, 3. 4: „Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied unto men but unto God;“ 1. Cor. 12, 4. 5. 6: „there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are differences of administration but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations but it is the same God which worketh all in all.“

131. 3. *Divine properties* are ascribed to Him, as:

α. *Eternity*; „Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself,“ Heb. 9, 14.

β. *Omniscience*; 1. Cor. 2, 10: „the Spirit (of God) searcheth all things, yea the hidden things of God.“

γ. *Omnipresence*, Psalm. 139, 7: Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I go from thy presence?“

132. 4. To the Holy Ghost are also ascribed *divine works*, part of which have been specified already. Among these are especially to be noticed the *work of creation*, and the governing of the Church. To these are to be added: *prophecy*, 1. Tim. 4, 1: „the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith;“ 2. Pet. 2, 21: „Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Amongst

the number of the divine works of the Holy Spirit is also to be mentioned the Covenant of mercy, into which man is admitted by the Holy Ghost by means of baptism, John 3, 5. 6: „Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit;“ Titus. 3, 5: God saves us „by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.“ But this can alone be done by God; for baptism is „an answer of a good conscience towards God,“ 1. Pet. 3, 21.

133. 5. *Divine honours are paid to the Holy Ghost*; thus we believe in Him, for we confess „I believe in the Holy Ghost, Rom. 9, 1: „I say the truth I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.“ This is an attribute due but unto God, in whose name alone we are permitted to give an oath; Deutr. 6, 13: „thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by His name.“

134. III. The third of the propositions which we made §. 89. remains now to be enlarged upon namely *the distinction which is to be made between the persons of the Godhead*. For although the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, and all three persons are of one substance, there is yet a distinction between them, so that the Father cannot be said to be the Son, or the Son to be the Holy Ghost etc.

135. As to the nature of this distinction, we are unable, with our present capacities, to comprehend them, seeing that we are now but able to understand the things of God as through a glass, darkly. It is nevertheless our duty in as far as it has pleased God to reveal it unto us, to acquire as clear an understanding of it as is possible for us, that we might be kept from confounding the different persons. As much namely can safely be said on this head, *that the Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten; that the Son is of the Father, not made, nor created, but begotten; that the Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding, as we are taught by the creed of St. Athanasius.*

136. For the farther elucidation of this subject it will be necessary in the first instance, to view the relation between the *Father* who has begotten the Son, and the *Son* who has been begotten by the Father.

α. The terms *Father* and *Son* point at a distinction between those two persons of such nature, that in the same sense God can be called Father by no other creature. For the Word, or the second person of the Godhead is called „the only begotten of the Father.“ John. 1, 14.

β. The holy scriptures expressly speak of such a *begetting*



of the Son; Ps. 2, 7: „thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee; Heb. 1, 5: „for unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?“ John. 1, 14: „We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.“ Christ is also called God's own Son, Rom. 8, 32: „He that spared not *His own Son*.“

γ. In the Creed\*) of our Church this relation is referred to in the following word: „*I believe that Jesus Christ is very God begotten from the Father in all eternity.*“

137. As to the way and the extent in which the Son has been begotten by the Father, this need not necessarily create great concern in us. For we ought always to look upon this subject as a mystery, the complete perception of which is only possible to us in a future life.

138. In order to point out the distinction which exists between the *Holy Ghost*, and the *Father and the Son*, it is said that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. This relation we are authorised to make, partly by the words  $\kappa\omicron\iota\tau\omicron$  and  $\piνε\upsilon\mu\alpha$ , by which the Holy Ghost is named, and which, in the hebrew and greek languages signify the „breath, spirit,“ which proceeds out of the mouth of men. It is therefore with these words, as with a figure expressed, that the Holy Ghost is the „breath of the Almighty,“ Job 33, 4.

139. But as God is not of flesh and blood, and therefore cannot be spoken of as having a mouth, like a man, we make the following inferences:

a. That between the Father and Son, of which the Holy Ghost proceeds, and the Holy Ghost himself, there exists a certain distinction.

b. That the Holy Ghost as a person originates with the Father and the Son in another manner, than can be said respecting the Son. For the Son *is* by being begotten; whilst on the contrary the Holy Ghost originates with the breath of the Father and the Son. The manner in which this is effected, we will be able to understand only then, when we shall be permitted to see the Lord face to face.

140. The personal properties, which the Holy Ghost is said to possess, can also be proved from the word of God. Namely, that the Holy Ghost is proceeding:

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\*) [Wherever the *Creed* is appealed to in the course of this treatise, the Apostical Creed is always intended as explained by Luther in his shorter Catechism; cf. Enchiridion, der kleine Catechismus Dr. Martin Luthers, mit Vorwort von Wilhelm Loehe, Stuttgart, 1846. (the shorter Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther, with a Preface by the Rev. W. Loehe.)]

a. *from the Father*, John. 15, 26 : „the Comforter, *the spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father*;" in consequence of which the Holy Ghost is called "the breath of the Almighty," Job 33, 4.

b. *From the Son*, for :

1. The Holy Ghost is called *the Spirit* or the breath of the Lord Jesus, Galat. 4, 6 : „God hath sent forth *the Spirit of His Son* into your hearts."

2. The Holy Ghost is called „*the breath of His lips*," Isa. 11, 4 : „He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked;" 2. Thess. 2, 8 : „then shall that Wicked (the Antichrist) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the *Spirit of his mouth*."

3. *The Holy Ghost has been communicated by the Son to his disciples in that he breathed on them*; John. 20, 22 : „He (Jesus) breathed on them and said" etc.; which proves, that the Son also communicates the Holy Ghost by breathing on him, who is to be favoured with the latter. For he whose breath, whose mouth and lip the Holy Ghost is, of that same the Holy Ghost must proceed; just as every man issues his own breath. But this again is one of the Mysteries of our christian faith, which we are bound to believe, and concerning which we are required to subject our reason to the obedience of faith.



## Chapter VI.

God has created heaven, earth, angels, and all visible creatures out of nothing.

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141. In the preceding inquiries we have endeavoured to delineate the nature of the God we are to think of, whenever, in the course of the following elucidation of the christian faith, mention is made of a God. We now proceed to consider His works, more especially those, which he has accomplished for the good of mankind. The first of these works is the *creation*, and we consider more especially:

I. *The creation of every creature in general, and*

II. *the creation of man, especially.*

I. Concerning the creation of every creature, we shall have to inquire:

1. *who is the Maker of all creation*

2. *of what all that exists has been created,*

3. *at what time this creation has taken place, and what sort of works there have been created.*

142. 1. *Who is the maker of all creation?* We acknowledge in our Creed God to be the creator of heaven and earth. We derive such a conviction:

a. *from nature*; for in viewing the heaven the earth, and other magnificent works, we are impressed with the conviction, that there must be an Almighty Lord, who has created all this, „for by the greatness and beauty of the creatures proportionably the *maker* of them is seen,“ Wisd. 13, 5; „great is the Lord that made it; and at his commandment it (the Sun) runneth hastily,“ Eccles. 43, 5; „for the invisible things of him (God) *from the creation* of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things, that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, Rom. 1, 20. We also derive this conviction:

b. *From the Bible*, which ascribes the creation of all things to the Lord God, as His own divine work. „*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,*“ Genes. 1, 1. Besides this true living God, there is nothing to be found, either in heaven or upon earth, either visible or invisible, which has taken the least possible part in the work of creation. It is all the work of God only, and of no other Being; „*I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.*“

143. 2. *Of what all that exists has been created.*“ The bible teaches us, that, although *man* was formed of the dust of the ground, (Genes. 2, 7.); the *grass* out of the earth, (Genes. 1, 11.); fishes from the water (v. 20.) and birds and other *animals* from the earth (v. 24. and Gen. 2, 19.); they have yet been created out of *nothing*. „Through faith we understand that the world were formed by the word of God, so that the things, which are seen, were *not made of things which do appear*,“ Heb. 11, 3.; (God) „calleth those things which be not, as though they were,“ Rom. 4, 17. For previous to God’s creating heaven and earth, there has not existed any thing, that is, any substance, out of which God could have subsequently created the things which be.

144. 3. *At what time this creation has taken place?* We must not imagine the world (as some heathen philosophers have done) to be from eternity, besides God we know of nothing that is eternal. And we can deduce from scripture the fact, that the world has been created 6000 years ago; and we have therefore not to imagine the world to be from eternity, but on the contrary, that it is coexistent with time. —

145. 4. *What sort of works there have been created?* God Himself comprises the works of creation under the two terms, *heaven and earth*, whereby we should rest satisfied. But a few instances of His creation may be taken notice of more especially :

146. *α. The heavens.* The papists have fabled a great deal about a peculiar heaven which they called *coelum empyraeum*, „the fiery heaven,“ and which, they said, did exist above that heaven which is open to our gaze; it is in this heaven, they say, that the Angels as well as the redeemed souls are dwelling and where they see God face to face. — But of such a heaven there is nothing said either by Moses or by the Apostles or Prophets; nor does our own reason lead us to make such a conclusion. And as nothing has been revealed to us about this matter, it will, in this life at least, always remain incomprehensible to us. This whole doctrine therefore is, to be looked upon as an invention of the human mind, which is always striving to exceed the limits, which have been prescribed to it by divine revelation [cf. §. 384.].

147. *β. The Angels*, which also are to be reckoned as God’s creatures. But they seem to be free from everything earthly; and this is perhaps the reason why Moses did not make mention of them in his history of the creation.

The Spiriture teaches us, with regard to these Angels:

A. *Their name.*

B. *Their nature.*

C. *Their reasoning abilities.*

D. *Their power.*

E. *Their number.*

F. *Their different degrees, and*

G. *That there exists a distinction between good and bad Angels.*

148. **A.** The term „Angel“ is a signification of an office. It denotes in the greek Idiom, (from which it is derived) a *Messenger*, a *Servant*, because the Angels wait upon the service of the Lord, Pslm. 103, 20 : „Bless the Lord ye angels, that excel in strength, that *do his commandments*, hearkening unto the voice of his word.“ v. 21 : Bless the Lord, all ye hosts, that *do his pleasure*. [The Son of God is also frequently called in Scripture „Angel“ Isa. 63, 9; Numb. 20, 16].

149. **B.** *Their nature.* Those creatures, which are called Angels, are of a spiritual nature, and have therefore nothing bodily. „Who maketh his angels spirits, Heb. 1, 7; [Hebr. 1, 14: „Are they not all ministering spirits.“] „A spirit has not flesh and bones,“ Luk. 24, 39. They are the invisible part of the creation mentioned by Paul, Coloss. 1, 16. The fact that Angels have appeared in *bodily shape* (Genes. 18, 2; 19, 1; Tob. 5, 6; Mrk. 16, 5.) involves by no means a contradiction, inasmuch as this was only for a time, in order that men might not be frightened by the transparent appearance of the Angels, Luk. 2, 9. For they were freed again of this bodily shape as soon as their business with man had been accomplished, Judg. 13, 20.

150. **C.** *Their reasoning abilities,* we are able to deduce from their works and occupations. (Judg. 6, 12; Luk. 1, 13. 19. 28; 2, 10. 14; 22, 43; Mark. 16, 5 ff. etc.). Now, some men have imagined that the Angels are able to discern the secrets of the human heart. But we are certain that this is beyond the reach of an Angels capacity. *For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him,*“ 1. Cor. 2, 11. Of God alone it is said, that to Him the secrets of man are known; Pslm. 139, 2; that he tries the hearts and the reins, Pslm. 7, 10; Jerem. 20, 12. Now if this was also in the power of Angels, how could the glory of this wonderful power belong to God alone?

151. **D.** *Their power* is intended, when they are spoken of as „excelling in strength“, Ps. 103, 20; as being „greater in power and might“, 2 Pet. 2, 11; as „principalities and powers“, Col. 1, 16; Ephes. 3, 10. And they have moreover manifested the same by their defeating great armies, 2 Kings 19, 35; 2 Sam. 24, 15. 16, in which occasions they exhibit powers, far beyond the reach of those of any man.

152. **E.** *Their number.* Concerning this point we have not any thing recorded with certainty. „Is there any number of his armies“, Job. 25, 3. But that there are a great number of Angels can be proved by the express words of the Son of God, Matth. 26, 53: „Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray my father, and he shall presently give me more than *twelve legions of angels?*“ And of Daniel we know that he saw in a vision the angels which worshipped the Lord; and which he thus describes: „*thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him*“, Chap. 7, 10; and Rev. 5, 11: „And I saw and beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about *the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times thousand.*“

153. **F.** *Their different degrees and divisions.* The holy scriptures mention the following: „*thrones*“, „*dominions*“, „*principalities*“, „*powers*“, Col. 1, 16; „*archangel*“, 1 Thess. 4, 16. — The nature of this distinction we are not able to explain, because it has not pleased God to reveal unto us any thing about it.

154. **G.** *The difference which exists between good and bad Angels.* God says of every thing which He had created that is „*was very good*“, Genes. 1, 31; and we must therefore conclude, that all Angels, with reference to their character and properties, have been created good. That there exists, nevertheless, this difference between good and bad Angels, this is to be attributed to the fact, that not all of them have remained in the state of holiness, in which they had originally been created. For which reason God has delivered up those among them that were disobedient to Him, to a righteous judgment and condemnation, and has cast them into eternal destruction, John. 8, 44: „*He (the devil) is a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth*“; 2 Petr. 2, 4: „*God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*“; Jude 6: *the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day*“.

155. These latter mentioned Angels we find also distinguished by peculiar names; as for instance: „*Devil*“, John. 8, 44; „*the eternal Dragon*“, Rev. 12, 9; „*Abaddon*“, Rev. 9, 11; „*the prince of this world*“, John. 12, 31; „*the God of this world*“, 2 Cor. 4, 4; „*Satan*“, Matth. 4, 10.

156. They are so called because of their being the most determined enemies of mankind; for they are most actively engaged in the pursuit of depriving man of their soul's Salvation, striving to bring them to eternal destruction „through

the *envy of the devil came death into the world*“ (namely by means of Sin), Wisdom. 2, 24; „*Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*“, 1 Pet. 5, 8. — Mankind is therefore obliged to maintain a continual struggle with this their adversary, Ephes. 6, 12 ff.

157. The good *Angels* (to which alone in fact the term „Angel“ is applicable) are those, which have always remained in the state of holiness in which they have been created, and which have been retained in the same by God.



## Chapter VII.

God has endowed man, more than the rest of His creatures, with good gifts and has created him after His own image.

We have now to turn our attention to the second part of our investigation (§. 141.), and to consider:

158. II. *The creation of man more especially.* In the whole range of creation, that of man was the last work; for it was the purpose of God to prepare the world for an habitation for man. God has created two human beings, a male and a female, Genes. 5, 2. „Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam“. God has created man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, Genes. 2, 7. „The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul“.

The female was created from one of the ribs of the male, Genes. 2, 22.

159. Man has not been created in a state of sin and misery, nor as being subject to death, as he now actually appears to us, — but after *God's image*. This latter term comprises that state of man, as it was immediately after his creation. It will therefore be necessary for us to investigate more particularly the nature of this *divine image*.

160. The term „*God's image*“, we find applied to Christ, 2 Cor. 4, 4; he is called the „*image of the invisible God*“,

Col. 1, 15; and „the express image of his person“, Hebr. 1, 3. In this sense the term is only applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ, because he is the everlasting Son of the Father.

Otherwise also the *husband* is called the „image of God“, 1 Cor. 11, 7: „he (the husband) is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man;“ that is, like as God governs the world, so also is the husband to rule the house. In this sense again, the term is applicable but to husbands; and in no way to females, children, unmarried persons or widows etc.

But, lastly, the term (image of God) is employed to express the state of *innocence, perfection, in which God has originally created man*, and which is was His purpose that man should transmit to his progeny.

It is in this sense especially, that we are now to consider this term.

161. The *divine image* denotes a state of perfection in which God delights, and in which human nature has been originally created. This perfection consists in 1) a right perception of God and 2) His creation, 3) complete righteousness, 4) true holiness, 5) the liberty of the will, to do the good and to flee the evil, 6) in immortality, and 7) the domination over all the creatures. There are therefore seven different points to be considered as constituting the image of God.

162. 1. *The perception of God.* God alone is able to have a right perception of Himself. Nobody knows the Son but only the Father; and nobody knows the Father but only the Son, and he whom the Son is pleased to reveal the father, Matth. 11, 27. — 1 Cor. 2, 11: „the things of God knoweth no man but the spirit of God“. As soon therefore as man is able to arrive at a clear perception concerning God, he becomes like Him; and it is therefore such a *perception part of the divine image*, as it is described by St. Paul, Col. 3, 10: „Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.“

163. 2. *The perception of the whole creation;* this also is in the power only of God, to whom alone every thing is known, (§. 57.). As soon then as man can get at a clear perception of the creation, he will be also in this respect in the likeness of God. But that Adam was possessed of such a perfect knowledge can be proved from the following facts: Adam had a knowledge of all the beasts that were brought before him, and could name every one of them, Genes. 2, 19; he knew of Eva, as soon as he saw her, that she was to be for a companion to him, and that she had been taken from his flesh, Genes. 2, 23. But such a clear perception betrays



great wisdom and deep understanding by means of which secret things may be comprehended, which are known to God alone. Man has therefore received the likeness of God also in this respect.

164. 3. *Complete righteousness*; this is usually ascribed solely to God; Deutr. 32, 4: „His work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he.“ — But in that man has been created in righteousness, that is, without sin and unrighteousness, he has been made in the likeness of God. He was God's image, because there was no evil and wickedness about him, Ephes. 4, 24. „Put on the new man, which after God is created in *righteousness and true holiness*.“

165. 4. *True holiness*; God is holy, 1. Sam. 2, 2: „There is none holy but the Lord.“ And as the first man has been created holy (Ephes. 4, 24: the first man is created in true holiness“), it follows that he must have been the image of God.

166. 5. *The free will* to choose the good, and to flee the evil. God is free in His works, Pslm. 115, 3. Pslm. 135, 6. „*Whatsoever the Lord pleased that did he*.“ — Now in that man has been endued with free will, so as to be able to do and not do that which he pleases, he has been made in the image of God. God moreover has put before man the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in order that he might shew his obedience, in not eating of the fruit of the tree. For this purpose he gave him the commandement „*Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat*“, Genes. 2, 17. Thus man had the free choice to do the good and to abstain from the evil; which is thus described by Jesus Sirach 15, 14, ff.: „*He himself . . . has left him in the hand of his counsel; if thou wilt, to keep the commandements, and to perform acceptable faithfulness. He hath set fire and water before thee: stretch forth thy hand unto whether thou wilt. Before men is life and death; and whether him liketh shall be given him*.“

167. 6. *Immortality*. God alone is immortal, 1. Tim. 6, 16. But He has also made man to be immortal in such a manner that, provided he remains in his perfect state, death should have no power over him. God has therefore made man in the likeness of Himself. The holy scriptures also testify clearly, that man has been created immortal, and has become subject to death only in consequence of sin, Wisd. 2, 23. „*God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity*;“ Genes. 2, 17: „*Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*.“ God referred, after the fall of man to this latter sentence, when he

says, Gen. 3, 19: „In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust *thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.*“ Rom. 5, 12. „By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death *passed upon all man* for that all have sinned.“

168. 7. *Dominion over every living creature.* God governs in heaven and upon eath according to His pleasure, Pslm. 24, 1: „the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein;“ Pslm. 33, 9: „for he spoke and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast.“ And as man has received power to rule over the living creature, he must be the image of God. That such powers have been committed to man, we read Genes. 1, 26. 27. 28: „Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing, that creepeth upon the earth. And God blessed them and said unto them; be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it: *and have dominion over the fish of the sea*“ etc. -

Now as we find that men had originally been endowed with a right perception concerning God and His creatures, perfect righteousness, true holiness, free will, and immortality, and as he had received power to rule over every other creature, — we should be convinced of his having been created in the image of God.



## Chapter VIII.

Man has not preseed in the state of perfection in which he has been created, but has fallen into sin, and has in consequence of this, lost the image of God, as well as all the privileges connected therewith.

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169. Man has not remained in this state of perfection and glory, but has lost the image of God by his disobedience to the commandments and the will of God; by which he has brought upon himself and upon his progeny, destruction and misery for the life that now is, and for that to come. With regard to this, two points are to be considered:

A. *The fall of man*, and

B. *The unhappy consequences which this fall has produced for mankind.*

170. **A.** *The fall of man* has taken place in the following manner: In the midst of paradise God had planted a tree, which He designated as „the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,“ of the fruit of which tree, He expressly forbade man not to eat; adding that if ever he should eat of it, he should surely die, Genes. 2, 17. With this God did nothing more, than ask that obedience to which He was entitled to, this being the only way in which man could manifest his gratitude for God's mercy towards him.

171. But Satan envied the happy state which man was in possession of, and finally succeeded in misleading Eve through the agency of the serpent's cunning, (2. Cor. 11, 3). And Eve not only forsake the commandment of God and eat of the forbidden fruit, but she also persuaded her husband to the same act of disobedience. And by this means they have both broken God's covenant, turned away from God, fallen from their righteous state, and delivered themselves up to the bondage of sin.

172. **B.** *The unhappy consequences of this fall* are twofold, viz :

I. *Such as affect the soul*, and

II. *Such as affect the body of man.*

I. As to those consequences of sin which *affect the soul*, there are again to be distinguished that by sin man has

a. lost the *good* qualities with which he had been endowed, and

b. acquired the *evil* of which he had been free.

173. a. With reference to the *good* qualities which man as lost, is to be mentioned

a. *The image of God*, more especially

1. *The right perception of God and His creatures*. And accordingly it was impossible for this quality to be handed down to man's progeny, which latter are, therefore, given to blindness and ignorance; Eph. 4, 17. 18: „*(the heathen) having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.*“ St. Paul especially refers to this loss:

Cor. 2, 14: „*the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can know them;*“ 2. Col. 3, 5: „*Not that we are sufficient for ourselves to think anything of ourselves.*“ Now, we are told that Adam has reared children after his own likeness, Genes.

3; and as the children are subject to this natural blindness, follows that the father also must have been subjected to the same evil, and that he has delivered it unto them. And regarding the absence of every right perception of every creature, experience teaches everybody sufficiently; for all a man desirous of knowing concerning it, he has to acquire by means of great exertions, and that after all the trouble he takes his knowledge always remains but imperfect and insufficient.

174. 2. *Holiness and righteousness*; for where there is sin, there can be no true holiness and righteousness.

175. 3. *The free will, to do good and to shun the evil*, for whosoever committs sin, is the servant of sin, John. 8, 34. And whosoever is the servant of sin, cannot be said to be free, for doing the good and shunning the evil; but on the contrary he is in captivity to the law of sin,“ Rom. 7, 23.

176. 4. *Immortality*; for it is proved by experience that man is mortal. The loss of it has moreover been predicted to him by God himself: „*for in the day thou eatest of the tree thou shalt surely die,*“ Genes. 2. 17. And after man had fallen into sin, his condemnation is thus expressed: „*dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,*“ Genes. 3, 19. „By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men,“ Rom. 5, 12; „*for the wages of sin is death,*“ Rom. 6, 23.

177. 5. *The domination over all living creatures*; this has been lost to such a degree, that not only no other creature now yields that obedience to man, but it is on the contrary, animated with a great hatred and ill will against man.

178. β. As another severe loss which man has incurred in

consequence of the fall we have to mention the *grace of God*. For God hates, with a just hatred every evil, and He has also expressly predicted unto Adam that death would be a sure consequence of his falling into sin. Man has therefore by means of sin, brought upon himself God's judgment, and His righteous indignation; and in this manner he has made himself unworthy of God's mercy towards him.

179. b. *The evil which man has acquired by the fall*, can partly be deduced from what we have stated with reference the good of which he has rendered himself unworthy. There again we have to consider the evil

aa. which has befallen the *soul*, and that

bb. which has befallen the *body*.

180. aa. *The spiritual evil which has befallen the soul*, consists, in the fact that, instead of hearing the image of God, man has put on the image of Satan. This state of things manifests itself in man's entire ignorance concerning the things of God, so that they, being earthly minded, betray a strong animosity against God. Instead of its original purity, man's heart has been filled and poisoned with sin to such a degree, that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is *only* evil continually, Genes. 6, 5. Instead of loving kindness man had to expect nothing from God, but wrath and righteous judgment, to escape which, Adam hid himself, Genes. 3, 8. Instead of enjoying his God, man carried about with him an evil conscience, which separated him from his God, Isa. 59, 2; and which smote him to such a degree, that he did not venture to appear before his God. Finally by sin he has, instead of being able to look forward to a life of bliss become subject to eternal condemnation.

181. bb. *The evil which has befallen the body* can be pointed out as follows. Man has been driven from paradise, Genes. 3, 23; he has been condemned to till the ground with great exertion, v. 19, 23; instead of the healthful state of happiness which had formerly been his lot, he has become subject to all sorts of sicknesses and weaknesses; as Sirach wisely says „*he that sinneth before the maker, let him fall into the hand of the physician,*“ Chap. 38, 15. Finally instead of man being immortal, death has received power over him.



## Chapter IX.

This great evil and suffering, which our first parents brought upon themselves in consequence of their sins, they have transmitted to their progeny.

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182. Experience teaches us, that the evils and maladies with which people are visited, they frequently transmit to their children. Yea even vice and malice, although being maladies of the soul, have been observed to have been communicated by parents to their children. Nevertheless it sometimes happens, that the children of crippled parents are yet in a healthy state, and that wicked people have pious children.

But not so is it with regard to the sin of the first man. For after having once sinned, man's nature became envenomed with sin to such a degree, that his nature has come down to his progeny in this sinful state. It is therefore that no child of man (except the Lord Jesus, Heb. 4, 15.) is born in a state of purity and holiness, but that all, because of their being descended from the first man, are partakers of sin.

183. *The single act, in the performance of which Adam and Eve transgressed the commandment of God, is therefore not only a sin on their part alone, but also on that of their descendants.* For Adam had been required to yield obedience unto God, not only individually for himself, but also in his capacity as the root of the whole human race. He has therefore, in that he transgressed the commandment of God, committed sin not only on account himself, but also on that of the whole human race. In the transgression of Adam all men have done evil; and accordingly the Apostle writes, „By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," Rom. 5, 16. 19. And after the first man had fallen into sin they could beget none but sinful children; and thus it is that in our days children are born in state of sin.

184. This state of things is usually described by the term „*original sin.*“ Which means: *the corruption of the human nature, in consequence of which man has turned away from God, from his works, and His will, being by his nature inclined to shun the good, which it is the pleasure of God that he should do, or if compelled to do it, is doing it with the greatest reluctance,—but who, on the other hand, by nature loves the evil, which God hates; having a desire after the same, and whenever he can accomplishes the evil, with pleasure and delight.*

185. In order to get a clear understanding of this

state, we need only look at a child. For if left to itself, it invariably acquires evil habits, and scarcely ever any good ones. With this the child proves, that it is by nature always inclined to evil, and not to good. And even if it is the desire of parents, to bring up their children in the principles of piety, godliness, virtue and honesty — even then it is well known, what labour and anxiety is required, in order to keep down the evil that dwells within their bosoms. Whilst it would indeed cost but little trouble, to mislead children from good to evil; — to which they will always be found willingly inclined.

186. Besides every man will surely make this experience by himself that at times, when he desires to hear the word of God, to study the scriptures, or other books, which might lead him to godliness. For although his heart might be already regenerated, and although his inward man might strive and struggle for the due performance of this holy duty — yet it will be found that he is sooner getting tired of it, than of any other work, which he had to perform. For many a person is not nearly as tired by a days labour in his usual vocation as by the hearing of a sermon; but when he has to wait upon, and to prosecute his pleasure or other unprofitable, frivolous, gluttonous occupations he never dreams of getting tired. And if these occupations even should last for a whole day, an hour bestowed upon prayer or worship would tire him more than even this. If we inquire into the reason for these phenomena, we shall discover them to have their source in the nature of man, which leads him from the good, and inclines him to every evil. This corruption (that namely his nature as well as his energies are leading away man from God, and from every good principle, and is inclining him to every evil) must certainly be of a very sinful and hateful description. —

187. It is presumed, with regard to the *proofs* for the corruption of our nature and the existence of original sin, that a reflex view of our own heart and conscience, will suffice thoroughly to convince us of their reality. But for the better and surer confirming of the same, we intend to produce the following proofs:

That man is by nature and by his birth invested with sin can be proved:

188. a. *Because all man are descended from parents, who have sinned.* For as a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit, Matth. 8, 18. we must conclude with Job. 15, 14. ff: „What is a man, that he should be clear? and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold he putteth no trust in his saints, yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?"

189. b. *Because by the fall of Adam all man have become sinners.* As St. Paul writes 1. Timot. 2, 14: „the woman being deceived was in the transgression.“ Rom. 5, 12: „By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned; v. 15: „through the offence of one, many (are) dead;“ v. 17: „by one man's offence death reigned by one;“ v. 18: „by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.“

190. c. *Because all men are conceived and born in sin,* Pslm. 51, 5: „behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.“

191. d. *Because man, in his natural state cannot enter the kingdom of heaven;* the Lord Jesus says, John. 3, 6: *that which is born of flesh is flesh.*“ But in the preceding vers he says: „Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom, of God.“ Paul writes, 1. Cor. 15, 50: „flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.“ And as it is only sin alone, which can possibly exclude man from the kingdom of God, and as all that which is born of flesh cannot inherit the kingdom, it is manifest, that all that which is born of flesh must be sinful.

192. e. *Because to the last hour of his life in man all that is to be found, which in reality only originates with sin.* For it is evident:

*α.* *That man is continually inclined to commit sin;* Matth. 15, 19: „But of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries“ etc. James 1, 14: „but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.“

*β.* *That all men even those yet unborn are subject to death,* Rom. 6, 23: „for the wages of sin is death.“ For death has come upon all men yea even upon those who have not committed the same sin as Adam, as is testified by Paul, Rom. 5, 14: „Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam.“ Eccl. (Sirach) 25, 24: „Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die.“

*γ.* *That all man are by nature subject to the wrath of God;* „the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. *The wrath of God rests upon all man by nature;* Eph. 2, 3: „we are by nature the children of wrath.“ All man are therefore sinners by nature.

*δ.* *That all men are excluded from the kingdom of heaven, yea even those who have not yet committed actual sin:* (cf. §. 191.) which can be proved by the following argument. Children



which die before, during or after their birth are either admitted in the kingdom of God or not. If they are admitted into it (as is testified by Christ, Matth. 19, 14: „for of such [the children] is the kingdom of heaven“), then they must enter there by Christ's mediation; for „there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,“ Acts. 4, 12; as also Jesus himself says, „no man cometh unto the Father but by me,“ Joh. 14, 6. But it are only sinners, which are said to come into the kingdom of Christ through him, „I am not come to call the righteous but sinners unto repentance,“ Matth. 9, 13; „Christ Jesus come into the world to save sinners,“ 1. Tim. 1, 13; „He shall save his people from their sins,“ Matth. 1, 21. If therefore such children can enter the kingdom of heaven in no other way than through Christ they most indeed be sinners. And as before, during or immediately after their birth they themselves, cannot have committed sin, they most necessarily be sinners by nature, cf. §. 228.

193. From this we conclude, that *although original sin has corrupted the human nature, yet this nature has not been materially changed by this occurrence.* It is to be considered as a great malady of man's spirit, but not of his substance and nature. We may deduce this from the fact, that God

aa. *has created that same being, which has afterwards been polluted by sin, and that He preserves the same still as one of his creatures;* for we read Acts. 17, 28: „In him we live and move, and have our being.“ But God cannot be said to have created original sin.

bb. *That He has redeemed this human nature by the blood of his own son,* Acts. 20, 28. Now He has not redeemed original sin, but he has redeemed his people from this sin, Matth. 1, 21.

cc. *That He has sanctified this human being by His Spirit,* Ephes. 5, 26. 27. He has certainly not sanctified original sin.

dd. *That He will raise up the human body on the last day to final judgment,* Job. 19, 26. It is nowhere said that God intends to raise up original sin to eternal life, but on the contrary that He purposes to purify the human nature of this and other failings, 1. Cor. 15, 43: *therefore original sin is not identical with the human nature itself.*



## Chapter X.

With this original sin originates the death of the body, the corruption of the powers of the soul and the body, actual sin, and in consequence of this, before the divine judgment the guilt of great disobedience and eternal condemnation.

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194. If we inquire after the consequences which the original sin has been instrumental in bringing upon man, we shall have to consider two points, viz.

*Man, who has sinned, and God's judgment, whose duty it is to punish this transgression.*

We propose to deal with the subject regarding God's judgment in the subsequent chapters. For the present it is our intention; to prosecute our inquiries concerning man, who has sinned. As the consequences which this original sin has brought down upon man, three things are especially to be noticed; which are:

I. *death for the life that now is, and for all eternity.*

II. *The corruption of man's abilities.*

III. *Actual sin.*

195. I. *The first consideration concerns the death of the body and the soul.*

God had told unto man, that as soon as he eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree, *he should surely die*, Genes 2, 17. And after man had transgressed this command, God pronounced the following judgment upon him: *dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*, Genes. 3, 19. And although Adam and we did not then immediately die, they fell soon after a sacrifice unto this condemnation. It was in this way that mortality and subsequently death did come over all men, Rom. 5, 12; 6, 23; Eccl. (Sirach) 25, 24. And although accordingly man has been created immortal, he has yet become subject unto death by means of sin.

196. II. *As another of the consequences of sin is to be considered the corruption of all man's abilities.* There are two different sorts of abilities to be distinguished; which are:

1. *Such as are peculiar but to the human nature, and*

2. *Such as he has in common with every unreasonable being and every other creature.*

1. Those that are peculiar only to man, are:

a. reason, and

b. will.

197. a. The reason is a natural ability, the possession of which enables man to perceive and to discern certain things which are utterly incomprehensible to every unreasonable creature. This ability moreover has not been lost to the human soul after the fall; for even those who have been born in sin, are endowed with reason and understanding in such a manner as to excel over every other creature. But yet this understanding has been darkened to such a degree, that it is impossible for man to discern divine things, or to perceive that which is taught concerning God, His nature, His will and His works, for although he listens to that which is implied by this proposition, yet is he thoroughly unable, by his own reasoning powers to comprehend the things of God in such a way, as might enable him to believe that every thing we are taught in scripture concerning the same, be really true.

198. For instance: suppose some man is told that Jesus Christ has been born of a virgin, without her virginity having suffered any injury. He listens to this relation and understand what it implies. But he objects: I cannot understand how this could come to pass, nor can my reason comprehend this. Just as the virgin Mary could not comprehend the message which the Angel was charged to convey to her; for although she heard what he had to say, and perceived the import of his speech, as well as the fact itself which the Angel had to announce to her — she was yet unable to comprehend the truth of the occurrences thus predicted to her. And it was for this reason that she said to the Angel, „How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man,“ Luk. 1, 34.

Again the Lord Jesus, on the occasion of his predicting the sufferings through which he should have to pass, as well as his death and especially his resurrection, was not understood by his disciples, which though they plainly heard that which he had to say were yet unable to comprehend the meaning of this saying. And we are expressly told, that because of their inability to reconcile that which they heard with their own thoughts, they were unable either to comprehend or even to believe his saying, Luk. 18, 31: „And they understood none of these things, and his saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.“

Exactly so it is the case with our perception regarding the things of God, — our reason is thoroughly incapable of supplying that faith which is required for their understanding.

199. Although this fact is sufficiently established by experience, we shall nevertheless endeavour to adduce some farther proofs.

a. *It is expressly said regarding man, that he is not able*

to perceive the things of the spirit, „the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit,“ 1. Cor. 2, 14.

β. *The things of the spirit are foolishness to the understanding*, „the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness,“ 1. Cor. 1, 18; „for after that, in the wisdom of God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe,“ *ibid* v. 22; „We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness,“ *ibid* v. 23. Cap. 3, 18: „If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.

201. γ. *The natural man is in enmity with the things of the spirit*, Rom. 8, 7: „the carnal mind is enmity against God.“

202. δ. *All spiritual works, which the mind of man is able to accomplish, are described as being the work of God*, 2. Cor. 3, 5: „Not that we are sufficient by ourselves to think any thing of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God;“ Phil. 1, 6: „He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it.“ (Of which more shall be said in that part of this treatise, which treats of man's conversion).

203. b. Of the *will* of man it may also be said, that it is quite as corrupt as the understanding; for

a. *It is inclined to sin, and to every evil, to such a degree, that he can do nothing Good, nor withdraw himself from the evil*, Genes. 6, 5: „Every imagination of the heart was also evil continually; Proverb. 22, 15: „foolishness is bound in the heart of a child.“ — Yea even man's will is captive unto sin; Rom. 7, 14: „for we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin; v. 19: „the good that I would I do not, but the evil, which I would not that I do;“ v. 23: „I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind bringing me in captivity to the law of sin;“ Galat. 5, 17: „the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and they are contrary the one to another: so that yea cannot do the things that ye would.“

204. β. *The human will is unable to yield that obedience to the will of God which is due to Him*. The Angels, not being under sin, are able to serve God from their free will; for they are not carried away by any evil inclination, nor misled by any vile and corrupt lusts. As this is impossible to man, it may be said with justice, that through sin he lost his free will, which would have enabled him to live in perfect obedience to the commandments of God.

205. The will of a prisoner cannot be said to be free to do or not to do whatever he pleases, — as little as the will of him, who cannot performe, that which it is his ardent desire to

do — and thus the human will cannot be said to be free. For it is captive unto sin, and is prevented by the sinful lusts that occupy the heart of every mortal, from performing even those good works which he has the intention to perform. In this respect every individual need only ask his own conscience, and examine his own experience, and he will not be long in finding that whenever he endeavours to perform a good action (be it prayer, or the contemplation of the divine mysteries and works, or the performance of other practices of godliness), unholy thoughts immediately intrude upon him, or he finds a continued state of prayerfulness to be tedious to him, and other divine practices to be attended with unpleasant feelings. — And if any one finds his state to be such, he is to himself a living testimony to the fact, that his will is continually hindered in the performance of the works of the spirit, and in the practices of a godly life; and that it can therefore not at all be said to be free, to do good or to shun evil.

206. 2. As to the *abilities which man has in common with the animals*, there may be mentioned: the senses, the appetite or lusts and affections, and lastly, motion. With other creatures he has in common, the abilities which are requisite for the maintainance and the reproduction of the race in all which great evil is harboured. For eyes and ears are inclined to wickedness, and incline to evil and vicious practices; whilst on the other hand, they take offence at the exhibition of the principles of a upright, honourable and useful life. This propensity manifests itself as soon as some vain or foolish, and unprofitable amusement is to be attended to, which none of us will get tired of in spending the whole day with, whilst on the other hand when we are required to attend to the duties of divine worship or the preaching of God's word, we confess ourselves very soon worn out and tired.

207. Thus it is with all the lusts and affections, and every one ought to make this experience on himself, that he is loaded with original sin, and that it manifests itself in him in anger, in passion, in lusts after riches etc.

208. The doctrine which scripture maintains concerning this great corruption of our nature may be gathered from the extracts which have already been given. There is finally (cf. §. 194.).

209. *Actual sin* to be taken notice of, as being one of the consequences of original sin — and that one of the most important, — which we propose to do in the next Chapter.



## Chapter XI.

Actual sin, which originates with the original sin and with the temptations of the world and the devil, and with which all men are beset, consists of different kinds, which nevertheless all tend to eternal destruction.

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209. Concerning *actual sin*, (which is committed either by an inward or an outward action, the following six points are to be considered:

1. *the nature of sin,*
2. *the origine of this sin,*
3. *the sinner,*
4. *the different degrees of sin; of which some may be of a larger and some of a smaller signification,*
5. *how these different degrees distinguish themselves from each other and*
6. *the fruits which are produced by this actual sin.*

210. 1. With regard to the question concerning *the nature of sin* we are in some measure led by *the law of nature*, according to which his conscience accuses every man of having done evil. Therefore the Apostle Paul writes concerning the heathen, who had not, like the jewish nation, received the law: that „they are a law unto themselves . . . . their though accusing or else excusing one another“, Rom. 2, 14. 15.

211. But it is especially the *divine law*, from which we can derive a clear insight into the nature and character of sin; St. Paul writes: „*by the law is the knowledge of sin,*“ Rom. 3, 20; — „I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet“, Rom. 7, 7. The law is therefore very justly compared to a glass, in which man beholds his natural face, James. 1, 23.

212. If we inquire of scripture as to what sin really is, we find that it consists in all that which is contrary to the law of God. It is thus that John. (Epistle, 1, 3. 4.) describes sin. And like as every transgression of any law of the authorities of this world, is considered as evil, so all that to be looked upon as sin, by the practice of which the law of God is trespassed.

213. The question now arises, *whether sin which has been committed unwittingly, or against ones own will, is also to be considered as sin?* We answer in the affirmative. For the law of God is trespassed not only willfully and with a purpose, but also unintentionally, — with outward gestures, inward

lusts and thoughts. We have therefore to consider the two following points:

214. a. *that all transgressions which have been committed unintentionally and without purpose, are also sin, for:*

α. Just as that man, who unintentionally kills another, is said to be his murderer; even so is he who trespasses the law of God, committing sin, whether he is doing so intentionally or unintentionally. And as, according to St. John's teaching, all that which deviates from the law of God is sin, it is evident, that all that must be sin, by which, though unintentionally, the law of God is trespassed.

215. β. The holy scriptures make a distinction between the sins, which have been committed wilfully and those which have been, committed unintentionally for St. Paul writes Rom. 7, 16. 19. that he is captive unto sin in that he does the evil which he would not do. He makes also mention of that sin which he committed in persecuting the Church of God, and on this occasion puts together *sin and ignorance*. 1. Timot. 1, 13: „(I) was before a blasphemer and a persecutor and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.“ And again, Heb. 10, 26. *wilful sins* are especially taken notice of; from all which we must conclude, that there can be possibly sins committed, which do not happen intentionally.

216. γ. In the laws of the mosaic institutions, sacrifices have been ordained for such among the people, as had committed sin out of ignorance; Levit. 4, 2. 13. 22. 27; 5, 4.

217. δ. It is also said of the saints that they have daily to pray for remission of the sins which they committed unintentionally, Ps. 19, 12: „Who can understand his errors, cleanse thou me from secret faults.“

218. We have also to consider: (§. 214.)

b. *that even that is to be looked upon as sin which has its existence only in the thoughts of man.* Thus for instance a man being desirous to love his neighbour with a brotherly love; is told that this his neighbour, has not dealt fairly towards him; — in such a case it may well happen that unholy motions and thoughts might rise in him with regard to a man of this description. Nevertheless he may very much dislike such thoughts and emotions, and strive earnestly to get rid of them. — Or suppose a man to be in the utmost distress, and he happens to get a sight of a valuable treasure, — in spite of all his endeavours to keep himself free of such snares — there will arise in him certain lusts and desires after the possession of the same. Such lusts lead to outward sin, and are therefore marked down as sins, for:

219. *α.* All that, which forms the real source of a sin, and is as it were the beginning of the same, undeniably stands in opposition to the law of God. And that which stands in opposition to the law of God must certainly be sin.

220. *β.* The evil lust is *forbidden* like all other sins. For we are commanded in the ninth and tenth commandment, not to covet our neighbour's house, nor his wife, nor his servant etc. nor any thing that is his.

221. *γ.* This evil lust is expressly called *sin*, Rom. 7, 7: „I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.“

222. In short: every thought, lust and desire, every word, gesture, and every work, whatever may be their name, — as soon as they are contrary to the law of God, or to the love of God, be it wilfully or unintentionally, or be they large or small etc. — they all together are, without any distinction actual sin.

223. We now turn our attention:

2. *To the reasons in which this sin originates.* For it is by no means to be said to originate with God, or that He wills and determines sin, or that He is tempting us to, or ordaining the, commission of sin. That God is the source of sin is an idea which cannot even be imagined. For this is just the contrary to every thing which He has revealed in nature concerning Himself. Besides, Scripture plentifully testifies that God is not the reason of sin; Ps. 5, 5: „thou hatest all workers of iniquity“; Sirach 15, 11: „Say not thou, it is through the Lord, that I fell away, for thou oughtest not to do the things that he hateth. He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, neither has he given any man licence to sin“; James 1, 13: „Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God: for God cannot be tempted with evil neither tempteth he any man:“

224. The real source of all actual sin is to be found either *within* us or *without* us. Its source within us is the *original sin*, or the sinful flesh, of which it is said, Gal. 5, 17: „the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh;“ v. 19: „the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, hatred etc.“ — And the Lord Jesus also teaches us, Matth. 15, 19: „Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders“ etc; James 1, 14, 15: we are told that „every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed; then when the lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin.“



225. As to the causes *from without* which lead man to sin, two are to be mentioned, namely

- a. the *devil*, and
- b. the *world*.

226. a. *The devil* is a cause of sin, because he misled our first parents to sin, [and still continues to lead us also into sinning] Genes 3, 1. ff. The Lord Jesus testifies concerning him that „he is a liar, and the *father* of it,“ John. 8, 44; and St. John. 1. Ep. 3, 8: „he that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

b. The *world* also tempts us to sin: Wisdom. 4, 11: „Speedily was he taken away lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul; for the bewitching naughtiness doth obscure the things that are honest.“ [1. John. 2, 17]\*

227. 3. We have to inquire, *who it is, that committs sin*. This can be answered very shortly in the following way: As all men are partakers of the original sin, it follows that all men must also be affected by sin. For nobody can think himself *free* of it as soon as he examines himself. Besides we find this directly and frequently expressed by God himself, that *all men are sinners*, Psalm. 14, 2. 3: „the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of man to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God: *They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good no, not one;*“ 1. Kings. 8, 46: „*there is no man that sinneth not;*“ Psalm. 143, 2: „*In thy sight shall no man living be justified;*“ Rom. 3, 23: „*for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;*“ Proverb. 20, 9; Eccles. 7, 21; Rom. 3, 10. 19; 11, 32; Gal. 3, 22; 1. John. 1, 10.

228. Nor are *little children* excepted from this charge. Inasmuch as the passions and evil thoughts which they frequently manifest are contrary to the law of God. And that which is not according to law, is sin, 1. John. 3, 4; God Himself testifies that the thoughts and imaginations of man's heart are evil from his youth, Genes. 6, 5; 8, 21.

229. Neither are the *regenerated*, in whom the Holy Ghost is dwelling, to be excluded. For although they do not permit sin entirely to reign in their bodies, they are yet in captivity unto sin inasmuch as they are constrained to do the evil, which they would not do; as St. Paul expressly says of himself, Rom. 7, 15. 19.

230. This is moreover testified by the *example of regenerated men of old*. Thus David sinned heavily against God, in that he committed fornication and murder, 2. Sam, 11, 4. 15; Solomon in that he permitted his heart to turn unto idols, 1.

Kings, 11, 3. Moses and Aaron doubted the power of God and His promises, Numb. 20, 12. Peter denied Christ, Matth. 26. 70. ff; he did not „walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel,“ Gal. 2, 11, 14. Not to mention those sins which they committed daily in their intercourse, their thoughts and words. For there are a great many hidden sins (Ps. 19, 13.) which are not observed by any mortal.

231. Besides this, it is certain that even the saints have daily to pray for the remission of their sins, Ps. 32, 6; Matth. 6, 12. They can only be saved by grace, Act, 15, 11, and only through Christ, *ibid* 4, 12. But through Christ *none but sinners* find their salvation, Matth, 1, 21; 9, 13. They would not stand in need of such a mediator, if they could come to God in their own righteousness and without sin, Rom. 4, 7; Gal. 2, 21.

232. 4. The next point we have to consider, is that of *he different degrees, which exist in sin.* Although all sins agree in this that they draw down upon the sinner divine judgment and eternal condemnation, there is yet a great difference between the different sins. For some of them are committed from ignorance, misunderstanding and simplicity, — others from design or wanton wickedness. Therefore says the Lord Jesus to Pilate, John. 19, 11: „*he that delivereth me unto thee hath the greater sin.*—And St. Paul, on the occasion of his referring to the persecutions of which he had been guilty towards the Christians, expressly says: that he has obtained mercy because he did it „ignorantly in unbelief,“ 1. Timot. 1, 13. And it is also certain that any sin which has been committed *unwillingly*, and in consequence of the weakness of the flesh, is not so heinous before the judgment of God, as any sin which has been committed with purpose and wilfully.

For in the first case the flesh is, as it were, merely engaged in a struggle with the spirit, — whilst in the latter, this struggle has taken such a turn, that now the spirit has been made entirely subject to the flesh.

233. Thus it is, that *upon different kinds of sin, different kinds of punishment are to follow*, Luk. 12, 47. 48: „And that servant, which knew his lord's will and prepared not himself neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did committ things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes; *ibid*. 20, 47: „Which (Scribes) devour widow's houses and for a shew make long prayers, the same shall receive greater damnation.

234. 5. We have now to consider more *particularly the different kinds of sin.* It is unnecessary to give an account of each of them. Some there are which are committed against

the first table of the law, and others again, against the second; some against the law with reference to the love of God, some against that of the love towards the neighbour. But there are two kinds of sin which we desire especially to take notice of.

For a distinction is made;

a. between *peccata mortalia*, sins unto death, and *peccata venalia*, sins which are daily committed and in the commission of which, man remains in the grace of God; and

b. such sins which can, and sins which cannot be forgiven.

Not as though this was to imply, that there are some sins that deserve eternal death and condemnation, and others again that are only to be visited with some temporary punishment. With respect to this we know that all sins are „*sins unto death*.“ But more especially such sins are called *sins unto death*, which have succeeded in subduing the soul and the body, and of the commission of which, no body can be said unwittingly to be guilty, nor ever has been said to be so.

Other sins again are called, in distinction from the latter, *peccata venalia*, — because they are not committed willingly. It sometimes happens to man, that he is not aware of doing any sin at all. Thus St. Paul persecuted the Church, with the intention of being zealous for the law, 1. Tim. 1, 13. In the same way the Apostles were killed by men, who fancied by this act to render God a service, John. 16, 2.

There are also daily sins committed of the commission of which, the sinner himself is not aware, Psalm, 19, 12; or there happen to rise, on a sudden, evil thoughts in the heart of man which however he strives to stifle very soon; or a word, an unhappy expression escapes him, which he, immediatly after, wishes not to have uttered at all.

235. The distinction between different sins consists therefore in the following facts: Sin unto death is a sin, which has been committed, in spite of conscience, out of mere wicked design, and concerning which man is aware, that it is sin and which yet he hesitates not to committ. By *peccatum venale*, on the other hand, such sins are intended, which although they are evil, are yet not known to be so by him, who committs them, or are committed in weakness or ignorance.

236. This difference can be established upon the following grounds: Whenever a sin unto death is committed, all parts of the human body have as it were agreed to the commission of the same, so that the sinner is entirely subdued unto sin, having rejected the Holy Ghost and cast away the faith which confides in Christs, as the bearer of our sins. All this amounts to a sin unto death, because the sinner has no

concern either in sin, nor in God's wrath, his punishment, or confession or forgiveness of sin. Such a sinner approacheth very nearly to eternal destruction, and it will be difficult for him to come to repentance. For such a one cannot easily be brought to hate the sin, after which he has such a desire that he is able for the purpose of enjoying it, to reject the grace of God, and to despise His displeasure and His punishment. *He is not easily moved by the law of God seriously to repent his sins; as little as this law had been able to prevent his committing sin itself.*

It is for this reason that wilful and premeditated sin is called *sin unto death*, as Nathan says unto David: *"thou art the man,"* (who is deserving death); because he had made himself wilfully guilty of fornication and murder, 2. Sam. 12. 5. 7. But such results are not to be feared in the case, where sin has been committed unwillingly. Sins of this description therefore, can be mourned over and repented of, and the Holy Ghost also is striving against them and defeating them, Rom 8, 13; Gal. 5, 16. 17.

237. a. (cf. §. 234.) *Sins which can, and such as cannot be forgiven, which latter is called the sin against the Holy Ghost*  
Concerning the latter we have to inquire:

- A. *what is said about it in scripture,*
- B. *why it is called the sin against the Holy Ghost,*
- C. *its nature and form,*
- D. *the reason why it cannot be forgiven.*

238. A. What is said in scripture with regard to the sin against the Holy Ghost, can be gathered from the following. The Lord Jesus says, Matth. 12, 31. 32: *"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, neither in this world nor in the world to come."* — The Apostles teach concerning this matter as follows: 1. Joh. 5, 16: *"there is a sin unto death. I do not say, that you shall pray for it;"* Heb. 6, 4: *"for it is impossible for those, who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame;"* *ibid.* 10, 26: *for if a man sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour*

*the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace."*

239. **B.** *Why it is called the sin against the Holy Ghost?*  
It is so, because all those are sinning against the Holy Ghost, who sin against God, for the Holy Ghost is real God.

But this sin is especially named in such a way, because the commission of the same is contrary to the teaching of the Gospel,

*a. which the Holy Ghost causes to be propogated and preached in the whole world.* Therefore even those may be said (though in another sense), to be sinning against the Holy Ghost, who oppose themselves to the ministry of the word, as ordained by the Holy Ghost, 2. Cor. 3, 6. Such did the people before the flood, in that they did not attend to warnings, which the Holy Ghost caused to be set before them by Noah, Genes. 6, 3; the Israelites who revolted against Moses and Aaron rebelled and vexed the Holy Spirit, Isa. 63, 10; *Ananias* and *Saphira* who lied to the Apostles, are said to have lied unto the Holy Ghost, Acts. 5, 3, 4.

*β. which the Holy Ghost strengthens and seals in the hearts of men, bearing witness, that we are the children of God.* Eph. 1, 13; Rom. 8, 16. And as the Holy Ghost testifies in this manner, any one making an opposition to the office of his ministry committs a sin against the Holy Ghost.

240. **C.** *The nature of this sin, and its form.* The sins, which are to be looked upon as sins against the Holy Ghost, must bear the following characteristics:

*a. The sinner must have a right knowledge of the true, pure and saving faith, or with other words, he must have been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and tasted of the good word of God, Heb. 6, 4, 5.* Whosoever does not know this Gospel cannot be said to committ sin against it, although he did despise and mock it. Thus St. Paul was, previous to his conversion, a persecutor, a mocker and slanderer, but he was so in ignorance, 1. Tim. 1, 13. Nor was the sin of those who crucified the Lord Jesus, a sin of such a nature, inasmuch as He himself prayed to the Father, that their sins might be forgiven them, because they did not know what they did, Luk. 23, 34.

241. *b. This thoroughly acquired saving knowledge must be denied from a free, but wicked design.* Evangelical truth can be said to be denied under the following circumstances:

242. *α. By an epicurean sort of assurance.* Although great many confess the Gospel, yet their works evidently manifest, that in reality they care but little for it. These are the fools who say in their heart, there is no God, Psal. 14, 1; who say that they „know God, but in works deny him,“ Tit. 1, 1. But such people cannot be said to commit this sin, because they deny the truth from too great an assurance, not from premeditated design.

243. *β. Fear of persecutions.* If the temptation in this respect becomes very strong, then the devil is very busy about it, and the flesh is weak (Matth. 26, 41; Luk. 20, 32.) — In such circumstances it may well happen even unto confirmed Christians, that, sinking under suffering and despair, they deny the truth in fear and trembling. As for instance St. Peter, whom we nevertheless read that he received remission of this sin. (Matth. 26, 75; John. 21, 15. ff.)

244. *γ. By wicked design and premeditation.* If there happen to be no urgent reasons for denying the truth, and the sin is nevertheless committed, it is to be considered as *Gradus* or a step towards the sin against the Holy Ghost. This did for instance the Pharisees, who knew that Jesus was teacher come from God, Joh. 3, 2. and who nevertheless rejected his doctrine, contrary to the convictions of their own consciences. And in the same manner some even in our days, who though they have a better knowledge of the truth do yet remain members of the Church of Rome, do a great proach, in a great measure, unto this sin against the Holy Ghost. Hebr. 10, 25, this *Gradus* is more especially taken notice of.

245. *c. The saving faith which is thus denied must be blasphemed.* Such a state is especially spoken of by the Lord Jesus, who called it „blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,“ Matth. 12, 31. We read also Heb. 6, 6: „they crucify the Lord Jesus afresh and put him to an open shame;“ ibid. 10, 29: „we hath trodden under foot the son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified an unclean thing, and hath done despite, unto the spirit of grace.“ So did the Pharisees in that they blasphemed the Son of God looking upon him as a deceiver, Matth. 27, 63. They blasphemed him, saying, that he had a devil, Joh. 8, 48. 52. They blasphemed his works, as if they originally proceeded from the devil, Luk. 11, 15. Whereby they blasphemed the Holy Ghost, whose work and office the Son of God did accomplish. Isa. 61, 1. Acts. 12, 38.

246. This sin consists therefore in a premeditated den

and blaspheming of the acquired saving, heavenly truth, concerning the forgiveness of sins, wrought out by Christ.

247. **D.** It now remains for us to inquire, *why this sin cannot be forgiven.* The reason for this is not to be sought in a deficiency on the part of God's grace, or of the merits of Christ. For in looking to the *will of God*, and to his *grace*, we find him prepared to forgive every sin, Rom. 5, 20: „Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound;“ 1. John. 1, 9: „(God) cleanseth us from all iniquity.“

248. If we look to the merits of the Lord Jesus, we find that he has cleansed us from all iniquity, Joh. 1, 7. And in reading therefore of a sin which cannot be forgiven we are not to suspect, either an insufficiency on the part of God, or on that of the merits of Christ.

249. The real reason why a sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven, will be understood from the arguments which have been proposed already; namely because that man himself rejects and cuts off all the means *by which he could come to repentance and be regenerated.*

250. For a sinner can arrive at repentance and regeneration 1) through the law, by which his sins are revealed to him; 2) by the preaching of the Gospel of the divine grace; 3) by the doctrine concerning the propitiation for our sins, which has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus; and 4) by the seal of the Holy Ghost, which takes effect subsequent to the heart and conscience of man having been convinced, that all which is taught concerning the grace of God and the merits of Christ, is a heavenly, divine and eternal truth. Besides this there is no other means and no other way to come to repentance.

251. Now of all these means he who commits a sin against Holy Ghost, has deprived himself in such a manner, that neither of them can be of any avail to him. For the law, which shows him his sins, he neglects; doing according to his own will and pleasure; the grace of God, as well as the merits of Christ he has no need for, for he who mocks, despises and blasphemes them, treads the Son of God under foot, crucifies him anew, and counts the blood of the covenant as unholy. He neglects the teaching of the Holy Ghost, rejecting and mocking it. There remains to such an individual therefore no way, by the help of which he can come to repentance and to the grace of God, — although these means are freely offered unto him.

252. We have, with regard to actual sin, to inquire into the consequences which this sin is calculated to effect. In general, these consequences are common to all sinners; but there

are some sins, which are productive of their own peculiar consequences.

