

THE
REFORMED
MENNONITE CHURCH,
ITS
RISE AND PROGRESS,
WITH ITS
PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES

BY
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PREFACE.

IT is not necessary to say much, by way of preface, to the following work, further than to give a short explanation of the motives which led to its undertaking. Knowing that but few readers would agree with me in sentiment, and that I have not the ability to produce a work which would bear criticism, as a literary production, together with the disadvantage of being much interrupted by other duties, has made the labor one of much anxiety, and caused it to be attended with many discouragements.

The idea of such an undertaking never occurred to me, until it was suggested to me by others, to whose solicitations I was induced to accede. Much advantage would have accrued, if the work had been engaged in only a few years earlier. Those who organized the Church, with all their associates, have been gathered to their fathers, and of those who were intimate with them in life, few are remaining, and they fast passing away. The younger members of the Church, who have not had acquaintance with the circumstances which brought about the forming of themselves into church order by these reformers, naturally felt a desire to have some reliable history of these events, so that after the departure of the few yet remaining who have knowledge of it, they would be able to refute any unfounded assertions or reports which might be originated. This desire seemed so reasonable, and I may say commendable, that I felt myself constrained to endeavor to gratify it to the extent of my ability.

The assumption of the Baptist church lately set up, that Menno Simon, and the early Mennonites, held that there is "no other baptism besides dipping in water, which is acceptable to God, and maintained in His word," also suggests the propriety of leaving some account of our doctrine, principles and practice on record, so that future generations might have no difficulty in

determining what we held, and the grounds upon which our views are based. Even now many persons have very erroneous ideas of our doctrine and principles, and many unfounded reports have been circulated.

I have very sensibly felt my inability to do justice to the subject I have undertaken, and would very willingly have left the task to other and abler hands, if any one had been found who was willing to undertake it. What I have presented as our views, I believe to be Scriptural and sound; and what I have asserted as history, I believe to be substantially true, and have conscientiously related it.

As our views on many points of doctrine are diverse from most other denominations of professing Christians, it became necessary to support them with argument from Scripture, and also to show the fallacy of the objections urged against what we believe to be truth. In doing this, it became necessary to speak of other denominations of professed Christians, of their doctrine, profession and practice, in a manner which I would much rather have forborne to do, if duty and necessity had not required it of me. This is especially the case in regard to the "Old Mennonite Church," amongst whom I dwell, and whom I highly esteem as friends and neighbors. If the doctrine and position I have attempted to maintain is *true*, I know every candid mind must assent that what I have said is just and right. God Himself has said, "Cry aloud and spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." (Isaiah lviii.) In this light I desire to be regarded, and if I am in error, I beg to be enlightened and corrected.

With a desire to promote the glory of God by advancing truth, I give these pages to the public, praying the Lord to bless them.

DANIEL MUSSER.

Lampeter, Lancaster co., Pa., June 27, 1873.

THE

REFORMED MENNONITE CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

"And He is the head of the body, *the church*: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead: that in all *things* He might have the pre-eminence."—Col. i. 18.

EVERY intelligent reader knows that there is an institution in existence which is called a Church, Church of God, or Church of Christ. They also know that there are numerous different organizations or associations of people in the world, and often in the same city, town or country, who assume to be churches of Christ. Jesus Christ is admitted by all to have authorized or ordained the organization or association of those who believe in Him into a body, of which He is the head. The different organizations which now exist, who assume to be this Church, or branches of it, have resulted from different views or principles held and entertained by the people who compose them. If the people who compose these bodies entertained the same views or principles, they would unite in the same association. This Church, or body, was ordained for the glory of God, and the enjoyment of those who believed in Him, and was known on earth as a religious organization or institution. But inasmuch as there were other religious organizations or associations in existence, it was necessary that each should have some distinct appellation by which it should be known or distinguished from any other.

So long as Jesus Christ was personally on earth, those who believed on Him were not organized into a body, but Christ called them *His Disciples*, and by this appellation they were known and distinguished from those who did not believe on Him. He called them His Disciples, and the unbelievers called them

His Disciples likewise. Soon after Christ's ascension into Heaven, His apostles, in obedience to His command, began to preach the Gospel, and organized a visible body, or Church. As the Gospel spread, and believers were multiplied, the name of *Disciple* did not so well serve to distinguish the believers in Christ from those religionists who did not believe in Him, and the name of *Christians* was given to them. It is said: "And the disciples were called *Christians* first at Antioch." (Acts xi. 26.) From the manner in which the origin of the name is here related, I do not suppose that it originated with the disciples themselves, but was applied to them by others, to distinguish them from those who did not believe in Christ. As Christ Himself, or His doctrine, was not popular, it may also have been applied to them by way of derision. Be this as it may, it does not appear that the disciples disapproved it, inasmuch as we do not find any expression of disapproval, and find them afterward using it themselves. As we find they did, after they were called Christians at Antioch, yet repeatedly designate believers by the name of Disciples, we conclude that it did not originate with themselves, and that it was only generally adopted by them some time after.

As there were other religious associations in existence at the time, it became necessary that, for the distinction of this from every other association, it should have a distinctive appellation for that purpose. It was altogether proper, then, that this Church, or body, should have a name, whereby it would be known and distinguished from all other organized bodies or associations of people, and this was the more especially so, as the Christians did not wish the community to associate them in their minds with any other existing association or people.

In the early ages of the Church, there was but one association bearing its name, and there was no prefix to its name necessary for further distinction. The profession was not then popular, and not much inducement for those who were not *Christians indeed* to associate themselves with the Church, since it usually brought them under reproach and derision; and oftentimes persecution, suffering and death was the consequence. The true religion of Jesus Christ never was popular, but in process of time the *profession* of it did become so in certain countries, and oftentimes a means of advancing worldly interests. Then, those of carnal

minds were induced to embrace its *profession*, but their hearts not being united or fused together by the Holy Spirit, they could not agree, and could consequently not walk together, as the Prophet Amos says: "Can two walk together except they agree?" The consequence was, divisions and separations, from which numerous parties and organizations sprang up, each claiming to be the Christian Church.

In consequence of these numerous divisions or societies, it became necessary for each party to have some denominational name, to distinguish it from others making the same profession. As a general thing, these different associations accept the distinctive appellation given to them, or, in many instances, they have assumed them themselves. In the first age of the Church, there was but one body which bore the name of church, or that was called the Church of Christ. There were no two churches in the same vicinity; but we read of the Church of God, which is at Corinth, of the Church of Ephesus, at Smyrna, Philadelphia, etc., but the members being all one in heart and soul, there could be no two at the same place, and further distinction was not necessary, as every one knew what that Church was and held. But when divisions sprang up, and different organizations were formed which could not agree or walk together, it became necessary to have something to distinguish one from another; hence the separate name of each separate party or body.

There being no warrant or countenance in the New Testament for these different names, but, on the contrary, as the whole Book teaches and points to a unity, the first symptoms of division, or the assumption of different names, was severely reprov'd by the holy Apostle Paul. Some have objected to receiving any other name than those warranted by use in the New Testament. These views have led them to object to receiving any name, but such as is mentioned or applied to the Church in the Scriptures, and, consequently, call themselves Disciples, Church of God, etc. In this we think them singular and inconsistent, as they countenance and support that division which is condemned in the Scriptures, and object to that which is a necessity and natural consequence of such division. A name does not affect any one. To be called a Samaritan and a devil, did not make the Saviour one; nor does the assumption of the name of "Holy Catholic Church" make

the Roman Catholic church what she assumes to be. Those organizations, therefore, assuming these Scriptural titles, usually receive from those outside some distinguishing prefix. Inasmuch as all other churches profess that which their assumed name indicates as their profession, some urge very strong objections to these popular names, asserting that they are anti-Christian, and a popular writer goes so far as to say, he concludes "they came neither from Jerusalem or Antioch, but rather from *Hell* and *Babylon*." There is no doubt the divisions themselves come from *Hell* and *Babylon*, but when once wrought out and formed, the name becomes a necessity, as much so as that one state, city, county or township must have a name whereby it may be known or distinguished from other states, cities, etc.

These names, whether assumed by the parties themselves, or given to them by others, are usually based on some distinctive feature of their profession or practice: as Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Baptist, Shaker, etc.; but sometimes it has reference to the name of some individual who has originated the society, or else has been an active agent in disseminating its doctrine and building up the body: as Lutheran, Mennonite, Swenkfelter, etc. It is always supposed or expected that those assuming a name, or accepting it as applied to them, should advocate, support and practice the principles which the name they bear indicates. If those who bear the name of Episcopalians, abandon the idea and practice of Episcopal church government, or those called Presbyterians cease their mode of government by the presbytery, it would be a misnomer to call them Episcopalians and Presbyterians; and those really supporting these principles by precept and practice, would not receive them into their church. With regard to those who have their name from some individual, if they do not support the doctrine and principles of the founder of their order, they cannot justly claim to be entitled to his name. Can any one be justly entitled to the name of Christian, who does not follow Christ in doctrine and life? Every one will admit they cannot. How then can they be entitled to the name of Lutheran or Mennonite, if they do not profess and practice the doctrine taught by these reformers? If a society of people should rise up and call their association an Episcopal church, and would govern it by presbyters, would the Episcopalian church own them? or would not the

whole world regard them as assuming a name they are not entitled to, or worthy of? Those who are named after some individual, can certainly with no more propriety or justice claim the name of one whose principles they deny, either in doctrine or by their life and works. They, therefore, who call themselves Lutherans, Wesleyans or Mennonites, and walk not in the way, life and doctrine of these men, cannot complain if the world refuse to recognize them as being what they claim; or that those who really adhere to these principles should refuse to receive them as brethren, any more than those spoken of by the Spirit in Revelations, of such as said they were apostles, but lied, the Church of Ephesus tried them and found them out.

The church whose history we propose to write is known by the name of Mennonite, being one of those named after an individual named Menno Simon, who was not an originator or organizer of a church or party, but became a member of one which existed before, and was afterward chosen to the ministry, and became an active laborer in advocating the doctrine, and advancing and building up the interests of the church with which he had associated himself. In this he was so successful as to give it the appearance as if he was the originator of it, and as a distinctive appellation it received his name, or one derived from it. But as there are other societies which are known by the name of Mennonite, the particular one under consideration has, for distinction, been termed "*Reformed Mennonite*," or by some, "*New Mennonite*." So far as I know, they did not themselves assume this name, but being given to them, they have no objection to the appellation, if it serves the purpose to distinguish them in the minds of the community from all other denominated churches.

Christ and the apostles are the true head and founders of the Church; whom it is the duty of the Church to follow, as their only guide and directors. By accepting the name of Mennonite, the church under consideration endorses the doctrine of Menno as being in agreement with that of Christ and the apostles, and that his life and practice was consistent with that doctrine.

Paul says to the Corinthians: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Paul admitted that Christ was the head of the Church, and all believers, members in particular, and the Reformed Mennonites, believe that Menno was such a member,

and faithfully obeyed his head, even at the expense of great bodily distress and suffering ; and many of his brethren in his day also sealed their faith with their blood, freely offering up possessions and life for the glory of Christ's name.

In the days of Paul, the name of Christ or His Church was in very low esteem in the world ; but Paul says to the Romans, he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation. In reading the popular church histories, we find that the name of Menno, and the church bearing his name, were not of great reputation. The hateful name of "*Annabaptist*" was everywhere applied to them, and they were everywhere held in derision. The Reformed Mennonites are nevertheless not ashamed of him, or his doctrine ; for they feel full assurance that the doctrine which he held is the power of God unto salvation, and that they cannot follow Menno without following Christ.

CHAPTER II.

“Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

THE history of no body, claiming to be a church, can be considered complete or satisfactory without giving the views, doctrine and sentiments of those who compose the body; otherwise the reader cannot understand the motives which prompted their actions. A presentation of the views of any particular order of professing Christians, therefore, forms a considerable portion of most church histories; and of this one it will necessarily form a chief part, inasmuch as the history proper does not extend through any great lapse of time.

I believe no church history, however liberal, will recognize every association to be a Church of Christ, which claims to be so considered. Every one has some particular parties which they hold as heresies, or sects. We will not in this chapter do more than present our views of what constitutes a Church, without stopping to inquire whether this or that denomination is considered as coming up to that standard; or which is a Church, and which not. The reader will, however, not fail to observe that in this respect we do not depart from the general rule. It might, then, be considered inconsistent with our doctrine to give the name of Church to such associations, as the views presented would not recognize as a Church. It being a short word, however, and very convenient for designating any particular society which has assumed the name of Church, we will use it for that purpose whenever we have occasion to refer to any particular denomination, and give them the name they have assumed, or the one by which they are popularly known. We make these remarks now, so that no one will misunderstand us by the use of the term.

Without stopping to inquire what the popular idea of the word church is, we will proceed to state what *we* regard as constituting a true Church. In our consideration of this subject, we wish to be understood as having reference to the *visible* Church of Christ,

or the church as it exists on earth. We read of the "general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven," etc. But our object is, to consider the Church, as it was organized or built by the apostles of Christ *here on earth*. We hear much said of the Church militant, and the Church triumphant. In our consideration, here, we desire to be understood as speaking of the Church militant.

In speaking of the Church, both Christ and the apostles present the idea of a building. We all know very well that the Church is not what we are accustomed to call a house or building, but the term was used to convey a better idea of its nature and use than could be done by any other expression. The term or idea is therefore used figuratively; but the object prefigured must have some agreement with the figure, otherwise the expression would be without meaning. The idea of a building, naturally suggests the idea of material to build with, inasmuch as no natural building can be erected without suitable material. Material must first be prepared, and put in order, also, before it can be used in erecting the structure. The timbers must be cut from the forest, and the stones must be quarried from the pit; and both must be hewn and dressed before they are fitted for the erection of a building. The people of whom the Church is composed may be very fitly compared to such building material as we have referred to. By nature, they were of the world, and differed nothing from all other carnal persons; but by the operation of God's grace and Spirit they were fitted for the formation of the Church.