253. *Consequences which are common to all sins, are:*

N. *the wrath of God, and the curse of the law, which accompany the wrath of God.* Of this it is said Rom 1, 1 that it is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man. This unrighteousness implies not only the outward and gross sins, but also, without exception, every thing which is contrary to the will of God, as revealed in the divine law. God himself has said, Deutr. 27, 26: „Cursed be he that confirmeth not at all the words of this law to do them. As also James 2, 10: „for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all.“ If therefore sins are committed by words, thoughts and works, be they ever so insignificant, it is evident that they are unrighteousness and ungodliness, since they draw down upon him who is committing them, the wrath of God and the curse of the law.

254. 2. *An uneasy conscience.* And although one conscience is sometimes much more burdend than the other, they yet all agree in this, that, without exception, they are all afflicted by sin. Even those who are not aware of having committed gross sins, do yet shrink from the judgment of God. This circumstance is to be ascribed to the fact that they are always „a betraying (rejecting) of the succours which reason affords. — St. Paul intimates concerning the heathen, that, though the law was not given to them, as has been the case with the Jews, they had nevertheless the law of God written in their hearts; that their conscience is bearing them witness and that their thoughts are accusing and excusing one another, until the day, when God shall judge the secrets of men, Rom 2, 15. 16,

255. 3. *Eternal condemnation in hell.* God visits every man with punishment in time and eternity. That eternal destruction is the punishment, which, without exception, follows upon every sin, will be shewn in the next chapter.

256. One special consequence of the sin, which has been committed contrary to the convictions of the conscience, — a conscience which afterwards predominates in the heart of man is, that, that Holy Ghost is taken from the regenerated, and his faith brought to nought; for:

257. α. By this sin the Holy Ghost is grieved, Eph. 4, 30; and vexed, Isa. 63, 10. And in cases where the Holy Ghost is vexed and grieved, the Holy Spirit can indeed not be said to be present;

258. β. This sin, in the heart in which it predominates,



has overcome the spirit. In the attempt to drive away the spirit, this sin succeeds in all cases, where it has acquired dominion over man.

259. Where the spirit of God dwells, there is life and happiness, Rom. 8, 13: „If ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body ye shall live;“ — 2. Cor. 3, 6: „the spirit giveth life.“ Now wherever the spirit has got the dominion, there is life and happiness, Rom. 8, 13: „If ye live after the flesh ye shall *die*;“ *ibid.* 1, 32: „Who . . . . committs such things are worthy of death;“ 1. Cor. 6, 9. 10; „neither fornicators, nor idolaters etc. etc. shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.“ Galat. 5, 19: „the works of the flesh are these: Adultery, fornication etc., of which I tell you before, as I also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not *inherit the kingdom of God.*“

260. From which we learn: that, wherever sins contrary to the convictions of conscience are predominant, there the spirit of God cannot dwell. On every occasion therefore, in which sins are committed by the regenerated men (as was the case with David, Peter and others) the consequence accrues that the Holy Ghost is driven out of their heart, and their saving faith undermined.



## Chapter XII.

Whenever man appears in such a state before God, the righteous judge He in His justice, requires of him, an entire obedience to all His divine commandments; and that man, in consequence of the sins which he has committed, should be thrown into eternal condemnation, — unless divine justice can be satisfied in another way.

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261. We have here to consider two points, viz:

I. *The duty of perfect obedience, and*

II. *The punishment of sin.*

I. Concerning the first point, we have to state the following: God has given to every man a law within himself, which he may direct his life and his actions. This same law also demonstrates against man as soon as he does any thing contrary to its dictates. Now this law of nature has been before the fall, most complete in man; but as after this event it became darkened by sin, it pleased God, to give this law again unto the children of Israel, in a form more agreeable to their understandings. If therefore, in the following pages, reference is made to the law, this mosaic law is always intended.

262. This law consisted of:

A. *the ceremonial and levitical law,*

B. *the political and civil law of the land,*

C. *the moral law of the ten commandments.*

**A.** The ceremonial law determines the order of the sacrifices, which are to be offered to God; the manner in which sins ought to be atoned for; the vows which are acceptable to God, and the manner in which they are to be fulfilled, together with all the rites, which formed part of the Jewish service. The whole Institution has been a type of Christ. It was intended to convey to man the truth, that, like as redemption had to be brought about by the blood of oxen, calves and other animals, in the same way also Christ was to be slain for the sins of the world, and his blood shed, in order to conciliate man with God the heavenly Father. That these sacrifices were unable to do away sin, the Apostle tells us, Heb. 10: 4; and that only the blood of the Son of God cleanseth from all iniquity, John in his 1. Ep. 1, 7: „For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sacrificed.“ Heb. 10, 14. In the same way, all the rest of the levitical law had reference to Christ.

263. But as they have only been shadows and types of things to come, they have, of course, been abolished since the subject typified has, in due time, made his appearance. The Christians therefore; are not subject unto them, — as St. Paul writes, Colos. 2, 16. 17: „Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which is a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.“ The following is the conclusion, come to by the Apostles, in a consultation held at Jerusalem, Acts. 15, 10: „Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear?“ *ibid.* v. 28, 29: „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 meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.“

264. **B.** *The political and civil law of the land, that is the regulations that were necessary for the maintainance of peace and order in the community; by which every man is protected in his rights, and by which the practice of wickedness is greatly prevented and at all times punished. Such laws are frequently to be met with in the mosaic scriptures, concerning which three different divisions may be made:*

265. a. *Such laws as have reference only to the jewish state, and which are not to be applied to any other people or government. Thus, for instance, no Israelite was permitted to sell or to bequeath his property to one of another tribe; and from that same reason daughters, who inherited property were not permitted to marry into another tribe, Numb. 36, 4. ff. Thus also was a man obliged to marry his brother's wife, if the latter happened to remain without issue; and if the second husband happened to have a son from this union, he was not to be looked upon as his son, but as that of his deceased brother, who was also intitled to the property left by the first husband, Genes. 25, 5. 6. These and other laws of a similar nature, have reference only to the different tribes, as they existed in Israel, which is not the case among other nations; and they are, accordingly, not allowed any validity in other countries, but have ceased to exist with the distinctions made by the jewish policy.*

266. b. *Such laws, which, although they have been abolished by divine authority, have yet been made legal in many countries, so that nobody is actually bound by them; thus for instance, the law Genes 24, 1. which law has been revoked by the Lord Jesus, Matth. 19, 8. 9.*

267. c. *Such laws, as are continually observed by us, and*

have never been abolished. Thus, for instance, the laws against premeditated or accidental murder, Numb, 35, 16 ff; concerning the duties of a judge, Deutr. 1, 16, 17; 16, 19, 20; concerning the poor, *ibid.* 15, 7. ff; concerning witnesses, Deut. 19, 15. And as such laws are founded upon, and originate with the moral law, they are again referred to in the New Testament, as being valid; thus, Matth. 15, 4. from Exod. 21 15; Acts. 23, 5. from Exod. 22, 28. Nor has God anywhere freed us from obeying these laws, but we are on the contrary still bound to honour them.

268. C. *The moral law* includes those, which have been written upon the tables of stone, and concerning which man is especially bound to answer before the judgment seat of God. For to the obedience we yield unto these laws, God has promised life and happiness, but for the trespassing of the same his curse and eternal condemnation.

In this respect two things are to be attended to, which are :

1. *what is it that entitles God to exact this obedience from us?* and

2. *whether the law can be fulfilled by any man, who could by these means, acquire that righteousness, which he ought to have before his God?*

269. 1. The question as to *what entitles God to exact the obedience from us*, we answer as follows. God is entitled to this obedience because of His having created us, by which act we have become his property. For every work is the property of the master who formed it. God has therefore right, to exact from us complete obedience to all his commandments. To this we are in duty bound. Nor can it be said, that God requires of us something which it is impossible for us to accomplish, seeing that he has given us sufficient powers, to enable us to do His will. And although sin has deprived us of this power, it is evident that God is still entitled to require it of us, considering that it had been our duty to flee the sin, and to strive for the preservation of the powers, which are requisite for the yielding of this obedience.

270. 2. *Can this law be fulfilled by any man, who could by these means, acquire that righteousness, which he ought to have before God?* God requires of us a complete obedience, where by we are able to satisfy every demand, which the law makes upon men, Deut. 27, 27. 26. He therefore, who trespasseth against one commandment, is guilty of the whole law, James 2, 10. Now the law requires the obedience of the whole heart, the whole soul, and of all might, Deut. 6, 5. That man, therefore, cannot be said to have been obedient to

the law, who has committed sin even but once in his life, be it by a sin from within himself, or without him, be it by the heart or the soul, yea if it were but only with a thought against God or against his neighbour. He, on the contrary, who kept the whole law, has the promise, that he should be justified by it, Levit. 18, 5. ff.: „ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which, if a man do, he shall live in them.“ Galat. 3, 12.

271. From this it would seem, that righteousness and eternal life are considered to rest upon complete obedience to the law of God; but it must also be kept in mind, that no man upon earth is able to fulfil the law, or to do all that, which God requires of him, as also that no man is able, in fulfilling the whole law to acquire that righteousness, which he ought to have before God; for:

272. *α.* *All men are sinners*; Pslm. 143, 2: „For in thy sight no man living shall be justified;“ Eccl. 7. 20: „for there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not;“ Rom. 3, 23: „for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.“ Galat. 3, 22: „the scripture hath concluded all under sin.“

273. *β.* *The scripture intimates man's inability to fulfil the law*; Acts. 15, 10: „A yoke . . . which neither our fathers, nor we were able to bear;“ Rom. 8, 3: „What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son,“ etc.

274. *γ.* *No man can be justified and redeemed by the law.* For that man only, who is obedient to every particle of the law, shall live by it. Now by the law no man shall live, Rom. 3, 20: „By the deeds of the law no man shall be justified in his (God's) sight;“ Galat. 3, 11, 12: „But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident: for the just shall live by faith: and the law is not of faith;“ v. 21, 22: „If there had been a law given which could have given life verily righteousness should have been by the law; but the scripture hath concluded all unto sin.“ Accordingly no man can fulfil the law; and all those who trespass against the law, are all subject to the curse and to condemnation. And as all men trespass against they law, they are all subject to the curse.

275. II. The second point we have to consider (§. 261.) is the *punishment of sin*. Concerning this we ought to keep in mind, what has been said concerning sin, namely that it draws down the wrath of God. And punishment is always near at hand, as soon as the wrath of God is provoked. If

therefore it is said of God, that He is a merciful, long-suffering and good God, who is repenting punishment, and who forgiveth sin, — this ought to be understood to imply: that if the righteousness of God has been offended by sin, His mercy cannot possibly have its full sway, and sin cannot be forgiven, unless divine justice has been fully and amply satisfied on account of these sins.

276. With this, three things are suggested, which are

1. Justice,
2. the punishment which sin deserves, and
3. the satisfaction (comp. §. 406 ff.), which satisfies justice and removes the punishment.

The punishment is hell and eternal condemnation. Concerning Justice it is to be said, that God, agreeably to this I attribute hates every sin. And as He is the judge of this world (Genes. 18, 25; Pslm. 9, 5. 9.), He deals as a righteous judge. Now a judge of such a description, must adjudge according to the confirmed law, and cannot leave unpunished any sin, which is condemned in the code by which he is governed. And although it cannot be said of God, that laws have been prescribed to him by which he is to judge; — yet must be supposed that His nature as well as His holiness and justice, must be looked upon as the rule which are the leading principles of His judgments. He cannot, therefore, this very reason pass over any action which is contrary to justice, without any retribution being exacted for it, — if indeed he intends to judge with justice, and not contrary to

277. Now God's wrath against the ungodly is of such nature, that it unceasingly rests upon the sinner, Eccl. 5, — The fire of his indignation, once kindled, burns down unto the lowest hell, Deutr. 32, 22; in short, God is a consuming fire, *ibid* 4, 24; an everlasting burning, Isa. 33, 14. An indignation of such a description, which exists unceasingly, fire which burns unto the lowest hell, cannot refrain itself, the wrath must be active, the fire must burn. In the same manner it must be said that the righteousness and wrath of God, cannot possibly cease to punish sin with eternal destruction, as long as these sins have not been atoned for, and this means a way has been prepared for the exercise of mercy.

278. And as it is in the power of no mortal, to help himself, nor of any other creature to assist in remedying evils which sin has been instrumental in bringing about, as we read Pslm. 49, 7. 8: „None of them can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him; for redemption of their souls is precious and it ceaseth for ever,“ —

follows, that the wrath of God, is always resting upon man, and that the latter has to expect nothing from God but eternal destruction. This is the natural state in which man now appears before us, if we view him with regard to the spiritual condition of his soul.



## Chapter XIII.

God, although in His Justice He might have condemned all man to eternal destruction, has yet been merciful to the poor sinner, and it is His will that all men should come to repentance.

279. Up to this, we have been considering the natural state of man, as it represents itself to us after its having been affected by sin. It is now our aim to consider, *whether man is destined to be lost and destroyed in this condition.* For under exactly the same circumstances, God has not even spared the Angels but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness; to be reserved unto judgment, 2. Pet. 2, 4.

280. We find this our question answered in the Lamentations of Jeremiah 3, 22: „It is of the Lord's mercies, that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not, they are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness.“ Even then, when we were still subject unto death he has „abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light,“ 2. Tim. 1, 10; and „delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,“ Col. 1, 13.

281. We have now to treat of this *work of grace* of our God; more especially:

I. *concerning His gracious purposes with regard to the sinful human race; and*

II. *concerning the means, which He has graciously provided to this end.*

282. I. *It is the gracious purpose, or will of God, that all man, which have sinned, should obtain mercy and be saved.* In this respect we have to attend to the following distinctions, viz:

Although it is the will of God, that all men should be saved, it is yet not His purpose to have them saved, in all instances whatever may be their behaviour towards Him and His Grace [obedience or disobedience]; but on the contrary He has, ordained certain means, by which man is to obtain this end, and it is His purpose, that all man should lay hold of the same, and by this means be reconciled to Him. This may be called His *general will*.

283. Now it happens, that but few men are availing themselves of these means; whilst they are rejected by the greatest number of men who remain in their evil career. It is, accordingly, the will of God, that those who accept those means, stedfastly remaining in the faith of Christ even unto their end, — that those should be partakers of eternal salvation; the rest of mankind, is subject to eternal destruction. This may be called His *especial will* — according to which He wishes *some* to be saved (which will or counsel is called the *effectual calling*, or the appointing of some to eternal life) whilst the remainder is to be given to eternal destruction.

284. **A.** In this Chapter, we intend to treat especially on the subject of the *general purpose* of God; and it is to be considered under the following heads:

a. God desires the eternal welfare of all men;

b. God has, with regard to this His will, that all man should be saved, appointed certain means, by which those who avail themselves of it, are to be saved;

c. God has, in this highly important work, plainly and perceptibly revealed His will in His word, — and He cannot be said perhaps to confess in His word, to be desirous of our Salvation, and on the other hand to be secretly determining our destruction.

d. It is not involving a contradiction on the part of God, when it is said, that He is desirous of the Salvation of all evil men, and yet also determines that as they obstinately reject His proffered grace, they all should be eternally condemned, (He knowing that they should remain in their evil ways).

285. a. That God is desirous of the Salvation of all man, is to be proved as follows:

1. God clearly and determindly expresses it, that He loves all man and that he will that all shall be saved; Hesek. 18, 23, 32; 33, 11: „As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live;“ Matth. 18, 14: „Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of those little ones should perish;“ 1. Timot. 2, 4: „Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowlédge of the truth;“ 2. Pet. 3, 9:



God is „not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.“

286. 2. *God will be merciful to all who have sinned*; Rom. 11, 32: „for God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy unto all;“ Galat. 3, 22: „the scripture has concluded all unto sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.“ — And that all men have sinned, will be evident from the passages already quoted: Prov. 20, 9; Eccl. 7, 21; Rom. 3, 23. It follows from this, that God will have mercy on all men.

287. 3. *God desires the wellbeing even of those who are not yet converted.* That it is God's desire to bring such unto salvation, there can be no doubt. And if it can be proved, that He desires the evildoers also to be saved, it will be evident, that He will that all men shall be saved. Now God testifies his gracious purpose towards the unconverted, saying: „I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people which walketh in that way which was not good, after their own thoughts,“ Isa. 65, 2; — „Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh,“ Proverb. 1, 24. ff.; Matth. 22, 3, the king is said to be inviting all men to the marriage-feast, and that it is his pleasure, that all should be partakers of his grace, from which feast yet a great number are disobediently staying away, mocking and killing the servants of the king, who are afterwards destroyed by the army of the king, v. 67. This parable has reference to the kingdom of heaven, and shews it to be God's pleasure, to see in the kingdom of heaven even such as are disobedient to His commands, and who reject his gracious invitation.

288. 4. *God has sent His Son to the whole of mankind.* The men to whom God has sent His son, the same also does He wish to become citizens of His heavenly kingdom, and partakers of eternity; it must therefore be admitted that he wishes all to become heirs of eternal life.

289. 5. *God calls every man to become an heir of His kingdom and to partake of His salvation.* Now him, whom God is calling unto salvation, the same also He desires to be saved, Matth. 28, 19: „Go ye therefore and teach all nations“ etc. Mark, 16, 15: „Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;“ Acts. 17, 30: „(God) commandeth all men every where to repent.“ Coloss. 1, 28: „Whom (Christ) we preach, warning every man in all wisdom, that we

may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." From which follows, that it is God's will, that all men should be saved.

290. **B.** *We have now to consider the proposition that God, for the purpose of carrying into effect His gracious purposes concerning the wellbeing of men, has appointed certain means and ordinances.* Though it is the will of God, that all men shall be saved, yet they are not to arrive at this end, without certain means, which it is quite in their power to reject or to await themselves of, thus enjoying perfect liberty in all their actions. On the contrary certain rules have been laid down and means provided, which are accessible to all men, who thereby may become heirs of eternal life.

291. To which end He has, more especially, sent His Son, who has taken upon him human nature, and having suffered for the sins of mankind has reconciled them to their heavenly Father. These facts are to be preached to men, in order that they might be seriously induced to repent and to accept of this redemption, and not to reject it; to trust to their Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, and not to doubt their being graciously accepted by God. He justifies them by this faith; and regenerating them by his word and sacrament, he strengtheneth their faith by the word and sacrament etc. These are the means by which He desires man to be saved.

292. That the employment of these means is indeed the will of God, can be proved from the fact of His having revealed His will accordingly: Ezek. 18, 21: „*If the wicked will turn from all his sins, that he hath committed . . . he shall surely live and not die,*“ v. 24: „*When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity . . . in his sin that he hath committed he shall surely die;*“ Mark. 16, 16: „*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned:*“ John. 3, 18: „*He that believeth on him (the Son) is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of the Father; 1 Timot. 2, 4: „Who (God) will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth;*“ 2 Petr. 3, 9: „*(the Lord) is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*“ From which we learn that God will have all men to be saved, but with the condition, that this salvation be effected in the manner He has thought fit to ordain; which is: that the ungodly return from his evil ways; that the just always remains in his righteousness; that the sinner repent, and come to the knowledge of the truth in the faith of Jesus Christ; it is in this way only

(and by no other means) that the will of God can be accomplished concerning man.

293. Another point for our consideration is: that *God Has, in this very important affair, thoroughly revealed His will in His word, and that He cannot be said, to promise in His word one thing, which in His secret counsel He has determined differently.* This assertion scarcely stands in need of any proofs; for :

294. *α.* Such an impression is quite in contradiction to the light of nature [that is within us], seeing that every man must be convinced of the fact, that such a supposition could only be stated by an ungodly man.

295. *β.* It is contrary to all that, which God Has revealed concerning His faithfulness. He is not a man that He should lie, but all His words are true, and that which He has promised He performs, Numb. 23, 19; 1 Sam. 15, 29; Pslm. 33, 4; Tit. 1, 2.

296. If we were permitted to imagine that God promises one thing in His word, and then determines differently in His counsel, — it would come to this, that nobody would have any confidence in the revealed word. For it would then always remain a subject of uncertainty, whether God is indeed so minded, as it is expressed in His word, or whether He has not determined differently in His counsel. Thus circumstanced, the Christian faith would indeed be at an end, since no body would be able to put a simple minded and sure confidence into the benevolent assurances of God. But we know, on the contrary, that our faith is to be founded upon a rock; that is, our faith is to be build upon an assurance and conviction of the faithfulness of God and His word, of so firm a nature, that neither flood nor storm, that is, neither temptation, nor danger nor assault might be able to subdue or to destroy it, Matth. 7; 24. 25. The divine word therefore, from which comes the faith, Rom. 10, 17, must stand so sure, that nobody should have any reason to doubt its integrity; which could not be the case, if it were not certain, that God is indeed intending to carry out every thing, which He is promising in this word.

297. *God is not contradicting Himself when He desires the salvation also of wicked men, and yet also wills (because He is aware of their determination to remain in their evil ways) that those who obstinately reject His gracious offers should be damned.* This question has been admirably expounded by our Lord Jesus Christ, in his two parables concerning the marriage feast of the king, and concerning that of the great supper: Matth. 22, 1. and Luk. 14, 16.

298. We observe, in both instances, that the giver of these feasts are said to have had two sets of purposes, which are:

1. *A gracious will*, a joyful inclination, in consequence of which they strove for the wellbeing of the invited guests, and desired them to enjoy all their wealth, and

2. *A judgment will*, in consequence of which, they determined that those who had been invited and who had ungratefully and uncourteously rejected the offer, should ultimately not be allowed to enjoy their grace and bounty. Both these determinations do not at all contradict each other, although, in the one case, the guests are desired to enjoy the feast, whilst in the other that boon is denied them.

299. In the same way our Lord can be said to have two determinations, of which the one is the *gracious will*, which by some of the Fathers has been called the *preceeding will*; because God, in determining it, was not previously waiting for man's committing actions of piety, or wickedness, or gratitude or ingratitude, obedience or disobedience — but is offering to all, without any exception, grace and salvation. — The second is called the *judgment will*, which some of the Fathers have called the *subsequent or succeeding will*, because it is said of Him, that He forms His determination according as men have accepted and availed himself of the kind and merciful offer of God. And if they have rejected and despised it, He meets them with disgrace and condemnation, rejecting them from before Him. Just as God, therefore, is desirous in His merciful purposes, of the wellbeing of men — so also does He determine, for the sake of His justice, that all those shall be saved, which have accepted the proffered grace; which blessing is to be denied to all those who reject His grace.

300. It can therefore be said, of God, that He is dealing with us like kind and pious rulers. They do desire nothing more earnestly than the welfare of their subjects; which latter they will always exhort in a kind and affectionate manner; yea they will even intreat them to behave well, that they might be able to enjoy all the benefits consequent to a proper life. And if it happens that these affectionate cares are rejected, and the requests and entreaties of the rulers not attended to; but that they are, on the contrary, laughed to scorn and their good advices openly spoken against — then the gracious purposes must, ultimately cease, and justice take its course. Upon which the rulers finally will cease to be careful of the welfare of such misbehaved subjects, and of course have them punished.

301. In all such cases, the king, the father or the rulers

cannot be said to have contradicted themselves, although under certain conditions they would have been inclined to do a thing, which in others they refuse to do. In the same way it cannot be said of God that He is contradicting Himself, if, in the one case, He is said to desire the salvation of all men, and in the other, — their condemnation.



## Chapter XIV.

Such as do not reject the gracious purposes of God, but listen to, and accept of, them with a true faith, and remain in them unto the end: — such has God ordained unto eternal life, elected from among the human race, and determined to come unto salvation; — but such as do not believe or who fall from the faith, God has not elected, — but has determined to remain in their sinful state, by which they will be eternally lost.

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302. We have, in this Chapter, to consider the subject of God's *judgment's will*. This takes effect in the event of some persons accepting of the proffered grace, and of others rejecting it. This will is of a twofold nature. We have therefore to consider:

I. *God's merciful will*

II. *God's severe will.*

303. We desire moreover to consider the obedience or the disobedience of man, which are determining the will of God, — not as it now appears to us, but as it has been known to Omniscience from all eternity. He has, by means of this latter property, from all eternity known all those who were finally to perish in their unbelief, — or those who would have faith in His Son, and remain steadfast in their belief, even unto the end. For to Him all future events are as if they were present before Him. He therefore permits the first to remain in their unbelief, and consequently in that state of condemnation, which He has pronounced upon all those, who do not repent and believe. — Whilst on the other hand he chos-

es and ordaines the latter to eternal life. This act has been designated, by the church, as the *election of grace*.

304. But for the better understanding of this subject, we have to direct our attention to the following six points:

1. *the explanation of the term election of grace;*
2. *its nature;*
3. *at what time has this election of grace taken place;*
4. *what are God's purposes concerning those whom He has chosen by the election of grace;*
5. *what it is that has determined God in this His determination;*
6. *which men He has elected.*

305. 1. Concerning the term: *election of grace* it must be remembered, that scripture itself is making use of it. St. Paul himself calls it the *election of grace*, Rom. 11, 5. And the Lord Jesus himself designates it as an election: "Many be called" says he, Matth. 20, 16; "but few chosen;" — Ephes. 1, 4. we read: "He (God) hath chosen us . . . before the foundation of the world;" as also Rom. 8, 33: "Who shall say any thing to the charge of God's *elect*?" This act is called an *election*, from the circumstance that not *all men*, but some, out of their number, have been chosen, to be partakers of the grace of God, and those few have therefore been *elect*ed by God, from amidst the whole race of mankind, to be his children and heirs.

306. 2. *The nature of this election* may be defined as follows. *It is the divine counsel according to which God, from all eternity, out of mere grace and compassion, has ordained, by his Son Jesus Christ unto eternal life those men, who in his omniscience he knew would hold fast the faith in the Lord Jesus even unto the end.*

307. 3. *At what time this election has taken place?* We answer: that it has come to pass before all eternity, as we are expressly told in scripture, Ephes. 1, 4: "He (God) hath chosen us in him *before the foundation of the world*;" as also 2 Timoth. 1, 9: "Who (God) hath saved us and called us with an holy calling . . . according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ *before the world began*." If therefore the election of grace has been from the beginning, before the world has been created, it follows that its existence does not fall in the space of time; but of eternity.

308. 4. As to the question concerning God's purposes with regard to this act, it is to be stated, that God has been pleased to ordain the elect to the full and eternal *enjoyment of his grace*; — to the *adoption of children*, Ephes. 1, 5; — to be the *image of his son*, Rom. 8, 29: "for whom he did fore-

know, he did also predestinate to be conformed to the *image of his son*;" — to be justified and glorified „for, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified," Rom. 8, 30; — finally to salvation, 2 Thess. 2; 13.

309. 5. *What it is which has determined God in this election?* — Where there is an election, there must be one preferred to the other, which is just the case in the question before us. But we have to consider how it happens, that it has pleased God to ordain to eternal life not all mankind, but a few from among them. *Either* God has, merely according to His pleasure and counsel, elected some unto eternal life, and from the same causes ordained others unto eternal destruction; *or* He has seen in the one individual something, by which He was determined to elect the same, and which He missed in another individual, for absence of which the latter could not be ordained unto eternal life.

310. As there are, on this head, different opinions, among different classes of men, we have to inquire

A. *What it was which God has not been considering in this work, and*

B. *What it was, that He has considered in the elect, and why it is that He has preferred those whom He did elect, to others whom He did not.*

311. A. Concerning the first inquiry it must be remembered, that God has not out of mere *wilful determination, or because it merely pleased him so to do, elected some unto eternal life, and ordained the greatest number of men to eternal destruction;* for

a. This contradicts the great goodness and lovingkindness of our God; for He does not wish the death of the unrighteous, nor that any one should be lost, but that all should be saved. Knowing this we arrive at the following conclusion: that Being to whom God inclines so graciously, that He does not wish his death and his destruction, but rather that he should be saved — such an individual God cannot, for no other reason than his mere will or pleasure, deprive of eternal salvation; — from which follows, that God in the act of this election, did not follow merely his own bent and inclination.

312. b. *God has chosen us in Christ:* Ephes. 1, 3, 4: „Who (God) hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath *chosen us,*“ etc. etc., which entitles us to the conclusion: that if God Has chosen one through Christ and in Christ, He cannot have done so out of His mere pleasure; for the expression „*in Christ*“ shews, that this grace has been bestowed upon us, merely for the

sake and the merits of Christ, as we are told, 2 Timot. 1, 9: „*Who (God) hath saved us, and called us. . . . according to his own purpose which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.*“ The expression „in Christ Jesus“ refers to the faith, for by this faith we are in Christ and he in us, Ephes. 3, 17. Now God has chosen us in Christ and through him: from which follows that He has done so, from another motive than His mere pleasure.

313. c. *We are elected according to the foreknowledge of God*, Rom. 8, 29: „Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate;“ — 1 Petr. 1, 1. 2: „to the . . . elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.“ From which we conclude, that he whom God has chosen, after first having, as it were, examined him, the same is not chosen by God because of His divine pleasure, but because of his being found fit and proper for this purpose.

314. *We have farther to observe, that God in determining His purpose had no regard to human virtue, piety and good works.* Thus He has not, for instance, chosen some unto eternal life because of their having abounded in the exercise of any of these works, or rejected others, for reason of their having been found wanting in some of these virtues or good works. For if it were so, then:

α. Would this counsel of God amount to an election consequent to *man's deserving*, and could therefore by no means be looked upon as an election of *grace*.

315. β. But the whole work of our Salvation is resting entirely upon the grace of God, and not upon our piety or merits; for „*by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works* lest any man should boast.“ Ephes. 2, 8. 9: „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.*“ If, accordingly, the work of our salvation can be proved to rest upon grace and not upon our own merits, it must follow that the election of grace is, likewise, the effect of grace and not of our own merits.

316. γ. Of this election and ordination of the children of God we are also taught, that it is not the result of their good works, but of the grace of God: „Who hath saved us *not according to our own works*, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.“ 2 Timot. 1, 9; — „(God) having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, *according to the good pleasure of his will to the praise and glory of his grace*, whereby he hath made us accepted in the belo-



ved," Ephes. 1, 5. 6. And the Apostle Paul, after having, in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, commented upon this doctrine, concludes the same with the words: v. 35: „*Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?*“ And in the fifth and sixth verses of the same chapter, he draws up a comparison between grace and works in the following manner: „*At this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace; and if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.*“

317. **B.** We have, secondly, (cf. §. 310.) to inquire, *What it was that God has been considering in determining His election of grace, thus preferring one individual before another; electing to eternal life but a certain number — but not the whole of mankind.* With respect to this subject it is to be remembered:

α. That God, in the work of election, has been *considering none but the Lord Jesus Christ*, as can be proved by the Bible passages, Ephes. 1, 4. 5; 2 Timot. 1, 9. — All men are, through Christ, reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. 5, 19. — „*Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,*“ John. 1, 17. — God has made us acceptable in the beloved (that is, in His Son), Ephes. 1, 6: „*neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (except the name of the Lord Jesus)*“ Acts. 4, 12,

318. b. *God has, in this act, considered the Lord Jesus Christ, not only in as far as he has suffered on behalf of all mankind, and born their sins: for in this case there would be no difference between those of the different destinations, nor the possibility of an election, since Christ would have born the sins of all.* It is therefore to be kept in mind, that:

319. c. *God has, in this act, been considering the Lord Jesus Christ, in as far as the latter has been accepted by men.* For he whom God has shown special grace, and in whom he has manifested His great love, the same has undoubtedly received and accepted the Lord Jesus, by whom he has been reconciled and brought to grace, not only by his merits, but in deed and in truth. Now the election of grace is a divine work, in the performance of which God manifests His great love towards the elect, thereby testifying that they have been indeed reconciled unto Him. From which follows, that the elect of God have received and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ.

320. d. It is also to be observed, that the Lord Jesus can be accepted by men in no other way, than by faith. The na-

ture of this we shall have occasion to explain subsequently; for the present it may suffice to observe, that faith is the firm conviction, on the part of man, that God is mercifully inclined unto him, and that He has forgiven him his sins, and purposes to make him heir of eternal life, because His own beloved Son had born the sins of mankind on his own body, paid a ransom for them, and cleansed them with his blood, — that man, being reconciled unto his God, might henceforward approach Him without fear and trembling. Whosoever owns such a confidence, lays hold, along with it, of the merciful promises of God, as well as of the merits of Christ. This is the faith by which the Lord Jesus is received into our hearts, and dwells in it, Ephes. 3, 17. and it is on this account that the Apostle Paul observes, Heb. 11, 6: that „*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*“ — Want of faith makes a man a cast away, as Paul and Barnabas were preaching to the hardened and stiffnecked Jews of Antioch, saying: „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, lo, we turn to the gentiles.“ Acts. 13, 46.

321. e. God has, therefore, in the act of election, considered no other circumstance, but that of the Lord Jesus having been received along with his merits, and righteousness, into the hearts of some men. And these men having been entirely reconciled to Him, God has elected them unto eternal life. — Whilst on the other hand He considered that, with some men no faith would be found, who must accordingly be said to have rejected the Lord Jesus in unbelief, — that they would not partake of his righteousness and his merits, and therefore still remain in their sins and under the burden of the divine wrath, — for all these reasons they have been found without Christ, and have therefore not been elected to eternal life.

322. This it is that constitutes the difference between those, whom God has elected, and those whom He has rejected, viz: that some have been found in Christ, which has not been the case with the rest; just as the same qualities serve to constitute the distinction between those, who have been saved, and those who have been damned. „*He that believeth on him (the Son) is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, — he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*“ John. 8, 18, 36.

323. f. Thus God, in that He has elected the believing of mankind, and rejected the unbelieving from among them, — has been considering especially man's faith. — This is not to

be understood as if this faith could, by itself, give unto any man such a worth and value, by the considering of which God might be induced to the work of mercy, and thereupon to elect this individual: no, faith is only to be considered as a means, by the exercise of which the Lord Jesus Christ is united with man, and in consequence of which union, Christ's innocence, righteousness and merits (which we have shown to be the only qualities, which are considered in the act of election) are applied and appropriated unto man. Which means nothing else, than that we are justified before, and saved by God, not for the sake of man's faith and his good qualities alone, but for the sake of that faith, which has laid hold of the merits and the righteousness of the Lord Jesus, and by which man desires to be justified and saved.

324. g. God\* has, in this act, been considering the Lord Jesus Christ, not only as he may be dwelling in man for a moment, but as he is dwelling in him, until the hour of his death. Like as salvation is promised but to those, who remain in their faith steadfast even unto the end, so has God, but those, concerning whom he foreknew, that they should remain in this faith unto the end, ordained unto eternal life, as we are taught by Christ himself, *„he that endured to the end shall be saved,“* Matth. 10, 22. — Those, on the other hand, who fall again from this saving faith, are said to obtain a severer condemnation, inasmuch as the faith which they had been possessing, is of no avail to them, and their latter end shall therefore be worse with them than their beginning; for it would indeed have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them, 2 Pet. 2, 20. 21.

325. Finally it is to kept in mind, (as has been shown formerly), that the election of grace has taken place before the creation of the world, even from all eternity, — in a period, in which neither man, nor faith nor even the merits of Christ had as yet any existence. It is therefore the act of the election of grace, and all that which has been adduced in favour of it, in the preceding argument, to be referred to God's eternal foreknowledge, by means of which He has foreknown from all eternity, the existence of men, their faith, the merits of Christ etc. For to Him all future things are not future but present. We are, therefore, entitled to the acceptance of the principle, that God was able to elect certain men, although they were not yet created, to pronounce with reference to their belief or unbelief, and to determine concerning their future state, — as also to consider in this act, the Lord

Jesus Christ although he had then not yet existed as a real man, nor entered upon the exercise of the functions of his office.

326. 6. It now remains for us to inquire into the second point, — namely *which men God has accordingly elected?* But this question has been sufficiently entered upon in the course of the preceding inquiry; and we have found as its result, that only those have been elected, who remain in their faith steadfast unto the end. Which again proves that not all mankind, but only a small part of the same have been ordained unto eternal life, since there are but few who prove faithful and remain steadfast in their faith unto the end. A few other points remain yet to be mentioned, which are:

a. *that God has not ordained and elected all men to eternal life:* this can be proved:

α. by the expression „*elect*“ which is made use of for this purpose; for where there is an election, there the whole cannot be intended. If, therefore, none but the faithful have been ordained to eternal life, it follows that all men cannot have been ordained to this end.

β. By the *express declaration* of our Lord Jesus Christ, Matth. 20, 16: „Many be called, but few chosen.“

γ. by the fact that *the elect have come to this calling but through Christ*. For none have been elected, but those who are in Christ; moreover those only which are in Christ are the believing people of God, which proves that but the faithful and no other men have been elected.

327. b. *That the number of the elect is but small, if compared with the great bulk of the ungodly; — yet if considered by itself they form a considerable body.* But few are chosen if compared with great number of the ungodly; as we read, Matth. 20, 16. — But yet there are a great number which belong to the elect, as we read Revel. 14, 1: „And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an *hundred forty and four thousand*, having his father's name written in their foreheads.“ —

Thus much is to be said concerning the *merciful purposes and decrees of God*.

328. God's severe *decree of judgment* is contained in His determination, according to which all those, who do not believe, become subject to his wrath, and are doomed to eternal destruction. But, with all this, we are not to imagine the existence of some particular, or secret counsel of God, with respect to the eternal destruction of the ungodly, and the condemnation of unbelievers. The fact is, that all mankind have, by sin, become subject to the wrath of God and to eternal destruction, but that God has graciously provided a remedy

against these impending evils. But it so happens that some do accept of this proffered grace, whilst others, in that they chose to remain in unbelief, wilfully reject it, and in reality never come to the enjoyment of the benefits, which this remedy is intended to convey. It is for this purpose, that the faithful are separated from the number of those, who thus are falling a victim to eternal destruction, — and that they afterwards come to the enjoyment of it. Whilst the unbelieving, on the other hand, are in the state in which they have fallen by their sins, and by which they are lost for ever, — because they did not chose to accept of the proffered help. And the Son of God has made no alteration with regard to this decree: „*He that believeth not,*“ says he „*is condemned already,*“ and „*he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: the wrath of God abideth on him,*“ John. 3, 18. 36; namely that wrath which is revealed over all sinners. Which proves that the Lord Jesus did in no wise intend any alteration of God's eternal decrees, as referred to in the course of this Chapter.



## Chapter XV.

For the purpose of putting into execution this His will, God has sent His Son into the world, that, having taken upon him human nature, he might accomplish every thing, which was necessary for the salvation of mankind.

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329. In order, that the gracious decrees of God concerning man, might not be in vain, God has, in due time, after man had sinned, began to put into execution all that, which He has intended from all eternity; which accomplishment he commenced with the sending of His Son, who along with the exercise of his office is to be looked upon as the foundationstone, upon which alone the whole scheme of our salvation is to rest. And for the full developement of this plan, we intend now to speak

*of the Person and the office of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

In doing which we have to treat in the first instance, of the *Person of Christ*, and to consider:

A. *the coming of the Messiah,*

B. *his name,*

C. *his person,*

D. *his nature,*

E. *the union of the two natures,*

F. *the reciprocal communication of their respective properties,*

G. *the two different states of Christ, viz: his state of humiliation, and that of exaltation.*

330. A. Respecting the *coming of the Messiah*, there are two questions to be inquired into: namely

1. *Whether the Messiah or the Saviour, whose coming the prophets had foretold must necessarily have come already?* — That a Saviour has been promised by God in times of old, who might bear the burden of our sins, and deliver us from our spiritual enemies, can be proved by bible passages, such as: Genes. 3, 15; 2, 3; Deutr. 18, 15; Isa. 35, 5; 53, 4. 5. 6; 59, 20; Mich. 5, 1. Hagg. 2, 8; Zach. 9, 9; Maleach. 3, 1. ff. All the promises contained in these passages can be proved to have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, by the following argument: A great part of the circumstances by which the Saviour was to be recognised, do not any more exist in our days, so that the Messiah could now not possibly be marked out nor recognised; from which we conclude, that as the circumstances,

which God has pointed out as such, at the existence of which the Messiah was to be recognised, do not any more exist, it follows that the Saviour must have already appeared. For they were expressly said only to be discernible in the time of the Saviour. But these signs have not been seen since 1800 years, which proves that the Saviour must have already appeared 1800 years ago.

331. Of the signs which were said to be cotemporary with the appearance of the Saviour, there are especially to be mentioned four, viz:

*α.* the Saviour was to come at the time when the *government should be taken away from Israel*. Genes. 59, 10: „the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.“ Now it is well known that the Jewish nation has lost its independence 1800 years ago; that it had then come into the hands of the heathen Herod, and that, in the time of Christ's birth, the whole nation was paying tribute unto the Roman emperor Augustus, Luk. 2, 2. Thus the first sign of the coming of the Saviour was dispensed with, inasmuch as the nation, about this very time, was losing its independence, and this sign could therefore refer to no other than to Christ.

332. *β.* The Saviour was predicted to appear *whilst the second temple was as yet standing*, which had been erected by Serubabel in the time of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, subsequent to the Babylonian captivity; and concerning which Haggai, 2, 6 ff.: had been prophesying, „yet once, it is a little while, . . . . and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with my glory . . . . the glory of the latter house shall be greater than that of the former.“ — Malach. 3, 1: „Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare my way: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in.“ This pledge also has been redeemed, as this temple has been destroyed 1700 years ago, and not a vestige of it is to be found any where; which being the case, the Messiah, even if he should come at any other time, could not be recognised.

333. *γ.* *The Levitical sacrifices should cease before the coming of the Messiah*: Jerem. 3, 15. 16. 17: „And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land in those days, they shall no more say: *the arc of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done*

any more; at that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, unto Jerusalem;" etc. — Daniel 9, 25. 27: „Unto the Messiah the prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks: . . . and *in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice to cease.*“ This proves that the Messiah was to appear after the cessation of the sacrifices, and as this event has taken place 1800 years ago, the Saviour must have then appeared — whereby also this sign has found its determination.

334. *δ.* *The Saviour was to come from the seed of Abraham, the tribe of Juda, and was to be a descendant of David.*“ — Faithful Abraham received the promise: Genes. 22, 18: „In thy seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.“ Of the tribe of Juda Jacob has prophesied, Genes. 49, 10; and unto David this Son was promised, 2. Samuel. 7, 12. 13: „And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom“ etc. The Messiah was to be recognised by this, that he was to spring from the generation of Abraham, the tribe of Judah, and be a descendant of David. But to discern this, namely who among the Israelites now living be belonging to the one tribe or the other, is an utter impossibility, since all the leading tables, registers, etc. have been lost in the progress of events; and this sign again being done away with, the Saviour must have appeared already.

335. 2. A second question is, *who may be this Saviour: Jesus Christ of Nazareth, or any other Individual?* We answer: that besides Jesus of Nazareth no other Saviour can be named, if we consider, in *the first place*, the deplorable end all those have found who have unjustly laid any pretension to this high distinction, as Theodas and Judas of Galilee, cf. Acts. 5, 36. 37., and also Barcochab, who had, in the time of the emperor Adrian, declared himself to be the saviour, and after having roused the people to revolt, was, along with his deluded countrymen utterly destroyed. Since then the Saviour has come already of a certainty, and since none can be pointed out as being that Saviour, but Jesus of Nazareth, it follows that he must be undoubtedly the Messiah.

336. It is also to be considered, in the second place, that the appearance of the Lord Jesus has been accompanied by all the signs of the Messiah. And we must therefore conclude, that such an individual by whom all the signs, by the existence of which God intended to have recognised his Messiah, are to be found, must indeed be the Messiah which He has promised.



Now in the Lord Jesus all those marks which were to point out the Saviour are to be met with, in so clear and circumstantial a manner that nothing can be wanting; which proves the Lord Jesus to have been the promised Saviour. All this will be sufficiently understood, when we point out those signs and apply them upon the Lord Jesus. He was to be born of a virgin from the seed of Abraham, out of the tribe of Juda and of David's house, just at a time, when the independence of the Jewish people was to be at an end, when the temple was still standing; but the sacrifices were soon after to cease; he himself should be a mighty teacher, and perform many wonders and signs; he should be rejected and despised by his own people, sold for thirty pieces of silver and after having been nailed to the cross and killed, rise up again on the third day from the dead and ascend into the heavens. These were the contents of the prophecies made concerning him.

337. Although the Jews maintain that at the time of the Saviour's coming the swords have not been beaten into ploughshares, nor their spears into pruning hooks: Isa. 2, 4; — that the wolf did not then dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lay down with the kid, *ibid.* 11, 6; although the mountains did not then drop sweet wine nor all the hills sweet wine, Amos 9, 13; yet this all can be fully and satisfactorily answered and accounted for, by the consideration that the kingdom of our Messiah was not to be a kingdom of this world; that, on the contrary he was rather to be poor, despised, and rejected of men: Zach. 9, 9. Isa. 53, 2, 3. And we are moreover told that the fathers of old, who had departed from this life previous to the Saviour's coming, were to be partakers of this kingdom, which proves that the latter was not to an earthly, but a heavenly and spiritual kingdom.

338. It was for this reason that the prophets used to clothe their visions concerning the spiritual things of the Messiah in parables of earthly and worldly subjects; and we have to learn from this that not all their prophecies concerning the kingdom of Christ, are to meet with a literal fulfillment. Thus we read Isa. 55, 12: „for ye shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hand.“ Nor does the nature of the different prophecies admit of Christ's kingdom being looked upon, and expected to be, an earthly kingdom.

339. For instance: the view that there was to be no more strife upon earth contradicts the prophecy made by Daniel 7, 18. 21. 22: „the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever . . . I

beheld and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." — We are also told that there should be great rejoicing in the kingdom of the Messiah, a promise which is again contradicted by the mournful state, the Messiah and his people were predicted to come into. For we read, that he was to be poor, *Zach.* 9, 9; that the shepherd was to be smitten and his sheep scattered *ibid* 13, 7; that he was to be like a worm, a reproach of man and despised of all people; that dogs should compass him, his hands and his feet be pierced, that he should be able to tell his bones, *Pslm.* 22, 6. 16. 17; — he was to be esteemed stricken, smitten and afflicted, *Isa.* 53, 4. 5. All which could not have been accomplished, if the establishment of a kingdom of worldly enjoyment, such as the Jews expected it, had been intended.

340. Like as, therefore, these prophecies have been shewn to require to be spiritually discerned and understood, so also are they to be considered to have found their spiritual fulfilment. That which has been prophesied concerning *peace*, intends to convey an impression of that time when Jew and gentile shall dwell together in peace and harmony; — or if we read of wine and milk than those spiritual and heavenly gifts of the grace of God are intended, which nourish and sustain the soul in the same manner, as is the case with wine and milk with reference to the body.

341. **B.** The name of the Son of God. The scriptures apply to the Son of God many names, which partly refer to his nature, and partly to his office. With reference to his *divine nature* he is called: „the Son of God,“ *Matth.* 16, 16; „the image of the invisible God,“ *Coloss.* 1, 15; „the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person,“ *Heb.* 1, 3.

With regard to his *human nature*, he is called: „the seed of the women,“ *Genes.* 3, 15; „the seed of Abraham,“ *Heb.* 2, 16; David's „righteous branch“ *Jerem.* 25, 5; „David's son,“ *Matth.* 22, 42; „the son of man,“ *Matth.* 26, 24.

With regard to his *office*, he is called: „the Christ,“ which is a greek word and coincides with the hebrew word *Messiah*; — and the „Anointed,“ for the Messiah has been anointed by the Holy Ghost *Pslm.* 45; 8. *Act.* 10, 38. — Now formerly there were anointed none but the high priests, *Exod.* 28, 41. the prophets *1 King.* 19, 16; and the kings themselves: *1 Samuel* 10, 1; 16, 12. 13; from which follows, that Christ has been anointed to be our highpriest, our prophet and king,

and might with right be called our Messiah, our Christ and the Anointed.

With reference to his office the Messiah is also called „Jesus“ which denotes one, who assists and saves. The reason of the designation we learn from the words of the angel, Matth. 1, 21: „Mary shall bring forth a son and shall call him Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.“ — He is also called „the Lord our righteousness,“ Jerem. 33, 6. because by him alone the lost righteousness of mankind is to be recovered; Dan. 9, 24; — „Immanuel, God with us,“ because of his having reconciled men unto God, as the Mediator and Redeemer.

342. **C.** The *person of the Son of God.* Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, begotten of the Father from all eternity. He is therefore the only true and eternal God, of one substance with the Father and the Holy Ghost, as has been proved elsewhere. Cap. 5.

343. **D.** *Christ's two natures.* There are two natures in this one person, viz: the divine and the human nature. The existence of the divine nature has been proved in the fifth Chapter.

Concerning the *human nature* it is to be observed, that with Lord Jesus this nature has been made partly equal to that of other men, partly not.

344. The equality of his nature with that of other men, consists in its substance, and in the changes it has been subject to. That the Lord Jesus had a real human, natural body is evident: for

*α.* He is the seed of the woman, Genes. 3, 15; the seed of Abraham, Genes. 7, 18; the Son of man, Matth, 26, 24; this being the case, he can have no other but a natural human body.

345. *β.* It is expressly told of him that he has taken upon him flesh and blood, Heb. 2, 14: „Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.“ As also Jesus himself says unto his disciples. „Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have,“ Luk. 24, 39.

346. *γ.* Human changes have befallen him: he has grown in stature, Luk. 2, 52; he has been hungry, Matth. 4, 2; he has been thirsty, John. 19, 28; he has yielded to sleep, Mark. 4, 38. and finally, he has died, John. 19, 30.

347. Jesus did also own a reasonable human soul, this can be deduced partly from the passages already quoted, partly also from his own words, when he says: „My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,“ Matth. 26, 38; — when

he calls upon his heavenly Father: „Father into thy hands I commend my spirit,“ Luk. 23, 46. and finally when he says to the thief upon the cross „to day shalt thou be with me in paradise,“ (ibid. v. 43) which he did not mean to be accomplished in the body, but in the soul.

348. Although with regard to the changes, which the human nature of Christ has been subject to, it has been partly shown already, how that he has been hungry, thirsty, how he has grown etc., it is yet to be kept in mind, that he has not been subject to all the changes, which the human body has to undergo without any distinction, but on the contrary he has experienced:

a. Such, which in itself are neither unclean, nor sinful; because he has been free from any sinful pollution. (Of this we shall have occasion to speak subsequently.)

b. Such only which are the properties of nature, and as such common to the whole human race; and not such which happen to belong to the one or the other individual nature. Thus we read nowhere of his having fallen ill, or of his having suffered any dislocation of his limbs or of other maladies.

349. In Christ's nature there consists an *inequality* with the human nature in two points: viz

1. In his *wonderful conception and birth*; for he has not been born in the usual course of nature in consequence of the cohabitation of man and wife, and therefore not by the mere working of God's power by which He sustains the continuance of the human race in the usual manner; — but he has been conceived by a virgin in consequence of the Holy Ghost's overshadowing, and performing this work in her. For the prophecy, Isa. 7, 17. runs thus. „Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel,“ and the announcement of the angel Gabriel: Luk. 1, 31. „Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.“ And on Mary's asking: „How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?“ the angel answered: „*the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,* v. 34, 35.

2. In the *holiness* of his nature. For sin, although it has come upon all men, has not polluted him, and he is the only one amongst the children of men, who has kept pure from sin, Heb. 7, 26: „*Such an Highpriest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separat from sinners.*“ Isa. 53, 9: „*He has done no violence, nor is any deceit in his mouth;*“ 1 Petr. 2, 22: „*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;*“ 2 Cor. 5, 21: „*For he (God) hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.*“ It was for this same reason, that he did not hesitate to make an appeal to the consciences of his very

enemies : „*Which of you,*“ he asks them, „*convinceth me of sin:*“ — a word which could be applied upon no other individual.

351. **E.** *The union of the two natures.* These two natures: viz the divine and the human nature, are united not in such a manner as for instance God is living in the hearts of his saints, or as the body is surrounded by the garments, or the sun by the circle in which he moves; nor can those two natures be said to be *mixed* up with each other or *changed*. But as in man the body and the soul, in coming together, are forming one body, even so are the natures in Christ united to one person.

362. This union can be established by the quotation of the following passages: John. 1, 14. we are told concerning the Word (that is, the Son of God) that „the word *became* flesh and dwelled among us.“ 1 Timot. 3, 16: „Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was *manifest in the flesh;*“ Luk. 1, 35: „that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the *Son of God;*“ Galat. 4: „When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his *Son, born of a woman;*“ Coloss. 2, 9: „*In him dwelleth the fulness of the godhead bodily.*“

353. But this does not mean to convey the idea of two persons or two Christs. For although Christ has, on taking upon him human nature, retained his divine nature, yet the human nature in that it has been taken by the Lord Christ, has been made to partake of the divine nature; so that it cannot by any means be said that there are two persons, of which the one is God, and the other man; but that both are God and man in one person.

354. This can be proved by the fact:

a. That the scriptures expressly teach; and frequently refer to, the *unity of the person of Christ*; Rom. 5, 15: Jesus Christ is the fulness of grace and the only man standing in Grace; *ibid.* v. 17: „They which receive abundance of grace . . . shall reign by one: Jesus Christ.“ v. 17: „By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 1 Timot. 2, 5: „there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;“ 1 Cor. 8, 6: „*One Lord Jesus Christ.*“

355. b. That the scriptures testify of the Son of God that *he has become flesh and dwelled among men.* John. 1, 14: „The word became flesh and dwelled among us etc.:“ 1 Cor. 15, 47: „the second man is the Lord from heaven.“

356. c. That the scriptures do ascribe properties which are the attributes of the human nature, to the whole person; thus for instance, when the human body of Christ is handled and felt: it is said that by this action the Word of life and the

living God has been seen and handled. 1 John. 1, 1. After the human nature had been nailed to the cross, we are told, that by this act the Lord of glory has been crucified (1 Cor. 2, 8), and that the prince of this life had been killed, Act. 3, 15. This mode of expression could not be made use of, if there were in Christ two persons: the one divine, and the other human, and not both one person.

357. **F.** *The communication of the properties of the two natures.* If body and soul are to be united to each other, it is necessary for them to have all their properties in common. For if this were not the case, and if the soul did not any more attend to the peculiarities of the body, and the body did not partake of the properties of the soul, than their union would soon have to come to an end. But this is not to be understood, as if the soul and the body did communicate to each other all their properties, without any distinction; no, this is only the case with such properties, which perform, work or suffer something. The soul communicates to the body the ability to move, to see and to hear etc. whilst, although immortal in itself, it can yet not be said to impart to the mortal body this property.

358. Exactly so it is with the two natures of Christ. As they were to be united to one body, they must also have all their properties in common; yet not without a certain distinction; for especially those are thereby intended, which refer to activity, performance or sufferings. It is, therefore advisable in this question, not to make ourselves any concern, as to whether the godhead had communicated to the human nature all its divine properties, and how this could possibly have taken place. — But in hearing of a certain property having been communicated to the two natures we will do best, to rest satisfied with the fact; — whilst, if on the other hand, there is nowhere anything said concerning any given property, we have to take care not to invent any thing concerning it; and to put aside all our private opinions.

359. In order to the better understanding of this matter three different ways of expression have been made use of:

Thus, it is said, in the first instance: *that which is peculiar to the one nature, is peculiar not to this one nature alone, but is to be ascribed to the whole person, which includes the two natures.* Thus it is peculiar to human nature to be born, to spring from the seed of David, to suffer and to die etc. But this is ascribed not to the human nature alone, but to the whole person, thus evidencing, that the said properties are belonging to the whole Christ — on account of his human nature; for we read, Rom. 1, 3; „*His Son Jesus Christ our*

*Lord*, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; Galat. 4, 4: „*God sent his Son, born of a woman;*“ Luk. 1, 35: „*that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God;*“ 1 Cor. 2, 8: „*they have crucified the Lord of glory;*“ Acts. 3, 15: „*they killed the Prince of life;*“ Zach. 12, 10: „*they shall look upon me (the Lord God), whom they have pierced;*“ Rom. 8, 32: „*He (God) has not spared his own Son but delivered him up for us all,*“ Gal. 2, 20: „*the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*“ 1 Peter. 4, 1: „*Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh.*“

360. In the same way the properties of the divine nature are ascribed to the whole person, which is yet not only God, but man. For as divine properties and works are to be considered the facts: that Christ *is*, before he become man; that the world *has* been created by him; that he has redeemed mankind from eternal death and condemnation; that he is the Lord of the heavens. All which is said concerning the individual person, John. 8, 58: „*Verily, -verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am;*“ Ephos. 3, 9: „*God who created all things by Jesus Christ;*“ Acts. 20, 28: „*The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*“

361. Another mode of expressing the same thing is: *If one nature is performing something, the other nature is also engaged in the same.* This saying has special reference to the divine works, which belong to the offices of the Lord Jesus. As such are to be considered: that he is the Mediator between God and man; our High priest; our Shepherd, Bishop and only judge, etc. For the redeeming from the curse, the bringing of the blessing of Abraham to mankind; the cleansing from sin, the reconciliation between God and men, — all these are the works of a divine power and not of any creature whatsoever. But yet they have been wrought in conjunction with the human nature.

362. From the curse of the law we are redeemed, as a consequence of *Christs having been made subject unto the law*, Galat. 4, 4. 5: „*God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law. — He has conferred the blessing of Abraham upon mankind, inasmuch as he has been made a curse for us.* Galat. 3, 13: „*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles.*“ — Christ has cleansed us from our sins, *by his blood*: 1 John. 1, 7: „*the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*“ — He has justifieth us *by his blood*: Rom. 5, 9; he has reconciled us to himself; he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.“

2 Corint. 5, 18, 21. — He has bruised the serpent's head, after having, during his suffering, bruised his heel: „that through death he might destroy him, that had the power of death, that is the devil.“

363. Now the fact is, that to be subject to the law, to become flesh, to cleanse with blood, to be made sin, to be pierced by the serpent, and finally to die — are properties which can be attributed not to the divine, but to the human nature. Which shews, that the divine nature of the Lord Jesus has performed all these works in conjunction with the human nature.

864. As a third way of expressing the same fact it must be considered, if it is said: „that the Godhead has communicated his properties to the human nature. Of such properties four are especially to be mentioned :

α. *Omnipotence*, which belongs to God alone, as has been shewn §. 56. That this attribute had been communicated to the human nature which Christ took upon him, can be sufficiently proved :

κ. *From many testimonies from the word of God.* — The prophet Daniel beholds in the Spirit, the Son of God seated on the right hand of God, and describes his visions in the following terms : „I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man come with the clouds of heaven, and come to the ancient of days, and they brought him, near before him. And there was given him, dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed;“ Daniel 7, 13, 14. — In the same way king David speaks in the 8 Pslm. 6. ff: *Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*“ This latter circumstance is more fully explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews 2, 8. where it is said: „In that he has put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. And the Lord Jesus Christ testifies accordingly: „All things are delivered unto me of my Father,“ Matth. 11, 27: „the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand,“ John. 3. 35; „all power is given unto me in heaven and earth,“ Matth. 28, 18. And the apostle Paul tells us: *though he (Christ), was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God,* 2 Cor. 13, 4; — (God) set him (Christ) at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power and might, and dominion, and every thing that is named, not only in



*this world, but also in the world to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*“ Ephes. 1, 20. 21. 22. — Now all that which is spoken of as having been *given* to the Son of God during his sojourning on earth, cannot be said to have been bestowed on his divine, but on his *human nature*; and if therefore the Lord Jesus Christ had received according to his human nature all power and might, it follows that he has communicated to his human nature the divine property of omnipotence.

365. *γ. From his works*, in the accomplishment of which the human nature cannot be imagined to have been inactive. Thus for instance, we read of his having raised the dead by his voice, Mark. 5, 41; Luk. 7, 14; John. 11, 43; or by the laying on of his hands, Matth. 8, 3; Mark. 6, 5; — of his having performed a miracle, inasmuch as from his body proceeded the divine power, by which the sick woman was healed, Mark. 5, 30. — Especially it is to be mentioned, that to him has been committed the power to judge mankind, because, as he himself expresses it, „he is the Son of man,“ John. 5, 27. For which judgment divine Omnipotence must be admitted to be indispensable; inasmuch as without the same neither all men could be brought before the judgment seat, nor the sentences put into execution. Which proves that to him, as the Son of man, or to his human nature, divine power has been committed.

366. *β. Omniscience.* This also is a divine attribute, and has been communicated to the human nature of the Lord Jesus: for

*aa. This is expressly taught in Scripture:* „In whom (Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,“ Colos. 2, 3. — And Isaias prophesies, 11, 2: „the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the *spirit of wisdom and understanding*, the spirit of counsel and might, the *spirit of knowledge* and of the fear of the Lord;“ — Now the Lord Jesus has been gifted with the Holy Spirit not „severally as it has been divided to every man,“ 1 Cor. 12, 11; but „above his fellows;“ Palm. 45, 7. and not „by measure,“ John. 3, 34. This proves that wisdom, understanding and divine knowledge, have been given to Christ without measure; and that he accordingly did possess every knowledge, just as the spirit „searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God,“ 1 Cor. 2, 20.

367. *bb. Omniscience has been requisite for the accomplishment of the office of Christ.* To him has been given to sit in judgment over mankind, John. 5, 27; in which judgment every idle word is to be accounted for, Matth. 12, 36; the secrets of man are to be judged, by him, Rom. 2, 2. 16; the hidden

things of darkness are to be brought to light, and the counsels of the heart made manifest, 1 Cor, 4, 5. And it is evident that, whosoever is to accomplish such a work must be possessed of divine omniscience regarding every word, work every hidden thing, all the secret counsels of the heart; which omniscience, Christ as man must have been possessed of.

368. *γ. Omniscience*, which is also an attribute of God (§. 58.) That the man Christ has been gifted with this property appears from the fact.

aa. That it must be looked upon as a *necessary consequence of the personal union*; „the word became flesh“ (John. 1, 14.); — „in him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily,“ Coloss. 2, 9. From which we conclude that, since the Word, or the Son of God has become flesh he can dwell no where his human nature is also, and that therefore his human nature must consequently be omnipresent. If in the human nature of Christ there dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, then his human nature cannot be said to be only on one place, for if it were otherwise, this could not be the case.

369. bb. *The scriptures teach the omnipresence of the human nature of Christ*: „Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them,“ Matth. 18, 20; — „I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, ibid. 28, 20; — (God) „gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is the body, the fulness of him, that filleth all in all;“ Ephes. 1, 22. 23; — „he that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things,“ ibid. 4, 10.

370. cc. *The omnipresence of the human nature of Christ has been requisite for the accomplishment of his work*. He works, by signs and wonders, with his apostles, Mrk. 16, 20; he has given to his church Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers, Ephes. 4, 11; he rules in the midst of his enemies, Pslm. 60, 2; he walks in the midst of the seven candlesticks, that is, among his people, Rev. 1, 13. — The works of Providence which Christ has wrought for the benefit of his people have reference more especially to his ascension, and accordingly to his human nature; and we are not able to say what sort of government or providence there would be; if Christ's human nature had not ascended into heaven.

371. dd. *His frequent appearances, after his ascension shew that he can be present at once in heaven, and on earth, just as he pleases*, and that he therefore is not to be met in one place only and not in the other, but is to be found everywhere. Whosoever reveals himself, cannot any more be said to be absent, but present. From which we conclude that as Christ

has revealed himself in his bodily shape on earth, he is not removed from, but every where present upon the same.

372. Such appearances were: his having been seen by Stephen, who, when standing before the council at Jerusalem, „saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God,“ Act. 7, 55. He has revealed himself to Paul at the moment of his conversion, by a flash of lightning, and with a human voice, Acts 22, 14, exclaiming: „Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Acts 9, 4; and v. 5: he says in an answer to Paul’s inquiry: „I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks;“ and v. 6: „arise and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.“ — *Christ has appeared to Ananias in a trance*, commanding him to baptize Saul, etc. Act. 9, 10; *he has appeared to Paul at Corinth*, Act 18, 9. „Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision: Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.“ — *Christ has again appeared to Paul when the latter was a captive at Jerusalem*; „And the night following the Lord stood by him and said. Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.“ — He has finally appeared to John walking between the golden candlesticks: „I saw seven golden candlesticks: and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man.“ Revel. 1, 12. 13. These appearances evidently prove Christ to be every where present in his human body; for that he in his human nature is present in heaven will not be doubted, and if he is, as we have seen, present in heaven and earth at one and the same time, it follows that to his human nature must have been given divine properties, seeing that other wise this could not be the case.

373. *δ. The honour which is due to none but to God.* All men are bound to adore the Lord Jesus also according to his human nature, and to pay him divine honours. Of this however we intend to speak more particularly whe we treat of the state of Christ’s exaltation.

374. *Γ. The two states of humiliation and of exaltation*; of which Scriptures speaks in the following terms: „Now that he *ascended*, what is it but that he *descended* first into the lower parts of the earth? Ephes. 4, 9; — „he *humbled* himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly *exalted* him“ etc.

375. *Christ’s state of humiliation* comprehends:

a. *His becoming man, or his conception*, in consequence of which the Son of God has taken upon himself our nature, body and soul, yet without sin; this has come to pass, not in consequence of an union of man and wife (for according

to his human nature he is without a father, Heb. 7, 3.), but by the Holy Ghost overshadowing Mary, a chaste and pure virgin, who has been pregnant with this her fruit for the space of nine months, to which she afterwards gave birth.

376. b. *His birth.* The same has taken place at Bethlehem, in accordance with the prophecy of Micha 5, 1. and by it the Lord Jesus has actually entered upon his state of humiliation. For he came into the world in a stable, was laid in a crib, and wrapped in swaddling clothes, Luk. 2, 7.

377. c. *His childhood and his youth.* Of which little else is known, but that the wise men came from the east to worship him, Matth. 2, 11; — that he had to flee to Egypt from the wrath of Herod, Matth. 2, 14. where he had to remain until the death of the latter (ibid. v. 20); that he afterwards returned from Egypt (v. 23); and had resided at Nazareth until the time when he entered upon his ministerial office, Matth. 4, 13; Luk. 2, 51; 3, 16; but that, in the mean while he had been visiting Jerusalem several times for the purpose of celebrating the solemn feasts, and that he had, in his twelfth year a controversy, with the doctors in the temple, Luk. 2. 46.

378. d. *His ministerial office;* in which he had been engaged for something more than three years, preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, and by miracles proving himself to be the Messiah, which God had promised unto the fathers. During this period he lived in a state of great poverty, Matth. 8, 20; John 8, 6, and had to experience great hatred, persecution and malice, on the part of his kindred nation.

379. e. *His suffering and his death,* during which he has been, in accordance with many prophecies, delivered unto his enemies by the treachery of one of his disciples, Pslm. 41, 10; Zachar. 11, 12. 13; left by others, Zach. 13, 7; mocked, beaten and despised by his adversaries, Isa. 50, 6; Pslm. 69, 9; nailed to the cross, Pslm. 22, 17; and this between two malefactors, Isa. 53, 10; fed by gall and vinegar, Pslm. 69, 23; finally killed, Isa 23, 8; Zach. 13, 6; and buried, Isa. 53, 9; all which is plainly stated in the Gospels. In all those occurrences he has been like every other man; he has taken upon him the office of a servant, not without sometimes manifesting his majesty and exaltation, of which he usually divested himself, for without such usual testimones he could not have redeemed mankind, by his ignominy, suffering and death for the which he had come into the world.

380. *Christ's state of exaltation* comprehends:

a. *His descending into hell.* After having been made alive again, Christ descended into that region, in which the souls

of the condemned are preserved unto judgement, shewed himself there, as the conqueror of death and hell to him who has the power of death that is the devil, Heb. 2, 14; as the plague of death and the destruction of the grave, Hos. 13, 14; and openly made a triumph of them, Coloss. 2, 15: „*having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them.*“ That this really constitutes the descent of Christ, can be deduced from the words of St. Peter (3, 18. 19.) where he says: „For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: *by which also he went and preached unto the Spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah,*“ etc.

381. b. *His resurrection from the grave*, which took place on the third day after his death, and by which he proved himself to have power to take his life again, John 10, 18; by which occasion also an angel was seen by those who watched the grave, who had to testify the wonderful resurrection of Christ from the dead.

382. c. *His state during the forty days*; during which period the Lord Jesus had shewn himself alive unto his disciples, held converse with them, coming to them through closed doors, John. 20, 10. He disappeared before their very eyes, Luk. 24, 19. thereby proving to have brought a glorified body from the grave, Phil. 3, 21.

383. *His ascension*; which we find related Mrk. 16, 19; Luk 14, 51; Acts. 1, 9. 10. — But that this article of our christian faith might be thoroughly understood we have to inquire: *What sort of heaven is intended when we speak of Christ's ascension, and, what is the nature of this ascension.*

384. With regard to the first part of this inquiry, it is to be observed, that the term *heaven* has in the holy Scriptures different significations. It is, for instance, employed to denote the *airy space* above us, in which the birds take their flight, 1. Kings 16, 4 (in the original); Jerem. 9, 10; and Genesis 28, 23. as the space, from which the rain descends called *heaven*: „*And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass.*“ — The term *heaven* signifies also the high firmament by which the world is surrounded, and into which God has set the starry world, and which is called *firmament or heaven*, Genes. 1, 6. 8. — Again the term *heaven* is meant to denote the *blessed state of redeemed souls*, and of the holy angels: Matth. 18, 10: „*In heaven their (the children's) angels do always behold the face of my father which is in heaven,*“ 2. Cor. 5, 1: „*A building of God, an house not made with*

hands, eternal in the heavens;" Luk. 16, 22: *Abraham's bosom*; Heb. 12, 22. 23: "Mount Sion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly of the church of the firstborn which are written in heaven." — It was into such a heaven, that the prophet Elijah has been taken up: 2. Kings 2, 11; and into such an heaven St. Paul was caught up, and heard unspeakable words, 2. Cor. 12, 2. 4. — Finally the term heaven signifies: *God's majesty and glory*: thus it is called God's dwelling place: Pslm, 13, 5; God's throne, Isa. 66, 1; in accordance with which we pray: „*Our father who art in heaven.*“ Which is not to be understood as having reference to the visible heavens, as if perchance He did hide himself there; for He is said to fill heaven and earth, and to be a „*God at hand and not a far off,*“ Jerem. 23, 23. 24; we are told, that „*in him we live and move and have our being,*“ Acts 17, 27. 28; — but this has reference to His glory and the hidden light in which he dwelleth, and which nobody can approach unto, 1. Timot. 6, 16. God has dwelt in heaven from the beginning of the world, where He also will remain after the dissolution of the created heaven, as we read Isa. 57, 15: „*(I) that inhabit eternity*“ and Pslm. 93, 1. 2: „*The world is established, that it cannot be moved, thy throne is established of old thou art from everlasting.*“

We thus find distinguished two heavens, a created and an uncreated heaven, and Christ being said to have been ascended into the heaven, the question arises, which of the two heavens is implied in this doctrine.

385. *Christ cannot be said to have ascended into the created heavens, in order to dwell there, as he used to do at Capernaum, in his own dwelling, or in that of Lazarus; John. 12, 2. 3: or in that of Simon the leper, Matth. 26, 6: thus being bound to space. For:*

386. *α. St. Paul in speaking of Christ's resurrection expressly testifies that he ascended „far above all heavens,*“ Ephes. 4, 10; that he is made higher than the heavens, Heb. 7, 26; — Now he, who has ascended far above all heavens cannot be said to have been tied to space in the created heaven.

387. *β. Even after his ascension the Lord Jesus has appeared upon earth, and has been seen by some. And as Christ has thus proved himself able to be present upon earth, after his ascension, and before his final appearance at the last judgment, we conclude, that in his ascension his human body has not ascended and thereby been enclosed, as it were, in the created heavens. This proves that Christ has ascended*

into the uncreated heaven, namely into the heaven of the Majesty and Glory of God; which we intend to prove still more fully, when we have occasion to speak of Christ's sitting on the right hand of God.

388. The second head of our inquiry, (§. 383) concerns the nature of this ascension. This term also has two different significations:

1. It implies a change of place and space, from the lower to the upper regions; thus for instance it is employed to express Elijah's ascension into heaven, 2. Kings 2, 11; as also the ship's mounting up to the heavens, when God raises the stormy winds, Psal. 107, 26.

2. It is used with respect to God himself. On such occasions it implies God's withdrawing from the view of man after having revealed himself, — or God's entering his own dwelling, or the hidden light, which no man can approach. Thus the scriptures when speaking of God's appearing unto Abraham with whom He made a covenant, promising unto him a son, which appearance or revelation afterwards ceased, make use of the following expressions: Genes. 17, 22. „And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.“ Which is not to be understood as if God had ceased altogether to be with Abraham (in the spiritual sense of the word) but that He had withdrawn Himself from Abraham's outward view, and as it were, entered into his invisible and hidden dwelling. To Jacob God promises to multiply his seed: Genes. 35, 10 ff.; after which, this conversation being at an end, the historian adds 5, 13: „*And God went up from him in the place, where he talketh with him.*“

390. With reference to the last mentioned signification, God's descending is also taken notice of, when it pleased Him to make Himself known by means of a special revelation, or some mighty work. Genes. 11, 7. God speaks: „Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language;“ Exod. 19, 18: „And the mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it;“ Psal. 18, 9: he bowed the heavens also and came down.“

But this descension is not to be understood to imply that God had formerly not been present at such places. It means nothing more than that God, on such occasion had made known His presence either by putting on visible shape, or by performing some wonderful work, which is not the case at all times. From this also we may learn how to understand the term *ascension*, when it is applied to God; namely that it means nothing else, but his ceasing to be seen by the human

eye, or abstaining from testifying his presence by some mighty deed.

391. If we apply this explanation to the doctrine concerning the ascension of Christ, it is to be observed, that the term ascension is here employed in the two just mentioned significations. — In the first place his ascension *refers to space*, for we are told that the Lord was taken up, and that a cloud received him out of their (the disciples) sight, Acts 1, 9.

392. Christ's ascension implies, secondly, *an entering into the hidden glories of God*, so that he doth not any more now make known his presence to the human eye in bodily shape, or by wondrous works. For that the Son of God is in reality, according to his humanity, present every where, has been proved already. He has therefore not been taken up henceforth not to be visible any more on earth, but only to enter into his glory; for such he teaches himself: Luk. 24, 26: „ought not Christ to have suffered such things, and to enter upon his glory?“ and he himself designates John. 20, 1f., his ascension, as a going up to his Father: „I ascend unto my father and your father, and to my God and your God.“ Thus we have the connexion between the doctrine of Christ's ascension, and his sitting at the right hand of God. For as this sitting to the right hand of God implies *the full exercise of dominion which the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ is possessed of*, it follows, that Christ's ascension has been an entering upon this exercise of dominion.

393. The substance of this article of faith, may be summed up under the following heads. The Lord Jesus has by the ascension:

1. Entered upon his hidden glory, which he had in the presence of his Father ere the world was John. 17, 5.

2. His visible presence has been withdrawn from us, because he has, by this act, entered upon the invisible glory of God.

3. The invisible presence of Christ's human nature upon this earth can nevertheless not be said to have ceased, as little as it can be said of God, that, after having gone up before the eyes of Abraham, his presence had then ceased upon earth. (389.)

394. (cf. 380.) e. *Christ's being seated on right hand of God*, constitutes also part of Christ's exaltation. This fact is especially mentioned by Mark 16, 19: „He (the Lord) was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.“ — It now remains for us to consider more particularly the two terms, viz: *to sit*, and: *right hand of God*; inasmuch as on



a right understanding of the same very much depends a right view of this whole treatise.

395. *The right hand of God*; this is not meant to imply an arm of flesh, as if God had hands, as is the case with men. For God is a spirit, John. 4, 24; but a spirit hath no flesh and bones, Luk. 24, 39. And the holy scriptures, when speaking of God in a figure, that for instance, „his eyes behold the doings of men,“ and „that his ears are attentive unto our prayers,“ do not intend by this to signify any bodily members; but by His eyes we are to understand His omniscience, whilst by His ears the willingness is intended to be denoted, with which He listens to the prayers of the faithful. — In the same way, the terms: His *hand* or His *right hand* are employed to denote God's power and Omnipotence, of which a great many instances occur in scripture; thus we read Exod. 15, 6: „Thy right hand O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord hath dashed in pieces the enemy;“ — Psal. 77, 11: „I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high;“ — Psal. 68, 16: „the right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.“ — And likewise God himself says, Isa. 48, 13: „Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spanned the heavens.“ These passages sufficiently prove that by the term: right hand, the divine Omnipotence is intended, by which all these things have been wrought, for which reason we also find this right hand described as „the arm of his strength,“ Isa. 48, 13.

396. By the expression: *right hand*, an impression of God's *Glory* and *Majesty* is also intended to be conveyed. It is therefore God's right hand on which Christ sat down, denoted, Luk. 12, „the *right hand of the power of God*;“ Matth. 26, 64: „the *right hand of power*;“ Hebr. 1, 3: „the *right hand of the Majesty*;“ Matth. 19, 28: „the *throne of his glory*.“

397. The second term we had to consider, referred to the *sitting down*. This implies, first a position of the body and its members; like as Abraham sat on the entrance of his tent, Genes. 18, 1, or as the blind Bartimäus sat on the road side near Jericho begging alms, Luk. 18, 35. But it will be evident to every thinking man, that no such position can be implied in the present instance, when it is considered that the Lord Jesus, after having sat down on the right hand of God, has appeared upon this earth, Revel. 1, 13; and when we read the words of Stephen: „Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of men standing on the right hand of God.“

398. The term *to sit* means also, in the language of Scrip-

ture: to *govern*, thereby more especially referring to one's sitting upon the throne, and thus being invested with the government. In this sense scripture applies this word, Pslm. 81, 11: „the Lord hath sworn in truth unto David . . . Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne;“ which means that his children's children were to succeed him upon his throne and government. 2 Thess. 2, 4, we read: „he (the man of sin) sitteth in the temple of God,“ i. e. he governs over the church and the people of God. Rev. 17, 1: „the great whore that sitteth upon many waters,“ meaning thereby that she governs many nations.

399. In the same sense it is also said of God himself that he *sits*: Pslm. 47, 8: „God reigneth over the heathen: God *sitteth* upon the throne of his holiness; Pslm. 99, 1: „the Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: he *sitteth* between the Cherubims.“

400. Thus we find, that we are to understand Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, as intending his *governing the world*, to the exercise of which government we consider him fully entitled, for the following reasons:

1. because the term: to sit is otherwise explained to mean to *govern*: Pslm. 110, 1. 2: „*Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool; the Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*“ This same passage is quoted by the apostle: 1. Cor. 15, 25: „*For he must reign till all his enemies*“ etc. The same act therefore which the Psalmist calls a sittings, the Apostle denotes as a reigning. In the same way St. Peter explains the same term: Acts. 2, 34 ff.: „David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou, on my right hand“ etc. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly; that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ;“ — 1. Peter 3, 22: „Who (Christ) is gone into heaven, . . . angels and authorities and powers *being made subject* unto him.“

401. To sit on the right hand of God, means therefore nothing else than to govern and direct every thing that exists out of divine Omnipotence, power, divine Majesty and glory.

402. 2. This will be still more evidenced, when we consider that if one, is said to sit upon the divine throne, he must be also considered as governing with power and majesty. Christ's sitting on the right hand of God, is therefore nothing else but an almighty and divine governing of all matter, because God's sitting upon the throne implies just this and nothing else, Heb. 12, 2: „*Who (Christ) endured the shame*

. . . . and is set down at the right hand of God; Revel. 3, 21: „To him that overcometh I will grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne;“ ibid 7, 17: „For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them.“

403. The whole sum and substance therefore, of this article concerning Christ's sitting at the right hand of God means, that Christ, having entered again upon his glory has assumed the government over all creatures, which he effects with divine power, Omnipotence, Glory and Majesty.

404. The last mentioned attributes are without exception ascribed to Christ's human nature. For it was alone with reference to his human nature, that he stood in need and that he was capable, of being exalted, which was not the case with his divine nature seeing that the latter is, in itself the Glory, the Majesty, power and Omnipotence of God the Father, with whom it is of one and the same substance.

405. (cf. §. 380) Finally there is to be included in Christ's state of exaltation, his *coming to the final judgement*. But as this latter forms part, not only of Christ's state of exaltation, but also of his kingly office, this subject will better be treated in connexion with the latter, §. 523.



## Chapter XVI.

In order completely to bring about all that, which the human race required for the insurance of their soul's salvation, the Son of God has especially satisfied the demands of divine justice, and thereby effectually reconciled them unto God.

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406. The Lord Jesus, that he might accomplish his work, had to perform three different acts viz:

A. *To reconcile men to God,*

B. *to acquaint them with this reconciliation and to bring them to God,* and

C. *to govern them,* i. e. to lead them by his commands, to protect them from their enemies, to adjudge and reward to every man good or evil according to his deserts. To him therefore belong three different offices, viz: the *office of High priest or reconciliation*; the *office of prophet or teacher*; and the *office of governor or king*.

In the Chapter before us we intend to treat of the first of the above mentioned three offices.

407. The *office of high priest and reconciliator*. — Although we have stated formerly (§. 276) that all men are bound to yield unlimited obedience to God their creator, yet it is to be remembered that there is no man upon earth, who, after the fall of the first parent, is able to pay the debt of his guilt and to render this obedience, since there is none that doeth good, and none that did not commit sin. But God's justice nevertheless requires the discharge of this duty, nor can that justice be satisfied by any thing short of it. It was for this reason that Christ has been induced fully to discharge this debt on our behalf, in order that no man might, by his guilt, be hindered from participating his intended benefits.

408. Christ has therefore freed us from this guilt, with which we were burdened in the face of the divine judgement, by his holy, spotless and godly life. This is testified by Christ himself Matth. 5, 17: „*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy but to fulfil;*“ Galat. 4, 4. 5: „*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons;*“ Rom. 5, 18. 19: „*Therefore as by the offence of one, judgement come upon all men to*

condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." —

409. Now all men have sinned and divine justice must either subject them to eternal punishment, or exact from them complete satisfaction. But in this emergency no man knew any means of helping himself or others, as we read Pslm. 49, 7. 8: „None . . . can by any means redeem his brother, nor give God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth (lasts) for ever.“ Here again the Lord Jesus has graciously interposed, and mediated between God and men, inasmuch as by his sufferings and death he has satisfied the demands which God had to make upon guilty men. For he has taken upon himself the punishment of our sins, in order that mankind might be reconciled to the heavenly Father, and that divine justice might have no claim upon them on account of their sin.

410. But that this point might be fully understood, we must attend to the three following inquiries, viz.

- I. *Whether the Son of God has, by his suffering and death satisfied divine justice in behalf of the sins of mankind,*
- II. *Whether this satisfaction was brought about for the sins of all mankind, and*
- III. *Whether such satisfaction was able to remove every guilt and every sin.*

411. I. The first assertion, *Whether the Son of God by his suffering and death has satisfied the demands divine justice in behalf of the sins of mankind,* can be proved from the nature of those passages of Scripture in which this subject is referred to. There are, more especially, four different evils mentioned in scripture, of which men have been redeemed by Christ, viz:

1. *from sin,*
2. *from the wrath of God,*
3. *from the curse of the law, and*
4. *from devil and hell.*

412. 1. Christ has redeemed us from sin, because

a. *he has delivered himself up for the very purpose that he might redeem us from sin; Rom. 4, 25: „Who (Christ) was delivered for our offences and was raised for our justification; Galat. 1, 4: Who (Christ) gave himself for our sins.“ Titus 2, 14: „Who (Christ) gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.“*

413. b. *Because he has borne our sins, Isa. 53, 14: Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;“ v. 6: „the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all;“ John, 1, 29:*

„Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.“ 2 Cor. 5, 21: „For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.“ — In this respect we find a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus in the institution of scape goat (of the old Testament dispensation). For the highpriest was commanded to put his hand upon this scape-goat whilst he confessed all the transgressions of the congregation; all transgression and every sin having thus been laid upon this goat, the latter was led out by a man into the wilderness; so that thereby, as it were, the sins of the people were carried away by the goat into the wilderness, there to be put an end to, along with the animal, Levit. 3, 16. 20. ff.

414. c. *Because he has taken upon himself and suffered the punishment our sins had merited.* Isa. 53, 5: „He was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we were healed.“ This latter prophecy is quoted by St. Peter, Epist. 2, 24, and thus explained: „Who (Christ) his ownself bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.“

415. d. *In that he has sanctified and purified us by his blood.* 1 John, 1, 7: „the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God cleanseth us from all sin.“ Heb. 13, 12: „Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.“

416. In that he has died for our sins. 1 Cor. 15, 3: „Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;“ Heb. 9, 15: „For this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions . . . they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.“

417. From all which we must conclude, that he, who is giving himself for the sins of others carrying their sins on his own body, who bears the punishment which others deserved and dying for the sins of others, sanctifies them by his blood, — that such an individual is able to satisfy the demands, which divine justice may have upon the sins of others. Now this has been the case, in the fullest sense of the word, with the Lord Jesus, who can therefore be said with the fullest right to have satisfied divine judgement on behalf of our sins.

412. 2. *Christ has also redeemed us from the wrath of God and from his judgement; this has been accomplished:*

a. by his reconciling God unto men, for:

α. he has offered himself as a sacrifice of his body, for a sweet smelling savour, Ephes. 5, 2: „Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour;“

β. He has become the propitiation for our sins, 1 John. 2, 2: „He (Christ) is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.“ *ibid.* 9, 10: „Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.“

γ. He has made peace by his blood, between God and men. Coloss. 1, 19, 20: „For it pleased God . . . by him to reconcile all things unto himself.“

δ. He has reconciled us by his death, Rom. 5, 10: „When we were enemies, we were reconciled by the death of his Son;“ Coloss. 1, 21. 22: „Now hath he reconciled you in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.“

ε. He has procured for us grace by his blood, Rom. 3, 25: „God hath set forth (Christ) to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.“

ζ. He has given himself unto God as a propitiation for our sins, 1 Cor. 5, 7: „Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.“ For like as in times of old, God graciously accepted of sacrifices for sins, and (as a type) forgave the latter, for the sake of the first, Levit. 4, 21. 26. 31. 35. even so has our heavenly Father accepted the sacrifice of his beloved Son, and for his sake pardoned our sins.

η. By his blood he has acquired for us forgiveness of sins. Matth. 26, 28: „This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.“

419. b. *By his saving us from the wrath of God* inasmuch as he has not only given himself as a propitiation for all, 1 Tim. 2, 6. but also has redeemed us from the wrath to come, 1 Thess. 1, 10., by the sacrifice of his own life, Matth. 20, 28: „the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many;“ and by the shedding of his blood, „In whom (Christ) we have the redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin. Ephes. 1, 7. Coloss. 1. 14.

420. c. *By his purchasing us from divine judgement and making ourselves his own;* Acts. 20, 28: „the church of God which he has purchased by his own blood; 1 Pct. 1, 18. 19: „ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ;“ Revel. 5, 9: „Thou (the Lamb) hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.“ 1 Cor. 6, 20: „ye are bought with a price.“

421. d. *By his justifying us by his blood.* Every one who is justified, is, by this means, delivered from wrath and from judgement. If therefore the Lord Jesus has justified us by his blood, Rom. 5, 9. than has he, of course, by his blood delivered us from wrath and divine judgement.

422. If therefore we read of one, who has given himself unto God as a propitiation for the sins of mankind, who has made peace between them and God; who, by his death, has reconciled God, and brought about grace by his blood; who has acquired forgiveness of sins by his blood, given his life for the salvation of men, purchasing them by his blood from divine judgement, and justified them by his blood, then we may be sure of his having redeemed mankind from the wrath of God, by his himself making satisfaction for their sins. Now Christ has accomplished all the abovementioned facts; and has thereby redeemed mankind from the wrath of God, by making satisfaction for their sins.

423. 3. *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law;* he has accomplished this, in that he subjected himself unto the law, Galat. 3, 13 ff. „Christ hath redeemed us from *the curse of the law being made a curse for us*, for it is written: cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ.“

424. Which leads us to the conclusion that, if one is redeeming others from the curse of the law, so that he himself becomes a curse for them, he must necessarily by this act satisfy the demands, the judge has upon the guilt of transgressors. Now the Lord Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law in that he himself has become a curse for us, and by this satisfied God the Father in behalf of our sins and paid our dues.

425. 4. *Christ has, finally, redeemed us from devil and hell.* This he has done by his death, Heb. 2, 14: „that through death he might destroy the power of death, that is the devil.“ The devil is, (as is the case with some men in an earthly court of justice) the executor of the sentences of divine justice. He carries out the punishment, which has been pronounced over the sinner; but as soon as he loses this his power he has no more dealings with divine judgement. For as long as the sinner's sentence is to be carried out, as long must the devil retain his power over him. But if one, by his death succeeded in taking from the devil his power as executor of the sentences of divine judgment, he would gain as much for the sinner, that the sentences could henceforth not any more be executed. This could only be done by his dying in the place of the sinner, that thereby divine judgement might be satis-



fied. And as the Lord Jesus by his death has redeemed us from the power of Satan, it follows that by this death he has, for our sake, satisfied divine justice.

426. II. The second inquiry: *Whether this satisfaction has been brought about for all mankind*, is also to be answered in the affirmative, because such we are frequently taught in scripture; for

427. a. *God has promised His Son to be the Saviour of all mankind.* Genes 3, 15: „*It (the seed) of the women shall bruise thy (the serpent's) heel;*“ ibid. 22, 18: „*And in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.*“ These promises concern all nations of the earth, and no man upon earth can therefore be said to be excluded from them. It is this the first promise which has been given unto Adam, not for his own benefit only, but also for that of the whole human race, which had sinned in Adam.

428. b. *God has given his Son for the Salvation and to the benefit of all mankind*, John. 3, 17. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him *might be saved*; 1 John, 4, 14: „*We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world;*“ Rom. 8, 32: „*He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all;*“ Galat, 4, 4: „*God sent forth his Son, made of a woman made under the law.*“ But all men, without exception are under the law, as we are read Rom. 3, 19: „*What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.*“ This proves that the Son of God has been sent to all men; Titus 2, 11: „*The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men;*“ Luk. 2, 10: „*I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*“

429. c. *Upon the Lord Jesus have been laid all our sins.* Isa. 53, 6: „*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities;*“ John. 1, 29: „*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.*“

430. d. *Because the Lord Jesus has died for all men.* 2 Cor. 5, 14. 15: „*We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all etc.*“ Heb. 2, 9: „*he (Christ) by the grace of God, should taste death for every men;*“ Coloss. 1, 19. 20: „*For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, . . . by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.*“

431. e. *The Son of God has improved the condition of every human creature, even of as many as have been polluted by*

*Adam's sin.* Matth. 18, 11: „The Son of man is come to save *that which is lost*;" Rom. 5, 18: „As by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon *all men* unto justification of life." 1 Cor. 15, 22: „For as in Adam all die, even so in *Christ shall all be made alive*."

432. f. *All men are called upon to partake of the benefits of the Lord Jesus.* As many as have been called upon by God to enjoy the benefits of the Lord Jesus Christ, for as many has the latter made satisfaction; but God is calling all men, without exception: Matth, 11, 28: „Come unto me, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden*, and I will give you rest;" Acts. 17, 30: „Now commandeth God *all men every where* to repent." (Of this more shall be said when we treat on the office of prophet and teacher.)

433. g. *The unbelievers are to be punished for the very reason, that they would not believe that Christ died for them.* Mrk. 16, 6: „He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but *he that believeth not shall be damned*;" John. 16, 8. 9: „When he (the Holy Ghost) is come he will reprove the world of sin . . . because they believe not on me;" *ibid.* 3, 18: „*He that believeth on him (the Son) is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*" — And what was it, these condemned unbelievers had been called upon to believe; — nothing else but what the Apostle Paul himself confessed: viz, „the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me," Galat. 2, 20. Whosoever has no faith in this, is condemned because of his unbelief. Thus, for instance, has Judas been condemned because of his not believing that Christ has given himself for him; and Caiphas also had the same fate because of the same unbelief. Now God, does not condemn anybody because of his not believing anything to be true which in reality proves not be true at all; which shews it to be a truth, that Christ has given himself for Judas, Caiphas, and for all other unbelievers, consequently for all mankind.

434. h. *Even those have been redeemed for by Christ, who are eventually lost for all eternity.* The human race is divided into two parts, viz: the believers, concerning whom there can exist no doubt that Christ has died for them, — and the unbelievers. If the Son of God can be proved to have died also for the latter, then it must follow that he has died for all mankind; for there is no human being who does not belong to one of the two just mentioned classes.

That Christ has died also for the unbelievers can be proved from the following testimonies. Rom. 15, 15: „De-

stroy not him with they meat, for whom Christ died;" 1. Cor. 8, 11: „through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died;" 2. Peter 2, 1: „False teachers . . . denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction;" Heb. 10, 29: „Of how much more punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." — We are therefore sure, that Christ has died for all men, for if it were otherwise,

i) *There would be little or no comfort in the consideration, that the Lord Jesus has died but for a few among men.* For then no man could anyhow be sure that Christ had died for him. Whilst, on the other hand, there must always be great comfort in the conviction, that Christ, by his death, has redeemed all mankind without any exception. We have seen already that he has died for all men: I am a man, therefore I may rest assured that Christ has died also for me.

436. III. We proposed to inquire, thirdly, *whether such satisfaction was able to remove every guilt.* This question also is to be answered in the affirmative, and to be supported by the following considerations:

*a. Christ has redeemed us from sin, reconciled us unto God and acquired for us forgiveness and righteousness.* On this head it is to be kept in mind, what has been already stated concerning redemption, reconciliation, forgiveness of sin, and justification. We conclude accordingly, that a prisoner, who is not entirely freed from all his fetters, is not in state to leave his prison; like as a criminal who has treated with his judge about a part only of his guilt and transgression, cannot be said to have done with him. The sinner to whom only part of his sins have been forgiven, cannot be said to have already found entire forgiveness for the same; he cannot be said to be justified, who is not free from every sin. If therefore Christ is said to have redeemed and reconciled us, and acquired for us forgiveness and justification, then we must conclude, that he has purified us from every sin.

437. *β. God forgives every sin to all those upon whom he has mercy.* That God's grace removes every sin can be proved: Isa. 38, 17: „thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back;" Michah 7, 19: „He will turn again, he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." — That such has been done by Christ, can be proved Joh. 1, 17: „grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" Acts 4, 12: „Neither is there salvation in any other" etc., which proves, that every sin, which has been forgiven, has

been atoned for by Christ; and as God is forgiving their sins unto all men, we conclude that Christ has atoned for the sins of all men.

438. *The scriptures expressly declare, that Christ has taken away all sins from us: 1. John. 1, 7: „the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from every sin;“ John. 1, 29: „Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;“ Zachar. 3, 8. 9: „I will bring forth my servant the Branch; for behold the stone that I have laid . . . saith the Lord Zabaoth, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.“*



## Chapter XVII.

After satisfaction has been done to divine judgment on behalf of men, and the latter have, by this means, been reconciled to God, it pleases the Lord Jesus to have this work of grace announced to them by the preaching of the Gospel, thus inviting them to be partakers of his mercy.

439. The Lord Jesus Christ has brought about a reconciliation between God and sinful men, so that now nothing is hindering them from acknowledging and accepting this benefit with grateful hearts. In which latter act the Lord Jesus again faithfully assists them, in order to lead them to their heavenly Father. But for the better understanding of the same, we have to inquire:

- I. In *which manner* the Lord Jesus proceeds in this act, and
- II. *Which means* he employs to bring about the desired effect.

440. Christ is brought near to the sinner:

- a. *by the calling,*
- b. *by repentance,*
- c. *by justification,*
- d. *by conversion,*
- e. *by renewing,*

f. *by the new birth,*

g. *by the union with Christ.*

441. a. The *calling* is the first act, by which men are requested to become partakers of the benefits of Christ; this calling we stand in great need of. Suppose a prison being filled with prisoners who had all been ransomed; but as long as this their redemption is not communicated to them, and they requested to leave the prison, their redemption would be of no avail to them. Exactly so this great work of mercy, by which Christ has delivered us from the pains of hell by his blood, would be of no avail, if we had it not announced to us, and if we were not requested to become partakers of the benefits connected therewith.

442. That this might be brought about, the Son of God has taken upon him the office of *prophet and teacher*, in the exercise of which he has instructed men of the mercy which God intends to bestow upon them.

Concerning this office four points are to be considered viz:

1. *The providential ways in which he leads all men, whereby he becomes their teacher,*
2. *what it is that he teaches,*
3. *whom he teaches,*
4. *to which purpose he teaches and for which reasons.*

443. 1. *Christ exercises the office of a teacher, being the instructor of all mankind.* This is a truly divine office, which the Lord Jesus ascribes to himself, Isa. 48, 17: „*I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go.*“ The same function the Lord Jesus applies unto himself when he says Matth. 11, 27: „*No man knoweth the father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*“

444. Christ's title to such functions can be proved:

a. From the predictions of the prophets, Deutr. 18, 15: „*The Lord thy God will raise up a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethern like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;*“ Isai. 50, 4: „*the Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know to speak a word in season to him that is weary;*“ *ibid.* 61, 1. 2: „*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.*“

b. *By the voice of his heavenly Father,* Matth. 17, 5: „*Behold a voice out of the cloud, which said: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.*“

c. *By the miracles by which he supported his preaching*, so that his hearers were obliged to confess: „This is of a truth that prophet, that should come into the world,“ John. 6, 14; „a great prophet is risen up amongst us;“ and that „God hath visited his people.“

445. 2. *What it is, the Lord Jesus has been teaching.* The fact is that he taught nothing else but the Gospel, which is the merciful message concerning the gracious purposes of God, the forgiveness of our sins and eternal salvation, all which have their source solely in the grace of God and the merits of Christ.

446. Although it has been proved already, that Christ has not abolished the law; yet can he not be called a preacher of the law, because he is, in this respect put in opposition to Moses; John. 1, 17: „*The law has been given by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ.*“ This is also plainly alluded to in Christ's own teaching, which the Evangelist Matthew sums up in the following words, „*Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, 4, 17. — And Christ himself advises his disciples to teach that „thus it behoved Christ to suffer . . . and that *remission of sins should be preached in his name*, among all nations,“ Luk. 24, 46. 47. — Accordingly the preaching of the Lord Jesus is an invitation to heaven for human kind, to repentance and forgiveness of sin; with other words an invitation to avail themselves of all the good things which the Lord Jesus has acquired for them by his blood and by his death. Which fact we find also referred to by Christ in the parable of the royal marriage-feast, Matth. 22, 3 and in that of the marriage supper, Luk. 14, 7.

447. The Apostles used to characterise their preaching by the following sentences: „*For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*,“ Acts. 20, 27; — „*For I determined not to know anything unto you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified*,“ 1. Cor. 2, 2; — „*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God; for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*,“ 2. Cor. 5, 19 ff. — This is the whole substance of the message, which the Lord Jesus had intended to lay before us, and to propose to us in his capacity as teacher.

448. 3. *Whom he teaches.* As the office of reconciliation and redemption concerns all mankind it becomes necessary that all men should be instructed concerning it. This consi-

deration would in itself be sufficient to prove that the call to Salvation has gone forth unto all men, without any exception. But lest some might be tormented by the painful thought, that God might not have called him to partake of his grace, and to become an heir of his kingdom, we will try to prove the inexceptionable calling of all mankind, as follows:

449. a. *The Lord Jesus calls all men to come to him*, Matth. 11, 28: „Come unto me *all ye that labour and heavy laden*, and I will give you rest.“ Now as all men must be said to labour and to be heavy laden, it follows that Christ has called them all unto him.

450. b. *He has commanded that all men should be called and taught*. Thus he commands his disciples Matth. 28, 19: „Go ye therefore and teach all nations“ etc.; Mark. 16, 15: „Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature,“ which command his disciples faithfully executed, as we read in the same Chapter 5, 20: „they went forth, and preached every where.“ Coloss. 1, 6: „Which (Gospel) is come unto you as it is in all the world, and bringeth forth fruit;“ v. 23: „Which (Gospel) was preached to every creature which is under heaven;“ v. 28: „We preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.“ And St. Paul thus explains the commands which had been given to the Apostles by the Lord Jesus, Acts 17, 30: „Now (God) commandeth all men everywhere to repent.“ We thus find that no man has been excluded from the merciful preaching of the Gospel, seeing

451. c. *That all such that do not come to the kingdom of Christ, nor avail themselves of the mercies which he has acquired for them, are punished, because of their not having listened to this call*. If God pronounces punishment over one because of his not having been obedient to his invitation, then we may be sure, that such a one has been called; now such is the case: God punishes with hellfire and condemnation the unbelievers for the very reason of their not having been obedient to his call, which proves that the unbelievers also have surely been called by God.

452. The fact of the unbelievers also having been called can be established by many passages of scripture. Proverb. 1, 24. ff. „Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, *I also will laugh at your calamity*: I will mock when your fear cometh;“ Isa. 65, 2. 5: „I have stretched out my hands all the

day long unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts; these are smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all day.“

Such passages are also Isa. 66, 4; Jerem. 7, 13 ff.; more especially the parables, which the Lord Jesus made use of for the better elucidation of this subject. We turn to Luk. 14, 16 ff. and find there, that the Lord of the mansion had determined, v. 24, „that none of those men which had been bidden should taste of his upper,“ because thy had rejected and refused his friendly invitation, which refusal caused his indignation to rise. — And the Lord Jesus declares expressly, John. 3, 18: „He that believeth on him (the Son of God) is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son.

453. 4. *To which purpose, and from what reason he has taught.* If we look into the word of God, we find that the Lord Jesus has taught mankind from no other reason, but

a. *That they should repent,* Matth. 4, 17: „Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;“ Act. 17, 30: „Now (God) commandeth all men, every where to repent;“

b. *That they might get forgiveness of sins,* Luk. 24, 47: „That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.“

c. *That they should be perfected in Christ,* Coloss. 1, 28: „We preach warning every man, and teaching every man; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesu.“

d. *That he might give them rest,* Matth. 11, 28: „Come unto me etc. and I will give you rest.“

e. *That they might enjoy the heavenly gifts,* Isa. 55, 1: „Ho, every one, that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye buy and eat; ye, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price;“ Matth. 22, 4: „I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage;“ Luk. 14, 17: „Come, for all things are now ready,“

f. *That he might take them under his protection,* Matth. 23, 37: „How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as the hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.“

454. It has been asserted by some, that besides the abovementioned, God had still an other reason for calling men, which is, that by it to lead them to destruction, or that they might fall a victim to their own impenitence. But this assertion is not only against the light of reason, but is also nowhere to



be found in holy writ. Thus we may rest assured, that our God is not desirous of misleading or bringing to destruction anybody by pretensions of this nature.



## Chapter XVIII.

In order that men might in reality come to that salvation, to which they have been called by God, they are by Him led to it by means of sincere repentance, in consequence of which they are induced, being convicted of, and repenting their sins, to take their refuge to Christ, and by their thus confiding in him, acquire mercy and forgiveness of sins.

455. To insure us of our eternal salvation in His presence, God has made ample preparations, in all the proceedings which have been already treated of. It is true that the Lord Jesus has delivered us from our sins, reconciled us to God, opened unto us heaven and eternal salvation, — even so that God has called upon us to partake of his grace and of the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ. But in to the enjoyment of these benefits, we have only then success, if we are aided by divine power. This aid God bestows upon us; thus raising again and upholding sinful men.

456. But this restoration of man is not accomplished at once, but only *partly*, so that only the *beginning* of it is made in this life. In this respect four different points are to be attended to, viz:

1. *Man*, who requires help, and whose restoration is called *repentance*:

2. *God the Lord*, who is either bringing sinful men before the judgement seat, or forgiving them their sins, which latter is called *justification*, or *forgiveness of sins*; men, who are induced to turn away from their evil and sinful life, giving themselves with all their might to the service of God; this is called *conversion*, *new birth*, and *renewing*, and

3. *Christ*, and the fact that men become united with him; which is called the *engrafting in Christ*. But the complete

restoration, is only brought about after the death of this body, in eternal life and in the kingdom of glory.

457. The first of these works of mercy is *repentance*. Concerning which we have to inquire:

- a. *Its nature,*
- b. *Its necessity,*
- c. *Of how many parts it consists,*
- d. *Its source,*
- e. *Whom among men it might concern, and*
- f. *Its fruits and consequences.*

458. *What is repentance?* Repentance means a real acknowledgment and sincere repentance of the sins of which we feel ourselves guilty, along with the firm assurance that God is willing to forgive them for the sake and the merits of his beloved Son.

459. b. *The necessity of repentance,* can be partly proved from the fact that God in so many instances and so frequently requests us to repent; partly also from reasons, which God himself has pointed out to us in scripture. Such are: that forgiveness of sins cannot be expected, unless they are repented of, Acts. 5, 31; that by repentance men may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, 2 Timot. 2, 25. 26. and from eternal condemnation, 2 Peter 3, 9. Whosoever therefore does not repent cannot expect to find forgiveness of sins, remains in the snares of the devil, and is a victim of eternal condemnation. Even so is impenitence drawing down the wrath of God upon mankind, Rom. 2, 5: „*After thy hardness and impenitent heart treasureth (thou) up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God.*“ Impenitence makes void God's works of mercy, Rev. 2, 5; draws down the fiery persecution of divine judgement v. 16, and great tribulation, v. 21, 22.

460. Besides the adduced reasons, repentance is also necessary

a. *That the preaching of the Gospel might take effect upon us.* For both John the baptist and the Lord Jesus have commenced their preaching with the following words: „*Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*“ Matth, 3, 2; 4, 17: this proves the kingdom of God, which has been preached by the Gospel, to be connected with repentance. Wherever therefore there is no repentance, there cannot possibly take place either the kingdom of heaven, or the promises connected therewith.

β. *That we may love God.* Nobody can serve two masters; he must necessarily hate the one and love the other, Matth. 6, 24. If there is therefore one who does not hate sin, but on the contrary has a predilection for it, such a one is the

servant of sin, John 8, 34. and it is therefore impossible for him to serve God. He must hate Him, and do the things which he knows to be hateful in His sight. Whosoever on the other hand is willing to come to God must love him and hate sin, and consequently if any one wishes to come to God, such a one must hate sin.

*y. That we might desist from sin.* Every one who remains in sin, cannot expect the service, which he renders unto God, to be acceptable un to him. Isa. 1, 15: „When ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood;“ Pslm. 59, 7: „let his (the condemned) prayer become sin.“ The kingdom of God is inaccessible to him, and the lake prepared for him, which burneth with fire and brimstone; Galat. 5, 21: „They which do such things (the works of the flesh) shall not inherit the kingdom of God.“ 1 Cor. 6. 9. 10: „the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven;“ Revel. 21, 8: „the unbelieving etc. etc. shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.“ — The departing from sin is a fruit of repentance. For every one, who is not conscious of the burden of sin, will not leave that sin, which is so congenial to his nature.

461. *Of how many parts repentance consists?* We answer: of two parts, viz: *the act of repentance*, and *of faith*.

The act of repentance consists of

8. man's conviction of being a sinner,
9. the conviction that God is zealous against sin; and that he is determined to punish the same with hellfire in all eternity;
10. the conviction that man is by no means able to help himself in this emergency, and that he has to expect this help from no creature whatsoever;
11. of a deepfelt repentance and sorrow with which the sinner feels himself sorely afflicted on account of his sin; and finally
12. of a heartfelt desire, if possible, not to have sinned at all, together with a intense hatred against sin.

462. A repentance of such a nature we meet with in the case of King *David*, who after having, with an afflicted heart, listened to the threatenings of divine judgement, exclaimed „I have sinned against the Lord,“ 2 Samuel. 12, 13; — in the case of *Peter*, who with many tears and much anxiety repented his having denied his master, Matth. 26, 75; — in the case of *the women who had been a sinner*, and who whilst repenting, shed her tears so abundantly as to wet the Lord's feet therewith, Luk. 7, 38; — in the case of the *publican*, who, in the deepfelt contrition of his heart, would not lift up asmuch as

his eyes unto heaven, but prayed God, with a repenting soul to grant him forgiveness of his sins, Luk. 18, 13.

463. The same sort of repentance manifests itself also in the case of those ungodly men, who, as their conscience awakens to the state of their soul, are despairing of the grace of God. Thus we read of *Cain*, that, when his sins were laid before him, he exclaimed: „My punishment is greater than I can bear.“ Genes. 4. 13. Judas also repented his having shed innocent blood, and by this thought fell in such a state of affliction, that he took away his life, in order to deliver himself of this painful idea, Matth. 27, 4. 5.

464. The second part of the christian's repentance consists of *faith* (cf. §. 461.) Faith is a heartfelt confidence of a sinful but repenting man, that God is willing, in accordance with His gracious promises, in mercy to forgive all his sins, through Jesus Christ.

465. Faith constitutes a most indispensable part of repentance for, we find:

α. both, (repentance and faith) always mentioned together in Scripture: Mrk. 1. 15: „*repent ye and believe the Gospel.*“ — And to the woman who had been a sinner, and who had repented her sins with many tears, Luk. 7, 38 the Lord Jesus says: „*thy faith has saved thee, go in peace.*“

β. that a *repentance of sins without faith, would lead us to despair.* This is clearly proved in the adduced instances of Cain and Judas. For the repentance of these two men agrees entirely with that of David and Peter, with that exception, that the first could not find any comfort in their mournful state, whilst the latter have found this comfort in the grace of God, by which their hearts have been lifted up again and gladdened. Thus we see that it is faith, that constitutes the difference between that repentance which leads to despair and condemnation, and that which leads to the grace of God. Which proves faith to be a principal part of a true and saving repentance. And it is to this circumstance St. Paul refers, when speaking, 2 Cor. 7, 10. of a twofold sorrow: „*for godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of:* (such a repentance namely which is accompanied by faith, as was the case with that of David and Peter) *but the sorrow of the world worketh death*“ (a sorrow which is without faith, as was that of Cain and Judas). Repentance consists therefore of these two parts. Every one who becomes a conviction of his sins, and sincerely repents and mourns over them, and who believes that God is willing to forgive him his sins, out of mere mercy, for the sake and the merits of Jesus Christ, — may be convinced that he has come to a real and saving repentance.

466. Besides the abovementioned, there are other things, which are to be considered as *unessential* parts of repentance, viz:

I. *The satisfaction which man may be induced to make and the ransom he may be willing to render for his sins*, for

1. Such has nowhere in scripture been required as an essential ingredient of repentance;

2. If we were able to make satisfaction for our sins, then the blotting out of the same would not any more be *of grace*, which latter is yet taught in scripture.

3. Many have repented, without having given satisfaction for their sins. Thus we read of the *publican* having repented, and consequently delivered of his guilt, without having given satisfaction for them, Luk. 18, 13. 14. The same was the case with the *woman who had been a sinner*, *ibid.* 7, 50; nor did *Peter* do penance, while yet his repentance was considered a sincere and effectual one, as also did one of the *malefactors*, who were crucified with the Lord Jesus, for he cannot be said to have been in a position to be able to do satisfaction for his sins, Luk. 23, 40 ff. — From which follows, that, for the sake of an effectual and saving repentance, our own satisfaction is not required.

467. Nor can

II. *The confession of sin, or the confessing the same to the priest* be said to be a necessary part of repentance. It is true that the (lutheran) church has retained the same, because of its usefulness and the wholesome influence it is calculated to exert. For by means of the services connected with the same, all those who intend to join the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, become, in as far as they require it, properly instructed of its importance. For there they are admonished to try themselves, whether they might approach the table of the Lord as worthy receivers; the Minister having thereby an opportunity to admonish his audience as to the things pertaining to their salvation. And every one, who has a heart burdened with care has then an occasion offered to him for unburdening the same before the Minister of the divine word and for receiving his advice. Finally it offers an opportunity to bring home God's promises concerning the merciful forgiveness of our sins to every one more especially. — Yet, in spite of all these advantages, confession is not to be considered as a necessary part of repentance, as if without the same there could be no effectual repentance. To prove which, we state:

468. That, even before this usage had been introduced in the church, men have repented effectually. For it is, in itself, quite sufficient for man, to confess his sins unto

God; and many pious Christians residing among heathens and turks, do sincerely repent their sins, and find grace by God, although they never have occasion to confess them to any mortal.

469. III. Nor is the *new obedience* to be considered as a part of repentance, but rather as a fruit of the same.

470. d. *The source of this repentance.* Repentance must be wrought in us by God, because no man is able to bring himself to it, by his own exertions. „We are not sufficient to think anything as of ourselves,“ 2. Cor. 3, 5; „For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do,“ Philip. 2, 13. — Now we have found repentance to consist of two parts, viz. of a sorrow on account of the evil consequences of sin, and of a joy, on account of the merciful forgiveness of sins. The sorrow has its source in the law, for by it is „the knowledge of sin,“ Rom. 3, 20; for the wrath of God has been made manifest to every sinner, as we read Deut. 27, 20: „Cursed be he that confirmeth noth all the words of this law to do them.“ And St. Paul distinctly says Rom. 4, 15: „the law worketh wrath.“

471. The joy springs from the Gospel, which is a joyful message of the grace of God, and of his forgiving our sins, and in which we are promised that every one who believes in him shall be saved. It tells us, that the Lord Jesus had come into the world to save sinners, 1. Timoth. 1, 15; that his blood cleanses us from all our sins, 1. John. 1, 7; that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8, 1. — These are the doctrines which a faithful Minister has to preach to his hearers, in accordance to the will of Christ; Matth. 13, 52: „Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.“

472. It is accordingly of importance, that these old and new things, Law and Gospel should not be mixed up with each other, but carefully kept separate. Like as the law does not teach the forgiveness of sin, so nobody has a right to look upon the Gospel as a mere call to repentance, by which men should come to a conviction of their sins, and by it be frightened. For the reader will have had sufficient occasion to see by the forgiving statements, how that the Law and the Gospel had each of them their separate functions, how that the Law served to frighten the conscience, whilst the Gospel has to pour comfort in the same, how that the Law could comfort no sinner, whilst the Gospel was to frighten no one on account of his sins.

473. c. *Who among men are concerned by this repentance.* It concerns all men who have sinned without exception. It

makes no difference, whether they formerly acknowledged the grace of God, or not, whether they had committed sins from neglect or from wilfulness. This can be proved by the fact:

474. *That all sinners have been called to repentance.* Matth. 11, 28: „Come unto me *all ye that labour*“ etc.; Luk. 24, 47: „That repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in his name among *all nations*;“ John. 7, 37: „*If any men thirst*, let him come unto me, and drink;“ Acts 10, 43: „To him give all prophets witness, that through *his name, whosoever believeth* in him shall receive remission of sins.“ — In this preaching of the Gospel all men without exception, and without any distinction are addressed, as well as those who had known already the mercy of God, and those who had not. It is therefore not with us to imagine such a distinction or to attempt to put a limit to the lovingkindness of our God,

475. *Because God calls to repentance, and receives in mercy especially those, who have formerly known him and his grace, but have deprived themselves again of this knowledge in consequence of sin.* Jerem. 3, 1: „Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet *return again to me*, saith the Lord;“ v. 6, 7: „Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. And I said, after she had done all these things, *turn thou unto me.*“

David also, who by inspiration of the Holy spirit, has been able to write so many beautiful Psalms, fell afterwards in to sin, to return from which he was requested by Nathan, 2. Samuel. 12, 7ff. — Manasse, who when a child, had been brought by his father to a conviction of the truth, gave himself, at a later period, unto idolatry, and other grievous sins, 2. Kings 21, 21ff., and was afterwards induced to repent by means of a hard imprisonment, 2. Chron. 33, 11. 12. — Peter also, after having denied the Lord Jesus, was induced to repent, partly by the authority of the Lord himself, Luk. 22, 61. partly by a kind conversation, John. 21, 15ff. — All which, after having, as it is admitted on all sides, committed sin, have repented and been received again in mercy; and in the same way also those in our days, who fall into sins may hope to come repentance and to receive mercy.

476. *f. As to the fruits and consequences of repentance;* of this, two are to be mentioned, viz:

a. *God's grace and mercy*, which He bestows again upon that man whom, on account of his sin, he formerly hated. Thus David says Pslm. 51, 17: „the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou *wilt*

not despise;" Pslm. 34, 19: „The Lord is *nigh* unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.“ And God says himself Isa. 57, 15: „I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a *contrite and humble spirit*; *ibid.* 66, 2: „To this man will I look, even to him, *that is poor and of a contrite spirit*, and trembleth at my word.“ That this is indeed the case, is sufficiently proved by the instances connected with Peter, the publican, the woman who had been a sinner, to whom the Lord Jesus has spoken words of comfort, and whom he has mercifully accepted again. It are more espially those who are poor in the spirit, who have the promise of inheriting life eternal, Matth. 5, 3.

477.  $\beta$ . *A new obedience and change of life*; and where both are absent then the latter estate of such a man is worse than his first, and of such a one the proverb holds true: „The dog is turned to his vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire,“ 2. Pet. 2, 20. 22. But every one who comes to saving repentance, departs from evil and does good, to which we are frequently exhorted by God: Isa. 1, 16; 1. Peter, 3, 11; Pslm. 34, 15 etc.; and this for the following reasons. Every one who repents his sins from his heart, must necessarily hate the same; and in thus hating it, he will take care not to committ them again, thereby, by the help of the spirit mortifying the deeds of the body, Rom. 8, 13. and „crucifying the flesh, with its affections and lusts,“ Galat. 5, 24.