To observe proper order, then, in the consideration of our subject, we must of necessity first consider the material of which the Church is composed or built. Man, being this material, must then first be considered; and in doing this, he presents himself to us, first, in his primitive state. It is said he was created in the image of God. Whether this expression had reference to his personal being, or whether the reference was to his spiritual state or being, the Word of God does not inform us. Man was made a visible, tangible creature, whilst God is a spirit, an invisible, incomprehensible spiritual essence. Scripture will, therefore, not countenance the idea that the image in which man was created was that of his person. The image of God, in which he was created, must, therefore, have been spiritual, and constituted a life with which he was endowed, separate and distinct from the animal life

which existed in the creature, or body. It is evident that he must have possessed a life besides the natural animal life, because it was said of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, "in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." He did eat, and the Scriptures declare that he died. We know he did not die a natural death, but lived some hundred years after, and begat sons and daughters. Then, if he died, a life must have been extinguished, and as it was not the natural animal life, I conclude it must have been the spiritual, or divine life, with which he was endowed; and this is what constituted the image of God, in which he was created. I have heard the idea, that Adam possessed a spiritual life, objected to. But I would ask, what was the life, then, which died? Could he possess any other life than natural and spiritual? The love of God in the soul is always a consequence of man's possessing the Spirit of God; and this love is the life which man lost in the fall. God is said to be love, and so long as man was in possession of this love, he enjoyed fellowship with God, had communion with Him, and was supremely happy. So long as he continued in this primeval state, it would seem that all he did was acceptable and pleasing to God; he had access to God and enjoyed his presence.

There is nothing said in the Word that there was a Church existing in the garden of Eden; but as the relation which existed between man the creature, and God the creator, is the same as that which is said to exist between God and the Church, it would seem to favor or countenance the idea, that man's fellowship with and access to God, his purity and holiness, constituted a relation which might be called a Church.

But man fell by transgression, and thereby a great change was brought about. He became defiled, and fell into darkness. It is said: "God is light, in which is no darkness at all." Man here lost his communion with God, because light and darkness can have no communion. He fell into sin, and his "iniquities separated between him and God, and his sins hid his face from Him." After the fall, the Scriptures testify that man became the servant of sin; that he was in bondage, and under captivity of the author of sin. God is said to be a consuming fire; that is, to everything impure; for the prophet Habakkuk says (chap. i.): "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on

iniquity." This forbade God to look with favor upon man, because all mankind were in this state of defilement and iniquity. In Psalms liii, it is said: "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, *no not one.*" There are many more testimonies in the word of God, which go to show the deep depravity of man after the fall. Every imagination of his heart was evil continually, and the earth was filled with violence, in consequence. Here, then, it must be evident, that man's relation to God had become greatly changed, and was very different from what it was before the fall; and if we consider the testimony which the Scriptures give of the Divine nature, it must also be evident that man could do nothing which was acceptable or pleasing to God; because nothing that was unclean could be pleasing to him, and man had not the ability to produce anything that was clean. Job says (chap. xiv.): "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."

Nevertheless, man had not fallen beyond the power of God to redeem or restore him, and there is abundant evidence that God had not utterly cast him away. So soon as man fell, God gave him the promise of a Redeemer, and those who believed this promise, and trusted in that Redeemer, He had also promised to bless and protect; and so far God had pleasure in them, as believing Him, and depending on the promised Redeemer. But no outward deed or action of theirs gave God pleasure, if not accompanied with faith. It is said of those things which God had commanded Israel to do, that he had no pleasure in them. But the faith which moved them to obedience was what pleased God, and moved Him to give witness of approval to that which they had done. God imputed their faith unto them for righteousness.

Scripture testimony shows that the number of those who thus believed and trusted in God's promise were few, in comparison to the number of people which existed on earth. These, whether few or many, were under the promise, and constituted the people of God. They had an interest in the Redeemer, but themselves were under bondage till the time of His coming and working out this redemption, when their debt would be paid and they delivered from their captivity. With all such believers, God made a

covenant, and being under that covenant, they were under God's favor and blessing. Although their advantage over those who did not believe was very great, yet God declared to these believers who were under this covenant, that at a future time He would make a new and better covenant with believers; which should be established on better promises. The difference between these two covenants, and believers under them, it is highly important that we keep in view.

As we are here considering man, in relation to his capacity as material with which to build a Church, there are two things which it becomes essentially necessary for us to notice; which is the difference between believers under these two covenants. In regard to these two covenants there is no difficulty, as all will agree that the one is the Mosaic, or legal covenant, and is called old; and the other is the Christian, or Gospel covenant, and is called new.

There is very little said in the Word of God, of man in his primitive state, but a great deal from the fall to the coming of Christ; and a great deal again under the gospel dispensation. This it is highly important that we observe closely; in doing which, we will discover that under the old covenant God calls the believers *His people*; but under the new covenant He calls the believers *sons, daughters and children*. Under the old covenant, in all His dealings with His people, He never once speaks of a Church. The word is never once used in the Old Testament. This fact is significant, both in regard to the Church itself, as also of the material of which the Church is built. For several reasons, then, we take the position, that under the old covenant, God's *people* were not His *children*; but under the Gospel, believers are His *children*, and alone material of which a Church could be built. This position, I suppose, will be objected to, especially as God does in several places (speaking of Israel) call them His children, and we also read, in Genesis vi., of the sons of God looking upon the daughters of men; and again, in Job, of the sons of God presenting themselves before the Lord; but in these expressions the reference is to their being sons of God's people, and not at all used in the sense in which it is expressed in the New Testament, in regard to the new covenant believer. In Deuteronomy xiv. we read: "Ye are the children of the Lord your God;" and in the

lxxxii Psalm it is said : " All ye are the children of the Most High." In chap. ii. of 2d Samuel, God speaks to David of his son Solomon, saying : " I will be his father, and he shall be my son." In Chronicles xvii., 22-28, the same thing is repeated ; but it all has reference to the one declaration of the Lord to David concerning his son Solomon. There is never a word of their being born of God. The words father, son and children, are frequently used to indicate an especial care or providence of one over another, which is not extended to all, or to any other. Paul calls Timothy his son, because he had an especial affection for him, like unto that of a father for a son. Elisha calls Elijah his father, and the king of Israel calls Elisha, father ; the servant of Naaman calls him father, and Eli calls Samuel, son. All these are instances where special care or affection existed between the parties, and expresses only the regard or affection they had for one another, without any reference to one being the natural parent or child of the other, or intention that it shall be so understood. Where the Lord says He will be a father to Solomon, that he shall be His son, it is in the same sense. He will care for, and keep him, as a father does a son ; and Solomon shall regard God as a son does a father. The passage referred to in Deuteronomy, as also in Exodus iv., where the Lord says : " Israel is My son, My first-born," the Lord has the same reference to His care and consideration for Israel. All the nations of the earth were the Lord's creation, and He cared for them likewise ; but for Israel he had an especial care above all others.

We are the children of our natural parents by natural generation, but no one is by this birth a child of God. Christ says : " That which is born of the flesh is flesh ; but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It is evident, then, that we become children of God by a spiritual birth, but we surely cannot be born of the Spirit without becoming partakers of or possessing the Spirit. All men must certainly have been in their sins till Christ came and satisfied the justice of God, by dying on the cross for the sins of man. Inasmuch as they were in their sins, they could not receive the Holy Spirit, because He would not dwell in a defiled temple. We do not read of any one receiving the Holy Ghost from the time of the fall of man till after Christ had ascended into Heaven, and sent the Comforter with great power on the day

of Pentecost. It is true, God moved the prophets of old by the Holy Ghost, and John the Baptist, Elizabeth, Zacharias and Simeon were influenced by the Holy Ghost to speak certain things, and testify to the things which were to come to pass; but it was not in that nature which those received who had their sins purged by the blood of Christ. John the Baptist, and those spoken of, were yet in their sins, because the blood of Christ was not yet shed; and without shedding of blood there is no remission. True, they had an interest in Christ by faith, but did not realize it till Christ died. Otherwise, how could it be that he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven, is greater than John the Baptist? Of all that were born of women, none was greater than he; but he that is born of the Spirit is greater.

In John vii., the evangelist says: "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Christ was not yet glorified," and in John xvi., Christ, when speaking of His going to the Father, says: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." The Comforter spoken of was the Holy Ghost or Spirit, and by these and many other expressions I take it that, although He did influence certain persons for certain particular purposes, He did not abide in them, and effect the purpose which he did in the New Testament believers, or those who believed after the day of Pentecost, when the first great outpouring of the Spirit occurred.

Obedience to the law could not give any one the Spirit; and from the testimonies cited, it is evident that the old covenant believer could not possess the Holy Spirit; and if not, then he could not be born of Him, and could consequently not be a child of God. To be a child of God, we must be born of the Spirit. It is further to be observed that God called Abraham and blessed him, and gave great promises to him and his seed. God renewed these promises to Israel afterward, and especially by Moses. He said He would be *with* them, dwell *with* them, be *amongst* them; He would be their God, and they should be His *people*: but in all his promises and sayings, He does not once say to them as He does to the New Testament believer, that they shall be his sons and daughters. We never read anything of their being *born* of Him, or of His dwelling or being *in* them, and they

in Him. Neither do we ever read of God and them having communion or fellowship, nor even they having fellowship one with another. God had, as I have said, given promise of the woman's seed, and to Abraham the seed in which all the families of the earth should be blessed. They who believed this promise received witness that they were righteous. This was all they could do for the time then being, but did not give them the Spirit, or make them children.

Christ said to Nicodemus : "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ; and marvel not that I said, ye must be born again." The birth here referred to is evidently that by which we become children of God ; and Christ makes no exceptions ; every one who ever sees the kingdom of God must be born again. Israel as a nation did not receive Christ when He came ; yet there were some did receive Him. The shepherds, the wise men of the East and the apostles seem to have received Him immediately. I would think if any of the Jews were children of God, these were ; yet Christ does not except them or any others. The declaration covers every man on earth. When the apostles came to Christ and asked Him, who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven ? He declared very positively to them that unless *they* are converted, they cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven. That which is here called conversion, is evidently the same as the new birth before spoken of. But now even His apostles had yet, according to Christ's declaration, to experience this. It is also evident that they could not have been children, unless they could have become so without the influence and power of the Holy Spirit, for this they had not yet received. It is further said by John (chap. i.), Christ "came to His own, and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." Now, it would appear, that although the mass of the Jews had become wicked and depraved, yet some of them seem to have been pious. Must not every one that was truly pious have received Him, or could any one have been pious and not received Him ? I trow not ! If there were any children of God in Israel, then, truly, the pious *Israelites indeed*, in whom there was no guile, must have been them. But, it is said, "as many as received Him, to them gave He *power* to become the sons of God." Now, it is very evident that

they could not become what they were before! If they were children of God before, they could not receive power to become so afterward. But the truth is, none of them were or could be children of God, no matter how moral, pious, or believing they were; they could not be children till they had received power from on high, by the Spirit of God shedding the life-giving power of love abroad in their hearts. I say again, no one is a child of God by virtue of their first, or carnal birth. They must be born again, or of the Spirit. If the apostles and those holy men who received Christ were children of God before, had been converted or born again, they could not, by receiving Christ, have obtained power to become what they already were; neither could Christ have made the declaration general, when he said to Nicodemus, "*Ye must be born again,*" or so directly applied His words to His apostles, when He said to them, "except *ye* be converted and become as little children, *ye* shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

The great delusion under which so many people labor, is that they do not properly distinguish between law and Gospel, and between old and new covenant believers. From the time of the fall of man till Christ died on the cross, all mankind were sinners, and regarded as such of God. "Without shedding of blood is no remission," and no other blood but Christ's ever was shed for remission, or could take away sin. How, then, could they be purged of sin before that was accomplished which God had ordained and declared was the only means by which it could be effected? If, then, they were in their sins, they could not draw nigh to God or have fellowship with Him; nor could God, as the Holy Ghost, dwell or abide in them, in this defiled state or condition.

All mankind in this time were under the covenant of the law, unbelievers as well as believers, but there was this difference: The believer embraced the promise of the Father and relied on it, and dying in this state, although dying in his sins, was still under the promise, and at Christ's coming and making the atonement he received the benefit of it; the defilement which heretofore clave to his soul was washed away by the blood of Christ, and from henceforth he stands in the same relation to God as those do who have died in faith under the new covenant. But the unbeliever died in unbelief, having rejected the promise of God, and had

forever to lie under its curse. The new covenant believer has his sins atoned for and washed away in this life. Whenever he, by faith, embraces the merit of the blood which was shed for remission, his sins are forgiven, and he enters into a new relation toward God, and God speaks words of especial endearment and love to him. Israel, as believers, had promise of favor from God. He would have special care of them and for them, would be with them and dwell amongst them; but never that he would dwell *in* them and they *in* Him; never that He would sup with them and they with Him; or never speaks to them as He does to the new covenant believer.

Children always partake of the nature of their parents. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh. The children of Israel were born of the flesh only, and walked after the flesh, and were permitted to do so because they could not receive the Spirit by which they could overcome the deeds of the carnal body. Therefore, they were permitted to resist evil, resent injury, and exact justice. This was the nature of the flesh of which they were born. But when Christ speaks to those who are born of the Spirit, who have received power to become sons of God, and by this birth and power receive the nature of the Heavenly Parent, He tells them, now they shall manifest this nature by their deeds and actions, because they are not now carnal, but spiritual. Peter says they are made partakers of the Divine nature. Because they are thus favored, Christ bids them to manifest their nature by returning good for evil, as their Heavenly Father does, to the evil as well as to the good. This requires power, even the power of the Holy Spirit, by which the believer is enabled to overcome all things, as Christ did, for He says, as He has overcome so shall they also through Him.

Paul, speaking to the new covenant believers (Gal. iii.), says: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." They are brought into fellowship with God by the Spirit of Adoption, which they have received by faith in Jesus Christ; and now they are said to be in Christ, and Christ in them. And because they are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

If we mark the difference of language in which God speaks to the believers of the two covenants, we cannot be at a loss to

understand the difference of their relation to God. God commanded Moses, under the old covenant, to build a tabernacle in which He would meet with him and commune with him, and his glory should rest upon the tabernacle. After they got into the Promised Land, David said, he lives in a house of cedar, whilst the ark of the Lord was under curtains, and would have built God a house for His name; but the Lord said he should not build an house for His name, because he had been a man of war, and had shed much blood; but Solomon, his son, should build a house for His name to dwell. Herein the ark of the Lord was put, and the cherubims set up, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. Although it was said that this should be a house for God to dwell, yet Solomon said: The Heaven of heavens could not contain Him; and Stephen said, God dwelleth not in temples made with hands. But here God had appointed to meet His servants and manifest His will unto them, and His name dwelt, or was in this house. But now, under the new covenant, God has said, *ye* are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell *in* them, and walk *in* them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And, again, "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2d Cor. vi.) Again, (1st Cor. iii.) Paul says: "Know *ye* not that *ye* are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in *you*?" and "The temple of God is holy, *whose temple ye are.*"

In these latter expressions, God speaks to such as are born again—born of water and Spirit—have received power to become sons of God, and are transformed by the renewing of their minds. In chap. xiv. of John, Christ says of such: "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." Who will make their abode with him? *We—the Father and the Son!* In His prayer to His Heavenly Father, in John xvii., in speaking of His disciples, Christ says, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word: That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, *that they also may be one in Us.*" In chap. iii., 1st Epistle of John, the apostle, speaking to

his brethren, says: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *sons of God*," and "Beloved, now are *we the sons of God*." Now, all this shows very clearly that there is great difference between what the Old Testament believer was, and what the New Testament believer is. The Holy Ghost never spake of the Old Testament believers as He does of the New. The New Testament believers are said by one Spirit to be baptized into one body, and are one heart and one soul, and have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. They are led by the Spirit of God, and are the sons of God, as Paul says, Rom. viii.: "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

We might very greatly multiply such testimonies from the word of God, but we deem it unnecessary. The new covenant believer is born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. They are new creatures, are in Christ, have put on Christ, and have fellowship with God and his Son Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed them from all sin; they are justified from all things; and that which separated them from God is now taken away, and by the power which they have received to become sons of God, they have begotten in them a new life. No one will gainsay that the believer under the old covenant was under the law; and Paul says: "As many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse;" but then he says: "Christ hath redeemed *us* from the curse of the law," and "sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Gal. iii.; Rom. vi.)