## Chapter XIX.

God summons the repenting sinner before His judgement seat, and after having convicted him of his sins, and pronounced punishment over him, He justifies him, and in mercy forgives him all his sins, for the sake of the sinners having accepted by faith the merits of Christ, who has given to divine justice that satisfaction, which sin and its punishment had made requisite.

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478. We have been considering man in his sinful state, in consequence of which state (if God would deal with him according to justice), he would be brought before the judgement of God, there to be convicted of sin, and condemned to eternal death. — We have now to look for the means by which he might be saved this emergency, delivered from his transgression, and the punishment consequent to it. As such means are to be considered *Justification* and *forgiveness of sins*. — In order to get a right view of this matter, we have to attend to the following considerations. —

479. a. *What it is, that is implied by the term „justify.“* The proper meaning of this word is perfectly familiar to those who have any acquaintance with the proceedings of a court of justice; in the course of which only those criminals are looked upon as justified who, although they have been convicted of their evil deeds, and have been condemned to punishment, but have yet been liberated out of mere mercy, acquitted of their guilt, and looked upon and declared to be, just. Exactly so it is the case with mankind, who are all, without exception brought before God's judgement throne, there to be convicted of sin, but out of mercy and for the sake of our Mediator, the Lord Jesus, to have their sins forgiven, — as if they had never committed sin, and to be looked upon as such. Such an act, and nothing else, is implied by the term „justification.“

480. We have also to consider:

b. *the nature of this justification, and what it consists of;* whereby we have especially to inquire, what it is that forms part of justification, and what not.

481. The fact is, that justification is nothing else, than a forgiveness of sins, and a remission of all punishment, whereby men are considered and declared to be just, as if they had never committed sin, and never become guilty before God. But for the full understanding of this point, we

shall here repeat once more the fact, that sinful man is brought before the judgement seat of God, especially for two ends, viz :

482. First, *in order to exact from him the discharge of the debt which Adam had incurred even when in his state of perfectness, and before he had sinned, namely that of entire obedience.* Men were bound to yield due obedience to all the laws which God had written into his heart, or which He might proffer him in any other way. Of this duty no man could possibly free himself, even after all men had rebelled against God by sin and disobedience. If therefore divine justice does exact this obedience of us, it follows that we cannot be justified unless we have settled this debt.

483. Thus the first act, or the first action of God's Judgement is brought about, which consists in the fact, that the *Lord Jesus has fulfilled the law in our behalf.* He applies this justice on us, as if we had wrought out the same, and had fulfilled the law, as has been proved §§. 422, 423. Thus the believer is justified in that all the guilt of which he had been accused of, is entirely remitted; for the Lord Jesus having settled on his behalf his debt of due obedience, the sinner is looked upon as if he himself had fulfilled the whole law, and had paid the debt of obedience.

484. The second action of the divine judgement concerns *the sins of which man has made himself guilty.* It is impossible for him to give satisfaction for this guilt. This is evident from the proceeding statement, and will be still more established in the sequel of this treatise. It was therefore necessary for the Lord Jesus to intercede again in this respect, and to set all things aright. And because of his having, by his sufferings and death, borne our sins and suffered for them, these sins are not any more imputed unto us, but remitted as if we had never committed them. 1. John. 2, 1. 2: „If any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, *Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;*“ 2. Cor. 5, 21: „for he (God) hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made *the righteousness of God in him.*“

485. Thus in the act of our justification two different things are accomplished, namely, in the first place, the righteousness of Christ and his fulfilling the law are imputed unto man, as if he had done these things himself; — and secondly, the sins which he had committed are not imputed to him, as if he had never committed the same. By the first act he is delivered from a debt, which he never pos-

sibly could have paid; whilst by the second he is freed from the burden of sin, which he never could have atoned for, and the punishment for which he could never have sustained. By these two acts he is delivered from the judgement of God, in such a manner, that henceforward he has not any more to fear either guilt or transgression, nor the evils which are a consequence of them.

486. In order to the establishment of the facts which we have just now stated, it remains for us to prove:

1. *that justification is wrought out by the imputing unto us of the righteousness of Christ, and of his merits, and*

2. *by remission or forgiveness of sin.*

487. 1. The first may be proved by the fact

*α. that such we find clearly stated in scripture.* Genes. 15, 6: „Abraham believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness;“ Rom. 4, 5: „To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justified the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.“

488. *β. That we are justified by the righteousness of Christ.* But of this righteousness we are only able to partake by its being imputed unto us; Rom. 5, 18. 19: „As by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.“ — No other manner of righteousness is to be found stated in the word of God, than that which is brought about by imputing unto us the righteousness of Christ. Like as, for instance, a debtor, as soon as any other man has paid his debts for him, is free of all payment, because the payment another had made for him is imputed to his benefit, exactly so we have forgiven our sins, after Christ had done satisfaction on our behalf for the same. For this satisfaction is imputed unto us, as if we ourselves had suffered punishment for our sins.

489. *Christ has been made sin only because to him have been imputed our sins.* For thus we are made just by the imputation of his righteousness. Christ himself had no sin. „But he who knew no sin, was made by God to be sin for us,“ 2. Cor. 5, 21; upon him He has laid all our sins, Isa. 53, 7. Christ has taken all our sins upon him, and borne them on his own body, John. 1, 29; 1. Pet. 2, 24. This could only be managed by our sins being imputed unto him, as if he had committed them himself; and therefore he has suffered the punishment of the same, as if he had committed these sins himself. And like as Christ, when he knew no sin

had been made sin for us, in that the sins of others were imputed to him, so we when we were yet sinners, became justified, by the righteousness of another being imputed unto us. Thus it happened, as has been formerly stated, that by the righteousness of one many have been made righteous.

490. 2. *Again justification is brought about by the remission and forgiveness of our sins.* This appears especially evident from the fact that justification and forgiveness of sins are looked upon in scripture as one and the same thing. Thus St. Paul in speaking of justification, says: „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,“ Rom. 4, 6. 7. 8. The same words David speaks in his Psalms, concerning forgiveness of sin, the Apostle Paul makes use of when speaking of justification, Act. 13, 38, 39: „Be it known unto you therefore, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.“ In this passage forgiveness of sins is treated in no way differently from justification. — Rom. 5, 9: „We shall be saved, being justified by his blood.“ 1 John. 1, 7: „the blood of Jesus Christ“ etc. — Rom. 18, 3. 4: righteousness and forgiveness of sins are spoken as being identical „*What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us;*“ Rom. 3, 25: „*to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*“ From which it is easy to see, that justification consists in the remission of sins.

491. Exactly so the criminal is proceeded with in an earthly court of justice. If he is accused and convicted of guilt, but his sentence reprieved, so that he is henceforth to be looked upon as not having been a criminal at all — then he must be said to be justified by this. Nothing else is required to justify him.

492. From which follows:

a. *that this righteousness of the sinner before the judgement of God, is by no means identical with God's indwelling divine righteousness, because*

α. Such is nowhere to be found in scripture;

δ. the same characteristics of that righteousness, by which we are justified before God, are not applicable to *God's essential righteousness.* For our righteousness is imputed unto us:

whilst God's essential righteousness, in as far namely as it is not intended to dwell in men cannot be imputed unto men. Our righteousness is but a consequence of the remission of our unrighteousness and of our sins, whilst the essential righteousness of God cannot be said to proceed from the same source. Which proves that the righteousness whereby we are justified in the sight of God, to have no identity with God's essential righteousness.

493. b. *That the sinner's righteousness in the eye of God, is not be looked upon as if now our nature had become so penetrated by purity and holiness, that henceforth we might be able to appear before God as holy and unblemishable as the holy angels.*  
For

α. righteousness is an imputation and but a forgiveness of sin, can therefore not be said to be a purity and holiness of our nature, etc. — Though a criminal has had reprieved his merited sentence, it yet remains sure that he has committed evil, although it has been forgiven him. Thus every sinner, whose sins have been forgiven, though he is justified, has yet remaining a blot upon him, that he has committed this evil, though the punishment consequent to the same is not imputed unto him.

β. *We know that sin is not so entirely rooted out of our nature, as that not every believer should be in circumstances to join St. Paul in his complaint, Rom. 7, 18. 19: „To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not; for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not I do.“ v. 23: „But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.“ Galat. 5, 16: „For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one another: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.“ — But if man's righteousness had the power to make our natures as pure as that of the holy angels, then such a complaint ought never to be heard of from the mouth of the saints. The renewed man would not be any more polluted by sin, nor would he have necessary to ask God to forgive him all his sins, which yet David declares to be most indispensable for every saint, Psalm. 32, 6.*

494. c. *Concerning the sources of this justification, we have again to consider, that*

495. α. the first and principal source (*principalis efficiens*) of men's justification is *God*, in that he does not deal with man according to his severe justice, but according to his great mercy; Rom. 3, 30: „It is one God, which shall justify;“

Rom. 4. 5: „Believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly“  
 ibid. 8, 33: „It is God that *justifieth*.“

496.  $\beta$ . Another source of our justification is the Lord Jesus Christ, with his merits and acquired righteousness (meritoria). In this respect two things are to be kept in view, viz :

$\alpha$ . *that we are justified by God for the sake of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ*, as is evident from what we read, Rom. 3, 24. 25: „Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past.“ Isa. 53, 2: „by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.“ Jerem. 33, 6: „and this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord of righteousness;“ 1 Cor. 1, 30: „Jesus, who is made unto our righteousness;“ 2 Cor. 5, 19: „God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;“ v. 21: „God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin etc.;“ Rom. 5, 18. 19: „By the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life; for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one all shall be made righteous.“

497.  $\gamma$ . *That, independent of Christ, no merit is able to justify us.* And this can be done neither by our own merits, nor by those of others.

*Not by our own merits*, for such would have to be wrought out by works which we are either bidden to do, or which we chose to do for ourselves.

$\alpha$ . By the practice of works which we are bidden to do, we can deserve nothing, since we are bound to do them, and since God requires them of us with great threatenings. For He tells us that, if we do not all things, which he has commanded us to do, He is jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the father upon the children unto the third and fourth generation (Exod. 20, 5), who condemnes us into hellfire (Deut. 27, 26: „Curseth he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.“) Now if a bondman executes every command which his lord lays upon him with many fearful threatenings, he cannot be said to have any merit in the sight of his master. Exactly so it is with us; we are not able to merit any thing in striving to do the will of our master; we do nothing, but our duty. And this we are taught by the Lord Jesus himself Luk. 17, 7. ff. „But which of you having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when

he is come from the field, go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterwards thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things, that were commanded him? I trow not. Solikewise when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say: „We unprofitable servant, we have done that which was our duty to do.“<sup>44</sup> To which must added that even our most noble and excellent works are polluted by sin, and that God, if He should deal with us after his justice, should rather have to give us punishment than reward. Isa. 64, 6: „*We are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;*“

498. The works we choose to do for ourselves, cannot have the merit to acquire for us from God the gift of righteousness and eternal life. For God is highly displeased if one, who has to serve him, endeavours to do things after his own sense, and has expressly forbidden such undertakings, Deut. 4, 2: „*Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it.*“ Thus God was sorely displeased on the occasion of Jerobeam's having erected a temple at Dan and Bethel, 1. King 12, 28ff.; which undertaking he also punished by his prophet, *ibid.* 13, 1 ff. Nadab and Abihu, two sons of Aaron undertook to offer sacrifice in a manner different from that which God had commanded, and were therefore devoured by the fire, Numb. 10, 1. 2. Israel, in the time of Isajah, was punished because of their having added to the worship of God, things of human invention, Isa. 1, 12: „*When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?*“ And the Lord Jesus adjudges such things as follow: „*In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,*“<sup>45</sup> Matth. 15, 9.

From which we learn that all those works, which displease God and are punished by him, cannot possibly procure either righteousness or Salvation. All such works that man chooses to do from his own will, displease God and are punished by him, and are therefore not acceptable to him and can accordingly acquire no salvation for mankind.

499. Nor is it at all possible for the merits of others, to acquire for us our salvation. For if one be ever so holy yet sin cleaves to him, and he cannot work out even his own righteousness, but must pray God to forgive him his sins, Pslm. 32, 6. And even if he endeavours to do good works, — yet by them he only does his duty, nor can he acquire

for himself any merit, much less for others. An experience which even David made: Pslm. 49, 8. 9: „None of them can by any means redeem him brother, nor give God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their soul is precious.“

500. The manner in which our justification is proceeded with it as follows. The righteousness is,

1. offered by God unto man, and
2. received and accepted by man.

Thus God offers his righteousness unto man by means of His Gospel, and by the holy Sacraments, of which we propose to treat subsequently. From the last mentioned springs the faith by which the justification is accepted, as we intend to prove immediately. If man has offered unto him the justification, then he accepts of it by faith, which is, as it were, the spiritual hand, by which the grace of God, the merits of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life and salvation are accepted and laid hold of.

502. I. *The nature of faith.* Three things are necessary for our belief, viz :

a. A *knowledge* of all that which God has revealed concerning our salvation ; of which St. Paul writes, Rom. 10, 14: „How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?“

b. An undoubted *assent* and conviction, as to the truth and inspiration of the divine word. If there is one, who has occasion to hear and to perceive that which God teaches, but considers it as a fable, contradicting it within his heart, — such a one cannot have faith. For he has no faith in God; he grieves the holy Ghost, putting away the word of God from him, and judges himself unworthy of everlasting life, Acts. 13, 46.

c. An *unflinching confidence in God*; whereby man has the firm assurance that God is able and willing to bring to pass all His kind promises for his benefit, and for that of all mankind.

503. Above all things it is necessary for man to acquire a thorough knowledge of all that which God has revealed to be necessary for our Salvation. More especially the Gospel promises with regard to his merciful purposes regarding sinful men; the message concerning the merits of Christ, which have been wrought out for the benefit of all mankind. For this is a testimony of God's love concerning all men, and of His will, that all men should be saved; for which purpose He has sent his only begotten Son into the world, who has tasted death for all men, and has become the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. All this is necessary for us to know, in order to get at a right understanding of the divine promi-



ses and explanation, and lies within the limits of that knowledge, upon which our faith must be founded.

Now if there is any one who hears, understands and believes this to be true, he will receive a firm conviction, that God will have mercy upon him, forgive him his sins, and make him an heir of everlasting life; that Christ the Lord has died for him, and in order to deliver him from his sins, to reconcile him to his heavenly Father and to prepare for him the way unto eternal life, as well as that Christ has suffered, and shed his blood for him, and that he had been delivered for his sins and raised again for his justification.

505. This faith has its source in the holy scriptures, which induce men to reason thus: It is the will of God that all men should be saved; He loves all men, and is exceedingly anxious that all should be saved and none perish. Christ has been given as a Saviour unto mankind, he has died for all, and reconciled them all unto God. Every one who bears a firm assurance of these facts in his breast, will have no doubts of his having found favour in the sight of God, and forgiveness of sins; as also that he is living in a state of salvation, and that he is to be one day heir of the kingdom of heaven and of everlasting glory. Such firm assurance and such confidence in God constitute a true faith. By such a faith we are able to appropriate to ourselves the mercies of God and the merits of Christ; and like as God Himself declares that He desires all men to be saved, and that Christ has been given a ransom for many, so in his turn believing man argues again: God desires me to be saved; Christ has become a ransom for me.

506. In the same way all saints have manifested their confidence. Paul declares Galat. 2, 20: „The Son of God hath loved me and given himself for me;“ — as also Mary Luk. 1, 47: „My spirit hath rejoiced in the God my Saviour;“ — Isa. 53, 4: „He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;“ 1. Cor. 1, 30: „Christ Jesus is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.“ — Thus the believer appropriates to himself the divine grace and the merits of Christ, and thereby that faith by which he is justified.

507. II. *The source of this faith*, is to be found in the word of God, and in the holy Sacraments.

α. In the word of God for „faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.“ Rom. 10, 17.

β. *In the holy Sacraments*; for baptism „is the washing of regeneration,“ Titus 3, 5. But regeneration cannot take place where there is no faith; hence faith comes by baptism.

The holy Supper appropriates the merits of Christ's to the Communicants in such a manner, that thereby, the Lord Jesus testifies to have given his body, as well as shed his blood for them. This every man is requested to apply to himself individually, as if the Lord Jesus did say to every one especially: this is my body which is *given for thee*, for the forgiveness of sins; and this is my blood, which is *shed for thee*, for the forgiveness of sins.

508. Now some might very properly ask: *If faith has its source in the word, where is this word to be found?* Is it to be found in the Bible only, or in the articles of the christian faith, laid down in the Apostolical creed\*)? Or is there any other word intended? We answer, the word which alone is the source of faith, is the doctrine of the grace of God and the merits of Christ, the access to which is open to every one. This doctrine is the foundation and the source of our faith. But by this, it is by no means intended to exclude the other articles of faith; we are rather desirous of including them, inasmuch as they are requisite for a right understanding and perfection of the above mentioned doctrines of the grace of God and the merits of Christ, and as without which them faith could not have been established in the heart of men, with sufficient firmness.

509. *To whom faith is given?* faith is profferd and granted by God unto all men without exception. For He causes repentance and forgiveness of sins to be preached *among all nations*, Luk. 24, 27; he commandes all men every where to repent; faith cometh by hearing, Rom. 10, 17. To this end He has given His word unto all men, that all men might receive faith by it. For this word is „the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth,“ Rom. 1, 16. — Now God, on his part, and in as far as He is concerned in this transaction, offers faith to every man, by means of his word. He is dealing like a benevolent man who gives alms to all the poor collected before his door, although it is not accepted by all of them.

510. III. The question as to who *is partaking of this faith and who not*, will be more particularly explained in that Chapter which treats of conversion. In this place we shall only state that there are to be distinguished two kinds of men, to whom faith has been granted. There are either *children*; who have been regenerated by baptism; — or *adults*, such as have come to years of discretion, so that by being instructed in the word, they receive faith.

511. *Children* who have been baptized are partakers

\*) See the note on the bottom of page 41.

of the faith, even before they have come to the full use and advantage of their own reason, for

α. the Lord Jesus himself testifies that they *believe in him*, Matth. 28, 6.

512. β. *Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Mark. 10, 14: „Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;“ Now it must be remembered that none but those who have faith, can enter the kingdom of heaven, as the Lord says Mrk. 16, 16: „He that believeth not shall be damned;“ John. 3, 5: „except a man be borne of water and of the spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.“ v. 18: „he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of the father.“

513. γ. Whosoever does not believe remains under the curse; the unbelievers shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, Revel. 21, 8. — John. 3, 36: „he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.“ — But little children do partake of this blessing, Mrk. 10, 16: „Jesus took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them and blessed them.“

514. δ. Little children moreover are children of God, who, if it should please Him, to cut them off in their infancy, makes them heirs of the kingdom of God, and fellowheirs with Christ. But this adoption is brought about by faith, Galat. 3. 26: „ye are the children of God *by faith* in Jesus Christ.“ John. 1, 12: „As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe in his name.*“

515. ε. Nor are we without instances of children having been mercifully gifted with the realities of the christian faith. Thus of those who had been circumcised on the eight day, we are told, that therewith they received, as Paul calls it, *a seal of righteousness of the faith.* Which proves them to have been possessed of righteousness and faith, else they could not have been sealed. — And we read of John the Baptist having leaped for joy in the womb of his mother, at the moment of Mary's entering into the house of his mother, having conceived the child Jesus, Luk. 1, 41. 44. What could he have rejoiced for, but for the coming of his Saviour in the flesh, who was to redeem him (as well as all mankind) from sin.

By this circumstance we learn

κ. that God is able to raise up faith even in little children, although they have not yet arrived at the full exercise of their reason; and

ζ. that, as God, under the old testament dispensation, has

wrought faith in children by means of circumcision, so in our days, He works faith in little children by means of baptism, yea that He is able the work faith without any means at all, as in the case of John.

516. *Adults*, that is, such as have come to the full use of their reason, and are able to be brought to the faith by the teaching of the word, receive faith, — *but not all of them*. The reason for this *is not be sought by God*. For he will have all men come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Timot. 2, 4; he calls every one that labours and is heavy laden, to come to him, and to come to rest by him, Matth. 11, 28. — But the reason that not all men are receiving faith, *lies with men*; inasmuch as some men do *resist* the divine calling, and the word (which latter is the power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth); in consequence of which the holy Ghost is not able to accomplish his work on such stiffnecked and stubborn people. Thus Stephen admonishes the Jews, Act. 7, 61: „ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, *ye do always resist the holy Ghost*: as your fathers did, so do ye.“ And St. Paul speaking to the Jews at Antioch, who had persecuted him and Barnabas says: „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, lo we turn to the Gentiles,“ Acts. 13, 46. — Yea the Lord Jesus adduces the same circumstance, as a reason for the Jews' (of his time) not receiving the christian faith, — namely that they had rejected his proffered grace; Matth. 23, 37: „How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, *and ye would not!*“

507. Thus we find that faith is given only to those, who allow themselves to be guided by the word of God, and who do not resist the same with enmity.

518. IV. *In what manner are we justified by faith*. Faith does not justify in such a manner, as if it was a *meritorious principle*. For in the work of our justification and Salvation, faith is placed in opposition to merit, Rom. 3, 24. 25: „Being justified freely by his *grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood etc;“ *ibid.* 11, 6: *if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace*; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work;“ *ibid.* 4, 4. 5: „to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith is counted for righteousness*.“ Since then all merit is excluded from our righteousness, and since works cannot, for

the sake of their merits, procure righteousness, it follows that faith cannot be said to be a meritorious work, and as such to justify.

519. As to the manner in which faith is said to justify, we refer partly to that which has been advanced concerning the justification, which is brought about by our faith being imputed unto us, partly we recommend, for the better understanding of this point, the two following points being kept in view :

*a. that faith is a confidence and an assurance.* That confidence which a man, who is deeply afflicted, bears to him, who has promised to assist him out of his trouble, is the medium that ties the oppressed to him who is his helper; the first cleaves with the greatest confidence to the latter. Suppose this troubled man being brought before a court of justice; but his kind friend faithfully standing for him, and delivering him from every imputation; — the poor man accepting with the greatest thankfulness this assistance, not doubting that he could be helped and not loosing his confidence in his friend, until he is helped, and entirely delivered from every charge. He has not merited this benefit by his confidence, but he has merely accepted a benefit which he did not deserve at all. Thus it is with sinful man, when standing before the judgement seat of God. As long as he retains the firm confidence in his friend and Redeemer, that he has delivered him by his blood from condemnation, as long may he hope to be delivered from his misery, and if this confidence remains with him to his death, he will be saved even unto the end. But we have done nothing by this our faith, but received the grace which the Lord Jesus has offered unto us, and made the same our own, by a firm assurance.

520. This, we are taught in scripture concerning the firm assurance of our faith; John. 16, 33: „in the world you have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world; Heb. 4, 16: „let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need; *ibid.* 10, 22: „let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled“ etc.; Ephes. 3, 12: „in whom, (Christ) we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.“

521. **B.** *That by unbelief, justification is rendered impossible,* because by it men reject the grace of God and eternal life, Acts. 13, 46. Which proves that as unbelief is an obstacle to justification only by rejecting the same, and along with the same the grace of God, so on the other hand, is faith

a means of justification in that man, who does not reject the grace of God, but with due obedience accepts of it.

522. This can be made clear by the following illustration. Suppose two felons being thrust into a prison for debt, where they would have to remain all their lives, unless they found somebody to sympathize with them. But a certain rich, kind-hearted man, undertakes to pay the debts which they had contracted, and causes the communication to be made to the prisoners, that they have been released from prison, and that they were accordingly at liberty to leave it. Suppose that one of the two prisoners believes this message to be true, and prepares himself immediately to leave the prison, to which there is no obstacle; — but that the other cannot be induced to believe, that his debts have been discharged by another person, yea that he is bold enough to deny having ever been in debt, or, in case he confesses himself a debtor, he maintains being able to discharge every debt of his by his own powers and exertions; — so that he sets his hopes upon friends and acquaintances, to work out his deliverance, — thus putting no trust and confidence whatsoever in the abovenamed individual, who was said to have really discharged the debt of this prisoner. Such a one must be said, to have rejected the pardon that had been wrought out for him, and to lose all the benefits of the same, and there would remain nothing for him, but to perish in his prison.

523. Exactly the same is done by the *unbelievers*, who look upon the grace which has been given unto us through Christ, as an invention, or who have no desire to put their hope in Christ, but rather trust in the holiness of other men, or in their own works, and who are bold enough to maintain, that they had no sins whatsoever etc. Such must remain in their sins, and perish for ever; whilst others who accept of the joyful message of the forgiveness of their sins as a truth, and put their confidence in Christ, the propitiator of their sins, are freed from their miserable state and become heirs of eternal Salvation.

524. From the arguments already produced, it will appear that justification is not by any means to be ascribed to man as a virtue, but that it is nothing else than a fruit of faith; Rom. 3, 28: „We conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law;“ Galat. 2, 16: „knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ;“ Rom. 4, 5: „to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.“ Here we find nothing else but faith and works put in opposition to each other; nor

is there any where a third object spoken of having as any connection with Salvation. Now we find works expressly excluded from the work of Salvation, and thus we find faith to be the only and proper source of Salvation. — We have to consider also (cf. §. 479):

525. c. *the fruits of justification.* They are twofold, viz:  
 α. *the peace of conscience*, so that he that is justified, has to fear no evil from God; as he formerly felt his conscience burdened on account of his sin, so now, after his sins have been forgiven him, he lives in the enjoyment of peace and rest. Rom. 5, 1: „*being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;*“ Rom. 8, 16: „*the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*“

526. γ. *A new obedience, a godly life and good works.* Rom. 6, 11: „*Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Christ Jesus, our Lord.*“ v. 13. „*Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God;*“ v. 18: „*being made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness;*“ 20 ff.: „*when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness; what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*“ — And concerning faith, the Apostle writes, Galat. 5, 6: „*faith worketh by love.*“

527. It remains now for us to consider more especially the fruits which are produced by faith and righteousness conjointly, namely the *good works*; and we have to inquire

- α. *which works may really be called good works,*
- β. *whether such good works be perfect,*
- γ. *wheter they are necessary,*
- δ. *whether they are entitled to a reward, and of which nature this reward may be.*

α. Good works may be called such works, as are performed from a obedience and in accordance with the will and ordinances of God.

β. *Whether such good works be perfect.* The good works, which are the fruits of righteousness are *imperfect*, for

528. *Sin cleaves to every good work, which is polluted thereby.* For all our righteousness is, according to Isa. 64, 6 and Sirach 27, 5., like „*filthy rags.*“ Rom. 7, 17: „*to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not, for the good that I would I do not: but the evil which*

*I would not, that I do;*“ v. 21: „I find then a law, that when I would do good, *evil is present with me;*“ Galat. 5, 17: „For the flesh lusteth against the spirit“ etc.

529. *Because along with the good works always evil works are performed.* For nobody may say: „I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin,“ Proverb 20, 9; for „all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,“ Rom. 3, 23; — every saint even must pray for forgiveness, Pslm. 32, 6. And although some one did keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is said to be guilty of all, James 2, 10; his obedience is of no avail, since God desires entire obedience. For every man is subject to the curse, who does not fulfill the whole law, Deut. 27, 26; Galat. 3, 10.

γ. *As to the necessity of good works,* we answer in the affirmative; but not so as if they did justify, or work out righteousness, as has been proved already, but:

*That by them God's will, which requires of us good works might be, as much as possible, obeyed.* God commands us, Coloss. 1, 10: „Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work;“ 1. Pet. 2, 24: „Who (Christ) bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness;“ Titus 3, 8: „These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.“

531. *That after God has adopted us as His people, His name might be, by our good works, glorified amongst all nations, and others also be induced to godliness;* Matth. 5, 16: „Let your light so shine before men, that they might see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.“

532. *That we might not again pollute ourselves with works of unrighteousness,* and thus bring down upon us the wrath of God and eternal condemnation; 2. Pet. 2, 20. 22: „the latter end is worse with them than the beginning; it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, *the dog is turned* etc.; Rom. 8, 13: „for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;“ 1. Cor. 6, 9: „know ye not that the *unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?* Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters etc. shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.“

533. *That the reward promised to good works might not be lost by us.* Good works have their reward, as well in this world, as also in that to come; Isa. 3, 10: „Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, *for they shall eat the fruit of their doings;*“ 1. Timot. 4, 8: „Godliness is profi-



table unto all things, *having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*"

Godliness has great promises, with reference to the life *that now is*; Isa. 1, 19: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land;" Eccles. 2, 26: "God giveth a man that is good in His sight, *wisdom, and knowledge, and joy.*" And God blessed (Deut. 28, 1 ff.) the children of Israel as follows: "And it shall come to pass if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, *these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee*; blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed, shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep; blessed shall be thy basket and thy store; blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out."

534. Godliness with reference to the life to come, has the following promises: Isa. 57, 1: "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, *none considering, that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come; he shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds;*" Proverb 10, 7: "the memory of the just is blessed;" 1. Cor. 3, 8: "every man shall receive his own reward according to *his own labour;*" 2. Cor. 5, 10: "We must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ; *that every one may receive the things done in his body*, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 1. Cor. 4, 5: "until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: *and then shall every man have praise of God;*" Matth. 19, 29: "every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, *shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.*"

535. But this reward is not to be looked upon, as being given by God as a reward, which his justice might induce him to bestow upon us, for the *sake of our good works*. No, it is, and remains an undeserved reward, a gift of God's grace and mercy. Thus a father rewards, from mere parental love, with a special gift that obedience of his child, which he is bound in duty to yield to him; his parent might as well not have rewarded him at all. In the same way God rewards, *out of mere fatherly kindness, without his being bound to do so, our godliness and piety*. For, in the first place there is not a saint upon earth, who durst ask from God his daily bread as his due, as if he had deserved it; on

the contrary he *must pray and ask for it*, „*Our father who art in heaven, give us day by day our daily bread.*“ And secondly there is not one who never had occasion to confess with Jacob: „*I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant,*“ Genes. 32, 10; and with Paul: „*who hath first given to him (God) and it shall be recompensed unto him again?*“ Rom. 11, 35.

536. Now the circumstance that the scriptures nevertheless promises man, that his good works should meet with a reward, can be sufficiently explained by the fact, that a reward though undeserved, is still a reward. Thus God speaks to Abraham: „*I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,*“ Genes. 17; it will be admitted that Abraham never *could* deserve such a reward. Psal. 127, 3: „*Lo children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his great reward.*“ — The same is implied whenever the prophets speak of a reward, and it is for this reason, the Psalmist calls it „*God's reward.*“



## Chapter XX.

God converts the repenting sinner, that his understanding might be enlightened for the purposes of the knowledge of God and of His merciful will; and that all his energies might be turned from sin unto God and His love, to obedience and justification, and that he might as much as possible walk in accordance with God's will.

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537. With reference to conversion the following points are to be considered;

- a. *the nature of conversion,*
- b. *God, who works the conversion,*
- c. *Man who becomes converted, and*
- d. *The fruit of conversion.*

538. a. *The nature of conversion;* this change is described to take place, when men are pricked in their hearts, Acts. 2, 37; when their hearts are smitten, 2 Samuel 24, 10; when their hearts are opened, so that they attend unto the word of God Acts. 16, 14; when the stony heart is taken out of them, and a new and pure heart given them, when a new and a free spirit is put within them, and they thus become the people of God and walk in His statutes, Hesek. 11, 39; 36, 26; Psalm. 51, 12.

539. Thus we learn that by the term conversion the following act is implied. If there be men having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart, Ephes. 4, 18. being in their stubbornness, enmity and disobedience far from God,—then they are enlightened by Christ, the great light of the world, John. 1, 9; so that, having formerly been darkened they are now a light in the Lord, Ephes. 5, 8. and walk in the light, John. 12, 35. 36; doing deeds that may be made manifest; casting off the works of darkness, and putting on the armour of life, walking honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strive and envying, but putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 13, 12. 13. And like as, previous to their conversion, they had turned away from God, so after the same has taken place, they return with humble obedience, subjection, confidence and love to him. In the same measure as they used to have a desire for the earthly, so they have it now for heavenly things; and like as they formerly delighted in

doing evil, in the same measure they now hate and flee sin; loving the truth they had become acquainted with, and rejoicing in the same, being attached to it, yield obedience to the same as far as in them lies.

540. b. *God, who works conversion*; more especially

*a. His part in this transaction.* This will appear from the fact that God is the originator of every good and perfect gift, James. 1, 17: „not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, our sufficiency is of God,“ 2 Cor. 3, 5. Thus He is, in our conversion, the beginning and the end, as also the only source of it. Jerem. 31, 18: „turn thou me, and I shall be turned;“ John. 6, 44: „no man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me to draw him;“ v. 29: „this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent;“ Philip. 2, 13: „for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure;“ Acts. 15, 9: „God purifies their hearts by faith;“ 2 Thess. 3, 5: „the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.“ — God is said to originate the good work in us, and to finish it, Philip. 1, 5; He is „the author and finisher of our faith.“ Heb. 12, 2. —

541. *β. What it is that induces God to convert men?* The whole work of our Salvation has its source only in God's mercy, and if it is asked what it is that induces God to convert us, we answer that there is no other reason but his mercy and lovingkindness. As God's grace and man's merits cannot stand together, we conclude that God, in the work of conversion does pay no regard to man's virtue, worth or merits, as if by them He was induced to convert him. Thus we read of the *shepherd* bringing home his lost sheep, quite without any deserving on the part of the latter, Luk. 15, 4, 5; of the *woman* that seeks the lost penny under the same circumstances, v. 8. As also that the king in preparing the marriage feast for his son, and the Lord for his evening meal, are inviting the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind to come and join him, Matth. 22, 9; Luk. 14, 21. It is exactly in the same way that God calls, leads and turns us to Himself; nevertheless we are unable to deserve anything in the sight of God, than eternal condemnation as the Apostle exclaims, Ephes. 2, 4, 5: „But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ.“

542. We have to consider :

*c. Men, who becomes converted*; in which respect we have to observe :

*a. what men are able to do towards their conversion,*

β. *what they are unable to do towards it,*

γ. *the conditions, by which they are fitted to conversion.*

α. *The preparations men can make towards their conversion,* are of a twofold kind. There are some that *proceed* conversion, and may be called *outward* actions; others again that essentially belong to conversion, which may be called *inward* actions.

543. As *outward* actions are to be considered: *the hearing of the word of God*; the hearing it *with diligence* and with the *purpose* to be taught by it; and seriously considering the subject matter of it. This is to be proved by *testimonies* and *instances* from scripture.

*Testimonies* we find when St. Paul writes concerning false teachers: „that they are *ever learning*, never coming to the truth,“ 2 Timot. 3, 7; and of the Israelites, Rom. 9, 31: „Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness, for they stumbled at that stumbling block.“ — Concerning the time of the *babylonian* captivity Amos says: 8, 11. 12: „behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord; they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.“

544. *Instances* of that description we meet with in the history of *Herod*, who liked to listen to the preaching of John the baptist, and in many instances obeyed him; in the history of *Sergius*, the Roman governor, who sent for Barnabas, desiring to hear the word of God, Acts. 22, 7. As also in our days many people hear the word of God, with the purpose of attending to the contents and teaching of the same, and to whom nevertheless it becomes a savour of death unto death, 2 Cor. 2, 16; for „the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ shine upon them.“

545. β. *What men are not able to do with reference to their conversion?* this question leads us to speak of those *inward* actions which essentially belong to conversion. Such are: *that man cannot enlighten his own mind*; *that he cannot turn his heart from evil, and bring it to good*, in order henceforward to love God and godliness, and hate and abjure sin. In this respect no man is able to make even a beginning towards conversion, much less carry it on and accomplish it; for:

546. *We are not able to perform works even of less consideration*; „Thou canst not make a hair white or black, Matth. 5, 36: — No man could undertake to change anything

within him, as his brain, liver etc., „which of you *by taking thought*, can add a cubit unto his stature?“ Matth. 6, 27. And if man is not even able to perform such an insignificant work, how can he be expected to bring a change into his soul, his will and his reason, so as to turn them from inclinations, with which they have been born.

547. *The Holy Scriptures expressly deny that man ever performs good and spiritual works*, especially such as tend towards conversion and salvation, thereby evidencing:

κ. That we are not able to do any good thing; as Christ says, John. 15, 5: „*without me ye can do nothing.*“ And a corrupt tree, can it bring forth good fruit? Matth. 7, 18; and are we not every one among us by nature corrupt trees? for „every imagination of the thoughts of our heart are only evil continually,“ Genes. 6, 5; 8, 21.

ζ. That we are not able to *speaking* any thing good; Matth. 12, 34: „Can ye, being evil, *speaking good?* for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;“ 1. Cor. 12, 3: „no man can say *that Jesus is the Lord*, but by the Holy Ghost.“

η. That we are not even able to *thinking* any thing good; 2. Cor. 3, 5: „Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to *think any thing* of ourselves.“ From all which we conclude, that an individual, that cannot even do, speak or think good, cannot be said to be able to perform anything towards his own conversion; for to this purpose, he would need good thoughts and works.

548. δ. *The conditions which make fit for conversion.* That some men remain unconverted is to be considered as *their own fault*. Suppose a conscientious and diligent teacher who is anxious to change his pupils from being ignorant to being learned, and to turn them from vice unto virtue, and who does not spare any pains, to accomplish this end. Nevertheless his disciples do not all profit by his anxiety: and that not as a consequence of the master being at fault, but because of his pupils not choosing to listen to him, but laughing to scorn his injunctions think themselves to be wiser than he; whereupon they join evil society, by the example of which they are misled, and remain in ignorance and vice. — Exactly so God, on his part, is doing his best for the Salvation of all men, and is anxious not to have lost even one from amongst them, and it is to all men that He addresses the words He once spoke to Israel „Now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard; what could have been done more to the vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes,“ Isa. 5, 3. 4.

549. That man might be fit for conversion, it is requisite for him

1. *to determine hearing the word of God for the purpose of being converted by it.* For to him the word is still foolishness, and he cannot perceive in what manner the preaching of the same might tend to his Salvation, 1. Cor. 2, 14. Rom. 8, 7: „the carnal mind is enmity against God.“ For if any man could have, by himself such a good intention, then he would be able to think something good by himself, which we have seen disproved 2. Cor. 3, 5. In such a case he would have the will to do that good, which God alone works, Phil. 2, 13.

550. 2. Much less is it necessary *for him to dispose himself by good works, for conversion,* which also appears impossible from the reasons adduced above; and it would therefore be impossible for any man to be saved. Besides conversion is performed some what like as a fish caught by the net, and drawn out of the water, Matth. 4, 19: to which the fish cannot be said to dispose himself. Nor was this the case with the *malefactor*, who was crucified along with the Lord Jesus, Luk. 22, 42; or with the centurion, who was standing by the cross, Matth. 27, 54; or with *the keeper of the prison*, who had the care of Paul and Silas, Acts 16, 29 ff. — All these things are therefore not required of man, on account of his conversion.

551. *But this one and great thing is required of him, that in hearing the word he might not throw any wilfull obstacles into the way of the divine working.* It is true that by nature we are disinclined to this divine work, and that the word of God is *foolishness* unto us, 1. Cor. 2, 14. But yet this *natural* obstinacy is not able to hinder any man from effectually listening to the word, because in this way nobody would be saved. Such wilful hindrances, which every one opposes to the divine work, are partly *outwardly*, or such as hinder the necessary preparations. As, for instance, if one lives in perfect security, caring but for his daily food, and living only for his enjoyment, despises the word of God. Such a one can never come to be converted, since he stifles the word of God, so that it can bear no fruit within him, Luk. 8, 14; 14, 18. Yea they are responsible even for the neglect with which, when hearing something of the word of God, they treated the same, and for their not trying to understand it, whilst they, on the other hand, did shun no pain or trouble or danger if the gain of worldly goods was concerned. — There are also *inward* obstacles which hinder those works which are essentially necessary to conversion: viz

552. *a. Atheism*, when namely the fool saith in his heart

„there is no God.“ For every one, who has plunged into an ungodly life to such an extent, as not any more to consider God, has fallen into the snares of the devil, 2. Timot. 2, 26.

553.  $\beta$ . *Old opinions, that have grown up with us.* Thus, for instance, the Jews have set their heart upon a Messiah that was to establish an earthly kingdom and rule over them; and as long as they do not dismiss this thought they cannot possibly come to Jesus of Nazareth, whose kingdom is not of this world.

554.  $\gamma$ . *The authority of people in high station of life.* In this way the Pharisees hindered their *servant* from coming to the Lord Jesus, John. 7, 47 ff.: „Then answered them the Pharisees, are ye also deceived? have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.“— And by this means also many among the papists, although they see the light, are prevented from coming to the truth. For the Pope, the Cardinals, Bishops and king hold closely together, and stand in great reputation before the world;— whilst in the lutheran church no such authority is admitted.

555.  $\delta$ . *A too great anxiety for the food of the body, for enjoyments and earthly honours.* This same sort of care prevented the *rich man* from being converted, Luk. 16, 19; as also the *young ruler* from selling all that he possessed and giving it to the poor, as he was bid to do by the Lord Jesus. He went away, we are told, sorrowful: for he had great possession, Matth. 19, 21. 22; as did also *Demas* who forsook the Lord, because he had loved this present world, 2. Timot. 4, 10.— And many there are in our days, who, prevented by their authority, importance, and other enjoyments, are kept from turning to a truth, they are perfectly aware of.

556.  $\epsilon$ . *The imaginations of our own reason.* If we desire to follow Christ, then we must bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2. Cor. 10, 5. But every one who allows himself to be guided by his own reason cannot be converted, unless he abstains from it. Thomas, who rejected the doctrine concerning the resurrection of Christ, remained in unbelief until his reason had been brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, John. 20, 25. 27. 28.

557.  $\xi$ . *The refusal of the divine working.* If the holy Ghost is beginning the work of conversion in man, but the latter dismisses every thought of it, or has no desire to hear of it, thus rejecting the truth, which he had even now become acquainted with, — then of course the work of conversion cannot go on. Such an instance we meet with in the history of king *Agrippa*. He, after having heard Paul's



preaching said: „*Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian.*“ But the instant Paul required him to be converted, Agrippa rose up and went away, thus quenching the spark of faith, the Holy Ghost had lit up within him, Acts 26, 28 ff.

558. *η. The wilful denial, yea even persecution of the known truth.* Many men come even the length of being convinced, within their heart, that that, which they have heard is heavenly, eternal truth. But if a man has no inclination to confess the same, then he tries to contradict and to persecute the doctrine, which he had been convinced to be truth. With reference to such an individual almost all hope for conversion is lost. The like people were the Pharisees, who saw, and were convinced that the Lord Jesus was a teacher come from God, that his teaching was unexceptionable, that nobody could work such miracles except God be with him, John. 3, 2. Nevertheless they persecuted him, his words and his works; not being satisfied until they had brought him to the cross. By this they hardened their hearts, and blasphemed the Holy Ghost, as the Lord Jesus told them himself, Matth. 12, 31. 32. — Stephen admonishes them Acts. 7, 51: „*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the holy Ghost; as your fathers did so do ye.*“

From what has been said above, it will appear, that man, if he desires to be instructed by the Holy Ghost, must entirely remain inactive; as also, that if once convinced of the truth nothing in the world ought to draw him from it, and that he should allow himself to be led by the Holy Ghost. Then he will be fit for conversion.

559. The question as to *how it is, that, in the whole, but a few men are converted*, every one will easily answer himself when attending to that which has been stated already. For although it is true, that man can do nothing for the *furtherance* of his conversion, yet he may do a great deal to *hinder* it. It is true that he cannot work out his own conversion, but it is as true, that he can hinder his being converted. Suppose a man falling ill, then he cannot cure himself; but he can easily put an obstacle in the way of his recovery, in that he does not obey the injunctions of his medical adviser, and, casting from him his medicines, does every thing to augment his sickness. — Or suppose a man, who has fallen into a deep hole, and on a rope being cast to him, by means of which he might be pulled up again, it is quite possible for such a one to reject this help, thus denying the help, by which he might be rescued. Now just as it is sufficient for a patient to submit himself to the injunctions of his Doctor, and not to withstand them, — or for one who has fallen in to a pit, in

order to be pulled up again, merely to allow himself to be drawn up, where in both cases they have merely passively to subject themselves, — so it is sufficient for man, in his conversion not to withstand the Holy Ghost, but to allow him to work out his conversion, although he cannot do the least thing towards it.

560. d. *The fruits of conversion.* These are partly identical with those of repentance and of justification, viz: God's mercy and lovingkindness, peace of conscience, improvement of life, new obedience and good works. For he who is converted loves God, and accordingly also his fellowmen, gives unto God the obedience due to Him, serving Him wherever he can; but unto his neighbour he does all thing whatsoever he wisheth they should do unto him, Matth. 7, 12.

561. Another kind of fruit of conversion is the *liberty of man's will*. For even so as his will has not been free before his conversion to do whatever is good, so, after his conversion this gift is given him by the Holy Ghost. Rom. 6, 12. 13: „*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God;*“ Rom. 8, 13. 14: „*if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God.*“

562. But as, whilst upon earth, every thing is *imperfect*, the liberty of the converted man itself is also *imperfect*; and not without its trials. Whereby many a good thing is hindered, and much evil promoted, as the Apostle himself complains, Rom. 7, 14 ff.; Galat. 5, 17.



## Chapter XXI.

The converted man is renewed by God, so that he might be transferred from a state of sinfulness, into the state of original purity, justice and holiness.

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563. The *renewing* and the *regeneration* are in no respect different from each other. Both are figurative significations; the first referring to the renewal of a thing that has been old; the second to the bringing back of sinful man to the state he formerly occupied. The latter expression is also made use of in scripture as a figure, referring to the natural birth; and as both are frequently employed in scripture, we thought proper, in this place, to say a few words about them.

564. In speaking of *renewing*, three things are generally referred to. Just as we do with an old building; for we say, first, that the house has been new; secondly, that it has become old and rotten; and thirdly, that it has been renewed, to the appearance it had when new.

Thus by the renewal of man three things are pointed at: viz

- a. *the state of perfectness* in which he had been created, which he has lost, and into which he has been renewed again;
- b. *the state of sin*, into which he has fallen, and out of which he is to be redeemed; and
- c. *the state of conversion*, into which he is to be brought by renewing.

565. Scripture points by the expression: renewing

a. *to the state of perfectness*, in which man has been created as the image of God, Col. 3, 10: „put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge *after the image of him that created him*;“ Ephes. 4, 23. 24: „be renewed in the spirit of your mind; that ye put on the new man, *which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*“

b. *To the state of sin*, out of which it is intended to relieve man, Rom. 6, 6: „knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that *henceforth we should not serve sin*;“ 1. Cor. 5, 7. 8: „purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with

old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavend bread of sincerity and truth;" Ephes. 4, 22: „put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" Coloss. 3, 9: „put off the old man with his deeds."

c. *the state of conversion*: Galat. 6, 15: „In Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*;" 2 Cor. 5, 17: „if any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*, old things are passed away; behold all things are *become new*;" Rom. 6, 4: „like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we should *walk also in newness of life*."

566. The renewing of man we find accordingly to be a delivering of man from his sinful state, a restoration to the state he has formerly been in; for the purpose that he might know God, put off sin from his mind and his members, and praise and serve God in true holiness and righteousness.



## Chapter XXII.

Converted men are born again by God, not by essentially changing their nature, but by mortifying their sinful passions, and evil deeds, and by stirring up all human energies to holy works and to a new life.

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567. Regeneration has been compared to the natural birth. As man is born from his parents, so he is, as it were, spiritually born anew, or a second time, by God. For which reason the latter act is not called simply a *birth*, but a new birth, or *regeneration*.

Concerning regeneration three things are to be considered viz :

a. that it is not implying any essential change of the regenerated ;

c. the nature of regeneration, and what it consists of, and

c. that those who are regenerated may fall again from their happy state, into sin, and perish in the same for ever.

568. a. *Regeneration is not implying any essential change of the regenerated.* It is true, that the natural birth gives man his essential character, and we are also told, that by regeneration we put on a new man and a new creature. Nevertheless can the latter act not be said to infer an *essential* change in man, as if, by his spiritual birth, he was not to retain a body like that of Adam, but be gifted with one like that of Jesus Christ. For

569. *α.* those who are regenerated are still said always to be *renewed*. But a new building that has been raised in the place of the one pulled down, cannot be said to have been renewed, — an appellation only applicable to one, the essentials of which have remained, and that has but put on a new and improved appearance. Exactly so it is in the case of man's regeneration; for by it he is renewed, not by any essential change taking place with his substance, but by his becoming better in the sight of God, and putting on a more pleasing appearance.

670. *β.* because in the regenerated man there is still always something to be found, *that has remained from his former state of sin.* For there is no man that can be said to live so pure and holy, that sin should not cleave to him. Nobody can say: *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin,*“ Prover. 20, 9. We read in Isa. 64, 6: „We are all as an

*unclean thing*, and all our righteousness are *as filthy rags*." Now if regeneration did essentially change human nature, than there could not possibly be room within it, for evil desires and others sins.

571. *γ*. The flesh is continually warring against the spirit, within the regenerated man, Galat. 5, 17. Now for a war two parties are required, and as we find within the regenerated man a war going on between the spirit of God and between the flesh, it is evident that, in the regenerated man, there is to be found not only the Spirit of God, or spiritual things, but also sinful flesh.

572. *δ*. Because the regenerated men do not have children *that are by nature holy*. On the contrary they conceive and bare children as other people do, whose thoughts are evil from their youth. Now if the nature of regenerated men was changed in such a manner, that nothing earthly could stick to them, but all within them be heavenly, how could such a pure and holy nature be said to beget sinful children?

573. *ε*. To the regenerated the same words are applied as is to all those, who, according to Adam, are *of flesh and blood*. Thus the regenerated David says, Pslm. 51, 5: „Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.“ This proves David to have got still the same body with him, as was the case at the time he was born. And the regenerated Paul writes Galat. 1, 13, that *he* persecuted the church; from which we infer that he, after his body, was still the same as formerly, when persecuting the church of God; and that by being regenerated, his nature had not been essentially changed.

574. *b*. *The nature of regeneration, and what it consists of*. In this respect we have to observe

*a*. *Mortification of the sinful nature*. This does not mean to say that the members of the body were to be subjected to mortification: but that they are to be made captive to the obedience of Christ, 1 Cor. 10, 5; that sin should have no more dominion in our members, but that they should be henceforth members of righteousness, Rom. 6, 12. 13; that they who are Christ's should crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, Galat 5, 24; that sin should not be allowed any dominion over them, but be subdued, Genes. 4, 7; that they should abstain from fleshly lusts, that war against the soul, 1 Peter, 2, 11. By all which exertions the human energies, that are inclined to sin are curbed, weakened, kept down, yea, as it were, killed, routed out and cast away; as the Lord Jesus speaks of the same subject, Matth. 5, 29. 30; 18, 8. 9. For thereby the members of the body are forbidden

to perform sinful works, as if they were altogether mortified indeed. It is with reference to this state, that Paul speaks of himself, Galat. 6, 14: *the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world;*“ meaning that the lusts and enjoyments of this world did matter so little to him, as if he had a crucified and dead body. This is the one part of regeneration, viz, that every thing sinful, which we have inherited from our parents should be spiritually dead to us.

575. *β.* The second part consists in the awakening of the soul and of all its powers to an activity with which God is well pleased. Every one who is not performing some sort of work, is like a dead body; and accordingly as we are by nature unfit for any thing that is good, the Holy Ghost designates us as „dead,“ Ephes. 2, 1; Coloss. 2, 13: „when ye were dead in trespasses and sins.“ Now if God imparts unto us the ability of doing whatever is good and spiritual, then he makes us alive, and by becoming alive, we are able to perform good works.

576. Our reason is made alive by being turned from our natural blindness and ignorance to the knowledge of God, Coloss. 3, 10; by beginning to be able to discern and to judge the things of the spirit, 1 Cor. 2, 15; by being able to know God, although at this time but as in a glass darkly, 1 Cor. 13, 12.

577. Our will is made alive, in that God gives unto us, in the room of this stony heart a heart of flesh, that we might do His will, Hezek. 11, 19, 20; in granting unto us a pure heart, and a new spirit, Palm. 51, 12; our mind is renewed, and we walk in righteousness and true holiness, Ephes. 4, 23, 44; and our minds are converted, that we turn to serve the living God, waiting for his Son from heaven, 1 Thess. 1, 9, 10.

578. Our inward and outward powers are made alive, in that we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, Rom. 12, 1; when we walk in newness of life, Rom. 6, 4; when we keep the feast, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, 1 Cor. 5, 8.

579. To such a spiritual life the Holy Ghost is, what the soul is to the natural life. For thus we are born again by the Holy Ghost, John. 3, 5; wherever the soul is in full activity, there is life, and likewise where the Holy Ghost is, there is also life and salvation, „as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God,“ Rom, 8, 14. By this act therefore we find the whole mind of man, as well as all the powers of the body and the soul to have undergone an entire change, so that as he has formerly been dead to

every good work, he now is alive to and busied with them; and as he has been formerly alive to evil and to the committal of the same, he is now entirely dead to it. A man of this description is, as it were *born again*, and has become quite *another man*, as the scriptures speak concerning Saul „the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt *be turned into another man*,“ 1 Sam. 10, 6; not as if his substance had become another, but his life and purposes have been changed.

580. c. *Constancy and perseverance in the state of regeneration.* The scriptures contain many precious promises on the part of God, that the faithful are not to be rejected from His presence. „Though he (the good man) fall, he shall not be utterly *cast down*: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand,“ Pslm. 37, 24: „I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand, John. 10, 28. — This has led some to the conclusion; that such men, as have once been regenerated, could not possibly again turn from the grace of God, fall in unbelief and thus perish. It is therefore our duty to consider this point more clearly:

581. s. With regard to *God*, we know that He, on His part, is doing every thing, that the believer might remain in his faith. For He calls, teaches, admonishes, warns and threatens him, in order that the commenced work might not be destroyed again. That this is the case is evident from the fact which has been proved already: viz, that, if *all men* are not saved, the fault is in nowise to be laid with God.

582. z. The reason for the believer's not always persevering in his faith, is solely to be sought on the *part of man*. Thus we are entitled to the conclusion, that as long as the believer clings to God, and does not turn from him as long will he not be cast away from God's presence. For as long as man clings to his God, no power on earth is able to wrench him from this stronghold.

583. 1. God has, in this respect, not left the believers without means, but has given them *His word*, and they can never be turned away from salvation as long as they take this word for their guide. But as soon as they desert this guide (and that is not at all impossible) then it is possible for them to fall from their state of regeneration. — It is just like a father leading his child a very impracticable track, upon which it would impossible for the latter to proceed by himself. The father is giving him comfort: you cannot fall, for I keep you with my hand! now as long as the child retains the hold of his father's hand, he will be sure not to fall.



But suppose him leaving his father's hand, out of mere wantonness or confidence of his own strength, his destruction will be inevitable. In spite of this, the words of warning and comfort his father had formerly addressed to the same would be considered to have been truth; the child could not fall as long as he allowed himself to be guided by his father, but, ceasing this precaution, he might be destroyed. — Exactly so it is with regenerated man: he cannot fall from his state of salvation as long as he submits himself to the guidance of God and His word, (which is, as it were, His arm). This can be proved by the fact

584. 1. *that scripture expressly teaches, that some of the regenerated may fall away again*, Luk. 8, 13: „They on the rock are they, which when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away.“

585. 2. *that God promises salvation to such as remain stedfast unto the end*; Matth. 10, 22: „he that endureth to the end shall be saved;“ Heb. 3, 14: „We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence unto the end.“ Now if all believers did remain stedfast in their faith, and there was no danger of their falling away; there would have been no occasion for its being aluded to as a necessary, yet, with regard to man, doubtful condition.

586. 3. *We are admonished to be careful of not falling away*; 1. Cor. 9, 24: „Run, that ye may obtain;“ *ibid.* 10, 12: „let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall; Revel. 2, 10: „be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee life; *ibid.* 3, 11: „hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.“ — Now it is in no way necessary for a man to be admonished to persevere in retaining a thing, which he is in no danger whatsoever of loosing. And as regenerated man is admonished in scripture to constancy, it proves that it is possible for such a one to fall from his blessed state.

587. 4. *God reveales his wrath over all those regenerated who have fallen from grace*, Ezek. 8, 24: „When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.“ Rom. 11, 20. 21: „thou standest by faith; be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee;“ 2. Peter 2, 20. 21: „if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again

entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is *worse with them than the beginning*. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.“ Heb. 6, 4. ff.: „For it is impossible for those 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 to renew them again unto repentance.*“

An exhortation St. Paul had been mindful of in a great measure, when he writes concerning himself: „I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: *lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away,*“ 1 Cor. 9, 27.

588. *We find recorded in scripture express instances of such as have, after their regeneration, fallen away again.* — Thus we read that *Aaron*, though having been regenerated, has yet committed sin, in raising an idol to the people, Exod. 32, 4. 5. 21; that *David* committed adultery and murder upon *Urian* and his wife, after having been regenerated, 2 Sam. 12, 7. 9. *Peter*, although he was a disciple of the Lord Jesus and in a regenerated state, has yet fallen away, in that he denied his master, Matth. 26, 69. ff. *Hymeneus* and *Alexander* also, having put away faith and a good conscience, made shipwreck concerning their faith, and were consequently delivered unto Satan by Paul, Timot. 1, 19. 20. *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* are said to have subverted the faith, in teaching that the resurrection had taken place already, 2 Timot. 2, 18. — Now the same that happened to the abovementioned individuals, may also happen to every one who is regenerated.



## Chapter XXIII.

Like as converted men, by regeneration, become the children of God, so also are they engrafted into the Lord Jesus, and become members of his spiritual body.

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589. The Lord Jesus Christ has a natural human body, which he took upon himself from the virgin Mary. With this body it was that he ascended into heaven, and appeared unto Stephen; and with the same body he shall appear again visibly on the last day, Acts. 1, 11.

The *believers* moreover and the assembly of the same are called *Christ's body*, Rom. 12, 4. 5: „As we have many members in one body, so we being many are one body in Christ;“ 1 Cor. 6, 15: „Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ.“

Thereby we have to consider

A. that Lord Jesus stands in a close union with the believer, and

B. in which way this union is brought about.

590. **A.** *That the Lord Jesus stands in a close union with the believer*, we find stated in scripture partly in *express terms*, partly in figures and parables.

*Express terms* we met with: John. 6, 56: „He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;“ John. 14, 20: „At that day ye shall know that I am in my father, and ye in me, and I in you.“ 1 Cor. 6, 17: „he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit;“ Galat. 2, 20: „I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me;“ Ephes. 5, 30: „we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones,“ 1 John. 3, 24: „If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father; ibid. 4, 13: Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit;“ 2 Peter, 1, 4: „whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature “

591. Again this union is referred to in *figures and parables*. Thus for instance we find it compared to a house and the inhabitants of the same, John. 14, 23: „If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him;“ Ephes.

3, 17: „Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.“ — Again to *God and the temple*, in which He dwells, 1 Cor. 3, 16: „know ye not that ye are the *temple of God*, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you;“ 2 Cor. 6, 16: „ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said: I will dwell in them and walk in them.“ — In other places we find this union compared to *man and his garment*, Galat. 3, 27: „As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have *put on Christ*.“ — To *marriage and the close union between man and wife*, Ephes. v. 25: „Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church;“ v. 31, 32: „A man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; this is a great mystery: but *I speak concerning Christ and the Church*.“ To this the parable of the Lord Jesus has also reference, Matth. 22, 2: „The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son;“ as also Hosea, 5, 19. 50: I will *betroth* thee unto me for ever; yea I will *betroth* thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgement, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in *faithfulness*.“ — Another comparison is that to *a tree and its branches*; John. 15, 5: „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;“ Rom. 11, 17: „Thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;“ v. 54: „if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert *grafted contrary to nature in a wild olive tree*“ etc. — Finally Christ's union with the believer is compared to a *body and the members of the same*, 1 Cor. 15, 15: „As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ;“ Ephes. 5, 53: „Christ is the *head* of the church and the Saviour of the church and the Saviour of the body.“

595. **B.** *In which way this union is brought about?* It cannot be said to be brought about by an essential change of that natural body, which man has received from Adam and his parents, into the body of the Lord Jesus, so that, henceforth, he could say of himself: *I am Christ*, and of his body, that he be heavenly, and not of Adam. For

*a.* *Nothing of the kind is to be found anywhere in scripture;*

593. **β.** the holy scriptures treat the whole proceeding solely as a *spiritual union*, Ephes. 3, 17: „that Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith*;“ 1 Cor. 6, 17: „he that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.“ — Now as faith will be acknowledged

to be a thing of the spirit, it cannot be said to bring about a bodily union. The Christians, who have been baptized by one spirit into one body, and who have been made to drink into one spirit, 1 Cor. 15, 13 are united to each other, not in their bodies, but in their spirits; and exactly so the believers are made with Christ one spirit, and not one body.

594. *γ.* We are told things concerning the body of the Lord Jesus, that could not possibly be said of the body of the regenerated and believing people; as for instance,

1. the body of Christ has been taken upon him by the Son of God individually, *personally*, so that the word became flesh, John. 1, 14; 1 Cor. 15, 47: „the second man is the Lord of heaven,“ and „in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily,“ Coloss. 5, 9.

2. Christ's body has been given *for us all*, Luk. 22, 19; but neither Paul's, nor Peter's body, nor that of any regenerated has been given for us.

3. Christ's body is *immortal*, Rom. 6, 9: „knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more.“ Whilst the bodies of the regenerated we know to be mortal.

4. Christ's body has been *glorified*, Phil. 3, 21; the bodies of the regenerated are frail, and by no means glorified in this life.

5. Christ is *sitting at the right hand of God*, Mrk. 16, 19. which is not the case with the regenerated.

6. The bodies of the believers are said to become like unto the glorified body of Christ, Philip. 3, 21; which would not be promised if such was the case already etc. — Which proves the bodies of the regenerated not to be the essential body of Christ, and that, in being united with him, they are not partaking of his substance and of his nature.

595. *δ.* Finally no such essential union can be intended, because of the bodies of the regenerated, things are spoken of, which could not be applied to Christ's body. Thus for instance

1. we are told that the body of man is polluted and inhabited by sin, Rom. 7, 17. 20. 23. Christ's body is neither polluted nor inhabited by sin.

2. The human body is described as being continually subject to the flesh, and as continually warring against the spirit, so that men are not able to do the things that they would, Gal. 5, 17. Christ's body is not subject to such a war; he may do as he pleases.

3. The human body goes to dust and ashes, Genes. 3, 19; Eccles. (Sirach) 10, 10. 13. This cannot be the case with Christ's body, after it had been impossible even for the

grave to keep him, that he should see corruption, Psalm. 16, 10; Acts. 2, 24. 27. 31.

4. The human body is committed to the earth in dishonour, in weakness, as a natural body, 1. Cor. 15, 42 ff. But the body of the Lord Jesus, after he has entered into his glory, cannot be committed to the grave, much less can it be found in dishonour and in weakness. — Which proves that the bodies of the regenerated are not the essential body of Christ, as also, that, in being united with Christ, they do not partake of his substance and nature.

596. The fact is that this union is brought about by *faith*, Ephes. 3, 17: „*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*“ — The natural human body has its members joined to it by bones and sinews, Tob. 10, 11; by which a bodily union is brought about. — Again two friends, are joined and united together by the love they bear to each other, 1. Sam. 18, 1; but this no body will look upon as a bodily union, inasmuch as love is not a bodily tie. Husband and wife are said to become one flesh, Genes. 2, 24; Matth. 19, 5; Ephes. 5, 31; not as if henceforth both constituted but one person, one substance, but that, by connubial love and attachment they are united to one body. In the same way, Christ and the regenerated are joined together by faith. Now this faith, which is the means of the union is not bodily, nor is it at all at the free disposal of man. Consequently it cannot bring about a bodily union between Christ and man. Faith on the contrary is a spiritual tie, resting upon confidence and hope, and bringing about a *spiritual* union between Christ and his spiritual members. — In the like manner a prisoner who has been told of a benevolent man coming to ransom and to liberate him, carries about with him the desire, the hope and confidence in this his benefactor. Thus also the believer's heart clings continually to his Redeemer, with hope, confidence and desire after him; taking his refuge to him in every trial, mingling him with every thought of his.

597. This circumstance is beautifully explained in scripture by the figure of *marriage*; Genes. 2, 24: „*They shall be one flesh;*“ 1. Cor. 6, 16. 17: „*Know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit;*“ Hosea 2, 19. 20: „*I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea I will betroth thee unto me, in righteousness, and in judgement, and in lovingkindness and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness.*“ A promise by which God on his part rests the spiritual union upon *righteousness*, which He alone can give, and upon grace and mercy which He bestowes

upon man. Whilst on the *part of man*, God rests this union upon nothing else but faith, by which they might trust in him that He is seeking their best, and that He is willing to be gracious unto them. All which causes a *spiritual* union, but not a bodily union.



## Chapter XXIV.

This great work God is bringing about in man by certain means, viz: his word and sacrament. And for the purpose of these means being brought near to every man, He has instituted the office of ministry. The word by which God teaches us his will, is contained in the holy scriptures, in which the writings of the Prophets and Apostels have been preserved and transmitted to us.

598. Up to this, we have only been considering the remedies and provisions, God had made for the purpose of raising again the human race that had fallen into sin. It now remains for us to see, whether God is applying these remedies with or without certain means. This is necessary for the purpose of preventing such as might be inclined to refuse the regular employment of these means, to expect the benefit of these provisions, without any means whatsoever, or to turn to such means as God does not employ at all, and thus, in both ways, deprive themselves of the benefits of divine mercy.

599. In order shortly to sum up this matter, we say: God workes *faith* and *strengtenes it*. He workes and strengtenes *faith* either in adults or in children. In the first this comes to pass by the teaching of the word; in the latter by the sacrament of baptism. This latter sacrament is also conducive to the strengthening and augmenting of that faith, which the adults derive from the word.

600. Concerning the word we have to inquire,

A. *In which way God does not teach us, and*

B. *In which way He teaches us.*

601. A. *God does not teach us*

a. *Without, certain means.* Such are revelations, visions, and

the like. — It is true that, in the Old testament dispensation, God has occasionally instructed men without the employment of any means. Thus he spake face to face, for instance to Abraham, Genes. 20, 3; to Moses, Exod. 33, 1; from his mercy seat, as he promised Exod. 25, 22: „There I will meet with thee from above the mercy seat“ etc.; through the ephod of the highpriest, 1. Samuel. 23, 9 ff.; in shape of a man, Genes. 28, 2ff.; by visions and dreams, Genes. 28, 12. 13; Jcrem. 1, 11. 13. etc.

602. But it is to be remembered that God is not now any more speaking to us in diverse manners, Hebr. 1, 1; that with regard to matters of faith and salvation God never taught his people by extraordinary revelations, but that for this purpose He Has ordained the office of ministry, which was exercised by Prophets, priests, and the holy scriptures. We are therefore not entitled to expect God to teach us without any means whatsoever.

603. Nor does God teach us by the *light of nature*, in such a way, as if this instruction did comprise every thing that is necessary for us to know. For,

α. All we know by ourselves, is utter darkness, blindness and ignorance; Ephes. 4, 18: „the gentiles, having the understanding *darkened*, being alienated from the life of God through the *ignorance* that is in them, because of the *blindness* of their heart;“ 1. Cor. 1, 21: „In the wisdom of God the world *by wisdom knew not God*.“

β. Every knowledge concerning the things of God is to be derived but from revelation; John. 1, 18: „No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son which *is in the bosom of the father he had declared him*;“ Matth. 11, 27: „No man knoweth the son but the father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son *will reveal him*.“

γ. Human wisdom is at enmity with divine knowledge; Rom. 8, 7: „the carnal mind is *enmity against God*;“ 1 Cor. 5, 14: „the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are *foolishness* unto him: neither can he know them.“ — It was for this reason the *virgin Mary* could not comprehend, how she was to bring forth a son, as she had never known a man, Luk. 1, 34; that *Nicodemus* could not understand the doctrine of regeneration, John. 3, 4. 9; that the Apostles could not discern the prophecies with reference to the sufferings of Christ, Luk. 18, 34; Matth. 16, 22; that *Thomas* could not believe that the Lord had risen from the dead, John. 20; 59. Now if the natural light of man is



contrary to the divine mysteries, it follows, that God does not intend us to be taught by the light of nature.

604. Nor does God teach us *by the holy angels*. For they have not been ordained to the office of ministry. On the contrary, God has forewarned us to take care not to be deceived by such as take upon them the name of an angel, 2<sup>d</sup> Cor. 41, 14: „*Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*; Galat. 1, 8: „*though . . . an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you then that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*;" Coloss. 2, 18: „*let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind*." — Such instances we meet with plentifully among the papists, the baptists and other sects, which have ever boasted a great deal upon having been taught by angels, or have allowed themselves to be deceived by pretended appearances of angels.

605. Neither is God intending us to be taught by certain *traditions*, which have professedly been transmitted to the church from one teacher to the other, ever since the time of apostles; — but of which circumstance nothing is to be found in the word of God. For

α. Nobody is able to prove that God has ever led us to look to such traditions; we have therefore nor right to rest upon them our hope for salvation.

β. Even if such a tradition was produced, we have no infallible means whatsoever of deciding, whether the same be really derived from the apostles, or whether it be the production of false teachers.

γ. Besides which, the holy scriptures are so perfect, that we do not stand in need of the teaching of any other book. For we are told, that the scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, 2 Timot. 3, 15: that it is able to make us perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, v. 1, 17; it leads us to „believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing we might have faith by his name," John. 20, 21. Which sufficiently proves, that we do not stand in need of any tradition whatsoever.

606. δ. The traditions are *uncertain* and liable to be falsified. Thus in the churches of the Thessalonians the report had been spread in the name of Paul „that the day of Christ is at hand." This report the apostle contradicts, 2 Thess. 2, 1. ff. warning his readers for the spreading of such traditions, in the following words: „*We beseech you brethren, that ye be not so soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by the*

*spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ was at hand; let no man deceive you by any means.*“ — And on Peter's once asking the Lord Jesus what sort of death John was to suffer, his frowardness was punished in the following words: „*If I will that he tarry, till I come, what is that to thee?*“ then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die,“ John. 21, 22. ff. In this instance we find, that the sayings of the Lord Jesus had been perverted by the apostles, almost immediately after they had been uttered by him; how much more was this possible with the traditions, which, in the course of so many centuries, had to be carried about by so many teachers, hearers, believers, schismatics etc.? The foundation therefore upon which *tradition* rests, is by no means of so secure a nature, for us with implicit faith to rest our salvation upon it.

607. **B.** The manner in which God teaches mankind, is of a twofold description; he teaches them *by means of men* and by *His word*, which the Prophets and Apostles have reduced to writing. With regard to the first, we know that God has employed men for this purpose, in time of old. Thus did *Moses* teach the people of Israel; as did also the Prophets, who had been partly called to this office without any outward means, partly brought up for this purpose, at the school of the prophets, 2 Kings. 2, 3. 5; 4, 38. ff. Under the New testament dispensation God sent *His Son*, to be a prophet, who was to be obeyed, Deutr. 18, 15; Matth. 17, 5. After his resurrection Christ gave to his people, *Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors* and Teachers, Ephes. 4, 11; of whom he says: „he that heareth you heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me,“ Luk. 10, 16. He commanded them also to go and to teach all nations, Matth. 28, 19. 20; and to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations, Luk. 24, 27. To this office the Apostles have subsequently ordained other men, as Timothy, Titus, and the latter again others, that by them the *Gospel might be preached* everywhere, Titus 1, 5. 6. Such they have done in accordance with the divine will and providence. St. Paul accordingly writes to the ministers of the church at Ephesus, whom he had ordained to minister in the same, as follows: „Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, *over which the holy Ghost has made you overseers*, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,“ Acts. 20, 28. — But of the office of the ministry we shall have occasion to speak in a subsequent chapter.

608. The *holy scriptures*, or the *written word of God* have ever since they have been written, been employed by God as

a means whereby to teach men. For it was for this purpose that God caused His word to be committed to writing by Moses, that not „every man might do as it pleased good to him“, Deutro. 4, 2; 12, 32. In the like manner the prophet Isaiah was commanded to bind the people down to the written word „to the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,“ chapt. 8, 20. — The Lord Jesus also has pointed out to us the scriptures, John. 5, 39: *Search the scriptures; they are they which testify of me;“* Luk. 16, 29: „They (the rich man’s brothers) have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.“ — In the same way St. Paul by his example leads us to the scripture; for we read that he said „none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses *did say, should come to pass,“* Acts. 26, 22; as also by diligent exhortations, 2 Timot. 3, 15. 16. „From a child thou hast known the *holy scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise *unto salvation*. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work.“ To which is to be added what he says Rom. 15, 4: „Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we *through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*“

609. From all this it is evident, that God teaches men and calls them to his kingdom by means of men, whom He choses to employ for this purpose. It is the duty of these ministers, to preach the word of God and to teach in accordance with the same, so that they do not deviate from it, neither to the right nor to the left, but, according to the command, Matth. 28, 20: „*teach them to observe all things whatsoever I (Christ) have commanded you.*“



## Chapter XXV.

Sacraments are holy actions, ordained by God, by the performance of which something real is offered unto, and received by us; by which, as by a seal, the word of God and His promises of mercy are sealed, appropriated, and made sure unto us, as also we are made partakers of other spiritual gifts.

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610. Concerning the sacraments it will be best to treat every one of the same especially. For a more general view of the same, it may be as well to draw the attention to the following seven points.

a. *What is implied by the word sacrament?* It is this a latin word, which originally designates either a certain *sum of money*, which, on the occasion of a lawsuit, each of the two contending parties had to deposit, and which was not returned to the party that lost the suit; — or the *oath*, which the soldier had to make to his general or to the magistrates.

This word, having been transmitted into the language of the latin church, is, was henceforth employed to signify every action or mystery of godliness; the latin bible designs the union of Christ and the church as a *sacrament*, Ephes. 2, 12; although the Apostle himself calls it a *Mystery*.

611. A Sacrament is especially called the mystery of that holy action, by which God appropriates and seals unto us the promises of the Gospel. We, on our part, employ the word in the same sense, considering them as the great Mysteries of Christianity, by which, in a special manner, Christ's people are united to the Lord Jesus, in order that they might never part from him, and rather loose their lives than again be induced by Satan and his servants to sin against God.

612. b. *The nature of Sacraments.* They are

α. holy actions,

β. which God has himself ordained,

γ. in which we have offered unto us, *first*, something that is outwardly, bodily and visible, and *secondly*, something that is heavenly, spiritual and invisible,

δ. the seals which support the word of God,

ε. the means by which God's merciful promises are appropriated unto us, — and

ζ. by which we are made partakers of other blessings.

613. *Sacraments are like seals which God puts to His word, as a seal is put to a letter, in order to prove that to be true which is contained and promised in the same.* At the time God gave unto Noah, and by it to the whole creation, the promise of never again sending a flood over the earth, He immediately put His visible seal to this promise, namely the rainbow; and whenever this sign makes its appearance, we receive a new assurance of this promise, Genes. 9, 13 ff. God promising unto Abraham that his seed was to become so large that it should be impossible for them to be numberd, sealed also this His promise with an outward sign, that as he was not able to number the stars, so should his seed be, Genes. 15, 5. 6. In the same way God when making a covenant with Abraham promising to be his God, and the God of his seed after him, Genes. 17, 7, He added a seal to this promise in ordaining circumcision, which was to be the sign of the covenant, v. 11. Thus also has He insured to other saints His divine grace, as will appear from the history of *Jonathan*, 1. *Samuel*. 14, 16; and from that of *David*, *ibid.* 17, 26.

614. Now in all these proceedings God has allways given, as it were two sort of assurances, namely, one that could be heard, and a second that could be seen; thus Noah received the word and the rainbow; Abraham had the assurances of the word and the stars, and on another occasion that of the word and circumcision. — In the like manner He assures us, in his word that his body has been given into death, and his blood shed, for us, and the same thing he assures us of in the Lord's Supper, when he gives us his body to eat, and his blood to drink. —

615. *The Sacraments appropriate unto man more especially the things, which he has been promised in the word.* For instance, in the word we are told that Christ has suffered death on account of the sins of the whole world and of all mankind, and that his blood has been shed for all. Now the Lord's Supper has been ordained that the Lord might say to the communicant: this is my body, which has been given for you, and this is my blood which has been shed for you. Thus that, which has been spoken of in the word, is, by means of the Sacrament, appropriated to every believer apart; the latter is now assured that the general promises of the Gospel have also special reference to him.

616. c. *What is necessary for a Sacrament?* Concerning which question we have to consider;

1. *him that institutes the Sacrament,*
2. *the substance it consists of,*

3. *the real, inward, essential form of the same, and*  
 4. *its purposes and effects.*

1. With regard to him that institutes a Sacrament, we observe that it *can be ordained but by God alone, and under no circumstances whatsoever by any man.* And this, because no man is able to prescribe to God the means by which to dispense His grace. He alone has the power to point out the means, the use of which are acceptable to Him. Every thing therefore, that has its origin in human tradition and differs others customs, cannot be admitted to be a Sacrament; as little as it can be considered as forming an essential part of the same. Whilst on the other hand, with regard to every action that is really a Sacrament, we are in possession of the direct commands of the word of God; which also contains, for the same purpose, certain commandments and arrangements, and a promise, that by means of these Sacraments we are to be made partakers of a heavenly and spiritual gift.

617. *It is necessary also that the Sacrament should not be instituted only for a short space of time, but that its efficacy should last as long as the dispensation itself to which it belongs.*

618. 2. With regard to its substance, it will be necessary for the words that institute the Sacrament to state that the believer has to receive something that is *earthly*, bodily and visible, as well as something that is *spiritual*, heavenly and invisible. For as God, by means of the Sacraments is communicating heavenly graces to earthly Beings, He, in the use of these means joins together earthly and heavenly, bodily and spiritual things. The bodily substance of the Sacrament is (in the language of the latin Church) called the *Element*, and consists in baptism of the water, in the Lord's Supper of bread and wine. That not more than the above mentioned things are required for the use of the Sacraments, we trust to prove in the chapters, that treat on the Sacraments especially.

619. But the following distinction, caused by the different dispensations, is not to be lost sight of. For even as so as the old testament dispensation consisted almost entirely of types, so the Sacraments it prescribed, had the spiritual and heavenly things but as a shadow of things to come and not in their reality; whilst those of the New testament have the spiritual and heavenly things not after their shadow, but in their *reality*.

620. From which follows, that the Sacraments of the two dispensations *cannot have been of one and the same description.* All such things, therefore, as are common to the Sacraments of both dispensations cannot be called a Sacra-

ment at all. Every thing that belongs to the old testament dispensation cannot form a Sacrament of the new testament; nor can anything of the new testament dispensation be made a Sacrament in the Old.

621. 3. With regard to the *real, inward and essential form* of the Sacrament, it will be necessary for the word to have ordained a certain action, by which the substance of the Sacrament is offered unto man and received by him. If such was not the case, then neither the express words nor the institution of the Sacrament would be done justice to. For the word must be joined to the Sacrament, else it would be no Sacrament at all.

622. From which we deduce, that the Sacrament cannot essentially consist *of substance alone*, even after the latter had been consecrated and put aside for this holy purpose. This could not yet make a Sacrament, because it had not been dealt with according to the will of him who instituted the same.

623. In the same way, although the Sacraments, as a whole, have their own signification, yet the visible elements of the same cannot be said „to signify something invisible.“ For, in the first instance the word „signify“ is not to be found in the words of Institution. And secondly if we maintain the term „signify,“ then we mix up the sacraments of the old and those of the new testament, as having only „to signify.“ But it is remarkable, that it is just this, that constitutes the difference between the Sacraments of the Old and those of the New testament. Those of the old testament are but shadows and do but „signify“ the future, whilst those of the new Testament in reality do comprise and offer the substance of the thing signified.

624. 4. *The purposes and effects of the Sacraments.* Every Sacrament must have spiritual effects. For it has been ordained for the purpose of being the means of communicating the grace of God to man; from which follows that every Sacrament, that has no spiritual effects, cannot be a Sacrament at all.

625. d. *Who is entitled to handle and to dispense the Sacraments?* thereby we have to answer two questions:

a. *whether the ministers of God alone are entitled to the performance of this act, or whether such as do not belong to the ministry have also a right to dispense the same?* The dispensing of the Sacraments forms *part of the obligations of the ministry*, as St. Paul writes „Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God,“ 1. Cor. 4, 1. Now as nobody is entitled to intrude himself

upon the office of the ministry, unless he be properly called, so nobody is entitled to dispense the Sacrament, unless he be called upon to do so by his office. But this has, of course, only reference to an orderly state of things within the church, and not to one of disturbance and persecution which makes it impossible to get at an ordained clergyman; in which latter emergency such also, as are not properly ordained to the office of the ministry, are permitted to teach the word, and to dispense the Sacraments. But yet with this distinction that the Sacrament of baptism be indispensably necessary, whilst the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper could be possibly dispensed with. In our days the Sacrament of baptism may happen to be of immediate necessity, but scarcely ever the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and we say therefore, that persons who have not been properly ordained to the office of the ministry, are permitted to confer baptism, but not to dispense the Lord's Supper.

626. *β. Whether, for the full efficacy of the Sacrament, it be necessary for him who dispenses the same, to be a truly godly man, and to have, during the performance of the same certain good purposes in his own mind?* We answer: it is true, that it behoves every man to approach the table of the Lord with fear and trembling, considering that he is about to approach the Lord's countenance. Now it may also happen, that he whose duty it is to dispense the Sacrament is a despiser of God, or though not evil minded in other respects, has yet his mind occupied, during the whole action, with unprofitable and unbecoming thoughts. But this circumstance cannot, in any way whatsoever, make void the Sacrament either in its nature or its working. For

*α.* In this way the word, if preached by evilminded people would have no effect neither. But that this is not the case is proved when we read of Judas, though unsincere, yet having effectually preached the word to the Pharisees, and Scribes, Matth. 10, 4. 7, that sat in Moses' seats, Matth. 23, 2. 3; — and of others who preached the word for the express purpose of creating envy and strife, Philip. 1, 15. — In the same way, the efficacy of either of the Sacraments cannot be made void by the wickedness of the officiating minister.

*β.* St. Paul writes Rom. 3, 3: „*Shall man's unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*“ the faith of God is accordingly of such a nature as to give us His gifts by means of the Sacrament; and how could it be possible for the faithlessness of His servant to make this faith of God entirely void.

*γ.* It is not possible for any one to know the thoughts



that animate his fellowmen; or to assure himself of the sentiments that are in the heart of the minister, whilst dispensing to him the Sacrament. As a consequence of this everybody would stand in continual doubt, as to his ever having efficaciously received the Sacrament. — And under such circumstances the Sacrament could not be said to be a seal to the faith of any one.

627. e. *To whom the Sacraments are to be given?* We have here to consider, in the first place, the persons who are to receive them, and secondly, the *preparations* they are expected to make for this purpose. — With regard to our first consideration, we say, that the Sacraments are to be given unto all men, who have subjected themselves to the word, and the promises contained in the same. Yet the mode of the instituting of the same, as also many other circumstances may serve to modify this principle. Thus we find that the Passah-lamb had immediate reference to *all Israel*, whilst circumcision was to be performed upon children on the eighth day and not sooner. Exactly in the same way is baptism the duty of every man, and there is no plausible obstacle whatsoever to this Sacrament being administered to Jews and Gentiles, as well as to children and adults; whilst the Lord's Supper is but for *such Christians* as are able „to examine themselves“ (concerning the state of their soul), 1. Cor. 11, 28. Which proves that to the Lord's Supper are to be admitted but adults and not children.

628. With regard to the necessary *preparations* for the Sacraments, we say that none but those are to be made partakers of the Sacrament, who are *believers* and in reality the spiritual members of the Lord Jesus; whilst such as are un-believers, or schismatics, or epicurean despisers of God and His word, as well as such as do not come to a knowledge of their sins, or who despair of the grace of God, — have no title whatsoever to the partaking of the Sacraments. Accordingly we find baptism and the Lord's Supper every where mentioned in close union with faith; Mrk. 16, 16: „*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*“ — And the Eunuch of Ethiopia, expressing his anxiety to be baptized is answered by Philip: „If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest [be baptized],“ Acts. 8, 37. And concerning the Lord's Supper we read: „*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread etc.*“ 1 Cor. 11, 28.

629. f. *To which purpose Sacraments are to be employed?* the principal end and purpose of the Sacraments is the *application and the sealing unto us of the divine promises*. Besides

which they are also to serve for other purposes; thus by the publicly partaking of the same along with God's people, one confesses himself to be of the same faith; binding himself to be faithful unto God even to the last, and even to give his life for the honour of His name. Finally by the partaking of the Sacraments, the believers determine henceforth to consider themselves as members of the same body, and to assist each other in works of charity.

630. *g.* As to the different kinds and numbers of the Sacraments. This distinction has its origin in the diversity of the two dispensations, for there were Sacraments belonging to the Old, whilst some are refering to the New testament dispensation.

The Sacraments of the Old testaments dispensation were: *Circumcision* and *the Passover*. — *Circumcision* was a seal of the covenant which God has made with Abraham and his seed, promising to be their God, and that of their seed after them, Genes. 17, 10; — a Sacrament that has been abolished [at the commencement of the new testament dispensation]. We know that Paul had seriously to contend with false Apostles, who mentained the necessity of baptism, even under the new testament dispensation; and that he decided the same to have been abolished, Act. 15, 1. 19. 20. — By the institution of the Passover the Israelites received the assurance, that the Angel of death should have no power over the inhabitants of the houses, that had the token of blood upon them, Exod. 13, 14. This Sacrament also has been abolished, for *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. 5, 17. The Lord Jesus in that he has instituted baptism and the Lord's Supper, has created something new, thereby making the first covenant (circumcision and passover) *Old*, Heb. 3, 13.

631. In the new testament dispensation, we have also not more than two Sacraments, viz: *baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*. —

In this place it is not to be omitted to attend to the following distinctions. By circumcision all the male children of God's people were received within His covenant of mercy; whilst the Passover served as a seal of the covenant of mercy made by means of circumcision. — In the same manner, the Christian is, by baptism, admitted into God's covenant, whilst in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper he has this covenant confirmed unto his soul.



## Chapter XXVI.

Holy Baptism is a Sacrament, by which the Lord is regenerating men, by water and the Spirit, to a new and spiritual life, purifying them from their sins, adopting them as His children and making a covenant with them, with the assurance that, if they remain in the same, they are to be heirs of eternal life.

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632. The first Sacrament of the Christian is *holy baptism*, concerning which we following nine points are to attended to.

a. *The name of this Sacrament.* It is *baptism*; this means to dip, to wash. Thus Naeman dipped into the Jordan when making the ablutions which he had been advised to try, 1 Kings. 5, 14. Thus the Israelites were all baptized in passing through the sea, 1 Cor. 10, 2. — In the same way the washing of the Christian is called *baptism* or a *dipping*, both an account of the external, bodily, and the internal and spiritual act thereby executed. — This act is also called the *visible pouring out of the holy Ghost*, Matth. 3, 11: „he that cometh after me, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost,“

633. The act of baptism is also designated with many other names, such as: *Water*, John. 3, 5: „Except a man be born of water and of the spirit“ etc.; — also: *the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Titus, 3, 5; — finally: *the washing of water by the word*, Ephes. 5. 26.

634. b. *The nature of this Sacrament.* It is a spiritual action, instituted and ordained by Christ, by the performance of which a man is baptized with water, in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Ghost; and by means of which he receives forgiveness of sins, is received in God's covenant of mercy and is made partaker of the merits of Christ, of adoption and of eternal salvation. — We propose to consider the essentials of the preceding definition more particularly.

635. a. Wherever we find baptism spoken of in scripture, we ought never to imagine it to refer to *the outpouring*, or the *gift of the Holy Ghost*, which favour even in our days is not denied to some faithful Christians; nor to the *baptism of death*, which the *holy Martyrs* had to endure; — but that it means to imply nothing else, but the *baptism of water*.

636. β. Baptism is not a mere external ceremony, whereby

publicly to confess the faith in Christ. This opinion is not derived from scripture, nor could it be supported by any part of the latter. Baptism is a much more beautiful and a truly divine operation, which could not be brought about by a mere outward ceremony, even if this ceremony was for the purpose of publicly confessing Christ.

637. *γ. Baptism is not a sign of the regeneration*, that is to take place in man, sometime after baptism had been conferred upon him. For as baptism causes regeneration, it cannot be said to signify the same. We have, therefore, not to consider it as a *mere token*, because baptism has not been given us merely as a *sign*, but as a *means of regeneration*.

638. *c. The way in which baptism has been announced and promised to us in the Old testament.* This has taken place:

*α. In words*, Ezek. 36, 25: „I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness,“ Joel. 3, 18: „A fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim;“ Zach. 13, 1: „In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness.

*β. In types*, such as:

1. *The flood*, 1 Pet. 3, 20, 21: „In the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water; the like figure whereunto even baptism both also now save us.“

2. *Circumcision*, Coloss. 2, 11, 12: „In whom (Christ) also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism.“

3. *The passage through the red sea*, during which the children were led by a cloud, 1 Cor. 10, 12: „All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.“

4. *The river that was flowing out from under the temple*, in the vision of Ezek. 47, 1, 8, 9: „The waters came down from under the right side of the house, and he said unto me, these waters issue out toward the east country, and go down in the desert and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live.“ This same healing river is also mentioned Revel. 22, 1, ff.; and can therefore not be understood to refer to any thing else but to *baptism*.—

As such types remain to be mentioned: the *levitical water of separation*, Numb. 19, 9, 10, ff.; — the *levitical purifications*,

Levit. 15, 6. ff.; — the *cleansing of Naeman*, 2 King. 5, 14. ff. 639. d. *By whom baptism has been instituted and ordained.* Every Sacrament must be instituted by God, else any action could not carry this name; which proves that baptism must have been commanded by God, and cannot have any other foundation. — The institution has taken place, in the first place, in that *John received the command to baptize*, Luk. 3, 2. 3: „The word of God came unto John, and he came into all the country about Jordan, *preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*;" John. 1, 33: „He that sent me to *baptize with water*, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending" etc. Accordingly the baptism of John is spoken of as being from heaven, Matth. 21, 25; and in another place it is called: *God's counsel*, Luk. 7, 30: „But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him (John).“ — In the same way as John, Christ did also baptize; John. 4, 1. 2. Which command he repeated, when he sent his disciples into all the world to preach the Gospel, Matth. 28, 19: „Go ye, teach all nations, *baptizing them*“ etc — And as, of baptism itself, we are told, that it is „*the answer of a good conscience toward God*," 1 Pet. 3, 21; — „*a washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*," Titus. 3, 5, — and the *washing of the water by which God sanctifies his Church*, Ephes. 5, 26, it follows that it must have been instituted by God.

640. 2. *The persons, who are called upon to administer the Sacrament.* God, although having instituted baptism, had yet the same administered by John, Luk. 3, 3; the Lord baptized by his disciples, John. 4, 1. 2. Thus we have a right to ask (seeing that God is not administering baptism Himself,) *who has been ordained by Him to baptize man?* This question has been partly discussed already. §. 625; and in this place is but remains for us to state, that God has ordained whom baptism to be conferred by those men he has called to the ministry of His word. Accordingly he commands: *teach all nations and baptize them.* Baptism is one of the mysteries of the kingdom of God, concerning which St. Paul writes 1 Cor. 4, 1: „Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.“ — If therefore, there happens to be a baptism to be conferred, it must be administered by a properly ordained minister. But with reference to this we have to make the following inquiries:

641. α. *Whether a minister, who maintains and teaches erroneous doctrines, is entitled to confer the Sacrament of baptism?* Such schismatic teachers there are two kinds, viz:

N. Some that do not keep to the strict command of the

Lord, employing for baptism another substance than water; whilst others do not baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, thereby perverting the mode of the institution. Such persons have no right to administer baptism, not because of their being in themselves unfit for this purpose, but because of their perverting Christ's command and ordinance.

2. Some false teachers there are who retain the mode of the baptism entirely unchanged. Such have a full right to administer the Sacrament of baptism, without depriving the receiver of the benefits this act is able to confer; always understood that such people, *who know* this minister to maintain errors, should not go to him, nor bring their children to him for receiving baptism, except in cases of the utmost necessity.

642. This can be proved by the fact

1. *that men's unbelief cannot make void the faith of God*, Röm. 3, 3: Like as for instance an honest man never fails to fulfil his promise, although he is obliged to have the same executed by a bad and faithless servant; exactly so God fulfils His promise, to grant unto us, by baptism, the regeneration of our souls and other spiritual gifts, although he that administers the Sacrament happens to be, because of his false teaching, unfaithful to his God.

2. *If men's unbelief was able to make void the faith of God*, almost every man would have to despair of being baptized rightly. For who can be thoroughly assured of His minister teaching in all points the right doctrine, or being in every respect right minded, and accordingly almost no man could feel himself assured of the benefits or of the fruits of baptism.

3. We know also that other religious acts have lost nothing of their efficacy, although he that officiated maintained certain errors. Thus, for instance, the *sacrifices* were not found fault with, for reason of their having been prepared by perverse priests; the virgin Mary offered sacrifices, with the assistance of a priest of the same description, Luk. 2, 24; and the Lord Jesus Christ himself commanded the priests that persecuted him (and thereby erred) to offer sacrifices, Matth. 7, 4; Mark. 1, 44.

Nor do we know of any instance, of any questions having been started, during the Old testament dispensation, concerning the Orthodoxy of him, who administered *circumcision*; and it is more than probable that the Lord Jesus has been circumcised by one, who had been attached to the (erroneous) doctrine of the Pharisees. — Exactly so it is in the case of *the Gospel of Salvation being preached* by ungodly people. The

word cannot be said to have lost its power and efficacy, in consequence of this circumstance. For although the Lord Jesus himself warned his hearers with respect to the erroneous teaching of the Pharisees, Matth. 16, 6. 12, he commanded them nevertheless to do whatever the Pharisees bade them do in accordance with the law of Moses. "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do," Matth. 23, 2. 3. St. Paul rejoices that the word of God had been preached, though it was not done of good will, but of envy and strife and in pretence, Philip. 1, 15. 18.

Now in the same way as sacrifices, circumcision and the preaching of the word of God do not become void of their efficacy, by being administered by ministers who maintain erroneous doctrines,\* so baptism cannot be made ineffectual by the errors of him who confers the same upon him. And all that has been said, with reference to the latter, holds also good in the case of a minister who leads an ungodly life.

643. A second question we have to consider is

*β. Whether such as are not ordained, or laymen are permitted to administer baptism.* We answer as follows: It is true, that the functions of teaching and preaching the word, are to be exercised but by properly ordained ministers; nevertheless if there should be none to be procured and the case most urgent, they may be exercised by one, not ordained for the holy office. The same is also permitted in the case of baptism being required, if it was impossible to procure a properly ordained minister for the purpose. This can be proved from the following:

α. The teaching of the word as well as the dispensing of the Sacraments, form alike part of the office of the ministry. As in cases of necessity the exercise of the first is permitted to the laymen, so also must be the latter.

β. The Sacraments of the Old testament have not been administered by the Priests only. Thus we find circumcision nowhere spoken of as one of the peculiar functions of the priestly office. The Passover every man was at liberty to kill and prepare for himself, Exod. 12, 6. Which proves that, in cases of necessity, the Sacrament of baptism may be administered with safety by persons, who are not ordained for the ministry.

644. *γ. Are women permitted to confer baptism?* Whatever has been said with regard to laymen, holds also good in the case of women. That, in cases of necessity, women are permitted to baptize, appears evident from the facts:

1. that in Christ Jesus all believers are made One, and

that henceforth the difference between men and women has been abolished, Gal. 3, 28;

2. That women have even been permitted to teach in some of the churches; as for, instance, Phebe in the church of Canchrea; — Priscia Paul's, helper, v. 3, concerning whom we have also a right to suppose, that they have also administered baptism.

3. Nor do we lack instances of women having conferred circumcision; thus we read of Zipora, the wife of Moses having circumcised her son, Exod. 4, 25. In the time of the persecutions under Antioch, many godly women circumcised their children, as we are told 1. Maccab. 1, 61; 2. Maccab. 6, 10.

645. f. *Who has a right to receive baptism.* It is the will of God that all men should enter his covenant of grace, and therefore that all should receive baptism. Accordingly there is no reason for excluding any man, old or young; rich or poor; man or wife from the benefits of the same, — unless any one *unfits himself for its reception.*

646. The question: *whether children are to receive baptism immediately after their birth, and before they have come to the full use of their senses, and have been able to be instructed concerning God's will,* — we answer in the affirmative; and this for the following reasons:

*α. The Lord Jesus has issued a general command:* „Go ye, and teach all nations,“ Matth. 28, 19. The term „all nations“ cannot but be understood to include also little children. And if it pleases God to include all men within the range of His merciful purposes, it does not befit man, to withhold these benefits from any body; and if God commands all men without any distinction, to be baptized, we have no right to deny this Sacrament to anybody, even not to little children.

*β. Little children are denizens of the covenant of grace.* For the Lord Jesus himself declares: that „of such (children) is the kingdom of heaven,“ Mrk. 10, 14. This covenant is made by baptism, which Peter calls „an answer of a good conscience towards God,“ 1. Peter 3, 21. From which follows, that whosoever belongs to the covenant of grace is entitled to receive baptism. Children we have just seen to belong to this covenant, — consequently they must be baptized.

*γ. The Lord Jesus has given us the following general rules:* „Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven,“ and „flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven,“ John. 3, 5; 1. Cor. 15, 50. — From this we conclude: nobody can inherit the kingdom of heaven as long as



still flesh and blood; but the children being begotten in the natural way are flesh and blood, consequently they cannot see the kingdom of heaven. Nevertheless we have seen it to be the will of God that they should enter the kingdom of heaven; and it becomes therefore indispensably necessary for them to be regenerated. But this regeneration is brought about by no other means than by baptism, which we know to be the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Titus. 3, 5; as also the Lord Jesus himself declares regeneration to be by water and the Spirit. Consequently it is necessary for children to be baptised.

δ. Besides, the Apostle Paul tells us, that even circumcision of old has been a seal of righteousness, Rom. 4, 11; and a means of the covenant between God and the seed of Abraham, Genes. 17, 11. 12. After the abolition of circumcision, baptism has been given us in its place, to be to us an answer (or a covenant) of a good conscience towards God, 1 Peter 3, 21. Now as with respect to circumcision, God did not take in consideration the human age, but commanded all children to be baptised on the eighth day, without awaiting their having come to an age, in which he would be able to comprehend the importance of the covenant made between God and Abraham; — so also is it His will, in the New testament dispensation, not to limit His grace in such a way, as to exclude little children from entering on the enjoyment of gifts, to which they were admitted under the law. On the contrary, He is willed that all children, without reference to their age and reasoning powers, should be baptized and that they should be made partakers of His covenant of grace, even before they have come to the full enjoyment of their reason.

647. Again it has been asked: *Whether evil doers, Schismatics and unbelievers ought to be admitted to baptism.* We answer: Every one who cannot receive baptism worthily is not to be baptized, as long as he is remaining in such a state. There are three things that unfit a man for baptism, viz: *false teaching; gross sins, and ignorance and unbelief.* — Suppose one who is teaching erroneous doctrines, or is sunk into sin in such a manner as to withstand the Holy Ghost, and to unfit himself for the operations the latter, — such an one ought not to be baptized, until he has put away from him his errors and his sins, according to the advice of Peter, Acts, 2, 38: *„Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.“* If he happens to be an adult, but has not yet received any instructions in the Christian faith, it is, of course, above all things requisite for him, previous to his baptism, to be properly instructed. On the occasion of

the Eunuch's asking Philip to baptize him, saying: „*See, here is water; what does hinder me to be baptized,*“ Philip answers: „*If thou believest with thy whole heart thou mayest,*“ Acts. 8, 36. ff. The same was done by Peter and Silas at Philippi on the occasion of their converting their keeper. They first preached to him the word of God, and baptized him afterwards, Acts, 16, 32. 33.

648. *g. The external means for administering baptism.* As in the administering of every Sacrament two essentials are to be considered viz: an earthly and a heavenly, we now intend to do this with regard to baptism.

The earthly part of the same is *water*. For water has been used by *John*, when baptizing near the Jordan, Matth. 3, 5; John. 1, 33. Nor has this been altered by the *Lord Jesus* at the time he instituted the Sacrament; his *disciples* also baptized with *water* Acts. 8, 38. At the time the Holy Ghost had been poured out upon the believers, on the occasion of their preaching in the house of *Cornelius*, Peter said: „Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?“ Acts. 10, 47. Paul moreover calls baptism „the washing of the *water*,“ Ephes. 5, 26.

649. No other fluid therefore, than pure water is to be used for the purposes of baptism. For in the words of its institution we are expressly commanded to use water; and we read of the Apostles having used the same fluid for their baptismal functions. Besides how do we know, that it is not God's intention to work regeneration — as far as externals are concerned — just by means of water, and to allow only such a baptism full value, as has been performed by means of water?

650. Another essential part in baptism, the *heavenly* part of the same, we find to be the name of the Triune God, or as it is expressed in the words of the institution, *of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*; the Lord Jesus bids his Apostles to go and teach all nations „*baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,*“ Matth. 28, 19. — And like as the Trinity itself descended upon the Lord, immediately after he had been baptized, so now the Holy Ghost descends upon him who is being baptized. By this act he is adopted by *God* (the Father), who having regenerated him, says to him: *this is my beloved son (or daughter) with whom I am well pleased*; and *God the Son* washes and purifies him from his sins, Ephes. 5, 26: „That he (Christ) might sanctify and cleanse it (his church) with the washing of the water by the word.“ — Now if a man, by being baptized is purified from his sins, this purification must necessarily be

brought about by the blood of Christ. For this blood alone, and nothing else, cleanseth us from all sin, 1. John. 1, 7; Ephes. 1, 7. — *The Holy Ghost* gives, as it were, the seal to this covenant, 2. Cor. 1, 22; he is the „earnest of our inheritance,“ Ephes. 1, 14; he „beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,“ Rom. 8, 16; as it is also said, that we are *born again by the Spirit*, John. 3, 5; whilst of baptism we are told, that it is the „renewing of the Holy Ghost,“ Titus 3, 5.

651. h. *The ceremonial of this Sacrament.* This is to be determined in accordance with the word *baptism*. We have therefore to inquire:

Which action is implied by the word baptism, in its original and proper signification? — and what is it intended to signify in the Sacrament before us?

652. *To baptize* means to immerse, to sprinkle, to purify (§. 632). It is therefore entirely unnecessary to trouble ourselves, *whether one who is to be baptized ought to be immersed, or washed, or sprinkled*, seeing that the word *to baptize*, originally includes these different significations. It is therefore, in this respect, quite indifferent in which way baptism is performed; and it is advisable for every one to retain the peculiar way he has been accustomed to; without giving himself any farther concern about it.

653. Moreover it is to be remembered, that the institution of the Sacrament of baptism, did not as much intend the mere washing or sprinkling with water, — than rather that this washing etc., be done in the name of *the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Baptism cannot yet be rightly called so, unless a washing or sprinkling has been performed; but it would be a mere washing and not a baptism, if this act was not done in the name of the Holy Trinity.

The term „*in the name*“ denotes, in the first place, that baptism has been commanded to be performed by the Holy Trinity; just as to go, to speak, to do etc., in the name of Lord, means nothing else, as to do these things by His commands. — It denotes secondly that baptism is performed in the strength and by the cooperation of the Triune God. — Thus we read of *David* having slain Goliath in the name, that is, by the power of God, 1. Sam. 17, 45; of *Assa* having gone out to fight against the Ethiopians in the name (that it in the strength) of God and with His assistance, 2. Chron. 14, 11; of *David* despising and triumphing over his enemies, in the name (in the strength) of the Lord, Pslm. 20, 6; 44, 6; 118, 10. — Whereby we learn that baptism is

not intended to be performed in the strength of man, but in that of the Triunne God.

Finally the term „in the name“ signifies that, in the performance of baptism, the Holy Trinity is to be expressly named, prayed to and adored. For to speak, to preach and to prophesy in the name of the Lord, means nothing else, than to speak and to preach the words of the mouth of the Lord; Jerem. 44, 16. 17; Acts. 5; 40; Luk. 24, 27; Matth. 7, 22. — To swear in the name of the Lord means, as much as, in the act of performing an oath, to name His name as an holy name, and thereby to honour Him; Deutr. 6, 13; 1. Sam. 20, 46. — To bless in the name of the Lord means: in the act of blessing to mention the name of the Lord, and thereby to honour Him as that God, from whom all our blessings flow; 2. Samuel. 6, 18; 1. Chron. 17, 2; Pslm. 129, 8; Numb. 6, 23 ff.: „Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, on this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them:

„The Lord bless thee and keep thee;

„The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

„The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.“

And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.“

All this leads us to the following conclusions. In order to bless in the name of the Lord, it is necessary for us to name His name, thereby honouring and acknowledging Him to be the source of every blessing. To perform miracles in the name of the Lord means: in the act of performing the same, expressly to make mention of Christ's name, and by means of naming the same to perform miraculus works. Thus the Lord Jesus gave unto his disciples power, in his name to cast out devils, to heal the sick etc., Mark. 16, 17. 18; which they accordingly did, performing wonderful works by mentioning the name of the Lord, Acts. 3, 6: „In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk;“ cf. *ibid.* 9, 34; 16, 18. And like as all these works have been performed in the name of God and of Christ, by mentioning the same, — so we are commanded to perform baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. For giving therefore to the act of baptism its full value it is necessary, whilst sprinkling the child with water, expressly to name the name of the Holy Trinity.

654. Besides it is not to be overlooked that, in being baptised, *man is entering a covenant with God*, 1 Peter 3, 21. In

making a covenant it is indispeusably necessary to mention the names of the contracting parties. And accordingly if a man is to enter into a covenant with God, it is but just to have mentioned the names of the parties; more especially to show that this covenant is not concluded with idols, with angels, departed saints, or with an unknown God, — but *with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.*

655. We have now to consider

i. *the effect baptism has upon man.* It does not appear necessary to repeat again, in this place, the effects by which, in general, the Sacraments are accompanied, and to apply them more especially to baptism; such as the openly confessing the faith in Christ, and the fact of their being a seal of the promises of God. It but remains for us to state the effects which are ascribed, more especially, to the Sacrament of baptism. Such are:

α. *The forgiveness of sins:* Mrk. 1, 4: „John did baptize and preach the *baptism of repentance*;" Acts. 2, 38: „Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins;" *ibid.* 22, 16: „Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins;" Ephes. 5, 26. ff.: „Christ gave himself for the Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, *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.*" Zach. 13, 1: „In that day shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness."

β. *Regeneration;* John. 3, 5: „Except or man be born of water and of the Spirit" etc.; Titus. 3, 5. we read that God saved us „by the washing of *regeneration*" etc. — Regeneration again brings about other effects, such as; *adoption* which is a fruit of our having been born again by the Holy Ghost, and accordingly by God. Thus in the new birth we become the children of God; and if by baptism we become children of God, this is brought about by *faith*, Galat. 3, 26. 27: *ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ*; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," — Faith again comes by the hearing of the word, Rom. 10, 17. And accordingly we find Peter, 1 Epist. 1, 23. mentioning as the source of regeneration the *divine word*: „*being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*" — Finally faith bringeth about the enjoyment of Christ's merits, Galat. 3, 27: „as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

γ. *The covenant with God*; 1. Pet. 3, 21: „baptism doth save us, not the putting of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (covenant) of a good conscience towards God.“

δ. *The renewing*; Titus. 3, 5: „the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;“ Col. 2, 11. 12: „In whom (Christ) ye also are 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 ye also are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.“

ε. *Eternal life*; Mrk. 16, 16: „He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;“ cf. 1 Pet. 3, 21. — This is sufficient to convince us, that baptism is not meant to serve only as an act for openly confessing Christ, or as a sign of regeneration; — but that it is a powerful means in the hand of God, whereby he performs such works within man that tend to his eternal salvation.

656. k. *Other circumstances connected with baptism.* Of these we have to mention five different points:

a. *The sponsors*, who accompany and carry the child to the font. We think it right here to observe, that the efficacy of baptism by no means depends on the presence of such sponsors. — But in the case of their undertaking this charge, they take upon themselves the following duties:

1. as *witnesses*, to take care that the Sacrament be duly administered, in accordance with the words of the institution;

2. after the child has come to the full use of its senses, to *testify* to the child, that baptism has been really conferred upon him, according to Christ's will;

3. to *pray*, that it might please God, after having graciously admitted the child into the covenant of his mercy, to *retain* him in the same, to bless him in his body and soul and finally to make him an heir of eternal salvation;

4. to confess in the act of baptism, in the place of the child, the faith in which he desires to be baptized and afterwards brought up;

5. and, finally, to exert himself to have the child brought up in the faith he confessed at the font, and to beware his being misled into errors that might hurt his soul.

It was for this reason that the Church commanded, in the case of baptism, to admit as sponsors none but godly people, who might be induced to benefit the children, by putting the abovementioned duties into practice. For individuals who maintain erroneous doctrines, ought not to be chosen as sponsors, because of their not being fitted for the proper exercise of these duties.

657. *β. Exorcism*; this precedes the act of baptism, and consists in the following words „*I conjure thee, thou impure spirit, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost that thou leavest and departest from this servant of Jesus Christ*“ etc. — But by these words it is by no means intended to say, that the body of the child is possessed by the Evil One. For every one is acquainted with the fact that the power Satan has over man, is of a twofold nature; he has namely first, power over the *body* and then, power over the *soul*. The devil has power over the *body* of a man, when he has made himself, as it were, master of his victim's limbs, using them as he listeth; — and over the *soul*, if he has got the same into his power, leading it, according to his pleasure. Christ speaks of such a possession of the spirit, Luk. 11, 25. 26: „*And when he cometh he findeth it (his house) swept and garnished; then goeth he and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there.*“

658. Now if, in the act of baptism, we find the devil bid to depart from the child, we ought not to understand this to be a *bodily*, but a *spiritual* possession. Nor are these words to be considered as being put to the devil, that thereby the child might be delivered from his power, or that they might exercise any other power over him; — they are merely intended:

1. *To remember those who are present that they are born of flesh and in sins.* We all, as well as the child that is to be baptized, are conceived and born in sins, Pslm. 51, 7; by nature children of wrath, Ephes. 2, 3, and accordingly, held captive in the power of Satan, until we are made, free by the grace of God; and

2. *This act is intended to be a figure of the power and effects of the act of baptism itself.* For by the one act the devil is bid to give up the power he held over the child, and by baptism this is accomplished and put into effect.

659. We do not deny that an exhortation of this kind (§. 658, 1) might be conveyed in a more fitting and appropriate manner. Yet this is no reason for an entire abolition of the act of exorcism; for *there is not a ceremony*, nor any external custom of the Church, which does give room for improvement; while yet to the Church there remains the choice of having the same abolished or not.

660. *γ. The sign of the cross*, which is drawn with the forefinger upon the brow and the breast of the child. This is not done in order that thereby some spiritual operation might be effected upon the child. On the contrary it is only inten-

ded to indicate that the child is to be baptized into the death of Christ, and being thereby delivered from the power of Satan, to make a covenant with God. It is for this and no other reason that the church has retained this custom.

661. *δ. The not repeating of this Sacrament.* Every one who has once had baptism conferred upon him, according to the commands of Christ, need not have the same repeated again. The reason of this is, that God, by the act of baptism, is making a covenant with man, and if God has once concluded this covenant, a repetition of the act tending therunto is unnecessary, seeing that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, Rom. 11, 29. For although it may happen on the part of man, to commit himself by breaking the covenant, yet this never comes to pass on the part of God, — as long namely as this time of mercy lasts, during which He entices sinners to become partakers of His covenant. The covenant in which God promised not to send any more the flood, we do not find to have been repeated, as little as that of circumcision. In the same way we are nowhere commanded to repeat baptism, nor is there anywhere an instance to be found of its having been repeated. It is, therefore, best for us to obey simply the commands of the Lord, without allowing our reason to mislead us on that score.





## Chapter XXVII.

The *Lord's Supper* is a Sacrament, in which the Lord Jesus, in the bread gives us to eat his body, and in the wine gives us to drink his blood, in order that thereby the benefits of his sufferings and death might be applied to every individual, the promises of the Gospel sealed unto him and his faith strengthened.

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662. Concerning this Sacrament we have to attend to the following particulars, viz to:

a. *the name of* the same; we find in scripture the following two:

1. *the Lord's Supper*, 1 Cor. 11, 20. The reason for this is that the Lord, having instituted a meal or supper to be celebrated, held the same, for the first time, in company with his disciples on an evening, — in the evening on which he celebrated the Passover, Matth. 26, 26. ff. And we find St. Paul describing the circumstances of the instituting of the same, as follows: „the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread“ etc. 1 Cor. 11, 23. And although, in our days, this Sacrament is celebrated invariably during day time, yet, with reference to the abovementioned circumstance, it is always called the *Lord's Supper*.

663. 2. Another expression for the same thing is „*the Lord's table*,“ 1 Cor. 10, 21: „ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the *Lord's table*, and of the table of devils.“ This Sacrament is called the *Lord's table*, because by the same the Lord is preparing unto us a table laden with heavenly gifts; which gifts we partake of, in accordance with his commands, to the honour of His name, and the salvation of our souls, of which He is the source. —

664. b. *The nature of this Sacrament*. With regard to this we find the following definition in the [lutheran] catechism. *Thereby the real body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are given to the Christians, to eat and drink them in the bread and wine, in accordance with the command of Christ himself*. Which means: that the *Lord's Supper* is a spiritual work, instituted and ordained by Christ himself, whereby, in the consecrated bread, he gives unto the believer his body to eat, and in the consecrated wine his blood to drink, in order thereby to apply unto every individual more especially all his Gospel promises,

and saving the same, strenghtenes his faith and gives him food unto everlasting life.

665. c. *The types* by which the Lord's Supper has been prefigured, as by a prophecy. Of these a great many might be mentioned; but we shall confine ourselves to the two principal ones.

*α. The Passover.* This was a supper which had been instituted by God and which, as a grateful remembrance of His having delivered them from the bondage of Egypt, the Jews were commanded to celebrate annually, by eating, on the eve of a certain day a lamb etc. Exod. 12, 3. ff. In our Sacrament also we have a Supper prepared for our use and in the same offered unto us a lamb, John. 1, 29, yea even a Passover 1 Cor. 5, 7; this we are commanded to eat in thankful remembrance of our having been delivered with power from the captivity of hell, Hosea 13, 14; Zach. 9, 11; Micha 2, 13; 1 Cor. 11, 25; Luk. 22, 19. And like as the children of Israel by putting the blood of the Passover upon the lintel and the two sideposts of their houses, preserved them from the approach of the angel of death, Exod. 12, 23; even so are we delivered by the blood of Christ from the power of Satan, 1 John, 1, 7; Zach. 9, 11; Rom. 3, 25.

666. *The manna*, Exod. 16, 15. as also the water that sprang from the rock smitten by Moses, Exod. 17, 6. This manna the Lord Jesus Christ himself shews to have reference to his giving us to eat his body and his blood, John. 6, 48. ff.: „I am that bread of life; your fathers did eat *manna* in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh“ etc; — And St. Paul, in being about to speak of the Lord's Supper makes first some premises with reference to the two types of the same. „Our fathers,“ says he, „did all eat the same spiritual bread, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that Spiritual Rock: and that Rock was Christ . . . these things were our examples,“ 1 Cor. 10, 3. 4. 6.

667. d. We have now to inquire: *by whom the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been instituted.* We have shewn it to be requisite for every Sacrament to be instituted by God Himself; this holds good in every respect with regard to the Sacrament before us, and accordingly no one ought hold himself at liberty to change anything in the mode of its institution, or to add anything thereunto, — save God Himself. Now we know that Christ is the Son of the Father, whom we are

commanded to obey, Matth. 17, 5; and if he is the living God, and the messenger sent by God unto mankind, — then the latter are bound to consider his will and his mode of institution with regard to a Sacrament as a thing to be obeyed, and as one, to alter which no man can be said to have a right to. *And if the Pope is making the attempt to alter anything in this testament of the Lord Jesus, then he proves by this that he is the Antichrist; because he changes and abolishes the Testament of the Lord Jesus, — a perfidy no honest man even would attempt with regard to his neighbour; „A testament is of force after men are dead,“ Heb. 9, 17: „though it be but a man's covenant (testament, vide margin), yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto,“ Gal. 3, 15.*

668. c. *The Individual who is called upon to dispense that Sacrament.* In this respect we have to attend to the two following inquiries, viz :

*α. To whom the dispensing of this Sacrament ought to be entrusted.* We answer that, as the Lord Jesus Christ has ordained his Apostles to be „the stewards of the mysteries of God,“ 1 Cor. 4, 1, it is evident that the dispensing of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper forms part of the duty of the properly ordained ministers of the Church. And as, in the case of this Sacrament, no such cases of urgency can happen, as we have admitted sometimes to come to pass in the case of baptism, no other persons, than such as are ordained ought to be permitted to administer the Lord's Supper. Nor do we anywhere find any command to this purpose, nor any instances of such a deviation from the rule ever having been permitted.