We have now at considerable length considered man as material from which to build the House or Church of God. We have confined ourselves chiefly to believers of the two great ages of the world; but there is yet a large class of mankind which we have given very little consideration, who, under both covenants, are called *unbelievers*. Paul says: "All men have not faith." These are the same in all ages of the world, and their relation to God is not changed by the change of covenant; nor are they benefited

by the promises of either. Under both covenants they are condemned, unless they repent and embrace the covenant promise, when they are no more unbelievers, but believers.

If we attentively observe the testimony which the Scripture gives of these three great classes of mankind, we cannot fail to perceive that unbelievers under either covenant, or believers under the old covenant, could not, in any wise, answer the purpose, or serve as material of which to build such a structure as the Church of God is declared to be; or that any organization of such people could be formed, which would in any way answer to that glorious body which Christ gave Himself for, and purchased by His own blood.

God's literal people, under the old covenant, were a figure of His spiritual children or people under the new; and the temple where His name dwelt, and where the worshipers brought their sacrifices, was a figure of the spiritual temple, or house of God, under the new covenant. This new or spiritual temple, which the Lord built under the new covenant, is His Church, which He commanded His apostles to build, and in which work He promised to be with them to the end of the world.

The tabernacle which Moses built in the wilderness, and the temple which Solomon built at Jerusalem, were unquestionably types of the Church which God designed to build in the last days. For the building of both these structures, God gave special directions, and, it is said, a pattern was also shown Moses on the Mount. David also gave Solomon particular directions of the manner and fashion for the building of the temple at Jerusalem, and said: "All this the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the work of this pattern." The tabernacle and temple were built according to the directions and pattern which the Lord had given and shown to Moses and David, and when finished, the Lord approved them by the manifestation of His glory appearing in them. But can we believe that God would have shown such approval, if the builders, from any cause, had disregarded the command of the Lord, and made it after another fashion? It was said by the Lord: "See thou make them after their pattern which was shewed thee in the mount." "Thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount." (Exodus xxv.—xxvi.)

If God gave directions for the building of these types of the Church, and would suffer no departure from those directions, can we believe that adherence to His commands and directions in the building of the antitype is of less importance? Or, that He would more readily countenance and bless a departure from His commands in the more important building, than He did in the lesser? Of this Church there has been a great deal said and written, and a great deal of contention. Organizations have been formed in great numbers, all claiming to be Churches of Christ; but many of them are composed of such material as formed a structure not at all agreeing with either of the types referred to, or the anti-type which the Church built by the apostles of Christ presents to us. Neither can they answer the purpose for which the Church was designed.

There is no doubt but that the design of the building of a Church was for the benefit, or comfort and security, of the children or people of God, and the promotion of His glory. If this is so, then the question might arise: why did God not build up a Church under the old covenant? which it is so far from God's doing that he does not even speak of it, the word Church not once occurring in the Old Testament. The reason is obvious; there was not material out of which it could be done. Under the old covenant, man was not even qualified for the formation of an association fit for a type of the Church of Christ! God had to use inanimate material for this purpose. By the corruption and perversion of man's nature, he had become so restive and disorderly, that no organization or association could have been formed which would have had any resemblance to the Church, or which would have had any stability or duration. The inanimate material used by Divine wisdom much better represented the submissive, passive and child-like spirit of the children of God, in whom the selfish spirit is destroyed, so that no one seeks his own, but every one another's wealth; submit themselves one to another in the fear of the Lord, and are willing to lay down their life for their brethren. All mankind being unregenerate, there could no Church be formed until Christ came, and by His death prepared the soul of man for the habitation of the Holy Spirit, by which he was transformed and

so wrought upon that he became fit material of which to build a Church.

When Christ came, He spake of a Church, gave His apostles charge to build it, and how to walk in it. But during His sojourn on earth no organization was formed, nor immediately after His ascent into heaven. Before this, His disciples had not yet received the Holy Ghost, which alone could qualify them for the work, or prepare fit material. At His departure from His disciples, He commanded His apostles to tarry till they were endowed with power from on high, when they should begin to build. They abode at Jerusalem, as Christ bade them, till the day of Pentecost, when they were baptized with the spirit promised, and were thereby qualified to preach the Gospel, and become builders of this spiritual temple, or Church. Many received the word they preached, believed in Christ, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which they were prepared as material fitted to build this house.

The inanimate material of the figurative house, after it was properly hewn and wrought to rule, fitted together without the noise of hammer or iron being heard in the rearing of the structure. This was a beautiful representative figure of the rearing of the spiritual temple, or Church of Christ, by the apostles. The hearts of those who believed in Christ by the word of the apostles, were united together as Christ had prayed His Heavenly Father they should be; and there were no laws, by-laws, or any force or violence needed to bring them into an agreement with each other, but they were by one spirit baptized into one body, and they became one heart and one soul. Such an institution never existed on earth, and could not have done so, because the power did not exist with man to bring it about. The spiritual state of man was such that the apostles, or no other set of men, could ever have formed such an organization or institution, even with the aid of any law or compulsory means, before they were thus prepared by the grace and spirit of God, any more than the workmen of Solomon could have reared such a structure as the temple, from material unwrought and unprepared, even if they had used the most violent noise and force of hammer and iron. Neither could the apostles, by any teaching, instruction, or tactical skill, ever have formed such an association without the operation of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of the believers. The stones and timbers had to be wrought to a

special rule, and the operation upon the hearts of men had also to be a *special* one.

Hope, then, and desire, our position may be clearly understood : that man, having transgressed the command of God, became defiled with sin. God is pure, holy, a light in which is no darkness at all, and a consuming fire to all iniquity. Man, in his defiled state, could not approach to God. His sins were a bar between him and God, which he could not pass. There was no power on earth to remove this sin, and God's justice stood in the way of His looking with favor upon man. In this defiled state of man, the Holy Spirit could not dwell with him, or in his heart, consequently he could not receive the Divine nature, which is ever wrought through the power of the Spirit. No access of man to God, or fellowship with Him, could therefore take place or exist.

God, however, being love, was moved by His divine nature to regard the condition of poor, fallen man, and gave him the promise of the woman's seed, which should bruise the serpent's head. This was the first Gospel promise of God to man. By believing in this promise he had assurance of deliverance from his fallen state, and restoration to that favor with God which he had lost by transgression and sin. This promise, however, made no change of the relation existing between God and man. It took not that from man which forbade his approach to God, or gave him anything of the nature which he had lost by transgression. It only gave assurance that this would be done; but until the promised woman's seed would come to effect the work, he must remain as he was before he received the promise, only the assurance gave him the comfort of hope for the future.

For the purpose of bringing man to know his need of the promised Redeemer, and to believe and trust in Him, God had written the work of the law in his heart, which either accused or excused him, according as he obeyed or violated its precepts. But for the better knowledge of this law, or to quicken its power on the heart, God gave it to Israel, engraven on tables of stone, which, Paul says, gave them much advantage. But neither could this take away sin, or change the relation between God and man. It only condemned for sin, and is by Paul called the ministration of condemnation. Paul says (Gal. iii.): "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 under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed." As a means to confirm and preserve this faith, God chose Israel, whom He made a figure of those whom He would cleanse and purify by faith in Jesus Christ, when in the fullness of time He should come. This chosen people of Israel He called His own people, and promised to be *with* them, dwell *amongst* them, and have an especial care for them; but He never said he would be *in* them; and though He was their God, and they His people, they were not born of Him, and consequently could not be His children.

The Church or House of God, wherein Father, Son and Holy Ghost dwell, it is said, is built of lively or living stones, and forms a spiritual house, wherein spiritual sacrifices are offered. But God's people under the legal dispensation, were, under the law, dead, and shut up under a law which could not give life until the faith should come, which could bring life and make its possessors children of God. Because, under the old dispensation, there was no living material, no such house or temple could be built, and nothing said or mentioned about it.

In the fullness of time God sent His Son, as the promised woman's seed, who gave Himself as a sacrifice for sin, so that all those who, by the power of the law, became sensible of their defiled and sinful state, and mourned and grieved for the unhappy condition they were in, might flee to Him and be washed and cleansed from their defilement. He invites all who are weary of their sins, and heavily laden with guilt, to come to Him, and He will give them rest. (Matt. xi.) He also promises the Holy Spirit to all such as believe in Him, by which they shall be led and guided into all truth; and Paul says (Rom. viii.): "As many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Jesus Christ, having died for sin, satisfied the justice of God's law, so that the justice of God suffers no violence in the forgiveness of sin, but on account of it God can be just, and a justifier of him who believeth in Jesus Christ. These are now justified by faith in Jesus Christ, and quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that the Holy Ghost in the Word of God represents him as quite a different being from what he was before. He was before

dead *in* sin, but now he is dead *unto* sin, and made alive unto God, through faith in Jesus Christ.

The New Testament believer is, therefore, said to be born of God—that is, the new life which is begotten in him, is by the power of God through His Spirit, and he is now spiritual. All such, being clothed with the virtue, merit and righteousness of Jesus Christ, are pure, holy and acceptable to God. They can draw nigh to Him and have fellowship with Him, and all such also have fellowship with one another. Christ says, He will be in them and they in Him. He and the Father will make their abode with them. The difference between these and those who believed under the old covenant is, that then they waited for and trusted that when the Messiah would come He would deliver them. And, although they firmly believed this, and it gave them comfort, they were yet sensible that they were still under the defilement of sin and under condemnation, whilst the other knows that his sins are already washed away, and he is justified from all things. Paul, in Heb. xi., gives examples of the power of faith in the old covenant believers, and names many personally, and what they endured and accomplished, and then concludes, saying: “And these all having obtained a good report through faith, *received not the promise*: God having provided *some better thing for us*, that they without us should not be made perfect.” These did not obtain the promise in life, but their souls were purified by the blood of Christ when He made the offering, and they, as captives, were set free. But the believer under the new covenant *has* received that better thing which the apostle has reference to, which is, that *he is made free* from sin, and has access to God, and fellowship with Him and His Son Jesus Christ.

Having now given our views of what the Church is composed, and also shown that none could be built so long as man was not made a spiritual being, we now come to consider what it was when it was built or organized on the day of Pentecost, by the apostles of Jesus Christ. This was the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on man, and those who received it, the first material with which a Church could be built. It would seem that, as soon as it was possible to do so, the apostles, guided by the Spirit, organized a visible Church, or body of believers. Now, reflect upon the composition of this Church! Was it not composed of such material as

we have described? Three thousand souls embraced Christ by faith, and were by one spirit baptized into one body, and the multitude became one heart and one soul. "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized, and the same day were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship." Soon after this we find that one Ananias and Sapphira fell, and went to their place. Whether these were of the number of the three thousand, or whether they were of those who were subsequently added, we are not told; but I would incline to the belief that they were not of the first day's building, as it is said, "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." But this is not material; whenever they entered, they either were of those who "crept in unawares," or else very soon yielded to the suggestions of Satan; and it is very certain they were not led by the Spirit, nor continued in the apostles' doctrine, and God separated them by an awful judgment.

But I do not propose here to follow the Church, but merely to take notice of what it was when first built by the apostles. No one will dispute its being a community of spiritual children of God, who, by faith in Jesus Christ, were cleansed from sin, and their hearts were fused together by the Holy Ghost, which was an inward work, wrought by an invisible power, which could only be discerned by the outward operation or effect it had upon the body. This spiritual influence led them to unite themselves into a visible body, which was governed by a power or law which never governed any body or association of men before. They had no laws, by-laws, or discipline, but were governed alone by the law of love. This is an undisputed fact. This is the aspect which the first Church bore. They built it of such material, and gave it such form, as Christ by His Word and the Holy Spirit taught them. No one now can build a Church under any other influence and direction; and the same Word and Spirit will surely direct us the same now as then. I do not, therefore, know how we can esteem any thing a Church which is not built of the same material, and governed by the same influence, which the first House of God, or Spiritual Temple, was.

Although our lot is now cast in the Gospel age, I suppose no one will deny that a very great number of our fellow-beings do

not yield to Gospel influence or power. They walk on in the broad way that leads to destruction, and are as carnal, and walk as much after the flesh, as man did in any age of the world; and if *believers* under the old covenant were not fit material to use in building a Church, much less those who are unbelievers, and resist the grace of God in a time of Gospel light, when the true light has come "that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

The apostles, who were endowed with an extraordinary measure of spiritual influence and power, did also unquestionably possess special powers of discernment, and there is no doubt that if any presented themselves for admission into the Church, who they thought were not wrought to the Divine rule, did either reject them, or if they were willing to receive instruction, would "teach them the way of the Lord more perfectly," and then, when taught, would receive them. There is no doubt that the apostles exercised discretion in their admissions into the Church. When the eunuch requested baptism of Philip, he replied, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." This reply of Philip implies that if he had not received satisfactory evidence of fitness, he would have refused. When Peter was in the house of Cornelius, and the Holy Ghost fell upon those who heard the word, he said: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" This surely goes to show that the apostles felt themselves constrained to forbid water, where the subject was not a proper one to receive the ordinance of baptism. Again, Paul says to Timothy: "Lay hands suddenly on no man." This shows conclusively that the apostles would not undertake to build with improper material. The apostles also labored in a Gospel age, but they would not receive such as did not yield to Gospel power. They required regeneration and life, so that the temple might truly be a living one. All unconverted persons are spiritually dead, and a living temple cannot be built of dead material.

Yet, with all the knowledge and discernment of the apostles, it seems that some unworthy persons did still creep in unawares (as Jude says). And this undoubtedly ever will be the case, even where the utmost care and diligence is exercised; and perhaps much more so now, in our day, as our spiritual endowment is not of so high an order as that of those in the apostolic age; and

the adversary has also more advantage, since the *profession* of the religion of Jesus Christ has become popular in many countries. But this is no justification for the laborers or builders in our day to receive unregenerated souls into the Church. No doubt the apostles used all the discretion they were endowed with, and, when they erred in this important matter, were deeply grieved, as every faithful shepherd must be when he becomes aware that he has admitted a thief or a robber into the fold of Christ. But, although he is deeply grieved under any circumstances, yet when he has acted faithfully, from pure motives, he can take some comfort from the consideration that even the apostles sometimes failed in this matter.

If, then, the position is tenable, that there could not be a Church founded before Christ's coming and cleansing man from sin, and the Holy Ghost renewing the heart by shedding the love of God abroad in it, must it not now hold equally good that there can still not now be a Church built of any other material than that which has been prepared in the same way—namely, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost?

Christ commanded to "teach all nations, and baptize them." Whenever we baptize an untaught person, we violate the instructions Christ gave us. No person *is taught* who does not obey the Gospel. If a minister of the Gospel has thousands of hearers, and he presents Gospel truth ever so plainly, if the hearers of the word do not obey, they have not been *taught*. Only the "*tached*" are to be received in building the temple. Those who mocked when Peter and the rest of the apostles were preaching the Gospel on the day of pentecost, and said, "these men are full of new wine," were not "*tached*," nor were they baptized. It may be said, "they did not desire, nor would they have accepted, baptism." Perhaps not; but if they had been willing, no doubt the apostles would have rejected them.

When God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle, He told him what material to use in building it; and do we think that God would have been pleased, and would have caused His glory to fill the building, if Moses had disregarded the command of God, and used some other material? When God commanded Joshua to invest Jericho in a certain manner, and utterly destroy everything in it and take no booty, Achan took certain of

the spoils, contrary to the command of God, and was himself rejected of God, and had to die ; God would not be with them. So King Saul was also rejected of God, for disobedience of God's command. God commanded Moses to make the boards, bars and staves of the tabernacle of shittim wood, and overlay them with gold. Now, if Moses had taken any other kind of wood than shittim wood for this work, or had thought they need not be overlaid with gold, surely God would have rejected his work. And if, whilst Moses was building this tabernacle, and desiring faithfully to follow his instructions, any of the workmen would have come to use a board of any other kind of wood than shittim wood, Moses would surely have rejected it. Now that tabernacle, Paul says (Heb. ix.), was a figure for the time then present, in the which certain offerings were made, till the time of reformation. This expression of the time of reformation, undoubtedly had reference to the reformation which Christ would make at His coming ; and His Church was that which was prefigured.

Now, for the building of this Church, or spiritual tabernacle, Christ has commanded a certain class of people to be taken. That class of people are such as have been *taught* ; and just as Moses was to take no other wood than shittim wood, (for it was said to Moses : " According to all that I have showed thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it,") so the builders of the Church shall take none other persons but such as have been *taught*. And, then, as this shittim wood was commanded to be overlaid with gold, so those souls who are thus *taught*, are also covered, or overlaid with the pure gold of the love of God, which has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Every one who is thus *taught* is converted, and by his walk in love he may be known as a vessel meet for the master's use, or as material fit for the building of the House of God.

It may be contended, that the gift of the Spirit in the apostle's days, was a miraculous power of God displayed in an extraordinary manner, which is not now so manifest as it was then. Admitting that this is so, yet every one who receives Christ by faith, also receives such a measure of the Spirit as will manifest itself by a walk of denial of the flesh and manifestation of love. Love is of such a nature that every one can discern something of it in

others, if they have themselves become partakers of the Divine nature, *as every teacher sent from God must have.*

Viewing these things in this light, we can recognize no society, or organization, as a Church of God, which is not of this building. This is the aspect which the Church bore whilst the apostles were builders; it is the plain command of Christ, and we can see no warrant or countenance in the word of God for departing from the rule and ground they laid down for us. God is the same pure and holy God as He was then; the all-seeing, all-knowing, all-powerful and loving God as he ever was. Man is also the same sinful, depraved, filthy and abominable creature, as he was then; unable to think or do anything good, or in any way to help himself, as the word of God teaches us he was then. Christ also is the same loving Saviour, and His blood as efficacious as it ever was; and the Holy Ghost will as surely and effectually shed the love of God abroad in the heart, and lead His possessor into all truth, as He ever did.

It is a law of nature, that like causes produce like effects; but in nature there are often counteracting agencies or influences which disturb the harmony of its operations; but in the operations of Divine power, nothing can change the result. Repentance and regeneration is the same as it ever was, and if we are brought under its Divine power it will make us what it did in the apostolic age: new creatures, humble, meek, self-denying and inoffensive followers of the lamb of God. An association of such converted persons will form a Church of the same nature and spirit as that which the apostles built in their day.

From this, then, we hope every one can gather what our view is of the material which is essential to the formation of a church, and the ground upon which that view is based.

CHAPTER III.

“ By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”—Heb. xi. 7.

ALL things which God ordered or commanded to be made and done were designed for a certain object or purpose, and if performed and applied, according to the command of God, to that object or for that purpose, did effectually accomplish the end and design which God had in view. But if applied to a different purpose from that for which they were designed, they would as certainly fail of accomplishing the end sought thereby, as they were sure to effect that for which God had designed them.

The ark which God commanded Noah to build for the saving of his house, He gave him special commands how to build in every particular, which Noah strictly followed. This ark, with its living freight, was borne upon the waters many days, and safely brought its occupants over from one era or period of the world's history into another, whilst all outside this ark perished. Naval architects say, a vessel built and constructed as that was, would be very illy adapted to weather or outride a storm at sea. If Noah had been acquainted with naval architecture, and perceiving its want of adaptation to the rules of science, or if some one skilled in the art had suggested some improvement on the plan laid down by the Lord, and Noah had followed these suggestions, do we suppose that God would have preserved Noah and his house in it? Or, because Noah and his house were saved in this ark, and some one had conceived the idea that this must now be a very good and safe vessel in which to carry on maritime commerce, and had applied it to such use, do we suppose he would have succeeded? The ark was useful and safe only for the purpose for which God had designed and ordered it. In saving Noah and his house, God made a special display of His power, as also of the infallibility of His word. Noah affords us an example of a living faith, by his obedience and unquestioning reliance in the word of God's promise, and has become a pattern to believers in every age of the world; and also puts to shame the

doubting, quibbling and fearful disposition of many whose lot has been cast in a more highly favored age of the world.

God has a special purpose in all that He orders to be done, and however unpromising the means may appear to man, they will effectually accomplish the end. Many of the means which God commanded Moses to use in leading Israel from Egypt to Canaan, would seem to carnal reason very inefficient to the end designed; but they never failed, if the word of God was obeyed. But when the same means were used to attain other purposes, they failed. When the children of Israel appeared to Pharaoh to be entangled in the wilderness, he pursued them, no doubt thinking there was no way of escape for them and they would become an easy pray to him. But God had a way for them, which to man would have appeared a visionary idea; but God had ordered it, and it could not fail. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, its waters divided, and Israel passed through as on dry ground. This was God's purpose; but it was not His purpose that the Egyptians should pass over as the Israelites did. What served as a salvation to one, was destruction and death to the other. This example teaches us how implicitly we should rely upon God's word, however unpromising Satan might represent it to us; and what heed we should take that we do not trust in what God has not promised.

In the wilderness, God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle, wherein was put the ark of the covenant; the cherubims were set up in it, and herein God had promised to answer Moses and Israel, when they would inquire of Him. For the same purpose He commanded Solomon to build a house, or temple, for His name to dwell. This tent and house are both made types of the Church of God, and were figures for the time then present of that which should come after. They served only the purpose for which God had designed them, and if the worshipers would have had due regard or consideration for the object of these buildings, and the worship commanded to be conducted there, with the offerings and sacrifices there ordered, they would not have fallen into the errors and destructive practices they afterward did.

Israel, as a nation, was chosen of God, and ordained for a certain purpose. So was the tabernacle and temple ordered for a certain purpose, and that purpose was accomplished in them.

However, many of the Israelites did not, as individuals, enjoy or participate in the blessings it was their privilege to do ; yet God's purpose could not be frustrated. God never designed, or said that, because they had descended literally from Abraham, or because they were circumcised and had privileges which the Gentiles did not enjoy, they should therefore inherit the promise ; but they were deluded into this belief, and therefore did not make use of the advantage God had given them by the law and oracles. They made a misuse of that which was designed for their benefit, and sought that by them which God had never designed they should obtain thereby. Their misuse made that which was designed as a blessing, prove a curse to them. So also of the sacrifices and ordinances, and even the law of Moses itself. All were given for a purpose, and that purpose was attained ; but those whom Satan succeeded in deluding into a perverted idea of the end for which they were designed, never were participators in the benefits accruing from them.

Those who brought their offerings and sacrifices, expecting thereby the guilt of their sins should be washed away, or forgiven of God, were surely deceived ; for it was impossible, Paul says, these could take away sin. So those also who sought by obedience to the law, to obtain justification and life, found that the means they were using to obtain this end, tended only to bring them condemnation and death. So Paul says, Rom. vii. : "The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." It is not the fault of the commandment, but the use we make of it, which causes it to be death to us. Paul says : "The law is good if we use it lawfully;" that is, if we use it according to the design for which it was given. It never was given to us to take away sin, but to give us the knowledge of it, that by this knowledge we might be led to seek its forgiveness in Christ, where alone it is to be found. When this is done, then God's object in giving the law is obtained ; but if Satan can so far blind and delude us, that we seek righteousness by obedience to the law, then we make a misuse of it, and God's design in giving it is frustrated in us, or so far as we individually are concerned ; but the object of God in giving the law was obtained nevertheless. Paul says, Rom. iii. : "What if some did not believe, shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"

Thus it was also with Jesus Christ. God sent Him into the world to save that which was lost, and He did effectually work salvation for every child of Adam; but great numbers rejected Him and His name, and many again confess His name, but in or by their works deny Him. There is no promise for either of these, though it is their privilege to enjoy the advantages accruing to man from the atonement made by Jesus Christ. Paul says, 1st Cor. i.: "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." The Greeks were a people who valued worldly wisdom very highly, and very eagerly sought after it; but by their wisdom and philosophy they never could come to the knowledge of God and His righteousness. Therefore, such a doctrine as the Gospel of Jesus Christ seemed to them a very foolish thing. The worldly-wise have ever been of the same mind as they were then, and the true Christ crucified is to this day as much foolishness to them, as it was to the Greeks in the days of the apostles. The Jews had some knowledge of God, but to obtain righteousness by another was to them offensive, and therefore the doctrine of the Gospel was to them a stumbling-block. But to them that are called, whether Jews or Greeks—that is, those who have come to the right knowledge of God, and perceive the true relation that exists between them and God—to these Christ crucified is both wisdom and power. They adore the wisdom which devised the plan of salvation, and the power which so effectually executed it.

But this has reference to those who reject Christ openly and professedly, and those who make no confession of His name. These we know have no promise in the Gospel, and for them there is no hope. There are, however, many who profess to believe in His name, and expect to be saved by Him, who will yet fail, for Christ Himself says that not every one who calls Him Lord shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Christ is a complete and certain Saviour to all those who truly receive and believe in Him. Those, therefore, who Christ says will come in the day of His appearing, and will say, "Have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in

Thy name done many wonderful works?" whom He will profess that He never knew, and bid them depart as workers of iniquity. Likewise those who, He says, will say, "Have we not eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you I know you not whence ye are." These, although they expect salvation by Jesus Christ, do not seek it in the way God has appointed for its reception. These are in truth unbelievers, else Christ would know them; but they differ widely from the class first noticed. They refused altogether the means, or rejected what God had appointed for our salvation, and what it was their privilege to enjoy. The latter intended to, and thought they were using them, but they were not using them in the *way* God had appointed. It is pretty evident that they expected to be saved by Christ because of something they had done, and this is the reason of their presenting what they had done. Their case seems pitiful; but whose was the fault? Evidently their own, else God could not find any in them. They did not obey the light which would have led them, and they were therefore given over to error and delusion to perish. I mention these things, and dwell upon them, to show the great necessity or importance of our having a knowledge of the purpose and object of the commands and ordinances which God has given, with the design of furthering the great work of our salvation. How easily we may form wrong conceptions of them, and the fatal consequences that must result to us from this error.

We propose in this chapter specially to consider the purpose for which God instituted the ordinance of a Church. The first object of God in regard to man, is his salvation. To this end all His dealings with man tend either directly or indirectly. There are many means which tend indirectly to this end, but there is only one which tends directly thereto, or which of itself brings salvation. Christ is the only means which directly, of Himself, and without anything else, saves the sinner from the wrath of God, brings him into fellowship with God, and clothes him with righteousness, or the garments of salvation, as Isaiah says in his LXVI. chapter: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride

adorneth herself with her jewels." All other ordinances, means, and dealings of God with man, tending to salvation, are indirect, tending to bring him to Christ, if he has not yet come to Him, or to preserve him with or in Christ, when he has once come to Him. Of these indirect means, not one has, of itself, or in itself, saving virtue. Saving virtue alone and singly dwells in Christ, and when we ascribe that to another object, or means, than Him, we rob Him of His honor, and diminish our love and reverence for Him.

All indirect means before conversion, chief among which are conviction and repentance, are designed to bring us to Christ; and those after conversion are designed to keep us with Christ. He is the true ark of safety, in whom we shall be as surely and as securely preserved from the fiery deluge of the wrath of God, which shall destroy the ungodly in the end of time, as the ark of Noah saved those in it from the waters which destroyed the ungodly from the face of the earth, at the time of the watery deluge. He is the true refuge, in which the soul is as free from the power of the law, as the manslayer was in Israel, when he had entered into the city of refuge.

The Church, then, as a means tending to salvation, is one of those means which we have termed indirect, not in itself possessing any merit or righteousness, and consequently not able to impart any to its members, for it is evident that nothing can impart what it does not possess. Neither does any one, because he is in the Church, or because of anything he does in it, receive salvation through Christ. The Church is God's ordinance, and is of great worth in His sight, and also of great value and comfort to man; but we have great reason to take heed that we do not use it for a purpose for which God has not designed it. It is only useful to us when we use it in its legitimate sphere. Every ordinance and appointment of God is good, if it be used lawfully, that is, with the design and in the manner for which, and in which God has appointed it, but mischievous when used with any other design, or in any other manner.