669. *β. Suppose a minister of the word to be the only officiating minister in a Sacrament, is such a one, if intending to communicate, to go to another clergyman in order to receive the Sacrament from his hand? Answer.* It is most advisable for a minister with regard to the Lord's Supper always to join his Congregation. For in preaching to his flock, does he not also thereby preach to himself? even so in dispensing the Communion, he may dispense the same to himself. For

1. *we are nowhere commanded to receive the Sacraments from the hands of others.* For though the Lord Jesus commands us: to take and eat, it is not necessary to take the elements from the hands of any other man. Thus we do not find, that the Manna of old had been put into the hands or the mouths of the children of Israel.

2. It is most probable that the Lord Jesus gave the bread and the wine into the hands of his disciples, who conveyed them to their mouths themselves. Such is also done in our days:

for every one who receives the Sacrament in accordance with the institution of Christ, receives the same, as it were, from the hands of Christ; and

3. There is no reason why such a communion should not be permitted, or prove inefficacious.

670. *γ. Whether a mode of Communion in which the minister dispenses the elements unto himself is also admissible in Churches where several ministers are officiating at the Sacrament?* The Sacrament cannot lose anything either of its substance, its efficacy or its effects, be it that the minister dispenses the Sacrament to himself, or that it is given him by another. It is this accordingly an *Adiaphoron*, a question of little importance, and one left to the free disposal of every Church. If it is therefore the custom in any Church, for the minister to receive the Communion from the hands of his colleague in the office, like the rest of the congregation, — this may be retained as being in accordance with the mode of Christ's institution. Nor is the opposite custom of a minister giving unto himself the elements to be rejected or abolished, wherever such a custom happens to exist.

671. *f. We have now to consider the Communicants, or those, who are called upon to receive the sacrament and to whom it is to be administered.* In this respect we have to inquire:

1. *Who it is, that in approaching the Lord's Supper really receives the same.* Two sorts of persons generally come to the table of the Lord, viz: such as are *worthy* to receive the same, and such as are *unworthy*. Now, although the Lord's Supper has not been instituted that it might be received by such as are *unworthy*, and although it is not God who renders any one *unworthy* of the same, — yet we read of such, who, though they have been *unworthy* have yet been admitted to circumcision and to the Passover, although without coming to the enjoyment of the benefits which these ordinances were calculated to confer. In the same way such as have not examined themselves, do receive [under the New Testament dispensation] the bread and wine and thereby the body and the blood of Christ, — although they do so *unto death and condemnation*. This can be proved by the following facts:

*a. The Lord Jesus knew the unworthy Judas to be among the number of his disciples, and yet said to all, without making any distinction: take and eat, this is my body etc., thereby giving his body not only to such as were worthy only, but also to the unworthy Judas.* If any one should have some doubts of Judas's having been really present on that occasion we refer him to what is to be read *Matth. 26, 25; Mrk. 14, 21. 22. and especially Luk. 22, 19. 20. 21.* For Luke, after

having related the institution of the Lord's Supper, adds the words the Lord himself had spoken: *Behold, the hand of him that betrayed me, is with me on the table.*

673. *β.* *The unworthy do partake of the whole sacrament.* Else the Sacrament would, in the first place, be made to depend on the faith of man and not from the will of him who instituted the same; and accordingly where there was no faith, there could not be a Sacrament. But this would stand in direct contradiction to the words of the Apostle Paul, Rom. 3, 3: „*Shall their (men's) unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid.*“ Finally in such circumstances; the unworthy receives either nothing at all of the essentials of the Sacrament, or but part of the same. Which is altogether nonsense.

674. *γ.* *The same is done in other religious acts.* Thus the stiffnecked and the unworthy hear the word of God preached to them, quite as completely as the worthy; the unworthy receive *baptism*; they were admitted to circumcision and to the Passover, without anything being detained from them, Exod. 24, 8. — Why then should such as are unworthy, not be allowed to receive the Sacrament as a whole?

675. *δ.* *The unworthy, like those who are worthy, eat of the bread which is the „communion of the body of Christ;“ they „drink of the cup of blessing“ which is „communion of the body of Christ,“* 1 Cor. 10, 16; „Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, etc. 1 Cor. 11, 27; „but let a man examine himself, and so let him eat“ etc., *ibid.* v. 28, 29. — From this we conclude, that every one who eats of the bread which is the communion of the body of Christ, does thereby not only receive bread but also the body of Christ. Such bread is eaten by the unworthy, accordingly they must be said in the Sacrament to receive not only bread, but also the body of Christ.

676. *ε.* *The unworthy, in that they unworthily eat and drink make themselves guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus, because they do not discern the Lord's body;* 1 Cor. 11, 27: „Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord;“ v. 29: „for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.“ Whosoever does *not* eat the body of Christ nor drink his blood cannot make himself guilty by eating and drinking the same, nor is he required to discern the Lord's body. But as the unworthy do make themselves guilty by eating etc., and by not discerning, it follows that,

in the Sacrament, the unworthy do receive the body and the blood of Christ.

677. 2. Again we have to inquire: *to whom this Sacrament is to be administered.* The Lord's Supper has been ordained for the benefit of all men, because Christ has given his body and shed his blood for all without exception. Nevertheless a certain preparation is necessary, on the part of man, in order to receive the same *worthily*, unto life and not unto condemnation. Accordingly, before approaching the Lord's table, every one is required to examine himself, „whether he be in the faith“ 2 Cor. 13, 5. and „to shew the Lord's death until he come,“ 1 Cor. 11, 26. Every one who is putting this in practice, is at liberty to approach the Lord's table. But of this preparation subsequently.

678. To the Sacrament are *not* to be admitted all those, who do not approach the same in a state of mind conformable to the ordinance of the Lord, — or such of whom it is known that they do not examine themselves. Some are therefore excluded from coming to the Lord's Supper, either by *natural causes*, or by other *obstacles*.

*The natural obstacles* are twofold:

*α. Want of the full enjoyment of reason*, as is the case, for instance, with children, who cannot be expected to examine themselves or to shew forth the Lord's death; — or with those, who, although they have arrived at a proper age, have yet so weak and infirm an intellect, as not to admit their being properly taught to examine themselves and to shew forth the Lord's death.

679. *β. The dislike* which some persons feel to drinking wine; this is sometimes the case, though not frequently. With some it is possible to overcome the dislike in so far, as to take the least drop of it, and this is to be considered sufficient for the purposes of the Sacrament. But if even this should be impossible for any man, then it ought to be evident to him, that he has been entirely excluded by nature from partaking the Sacrament. For let it be remembered that Christ has nowhere ordained in the Sacrament the bread alone to be taken; and accordingly nobody ought to feel himself at liberty, to celebrate the Sacrament with bread alone. — Nevertheless this defect is not to be considered as in any way detrimental to the salvation of him, who has been afflicted therewith. The *spiritually eating and drinking* of the body and the blood of Christ, we may rest assured, would be, in a case of this description, productive of eternal salvation, John. 6, 51. — *Other obstacles* of man's not coming to the Lord's table are:

680. *Unbelief.* For a man who has not faith, cannot ex-

amine himself as to whether he be in the faith? or to what purposes the Lord has died; or why he was to shew forth the Lord's death etc.; such a one would receive the Sacrament unworthily and to his own condemnation, and is not be admitted to the Sacrament.

681. *Erroneous doctrines.* All that has been said concerning unbelief, holds also good with regard to *erroneous doctrines*. For thereby the faith is overthrown, 1 Tim. 1, 19; 4, 1; 2 Tim. 2, 18. And if we are sure of a man not having of a truth the saving faith, such a one cannot worthily receive the Sacrament. Much less could the Sacrament be to such a one a symbol and a token of the faith confessed in the church, since he himself is of a different opinion. Besides if, with reference to one who does not hold the right doctrine, we are bid not even to receive him into our house, nor to bid him God speed: how much less should such a one be permitted to partake with us of the Lord's Supper?

682. *Such sins as are publicly committed* in spite of the warnings of conscience, and which a man is determined not to leave of, or to repent. Every one who is in such a state is not able to value the great merits of Christ, is earthly and carnally minded, and an enemy of the cross of Christ, Phil. 3, 18, 19. He is not examining himself because he cannot see his own sins; nor does he take his refuge in Christ, but on the contrary he crucifies him anew, Heb. 6, 6; 10, 29. — Such an Individual is even unworthy of our joining with him in some ordinary meal, 1 Cor. 5, 11: „*If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator or covetous, or an idolater, or a traitor, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one (I have written unto you) not to eat.*“ Much less is such an unworthy guest to be admitted to the Lord's table.

683. g. *What it is, we are commanded to receive in the Lord's Supper.* Tis is of a twofold nature, namely *earthly* and *heavenly*.

The *earthly* matter we receive in the Sacrament is *bread* and *wine*. — In the words of the institution we read that the Lord Jesus took *bread* and blessed it etc. It was this *unleavened* bread, because the Jews were at that time celebrating the *Passover*, and accordingly not permitted to have any leaven about them, Exod. 12, 18. ff. On account of this [accidental] circumstance the Enemy has succeeded in bringing about divers contentions in the church, which induces us to make the following observations with regard to the *bread*.

a. *Every thing that, by being prepared from flour and water, is entitled to be called bread, is admissible to the purposes of the Sacrament.* It makes no difference, whether such bread

be *leavened or not*; whether it be composed of *wheat* or any *other grain*; whether it be so *large*, that many could receive of the same piece, or so *small* that every communicant had to receive a whole one for himself etc. For all these things are accidental, and do not by any means bring about any change in the substance of the bread itself.

684. We [the lutherans] employ in the Sacrament in our church *thin cakes* or *wavers*, and are convinced that thereby no prejudice is done to that Sacrament. Nor does it concern us in the least if we are told by some, that thereby we do not conform to the commands of Christ.

685. *β. Every thing that, in the common way of speaking, could not be called bread, is not to be used in the Sacrament.* For that which has been baked of roots, barks, or the ashes of trees, could not properly be called *bread*. If therefore any one should intend to use for the Sacraments a production of the above mentioned materials, such an one would thereby, at least break the express command of the Lord; nor could he be quite sure, whether the substance he used had been really bread, and whether he had not profaned the Lord's Supper, by using a substance which he had not been commanded to use.

686. With regard to the *wine* used in the Sacrament, we have to observe, that it must have been a substance of that description which the Lord made use of in the institution of the Sacrament, since we do not read of any other fluid except the wine having been used on that occasion; Matth. 26, 28. 29: „This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not eat of the *fruit of the vine* until“ etc. — Nor has the fact of the Lord's having used wine on that occasion ever been questioned. In the Sacrament it is therefore not to be permitted to mix *the wine* with any other substance, much less to substitute any other fluid in its place.

687. The Romish Church, *professedly* in order to give to the Sacrament a greater perfection, has made it a law to have the wine that is used to this purpose mixed up with *water*. But this is nothing but a human tradition, and contradicts the ordinance of Christ. It is true that the wine, in that state in which we receive the same, might have been already mixed up with water. But as the wine still remains wine, the last mentioned circumstance can in no way whatever prejudice the efficacy of the Sacrament. For as no man is able to convince himself that the wine contained no water whatsoever, every Individual almost would have to despair of his ever having rightly and properly received the Sacrament. But this fact is



in no way giving any support to the superstition maintained by the Romish Church, that the wine ought to be mixed with water. — We just take the wine as good and as pure as we are able to get it, without giving us any farther concern.

688. In the case of wine not being able to be got, or of some one using any other fluid, as beer, brandy etc. — it is not to be imagined, that thereby the Sacrament had been performed in conformity with the will of Christ, who when instituting the same, *used the fruit of the vine*; his command would have thereby been trespassed, and no Sacrament at all celebrated.

689. The *heavenly part* we receive in the Sacrament is the *body* of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is given us to eat in and with the bread, and his *blood*, which is given us to drink in and with the wine. That this is really the case, can be proved from the following reasons:

690. 1. *The Lord Jesus in the act of the instituting the Sacrament has commanded his disciples to eat and to drink his body and his blood in these words: „take eat; this is my body that has been given unto you: drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New testament which is shed for you,“* Matth. 14, 22. 24; Luk. 22, 19. 20; 1 Cor. 11, 24. 25. — From this it is easy to perceive that Christ in giving to the disciples the bread, has also given them thereby *his body*; and in giving them the wine he gave them also his *blood*. Thus we are able to draw the following conclusions: that whatever Christ did name in the act of giving the bread, the same he has really given, as it is also the case in every day life, that whatever you name you are really understood to be giving. If anybody in offering you a cup should say to you: *drink*, this is wine, you will certainly expect to have given to you the cup along with the wine contained in the same. If a medical man is offering you a vessel, saying: take this, it contains a healthy draught, you will in taking the same, look for nothing else but the beneficial draught.

691. The same principle is carried through in Scripture, and in the Church in general. If, for instance, we are told in Scripture concerning Christ, that „the word *became flesh*, John. 1, 14, we find this explained by St. Paul Colos. 2, 9. in the following sentence: „*in him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*“

692. Now in offering the bread, the Lord Jesus expressly named and commanded his body to be eaten, and in offering the wine his blood to be drunk; we conclude therefore that he has given his body to be eaten and his blood to be drunk.

693. We ought not to be misled by the fact that other

people have given to this word different explanations, maintaining that the words „this is my body“ have a different meaning from what their plain sense is. Thus they assert that the particle „this“ in the beginning of the sentence has reference to the bread [as if it was intended to say: that bread is my body]; that the word „is“ means *as much as* „signifies,“ as if Christ had intended to say „*the bread signifies my body.*“ Others again affirm the term „body“ in this passage to imply as much as: „*that is a token of my body;*“ thereby paraphrasing the whole sentence as follows: „*this bread is a token of my body.*“

But all these explanations are to be looked upon as human inventions, which it would be easy for vain reason to multiply. But as long as we keep close to the word, and to its simple meaning, it is almost impossible for us to be led into error; whilst explanations that have their source only in our own brains, have too little security, as that our consciences should be able to find peace through the same.

695. Besides this way of speaking it quite unusual in all languages, as well as in scripture. What could induce Christ to employ such a new way of expressing himself? Especially on the occasion of his making his testament, in the act of which every other testator usually is most solicitous of employing the plainest terms, and the most easily understood expressions, in order to prevent any contentions arising between his heirs in consequence of dark and unintelligible expressions. That such has been intended by the Lord, no godly heart will be induced to affirm.

696. 2. *The Lord Jesus has commanded that his body should be eaten and his blood drunk by our bodily mouth.* From which we conclude: that whatever in the Lord's Supper we are commanded to eat and to drink with our mouth, must be essentially present in the same, and must constitute a material part of the spiritual Supper. We are commanded in the Lord's Supper to eat the body and drink the blood of the Lord Jesus, which makes it necessary for the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus to be really present in the Lord's Supper, constituting a material part of the spiritual Supper.

697. 3. *The bread in the Lord's Supper is the communion of the body of Christ, and the wine the communion of the blood of Christ;* 1 Cor. 10, 15, 16: „I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say: *the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*“ By which we have evidenced:

N. that the terms „body“ and „blood“ intend to signify

nothing else than Christ's essential body and his essential blood; and

2. that by the term „cup“ the wine is implied that is contained in the same.

This leads us to the following conclusion: either the bread in the Lord's Supper is a *spiritual communion* by which all the benefits of Christ are applied unto us; — or it is such a sacramental communion by which the body of the Lord Jesus is given unto, and accepted by, us with the bread.

698. That the bread is not merely such a spiritual communion can be proved as follows:

α. This spiritual communion exists also without this sacrament, whilst by the latter a communion is spoken of which is to be the effect of the Sacrament and of nothing else.

β. If such a spiritual communion was intended, then the sacrifices of the old Testament must also have been the communion of the body and of the blood of Christ, because they were intended as types of the things to come, Col. 2, 17.

γ. In the spiritual communion the benefits of Christ are laid hold of by us, without any distinct reference to his body or his blood. But in the Sacrament, the bread is to be the communion not of the blood, but the body of Christ, — and the wine not of body, but of the blood of Christ. Which proves that the Lord's Supper is not intended to be a spiritual, but a sacramental communion, in which the real body of the Lord Jesus is to be given and received. It has been proved, that the bread is not such a spiritual communion; and accordingly it must be a sacramental communion, in which the real body of Christ is offered and received with the bread.

699. 4. *The distinction between the Sacrament of the old and that of the new Testament consists in the fact, that in the first the Lord Jesus has been merely prefigured, whilst in the other he is bodily present.* Thus, for instance, St. Paul writes concerning the worship of the Jews, that it was: „*a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ,*“ Col. 2, 17; Heb. 8, 5. 6. „*Who (the levitical Priests) serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.* But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant;“ *ibid.* 9, 9. ff.: „*Which (the first tabernacle) was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience, which stood only in meats and drinks and divers washings; and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with*

hands; neither by the blood of bulls and goats, but by *his own blood* he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us;" *ibid.* 10, 1: "*the law has the shadow of good things to come, and not the substance.*"

700. From this we conclude: that peculiarity by which the sacraments of the Old and New Testament are distinguished from each other, cannot be common to both. But this distinction consists in the fact that the Sacraments of the Old testament were only types, shadows and figures of the Christ that was to come; whilst this is not the case with those of the New testament, which can therefore not be said to be but figures and types. There are only these two ways: the sacraments of the New testament have either Christ, in his substance and nature, present with them, or only in figure. That the latter cannot be the case has been proved just now, and accordingly, we come to the conclusion, that they have really Christ in his substance and nature present with them.

701. h. *The ceremonial of this Sacrament.* The Sacrament being an holy action, it is necessary when celebrating the same, in every respect to conform to the commands of Christ. Three different parties we find engaged in this solemn proceeding, viz: *the officiating minister, the Lord Jesus and the communicants.*

702. The duty of the *minister* consists :

In the first place, in the *consecrating*, thanksgiving or blessing of the bread and wine. The Lord Jesus, we are told, in being about to institute this Sacrament, took bread and blessed it, Matth. 26, 26; in conformity to which St. Paul calls the cup "*the cup of blessing which we bless,*" 1 Cor. 10, 16. The exact words which the Lord Jesus and subsequently the primitive Church, employed for the purpose of this blessing, are entirely unknown to us. We [the lutherans] in blessing the bread, make use of the Lord's Prayer and of the words of the institution. This thanksgiving and blessing is not merely intended to serve as an historical relation of the institution, whereby, and by the crossing of the same, the bread and wine are to be changed into the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. They are done for no other purpose than to signify that this solemn act is now about to be performed, that the bread and wine have been withdrawn from common use, and set apart to this special purpose. Moreover, in reading the words of the institution, the Lord Jesus is, as it were, to be reminded of the promises given at the occasion of the institution, in conjunction with the prayer that it might please him at this time also, to give to the communicants his

body and his blood; finally that the Lord's death might be shewn forth on that occasion.

703. Another duty of the minister is the *distribution* of the Sacrament. This is necessary to enable great numbers to attend the Sacrament, and yet to have every thing done orderly and with decorum. And if this distribution is brought about in such a way that every communicant is able to receive the consecrated wine and bread with befitting reverence, then this part of the Sacrament has been done justice to. It is in either case not to be looked upon as an error, if the communicant had the bread and the wine given him into his hands, as has been done most probably by the Lord Jesus, or if it had been put into his mouth. — But this whole act is made void by the *mass*, in which the Priest alone is permitted to take the bread and the wine, without distributing the same to the congregation.

704. There are some, who are of opinion that to the abovementioned duties of the minister, two others are to be added, the first of which of the *breaking of the bread*; because the Lord Jesus and professedly also the members of the primitive church, are said to have broken bread on the occasion of the Sacrament. But this has been done for the following reason. At the time that the Lord instituted the Sacrament, he was just eating the Passover with his disciples; on which occasion also, because of the feast, the unleavened bread was used. And being about to distribute the bread he was most naturally compelled to break the same, since this bread never was baked in so small a size as would have rendered unnecessary the breaking of the same. For this and no other reason he brake the bread, which breaking has been imitated for the same reasons by the primitive Church. The necessity of distributing from a large lump of consecrated bread made the breaking of the same unavoidable. And wherever the bread used is of so small a size that the breaking of the same does not appear requisite — either of which is left to the free option of the church — then, of course; the breaking of the bread is not called for, and may be omitted — provided always that (in both cases) it be done without any mixture of superstition.

705. But if it should be objected that the breaking of the bread is requisite because of its being a type of the body of the Lord Jesus having been broken upon the cross, — then we have a twofold answer:

1. Whosoever teaches the same to be requisite for the Sacrament, is obliged to evidence the necessity of the same. We deny that the Lord Jesus, in adding to the words of his

institution the expression: „*this do*“ had any intention of commanding anything of the kind. For it is evident that he desired nothing more than to command his disciples, henceforward to do the same thing he was just about to do, viz: to eat and to drink.

706. 2. We do not believe the breaking of the bread, as a reference to the broken body of the Lord Jesus, to be requisite in the Sacrament. For neither the Evangelists, nor St. Paul make any allusion to this end, whereupon this assertion might be rested. On the same principle we would have to shed the *wine*, in order to remember Christ's having shed his blood for us. And as little as the latter will be said to be necessary, so will it be also with the bread. The types and shadows that were to prefigure Christ have been made an end of in that Christ came, who is the substance of these shadows. But in making the bread a type of Christ's broken body, we would have again types and figures, which would be contrary to the very spirit of the New Testament. Besides it ought to be remembered that the Passover which had to be killed, and the blood of which had to be sprinkled over the door of the house, would have been a much more intelligible type of Christ's crucifixion, than the mere breaking of the bread in the Sacrament. And, accordingly, if Christ had really intended to ordain some figure of his death being used in the Sacrament, in abolishing the Passover and introducing the breaking of the bread he would have *abolished* the intelligible type, in order to substitute for the same something less intelligible. But an assertion of this kind will not be allowed to be admissible.

707. Another duty of the officiating minister (cf. §. 704) some maintain to be the *celebration of the Mass*. In the Romish Church the Lord's Supper is made to be a *sacrifice*. They maintain that immediately after the Priest had performed certain ceremonies over the bread and wine, said several prayers and read the words of the institution, the bread and wine are *changed* into the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus. Upon which this body and this blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are, by the Priest, *offered as a sacrifice* for the washing away and the forgiveness of our sins, not only of living man, but also of the dead, whose souls are retained in purgatory. — But the Lord's Supper cannot be changed into such a sacrifice, from the following reasons:

708. 1. *The Sacrament has not been ordained for this purpose by the Lord Jesus*. The Sacraments are not sacrifices; for in the Sacrament it is God that gives unto man, whilst in the sacrifice it is man that gives unto God. Now in the

Lord's Supper it is God that gives unto man, namely bread and wine, and thereby the body and blood of His Son, whilst we on our part (in conformity with the plain commands of the Institution), give nothing unto God, — the spiritual offerings of our heart, our prayer, our praise and thanksgiving always excepted, which have no reference to the case before us. This proves that the Lord's Supper was intended to be a Sacrament and not a sacrifice.

Again in the Lord's Supper it is intended, that we should *shew forth* the Lord's death, — whilst the mass is performed inaudibly and in an unknown tongue. — The Lord's Supper has been instituted *but for the living*, and by no means for the dead; — the mass is performed for the dead as well as for the living. — Finally the Sacrament has been instituted for the purpose of *Christ's merciful works being applied unto us, and our faith strengthened*; — whilst the mass is performed for the benefit of a variety of things, such as travels, voyages, successful wars etc., — circumstances which, in themselves, have no connection whatsoever with the Lord's Supper.

709. 2. *The sacrifice which the Lord Jesus has made of his body, has abolished every other expiatory sacrifice.* For

α. We are frequently told in the New testament that Christ, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, has thereby fulfilled all that which has been typified by the sacrifices of old, Hebr. 9, 28: „Christ was *once offered* to bear the sins of many,“ *ibid.* 10, 10: „by the which will we are sanctified *through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*;“ v. 14: „for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;“ Rom. 6, 10: „in that he died, he died unto sin *once*;“ 1. Pet. 3, 18: „Christ has *once* suffered for sins.“ — From this we conclude, that: whatever has been done once for all, need and ought not to be repeated again; and as we learn the sacrifice for the sin of man to have been offered *once for all*, it follows that it need and ought not to be done over and over again.

710. *We find it stated to be the distinguishing mark between the Lord Jesus Christ and the priests of the Old Testament, that the latter had to make every day sacrifices for the sins of the people, whilst the Lord Jesus had accomplished the same thing once for all by his own sacrifice.* 1. Heb. 7, 26. 27: „For such an High Priest became us, who *needed not daily*, as those High Priests, *to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people; for this he did once, when he offered up himself*;“ *ibid.* Chap. 9, 12: „Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but *by his own blood* he (Christ) *entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption*

for us;" v. 25, 26: „Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands . . . nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world has he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" Chapt, 10, 11. 12; „Every High Priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.“ — From all this we conclude: that, as the priests of the Old Testament are distinguished from the Lord Jesus by the circumstance that they had to repeat the sacrifice for the same thing, yea to offer every day sacrifices for the sins of many, and that the High Priest was permitted only once in the year to enter the Most Holy — whilst we are expressly told that Christ has effected all this once for all by his one sacrifice: it is evident that Christ cannot now be said daily to offer that same sacrifice whenever the Mass is read, — but that on the contrary, such a sacrifice stands in direct opposition to the sacrifice made once for all.

711. *γ.* If it was really necessary for the sacrifice of Christ to be daily repeated, we would have to conclude, that his sacrifice on the cross has not been complete. Under the old Testament dispensation it was necessary to offer often times the same sacrifices, because they were imperfect, Heb, 10, 1. ff.: „For the law . . . can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect, for then would they not have ceased to be offered; because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sin; . . . for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins;" *ibid.* v. 11: „every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes which can never take away sins.“ And v. 18 we find the following put down as a rule: „Where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin.“ From this we are able to make the following deduction: forgiveness of sins is brought about by the sacrifice made by Christ once for all; and consequently by this sacrifice every other sacrifice for sins, accordingly also the sacrifice of the mass has been abolished. If we do not admit this, we must reason thus: After Christ's sacrifice there remains still a sacrifice to be brought for sin, consequently in Christ's sacrifice there is not forgiveness of sins.

712. 3. In the sacrifice of the Mass no blood is shed. But in the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told (Chap. 9, 22):



„without shedding of blood is no remission.“ Consequently in every sacrifice for sin blood is to be shed. But in the mass there is no shedding of blood, nor has the same ever been affirmed to be a bloody sacrifice; therefore the mass is no sacrifice for sins.

Nor is it anything against us, if it is affirmed that in *the Mass there is the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ*. For even supposing this to be true, there is yet no *shedding* of blood in it; but this *shedding* we know to be indispensably necessary. For those who brought oxen and calves in order to sacrifice them unto the Lord, did not derive any benefit from the blood contained in these animals, unless it was shed. Thus, though the mass did contain blood it could yet not purify us, unless it be shed; but as this is not the case, the mass can never be looked upon as a *propitiatory offering*.

713. As another [essential part] in the Lord's Supper (§. 701), we have to consider the *Lord Jesus* and the *works* he performs by means of the same, of which the most important is: the *Sacramental union* of his body with the consecrated bread, and of his blood with consecrated cup. We have seen already that, in the opinion of the Apostle Paul, the consecrated bread is the communion of the body, and the consecrated cup the communion of the blood of Christ. Where there is such a communion, there must also be a union, and the bread must therefore be united with the body and the cup with the blood of Christ. The manner in which this union is brought about, we have no other means of learning than by the words of Christ, when he says: *eat, this is my body; drink this is my blood*. Whereby we understand that the two are united together in such a way, that, with the bread, we eat the body, and, with the wine, we drink the blood of Christ. The attempt to enter more deeply into this mystery is as useless as it is unprofitable, since not more is revealed unto us concerning this matter. — The reader's attention is requested to the two following considerations.

714. **A.** *That the bread and wine are not essentially changed into the body and blood of Christ; so that as it were these materials did not remain either bread and wine, but only retained the outward appearance of the same.* That this is not the case can be proved from the facts:

*α.* That there is no indication of such a change to be found in scripture, — from whence alone a doctrine like this could draw its support. For although the Lord Jesus, when instituting the Sacrament said: „This is my body,“ yet did he thereby not intend to signify any material change in the bread, as we shall prove immediately. In order to testify

the union of the two natures it is said concerning the Lord Jesus that: „the word was made flesh,“ John. 1, 14; yet is it thereby not intended to indicate that the Word had been essentially changed into flesh; and exactly so the expression „this is my body“ signifies nothing more than the union of the bread with the body, but not that the one has been essentially changed into the other.

715. *β.* St. Paul writes concerning the consecrated bread, that it is „the communion of the body of Christ,“ 1. Cor. 10, 16. — Now it is well known that two distinct parties are required wherever there is to be an union. That which *has* the communion must be different from that which *is* the communion; and accordingly the bread which has the communion of Christ's body, must be different from that body of Christ, whose communion is called bread.

716. *γ.* St. Paul, in speaking of the Sacramental act treats the bread used in the same as bread and as nothing else, 1. Cor. 11, 26. 27. 28: „As often as ye eat *this bread*, and drink *this cup*, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come; wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread“ etc. Now if the bread, after having been consecrated, had been essentially changed into the body of Christ, Paul could not have spoken of it as bread that was to be eaten.

717. *δ.* It is impossible for the body which had taken its flesh from the virgin Mary, to be created again by a change in the bread. For if this was possible then the Lord Jesus must have two bodies, one which he took from his mother, and another which he takes from the bread.

718. If the consecrated bread and wine should happen to be put by and preserved for future use, in the course of time the wine will turn sour and the bread mouldy; — but it could not be imagined by any one, without incurring the charge of blasphemy, that such would be the case, if these substances had been changed into the body and blood of Christ.

719. **B.** *This sacramental union takes place between nothing else than the bread and the body of Christ, and between the wine and the blood of Christ.* We have therefore to reject the opinion, that in the Lord's Supper we receive, along with the body of the Lord Jesus, also his divine nature. For of this we read nothing in the words of the institution, and consequently no body is entitled to affirm that the divine nature is united with the bread, — although in spite of this, the

union between the body of Christ and his Godhead remains inviolate. In the same way it is an error to affirm, that with the bread we receive, along with the body, also the blood of Christ. For although it is by nature impossible to separate the body from the blood, or the reverse, — yet it is different in the case of the Sacrament. For Christ has commanded us with the bread, to eat his body (and not his blood), and with the wine to drink his blood (and not to eat his body). It is consequently a contradiction to Christ's institution, if it is said, that the blood of Christ is received with the bread or his body with the wine; and thus we know that in the Sacrament no union takes place between the bread and the blood, and between the wine and the body of Christ, although we are not able to get a clearer insight into the nature of this mystery.

720. It now remains for us to mention the last party (§. 701) that is concerned in the Sacrament, and that is the *Communicant* himself. In the words of the institution he is bid „to take,“ „to eat“ and „to drink.“

In the first place Christ bids the communicant „to take“ etc. This may be done either with the hands or with the mouth. As long as the bread is taken, it is to no purpose and not profitable to contend for any particular one of these two modes of doing the same thing. It is most probable that Judas had given the bread into *his mouth* which the Lord had dipped for him. — As to the mode of taking it, every believer is to be left to his own option, and the laying down of a rule to be avoided, which might tend to superstitious practices.

721. Again the communicant is bade „to eat.“ Christ in instituting the Sacrament commanded his disciples to eat that which he gave unto them; which was the bread, and therewith according to his own words, his body. In this respect again it is not only necessary for us to understand, — but also to believe. — It is our duty attentively to consider the words of his commands, and to remember that this sacramental eating (and drinking) is *not merely a spiritual eating*, which is done by faith.

722. For although the Lord's Supper is a *spiritual feast*, yet has it not been instituted for the mere nourishing of our bodies for the life on earth, but on the contrary for the preparing of our bodies and souls for the spiritual life that is to come. But essentially different from this is the view, according to which „the spiritually eating the body of Christ,“ and „the spiritually drinking the blood of Christ“ are said to denote the being made partakers of his merciful works; and it

is, accordingly, erroneous in this sense to call the Lord's Supper a spiritual meal. Such a spiritual meal of the latter description is spoken of by the Lord Jesus, John. 6, 35: „I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.“ — That such a spiritually „eating“ has not been intended in the Lord's Supper, is evident from the following reasons.

723. A sacramental eating cannot be performed without the Sacrament; whilst a spiritual eating may take place without any sacrament, inasmuch as Christ's benefits may be laid hold of also by faith. — The sacramental eating is peculiar to the New Testament dispensation; whilst the spiritual eating we know to have been done by all believers since the creation of the world. — In the sacramental eating the believer does not only not receive the bread without the body of Christ, nor the body without the bread, but he receives the bread together with the body of Christ; whilst, when spiritually eating the Sacrament he would receive merely the body of Christ, — but not the bread. — The sacramental eating is performed by the good as well as by the evil; the spiritual eating only by the believers. — The sacramental eating is done by some unto life and salvation, and by others unto condemnation; the spiritual eating always unto salvation and never unto condemnation. — The sacramental eating is made to differ from the sacramental drinking; this difference is abolished in the spiritual reception, since, to eat Christ's body would be made, according to this opinion, to denote: „to believe,“ as also the drinking of Christ's blood: „to believe,“ — The sacramental eating we find commanded with the term „eat,“ in addition to which the spiritual eating is spoken of „this do in remembrance of me;“ consequently the sacramental eating is essentially necessary for the Lord's Supper, but the spiritual eating for the effectual and blessed use of the same.

724. By the sacramental eating of the consecrated bread, the believer receives the body of Christ. This remains to be explained.

*α.* It is to be remembered that human reason never can arrive at a clear perception of the nature of this change, but that man ought to give glory unto Christ Jesus, believing that he is „able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.“ Ephes. 3, 20.

725. *β.* This eating is done by the bodily mouth. For:

1. Either we are commanded an eating with the bodily mouth, which, of course, is done by the mouth, or a spiritual, one which is done by faith. That the latter is not the case has

been proved just now; and it follows, that an eating with the mouth has been intended.

2. We are bid to eat bread, which can be done only with the bodily mouth; and consequently an eating with the bodily mouth must have been intended.

3. The eating ordained in the Sacrament has been obeyed by the Apostles, in that they ate with their bodily mouths. There is not in scripture the least indication of their having added to the eating of the mouth also a spiritual eating, such as is effected by faith.

4. St. Paul, in the passages already adduced, says, that the consecrated bread is the communion of the body of Christ. But if, in the Sacrament, we really did only eat the bread with our bodily mouths, and also not the body of Christ, there could be said to exist no such communion between the bread and the body of Christ. For such a communion it is indispensably necessary, that, in the Sacrament, the bread along with the body of Christ should be eaten by us with our mouths. Besides the minister gives, and the communicant receives the sacrament entire and undivided, and accordingly with the bread also the body of Christ; and not is the bread given with the body of Christ, to the faith of the receiver.

726. *γ. Nevertheless we are not to conclude that, as Christ's body is eaten by our bodily mouth, this is effected in the same way as other food is eaten.* For such a mode of reasoning is not applicable to the mysteries of God. — At the time the Holy Ghost descended upon Christ in the likeness of a dove Matth. 3, 16. it was a natural dove that was seen descending; of the Holy Ghost this cannot be said, since he filleth all in all, and he can therefore not be considered moving from one place to the other. — The Holy Ghost, on the occasion of his having descended upon the Apostles, is said, Acts. 2, 3, to have sat upon each of them, while yet the Holy Ghost cannot be said to sitting or standing. — After the virgin Mary had conceived the Son of God, Luk. 1, 35. 42, the divine nature could not be said in a natural way to be enclosed within her womb. — At the time God was moving before his people in a pillar of cloud, this pillar of cloud, as they proceeded, was seen moving from place to place, yet this moving cannot be reasonably ascribed to God, Exod. 13, 21.

Exactly so we ought to consider the Lord's Supper; and if we are told that the body of Christ is eaten by us with our bodily mouth, we ought not to conclude that we eat the same, in the way we do other food. And like as we believe the Holy Ghost to have *descended*, although to him there exists no space, so also ought we to believe that in the Lord's Sup-

per the body of the Lord Jesus is eaten by us, with our bodily mouth, though we are unable to comprehend how this is effected; being convinced that, at all events it is not done in the way we eat other food.

727. Again the communicant in taking the Lord's Supper, is bid „to drink.“ With reference to this we have to inquire.

*α.* *What is intended by the term „to drink?“* Thereby the act of drinking with the bodily mouth has been intended, as has been proved to be the case with the eating of the body of Christ.

*β.* *What is to be drunk?* — Wine and with the same the blood of Christ.

*γ.* *Who is commanded to drink?* Concerning this question there ought never to have existed any doubt among Christians. — Nevertheless there have been raised controversies with reference to the same, and it has been asked: *Whether the priest alone, or also the rest of the laity are entitled to receive the cup?* We now proceed to answer this question, and say: that there is no reason whatsoever for the cup being withheld from the laity; which assertion we prove as follows:

728. 1. *Christ, in instituting the sacrament has expressly commanded that „all“ should drink of it,* Matth. 26, 27. And that such has been done by the disciples can be proved from Mark. 14, 23, where we are expressly told that „they all drank of it.“ And if it is objected that the disciples, to whom Christ's words had been addressed, had been all priests, we maintain that Christ gave them this command not only for their own persons, but in their persons also to all Christendom. For in the same way as he previously said to the Apostles „eat“ etc. [which is not denied to be binding also for every Christian], so now he adds „drink ye all of it,“ thereby also including every believer.

729. 2. In the primitive church all christians have received the wine, this is testified by St. Paul himself, 1 Cor. 10, 21: „ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devil;“ *ibid.* Chap. 11, 26: „as often as ye drink this cup,“ etc. v. 27: „Whosoever . . . shall drink this cup unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of Christ.“ In short the Apostle knows no difference, every one whom he bids to eat, he bids also to drink; let it be remembered, this Epistle is not written to the priests only but to the saints, or the congregation of the Lord, 1 Cor. 1, 2. From this we learn that Paul admonishes the whole congregation not to receive the blood of Christ unworthily. And whatever the members of the church of Corinth had a right to, cannot be denied to the rest of the Christians.

730. 3. *There cannot be produced any reason whatsoever for denying the wine to the laity, and why in denying the same to them the Lord's Testament and will should be infringed and made void. And consequently we persevere in our conviction that in the Lord's Supper the laity are entitled to receive the wine as well as the bread; and that such as do not receive the wine in Sacrament, must be considered as not having received the sacrament in accordance to the will of Christ.*

Up to this, we have been considering the nature of the Lord's Supper, and the outward ceremonial prescribed for the dispensing of the same.

731. But the Sacrament is made void of the aforementioned characteristics when it is affirmed by the Romish Church, *that the consecrated bread might and ought to be locked away, preserved, carried about and adored.* This doctrine has its origin in the erroneous doctrine we have already disproved, viz: that the bread be essentially changed into the body of Christ. But for the particulars:

A. *The inclosing and preserving of the consecrated bread.* In the Romish church it is customary for the Priest, to consecrate the bread and after having done so to preserve it, that, in the case of a sick man desiring to have the Sacrament administered; they might have the consecrated bread in readiness. But this is contrary to

*α. The institution of the Lord Jesus.* For in the same, Christ is putting together the breaking, taking and eating of the bread, in such a way, that there cannot be a sacrament, whenever any of these actions are performed separately. Thus, in the case of the Passover, the killing, roasting and eating the same always went together; this Sacrament was not to be considered as perfect whenever one of these acts had been omitted. Every one, therefore, who desires to celebrate the Lord's Supper, has not only to bless the bread, but also to eat of it, and give also others to eat of it. Such cannot be done, if after having been consecrated, the bread was preserved for future occasions.

733. *β. It is also contrary to the unanimous custom of the primitive Church.* For we do not find it anywhere stated, that the Lord Jesus, having consecrated the bread, preserved it for a future use, without giving his disciples to eat of it, or that the Apostle Paul commanded some of the consecrated bread to be preserved. On the contrary we read of all them having eaten of the bread and drunk of the cup, 1. Cor. 11, 26. Nor did this scriptural view of the matter ever lose its autho-

rity, until a new custom had been introduced by unauthorized men.

734. *γ.* *This locking away of the bread contradicts the very nature of a Sacrament.* For a Sacrament is an action whereby the visible sign is applied unto the receiver. Thus in circumcision there is the taking away of the foreskin; in the Sacrament of the Passover the eating of the same, in baptism the sprinkling with water, — and in the Lord's Supper the eating and drinking. Accordingly as without the taking away of the foreskin there can be no circumcision, without the eating no Passover, and without sprinkling, no baptism, — so without eating and drinking there can be no Lord's Supper. And eating and drinking cannot take place as soon as the consecrated bread is preserved for future use.

735. **B.** *The carrying about of the consecrated bread.* This custom exists also in the Romish Church, and takes place when in the consecrated bread is carried with great procession from the church to the house of the sick or dying, — or when, on the festival of the holy Body (which is the Thursday after the feast of the Holy Trinity), the bread is carried round the fields in order to improve their fertility. This latter proceeding is in every respect an useless one. For it has not been instituted by Christ, but has been entirely unknown to the primitive Church until 1264, in which year it was instituted by the Pope Urban IV. Besides, by this act the Sacrament is applied for an external purpose, whilst it has yet only been instituted for spiritual purposes.

736. **C.** *The adoration of the consecrated bread.* In the case of the consecrated bread being carried about, every one who meets the same (as also during the performance of mass) is bound [by the laws of the Romish Church] to kneel down and to worship the consecrated bread. Concerning this there is to observe:

*α.* It is true, that every one, who desires to receive the Sacrament worthily, ought to approach the same with a devout and humble mind.

*β.* Christ is everywhere, consequently also in the Sacrament, to be worshipped as God and man. For of such a service nothing in the world is exempted 1 Timot. 2, 8: „*I will therefore that men pray everywhere.*“ — Nevertheless

*γ.* is that worship not to be offered directly to the bread. For we remember that God was not even pleased to be adored under the image of the golden calf, Exod. 32, 5. 7. although he yet desired to be worshipped on that same spot. In the same way Christ also desires to be worshipped wherever there is the Sacrament; but that we should worship him in



the bread, this we are neither commanded, nor have we any precedent whatsoever whereby to be guided. The worshipping of the bread, therefore, is to be looked upon as an institution of man, and a worship that is done in vain, Matth. 15, 9.

δ. It is therefore erroneous, for any one to address himself with his prayer to any thing that constitutes part of the Sacrament. For as it has been proved in the preceding that the bread is not substantially changed into the body of Christ, it follows, that every one who worships the bread is thereby committing an act of idolatry.

737. **D.** (cf. §. 662) *The effects and consequences of the Lord's Supper.* They are twofold. Some refer to the Lord Jesus; for we are desired to render ourselves obedient to his will; to shew forth his death; and to be grateful for the unspeakable benefits he has conferred upon us.

738. Others again have more special reference to, man. For by the Sacrament man has

α. *strengthened his faith.* For the Christian's faith is to consist in the sure confidence, that Christ is his Saviour, that he has died and shed his blood for him. Now in the Sacrament Christ testifies to the believer that his body has been given and his blood shed for him, that they might also be to him a pledge of the benefits he is entitled to enjoy. Which proves that by the Lord's Supper, Christ is strengthening the faith of the communicant. If this comes to pass, then

β. Christ also applies unto him the *promises of the Gospel.* Such as, that he does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted; that none should perish, but that all should come to salvation etc. For we may be sure that for whom Christ has given himself, him God also desires to be saved. And as Christ testifies in the Sacrament, that he has given himself for every communicant and shed his blood for all, he thereby testifies to every one individually that God desires him to be saved.

γ. *The Sacrament is to the communicants a pledge of their Salvation.* God desires them to be saved because Christ has died for them; this is preached to them in the word, and testified in the Sacrament. And thereby God promises, as it were, on his part to leave nothing undone that might tend to promote their salvation; and if men are doing their part to this end, they may rest assured that, as sure as God is true and cannot lie, and as Christ is the truth himself — they shall have eternal salvation.

δ. It may not be unprofitable, in this place to mention

the divers practical effects of the Lord's Supper, as pointed out by the Fathers of the Church.

1. In publicly partaking of the Lord's Supper, we confess ourselves to be of the same faith with that congregation, in the midst of which we partake the same;

2. we are engrafted into the spiritual olive tree, which is the Lord Jesus.

3. By means of that act, Christ's promise is fulfilled: „If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and *we will come unto him, and make our abode with him,*“ John. 14, 23. And

4. We thereby receive an assurance of our resurrection from the dead. For Christ, in giving us his body to eat, gives us the assurance that, although our bodies are frail, yet they shall be made like unto his glorious body, Phil. 3, 21.

739. **E.** *The preparations for worthily receiving of the Lord's Supper.* This is a very important point; for not all, who receive the Lord's Supper, are to partake of the benefits it is calculated to effect, but only those who receive the same worthily. For we are told 1. Cor. 11, 27 ff.: „*Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*“

740. Such a preparation appears, after what we have just read, to be indispensably necessary. But this preparation is not to be brought about by outward observances (which otherwise are not to be depreciated); or by abstaining from the taking of other food, previous to going to the Sacrament (for the Apostles themselves received the same immediately after having eaten the Passover); — it is only brought about by man's inwardly *examining himself.* — This is done:

*α. By the law.* Man has to examine himself, whether he has been living in sin, and thereby drawn dawn upon him the wrath of God; whether there is still alive in him a desire and a longing after sin, and whether he is determined, from this time forward to persevere in his career of sin, or whether he is actually feeling remorse and repentance on account of this sin. This being done, the *one* will find himself to be little heeding his sinful state, rather inclined in favour of the same; and accordingly that he has not yet a right perception of the fierceness of God's judgement, or of His hatred against

sin, nor that he had ever troubled himself much concerning the wrath of God, nay, that he perhaps does not even believe in the existence of God. Such a person, how could he worthily approach the Lord's Table? — Another again, feels an awful fear of appearing before God, whose wrath and judgement he fears on account of his manifold sins, which latter he yet earnestly repents, not only because of the punishments which they draw down upon him, but because he had not exerted himself to prevent his offending so kind and merciful a Father. Henceforth he determines to take heed to sin no more. Such an one has properly examined himself by the law, and is, in this respect, not to be excluded as an unworthy guest from the Lord's table.

741. *β.* Man again is to examine himself by the *Gospel*. He is to examine himself, whether he knows and believes, that it is God's will, that all men, who have sinned should not perish but that all should come to everlasting life; that, for the accomplishment of this design, he has sent His Son, who has by his death propitiated for their sins, and satisfied the demands, divine justice had upon them; — whether he believes that this merciful purpose of God, and this merit of Christ has special reference individually to himself, that God has loved *him*, and that Christ has shed his blood for *him*; — whether there is no doubt in his mind, that through Christ all his sins have been forgiven unto him, and whether he is convinced, that as a pledge of this forgiveness, Christ is giving him, in the Lord's Supper, to eat and to drink, his body and his blood, by the bread and wine. If he is unable satisfactorily to answer any one of these questions, he may be sure to be unworthy of approaching the Lord's table. But if on the other hand he feels himself firmly convinced of these facts, (although in the weakness of the flesh he may now and then be tempted to question the one or the other), he may rest assured, that he is about to approach the Lord's table worthily, and to receive the Lord's Supper unto eternal life.

742. *F.* *Other circumstances that accompany the dispensing of the Lord's Supper.* As most of them have been treated of already, there remain only three to be mentioned, viz:

*α.* *the time* in which it ought to be celebrated. The Lord Jesus instituted the same on an evening, from whence the meal is called the Lord's Supper. If we look nearer into these and other circumstances, we find:

1. That this has been left to the option of every Individual. No body is bound to take the Supper upon a certain day of the year, or upon a certain Sunday or Holiday, or in

the morning or afternoon of the day etc.; this liberty ought not to be limited.

2. Nor has the primitive Church ever considered itself bound, in this respect, to any particular time. The Apostles continued, we are told, „daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,“ Acts. 2, 46. At Troada they had the custom of celebrating the same on the Sabbath days, Acts. 20, 7.

743. Concerning the *place*, where it ought to be celebrated. In this respect we have to answer two questiones, viz:

β. *Whether the celebration of this act is to be performed only in places of public worship, or whether it may also be done in private houses in case of people being sick.* Every thing that constitutes part of the worship of God, ought by right to be done in the public assemblies; yet if there be a *special occasion and consideration* it may also be done in private houses. Thus Christ celebrated the first Lord's Supper in the upper room of an inn, — nor have there been given any peculiar directions concerning this. The Apostles and other Christians, we read, were „breaking bread from house to house,“ Acts. 2, 46; and as we have the express promise, that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there he will be in the midst of them, Matth. 18, 20. thereby as it were, forming the family of the house into a Christian communion, there is no reason why in the case of any one being prevented by sickness from joining the congregation, the Lord's Supper should not be administered unto him in his private dwelling.

744. *Whether the Lord's Supper is to be administered on tables or upon an altar.* An altar, according to the leuitical law, is a place upon which the sacrifices are deposited and, as it were, given unto God. In the Romish Church that part of the edifice is called the altar, on and by which they celebrate the so called sacrifice of the mass. We [the lutherans] have in this sense of the word neither a leuitical nor a romish altar. And as these tables within our churches have retained, from the times of Popery, the designation of „altar,“ and as it is of no importance to us, whether it be called a table or an altar or any thing else, — we do not hesitate to say: that *the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated on the altar.*

745. γ. *The repetition of this Sacrament.* The reason why baptism is not to be repeated has been stated already. This is different with the sacrament before us, which must necessarily be repeated frequently. The reasons for which are:

1. the Apostel Paul quotes the words of the Lord as

follows: „This do ye as *often* as ye drink it in remembrance of me;“ v. 26: „*as often* as ye eat that bread“ etc.

2. We read of its having been frequently celebrated by the members of the primitive Church, and that they went breaking bread from house to house, Acts. 2, 46. And

3. We know that the Passover had to be eaten every year, — a Sacrament which has been a type of this very Lord's Supper. —

As to the question how often a Christian is to go to the Lord's table, this must be entirely left to his own option and to the state of his own mind and godliness. Nevertheless it would be profitable for the Christian frequently to examine himself, that thereby he might grow in godliness and have his faith strengthened.



## Chapter XXVIII.

The holy ministry is an office, instituted by God, in which He has set aside from the rest of men certain persons, whose duty it is, by His authority to preach His word, to spend the Sacraments, to lead those who are committed to them unto Christ, and to build them up unto eternal life.

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746. Although God might have been able to teach, direct and govern men without any means whatsoever, yet has it pleased him, to employ certain men for the purpose of carrying out his designs. This arrangement which has been made for the furtherance of our Salvation, we have now to consider more fully. There are especially six points which require our attention: which are;

747. **A.** The names that have been applied to these men; the most frequent amongst them are:

*α. Ministers* (Servants) 1 Cor. 3, 5: „Who then is Paul, and who is Apollo, but *ministers* (that is ministers of God and Christ) by whom ye believed;“ Rom. 1, 1: „Paul a *servant* of Jesus Christ;“ Galat. 1, 10: „If I yet pleased men, I should not be the *servant of God*;“ 1 Cor. 4, 1: „Let a man so account of us, as of the *ministers of Christ*;“ 2 Cor. 6, 4: „in all things approving ourselves as the *ministers of God*.“ „*Ministers of the church*,“ Coloss. 1, 24. 25; „the Church whereof I am *made a minister*.“ — „*Minister of the Gospel*,“ Ephes. 3, 7: „The Gospel whereof I was made a minister.“

748. **β. Elders**; so called because, in the newly planted churches, the Apostles appointed those to be servants of the word, who had either from their age a certain influence over the people, or, what is more probable, who had been longest members of the Church and consequently had more Christian experience than the rest; 1 Timot. 5, 17: „*Let the elders that rule well*“ etc; Titus 1, 5: „For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting and ordain *elders* in every city.“ — St. Paul accordingly expresses it as his wish, that a bishop should not be a novice, 1 Tim. 3, 6: giving it as his reason „*lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil*.“

749. **γ. Bishops**; which words in the greek language, from which it is derived, signifies: *an overseer*. Although in the Romish Church this title signifies a very high station in the Church, yet in the scriptural sense, it is intended to denote

nothing more than a *teacher* or *minister* of the christian Church; Acts. 20, 28: „Take heed therefore . . . unto the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you *overseers*“ (Bishops); Phil. 1, 1: „All the saints which are at Philippi, with the *Bishops and Deacons*.“

750. *δ.* *Other names* have been taken from domestic relations, such as: „*stewards* of the mysteries of God,“ 1 Cor. 4, 1; „*labourers* together with God,“ 1 Cor. 3, 6. 9; „*labourers in God's vineyard*,“ Matth. 20, 1; „*labourers in God's harvest*,“ Matth. 9, 38; „Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest;“ „*fishers*,“ Matth. 4, 19: „Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men;“ „*shepherds*,“ 1 Peter 5, 2: „Feed the flock which is among you;“ „*ambassadors*,“ 2 Cor. 5, 20: „We are ambassadors for Christ.“

751. **B.** *The nature of this office.* This office has been instituted in order that by it men might be made fit for eternal salvation. This is done

I. *by teaching,*

II. *by the dispensing of the sacraments, and*

III. *by church discipline.*

I. The *teaching* refers to two things; first to the preaching of the saving faith (for through faith we are saved, Ephes. 2, 8), and secondly, to a godly and unspotted walk and conversation, lest by an ungodly life on the part of God's minister, faith and salvation might be lost to him for ever. Whosoever desires to plant *faith* into the hearts of his fellowmen, must necessarily do two things;

1. *he must lay before his hearers the word of God in its purity and uncorrupted.* For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Rom. 10, 17. This word is twofold, viz: the law and the Gospel, Matth. 13, 52: „Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things *new and old*.“ But this has been sufficiently treated of in its proper place.

This doctrine having been properly preached unto the hearers, produces that saving faith, by which they may be justified before God, and made partakers of eternal Salvation.

752. Whosoever undertakes to implant faith into the heart of men must

2. necessarily maintain a godly walk and conversation. For by this he is required to sow among his hearers godliness and good works, which latter again are the effects of the Word, which is said to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction unto righteousness,“ 2 Tim. 3, 16; but the walk and conversation also of the teacher are

required to tend to the same end, 1 Tim. 4, 12: „*be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*“

753. But as the devil, is always anxious to tear the word of God from our heart, Luk. 8, 12, and to sow the weeds of false teaching among the wheat that has been sown, Matth. 13, 38. 39, it becomes necessary for the minister of the word, occasionally to pronounce words of *censure*, exhorting erroneous teachers, and other hardened sinners to turn from their evil ways. But this assertion gives rise to two questions, which it our duty to consider.

*α. Is it the duty of the minister of the Gospel merely to preach the doctrine of Salvation unto his hearers, or is he also bound occasionally to refer to erroneous doctrines which are maintained, for the purpose of refuting them?*“ If the Church of Christ were always in such a position as would make impossible for its members to be misled, it would not appear necessary to refute any existing errors, of which there was nothing to fear. But there are never wanting heresies among us, 1 Cor. 11, 19, and every minister is standing in continual dread lest any of his flock be led away from the saving faith. Accordingly, he is by no means at liberty to be silent on that subject, but on the contrary, bound earnestly to resist the evil, with all his powers. This we prove as follows:

754. In the first place: A minister is desired not only to exhort by the teaching of the word, but also to convince gainsayers; „There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, whose *mouth must be stopped,*“ Tit. 1, 10. ff., „*instruct those who oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance,*“ 2 Tim. 2, 24.

755. In the second place: Christ also as well as his Apostles have frequently and earnestly warned their hearers from erroneous teaching, and from those who might mislead them. Of Christ we know how frequently he has dissuaded men from listening to the Pharisees and Scribes, Matth. 16, 6. ff.; 23, 13. ff.; and how frequently he controverted their views. The same did Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, Chap. 3, 1. ff.; 5, 1. ff.; Acts. 15, 2. ff.; as also in that to the church at Corinth, 2 Cor. 11, 13. ff.; and the same has been done by pious and godly ministers in all ages of the church.

756. And thirdly: Those shepherds that see the wolf coming and yet do not resist, are said to be not the right shepherds, but hirelings, John. 10, 12. It is not sufficient for a shepherd to lead his flock on good pastures; he is also required to prevent the wolf from doing mischief, and to keep his flock



from straying into pastures that are filled with dangerous herbs and poisonous waters. If he is not considering this to be his duty, then he must be said to be a faithless shepherd. — Now erroneous teaching is nothing else than a poison to the Soul; and heretics and other seducers are like ferocious wolves; and, accordingly, every minister that is not warning his flock for them is to be considered as a unfaithful shepherd.

757. *β.* *Whether those who maintain such erroneous doctrines ought to be publicly named to the Church, pointed out as heretics, seducers, false teachers, and publicly condemned as such.* We answer in the affirmative; yet it ought to be done, not with ostentation, but in humility. But on this we cannot enter now. — That we have a right to mention such Individuals, by their very names, before the church, appears evident from the following reasons:

758. 1. We do not hesitate to point out publicly the names of those, whose conduct is injurious to Society; such as robbers, felons etc. in order to warn every one of having any communication or intimacy with them. — Thus also in *public schools* the pupil is forewarned by the teacher, in the *household*, the child by the parent, from connexions that might do them hurt, — on which occasions the Individuals warned against, must always be mentioned by their real names, without any one finding fault about it. Why should such not be permitted in the Church?

759. 2. Christ and his Apostles publicly pointed out such individuals, naming them by their very names. Thus Christ named the Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees, Matth. 16, 6: „Take heed, beware of the leaven of the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*;" Chapt. 23, 13: „Wo unto you *Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites*." — The apostle mentioned by name, as being dangerous: Hymeneus, Philetus, Alexander, 1 Tim. 1, 20: the Nicolaitans, Rev. 2, 16; Jezebel, *ibid.* v. 20.

760. 3. Christ and his Apostles were in the habit of publicly pointing out and condemning heretics. Thus we find Christ designating the Pharisees as „hypocrites," Matth. 23, 13; as „children of hell," v. 15: as „blind leaders of the blind," Matth. 15, 14. — St. Paul again designates Elimas as „a child of the devil," Acts. 13, 10; — others as „false apostles, deceitful workers," 2 Cor. 11, 13; — as ministers of Satan," v. 15. — as „dogs," Phil. 3, 2. — That same Apostle also *delivered* Hymeneus and Alexander unto Satan, 1 Tim. 1, 20; and, accordingly, if such is also done in our days to heretics etc. (though with humility and great discretion) they ought not to consider themselves in any way hardly dealt with

761. *γ.* *Are such as are known to live in a state of gross*

*sin, thereby giving public offence, to be publicly punished and otherwise pointed out to the congregation?* Public vices ought also to be punished publicly, 1 Tim. 5, 20: *Them that sin rebuce before all, that others also may fear.*“ If such an individual happens to be publicly known, there is, of course no necessity for mentioning his name; if this is not the case, than he ought to be named, lest by being passed over in silence, the evil might become greater. But a rebuke of this nature ought to be brought forward with „all authority,“ Tit. 2, 5. that others also might fear. — Thus much with reference to the teaching of the word.