Any ordinance or duty which is not observed or discharged in a Gospel spirit, is not only vain, but destructive. Paul says to his brethren in Gal. v. : "Behold I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing." It is

evidently not the intention of Paul that the act of circumcision itself would make "Christ of no effect" to those who receive it; for he himself took and circumcised Timothy, and he certainly did not render him Christless (Acts xvi.). The difference is, Paul circumcised Timothy in a Gospel spirit, whilst the Galatians sought it in a legal spirit. It is, therefore, the spirit in which an ordinance or duty is performed which makes it saving or destructive. An act may in itself be good, but if performed in a legal spirit it is offensive to God. A legal spirit does not only render the best works nugatory, but actually destructive.

In order rightly to comprehend the design and use of the Church, it becomes necessary to consider what man was by creation, what he became by the fall, and what he becomes by grace. In his first creation, man was free from sin, holy, and in fellowship with God. God is wisdom and goodness itself, and although we may not be able to comprehend the wisdom and goodness which permitted man to fall, or created him so that it was possible he could fall, yet there is no doubt that it did not comport with His infinite wisdom and goodness, so to create him that he could not fall. That it was not the will of God he should fall, must be evident from the command He gave him, and the threat for disobedience. That man could have obeyed God and avoided the fall, must, also, be concluded; because it is not consistent with the attributes of God to suppose that He would have punished man for doing what He had created him incompetent to avoid. Then he was not in the power of Satan, and could never have been thrust from his glorious position, or the blessed relation in which he stood toward God. But man could yield himself up to sin, and to attain this end Satan enticed him. If Satan would have had man in his power, he would, in his rage, at once have thrust him down from the glorious position he occupied. But as he could not do this, he enticed him to yield his will to sin.

Having yielded his will to sin, man became the servant of sin, and being unclean because of it, he was separated from God, and could never approach Him, unless he could cleanse himself from sin. This man could not do. As he had yielded himself unto sin, he became the servant of the author of sin; and if God, in His goodness and mercy, had not foreordained and provided a means by which He could restore man, he would have had forever to remain

in this service, and receive its wages. Of this means God gave promise in the woman's seed; but until the seed came he had still to abide under the yoke of sin. Christ, the woman's seed, was here promised to fallen man as his Saviour; and those who by faith embraced this promise received witness that they were accounted righteous. These, although they died under the promise, still enjoyed only a prospective delivery, or salvation. They lived and died sinners in themselves, but under the promise that at the coming of Christ, the woman's seed, they would be made free. Although man had not power to cleanse or free himself from sin, he had power to embrace Christ by faith, and enjoy hope of deliverance. This Satan could not hinder. Neither could he, when once man had embraced the promised Saviour by faith, force or compel him to relinquish his hold of Him. But as we have said, he could in the garden of Eden entice man to sin, so he also could here seek, by his alluring snares, to draw man from the ground of hope which he had by faith in Christ, and thereby rob him of his precious benefits.

We will not weary the reader with a lengthy dissertation on this part of our subject, but merely allude briefly to so much as seems necessary to a right understanding of our views. Christ, being the only direct means of salvation, was here first presented to man for his acceptance by faith, or rejection by unbelief. But in order that man should embrace this means of salvation, it was necessary that he should understand his true position and relation to God, so that he would feel his necessity of the means. For this purpose God makes use of the law which he gave to man, which Paul says, "was given for the knowledge of sin." This law is a means which is an essential to salvation, because without it man could not know his true relation to God, and without this knowledge, could not seek the righteousness of God. It is, however, still only an indirect means, inasmuch as it takes away no sin or brings no righteousness; but as a means by which he knows his need, he is led by it to embrace the promise. Here we may say, that this is *still* the office of the law. It *still* performs the same important, and we may say essential office, in the work of salvation. But Satan ever sought to defeat the object which God had in view, and for this purpose so perverted the minds of mankind, that they used the law as a direct means of

salvation, and thereby, in many souls, defeated the end for which God gave it. God had also given Israel other ordinances, and commanded them to bring sacrifices and offerings. But none of these took away sin, yet some of them were called "sin offerings," and it was said when they would offer them, their sins should be forgiven. But this forgiveness had reference only to the natural disabilities which their sin brought them under; but in relation to God, their sin remained till Christ, the true sin offering, should be offered. Paul says, Heb. x. : "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin." In the sacrifices, he says: "There was a remembrance again made of sin every year, and in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, thou hast had no pleasure." Therefore these only tended to, and were indirect means of, salvation. These were types and figures of Christ, and served a different office from what the law did. The design of the law was to bring man to embrace the promise, but that of the offerings, sacrifices and ordinances of Israel, were designed as preservatives, to keep them in remembrance of their need, and prevent Satan from enticing them from the blessed hope they had obtained by the promise. As the law was the means under the old covenant to bring sinners to embrace the promise, and the same thing was necessary after the new covenant was instituted, the law did not cease at the coming of Christ. Man, by nature, was the same under both covenants, and the promise in both rests on Christ; in the first, on that which He would do at his appearing, and in the second, on that which He did do whilst on earth. The law, therefore, served to bring the sinner to embrace the promise, and the ordinances, to hold him to it. As the promise under the old covenant had reference to what Christ *would do*, the ordinances, being types and shadows of that to be done, had naturally to cease when the substance itself appeared or was realized. Then God gave the ordinances to Israel, not to lead them to embrace the promise, because they were only commanded to such as had already embraced it, but to support them in their faith, and keep them in remembrance of the object of their faith, so that Satan could not so easily lead them away from it. It will, therefore, be perceived that the ordinances of Israel gave no merit; no one of them, nor all together, could save. They were means which God had appointed to effect the end of salvation, but they were

indirect means, and in themselves had no saving virtue. The great delusion of the Jews lay in their making them a direct means, and using them to obtain righteousness by a merit which they did not possess. This delusion is apparent by their not receiving Christ when He came. They did (as Paul says) not submit themselves to the righteousness of God, but sought to establish their own righteousness by the works of the law.

This, therefore, was a misconception of those means, making them direct, whereas they were only indirect means; and by their misuse, instead of a benefit and help to salvation, they became an injury and hinderance to it. But the true Israelites, who had a clear knowledge of the nature and design of these means, used them to advantage, and with great benefit, and delighted greatly in them as elevating their hearts, lifting their affections up to God, and joying and rejoicing in their prospective salvation. This made David say (Ps. lxxxiv.): "For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Because the Church is an institution originating under the Gospel, the inquiry in relation to its object naturally leads us, first, somewhat briefly to consider man in a state of grace, as he is when made partaker of Gospel benefits. We are now in the Gospel age, or era, of the world; but man by that is nothing changed. He is by nature the same sinful creature, dead in trespasses and sins, as he was before Christ's coming into the world and publishing the glad tidings of the Gospel. But he is not so by necessity, as he was before, but has privilege to cast off the yoke and become the servant of righteousness. He is invited and besought with great earnestness to become the servant of Christ. Here the same indirect means are made use of, as under the old covenant—namely, the law. Its power is made use of to give man the knowledge of sin. Just as in God's dispensation with man, Moses had to come into the world before Christ, so his ministry must still be executed in man, before it is possible he can come to Christ. But now being by the law or ministration of Moses, drawn to Christ, he embraces Him as his Saviour, and is *saved*; that is, he is now made free from the guilt of sin, it having lost its power of condemnation; he has access to God, and enjoys

fellowship with Him, who also owns him as His child, and calls him His son. Being thus now brought under the Gospel promise, he rests not upon that which Christ will do, but upon that which He has done ; and it will be perceived that his relation to God is entirely different from that of the believer under the old covenant, which we have before had under consideration. Different indirect means are also necessary now, to preserve him from falling into the snares of the devil, and again lapsing into sin.

Christ did not consider His apostles themselves competent to commence the building of a Church, until they were qualified by the power of the Holy Spirit. He said they should tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. When the Holy Spirit endued them with this power, they began to preach and endeavor to bring men to Christ, but they did not begin by setting forth the merits and benefits of Christ, because this could have had no effect on people who knew not that they needed any such thing. They had first to use the indirect means of the law, to bring the sense of guilt upon the soul, and convince them of the deplorable condition they were in. When they succeeded in convincing a number of them that they were sinners, they became greatly troubled, and cried out, "What shall we do," then they began to present to them the direct means of salvation—namely, Christ. Now, when this multitude embraced Christ by faith as the only means of salvation, the Holy Spirit united their hearts by the love of God ; then the apostles began to build them up into a visible body or Church. This was the first association of man that ever existed on earth as a true living *Church*, and it is reasonable that we should inquire what its object was, or for what purpose Divine wisdom had ordained it.

To this end, it is important to observe what the Scriptures testify of it, and also closely to observe what the apostles and those who were associated with them in this Church said, and what they did. That God's object in ordaining a Church was not for the purpose of saving sinners, is evident from the fact that it did not save all that entered into it. If the Church had been built for the purpose of saving, it would have to save all that enter it, for God never appointed any means which were not entirely efficient. Christ, when speaking of the Church under the similitude of a sheep-fold, evidently indicates that it has no

saving efficacy or virtue. Christ Himself is the only means of saving, and no one ever entered Christ but what was saved, if they abode in Him. But of the Church as a sheep-fold, He speaks of some entering who are thieves and robbers. We also read of Ananias and Sapphira, who were in the Church, being stricken with death, because they lied unto God. Others, whilst in the Church, blasphemed and committed fornication, thus giving evidence that they were not in Christ or in a saved state, and were severed from the Church and given over to Satan. This is sufficient to show that the Church was not ordained of God to save.

That which presents itself most conspicuously in the sayings and doings of the early builders of the Church, is their disinterested labor, self-denial and suffering. All their actions were imbued with that Divine love, which they were made partakers of by the power of the Holy Ghost, and Paul would not even accept of that which was his just due, lest Satan might take advantage of it to make it appear that he was acting from interested motives. This principle also prevailed throughout the Church, and shows how largely they partook of the Divine nature. Divine love prompted Christ to leave the glory of His Father for a season, to endure the cross and despise the shame. The same principle also induced His holy apostles to exert themselves to the utmost, at the expense of great affliction and suffering, to bring souls to Christ, who was the only means of salvation. In doing this, they brought them to the Church also, for Christ Himself, by His Spirit, would unite them with the members of the Church, and his spirit would also lead them to unite with the visible Church, for their own comfort and the glory of God.

In these labors, the builders of the Church proceeded differently from those of any human organization. In all human organizations some perceptible advantage is sought, and these advantages are held out as inducements for others to unite with them. But the early builders of the Church did not do so. The reason was, there was no benefit or advantage to be obtained by it. They labored amongst unconverted, graceless people, who could see nothing in the Church of any worth to them. And in their carnal state they could obtain no benefit or advantage in it, not even reconciliation with God, salvation, or anything of a Divine nature. Their efforts had therefore first to be to make them

sensible that they are sinners, and as such under the wrath of God, which they must forever bear, if their sins are not taken away. In all their labors this was their first effort, unless it was with such as had already, by the grace of God and the force of His law upon their hearts, been brought to realize this, as was the case with Saul of Tarsus, and I would infer, also, with Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch. In all these cases they immediately preached Jesus to them, because the law had executed its office with them before, leaving them, as Christ represents the man journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, half dead and unable to help themselves. But with those resting on their own righteousness, or lying in Pagan darkness, they had first to awaken to a sense of their true relation to God, by the power of God's law. But in no case do we find them pointing the sinner, either dead and hardened, or awakened and trembling, to the Church. To bring them to Christ was the object, and the effect of their coming to Him was, as I suppose, invariably to lead them to the Church. If ever the apostles did urge any to unite with the Church, it must have been such as had first received Christ by faith, for the Church could be of no benefit to any others. I have no doubt they did instruct their converts in this duty, but it could not have been before they had embraced Christ, otherwise they would have to teach them to climb in some other way than by the door. The apostles' constant practice was to declare the miserable state of all out of Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, moral or immoral, bond or free; that all are included in unbelief, and consequently under condemnation of the righteous law of God. When they would become convinced of the truth of this, they would then preach to them the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus Christ, He being the only direct means under heaven. In Acts iv., Peter, speaking of Christ, says: "Neither is their salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

As we frequently hear other means of salvation set up, or, at least, other means associated with Christ for the forgiveness of sins or salvation, we feel constrained to give this matter a little consideration here. In the first place, I would ask: Is Christ a complete Saviour? I believe He is, and think I have strong Scripture grounds to support the view. The voice from Heaven at His

baptism said: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." John the Baptist said: "He is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." Paul, to the Corinthians, says, 1st Epistle, ii.: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." If any duty, ordinance or work was necessary to associate with Christ for the forgiveness of sins, then is Christ not a complete Saviour. God is not pleased with Him alone. He, as the Lamb of God, does not alone take away sin, and Paul had left something in coming to the Corinthians, which was of the highest importance for them to know. The angel of the Lord said to Joseph: Mary "shall have a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall *save* His people from their sins." To the shepherds, the angel said: "Unto you is born a *Saviour*." Under these declarations of such high authority, could He be anything less than *completely* and *entirely* a *Saviour*? And is there any other name, any other thing, or any other means of which this thing is said? Christ also repeatedly said Himself that He has power to forgive sins, and also declared that he that believeth on Him "hath everlasting life," and "this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." There are many more testimonies, both in the evangelists and in the epistles, equally strong in proof of this position. It is true, faith is mentioned in connection with Christ, but faith is only the hand, as we might say, by which we grasp, or lay hold of His merit. It is also said of some that they purified their hearts by faith. But here the object, which is Christ, is understood, for faith must always have an object.

We do not find that the apostles urged any outward duty on those who inquired about salvation, except in two places, where baptism is named in connection with the means which will save; but I think we have good reason to believe that these expressions were not intended to convey the idea, that the guilt of sin is washed away by that ordinance. But we will not argue that point here, but leave it for a subsequent chapter. Neither do we find that they urged any one to unite themselves to the Church. Yet I suppose those who were converted to the faith all did so, as the Spirit which they received united them, heart and soul, to their fellow-believers, and led them to obey the injunction of the Saviour. But, as the apostles were commanded to *teach them to*

observe all things which Christ had commanded them, and as they had not then the written Word, as we have now, they no doubt told their converts what the Saviour's commands were.

The apostles were commanded to preach the Gospel, and seem to have been very solicitous to spread it abroad. The Church, as a light, also contributed to spreading it in the world around them. By the contribution of means to those who labored in the Word, they also may have helped greatly to advance the Gospel cause. All these were duties of the Church, but do not seem to be the object for which the Church was ordained. These objects might have been attained without the organization of such a visible combination or union as the Church forms. The special object for which the Church was designed, seems to be one in which each member is specifically charged with a certain duty, which every other member of the body has a right to claim or demand of them; and in case of failure to perform that duty, has a right also to reprove the delinquent. In regard to the duties above referred to, there is no specific duties assigned to any special member of the Church, and in their discharge each one must be governed by the convictions of their own conscience. Remembering that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and for the furtherance of His Gospel and the relief of the poor, the Lord asks of them to contribute of that fullness according as He has prospered them, or entrusted His goods to their care; not grudgingly, but of a willing mind.

Every member of the Church is supposed to be a child of God, born of the spirit, and possessed of that life which the Saviour called everlasting or eternal life. I say they are *supposed* to, because none other have any business or right there; yet I am also aware that there have ever such crept into the Church, who were not born again; but so long as this is not apparent, the members of the Church have no right to conclude that they are not children, and when this is, or becomes apparent, will purge itself of them. In reflecting upon the composition of the Church, and the special charges which Christ and the apostles give to every member of the body, it becomes apparent that the object of the formation of the Church, is the preservation of that Divine life which every child of God possesses, which the devil, our own flesh, and the world, are ever seeking to destroy.

As we have already said, Christ is the means which God has appointed to give life and salvation to every one who comes to Him. This means is effectual, certain and infallible, and to every one who remains in him is also sure. The Church can give no life, as it is only one of those indirect means of salvation of which we have spoken. It is appointed of God to preserve the life begotten by other means, and so long as it is a living church, or church indeed, it will as effectually accomplish the design of its formation, as Christ will accomplish the end for which He was sent. Satan can force or drive no soul out of Christ, but may try to allure them from Him, by flattering and deception. Against these wiles of Satan, the Church is designed to guard its members, and if they will heed its warnings and services, it will preserve them. But as God in the beginning created man with a susceptibility of falling, (it not comporting with His wisdom and glory so to create him that he could not exercise his will for good or evil,) so it has also not been consistent with His Divine attributes, so to order the re-creation that man has no power to choose, or to exercise his will in a redeemed state, or the means of his preservation and safety to be such, that by disregarding the service of Love, he may not also cast away its benefits.

I know that Christ says, no one is able to pluck one of His sheep out of His Father's hand, saying (John x.): "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand;" and again (John xi.): "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." From these expressions of Christ, with others tending to give the believer confidence in his entire safety, many have taken the idea that those who are once redeemed cannot fall away and perish. If this were so, why would Christ and the apostles warn believers so much of the danger of coming short of securing their salvation? Christ says: "He that endureth unto the end shall be saved." Here is an intimation that some might not endure, which could not be expressed if they could not fail to endure to the end. In Matt. xii., Christ speaks of the unclean spirit going out of a man, and his house (or heart, as I would take it,) being swept and garnished. But the spirit returneth, taking seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last end of that man is worse than the first. This surely

represents a heart swept and cleansed from sin, and garnished with the Divine virtues and graces. Again, Christ speaks, in Matt. xxiv., of a servant whom a master had left in charge, or ruler of his household, to give them their meat in due season; if he shall say in his heart, my master delayeth his coming, and shall begin to eat and drink with the drunken, the lord of that servant will come when he is not aware, and give him his portion with hypocrites, etc. In Luke xxi., Christ says to His disciples: "Take heed unto yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and that day come upon you unawares." And in a subsequent verse He says: "Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy," etc. He, in these several quotations, speaks to His disciples in a manner which would be quite unnecessary, and also unreasonable, if such a supposition could not occur.

In the tenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, Paul tells his brethren that he would not have them to be ignorant of what occurred to Israel, how they had all left Egypt, had all gone through the sea, and eaten the same meat and drank the same drink; but they lusted after evil things, and fell in the wilderness. He then warns his brethren that they should take heed lest they also fall. In Hebrews iii. and iv., Paul also warns and admonishes his brethren to take heed lest they fall through unbelief, and come short of entering into rest. Surely these expressions are as plain as language can make them, that there is danger of the believer falling, and not only falling, but perishing. If they could not fall and perish, what would be the meaning of such language? or, why would it be uttered? In Gal. v., Paul also says: "Whosoever of you is justified by the law is *fallen from grace*." If they were in grace, they must have been converted, and children of God; and they could not fall from grace if they did not stand in a state of grace? There are also many other expressions, equally strong with these, in support of this position.

But, it is said, this position is only supported by inference, whilst the other is by actual declaration. Where the expressions from which the inference is drawn are so numerous and so strong, as they are in this instance, and are such as would leave them altogether meaningless without this inference, we have reason to inquire whether an inference may not be drawn from the positive

expression which will harmonize with the others, which would be altogether without force, without the inference we have drawn from *them*. There are other positive assertions from which we know that we must draw inferences differing from the import of the words themselves. Luke says, chapter ii.: "In those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that *all the world* should be taxed." We know that Cæsar Augustus had not authority to tax *all the world*, but that his decree only had reference to that part of it over which he had authority. In John xii., Christ says: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, *will draw all men unto me*. (This he said, signifying what death He should die.)" In this expression (although it is positive) we *must* infer that He meant all who would be saved. We know that all men did not come to Him personally, and in a spiritual sense; only too many never came to Him. In John xiii., where we read of Christ washing His disciples' feet, it is said: "He riseth from supper, and *laid aside His garments*; and took a towel and girded Himself." I once heard a man contend that Christ "took off all His garments. One garment, or several pieces, does not meet the expression; He must have taken off all." He said: "The Word says so—His *garments*." We must admit, here is a positive declaration, but I do not suppose any reasonable person would uphold that Christ so far violated the rules of propriety and decency, as to entirely denude Himself in the presence of His disciples, even if they were all males. We must here draw the rational inference, that Christ took off and laid aside some part of His outer garments. The inference we would draw from the positive declarations above referred to is, that Christ desired to give the timid and fearful believer assurance that no power, no temptation, or no trial, however fearful they might be, should be able to sever them forcibly from Him. They should, if they cleave to Him, have power to overcome all the powers of evil, however threatening they may appear.

Christ speaks of great security to the believer, who is under grace; showing him that no power or force, however great, can pluck him out of the Father's hands. He is entirely safe, so long as he does not consent and yield his will to sin. On the other hand, the flesh and the world are great adversaries, and opposers of the Divine life in the soul, and Satan working through them,

may excite such lusts and emotions in our earthly members, or carnal nature, as may entice us to yield our will to a carnal life, or to walk after the flesh. To guard the believer against this, Christ and the apostles have given us the many warnings referred to before. If man in the beginning could be enticed to yield his will to sin, why not now? If the Divine life in man could then be extinguished in him, why not again? So long as man believes in Christ, he will not die; but when he ceases to believe, he dies. In Rev. iii., we read of the Church of Sardis, that was dead. Surely, if it ever was a Church, it was alive; but now it was dead.

In view of this danger, Christ formed His Church as a means of preservation to His children, as well as for their comfort and enjoyment, just as a natural parent builds a house for the safety, comfort and enjoyment of his children. The believers in Christ are first united in spirit, and then in the outward bond of fellowship; and God has given them such ordinances in the Church, and prescribed such duties to the members individually, as will tend to keep alive this love and charity, which is the source of their enjoyment, and what Paul terms the "bond of perfectness."

It would be impossible to lay down, or specifically to mention all the different duties which are incumbent on the members of the Church. They are all based on the principle of love; and the circumstances which require their walk in love are very various. We may, however, mention some few which seem prominent, and are referred to in the Word of God. First among these we might mention the ministry. God instituted the ordinance of the ministry as a great comfort and blessing, and Paul, by the Holy Ghost, instructs the ministry in what light they shall regard themselves, and teaches the Church how they shall regard the ministry. Christ says, Mark ix.: "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and *servant* of all." And in Matt. xx.: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your *servant*," and says further: "For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Paul also says, he has made himself servant unto all. The apostles also frequently call themselves servants of God, because they served His household. God Himself could receive no service from them, but in that which they served His Church they served Him. Peter also

charges the ministry in what spirit they should take the oversight of the flock, not as being lords over God's heritage. They should consider themselves as unworthy servants, as Paul considered himself less than the least of all saints. Unto the Church Paul says, they shall esteem those very highly who labor among them and admonish them, and says, also, they shall obey those who have the rule over them, as such that watch over their souls. If the ministry, and the Church, (or the laity,) regard themselves and one another in this light, then the ministry can yield themselves to the service in a willing mind. Paul, when at Miletus, sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the Church, and charged them: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

The charge to the elders of Ephesus to "feed the Church of God," has reference to that spiritual meat of the Word of God, which is the special aliment of the children of God. For this purpose we find the apostles gathering their brethren together, and dispensing this Word to them, and Paul tells the Hebrews not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. Every faithful minister will, therefore, as often as opportunity and occasion offers, preach and declare the Word of Truth to those whom he can engage to meet. Paul charges Timothy very earnestly to "preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

A godly, faithful ministry is, therefore, an ordinance of great blessing and means of safety to the Church; and Paul to Timothy asserts that by faithfulness in this calling, he will both save himself and those that hear him. He says: "Take heed unto thyself, and to the doctrine; continue in them; for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." Faithful ministers (and, indeed, we may well say the Holy Ghost appoints no other) will watch over the flock, in meekness try to be ensamples to them, reprove and instruct the wayward and erring, comfort the weak and feeble-minded, encourage the despondent, and comfort, encourage and instruct all, both privately and publicly, as often as opportunity offers.

Paul compares the Church to our natural body, in which the members have mutual interest for one another. If one suffers, they all suffer; and every one lends all the help it can for the safety and rescue of the other. The health and vigor of the Church consists in a firm and lively faith. If there is a true living faith, the spirit will always be lively and active; and if one is perceived to be weak in faith, or drooping in spirit, all are in sympathy with them, and try to comfort and encourage them by the presentation of the blessed Word of promise; and if one errs from the faith, or is overtaken in a fault, all are solicitous, and labor together to restore them in the most gentle manner, as Paul says, "in the spirit of meekness," for they fear lest a member might here perish. If one member of our natural body suffers, all the other members suffer with it. So Paul also says of the spiritual body: "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer." The love of God constrains them to walk lovingly toward all their brethren. God has great love and regard for His children; and as they have received His nature, they evince it in the consideration, care and love they manifest for one another. His Church is a living temple, built of lively stones. No dead stone is of any use, or has any business here, and the builders are always very anxious lest they might receive into the house of God material which is unfit, or improperly prepared. The apostles were endowed with a large measure of the Holy Spirit, and by it perceived the mischief which unconverted, carnal persons would work in the Church; and as they directed the churches to put away from among themselves wicked persons, withdraw themselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and have no company with such as did not obey their word, we may well conceive that they also exercised prudent care, or discretion, in their admissions into the Church, especially as the Saviour had told them that such as entered the Church without conversion would be thieves and robbers. (John x.)

The Saviour directs His disciples, in His Sermon on the Mount, how they shall walk before the world; how inoffensive, harmless and forbearing they shall be toward all men, not resisting evil, but returning good for evil, and love and do good to their enemies, so that the light of their spirit might shine, and show to the world that they possess the nature of their Heavenly Parent.

Paul repeats the charge in Ephesians v., telling his brethren that they shall "be followers of God as dear children, and *walk* in love, as Christ also has loved us, and gave Himself for us." Christ gave Himself for us when we were sinners, and whilst we were His enemies, He died for us; and surely we could do nothing less than return good for evil, if we would walk in love, as Christ did. Paul also says, in Rom. xii. : "Recompense to no man evil for evil;" and again, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Christ also repeatedly and earnestly commands His disciples to love one another. And we find the apostles Paul, Peter and John, in their epistles, faithfully carrying out what Christ charged them to do—namely, "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

These are charges, as duties, enjoined on every member of the Church of Christ. The Spirit which they receive in conversion also impresses this disposition into their hearts, and inclines them to walk in love toward all men. But there is a law in their members, which wars against the law of the Spirit. If this law which is in the members were obeyed, it would soon destroy the law of the Spirit, and this Satan is constantly laboring to excite and bring to life. But by these commands given to the Church, and the ministry and laity, admonishing, encouraging and reproving one another by the power of these words, preserves them from falling into the snare of the enemy. Thus the Church, and these commands and duties enjoined upon the members, becomes a preservative of the Divine life of believers. Obedience to all these commands gives no righteousness, or does not save; but they tend to preserve that which has been obtained by faith in Jesus Christ, and, therefore, may with propriety be called an indirect means of salvation.

We can very plainly perceive that a person walking as this law or rule here prescribes, is entirely different, or, we might say, opposite, to that in which a man in his carnal nature walks. Paul says, Romans viii. : "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And

again, in 1st Cor. ii., he says: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." This element, then, around and about the believers, cannot help but exert a deleterious influence over them. Christ said offenses must come. By the Church, this deleterious influence is counteracted; but reason itself would teach us, that if the carnal element of the world is admitted into the Church, it must neutralize its preservative influence. Offenses from the world are unavoidable; they must come, but still they are not so dangerous as those which occur in the Church itself, inasmuch as an open enemy is not so dangerous as a hidden one, or one outside of our house cannot so easily injure us as if admitted into it.

Besides the walk in love to the world, and the general charge of believers to love one another, Christ gives special directions how to proceed in certain cases, as where offenses occur: "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 an heathen man and a publican." This is a command of Christ, and must be one of love, and the following of it and carrying it out, must be walking in the strictest love. Any deviation from it is a deviation from the law of love.

By a little reflection, we must perceive the tendency of such a course as is here prescribed by our Saviour. There is great consideration for offenders here presented, but also firm and persevering labor of love prescribed, in order to win him and reclaim him from his error. Many a time the flesh would prompt us rather to submit, and bear the trespass silently, than to take this heavy cross upon ourselves; but love to God and our brother forbids it. Paul earnestly and affectionately urges this duty, in Gal. vi., saying: "Brethren, if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Now the foregoing are ordinances and duties the Lord Jesus and the apostles have prescribed for the church to walk in and

keep; and Christ makes obedience to them a test of love. It is vain that we profess to love Him, if we do not keep His commandments. Unless we have been truly converted, we cannot keep them, and therefore it usually happens that those who have crept into the Church unawares, or climbed up some other way than entering through Christ, manifest their nature and disposition, so that the Church can purge itself of them; for Christ says: "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican;" and Paul says: "Withdraw thyself;" and again: "Have no company with them, that they may be ashamed." In 1st Cor. v.: "Your glorying is not good; know you not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." How plainly is the duty here prescribed, and how apparent the object! The Church must be kept pure, or its object cannot be obtained. As well leave the children of God at once walk and associate with the world, as receive and retain the world in your communion and fellowship! "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." These general and special duties are therefore means of salvation, but only indirect means. They bring us no merit, cleanse us from no sin, afford us no righteousness; but if faithfully observed, in the fear of God, will preserve us in that state of grace and favor with God, which we have before been made partakers of, through faith in Jesus Christ.