762. II. Another part of the duties of the minister consists in the *dispensing of the Sacraments*. They are to be treated by him as divine myteries, which have been instituted for the glory of God and the wellbeing of mankind. He is therefore bound to dispense the same to all such as stand in need of them, and of whom he knows that they are desirous for eternal salvation, and determined to win the same. But in the case of his being convinced that the taking of the Sacrament, by any individual, would not tend to the honour of God, and to his, the individuals, own destruction, — he is entitled to *deny* the dispensing of the same, that he might not „give that which is holy unto the dogs,“ nor „cast the pearls before swine,“ Matth. 7, 6.

763. III. *Church discipline*. Concerning this, we have to consider two parties; first that referring to the *teachers*. It is natural that among them, as a body, certain rules and regulations must be maintained, (but of this subsequently); — and secondly that of the *hearers*. These are to be ruled not with wrath and authority, as is done with the disobedient, Luk. 9, 55, 56, — but with spiritual authority. This power the minister derives partly from the *word of God*, Heb. 4, 12. — which power we have already had occasion to speak of, — and partly also:

764. From the exercise of the power of the *keys*, as the ministry of the word is called by the Lord Jesus Christ, Matth. 16, 29: „*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;*“ Matth. 18, 18: „*Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven*“ etc.; John. 20, 22. 23. „*And when he (Jesus) had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them „Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.*““ — Concerning this we have to consider:

765. *The nature of this power*. This power is not to be

exercised over the body, but over the soul; it has not been instituted for the purpose of governing the body, but that thereby the souls of men might be guided and directed.

*How this power is to be exercised?* we answer: *Not by means of worldly compulsion*, such as fire, pain etc., but solely by means of the Word of God; it manifests itself in offering a friendly reception to the obedient and a serious exclusion to such among the congregation, who have no desire to be guided by the word of God. Just as a shepherd leads his flock; the obedient among them he is kind to; the disobedient he tries by gentle means to induce to a better course, and if he finds that they are not willing to improve, he removes them from his flock, yet without employing more dangerous and hurtful means. And St. Peter admonishes ministers to feed the flock of Christ, not as though they were lords over God's heritage," 1. Epist. 5, 3.

Nor is the power of the keys to be exercised for the gratification of the minister's own inclinations and desires, as if it stood in his option, to forgive his sins to the one, and to the other not. He is bound to do every thing to the glory of God, and for the wellbeing of the souls of his flock, — in short, to do every thing, which scriptures recommends to this end, and to shun every thing that might create any obstacle to the desired effect.

Nor is it to be done by *interest* or *affection*, such as love, hatred, influence, presents etc., all which are at variance with the principles of divine justice, and as even earthly judges are forbidden to be influenced by them, how much less ought this to happen in the case before us?

766. C. (cf. §. 747) *The effects of this ministry.* They consists not only in preaching and proclaiming of the divine word and judgement, but also in the exercise of a power, something similar to that which worldly Governements commit to the subaltern officers and magistrates, and whereby the latter are in duty bound to protect the peaceful subjects, and to punish the evildoers. And like as these authorities not only proclaim the will of their superiors, but also, in different ways, do really make use of the power deputed to them, — exactly so has God, which, in our case is the highest authority, deputed to the ministers of Church a like spiritual power.

767. With reference to the *forgiving of sins*, we have more especially to consider:

a. that a penitent sinner has his sins forgiven him, as soon as he returns unto God, being freed from the effects they would have otherwise had upon him. As for instance in

the case of the (penitent) Publican, Luk. 18, 13, who, as soon as he repented in his heart, and had taken refuge in the grace of God, had his sins forgiven him without any delay, at the same moment. — Acts. 13, 39: „By him (Christ) all that believe are justified (from sins);“ Rom. 4, 5: „He that believed on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.“

768.  $\beta$ . Forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to all sinners by the preaching of the Gospel. For the apostleship has been instituted to be a „ministry of reconciliation,“ 2. Cor. 5, 18. The Apostles were commanded to preach repentance and remission of sins, Luk. 24, 47.

769.  $\gamma$ . There are also in the Church properly instituted authorities, who are entitled to declare unto man (after he has repented his sins) the forgiveness of his sins, — in the same way as, in the case of an individual having been found innocent before a court of justice, he is liberated from his prison by the power which these judges are possessed of. — Thus the Publican was justified before God, at the moment that he directed his humble prayer unto God, although he had, as is proved by his hastening to the temple, previously repented and found forgiveness of sins. Christ also absolved the woman who had been a sinner, and repenting of her sins, had taken refuge in him, the real mercysseat; although she had previously already repented of her sins, and found grace before God.

770.  $\delta$ . But we ought to be careful not to pronounce forgiveness of sins to those who are unworthy. As such are to be considered:

1. Those who have not yet come to a knowledge of their sins. Thus the Prophet Nathan did not promise unto David forgiveness of sins, until the latter had declared with a repenting heart: „I have sinned against the Lord,“ 2. Sam. 12, 13;

2. those, who do not abstain from the sins they committ against their better knowledge. For we are told that he only is to find mercy „whoso cofesseth and forsaketh“ his sins, Prov. 28, 13; and

3. those who, although they wish to abstain from their sins, yet have not strength to believe that God is willing to forgive them their sins, for the sake and the merits of Christ; „Woe to the fearful hearts, and faint hands; woe unto him that is faint hearted! for he believeth not; therefore shall he not be offended,“ Eccl. (Sirach) 2, 14. 15.

771. Now it is given unto no man to discern the hearts and the minds of others, and accordingly the minister is bound to judge with that christian charity, which „believeth all things and hopeth all things;“ and he has therefore to pronounce

forgiveness to every one, who properly confesses his sins to him. But he is to do this not without having seriously admonished him, and with the express condition that if, what he confesses be true, he ought now by sincere repentance to seek acceptance by God. To which it would be well to add, that God, who knows the heart of man, is sure to punish the hypocrite, and that every thing that is loose in heaven, has been loosed by the office of the ministry.

772. With regard to excommunication we have to observe:

*The nature of the same.* It is the means, whereby impenitent sinners are separated from the christian congregation, that thereby such a sinner might be induced to repent and to seek again acceptance by God. This act is called by Paul „a delivering unto Satan,“ 1. Cor. 5, 5; 1. Tim. 1, 20.

773. *How it is to be used?* It is not to be used as a means against every sinner, but merely against those who, after having been frequently admonished to depart from sin, persevere in designedly committing sin. Concerning such, the Lord Jesus himself has given us instructions, Matth. 18, 15 ff.: „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 unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen and a Publican.“ Accordingly this excommunication ought not to be pronounced over any sinner, unless his sinful ways have before been in *private* and in *public*, pointed out to him, and he be warned against. Is he, in spite of this admonition, *not inclined to repent and mend his ways*, then God's wrath ought to be made known to him, nor should he be promised forgiveness of his sins, but be looked upon as a heathen and Publican. Of course, such individuals ought also to be shunned by all godly people, who ought to have no intercourse whatsoever with them.

774. *The end and aim of this excommunication.* The most important amongst them is, that the stiffnecked might be inclined to come to a knowledge of his evil ways, and repent his sins. Such was the end Paul had in view when he excommunicated the Corinthian, who had sinned in that he married his father's wife, as he writes 1. Cor. 5, 3 ff.: „I have judged . . . concerning him that has so done this deed: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus

*Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.*“ — The excommunication is also designed by openly censuring sin and its consequences, to induce men in general to abstain from it, and to come to sincere repentance. Thus Hymenæus and Alexander were delivered by the apostle unto Satan, in order „that they might learn not to blaspheme,“ 1. Tim. 1, 20.

775. **D.** We have now to consider by whom this office is to be administered.

*α.* It is to be administered by *human beings*, not by angels, or any other creatures; more especially, it ought to be entrusted to males and not to females. Though the latter are bound to teach their own children, servants etc. (as Paul writes, Titus 2, 3: that „aged women are to be teachers of good things“), yet they are not to be allowed to serve in the public ministry, 1 Cor. 14, 34: „*Let your women keep silence in the Churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; for they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law;*“ 1. Tim. 2, 12: „*I suffer not a woman to teach.*“ But an exception of this rule is permitted in case there is an absolute want of godly men for the office, and there are some pious and able women who are fit to be employed in this emergency; as we read of Phebe at Cenchrea, Rom. 16, 1, and of Tryphena, Tryphosa and Presis (v. 12) having done great service to the cause of the Lord.

Again such as wish to serve in the Ministry ought to *have the proper age*. For as little as to that very laborious office children could be admitted, on account of their weakness, even so is it impossible to entrust the same to very old people, because by their infirmity they would be unable to fulfil all the duties of the holy office. Besides this there is no age excluded from the office; not high age, Phil. 9; nor youth, 1. Tim. 4, 12: „let no man despise thy youth;“ Jerem. 1, 7: „Say not I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak.“ — Another condition for this office is *bodily health*. And if somebody happens to have a defect in his body, he may exercise the office as long as he is not prevented, from properly doing his duty; but as soon as he finds it to be an hindrance he had better not undertake it at all. — We have again to remember:

776. *β.* that it is not becoming a minister of the word to be occupied, along with it, in any other business. It is true that St. Paul, whilst officiating in his apostleship continued also his business as tentmaker, Acts. 18, 8. But this is

different in our days, since the ministers have to give all their diligence to the study of the word of God, and the addresses they have to make to their people. As Sirach says, Eccl. 38, 24: „The wisdom of the learned men cometh by opportunity of leisure: and he that hath little business shall become wise.“

777. But more especially it ought to be remembered, that the *Lord Jesus wills that worldly authorities should not in any way mingle into the administration of this office.* Luk. 22, 25. 26: „*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.*“ Thus we learn from scripture, that king Usias was struck by palsy, because of his having unlawfully assumed the priestly office, along with his kingly office, 2. Chro. 26, 19. 20. But if somebody is lawfully called to the office, and he feels himself fit for it, and is determined to give over his former occupation, then he may assume the office. For we know that the Lord Jesus called fishermen, publicans etc., to the office, Matth. 4, 19. 21; 9, 9. But still it is not advisable to call men of that description to exercise the functions of the holy office, as long as there are men to be found, who have fitted themselves to it from their very youth.

778. Nor is there any reason for excluding from the office such as are living in a *married state.* For

1. marriage is a lawful state, which has been instituted by God even before the fall of men, Genes. 2, 22 ff.; and blessed by Him, Genes. 1, 28, — a state which He desires to be kept and considered honourable, Heb. 13, 4, and which he has established by a special law; Genes. 20, 14. There is therefore no possible reason for a minister of God being forbid to be married; for God does not forbid his ministers to enter marriage, 1. Tim. 3, 2. 4: „*A bishop must be the husband of one wife, one that ruleth over his own house, having children in subjection in all gravity.*“ This injunction we find repeated, Titus 1, 6.

2. The Apostles themselves are known, during their ministry, to have lived in a married state, as for instance Peter, John and James, 1. Cor. 9, 5. 6: „*Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, as Cephas?*“ —

3. Such a curtailing of the marriage state is expressly declared in Scripture to be a doctrine of devils, 1. Tim. 4, 1. 3: „*In the latter times some shall depart from the faith*

giving heed to seducing spirits and the *doctrines of the devils, forbidding to marry.*“

4. The circumstance that the Popes have forbidden the Clergy of the Church to marry, has been the cause of the perpetration of a great many vices and other crimes, — and the devil could not possibly have had given into his hands a better means for multiplying vice and other offences among man, than just this law.

779. *γ. The qualifications of such who desire to minister the word.* They are twofold; in the first place, the minister must possess a certain *ability* for the exercise of the same. Before he undertakes to teach others, he should first instruct himself; „learn before thou speak,“ Eccl. (Sirach) 18, 19. To which end he is „to seek out the wisdom of all the ancient and be occupied in prophecies,“ Eccl. (Sirach) 39, 1. Thereby he will enable himself to preach the word in a becoming manner and „by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers,“ Tit. 1, 9. and be made, what the Apostle calls „apt to teach,“ 1 Tim, 3, 2; 2 Tim, 2, 24. A second qualification is a *godly walk and conversation*; whereby the minister is to serve as an example of the believers, 1 Tim. 4, 12. — Now the persons who are admitted to the ministry are not all of a godly walk. Some there are, who although during their ministry they lead a godly life, have yet in their youth loved the world and its pleasures. But this is no reason for their not being admitted into the ministry, after they had been converted and had repented of their sins. Nevertheless it would be more profitable to send such to minister in places where their former ways are not known, and thus to avoid offence, „lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil,“ 1 Tim. 3, 7. — Others again there are, who, even after their entering their ministry, do continue in their former evil ways; such are not only not fit to be examples for the Church, but they also by their evil deeds, pull down that again, which they might have build up by their teaching. They are therefore not fit for the office of the ministry; inasmuch as, for this, they are required to be „sober of good behaviour, not given to wine“ etc. 1 Tim. 3, 2. 3.

780. **E.** *In which way is the minister to enter upon his office?*

*α.* Every one who desires to be a minister of God, ought not to push himself into this office, but ought to be *properly ordained* for this purpose. Thus in the time of Jeremiah the prophets were punished because of their having gone and prophesied without their having been sent, Jerem. 23, 21. — „No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is call-



ed of God, as was Aaron, "Heb. 5, 4; „How shall they preach except they be sent?" Rom. 10, 15.

781. *β. How are these ministers to be called?* This is done either without any *outward means*, as was the case with the Prophets: Isa. 6, 8. 9; Jerem. 1, 15 ff. and as the Lord Jesus called the Apostles, Matth. 4, 19. 21 etc. — Or certain person or classes of the church are entitled to this privilege, viz, the *ministers*, the *authorities* and the *members of the Church*.

782. The *ministers* are entitled to ordain ministers into the Church, for we read, Titus 1, 5: „For this cause I left thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city as I have appointed thee;" 2. Tim. 2, 2: „the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

783. The *worldly authorities*. In the times of the Old testament they were bound to take care that the office of the ministry be properly attended to and filled by godly people; thus for instance, King Salomon, 1. King. 2, 27. 35; Hiskias, 2. Kings. 18, 4; Josaphat, 2. Chron. 17, 6; Josiah, 2. Chron. 35, 2; Judas Maccabeus, 1. Macc. 4, 42. This circumstance should serve as an example to Christians. And this obedience has indeed been yielded by all Christians, until the time the Pope thought fit to command them to deny it the higher authorities.

784. The *lay members* of the Church ought also to have a vote in the election of their minister. Thus we read that Matthias had been elected by the whole assembly of the faithful, Acts. 1, 23; that the Congregation at Jerusalem had sent Paul and other elders into Antioch, Acts. 15, 25. 26. This privilege has moreover been exercised by the laity in the first centuries of the Church, until the Popes took it upon themselves to deprive them of it.

785. For the purpose of carrying into effect the election of the minister in the manner stated above, it is customary to elect a few individuals from every class, who as a body are authorised to make this election. — Or in other places it is usual for the lay members of the Church to propose a minister to the other classes, who might either choose from among them persons fit for the office, or otherwise reject them. But this is left to the option and agreement of the different classes of the Church.

786. *γ. The proceedings relative to the appointing of a minister into the Church.* These are:

1. *The election*; which is a privilege of the parties stated above, and ought to be exercised with a view to the promo-

ing God's glory, the welfare of the Church, and the Salvation of mankind.

2. The *vocation* or *calling*; whereby the minister is acquainted with the fact of his having been chosen, and requested to accept of the same, and to fill his office with diligence and sobriety.

3. *Ordination*. This is a custom which has been in use in the time of the Apostles, and in the primitive Church. The Apostles used to ordain the elders by *the laying on of hands*, — perhaps for the same reason as the sacrifices of the old testament had to be set apart for holy purposes by the laying on of hands, Lev. 3, 2; 4, 15; or as, under the same dispensation, the Levites had to be ordained to the service of the temple by the laying on of hands, Numb. 8, 10. This laying on of hand is done, that thereby the minister might know that he has been set aside to be a minister of God's word, and that he might perform the duties of his office with due care and solemnity. And this custom has not been retained from any necessity whatsoever, but from the free option of the Church, — and because it has pleased God to bestow his spiritual gifts more especially by means of laying on of hands, 1. Tim. 4, 14: „Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery;“ 2. Tim. 1, 6: „I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.“

787. Thus far we have been treating of the ordinary rules attending the induction of a minister in his office. It is now necessary for us to consider the way in which the great Reformer Dr. MARTIN LUTHER has been called to that holy office, and to inquire, *whether his authority to bring to light again the word of God, and to reform the Church from the errors of Popery, has proceeded from God or from man.* We reply: that Luther had been called to perform this great and glorious work by God, who did call him partly with and partly without outward means.

788. As the *means*, by which Luther has been called to this great work, are to be considered Luther's having been ordained into the Church, and his having been chosen Professor at Wittenberg, where it was his duty to expound the word of God; as also his having been made Doctor of Divinity, whereby he was bound publicly to teach and to promote the knowledge of the saving faith. Accordingly, as soon as he made it a point to perform his duties in a conscientious manner, he could not fail thereby to bring to light the truth of the Gospel, and expose the errors of darkness. And indeed,

Luther has also been distinguished by God, peculiarly in that He blessed in an extraordinary manner his exertions in the fulfilment of an office, to which he had been called in a regular way. For it pleased God by Luther's exertions, to cause the Antichrist to be exposed, and to have His word restored again unto men.

Again Luther was called without any outward means. For, in the first place, God has promised to send an Angel, who was to „fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth (Rev. 14. 6), saying with a loud voice, „fear God and give glory to him . . . Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city and is become the habitation of the devil,“ Rev. 18, 2. — Secondly it is evident that this work of exposing the Antichrist has been a truly godly work, which God has been pleased to have carried into effect by means of Luther. And more especially the fact, that by his exertions the pure saving faith, as taught by the Gospel has been secured to us, again sufficiently proves that his doings have been from God, since none could perform them who has not been sent and inspired by God for this purpose.

789. **F.** *Are there to be different orders amongst the ministers of the Church?* Concerning this question, we have to attend to three different points:

α. that there are to be different orders, because He bestowed upon some men His gifts in a larger extent than upon others. It is true that all, who have been ordained by God into the office, are fit to exercise its functions to their utmost extent. But there are some who, in extraordinary cases, stand in need of advice and instruction, which is not the case with others, who are rather able to govern and to direct. And this is confirmed by our every day's experience; that there is among men a diversity of gifts; as is acknowledged by St. Paul himself, 1 Cor. 12, 8. ff.

According to this diversity, God has also ordained a diversity of duties. In the Old testament there were ordained Prophets, Priests and Highpriests; and in the New Testament, there are Apostles, Evangelists, Elders, Pastors and Teachers, Eph. 4, 11. Thus Titus was ordained by Paul to be Bishop (not Apostle) at Crete, and commanded to ordain elders in every city, Titus 1, 5. And experience teaches us, that the retaining of the order of things, as described above has been conducive to the maintainance of order and discipline in the church.

790. **β.** *But this order of things we are permitted to change and to arrange as appears most convenient,* since there is no

certain rule given to us in this respect. But on such occasions the apostolical admonition ought never to be lost sight of: „*Let all things be done decently and in good order*, 1 Cor. 14, 40.

791. f. *In this order of things it is not intended, that the whole affairs of the Church should be put into the hands of, and subordinated to, one Bishop; for:*

1. In the recapitulation of the different callings in the Church, 1 Cor. 12, 8. ff.; Ephes. 4, 11. such a common head and Bishop is not mentioned; from which we conclude, that such an order of things has not been intended by Christ and his Apostles.

2. The Lord Jesus has frequently warned his disciples, that none of them should strive to be first and lord over of the rest, Mrk. 9, 34; Matth. 20, 26. 27; Luk. 22, 25. 26: „*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 doeth serve.*“

3. The Lord Jesus has had, on the occasion of his disciples contending for the precedence, a fit opportunity offered to him, to make known his will on that score. If it had been his will to institute one common head over the Christian world, he would have decidedly done it at that moment. But this he has not done, thereby indicating that he is not minded to have such an order of things in his Church. Finally

4. Neither the Apostles, nor any of the orthodox teachers have ever assumed such an authority, nor ever endeavoured to exercise it.

792. The Lord Jesus has, on the contrary, given to all Apostles one and the same instructions, Matth. 28, 19. 20. He has not, for instance, given unto Peter more particular instructions, and advised the others to subject themselves unto him as their common head. Nor has it ever been his intention that all Churches that were to be founded by the different Apostles, should subject themselves to Peter and his successors, as their head and ruler. For we know that the Apostles never did acknowledge Peter to be their head, but on the contrary Paul writes, 2 Cor. 11, 5. and Galat. 2, 11. 5, and Galat. 2, 11: „*I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles;*“ and „*I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*“ Nor do we know of any case that in the primitive Church any one did presume to take upon himself a position like that of the head of the Church, or who had been considered as such, until the

Popes endeavoured and succeeded to gain this power over the Church.

793. The Lord Jesus will give unto no other the title and office of „the head of the Church,“ Ephes. 5, 22; Col. 1, 18; nor that of „chief Shepherd,“ 1 Pet. 5, 4. Accordingly no body should assume this title and office, which would be the case, as soon as any man would pretend to be the head of the Church.

794. **G.** *The effects of this office.* These are in a great measure pointed out by the different names which that office bears in scripture. Thus the ministers are called: „stewards of the mysteries of God,“ 1 Cor. 4, 1; „servants,“ Rom. 1, 1; „ministers“ (servants), 15, 16; „planters,“ 1 Cor. 3, 6. ff.; „masterbuilders,“ 1 Cor. 3, 10; „pastors,“ Ephes. 4, 11; „labourers in the harvest,“ Matth. 9, 38; „ambassadors,“ 2 Cor. 5, 20. — Now we know that the servants of a house as long as they properly do their duty, are not without profit to the household. And in the same way those who have been ordained into the Church, will not labour in vain. The result of the Apostles exertions was, as is wellknown, the propagation of the Gospel of Christ in all the world, 1 Col. 1, 23, and that by their means a great number of men have come to the knowledge of the truth. The calling of the Apostle Paul we find described in the following very beautiful words: „I will appear unto thee, deliverning thee from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 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.“ — And of the office with which Timothy was entrusted, Paul says: „In doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee,“ 1 Tim. 4, 16. Again of Peter: „Who (Cornelius) shall tell thee words, whereby thou and thy house shall be saved,“ Acts. 11, 14. And with regard to all teachers he says, 2 Cor. 4, 7: „We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us,“ and, 1 Cor. 1, 21: „It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.“

795. Finally we have to consider.

**H.** *The means whereby a minister is to be maintained;* the reply to this is sufficiently clear from the word of God, namely: they are to be maintained by those, whom they teach.

The Priests of the Old Testament had no heritage in Israel, they were to be supported by the tithe, Deut. 14, 28. 29; by the firstfruit of the harvest, Levit. 23, 10; Numb. 18, 12. 13; by the money wherewith the firstborn were to be redeemed,

Exod. 22, 29. 30. etc. For as „they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple,“ (1 Cor. 9, 13). „even so hath the Lord ordained that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel,“ v. 14. It was for this purpose that the Lord Jesus did not wish his disciples to provide themselves for their journey with money and other requisities; „for,“ says he „the workman is worthy of his meat,“ Matth. 10, 9. 10. And though St. Paul did not avail himself of this injunction, yet was it not his intention to have this support withdrawn from other ministers of the word; for he writes expressly, Gal. 6, 6: „*Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things;*“ 1 Cor. 9, 7: „Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? If we have sown unto spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.“

Thus much concerning the office of the ministry, and in general concerning the means, whereby God is pleased to raise up again man from his sinful state, to preserve him in his spiritual life, and finally to make him partaker of everlasting glory.



## Chapter XXIX.

God, after having raised up again man from his sinful state preserves him in his Church, which is the congregation of saints and in which worship is rendered unto Him, until it pleases Him, at the set time, to call him into His heritage.

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796. This Article of our Confession runs as follows :

„I believe in one Holy Christian Church.“

For like as a good shepherd carefully gathers his flock into the barn, in order to keep them from any storm or mischief befalling them, so the Lord Jesus, who is our good Shepherd, is gathering the faithful into one Church, protecting them and supplying all their spiritual wants. In order to get a right view of this christian Church, we have to attend to the followings points.

797. **A.** How it is called; this is twofold, either by  
*α. proper names*; in the greek and latin languages it is called: „ecclesia,“ a calling together, on account of Christ’s calling to it his people. In the German language it is called „Kirche“ [in the english „Church“], which [both] seem to, be derived from the greek word *κυριακός, οίκος*; and in this case it would denote „a house,“ or „congregation of the Lord.“ — But there is little importance to be attached to a name.

798. **β. by appellatives**; such are: „Holy,“ of which we mean to treat subsequently. „Catholic;“ with reference to this latter, we have to observe, that the Romish Church assumes for itself the appellation „catholic,“ and that she designates such as are members of the same as „Catholic Christians,“ maintaining that their’s is the only true Church of Christ, and that a Church that does not bear this appellative, could not be the Church of Christ. To get a clear view of this matter we have to inquire :

799. *Why the Church is called „catholic.“* Catholic denotes „general.“ Christ’s Church is called so in opposition to the jewish Church of the Old Testament, which was instituted but for one nation, one country, and was destined to last only until the coming of Christ in the flesh. And although the heathen were not forbidden to confess themselves to this Church, yet it was more peculiarly given and instituted for the Jewish nation, and the temple worship confined to Jerusalem. For which reason also it could not be propagated among

other nations. But this is different with the Church of Christ; she is not confined either to a certain people, or to certain countries. The Lord Jesus says concerning it: „*the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth*, John. 4, 21. 23. And the Apostles were commanded Matth. 28, 19: „*Go ye and teach all nations*“ etc. Mrk. 16, 15: „*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*.“ — This state of things has been prophesied, Psalm. 19, 3. 4: „*There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard; their line is gone out through all the earth; and their words to the end of the world*“; Isa. 11, 10. „*In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek*“ etc. Accordingly Christ can be said to have founded a „catholic“ Church, only with reference to its being destined, without any distinction, for all nations, all climes, and all times; a church which was to be promoted among all nations and to last until the dissolution of the world.

800. *Is the Romish Church entitled to the appellation of catholic?* We answer: No, because:

α. This Church does not maintain the pure doctrine of Christ, which is the only source of which a „catholic“ Church can spring, Luk. 8, 11; 1 Pet. 1, 23.

β. This Church does not date its origin from the time of Christ, but has in the course of Centuries gradually risen to great power and importance, by unfair and unworthy means. And if they call such a state „catholic,“ then this is an appellation, of which in fact they can derive no benefit.

801. *How many Churches there are?* Before we proceed to shew the nature of the Church, we have first to make sure, what Church we speak of. There are:

α. A *Church militant*, and a *Church triumphant*. — The *Church militant* is the Congregation of the believers, who, in this world have always to contend against the devil, the evil world, and their own flesh. Of this Church St. Paul speaks 1. Tim. 1, 18: „*This charge I commit unto thee, that thou mightest war a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience*.“ 2. Tim. 4, 7: „*I have fought a good fight*“; 2. Cor. 7, 5: „*When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest; but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears*.“ —

The *Church triumphant* is the assembly of the holy and elect, which have come to the enjoyment of their Salvation, there for ever to join in praises of that God, by whose help



they had conquered their spiritual enemies „*Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, for the accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night,*“ Revel. 12, 10; „*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing,*“ Rev. 5, 12.

802. Again the Church *militant*, is twofold: *visible* and *invisible*. The *visible* Church comprises the assembly of those, who are members of Christ's kingdom, and who have the word of God preached to them in its purity, and the Sacrament administered according to Christ's will and institution. It is called „*visible*“ not because of the Individuals of which it consists being visible to the outward eye, — but because of its having a visible mode of worship, thereby testifying, that every member among them is persuaded of, and has accepted *the faith*, which is preached in that Church, and that all members are determined to serve one and the same God, and to work out together their own salvation. This visible Church is implied, when we read, Matth. 18, 17: „*If he (thy brother), shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect the Church let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a Publican,*“ Acts. 5, 11: „*Great fear came upon all the Church;*“ Rom. 16, 1: „*Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the Church which is at Cenchrea.*“

803. The „*invisible*“ Church is not called so because of its members not being seen by the eye of the body, but because of the faith of its members, which alone constitutes a true Church, being invisible. Accordingly, the invisible Church comprises the whole number of true believers that ever lived in the world, and which, by their common faith are all united together in One, even Christ; as it is written, Eph. 3, 17: „*Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*“ This Church is invisible because no man is able to discern the hearts and thoughts of the believers. For „*man looketh at the outward appearance,*“ 1. Sam. 16, 7; and it is God alone that knowes „*the hearts of all the children of men,*“ 1. King. 8, 39. Accordingly the Lord alone, „*knoweth them that are his,*“ 2. Tim. 2, 19; but to us such a knowledge is denied, Rom. 2, 28. 29. „*He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly.*“ And St. Peter in his first Epistle 3, 4 says, that an ornament of a godly woman ought to be „*the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.*“ — Luk. 17, 20. 21: „*The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:*

neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold *the kingdom of God is within you*;" Pslm. 45, 13: „*The king's daughter is all glorious within.*“ This can also be proved by the following instances: At the time that Ahab was persecuting the Prophets of the Lord, Elijah was of opinion that he alone had been left from among the number of the faithful, 1. King. 19, 10; but he is told by the Lord v. 18: „I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees of which have not bowed unto Baal.“ — And of the christian Church we are told, that, at the time of its being persecuted by the Antichrist, it should „flee into the wilderness,“ where it should find a „*place prepared of God,*“ Rev. 12, 6.

804. This proves that there really exists a distinction between the visible and the invisible Church.

α. In the visible Church there are to be found believers and unbelievers. For not all who confess the faith and partake of the Sacraments, are really true believers, but some are hypocrites, and almost asmuch unbelievers, as those, who have not had preached unto them the word at all; — in the invisible Church there cannot be a hypocrite, but every member must be a true believer.

β. Into the visible Church we are admitted by the hearing of the word, and the partaking of the Sacraments according to the Lords institution — into the invisible Church but by faith.

γ. Accordingly the visible Church is also denoted as the assembly of those who have been called, — but the invisible Church as „the assembly of the elect,“ although in the latter there are also to be found some, who, though they believe for a time, are yet falling away again, and perish for ever.

805. The *visible* Church upon earth is again twofold; either a *general* Church, one that is spread over the whole earth, or a *particular* Church, that is bound to the confines of a certain country.

The *general* Church is intended by the Lord Jesus, when he says, Matth. 16, 18: „Upon this rock (faith in me) I will build my Church;“ and this Church is referred to Col. 1, 18, when the Lord Jesus is called „the head of the Church,“ for which he has given himself that „he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,“ Eph. 5, 26. Members of this general Church are all those, who hold the word of God in its purity, and who do partake of the Sacraments; and not only those who are living together on one spot and at one and the same period, but all who have ever dwelt on earth since its creation, who live now on it, and who shall live on it, until the day of judgement.

806. From this general Church are to be distinguished the *particular Churches*, which are confined to certain spots. Thus the Apostle Paul addressed his Epistles to particular Churches as for instance one to the Church of Rome, one to that of Corinth, Ephesus etc. As also in the Acts of the Apostles we find mentioned the particular Church at Jerusalem, Chap. 2, 47; 4, 23 etc. In the same way we speak, in our days of the Church of Germany etc.

807. **C.** It will now be possible for the reader to understand what sort of Church we have intended §. 801. It was not the Church triumphant, but the Church militant we spoke of; not of any of the particular Churches of certain lands, but of that general Church, which is spread over the whole world. But this Church is as we have seen, either visible or invisible, and those Christians who are members of the visible Church are not always members of the invisible. It is therefore necessary to keep in mind, that in our inquiry both, the visible and the invisible Church are spoken of, — but with this difference, that, if we speak of the outward assembly, we thereby refer to the visible, and if, on the other side, we speak of the spiritual union in the faith, we make reference to the invisible Church. This will be clear partly from the preceding remarks, partly also from the following.

808. **D.** *Which Individuals do belong to the Christian Church?* In this respect there is again to be made the same distinction. Namely to the invisible Church belong all those who have the true faith within their heart, and not the mere outward appearance of it, and are thereby spiritually united to Christ. Such as have this faith are in reality the true members of the Church, their circumstances be whatever they may. But in the case of any Individual not having this inward faith, no earthly authority or power whatsoever is able to make him a member of that Church; and he, as well as all unbelievers, can never become members of Christ's spiritual body, which is the Church.

809. Members of the visible Church are:

*a. According to the will of God, all men.* For He invites them all, without any distinction; and there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, since He also calls the Gentiles into His kingdom, Isai. 11, 12: „In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek;“ Acts. 10, 35: „In every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable with him“ (for being received into the christian Church); Gal. 3, 28: „There is neither Jew nor greek, there is is neither

*bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ.*"

810. *β.* According to outward appearances all those who hear the preaching of the word, and partake of the Sacraments. We on our part cannot make any difference, whether they are good or evil, believers or unbelievers, sincere or not; for as we can judge only by outward appearances, christian charity ought to induce us, „to hope every thing, to believe every thing," 1. Cor. 13, 7; and to suppose that all, who confess themselves to be members of the Church, are in reality so, within their hearts. Thus, for instance, Simon the Sorcerer was looked upon as a Christian, because of his having received baptism, Acts. 8, 13; as was also the case with Demas, Paul's assistance, who yet turned out not to be a Christian at all, 2. Tim. 4, 10.

811. This state of things is compared by Christ to „a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away," Matth. 13, 47 ff. In another place he compares it to a field, „upon which the good seed and the tares grow up together," v. 38; — and again to the *royal marriage feast*, to which came alike the worthy and the unworthy, Matth. 22, 10. 11.

Exactly so it is in the Church; for there are also some, who have merely the outward appearance of being worthy members, yet not without also outwardly differing from the true Christians. This is sufficiently explained by the parables quoted above; and St. John writes, 1. Ep. 2, 18. 19: „*Even now are there many Antichrists; they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.*" In the same manner St. Paul makes a distinction between those who maintain heresies and between the true christians, 1. Cor. 11, 19: „There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."

812. *γ.* In reality it are only the believers who are to be looked upon as members of the visible Church, and not those, whose faith is shipwrecked either by their maintaining erroneous doctrines, or by an ungodly walk.

By *erroneous doctrines*. For those cannot be said in reality to belong to the Church who, by their maintaining erroneous doctrines, are hindered from receiving into their hearts the saving faith of the Gospel. Thus we read of Hymenaeus, Philetus and Alexander having suffered shipwreck, because of their unwillingness to believe the doctrine concerning the resur-

rection from the dead; and, we know that Paul, in that he gave them over unto Satan, 1. Tim. 1, 19. 20; 2. Tim. 2, 17. 18, did not consider them members of the Church. Individuals of this description are called „heretics;“ and although they may not fall away by an ungodly walk, and although they may partly maintain the true faith, and confess Christ, yet, as long as they adhere to an erroneous doctrine, they cannot possibly acquire the saving faith of the Gospel; and they are moreover to be considered as dangerous Individuals, inasmuch as they might mislead others also.

813. By an *ungodly walk*; all those become void of their faith, who fall into gross sin, and commit the same willingly, in spite of the warnings of their own consciences. It has been shown already in which way such may and do lose their faith. Thus St. Paul excommunicated a man at Corinth, because of his having married his father's wife, and that he desired him not to be considered a member as long as he did not repent, 1. Cor. 5, 5. Accordingly such a sinner is without the pale of the Church, and the communion of Christ, as long as he remains in his sins. But there is no sinner so atrocious, but who after having repented, might not be received again into the Church; and in the same way any Individual, that has been once a member of the Church, but has fallen away again, may be, after having repented of his new error, admitted again into the Church: „If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness,“ Gal. 6, 1.

814. **E.** *The qualities and characteristics of the Church.* These are:

*a. Purity*; as we read, Ephes. 5, 25. 26. 27: „Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and *cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*, 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*.“ And this purity it is, we have imputed unto us, when we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, Isa. 61, 10. Now it has been substantiated already, that those unworthy people also are frequently found to be members of the (visible) Church; as also in a previous Chapter, that our regeneration never is perfect as long as we are on this earth, and that even the very saints have continually to contend with their spiritual enemies. And thus is the Church, in the midst of its purity, as stated above, not without sin, and without daily blemish. But these spots we know to be hid, as it were, from the judgement of God, since „there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,“ Rom. 8, 1.

815. *β. Unity.* We confess in our Creed: „I believe in *one christian Church*“ etc. For there is but this one Church, which comprises all true believers. This has never been questioned. But the Church is also the congregation of God's holy and believing people; and it may therefore appear strange, that there should be found, in this assembly of the holy and godly people, divers heresies and heretics, which give cause to much strife, dissension and disunion. And considering this circumstance many a one might be inclined to believe it to be rather the school of Satan, than the Church of God. But it ought to be remembered:

816. 1. That the devil is a bitter enemy of the Church of Christ, and is ever ready to do it some mischief or other, Matth. 13, 37. ff.: „*He that soweth a good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world. The good seed are the children of the Kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil.*“ — Besides

2. There are also men, who instigated by Satan and by their own ambition, selfishness etc. endeavour to spread erroneous doctrines in the Church, 1 Tim. 4, 1: „*In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of the devil.*“ This has been more particularly spoken of by the Apostle, 2 Tim. 3, 2 ff. Now there can never be any concord between Christ and Belial, 2 Cor. 6, 15; and, accordingly, as long as the Church has this enemy, so long is it not impossible for heresies to be broached within its pale.

817. God permits this state of things for two reasons:

aa. As a punishment to a disobedient world, which loves „darkness rather than light,“ John. 3, 19; „*for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness,*“ 2 Thess, 2, 11. 12;

bb. As a trial for those who are believers „*there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved might be made manifest in you,*“ 1 Cor. 1, 19.

Again we have to keep in mind that

818. 3. *It has been prophesied before hand that there were to rise heresies in the Church.* Simon prophecies concerning Jesus, Luk. 2, 34: „*this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;*“ Acts. 20, 29. 30: „*I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter among you, not sparing the flock; also of your ownelves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*“ And more especially concerning the last times, we are told, Rev. 12, 12: „*Woe to: e*

inhabiters of the earth and the seal for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he has but a short time;“ Matth. 24, 24: „*There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect;*“ cf. also 2 Tim. 3, 1.

819. 4. *In the very first times of the Church there have also risen different sects*, of which mention is made in scripture. Thus we read of there having arisen a contention between Peter and Simon the Sorcerer, Acts. 8, 18 ff.; between Paul and those among the Apostles, who erred in mixing up the Law and the Gospel, Acts. 15, 2. ff.; also of dissensions having been caused by the Nicolaitanes, Rev. 2, 6. 15; and finally of Jezebel having endeavoured to seduce the Lord's servants, v. 20. In another place we are told, that the bishops of Smyrna and Pergamos had to do with the Synagogue of Satan, Rev. 2, 9. 13. If there are therefore arising in the church all sorts of heresies and sects, this ought to alarm nobody, since their rising is in the very nature of the church, and since they have taken place even in the earliest times of the church.

820. γ. (cf. §. 814) *The church's duration unto the end.* Christ was not sent to institute a Church which, like the Jewish dispensation, was to last but for a limited period; and accordingly it is considered as one of the characteristics of his Church, that it should never cease to exist. Concerning this, we have to keep in mind two things, viz:

*That the Church is never to cease in this world.* We have already pointed out the difference that exists between the invisible Church, that rests upon faith, and the visible one, that manifests itself in the external services. The invisible Church never can cease; for although the number of the believers be but small, yet Christ's promises will always remain true; and he expressly says, that „*the gates of hell shall not prevail*“ against his Church, Matth. 16, 18; as also Matth. 28, 20: „*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*“ — In the time of Elijah God had reserved unto himself seven thousand believers, without Elijah ever being aware of the fact, or knowing them to be such, 1 King. 19, 18. In the same way also He preserves unto Himself in our days a number of faithful believers, who are known to no other than unto Him. 2 Tim. 2, 19. Which circumstance has also been referred to by Daniel, Chap. 2, 44: „*the Lord of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*“

821. This leads us naturally to the question: *Whether, under the reign of Popish darkness, and before Luther began to reform the Church, there has also existed a Christian Church, and if so, where it was to be found.* We reply:

In the first place: As it was prophesied of the church that, at that period, she was to flee into the wilderness, it needs no farther proof, where she was then to be found. It was God's pleasure to hid her in such a way, as to make it impossible even for the devil to find and persecute her.

In the second place. Wherever, even then, the word has been preached in its purity, and the Sacraments dispensed in conformity with Christ's will, there has been an assembly of the faithful. For the word of God is never preached in vain, but God has given us the following promise: „My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I send it,“ Isa. 55, 11. There are, accordingly, always some men who are true believers, though they are but few. And as the Sacrament of baptism invariably regenerates those, who have the same conferred upon them, there must of necessity be always a number of children at least, who are in reality members of the true Church.

822. Accordingly, under the reign of Popery there have been members of the true Church:

1. Those who by baptism had been engrafted into Christ and thereby made his members, — before any error had perverted their minds;

2. those who have been converted by the preaching of the word, and have partly not disdained to expose the errors of Popery, and of which some are mentioned in History, but whose number is doubtless very much greater;

3. those who have mourned over the corruptions of Popery, of which also some cases have come to our knowledge; and finally

4. Those who have not allowed themselves to be drawn away from the word of God, taking from it their knowledge of the saving faith, and have remained in the same unto the end.

823. *In which way is it possible for the (visible) Church to cease on earth.* This might come to pass in times, when the public worship has ceased and there remain only secret believers; as was the case at the time of Nicodemus, John. 3, 2, and Joseph of Arimathia, John. 19, 38. — The possibility of such a decay can be proved by the following:

1. Such a state of things has been prophesied to come to pass in the times of the Antichrist, Rev. 12, 6: „The



woman (the church) fled into the wilderness, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore years;“ v. 13, 14: „When the Dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman; and to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness“ etc. — Rev. 13, 3. 4. 7: „All the earth wandered after the beast, and they worshipped the Dragon which gave power unto the beast. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds and tongues and nations;“ cf. also Chap. 14, 8; 17, 2. 15; 18, 3.

2. We know, that at different periods the Church has already fallen into such a state of decay; as for instance in the reign of king Ahab, when Elijah thought that there had remained none of the Lord's people upon earth, 1 Kings. 19, 14; — also during the babylonian captivity, whereby the worship in the temple of the Jews had been made to cease for 70 years, and on which occasion but four men were to be found, who steadfastly refused to conform to heathen idolatries, — namely Daniel, Sadrach, Melech and Abednego, Dan. 3, 12.

3. At the time of our Lord's passion, there were none who confessed themselves publicly to him, much less any public services, and in all appearance there was no visible church. — — All these things which have happened, or are still to happen under the reign of the Antichrist, are quite in keeping with the nature of the church of Christ.

824. Now, the Lord Jesus compares the Church to a city *that is set on a hill and that cannot be hid*, Matth. 5, 14. But this must be understood to refer to its state of unity and perfectness, but not to the state of dissension. A city, though situated on a hill may yet be hid from the view, by the fall of night; yea even the Sun itself may be withdrawn, at least from our view, and darkened by clouds, though in truth his light can never be darkened. In the same manner the church is always (with but few exceptions) before every body's eyes.

825. *δ. The possession of the eternal truth.* For the Church cannot be *without the true faith* as long as she holds fast the word of God. And as the invisible Church is constituted of the whole assembly of the true believers, it follows that she never can err with respect to those essential doctrines of the christian faith, without which faith cannot grow within the heart of man. For if it was possible for the invisible Church to err, then there could not be any Church at all on earth; but that there is to be a Church on earth has been proved previously. Nevertheless there is not one among the believers who is not liable to falling into dangerous errors, and thereby

casting his faith from him. But of this subsequently. — Of the elect amongst these lattermentioned, God has known from eternity, that they were to return again to the faith from which they had fallen; and they do so, before departing this life — for God's Prescience cannot fail.

826. *In which way can the Church fall from the true faith?*

1. By departing from the word of God;

2. Particular Churches may fall into error and thereby separate themselves from the Church, as, for instance, in the case of the Arian heresy.

3. It is also possible for the general visible Church to fall from the true faith, if she should happen to permit erroneous doctrines being taught, and the purity of the worship being polluted, within her pale. For we have shewn it already to be possible for the whole visible Church to vanish from the earth.

827. **F.** *The characteristics whereby the true faith might be distinguished from that which is not so.* For this purpose there can be no better criterion than the *preaching of the word in all its purity, and the dispensing of the Sacraments in conformity with Christ's institution.* For:

*α.* Word and Sacrament are the only means by which the Church is propogated upon earth: and accordingly in every place where these legitimate means are put forth, there must be the Church itself. For of the word of God we have the promise that it is never to return void, Isa. 55, 11.

This *word* itself we find designated as the seed of the Church, Luk. 8, 11. And 1 Peter. 1, 23. we read „*Being born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*“ The Lord Jesus, being about to institute his Church, commanded his Apostles to „*go and teach all nations, baptizing them.*“ etc. Matth. 28, 29; and, accordingly, Paul says 1 Cor. 4, 15: „*In Christ Jesus I have begotten you in the Gospel.*“

Concerning the *Sacraments*, and more especially concerning baptism, it has been stated already that it is the washing of regeneration, etc. Tit. 3, 5; that every one who desires to enter into the kingdom of heaven must first be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, John. 3, 5. Accordingly, wherever the word and Sacraments are set forth in their purity, there is also the Church; and wherever this is not the case and consequently the legitimate means of grace absent, there cannot be said to be the Church.

828. *β.* The word and Sacraments are the privileges of the church and their administration her proper business. John. 10, 27: „*my sheep hear my voice;*“ Chap. 8, 47: „*He that is*

of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." Chap. 14, 23: „If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him.“ Wherever these acts are carried into effect there must be found the Church, and accordingly we conclude that wherever the word is preached in its purity, and the Sacraments administered in conformity to Christ's institution, there must be the Church. And on the other hand wherever these characteristics are wanting, there we cannot speak of the existence of a Church.

829. *Because those who have the true faith, differ from those who maintain errors, by the very fact, that the first are obeying the word of God and partaking of the Sacraments in the right way and the others not.* Johf. 8. 31: „If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;“ Matth. 7, 15. 16: „Beware of false prophets, ye shall know them by their fruits,“ (that is: their teaching). Those characteristics by which the orthodox are distinguished from the heretics are also the characteristics of a true Church; and accordingly we conclude from the statement made just now, that the obedience to the word and the right use of the Sacraments are a mark of the true Church. — For our purpose it suffices us to show, *where the Church of Christ is, and where not;* and we do not heed others, — such as:

830. aa. *Antiquity;* that is, that *that Church is to be considered the true Church, which is the oldest Church in the world.* This antiquity is made to refer either to the time of the Church's *foundation* or to its outward *authority*. As to foundation, *that Church must be considered of the highest antiquity, which has first started in view to the eye of the world.* Thus for instance, at the time the Lord Jesus and his Apostles were preaching among the Jews, their Church seemed to be the New one, and that of the Pharisees the Old one. But on a closer consideration we find that the Church of Christ had been already preached in the first promise that was ever given (that the seed of the woman should pierce the serpent's head, Genes. 3, 15), and that it consequently was older than that of the Pharisees, yea the oldest among all; whilst the Church of the Pharisees was not older than the doctrine they maintained, and which had been invented but recently.

831. Nor can we judge about the antiquity of any Church by the *outward authority* she has power to maintain. For we are nowhere advised in scripture to judge the orthodoxy of a Church by a reference to its antiquity and its external importance. If we did so, it would come to this, that we adjudged the true Church to be the erroneous Church, and the reverse.

Thus for instance, at the time that God determined to raise unto Himself a nation, from the house of Abraham that should worship Him, and to this end led Abraham out of the land of Chaldea, — Abraham had already a Church, in which he and his house had worshipped certain gods, Joshua 24, 2. This Church was to be considered an old Church with reference to that instituted but recently by God, and yet was Abraham to give preference to the Old? — Again at the time the children of Israel were led out by God from the bondage of Egypt, who instituted His services among that people, the Egyptian superstitions were much older, than the newly proclaimed creed; and accordingly if age was to be given the preference, what must have happened? And the christian faith also, on its first going out into the world, was considered to be new, Acts. 17, 19: „*May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest, is?*“ Whilst the idolatry of these very men that put these question was of a very long standing; but in spite of its antiquity it could not be pronounced to be true, as little as the christian faith, because of its being new, could be said to be erroneous. And in the time of popish darkness the Church has also been hidden for a short time, from which it has emerged anew, according to the promise, Rev. 14, 6; 18, 4. But we can, nevertheless not say that Popery, because of its antiquity was true etc.

832. bb. Nor can we be guided in our judgement concerning any Church, by the *extensiveness of the same*. Some there are, who maintain that that Church must be the true Church, which is spread most extensively upon earth. It is true that the limits of the Church are none other than those of the world; but that this Church is not permitted everywhere the free and open manifestation and worship, — nobody will attempt to deny. Nevertheless we cannot admit the assertion to be true, that that Church must be the true Church of Christ, whose visible communion and worship is the most extensive one of all. Christ addresses his Church as a „*little flock*,“ Luk. 12, 32. At the time of our Lord's sufferings the Church had become so „*little*,“ that for a time there were none that believed on him, and at another time again but two or three. Whilst on the contrary the whole lump of the people were on the side of the Pharisees, — thus making the erroneous Church much more extensive than the true Church. Likewise the Arian heresy had also overspread almost every land in which a christian Church was to be found, whilst but few adhered to the true faith, — and yet the Arian Churches could not be said to be the true Churches. — Of the Antichrist we are told, that he was to subdue na-

tions, kings, generations etc., Rev. 13, 3. 7; 14, 8; 17, 2. 15; 18, 3, whereby the Church of Christ was to be oppressed in such a way, as would compel her to hide herself in the wilderness, Rev. 12, 6. — And concerning the last time, we have the prophecy that there are to rise many false prophets and false Christs that should, if it were possible „deceive the very elect,“ Matth. 24, 24. And from the words of our Lord, Luk. 18, 8, we are led to conclude that the number of those who are misled should be larger, than that of the faithful, „when the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on earth?“

833. *γ.* Some affirm that that Church must be the true Church which is able to perform *miracles*, and that wherever these characteristics are not to be met with, there cannot be the true Church. — There is no doubt that God, in His Providence, even in our days is performing many miraculous works amongst us, but in the case before us these kinds of miracles are not intended, — but such as have been wrought by Christ and his Apostles for the support of the faith which they preached. Such miracles were *then* employed in order to testify who was the true Messiah and Saviour, Isai. 35, 4. 5: „God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence: he will come and help you; then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart and the tongue of the dumb sing.“ — But we are nowhere told that this state of things was also to serve as a criterion, after the Church had once been instituted, since:

834. 1. It is not possible for us to discern whether such miracles are from God or from Satan. For miracles of this kind are not only not promised to us in the Bible, but we are, on the contrary, warned to beware of miracles, which are performed independent of God's word. It is, moreover, very easy for the devil to blind and deceive man, by his false miracles, which we are able to distinguish from divine miracles only by examining the word of God, whether such miracles have been promised in it, or not. Now we do not meet with any word or passage in scripture, wherein the continuance of these miracles has been promised to the Church of Christ; which makes it impossible for us to know, whether any miracle (performed in our days) is the work of Satan or of God.

835. 2. We are told that the *wonders of the last days* are to be of a dangerous nature, and are warned not to give them any heed, Matth. 24, 24 ff.: „There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive

the every elect. Behold I have told you before; wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold he is in the desert, go not forth: behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not."

Being thus warned against miracles, it is not possible for us, to consider their existence in any Church, as a mark of her being the true Church.

836. 3. *Miracles have been pointed out by God as one of the marks of the Antichrist; this is done in the passage quoted above (Matth. 24, 24), and more especially, 2. Thess. 2, 9: „Him (the Wicked) whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders;“ Rev. 13, 13. 14: „And (the other beast) deceiveth them that dwell on earth by the means of these miracles, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.“* And as the sign of the Antichrist, cannot at the same time be looked upon as the mark of a true Church, it follows that miracles cannot now be looked upon as marks of a true Church.

837. 4. *The gift of performing miracles has not been claimed by the Church for many centuries after its foundation nor is it the case in our days; and accordingly if the power to perform miracles really did constitute a mark of the true Church, they must necessarily always be found with the Church. But this has not been the case, — and therefore miracles are not a mark of the true Church.*

838. As to the miracles which are professedly performed daily in the Popish Church, we state

a. that the Holy Ghost has marked them out long ago as lying wonders;

b. that such wonders are always reported to have occurred at a distance of many hundred miles, from whence it scarcely ever was possible to get at more detailed information; and

c. that neither the Pope, nor any of his partisans have ever performed any miracle for the purposes of refuting the doctrines as taught by the Protestant Church, which they surely would have done, were they in any way able to perform a miracle.

839. G. *The authority of the Church.* It is not in the power of the Church to compel any man to accept of the christian faith, — or to govern the consciences of men. For though the Church might sometimes succeed in compelling any Individual to conform to its tenets, — yet within his heart he certainly will not give way to these persuasions befor he has not been convinced of the truth of her creed. —

But in a compulsory manner the Church is not permitted to act, for

α. this power has not been committed to the Church;  
 β. nor has it ever been exercised by her; on the contrary,  
 γ. the Lord Jesus has expressly forbidden compulsory means so be used, Luk. 9, 55. 56. On the occasion of the Samaritans not being willing to receive the Lord Jesus and the Gospel of his salvation, James and John got angry, and desired Christ to allow them to „command fire to come down from heaven and consume them;“ — but the Lord hindered and rebuked them, saying „ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy life but to save them.“

840. The authority of the Church accordingly consists more especially in keeping up order and discipline regarding the properly ordaining of the preaching and of all Church ceremonies; to her belongs also the punishment of the stiffnecked. That this is the case, has been partly proved already in the chapter which treats on the public ministry. Nevertheless we intend to consider this subject more particularly in this place.

α. *It is left to the free option of the Church to ordain the different ceremonies of which the public worship is composed, — yet with certain conditions.* The ceremonies with reference to the temple worship, under the Old testament dispensation, had been ordered in all its parts by God Himself. This is different in the Church of the New testament; the ceremonial of her worship has been left to the option of the Church, — but with the understanding that „all things be done decently and in good order“ and „unto edifying,“ 1. Cor. 14, 26. 40. What is said by Paul concerning the covering of the head (1. Cor. 11, 4. 5), concerning the order of teaching (1. Cor. 14, 27), does not now bind us, as also the Church never has considered herself bound by it. It is accordingly left to the pleasure of the Church to ordain every thing with regard to worship and ceremonial, but so to ordain them that they may tend to the edification of her members.

841. β. *It is not in the power of a number of members, or of any individual member, to bring a change into that which has once been made a rule in the Church.* If every thing is to be done in good order and in decency, then it cannot be permitted for every individual member of the Church to make alterations in that which the whole congregation has once agreed upon. If such would be permitted, it would be the cause of great disorder. Such an attempt is therefore to be looked upon as sin against the authority of the Church; for thereby

one is desirous to alter that, which the Church has thought fit to institute by divine authority.

842. *γ.* *Although it is in the power of the Church to make alterations in the ceremonies of the worship, yet is it not in her power to give way to the enemies of divine truth, and to bring about any alteration in order to please them.* The Apostle considered circumcision as a free ceremony and caused Timothy to be circumcised Acts. 16, 3; but as soon as the false Apostles put it down as a law for every Christian to be circumcised, Paul immediatly contended against it, Acts. 15, 2. And he expressly says Gal. 5, 2: „Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing,“ which he prefaces with the admonition: „Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.“ Thereby declaring it to be a reason for his contending against circumcision being made a necessity, that the liberty of the Christian might be preserved; as he declares, Gal. 2, 5: „To whom we gave place by subjection no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you.“ If some of the ceremonies of the church are attacked by her enemies then it is advisable for her not to change them, though something of the kind might have been previously intended. For if she gave way, she would have to alter every thing besides also. Thus it is quite left to the Christian liberty, to remove the images from the churches, to abolish exorcism by baptism etc. But if false brethren make this abolition a necessity, then the church is not any more at liberty to do so; she is obliged to retain them, that she might not come again into captivity and go void of her liberty.

843. **III.** *The different estates that constitute the Church.* For our God is not a God of confusion, and He therefore desires every thing in His Church to be done „decently and in order,“ 1 Cor. 14, 33. 40. He has instituted in His Church three different estates, to one of which every member of the Church must necessarily belong. They are: the *teachers*; the *politica power of the land*, and the *lay members*. To the first belong all Pastors and ministers; to the second the *government and its subjects*, and to the third, *masters, women, men- and maid-servants, parents and children* etc.

The first of these three estates, viz: that of *ministry* has been sufficiently treated of in the last chapter. That of the *lay members*, God instituted immediately after the fall, Gen. 3. 17: „In sorrow shalt thou eat of it (the ground) all the days of thy life, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee.“ — About this there has never been any controversy.



The *political* government has also been ordained by God; „by me kings reign, and princes decree justice,“ Wisd. 8, 15; „the powers that be are ordained of God,“ Rom. 13, 1.

844. It might be asked, *whether in Christ's Church and according to his will, there are to be worldly authorities?* We reply: Yes; for

a. *The authorities have been instituted by God, and have not been abolished by Christ and his Apostles.* And we find also that the Lord Jesus had himself intercourse with men in authority; as, for instance, with the Centurion at Capernaum, Matth. 8, 5. ff.; with a nobleman, John. 4, 47. ff.; with king Herod, and with Pontius Pilate, Matth. 27, 11; Luk. 23, 2. 8. — As did also the Apostles, for we read of their having had intercourse with the Centurion Cornelius, Acts. 10. 17. ff.; with Sergius, *ibid.* Chap. 13, 7; with Felix, Chap. 24, 10; king Agrippa, Chap. 26, 1. ff.; none of whom had been admonished either by Christ or his Apostles to leave their worldly positions; which would have been the case, if the latter had considered these offices to be inconsistent with Christianity.

845. b. *In describing the kingdom of Christ, authorities are expressly made mention of;* Pslm. 2, 10, 11: „Be wise now therefore ye kings: be instructed ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear,“ etc.; Pslm. 24, 7: „Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in;“ Isa. 49, 23: „Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mother;“ Chap. 60, 3: „gentiles shall come in thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising;“ Pslm. 72, 10. 11: „the kings of Tarsish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Sebu shall offer gifts,“

846. c. *The Christian is bid to pray for the existing authorities,* 1 Tim. 2, 1. 2: „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.“

847. d. *The Christian is bid to subject himself to the worldly authorities,* Rom. 13, 1: „Let every soul be subject unto higher authorities;“ v. 2: „Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation; v. 4: „For he (the ruler) is the minister of God to thee for good, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil;“ v. 5: „Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake;“ v. 7: „Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear;

honour to whom honour." Matth. 22, 21 the Lord Jesus commands „to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's;" 1 Pet. 2, 13. 14: „Submit yourselves every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors" etc.; v. 17: „fear God, honour the king."

848. I. *The enemies the Church is to encounter on earth.* The Church on earth is like the ship in which Christ sat, and that „was covered with the waves," Matth. 8, 24. The Church is surrounded by enemies on all sides, John. 15, 18. 19: „If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you; because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

849. Amongst the false teachers and enemies of the Church the most conspicuous is the Antichrist. He is to be the most persevering enemy of the Lord Jesus. „Antichrist" is usually called every one, who opposes himself to the christian faith, 1 John. 2, 18: „Even now there are many Antichrists." But more especially concerning one principal Antichrist we have the prophesy 1 John. 4, 3: „This is the spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come;" and St. Paul says of him that he is „a man of sin, the Son of perdition," 2 Thess. 2, 3. 4.

850. With regard to this Antichrist many questions might be started; thus: whether he is now in the world; whether he is to come from among the Jews; whether he is to dwell at Jerusalem, etc.; but this is not the place to enter upon these inquiries, and we propose to take notice but of the two following questions, viz:

a. Whether in our days the Antichrist has come already. and:

β. if so, where he is to be met with.

851. Now every one ought to know that the great Antichrist referred to in the prophecy, is no other than the Romish Pope. This we prove as follows: The Antichrist is to be recognised by different signs, as was also the case with Christ; and if the different signs, which God has pointed out to us as the marks of the Antichrist, are to be found upon any one, that same must be the Antichrist. The following are the marks by which the Pope may be proved to be the Antichrist: His name, the spot where he is to be found; the time of his reign, his pride and insolence, and his works.

852. a. The name by which the Antichrist and his kingdom is to be recognised is „Babylon;" Rev. 17, 5: „Upon the forehead was a name written, mystery, Babylon the great." That this Babylon means no other spot than the city of Rome we

shall prove subsequently. The Romish Church is therefore *the spiritual Babylon*.

853. b. As to the *place* where the Antichrist was to govern, we have pointed out to us: *Babylon*, Rev. 17, 5; „*the seven hills*,“ Rev. 17, 9; „*the seven heads are seven hills on which the women sitteth*;“ *that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth*, Rev. 17, 18. These three significations belong to the city of Rome, for

„*Babylon*“ has always been considered by the fathers of the Church to refer to Rome, and this title is, moreover, vindicated on behalf of Rome, even by the Papists of our days; vide: *Bellarminus* lib. 2. de Rom. Pontif. 2, and: *Gretserus*, defens. 2. contravers. Bellarmini lib. 2. cap. 2.

„*The seven hills*“ do also refer to no other city than to Rome, for this city is, as is generally known, build on seven hills. And even the Papist themselves agree that this name is referring to Rome.

„*The great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth*,“ refers also to Rome; for we know that, at that time, Rome had subjected all kings to its own authority, and that there was not then a town on earth, that could have ascribed to it such an universal power.

854. If the partisans of the popish Church should object to this, and say, that all this did only refer to heathen Rome in which at that time, the faith of Christ was dreadfully persecuted by the Emperors, — we answer:

α. that that part of the Apocalypse, from which our references are taken, is referring to the time that was to succeed that of John and the heathen Emperors.

β. The facts spoken of more especially were prophesied to come to pass after the Roman empire had gone to ruin; 2. Thess. 2, 3: „*that day shall not come, unless there be a falling away first*;“ which state of things was typified in the Parable of the two beasts, Rev. 13. This had not come to pass at the time of the heathen Emperors.

c. This empire was to retain a certain appearance of holiness, „*I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake us a Dragon*,“ Rev. 13, 11. Such an appearance of holiness however was not to be found during the reigns of the Roman Emperors. This prophesy, which referred to the Antichrist's governing at Rome must therefore have reference to a later period.

d. Finally that this power was to be an ecclesiastical empire we shall prove immediatly. For

855. The Antichrist was, fourthly, to be met with in *God's temple*, 2. Thess. 2, 4: „*Who* (the man of sin) *opposeth*

and exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, so that he, as a God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is a God." That thereby the temple at Jerusalem is not intended, can be proved by the facts, that this temple was to be previously destroyed, Matth. 24, 2, and a third temple was not to be raised, Dan. 9, 27. On the contrary it means the Church of God, which is called a „temple," 1. Cor. 3, 16: „know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" 2. Cor. 6, 16: „ye are the temple of the living God." It was in such a temple that the Antichrist was to govern; and that this has actually been the case, is sufficiently known.

856. c. *The time in which this was to come about.* Here we have to observe:

α. *At what time this reign of the Antichrist was to commence and to prosper.* This can, of course, not be pointed out as to the year and the month. In the first instance, it is described by John as a beast that had seven heads and ten horns, Rev. 13; which are, according to Daniel, ten kings, Daniel 7, 24: „The ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." — Secondly, we are also told in the same chapter of the book of Revelation that it was to be sorely wounded, v. 3; after which the apostle saw another beast rising which had two horns like a lamb (two governments, a spiritual and a worldly), but which spake as a Dragon. Which proves that that same beast, the Antichrist, had then began to rise, and that it had already wounded the first beast (the Roman empire). Of this the Apostle speaks 2. Thess. 2, 7: „for the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken away."

857. β. *At what time this power was to decline and cease.* This we are plainly told by St. Paul, 2. Thess. 2, 8: „Then (when he who now letteth the mystery of iniquity, namely the power of the Romish Church, will take the same away) shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming." Accordingly he is to be revealed and deadly wounded by the Word. For this is, as it were God's mouth. And the Antichrist shall be taken away as soon as the Son of Man comes to judge the world, — the reasons for which we shall learn presently.

858. d. *By the power, pomp and arrogance which the Antichrist has assumed.* This circumstance is referred to Revel. 13, 14, when the beast is sending forth his commands to all those who live on earth; when it is brought about that „no man might buy or sell save he that had a mark or the

name of the beast," Rev. 13, 17; — when the woman is said to be „arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand“ etc., Revel. 17, 4. — But more especially and pointedly the insolence of Antichrist is described by St. Paul, 2. Thess. 2, 4: „*Who (the man of sin) opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as a God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is a God.*“ — It is now our duty to point out that this has really reference to the romish popes.

859. *α. Their great and immense pomp* is known to every body, and has been mourned over and complained of for many centuries.

*β.* They have exalted themselves above all that is called God, yea even above the living God, the creator of heaven and earth, in that they have not submitted themselves to his word, nor shewn any willingness to have their doctrine examined and proved by it. Also in that they maintained the Supper of the Lord to be a sacrifice, and in that they have withdrawn the cup from the laity, which yet the Lord Jesus commanded to be given to them. In this way they have placed their will and ordinances above those of the living God. — Otherwise the authorities are also called God's, Ps. 82, 1. These also the popes have set themselves above, for they have taken it upon them to set some roman (i. e. german) emperors upon the throne, and take that crown from others. Not to speak of other arrogances and unbecoming actions of which they made themselves guilty, and the unworthy treatment they gave to some of these emperors. Nor were other authorities at liberty to do any thing save that which was approved by, and in the interest of, the popes. Thus they have set themselves above all that is called God; and accordingly have made themselves a God, in that they have exalted themselves above God.

860. *γ.* They have exalted themselves above all that is called worship, i. e. above all churches on earth. They have also assumed the title of Christ's vice-gerent, the bridegroom, head and first bishop of the Church, and have permitted nobody to have any opinion of his own, — although they have led already many thousand souls to eternal destruction. — There is no end of their ostentation, — and if the world ever has been groaning under the heavy hand of cruel and shameful arrogance, it was certainly by that of the popes.

861. *e. The works and occupations of Antichrist;* of these we intend to consider especially four:

*α. miracles.* They are said, in the last times, to be

marks of the coming Antichrist, 2. Thess. 2, 9: „Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and *signs* and *lying wonders*;" Rev. 13, 13: „And he (the man of sin) doth great wonders."

The Popes are performing great miracles, at least according to the pompous assertions of their partisans. But that they are *lying wonders*, we prove:

1. from the fact, that they cannot be proved to be divine miracles;

2. because we do not find in the word of God any rules whereby to prove whether these wonders be not lying wonders; and

3. because we are expressly told, that those wonders which are to be performed in the last days, are to be lying wonders and the work of Satan.

862. *β. The forbidding of meats*; 1. Timot. 4, 1 ff.: „The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils . . . . *commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.*" — The Popes have taken it upon them, to forbid men, during lent, to eat certain meats which have been created by God for our use. Yea even to some spiritual orders they have prohibited their use for all their lives, — professedly in order thereby to induce them to a greater sanctity. Adding that, whosoever ventured to trespass their law and take any of these meats (which have yet been created by God to be eaten with thanksgiving!), was to be excluded from the grace of God, and excommunicated by the Popes.

863. *γ. The forbidding to marry.* This St. Paul states, together with the former sign, in the passage already referred to, saying: „In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and the doctrines of devils, *forbidding to marry.*" And Daniel prophesies that the Antichrist was not to regard the *desire of women*, Chap. 11, 37. This cannot be understood to refer to a general abolition of marriage, but only for certain classes of men.

Now the Popes have forbidden all those to get married, who have anything to do with the public offices of the church, or who are members of a spiritual order. They have done so, in order, as they say, to promote greater godliness among men, — but in reality they have thereby given rise to the perpetration of numberless sins and vices, infanticide etc., of which much has been complained already.

864. *δ. The barterings which have always been allowed to be carried on in the church.* The Apostle complains of that

sort of people who wish godliness to be acquired like any other gain. Thereby doubtless having in mind that sort of trade that was to be carried on in the church under the cloak of godliness. In Revel. 18, 3 ff. we find this babylonian empire of the Antichrist described as a rich mercantile town, in which much trade and many rich merchants are to be met with. This is explained Daniel 11, 43: „He shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver“ etc., and 2. Pet. 2, 1 ff.: „There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you . . . and *through covetousness shall with feigned words make merchandise of you.*“ This has been fulfilled by the popes to the utmost of their power. What a sum of money have they not extorted for masses, for prayers for the living and the dead, and the latter's release from purgatory? Or by that very profitable trade with indulgences, which on the occasion of every jubilee, were sold all over Christendom? Who knows the sum the *casus reservati*, or the pardon for such sins, the remission of which the popes have retained to themselves, have thrown into their pockets? For that in that case they have not at all been liberal, may be proved by the *taxa poenitentiarum*, in which the prices are stated which are to be paid for the remission of every sin! Not to speak of the selling of bishopricks and other preferences, — so that even godly people among the papists themselves complained, and said, that in their church every thing was to be bought for money: kingdoms, church offices, prayers, services, heaven and hell, God and the devil, — every thing!

865. Thus we have stated the principal characteristics of the Antichrist, from which we are able to conclude that popery is the very kingdom of the Antichrist. For whoever, in these last days of the church, is exalting himself above God and all that is God; — and allows himself to be honoured as a God, — having his seat at Rome, — is boasting with lying wonders, and forbidding meats and marriage, — and carrying on bargaining with the things of God, the same must be the real and great Antichrist. That all these things are done by the popes we have just now shewn, and we therefore conclude popery to be the true and real Antichrist.



## Chapter XXX.

Although, as we have shewn, God is carrying out His purposes of saving His people in His Church, yet is this Salvation but commenced and imperfect whilst on earth, — and the believers come to a full enjoyment of their Salvation only after their souls have been separated from their bodies by means of death, to remain in this state of separation until soul and body are united again for the day of judgment, that henceforth the whole man might come to the enjoyment of eternal, unspeakable bliss.

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866. We have now to speak of the fourth and last state of man which is:

*that of consummate happiness.*

In this state God's merciful purposes concerning men are completed; by which completion our faith also ceases, for we are told that the end of our faith is the salvation of our souls, 1. Pet. 1, 9. Concerning this we have to consider.

867. **A.** *What it is which in this state of bliss, the ungodly have in common with the believer?* — When men are about to depart from this life, there are four things that befall the good alike with the evil among them, viz :

- I. The soul is separated from the body;
- II. This separation lasts up to the judgement day; after which,
- III. The body is raised again and united with the soul;
- IV. After this union has taken place, judgement is pronounced as to the place, where this united body is to dwell for ever.

868. I. Accordingly the first thing which we have to consider, is *death*. This is sufficiently known among men; nevertheless we have to attend to the following inquiries:

a. *what is death?* It is not a state of things, whereby the body and the soul are thoroughly annihilated, as if never to exist again. Carnally minded men, have, it is true, maintained some such views of annihilation; views which we find expression given to Wisd. 2, 1: „*Our life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy. The breath of our nostrils is as a smoke and a little spark in the moving of our heart, which being extinguished, our body shall be turned into ashes, and our spirit shall vanish like a soft air. And after*



*our end there is no returning: for it is fast sealed, so that no man cometh again.*"

But this view is entirely inconsistent with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which remains to be proved by the following.

869. Some say that by death the soul is entirely annihilated, and is brought again into existence on the day of judgement. This cannot be; for, in the first place, we have no intimation to this end in scripture; nor can we deduce it from nature, or from any man's experience. — In the second place, scripture expressly teaches us, that the soul still continues to exist after the death of the body, 1. Sam. 25, 29: „A man is risen to pursue thee, and seek thy soul: but *the soul of my Lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God*; Wisd. 3, 1: „The souls of the righteous are in the *hand of God*, and there shall no torment touch them;“ Matth. 10, 28: „Fear not them which kill the body, *but are not able to kill the soul.*“ The Lord Jesus testifies Matth. 8, 11, that the Patriarchs are alive after their death. — In the third place, the immortality of the soul is shewn in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, of whom it said that they have been alive after their death, Luk. 16, 22. 23. 24. — In the fourth place, there are no instances wanted of certain souls having been shewn to be alive after the death of the body; thus for instance, *the Lord Jesus himself* recommended his soul into the hands of his Father, Luk. 23, 46; or in case of the *malefactor*, whom the Lord gave the promise: „to day shalt thou be with me in paradise,“ Luk. 23, 43; as also we read of those, whose souls St. John heard crying vengeance against their persecutors, Rev. 6, 9, and of those, whom Christ preached in prison, 1. Pet. 3, 19; — Lastly, we read of the wishes and hopes of holy men, as follows: Stephen prays „Lord Jesus receive my spirit,“ Acts. 7, 58; and Paul writes that he has „a desire to depart, and to be with Christ,“ Phil. 1, 23: — All this could not take place, if the souls of the dead were annihilated, to be brought again into existence for the last judgement.

870. On the contrary, death is nothing but a separating of the soul from the body. The soul on departing from the body, ceases to animate the latter, and enters into a state different to that it had been in formerly, in which state it remains, until it is reunited to the body.

871. b. *The cause of death.* It is not necessary to enlarge on this; for we have proved already, that death did not exist previous to the fall, but has been brought about by sin; death is, as the Apostle writes „the wages of sin,“ Rom. 6, 23.

872. c. *The universal reign of death.* Death exercises its power over the good and the evil. This we are taught by our every days experience, and no man will deny, „that the covenant from the beginning is: *Thou shalt die the death,*“ Eccl. (Sirach), 14, 17.

873. d. *Its arrival;* by the one sooner, by the other later; the one dies in his youth, the other in old age. This difference and irregularity might be considered by many as being against nature. But we ought to remember that God has put his set time to every individual, which none ever can prolong, Job. 14, 5: „*His (man's) days are determined, the number of his month are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.*“

874. In this respect God has ordained everything according to His own will and counsel. But yet in determining this point, God has nevertheless taken in consideration the behaviour of men. Thus He promises to the godly *a long life*, as a reward of their piety, Exod. 20, 12: „*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;*“ Psm. 128, 6: „*The Lord shall bless thee, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life; yea thou shalt see thy children's children;*“ Psm. 91. 16: „*With long life will I satisfy him.*“

875. But the life thus predetermined may also be shortened; this is done either by God himself, or by man.

In doing so, *God* has two different reasons. Thus, for instance, in His mercy He hastens away a godly man from the midst of this evil world, Wisd. 4, 10. 11: „*He pleased God, and was beloved of him: so that living among sinners he was translated; yea speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul.*“

God again is shortening the life of men, in consequence of His severe indignation against wickedness. Thus *Absalon*, because of his being an undutiful son, was almost imperceptibly cut off from life, 2 Sam. 18, 14. — „*Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him,*“ Genes. 38, 7. In the same way it went with other evildoers, Psm. 55, 24: „*bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.*“

*Man* again shortens his life either by mortally wounding his body, in consequence of which he is prevented to live any longer, as was the case with Saul, 1 Sam. 31, 4; — or by destroying his nature in other ways, Eccl. Sirach 37, 30. 31. „*Excess of meats bringeth sickness, and surfeiting will turn*

unto choler. By surfeiting have many perished; but he that taketh heed prolongeth his life."

876. This would look at the first sight, as if the decrees of God were changeable. But this is not implied thereby. For though He has put for every man the limits of his life from all eternity, yet has He not done so merely from His own counsel and pleasure, but in determining this, He has been considering also man's behaviour, and thereby found, that some would subsequently put 'an end to their lives, whilst others by their evil deeds, would draw upon them His divine displeasure. And according to this He has determined the end of these different individuals to come about much sooner, as He would have done, if He had followed only His own will. Thus the death of King of Hezekiah was determined on, but God listened to his prayer and granted him other 15 years to live, 2 Kings. 20. 6. And in the same way the lives of Absalon, Achan and other evildoers would have probably been longer as they were, had their evil deeds and purposes not induced God to shorten them.

877. e. *The different modes of death.* These are many, of which we shall mention but three:

Man is dying a *natural death*, when in the course of nature his strength begins to fail, and from mere exhaustion he dies at the usual age of 70 or 80 years.

He is dying a *half natural death*, when in the midst of the enjoyment of life he is carried away by illness, or other natural causes.

Again he is dying an *unnatural or violent death*, when although in the usual course of nature he might have been living yet for a long space of time, he is berieved of his life by weapon, poisons etc., and other unnatural and violent means. — And with respect to this, we meet with the following questions:

878. 1. *How is it that some are dying a natural death, and again others an unnatural death.* Here again we have to consider *man's behaviour*.

Thus it happened unto Saul and Judas, and still happens to those who do evil, and thereby draw dawn punishment upon them. To this also belongs a careless and precipitate exposing to dangers; carelessness in the use of meats, medicines, and innumerable other causes. — And again we have to look upon *God's judgement*, which punishes sins with a fearful death. Thus for instance, in the case of Absalon, 2 Sam. 18, 14; Herod. Acts. 12, 23; Antioch, 2 Maccab. 9, 9. Many are punished in the same way as they have sinned, as for instance, Agag, 1 Sam. 15, 33; Ahab. 1 Kings. 21, 19;

22, 38; Joram, 2 Kings. 9, 25, 26; and Jezebel, 1 Kings. 21, 23; 2 Kings. 9, 36.

879. 2. *Whether those who are dying of a violent death (as is also the case with criminals who have been condemned to die by the proper authorities), are for ever cast away from the grace of God, so that they never can repent and come to salvation.* We answer, no! for:

*α.* As we do not find it anywhere stated that God has rejected them, we are not entitled to maintain such doctrines; especially since God's secret counsels have not been revealed unto us.

*β.* God has expressly declared to cast away from his grace no repenting sinner that comes to Him, John. 6, 37: „Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;“ Matth. 11, 28: „Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden“ etc.; Ezek. 18, 31. 32: „Why will ye die O house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves and live.“

*γ.* We have in the Bible a clear instance of God's accepting a sinner of this description, as soon as he had repented. This was the malefactor, who was crucified with the Lord Jesus, and who, when upon the cross, confessed his sins, and that he had deserved such a punishment, Luk. 23, 43. And on taking his refuge to Christ, he is answered by the Lord: „to day shalt thou be with me in paradise.“

880. *The state the soul is in, after having been separated from the body, is common to all.* Concerning this we have to consider six different points:

I. *The immortality of the soul*, or its existence after this life; this can be proved by the fact:

*α.* that it is frequently testified in scripture, and that if the soul was not immortal the whole doctrine taught by the Bible would fall to the ground.

*β.* Nature and man's conscience testify the immortality of the soul; for they convince him, that after this life, there is a judgement which is to reward every one according to his deserts. And in this opinion he is supported by St. Paul, who writes Rom. 2, 15, 16: „Which (the Gentiles) shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another; *in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.*“ And consequently the heathen have always maintained the principle of the immortality of the soul, and always talked something about a heaven and a hell, in which every one was to receive according to his deeds.

γ. Divine justice makes it necessary for the soul to be immortal; for the righteous judge of the world cannot leave the godly without their reward, and the ungodly unpunished, 2 Thess. 1, 6. 7: „It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us.“ But this could not be carried into effect if, after death, body and soul did perish. Besides we find also that the godly whilst upon earth, are frequently in tribulation, whilst the evildoers are permitted to enjoy their lives, in peace; that „there be just men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous,“ Eccl. 8, 14. And if God is to bring about an equity in this respect, then there must necessarily be another life.

881. II. *The place*, in which the souls dwell after having been separated from the body. They are not all to dwell in one place; for there is a difference between them; there is the number of the believers, and that of the unbelievers, in one of which they must have been in when on earth.

882. Of the souls of the *just* and the *faithful*, scripture informs us, that they are taken into the house of the Father, John. 14. 2; into „an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,“ 2 Cor. 5. 1; into an „house which is from heaven,“ v. 2; into „the heavenly Jerusalem,“ Heb. 12, 22; into God’s hand, Wisd. 3, 1; into „Abraham’s bosom,“ Luk. 16, 22; into „paradise,“ Luk. 23, 43; into the heaven, or „the third heaven,“ 2 Cor. 12, 2. 4.

883. It might be asked with reference to this subject, whether the souls of the redeemed are retained for final judgement in a certain locality within this created world, or without the same. This question is easily replied to; since we do not find any information on this subject in scripture, we would in vain endeavour to unravel this mystery. For it is much better for us altogether to remain in ignorance with reference to matters, about which there has nothing been revealed to us, — than to make suppositions which we have no means of establishing.

884. Of the unbelievers we are told that, after their death they come into „torments,“ Luk. 16, 23; into „hell,“ Rev. 1, 18; into „darkness,“ 2. Pet. 2, 17; into „darkness,“ in which „there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,“ Matth. 22, 13; „into everlasting fire,“ Matth. 25, 41; „into hell fire,“ Mark. 9, 47; into „the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,“ Rev. 21, 8. — Some there are, who have given themselves great concern as to where this hell is placed. This is an un-

profitable subject, since we do not find anything about it in scripture; and we ought much rather to strive to make sure that, wherever this hell may have been placed, we on our part might be kept from being found fit to inhabit it.

885. The Popish Church has found it convenient to fable something of the existence of three other hells besides that mentioned already; viz: one, in which the souls of those children are said to be retained, which have died previous to receiving baptism; one in which the souls of those holy fathers reside, who have died before the resurrection of Christ had been accomplished, and lastly the purgatory.

Of those souls pointed out as being retained in the two firstmentioned dwellings, the papists teach, that, though they are not suffering any torments, they are yet not permitted to come before the presence of the Lord. But of this assertion nothing is to be found in scripture. On the contrary, we are informed by the latter, that every man either dies in the saving faith of the Gospel, and is carried into Abraham's bosom, Luk. 16, 25; — or he dies in unbelief, and is thereby for ever condemned, Mark. 15, 16. And we know with certainty, that those who, previous to Christ's coming, have died in faith, have come to the immediate enjoyment of their bliss, as is evident from the examples of Moses and Elijah, Matth. 17, 3. — Which proves this Popish doctrine to be erroneous.

886. Of purgatory that Church maintains the following doctrine. There are some, they say, who though they have died in the faith, have yet not done penance for every sin which they had committed during their lifetime; such are bound, after their death, to be purified by a fire which is as powerful as hellfire, and in which they are tormented until every sin is washed away, and they are made fit for eternal salvation. Such a state of things cannot only not be established from scripture, but its existence can be *disproved* from the word of God, as follows:

887. 1. *It is this doctrine opposed to the priestly office of the Lord Jesus.* For, according to scripture, remission of sin is only through Christ, Acts. 4, 12; 1. John. 1, 7: „the blood of Jesus Christ *cleanseth us from all sins.*“ Through Christ we have perfect remission of sin and punishment, Isai. 53, 6: „The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed;“ through Christ we are freed from every apprehension with reference to the judgement of God, Rom. 8, 1: „*There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.*“ All believers are in Christ, Ephes. 3, 17: „Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.“ — Which proves,

that after his departing from this life, the believer cannot be said to be visited by the judgement of God.

888. 2. *It is contrary to the happy state the believers are declared to be in after their death;* Rom. 6, 7: „He that is dead (in Christ) is freed from sin;“ Wisd. 3, 1: „The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them;“ Rev. 14, 13: „Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.“ —

It is evident that these statements with regard to the state of the souls of the redeemed, are not consistent with the doctrine of purgatory.

889. 3. *Even those who come to eternal salvation, being redeemed without having done penance for their sins, need not go into any sort of purgatory or the like.* Thus we read that Lazarus, immediately after his death, was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom, Luk. 16, 22; and that the Lord Jesus gave to the malefactor the promise: „To day shalt thou be with me in paradise,“ Luk. 23, 43. And it might be asked, in what way were all those to do penance, of whom we read that in the last day they should be caught up alive? — And if the latter mentioned are not required to pass through this process, why should it be requisite for others?

890. 4. *It is contrary to the manner in which, according to scripture, we are said to be saved, viz: not by means of our own works, but by faith in Christ;* John. 3, 18: „He that believeth on him (the Son), is not condemned;“ Rom. 3, 24: „We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;“ v. 28: „We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.“ — Accordingly, if the believer is to be saved only by faith, and not by his own works or any other means, it is evident, that no purgatory is necessary for cleansing him from his sins.

891. c. The different *apparitions* etc., with which the souls of the dead are said to have frequently favoured some living mortal, have not only no foundation in scripture, but are also contrary to scripture. They may be contradicted by the following: St. Paul has given us a description of Satan (2. Cor. 11, 14); there is therefore great danger that Satan might be in some way or other concerned in the apparitions spoken of above. In scripture we have no instance of it given us, much less are we told to inquire anything of these spirits. And the news which these spirit in general bring, very much testify that the whole is evil, and these things have done a great deal to aid the coming in of the

Antichrist. Remember, Lazarus was not to be sent again to the world (as he wished it), in order to warn the rich man's brothers, Luk. 16, 17. We are also forbidden in such cases to listen to them, Isai. 8, 19: „should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead.“ There should be none to be found in Israel who was a consultor of the dead, Deut. 18, 11.

892. d. *How much the souls of the dead know about things from without them.* The soul on being separated from the body, undoubtedly gets a clearer insight in every thing; which is the case more especially with the souls of the saints after their having been freed from that body of sin. But in spite of this, we are not entitled to ascribe to these souls the attribute of Omniscience. This is a property, to which no creature has a right to lay claim, 1: Kings. 8, 39: „For thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men.“ It is therefore erroneous to imagine that the saints in heaven have a knowledge of every thing that concerns man, and that they are able to hear man's prayers.

893. For no man is able to discern the things of God as they pass within His holy mind. Nor have we any information to the end that the saints know every thing concerning man; on the contrary such a notion is disproved, Isai. 63, 16: „Doubtless thou art our father though Abraham be ignorant of us.“ — In general it is said of the dead that „they know not anything;“ and „his (the dead man's) sons come to honour, and he knoweth is not, and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them,“ Job. 14, 21.

894. e. *The occupation of the departed souls; concerning this we have to inquire,*

*Whether they be occupied at all?* We answer in the affirmative, for we learn from scripture, that the *elect* are continually engaged in glorifying God, as is shewn in the figure of the twenty four elders, Rev. 4, 18; 5, 18 ff. *They call down vengeance upon their adversaries,* Rev. 6, 9. 10: „I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying: how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on earth?“ — And knowing the many trials a believer has to endure upon earth, the souls of the saints also make *intercession for them,* Rev. 5, 8: „The twenty four elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.“

895. A second question is, *whether the souls of the depar-*



*ted saints are making especial intercession for those, who address themselves to them in their distress.* It is to be supposed, that the departed saints are making intercession for the church and her sufferings. For the wickedness of the world and the devil are well known to them, since they have experienced them themselves; for which reason they take also a certain interest in those christians who are still engaged in this warfare. Still there is but one such case mentioned in scripture, viz: that of Judas Maccabaeus who in a vision, saw the highpriest Onias and the prophet Jeremiah (which both were then dead) making prayers for the whole nation of Israel, 2 Maccab. 15, 12. 14. But that all saints are doing so, — or that they are doing so for those who turn to them in their distresses, is quite uncertain. From scripture we are not able to learn anything about it, nor from the report of any one who returned from the grave to tell us all about it, — nor is such done Luk. 16, 27. Whosoever therefore is resting his hope upon this intercession, is sure to deceive himself, is taking the shadow for the substance and will find no rest for his soul.

896. The *souls of the condemned* also have their occupation, but it is one of a different and painful nature. They are said to *be groaning for anguish and spirit*, Wisd. 5, 3. ff.: „When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for“ etc. — They are said to be *mourning over their pains, and the unsupportable wrath of God*, Rev. 6, 16. 17: „They said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?“ — *They blaspheme the Majesty on high*, Rev. 16, 10. 11: „They gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores.“

897. *f. Some souls are in the state of Salvation, and others not.* The last judgement has, as we know, not yet come to pass; and accordingly some are of opinion, that the souls of the dead have not yet entered either of the abovementioned two estates; maintaining that all the while the souls of the redeemed are looking forward with delight to being brought into the full enjoyment of salvation by the last judgement, — whilst the souls of the evildoers are awaiting with terror the judgement to be pronounced upon them. But inquires of this nature are of little importance. It seems to be more conformable to scripture that, after being separated from the body, the souls of the just come to salvation, and those of the damned to condemnation. This seems to be clearly ex-

pressed by the Lord Jesus himself, Luk. 16, 22, 23, and can also be established by other testimonies from scripture, John. 5, 24: „He that heareth my word, etc. hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, *but is passed from death unto life;*“ Rev. 14, 13: „blessed are the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth.*“ To which also may be added the example of the malefactor, whom the Lord Jesus promised that he was to be with him in paradise on that very day. — It is of no importance that the final judgement has not yet been held, for those who do not believe, *are condemned already*, John. 3, 18; and in this judgement not only the soul, but also the body is to be judged. This suspense of a looking forward for a coming judgment, would fill the hearts of many with unspeakable pain. — But one thing we know to remain true and established, and that is: „if the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be,“ Eccl. 11, 3.

898. III. Again it is common to all men, that they rise from their graves, or the *resurrection from the dead*. Concerning this we have to consider:

1. Whether the dead really do rise, and whereby this is to be known? Unreasonable animals, after having once died, do not return again to life; but man is superior to the latter in that he is rising from the grave, to have his body and soul united again, thereby constituting again an entire individual, as has been the case previous to his death. But this it is not easy to believe for a carnal mind, which if it does not deny this truth with words, is yet doing so in his works. Thus for instance understood Alexander and Hymenaeus the resurrection of the dead only in a spiritual sense, 2 Tim. 2, 18. But that the body is to rise again, can be proved:

899. *From scripture*, which teaches, and frequently refers to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; Job. 19, 25, 26: „I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand on the latter day upon earth: *and though after my skin, worms destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God;*“ Psl. 34, 21: „He (the Lord) *keepeth all his (the righteous) bones:* not one of them is broken;“ Isa. 25, 7, 8: „He (the Lord) will destroy in this mountain the lace of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations; *he will swallow up death in victory;*“ *ibid.* Chap. 26, 19: „*Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.* Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the *earth shall cast out the dead.*“ Dan. 12, 2: „*Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,* some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting

contempt;“ Hos. 6, 2: „After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight;“ Macc. 7, 9: „the Kings of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life.“ John. 5, 28. 29: „The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his (the Son's) voice, and shall come forth“ etc.; *ibid.* Chap. 6. 40: „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.“ This subject has also been spoken of by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 15, 10, ff.

900. The Bible also teaches us the resurrection by means of certain very beautiful figures. Thus Ezekiel (37, 1 ff.) saw in a vision a „valley which was full of bones,“ and which on the Holy Ghost's breathing on them, „the sinews and the flesh came upon them and the skin covered them above;“ cf. John. 12, 24 ff.; 1. Cor. 15, 37. 38. 43. And like as the seed is put into the ground and witheres to rise again in beauty, — so man is sown in dishonour, and rises again in honour etc.; cf. also the vision, Rev. 20, 13: „The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them.“

901. The Bible also tells us of some instances of the dead having been brought to life again. Thus the son of the widow at Zarpath was raised again by Elijah, 1. Kings. 17, 22; the son of the Shunamite by Elisha, 2. Kings. 4, 35; cf. also 2. Kings. 13, 21. — Similar instances are to be found in the New testament; as for instance the Lord's raising up the daughter of Jairi, Matth. 9, 25; and the son of the widow at Nain, Luk. 7, 15; *Lazarus*, John. 11, 44; again Peter's miraculously raising *Tabitha*, 9, 40; and Paul's raising *Eutychus*, Acts. 20, 10. 12. Amongst those who have risen again after their death are also to be counted *Enoch* and *Elias*, whom God has taken up alive, Gen. 5, 24; 2. Kings. 2, 11; as also the saints that have risen with Christ, Matth. 27, 52. 53. All which is told us to the end that we might believe the resurrection to be a divine doctrine. But it is more especially from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, that the doctrine of our resurrection is sufficiently established, 1 Cor. 15, 22 ff.

902. The resurrection can also be proved by necessary deductions. As for instance God declares Himself to be the God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, Exod. 3, 6. To which the Lord Jesus adds „*God is not the God of the dead but of the living*,“ drawing from this the conclusion, that the patriarchs were to rise again, Matth. 22, 32. — Again, if we consider the many promises which God has given unto man,

we must conclude that there must be a life in which these promises are to be carried into effect.

903. But more especially the resurrection may be proved from the *nature of man*. For he is created in such a manner, that his conscience tells him of a reward that is to be given to the good and the evil, in consequence of which even many of the learned heathens have been of opinion that there must be a resurrection after death.

904. 2. *Which creatures are destined to partake of the resurrection.* In this respect we have to inquire:

*Whether unreasonable beings are also to rise again.* Of this we find nothing in scripture; and we have therefore no right to exercise our own fancies on this head. That they do *not* rise again, can be proved from the fact, that in the whole range of scripture no other, but the resurrection of man is taken notice of. Besides we know that in the last day every creature, with the exception of man, is to perish.

905. *Whether monsters, and such like are to rise again.* Answer: as long as they are to be looked upon as human beings, they are not to be considered as being excluded from the resurrection; but if it should happen that in shape, feature etc., such an unfortunate creature cannot be considered as a human being, — then we leave it in the hand of God to do as He pleases, since nothing has been revealed to about it in scripture.

906. *Whether little children,* that have died after their having been conceived in the mother's womb, or immediately after their birth, previous to baptism having been conferred upon them, are to rise also. We answer: every human being is to partake of the resurrection. It is true that some are of the opinion that the soul is joining the Phoetus only after the fortieth day of its having been conceived, and that it is by this occurrence that the human being takes a beginning. But as the soul takes its existence cotemporary with the conceived fruit, building up the body for a fit vessel unto himself; it is more probable that the soul is beginning to exist at the moment of conception. This consideration makes it probable that the beings in question do rise on the last day.

907. *Whether the ungodly also are to rise again?* There can be no doubt about that. It is true that there are some, who are of opinion, that the eternal death with which the ungodly are threatened, do not admit of their resurrection. But their resurrection is expressly taught in scripture; Dan. 12, 2: „Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt;“ John. 5, 28. 29: „All that are in the grave shall hear

his 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*." This can also be proved from what we learn concerning the last judgement; for in this judgement *all human beings*, consequently also the evildoers, are to be judged, Matth. 25, 31. And as the final judgement is to take place subsequent to the resurrection, it follows, that the ungodly also shall be required to rise. In short every human being, whatever be his state, circumstance etc., is to rise again on the last day, Rev. 20, 12: „*I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and their books were opened*“ etc.

908. *The state in which the human body is to be in, by his resurrection.* Here again we have to observe:

*α. Are they to rise again with substantially the same bodies as they died.* We are to rise with precisely the same bodies, for in the first place, this we are expressly taught in scripture, Job. 19, 25. — Secondly, because our *frail bodies* (and not other bodies) are to be *glorified* and „fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body,“ Philip. 3, 21. — Thirdly, *because in all the instances recorded to us in scripture, all have risen again with the same bodies they had previous to their death*; such was the case with Lazarus, Tabetha etc. We are, more especially supported in our conclusion by the resurrection of Christ himself; for he brought from his grave a glorified body, though it contained the marks of the spear with which he had been pierced, John. 20, 27, proving this glorified body to be the same which had been nailed to the cross. And thus it will be with the rest of men. — In the last place, *because there can be no single proof adduced from scripture, that there is to rise a body different from that which has been put into the grave, and this notion is therefore to be rejected as erroneous.*

909. *β. Are the bodies to rise again in the shape etc. and with the same infirmities they happened to have upon them?* With regard to the shape, the frame etc. of the body, we are not able to make any assertions — though some froward people have endeavoured to do so, — because we are told nothing about it in scripture. Nor is this point of any importance. It is most probable that children and others, which have not arrived at their proper growth, are to rise in the full growth they would have arrived at, if they had lived long enough. For thereby their nature had been imperfect; and in the resurrection every imperfection is to be done away with. Nevertheless we ought not to overlook what we read Rev. 20, 12, and on other places. — With regard to the *infirmities*,

they are doubtlessly to be removed, for we know that our frail bodies are to be glorified, Phil. 3, 21. Paul also testifies that our body „*is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power,*“ 1. Cor. 15, 43.

910. *γ.* Whereby are the souls of the redeemed to be distinguished from those of the condemned? We are told in general, that in the resurrection the body of the saints is to be like that of God's Angels, Matth. 22, 30; — Phil. 3, 21: „The Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body“ etc. — This change manifests itself in that these bodies are made to be:

911. *Spiritual*, 1. Cor. 15, 44: „It is sown a natural body; it is raised a *spiritual* body.“ Not as if thereby the body was changed into a spirit, — for it has been proved already that a spirit cannot have flesh and blood. The spirituality here intended is to be observed on Christ's body, that had also flesh and blood, Luk. 24, 39. It is called a spiritual body because of the spiritual gifts and properties with which it has been endued.

912. To shine in brightness, Daniel. 12, 3: „They that be wise shall shine as the *brightness of a firmament*; and they that turn many to righteousness as *the stars* for ever and ever;“ Matth. 13, 43: „Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. — This same property is also spoken of with reference to the Lord Jesus, for we are told that „he was transfigured before them: *and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.*“ And we read that the children of Israel „could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the *glory of his countenance,*“ 2. Cor. 3, 7; Exod. 34, 30; and if this shining brightness has been observed with some, we may be sure that it shall be found upon all the saints.

913. *Invisible*. Not as if thereby they could not be seen wherever they are, but so that it is in their option to allow themselves to be seen or not. It was in this manner that the Lord Jesus appeared unto his disciples, Mrk. 16, 14. He came upon them unawares so that they „supposed that they had seen a spirit,“ Luk. 24, 37; and he „vanished“ (ceased to be seen) again out of their sight, Luk. 24, 31. The saints that had risen with Christ, were not seen of all, but they only „appeared unto many,“ Matth. 27, 53. This proves that it is in the option of these glorified bodies to allow themselves to be seen or not; as is the case with God, Genes. 12. 7; — with the Angels, Judg. 13, 3. 21; — and with the saints in heaven, Matth. 17, 3.

914. Again these glorified bodies are *endowed with the power of penetrating every thing, even those to which a human*

*body has no access* On the occasion of the Angel appearing unto the virgin, he had not need to open a door etc. in order to be seen by her, and accordingly on seeing him she was frightened, Luk. 1, 29. In the same way the Lord Jesus appeared unto the disciples, being then assembled „the doors being shut,“ so that they were „terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit,“ Luk. 24, 37; John. 20, 19. 26. The same state of things was manifested on the occasion of Christ's walking on the water, and which he bid Peter to do likewise, Matth. 24, 25. 29.

915. *Immortal and incorruptible*, 1 Cor. 15, 42: „It is sown in corruption, it is raised in *incorruption*;“ v. 53: „this corruptible must put on *incorruption*, and this mortal must put on *immortality*.“ For we are called „to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,“ one „which is reserved for us in heaven,“ 1 Pet. 1, 4. We know also, that „Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him,“ Rom. 6, 9, and that „if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him,“ Rom. 6, 8.

916. *Perfect in their powers*, Isa. 40, 31: „They that wait upon the Lord shall *renew their strength*; they shall mount with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.“ — More especially their powers of visions and perception are to be made perfect, which are in our present state so imperfect, that we cannot see God, Exod. 32, 20; Job. 19, 26. 27; 1 Cor. 13, 12: „For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then *face to face*;“ 1 John. 3, 2: „We shall see him as he is;“ Matth. 5, 8: „Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.“

917. *Perfect in their strength*, so that they shall not want food for the sustenance of the body; Isa. 49, 10: „They shall not *hunger nor thirst*; neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them;“ Rev. 7, 16. „They are before the judgements seat of God; they shall not any more hunger nor thirst“ etc. Thus much concerning the properties of the glorified bodies.

918. *Is there to be a distinction between these bodies with reference to the degree of glorification?* — Decidedly: for we are promised, that on the day of resurrection God will reward our good deeds, Luk. 14, 13. 14: „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.*“ But salvation is not to be looked upon as such a reward, since it is not to come by our own works, Ephes. 2, 8. 9. This reward is therefore dealt out in different proportions, as St. Paul

writes: 1 Cor. 15, 40. 41: „*There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another; there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from the other in glory, so also is the resurrection of the dead.*“

199. *The distinguishing marks of the bodies of the wicked.* They are to be deprived of all the glorious gifts mentioned as being granted to the saints; a state of things that is to tend to their eternal destruction, Isa. 66, 24: „*their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.*“ Of this subsequently.

920. e. *At what time this resurrection is to take place.* Some are of opinion, that the Lord Jesus intends to raise up a kingdom after the resurrection from the dead, when all wickedness shall have been destroyed. This kingdom they maintain, is to be a spiritual kingdom, — but yet one that is on this earth; and is to last for the space of a thousand years, after which the world is to be consumed, and the condemnation of the wicked and the Salvation of the redeemed to commence. To this we cannot assent, for:

1. *The resurrection and the last judgement are to take place at one and the same day,* John. 6, 40: „I will raise him up at the last day;“ Chap. 11, 24: „I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.“

2. *In the resurrection the elect are not to remain on this earth,* but they are to be taken up, to meet the Lord, and to be with him, not only, for the space of a thousand years, but for ever, 1 Thess. 4, 16. 17: „The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout etc. 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 be *ever* with the Lord.“

921. It is true that we are told Rev. 20, 4: that „the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus,“ were to „reign with Christ a thousand years.“ But this refers only to the circumstances the Church militant is to be in, whilst upon this earth, and the persecutions which it is to experience. That this prediction in reality is not referring to a *millenium*, can be proved by the following:

α. We have shewn already, that the dead are not to rise before the day of judgement;

β. The last times are said to be evil, and not very prosperous days, 2 Tim, 3, 1. — „The love of many shall wax cold,“ Matth. 24, 12; „the harvest is the end of the world; as therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth



his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity," Matth. 13, 39. ff. — The devil also is to manifest himself in his most heinous shape at the approach of the last day, Rev. 12, 12: „Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he has but a short time.“

γ. At the end of the thousand years, Gog and Magog are to commence a severe war against the saints, besides the many temptations with which Satan is to be busy, as is shewn v. 9 of the same Chapter. But this cannot agree with the supposed kingdom which Christ is said to erect upon earth.

922. Again to all men is in common:

IV. the *last judgment*. Of this we have to observe:

1. *Are we to expect a final judgment*. About this there cannot be a doubt maintained by any Christian, for it is frequently referred to and taught in scripture. Nor ought any reasonable being to have any hesitation to admit this, since he finds it written in his heart and conscience; Rom. 2, 15. 16 we are told of the Gentiles that „their (the Gentile's) conscience also (is) bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; *in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel*.“

2. *Who is to be the Judge?* The scriptures mention different names, viz:

α. *God*; God is the judge of all the world, Pslm. 9, 8. 9: „the Lord shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment to the people in uprightness. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble;“ Isai. 3, 13. 14: „The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth up to judge the people; the Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people.“

β. *Jesus Christ*; John. 5, 22: „The father hath committed all judgment unto the Son; Rom. 14, 10: „We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.“ Now we know that there are two natures in Christ, viz: the human nature, and the divine nature; thus constituted he is to be the judge the world. John. 5, 27 (The Father) „hath given him (the Son) authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man;“ Matth. 25, 31: „When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him“ etc.

γ. *The saints*; 1. Cor. 6, 2: „Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world;“ Matth. 19, 28: „When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.“ —

Scripture moreover maintains that difference, that God the Holy Trinity is to be the sole and principle judge, but that Christ the Lord, as a Person is to execute that judgment as the visible representative of the Trinity. God has, according to Acts. 17, 31 „appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness *by that man whom he has ordained.*“ Whilst the *saints* are to act as witnesses to the fact, that God has offered unto all those men, who are now about to be condemned the means of Salvation, but that they had rejected the same, Mrk. 6, 11; Acts. 13, 46. 51.

924. 3. *Who is to be judged?* All human beings that ever have existed, Matth. 25, 31: „before him shall be gathered *all nations;*“ Isai. 45, 23; Rom. 14, 11: „Every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God;“ 2. Cor. 5, 10: „*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.*“

925. 4. *At what time is this judgment to take place?* At the end of the world, Matth. 13, 40 f.: „So shall it be in the end of this world; the Son of man shall send forth his Angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire.“ —

It is here the place to speak of the consummation of the whole world.

α. *Is this world to last for ever, or is it to pass away one day?* That this world is one day to pass away, we find frequently testified in Scripture; Pslm. 102, 26. 27: „The heavens are the work of thy hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure, yea *all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed;*“ Luk. 21, 33: „*heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away;*“ 2. Pet. 3, 10: „The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; *in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.*“

927. β. *Is the world, in its substance to pass away, or is it merely to be renewed?* Like as the world has been made out of nothing, so also is to pass again away into nothing. This is clear from the evidences adduced already, and agrees also with what we read, Rev. 21, 1: „I saw a new heaven and a new earth: *for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea;*“ Isai. 65, 17: „I create new heavens and a new earth: *and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*“

928. γ. *At what time is this to take place?* If we inquire after the month, day or hour — this is not revealed unto us;

Mrk. 13, 22: „Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son (that is, in his state of humiliation) but the Father.“ — If we look at the state of things in the world, we may rest assured that the end of the world is not far off, inasmuch as all the signs which were to mark its approach are almost all fulfilled. As such signs are pointed out to us: „Wars and rumors of war,“ Matth. 24, 6; „the love of many shall wax cold,“ v. 12. (false) „security,“ Luk. 17, 26 ff.; 1. Thess. 5, 3: „the appearance of false Christs and false prophets,“ Matth. 24, 23 ff.; the man of sin „is to be revealed,“ 2. Thess. 2, 2, 3; „signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars,“ Luk. 21, 25; distress of nations and perplexity, „men’s hearts failing them for fear,“ v. 25, 26; „all Israel shall be saved,“ as announced by Paul, Rom. 11, 25, 26: „I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles come in; and so shall all Israel be saved.“ — This is also prophecied by Moses, Deut. 4, 30: „When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn unto the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient to his voice.“ This can properly be understood to imply nothing else, than that, before the coming of the last day, the Jewish people is to be converted in large numbers to the Lord. — Another characteristic of these times is „the sign of the Son of man,“ Matth. 24, 30. It is uncertain, whether this sign is to appear on heaven, or any where else. If it should refer to the signs stated above, then we shall have plenty opportunity of seeing them; or if it intends anything else, we shall be permitted to observe the same in due time; but in the meantime we ought not to imagine that the end of the world is not to come, unless it is preceded by some signal and wonderful token. — Another sign again is the *preaching of the Gospel in the whole world*, Matth. 24, 14. This is carried into effect either in the way the Apostles used to do; or if it refers to the revealing of the Antichrist, for thereby the Gospel is preached all over the world.

These signs — with the exception of the conversion of the Jews, and the preaching of the Gospel to every creature having been fulfilled, they must be looked upon as the sure messengers of the approaching consummation of all things; though they do not enable us to point out the month, the day, or the hour of its finally taking effect. Just as a high age is the sure messenger of a man’s approaching end, though it does not point out the day or the hour of his ultimate death.

929. *δ. The business of this judgement.* Before this court every thing that men ever have done, be they evil or good: or whatever good they have omitted to do, is to be judged; 2. Cor. 5, 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 he has done, whether it be good or evil;*“ Eccl. 12, 14: „God shall bring every work into judgment, with *every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*“ — There is nothing hid that is not to be brought to light in this judgment; cf. Eccl. 12, 14 and Rom. 2, 16: „*God shall judge the secrets of men;*“ 1. Cor. 4, 5: „The Lord will bring to light the *hidden things of darkness,*“ and *man's deeds,* Matth. 25, 35. 42; *ibid.* 12, 36. 37: „Every idle word that man shall speak, they shall have to give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt *be condemned;*“ 1. Cor. 4, 5: The Lord will also on that occasion „*make manifest the counsels of the heart.*“

930. *ε. The nature of the judgment, that is to be pronounced.* It is to be a judgment for eternity, which is never to be retracted, and the effect of which shall last for ever; for thereby men are either to come to the enjoyment of eternal salvation, or of eternal condemnation. Of which two kinds of judgment the Lord Jesus has made special mention, Matth. 25, 34: „Come, ye *blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;*“ v. 41: „*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*“

931. *ζ. The execution of this judgment.* This is to take effect as follows: Matth. 25, 46: „*These (the condemned) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.*“ Thus much with reference to that which is common (though with a different effect) to all mortals.

932. *The distinguishing marks which are to exist in the future life between the godly and the ungodly.* These are to be *salvation and eternal condemnation.* We have proved already, that the souls of the departed are conscious of the state they are ultimately to be brought in in the last judgment, even before this takes place. — We have now to consider these two different conditions more especially, and what is to become of men after the dissolution of the world.

933. *a. Eternal life.* In the preceding parts of this work we have shewn how that before God all men are found to be sinners, — and by what means it pleases Him, to convert them from their sins, and in which way, after having justified them, He preserves them in their new estate. And that al-

though God is redeeming men in His Church, this blessed state is yet imperfect, and mixed up with many troubles, but not without the comforting assurance that this state is to be improved and made perfect in the state of *eternal salvation*. — Concerning this we have to keep in mind three things:

*α.* In the state of salvation all evil is to be done away with, with which man has ever been troubled, Isai. 25, 8: „The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all the faces;“ Rev. 21, 4: „And there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.“ — But more especially all the viles and the lusts of the devil are to be done away with and vanquished; and according to Rom. 16, 20, also the death; Isai. 25, 8: „The Lord God will swallow up death in victory;“ 1. Cor. 15, 26: „The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;“ Rev. 21, 4: „There shall be no more death.“ — Again there are to be done away the outrages of the mighty of this earth, Wisd. 5, 1: „Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours;“ — *anxiety and labour*, Rev. 14, 13: „Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, . . . they may rest from their labours;“ Isai. 66, 23: „From one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.“ — *Poverty and other misfortune*; Lazarus had no more complaints, after he had been carried into Abraham's bosom, Luk. 16, 25, for there God is to be „all in all,“ 1. Cor. 15, 28. The saints have, even in this life already, the comforting assurance, and the satisfaction, that they have a merciful God, Psal. 73, 25. 26, Moses was able to remain with the Lord upon the mountain, for the space of forty days and forty nights, without his tasting any food, Exod. 34, 28. How much more shall the saints find satisfaction in gloriously viewing the divine Being, His Majesty and His Glory, so as never to perceive hunger or thirst, Rev. 7, 16.

935. *β.* In the state of salvation there is to be an abundance of every good. This state is likened to a marriage feast, in which everything is ready, Matth. 8, 11 ff.: „Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;“ Luk. 22, 29. 30: „I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom;“ Psal. 36, 9: „They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.“ — Again the state of salvation is described as one of *great glory*, Coloss. 3, 4: „When Christ who is your life shall appear, then shall ye

also appear with him *in glory* 2. Cor. 4, 17: „Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;“ — Another appellation for this state is also „*unceasing joy*,“ John. 16, 22: „I will see you again, and *your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*;“ a joy not to be comprehended, 1. Cor. 2, 9: „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;“ — a joy unspeakable, 1. Pet. 1, 8: „ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.“ — This joy is designated by Abraham as a comfort, Luk. 16, 25: „Lazarus received evil things, but now he is comforted.“ It is a delightful viewing of the divine Being and His Glory, Job. 19, 26. 27: „In my flesh shall I see God;“ Matth. 5, 8: „Blessed are the pure in heart“ etc.; Ps. 42, 2: „My soul thirsteth after God: when shall I come and appear before God?“ 1. Cor. 13, 12: „Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known;“ 1. John. 3, 2: „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.“ — The state of Salvation is likewise one of *sweet communion* with the holy Angels, the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs and the rest of the elect, whose remembrance is also dear to us in this life, Heb. 12, 22: „But ye are come unto mount Sion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.“

936. *γ.* In the state of salvation the redeemed have no other occupation, than unceasingly to sing praises unto God. The occupation of the holy Angels is that they continually exclaim one to another, Isai. 6, 3: „*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth, is full of his glory.*“ A more wellpleasing service the elect are not able to render unto God, when enjoying eternal life, than to sing His praises, Rev. 4, 8: „they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come;“ Chap. 5, 8 ff.: „four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints; and they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue,

and people, and nation;" Chap. 7, 11. 12: „the elders fell before the throne on their faces and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, and honour and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen.“ Chap. 22, 10: „And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them.“

937. h. *The miserable state of the condemned in hell; concerning this we have to consider:*

*α. That in hell there is nothing to be found of all the good a man is able to enjoy*, and part of which has been stated in the preceding paragraph. The condemned are not to enjoy these blessings, because they are entirely excluded from the kingdom of God, Rev. 22, 15: „*For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie;*“ 2. Thess. 1, 9: „*Who (the wicked) shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*“ — They are also to be denied the light which gladdens the heart of every man, Psal. 49, 20: „*They shall never see light;*“ to them „*is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever,*“ Jud. 13; „*Bind him hand and foot and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,*“ Matth. 22, 13. — The weary and thirsty traveller is enlivened by the *cooling draught*; but to those condemned to hell fire, this benefit is to be denied, as we see exemplified in the case of the rich man; Luk. 16, 24. 25. The weary is rejoicing in his *rest*; but those worn out by the anxieties of hell are to find no such rest, Rev. 14, 11: „*They have no rest day and night.*“

983. β. *The condemned are to experience all that is calculated to give to man trouble, pain and anxiety. More especially the fearful consciousness of God's wrath*, Rev. 6, 16. 17: „*They said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?*“ — *The painful society of the spirits of the hell and of those of all the condemned.* Hellfire is prepared for the devil and his Angels, Matth. 25, 41. *As also unspeakable pain in body and soul*, such as the pangs of an evil conscience, remorse for having rejected the grace of God, and not listened to the divine warnings etc. This state of things is called „*everlasting punishment,*“ Matth. 25, 46; — „*a torment,*“ Luk. 16, 23; Rev. 20, 10: they „*shall be tormented day and night;*“ — „*wailing and gnashing of teeth,*“

Matth. 13, 42; — „everlasting destruction,“ 2. Thess. 1, 9. This anguish of soul is prefigured by the use of the term „fire,“ since it is fire only that can inflict upon man the most intense pain. Thus the rich man says, Luk. 16, 24: „I am tormented in this flame;“ Matth. 25, 41: „Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire;“ Chap. 3, 12: „He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire;“ Rev. 14, 11: „the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever;“ Chap. 20, 15: „Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire;“ Chap. 21, 8: „But the fearful, the unbelieving etc. shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.“ „Fire“ signifies the fierce and insupportable wrath of God; Deut. 32, 22: „*for a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell;*“ Isai. 30, 33: „Tophet is ordained of old; yea for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord shall kindle it;“ Chap. 65, 5: „These (the idolaters) are a smoke in my nose, *a fire that burneth all day.*“ — Finally the state of the condemned is compared to a worm within the heart that never dies, Isa. 66, 24; Mrk. 9, 44: „*Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*“

With the perfecting of the enjoyment of eternal salvation, God's merciful works are concluded, and with the final condemnation His eternal wrath and anger are for ever determined to take effect, so that after the last judgement men have neither to work out, nor to expect any change in their condition. For after this nobody can go void of his salvation, as little as anybody can be redeemed from hell. Each is to remain for ever in the state he was put in on that occasion. — And, accordingly, it is here the proper place to conclude our work, which has been undertaken for the purpose of pointing out to man, what he has to know and to believe, in order that he might avoid condemnation, and come to eternal salvation. —





# The Author's concluding Prayer.

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O holy and blessed Trinity, the only source and fountain of all our temporal and eternal welfare, enable us, we beseech thee, so to live, that whilst the day of mercy is still open to us, we may escape all the evils which are to befall the wicked and the unbelievers, and grant that, when the last day arrives, we may be able appear with joy before the judgment seat of the Son of man. Amen! Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our Mediator, our Redeemer, our help in time of need, and the Author and Finisher of our faith, in whom all promises of God are yea and amen!

A m e n.



# E r r a t a.

|      |     |      |    |       |                                    |
|------|-----|------|----|-------|------------------------------------|
| Page | 3   | line | 2  | read: | to learn.                          |
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| "    | 125 | "    | 19 | "     | are to be consid.                  |
| "    | 136 | "    | 25 | "     | commit.                            |
| "    | 142 | "    | 31 | "     | choose.                            |
| "    | 171 | "    | 16 | "     | Lord.                              |
| "    | 172 | "    | 29 | "     | into a <i>good olive tree</i> .    |
| "    | 186 | "    | 21 | "     | necessity of <i>circumcision</i> . |
| "    | 196 | "    | 3  | "     | Triune.                            |
| "    | 202 | "    | 13 | "     | for.                               |
| "    | 226 | "    | 40 | "     | career.                            |
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| "    | 232 | "    | 16 | "     | make it impossible.                |
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| "    | 241 | "    | 26 | "     | to the higher.                     |
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| "    | 269 | "    | 24 | "     | Gods.                              |
| "    | 278 | "    | 20 | "     | unbelief.                          |
| "    | 291 | "    | 43 | "     | inquiries.                         |