No one can help but perceive that such associations, influences and surroundings, of themselves, would have a preservative tendency, but when they exist in connection with the ordinances and other duties alluded to, they tend still more to secure the end and object we have under consideration.

But Christ and the apostles gave yet other ordinances of a ceremonial nature to the Church, which we hold are designed for the same end as the Church itself, and all the ordinances and duties before considered. These are baptism, breaking of bread or holy supper, washing of feet, and the kiss of peace. These may be considered means of grace, just as singing, praying, preaching, hearing and reading are means of grace; but they are all secondary

or indirect means, inasmuch as they of themselves impart no virtue, but are means to bring us to Christ, the direct and first cause or source of grace and every virtue we possibly can be made partakers of. In our singing, do we receive anything direct by it or from it? It only becomes a means when the soul is moved by a consideration of its necessities to embrace Christ, and in Him or through Him to come before the Father. The same we may say of praying, preaching, hearing or reading. They are means appointed of God, and when used so as to exercise the understanding, and the soul is thereby brought under a sense of its dependence on God, of its great need, and of its utter inability to do or bring anything before God which could be accepted by Him. But faith is strengthened and led to lay hold of Christ, the soul finds access through Him to God, and enjoys sweet fellowship with God, and His Son Jesus Christ. But when we sing, pray, read or hear, or whatever we do, and regard our words, performances or emotions, and think God will regard us because of them, we make them a direct means of salvation, and are making use of them for an object for which God had never designed them, and surely have our reward. It is nothing less than establishing our own righteousness by the works of the law.

The same may be said of the ceremonial ordinances; they do not impart any virtue. The soul has espoused Christ, and by faith has embraced his merit and righteousness, and is thereby made partaker of it, and in baptism openly confesses and testifies to what Christ has done for it. They are baptized in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. To be baptized in these names we must have come to know Father, Son and Holy Ghost; for we can surely not be baptized in the name of one whom we do not know. To know Father and Son constitutes eternal life, which is the work of the Holy Ghost. Then what do we directly receive by the ordinance? Nothing at all! The soul is exercised by solemn considerations of what it is testifying in baptism. The testimony is that we have died unto sin, the old man been buried with Christ, and by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit have risen to newness of life. In laying off this solemn testimony before God and man, and sealing it in the name of the Holy Trinity, every conscientious person must be seriously exercised, and led closely to scrutinize his own heart for the testimony to the truth

of what they are here professing and representing. And whilst they solemnly ratify the covenant they have made with God in Christ, confessing that they have been brought to a knowledge of their sinful and lost condition, and by it have been brought to Christ, in and by whom they have received the forgiveness of sins, and now promise to forsake the world and its vain pleasures, deny themselves of all that is contrary to the will of God, and live henceforth, not to themselves, but to Him that has died for them; and to this, by the help of God, they will be faithful until death. No one surely can solemnize this covenant with any sense of what they themselves are, without it begetting in them a firm and reliant faith in Jesus Christ, by which they are comforted, supported and strengthened, and in this way it becomes a means of grace and salvation to them; but it is not a direct means. The ordinance does not impart the grace to them. If it were not for Christ this ordinance would be nothing at all. It is, therefore, only indirectly a means, by leading the soul to the direct source of all merit, righteousness and salvation. Although this is an ordinance which we receive but once in our life, yet the reception of converts into the Church makes it one of frequent occurrence, which, although we do not receive it ourselves, yet the accompanying services from the Word, with the solemnity of the occasion, leads every faithful soul to deep reflection about their own spiritual condition. It brings to their mind the time when, with bowed knees, they themselves made these solemn vows, and to inquire whether they have paid them to the Most High; and the effect is to lead them to Christ, where they always receive comfort and strength. The soul being brought to Christ in deep humility and submission, renews the solemn covenant, and makes earnest petition to God for help, that they may preserve the "answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The same may be said of the Lord's Holy Supper. It is an ordinance which Jesus Christ gave to His Church for the same purpose as the former, but by a somewhat different exercise of the soul, by impressing the mind with a sense of the benefits accruing to it by the sufferings of Jesus Christ, by which it has been made free from the curse it so deservedly lay under. Christ knew the effect that the consideration of His sufferings must have on the minds of those who had felt something of the

wrath of God upon their souls, because of their sin, but by Him have been made free and been brought into favor with God. He knew the effect which meditation on the meritorious sacrifice which he made would have on those who love Him. The setting forth of the scenes of that night, the close of the Old Covenant commemoration, the solemn institution of the new, the retirement to the garden of Gethsemane, the agony of soul He there endured when His soul was sorrowful unto death ; when His sweat fell like great drops of blood upon the earth, betrayed, denied and forsaken by all who professed to love Him ; when, in truth, His own arm had to save Him, He was derided, scoffed, spit upon, and crowned with thorns, and at last nailed to the cross, His body broken and His blood shed to wash away our sins. Jesus Christ knew how poor, weak and forgetful His saints and disciples are, and devised this gracious means of renewing and reviving in their souls a remembrance of those things so highly essential to their stability in faith.

We do not purpose here to dwell specially upon the consideration of this ordinance, further than to show that no direct virtue is derived from it ; but by leading us to Christ, in reverence and adoration, we receive from Him great help, mercy and favor. The same may be said of the washing of feet. The Saviour, shortly before His suffering, washed His disciples' feet, and commanded them that as He had done they should do to one another. There is in this washing no sin washed away or virtue received ; but by it the believer represents the sense he has of his need of daily and continual washing by Christ, and also sets forth his willingness to serve his brethren, both in body and spirit, according to their necessity, as also his willingness to submit himself thus passively to his brethren in their desire and effort to assist him, whenever and wherever he has erred or gone astray. The sinful abomination of thus openly professing before God and man what we do not practice, must stare every one in the face who is not willing to humble himself and obey what he here sets forth ; and the word of God, which so solemnly and earnestly inculcates these duties, must bring every faithful soul under serious consideration, and thus the soul is drawn to Christ, and is refreshed, revived and confirmed in faith. Thus this ordinance (with all others commanded by Christ), tends to bring and lead

us to Him, and by impressing us with a sense of our need of Him, and His love for us, become bonds to bind us to Him.

The apostles Paul and Peter charge believers to greet one another with an holy kiss; Peter says a kiss of charity. This *holy* kiss the children of God usually greet one another with at meeting and parting, and is designed as an emblem of peace and unity between them. The Apostle Paul very frequently calls his brethren holy. Holiness is attributed to God, and conveys the idea of perfection. Man in his best estate being imperfect, is not in himself holy; but as the saint is in Christ he is holy, because all Christ's virtues are attributed to him, therefore he is called holy; and when the saints greet one another, it is called "*an holy kiss*," because it is a sign or evidence that they esteem their brother holy, in the sense referred to, and that they also profess to be holy in the same sense. It is, therefore, an acknowledgment between believers that they esteem one another as being in Christ, and consequently brethren. If they know, or do not believe themselves to be in Christ, this would be an act of hypocrisy in themselves; and if they know their brother to be unholy, and yet greet him as a saint, they make themselves guilty with him. It is, therefore, a solemn greeting, and tends to exercise the mind in such considerations as will lead to Him, who alone can preserve man in a state of holiness. But by this, or no other ordinance or duty in the Church, is there any direct virtue or merit conveyed; but indirectly it does serve to this end by leading the soul and binding it to Christ, under a continual sense of its dependence on Him, and the importance of being always found in Him, not having its own righteousness, but, as Paul says, (Philip. iii.): "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

The Church is called the House of God. The believers are called God's children. He their father, and they His sons and daughters. The Holy Ghost, speaking in this figurative manner in such familiar language, conveys the idea that God's House, or Church, is built as a dwelling-place for His children or household; as fathers do build houses for their children or families to dwell in, for their security, comfort and enjoyment. A father may have a number of children; he builds a house, and leads them into it. The house had nothing to do with giving them life, but they are

brought into the house for the preservation of the life they had before they were in it. Thus God has built His Church, and by His Spirit leads His children into it as a place of security, comfort and enjoyment. They are not born of the Church, or by it, but of God ; by the incorruptible seed of the Word. A person may be in the darkest regions of the earth, in some lonely isle, or solitary cell, where there is no Church, nor have any access to a Church ; by the power of God's Word and the influence of His Spirit they may be born again, and become spiritual children of God. If they are faithful, God will have a way to preserve them there, without the influence of the Church. But the Church is the ordinary means God has appointed for the preservation of His children, and by His Spirit He begets in the heart of every believer a feeling sense of the necessity of this means of preservation, and also of desire for the enjoyment of the communion of saints. Every child of God has also duties to perform, which cannot be performed outside of the Church. The Word of God teaches, and the Spirit of God leads, every child of God to unite with the Church. Then if there is a Church in the vicinity, or within access, no one can obey Christ, keep His commandments, or be led by His Spirit, who does not unite with it ; consequently they are not, and cannot abide under the promise. The Church does not bring any one under the promise, but Christ does ; and he that is a member of Christ must of necessity be a member of His body also.

When a father builds a house for his family, household or children, he builds it as secure as he has means of doing ; and if there is danger of aggression from enemies without, he places in their hands such weapons of defense as he thinks will enable them to repel assaults from without. If it were in his power, he would give them such means of defense as would secure them from all assault. But he will not build his house so that they cannot get out of it, nor that they cannot admit any one into it. God has the power, and has made His house so secure, and has given His children such efficient weapons of defense, that even the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against one who is sheltered in the house of God, and defends himself with the weapons God has given him for that purpose. But there is a door by which he can go out if he loses the sense of his danger ; and if the Church

too much loses sight of the importance of whom they admit into their fellowship, whether they are truly born of God and are truly children of God, the house may become divided against itself, and cannot stand.

It would seem as if the Apostle John held the idea that those in the Church could not be overcome ; but it is evident that he refers to those who are really in Christ. He speaks of many Antichrists existing, and their having gone out of the Church. He says (Epistle John ii.): " 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." It is very evident that these were not of the children of God when they went out. But whether they never were of them is not so distinctly given. I have already said, that from the evidence of the Word of God, I believe we can give up and cast ourselves away. If it did not comport with the wisdom of God to make man incapable of falling in the first creation, I do not see why it should in the re-creation. Besides, the warning to believers of the danger of falling and perishing, so strongly supports the position here taken, that I do not see how we can reconcile our minds to anything else. The city of refuge in Israel was a figure of Christ. The manslayer was entirely secure in the city. No power could apprehend him there ; but if he went out of the city and was apprehended, he had to die. This, it seems to me, strongly supports the foregoing position.

When King Solomon commanded Shimei to build him an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there securely, and not go out over the brook Kedron, or he should surely die and his blood should be upon his *own head*, Shimei said : " The word of the king is good ; as my lord the king has said so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days." But two of his servants ran away from him, and he went after them to Gath. Then it was told Solomon, and he had him arrested and slain. No one could have slain him if he had remained in Jerusalem, for he had the king's protection. Not even Solomon, the king himself, for he had his promise. But he followed his servants. No one could have forced him from Jerusalem ; had he kept them with him they would have served him, and when they ran away, had he let them

go he would still have been safe ; but he followed them and had to die.

The children of God had faculties and endowments in nature which served them in their carnal state, or life. In their new life, under grace, they may also serve them, if they are kept at home under restraint of the spirit of God ; but if they suffer them to roam unrestrained, to go abroad out of Jerusalem, and then follow them there, they may be assailed by their adversary and slain. In Christ they are always secure, but out of Him they have no security. For this reason they are so earnestly entreated to watch that Satan does not entice or lure them out of their stronghold or fastness.

If in the performance of any duty in the Church, or in any of its ministrations, we look for a blessing from God, as having performed any meritorious service, or receiving blessing as from a direct means of grace, we will be disappointed. Our hearts will remain cold and dead, unless we are so far deceived, that by a pharisaical, or self-righteous spirit, we flatter ourselves with some emotion arising from natural excitement, and have hopes engendered which will in the end leave us be put to shame. But if we perform our duties, or attend the ministrations or ordinances of the Church, out of love to God, in the spirit of true dependence on the Lord, as a means He has given us whereby we are led to Jesus Christ, the true source and author of all our blessings, we will surely be blessed with comfort and peace. I have observed that the Church of God was built, as well for comfort and enjoyment as for security. But can we have either comfort, joy, or security out of Christ ? It was by a sense of utter destitution and helplessness that we were first brought to Christ ; and the sense of this destitution and helplessness in ourselves must continue with us, or we will not continue in Christ. The first sense of this destitution was attended with slavish fears and great terrors of judgment. But now, under grace, the sense of destitution and helplessness is attended with faith in Christ, and full confidence in His power and willingness to help and save us. The consideration of the word of God, or measuring ourselves by and viewing ourselves in it, always exposes to our view this helpless dependence. But this is no bar to enjoyment, because we behold ourselves secure in the everlasting and unchangeable love of God.

With the Church of Smyrna we are poor (in ourselves), but we are rich (in Christ).

We have before observed that Christ speaks of many that will come in that day, and say: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." If our Saviour had said that a few will come in that day, and say as He here declares they will, and be told to depart, we all would have reason to fear we might be among those few; but when He says many will be of that class, what a fearfully weighty declaration does it become to us! And when we reflect that it is of those who profess Christ, and evidently thought they were serving Him, for if they had *known* they were not serving Him (but only professed or pretended), they could not come thus before Christ in that day. And, lastly, if we reflect that in this declaration of the Saviour, He evidently points to such as have been preachers of the Word, who really thought they were doing wondrous things; and yet, in all they did, Christ does not know them, and calls them workers of iniquity! Again, there is another class of which He says there will be many. These are evidently such as were devoutly following some doctrine of the Christian religion. They profess they have eat and drank in His name, and He has taught in their streets; but He will say: "I know you not." Paul says to Timothy: "The Lord knoweth them that are His." These certainly thought they were using the means of salvation, yet they as certainly did not use them lawfully or in the spirit, or way, that God had appointed them. Every means of God will certainly and effectually accomplish the end for which He has designed it, if used lawfully, or according to the intention of their institution. The persons here spoken of by Christ, seem to have been of some organization which claimed to be a Church, as by their plea they must have observed Church ordinances; but it is equally evident that they made a misuse of them. And does it not seem as if the misuse consisted in their making them a direct means of salvation? Had they sought salvation by the means which God had appointed for that purpose, Christ would surely know them; but they used the indirect as direct means, and they failed. The legal spirit by which the Jews sought righteous-

ness by the works of the law, is so natural to us that Satan finds it a great engine to propel the work of delusion. 'Those Jews whom Paul speaks of as seeking righteousness by the works of the law, and did not attain to the righteousness of God, did not fail because of anything in the law, but because they used it in a wrong spirit. It was not the law that caused them to fail, but the spirit in which they used the law. Any other religious service used and observed in the same spirit, will have the same effect. Gospel ordinances in those of whom Christ speaks, failed from the same cause as those which Paul speaks of.

It is worthy of observation how the apostles labored in the churches, and how they strove to impress on the minds of their brethren that truth of the Gospel, that nothing will avail us "but faith that worketh by love." Paul says to the Corinthians, chap. ii.: "For I was determined to know nothing among you, *save Jesus Christ* and Him crucified." He is the only ground and direct means of salvation, and other cannot be laid. This, however, Satan is not so apt to deny, but he tries to lead us to expect the merits of Christ to be imputed to us, because we are obedient and diligent in the use of Gospel ordinances and duties; thus still (as it were) indirectly making them a direct means of salvation, as being the cause of the imputation of righteousness; whereas Paul says it is imputed unto us because of faith alone. The word of God everywhere points us to Christ as the only means of salvation, whose righteousness alone avails before God; and this righteousness is bestowed upon those who seek it alone out of love. The Word, with all its duties and ordinances, tends to show us our nakedness and depravity in ourselves, and the emptiness of all we can do, and the richness, fullness and freeness of Christ.

For the reasons here stated, we prize the Church highly, with all its ordinances and duties, as means of God appointed for salvation, and, although indirect, yet highly salutary and necessary; and we thank and praise God for them, as serving to secure us and afford us joy and consolation, which cannot be afforded us by any other means than those which God has appointed for that purpose, nor by any use of those means, than that for which the Church and its ordinances and offices were designed of God.

CHAPTER IV.

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. iv.

AFTER considering the material of which the Church of God is built, and how it is prepared, then, again, by whom it is built, and for what purpose, we cannot but be amazed to see so many different structures, all claiming to be that Church of God, especially after what the holy Apostle Paul says in the above quotation: "There is one body, and one Spirit." This one body is Christ's Church, and the one Spirit is the spirit by which that Church or body is influenced or led. As God Himself has built that Church, and for a weighty and important purpose, it becomes a matter of deep interest to man to know which of these many bodies of the present day is the Church of God. If there is but one, then those beside *that one* must be something different from the Church.

I suppose that the world can never fully identify the Church of Christ, since John says (1st Epist. iii.): "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not;" and Paul says (Rom. viii.): "The carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" and in Cor. ii.: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." In Matt. xiii., the disciples ask the Saviour why He speaks unto the people in parables. He replied: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given." The Church of God, being then under the influence of the Spirit of God, and led by Him, it is not strange that those destitute of the Spirit should not be able fully to identify it. Neither is this necessary to man in his carnal state, because salvation is not obtained by or through it. God's design is the salvation of man, and for this purpose He convicts him by His law, and teaches him by His grace. If he yields to this, it will lead

him to Christ, in whom he will find salvation; and then he will be doing the will of God, and "shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God," or of man. To all such Christ has promised the Spirit, and then he will be able to discern spiritually.

Nevertheless, natural reason will teach us that if there is but one body, there cannot be many bodies, and if the body or Church of Christ is led by His Spirit, then it cannot lead them so differently as we see those claiming to be the Church are led. Christ said to His disciples, (Matt. v.): "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Therefore the Church must ever be such a light to the world, that they can see something in their walk and conduct that distinguishes them from the world; and though the world hates and maligns them, they will still see the light, although they try to close their eyes to it. But those who are born of God will know the Church and children of God, "for every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." (1st John, v.) Even those who persecuted the Albigenes, Waldenses and Mennonites unto death, in the 13th, 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, had to bear testimony to their virtuous, pious and exemplary lives, showing very clearly that so much can be comprehended by the darkest minds, as will serve to distinguish the Church and its children from the unconverted world.

I know that it will be very offensive to many of the members of these different churches, for us to say that they cannot all be led by the Spirit of God, and that there can be but one Church which is led by that Spirit, and those not led by it must be in error. I hope I do not say this in a partisan spirit, or because it affords me any gratification to protest against those who oppose our views, but to lead my readers to reflection and close examination, whether the views they entertain are scriptural. I know that carnal reason will advance many objections to these views, but are they scriptural? I feel persuaded that if we take our thoughts captive under the obedience of Christ, we cannot view these things in any other light. Paul, in the words of our text, did not intend to say that there is no other spirit but the one, but there is no other Divine or Holy Spirit. John says, 1st Epistle, iv.: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but *try the spirits* whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out

into the world." So there is but one Holy Spirit, which influences and leads the children of God, and that one body; but many spirits which are not of God, which influences and leads the children of this world and those other bodies which oppose the Church of God. The difficulty of the one Holy Spirit leading and guiding these many parties, often holding opinions so different, and even opposite, is seen and felt by all; and to avoid the reproach of the world, and one another, they make use of a word which expresses a Divine virtue, and with this as a mantle, seek to cover this deformity. They profess *charity* for one another, and because it is said, "Charity covereth a multitude of sins," they have stretched it to cover this hideous deformity. Christ promised His disciples the Holy Spirit, which should lead them into all truth. There certainly can be but one truth; or truth never can conflict with itself. If it is the *truth* which the Quakers and a number of other churches hold, that it is anti-Christian to fight, or to use swords and other deadly weapons in defense of their rights, and the Holy Spirit teaches them this doctrine, or leads them into it, then that which many other churches teach, cannot be *truth*, when they say it is not only the privilege, but the duty of Christians to fight, and, if need be, kill and destroy those who would encroach on their rights, or in hostility invade their country. One or the other must be wrong, and influenced by a different spirit from that which the Saviour promised to His disciples, and must therefore be *false*. So the Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and many others, hold that the Holy Spirit teaches them that infant baptism is of God, and it is His will they shall teach it, and their duty to observe and practice it, whilst the Baptists, Mennonites and many others, hold it as idolatrous and anti-Christian, and originating with the author of evil. Many other such differences might be cited, in which one party holds that the Spirit teaches them, whilst the other as decidedly hold that the practice is unscriptural, and an abomination in the sight of God. So long as they hold these views so very opposite, common sense teaches us that the one Holy Spirit cannot lead both parties, and if it is not the Holy Spirit, then it must be the influence of one of those which John says is influencing the false prophets which have gone out into the world.

Paul says, Rom. viii. : "If any man have not the spirit of Christ

he is none of His." And again: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are one. If we have this Spirit, we must be led by it, and it will lead us into all truth. It is the spirit of our carnal and fallen nature which leads to divisions, but the Spirit of Christ leads into unity. Where there is not unity, there the Spirit of Christ cannot be. The effect and influence of the Spirit of Christ is expressly set forth in the xii. chap. of 1st Cor.: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many," etc. The idea that all these different churches, taken together, compose the Church of Christ, and each one individually is a branch, has received pretty general assent in the world, and many never take the pains to inquire whether it is scriptural or not. To the inconsistency of their all being led by the same spirit, we have already adverted; and now let us inquire how this idea agrees with the figures Christ and Paul give us. Christ says He is the vine, and His disciples are the branches. Then, undoubtedly, all the branches must bring the same fruit. One cannot be spiritual and the other carnal. Paul compares regenerated souls to branches taken out of the wild olive tree, and engrafted contrary to nature into the sweet olive tree. The root which bears the branches influences them, so that they bring sweet olives. One branch does not bring sweet olives, and the other wild. So, also, with our bodies, to which Paul compares the Church. The members of our bodies all obey the same will and controlling power, and there can never be different intentions, schisms or divisions. The idea of a unity of all the members of the Church of Christ agrees perfectly with the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and also with the symbols given by Christ and Paul. The idea of the Church of Christ being composed of all these different churches, as branches, is received by very many honest and well-meaning souls, who are captivated by this view; and when they see anything irregular in the conduct of the members of their church which disquiets them and troubles their conscience, they are told by their teachers that these things are unavoidable, and if *they* are only faithful and upright, they are not accountable for what another does, and each one must give an

account for himself. Conscience is thereby quieted, and the teacher, or pastor, is relieved from bearing what to the flesh is a very heavy cross.

If it is, then, made out that the Holy Ghost must be with and in the Church, and unless the body which claims to be a Church is led by this Spirit, it is not the Church, and that where the Spirit leads, it brings the body into unity, love and peace, then it must be evident that very many of these associations are not Churches, because there is not unity, love and peace existing in them. Paul reprov'd the Corinthian Church very sharply, when divisions became apparent among them, and besought them, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment. (1st Cor. i.) He also told them they are carnal, and walk as men. Those churches, then, which have not the Holy Spirit as their leader, must be led by a strange spirit, which is opposed to Christ, and the body is an anti-Christian association, opposing and hindering the work of Christ. These, then, being enemies of Christ, it is impossible that one of His members can dwell safely in such a body; and it is highly important that they should be fully able to identify His Church, and clearly distinguish it from those of Antichrist.

It is not our purpose to dwell on the inconsistencies and errors of the various churches, further than to show the utter impossibility of their all being Churches of God, so that those who are concerned about their everlasting welfare may not be so easily ensnared by the devices of the enemy. It is true, the Church will save no one, but the leaders of the churches are usually sought as guides in the way of salvation, and those who are leaders of anti-Christian churches are not likely to direct a soul in the true way of life, namely, to Christ. It is also true, that so long as they have not come so far as to receive the Holy Spirit, they cannot fully identify the Church of Christ; yet a sense of danger may beget in them a wholesome fear, which will cause them diligently to search the Word of God, and closely attend to the leading of the grace of God, which will surely bring them to the true fountain and source of life, which is Christ. Paul, speaking of a certain class of men, says (2d Cor. xi.): "For such are false apostles,

deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works." It must, then, be clear to every reflecting mind, that it is highly important that every one who is concerned for his soul's welfare should have the knowledge that these churches cannot all be true Churches of Christ; and if not, then they must be Antichrist's, and their ministers Paul calls ministers of Satan, transformed into ministers of righteousness.

These expressions I know will offend many, but how can we forbear? And now, how can it be otherwise, if there is but one body and one spirit? That sentiment of false charity, which teaches such souls as desire to seek their salvation, that there is no difference to which of these many different churches they associate themselves, if they are only faithful and do right, is very dangerous and seductive, and tends to stifle the germ of life which God has enkindled in the soul, and which God designs to foster and bring to the birth. I would, therefore, desire that every upright soul setting out to serve the Lord, might be aware of his danger, and thereby driven to pray and supplicate God to preserve them, and to searching in the Word of God for guidance and direction. There is a great deal of warning in the Word of God, that we shall take heed that we be not deceived, and to let no man deceive us with vain words.

If, then, there are many deceivers, or many false prophets, gone out into the world (as John says), and Christ also warns us to beware of them, for although they come in sheep's clothing, inwardly they are ravening wolves, should we not be fearful when we set out to work our soul's salvation, lest we might fall into the hands of some such, and be ensnared into some anti-Christian association, where the Divine life which God has begotten in our soul might be devoured? Many a soul is impregnated by the seed of the Word, and when they reveal their state of mind to those who assume to teach the way of salvation, they are directed to the ordinances or duties prescribed for the church, and to the use of means which God has not appointed for salvation; and the birth which follows proves to be one after the will of man, or the

flesh, and no true Divine life follows. Perhaps many of these, under favorable circumstances and faithful teaching, being shown the true nature of sin, and, also, of righteousness, and where to be found, might have been led to Christ, and a true child of God been born. We, therefore, feel it our duty to raise the voice of warning, and point out the dangers of destruction to those who, with us, are traveling to eternity, so that we might, by the blessing of God, be instrumental in saving some from falling into the snares of Satan. We know that these sentiments will bring upon us the imputation of being self-righteous, Pharisaic, bigoted and uncharitable, which is not at all agreeable to the flesh, and if we would consult the promptings of our carnal nature, would take a course which would bring us commendation; but if I would seek the friendship of the world, I must be the enemy of God.

The true Church of God, which He owns as His bride and spouse, is composed of souls who are truly born again; who are converted persons, that have been brought from darkness unto light, or from death unto life, and from the power of Satan unto God; who are made new creatures, and walk in newness of life. These have fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth them from all sin. We do not wish to be understood, that we hold that every individual member of the true Church of Christ is such a truly converted and regenerated person. We have already said that some others creep in unawares; but so long as it is the Church of God, none such can get in but by creeping in unawares; yet their number will not be so large as to change its complexion, lest it would cease to be a Church. So soon as their number would be so large as by their influence to change the outward complexion of the body, the true and living members would take alarm, and purge it of such offensive members, as would mar the comeliness of the Lord's Body. So long as it is a Church of God, the truly converted and living element must so far predominate, that such as are unconverted (if any have crept in) will be expelled from the body, so soon as it becomes manifest that they are not living branches; and those who are not yet revealed cannot exert sufficient influence perceptibly to change the outward aspect or complexion of the body. The outward aspect of the Church must ever be such, that it will distinguish it from all that walk in the element of this world, else it

would not be that light which can be seen of all, or a city that is built upon a hill.

When Christ was personally on earth, there was a class of people that whatever light He emitted they would not regard it, and continually blasphemed His holy name. Even His good works and miracles they ascribed to Beelzebub. Others would admit them, but still did not obey Him. Nicodemus admitted: "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him." But whatever the convictions of Nicodemus were, he had not the knowledge of Christ which Peter had, when he said: "Thou art *the* Christ, the son of the living God." The convictions seem to have been with many more, but the cross was in the way that they did not confess Him. These, with Nicodemus, partially identified or knew Christ. If they had obeyed the light they had, it would have been sufficient to bring them, and would have brought them, to a complete knowledge of the Saviour. But these had not the knowledge of Him, which those had who confessed and followed Him, as His disciples did; and John says (chap. ii.): "But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all *men*." But the world, it is said, knew Him not, and John says, "therefore the world knoweth us not." Christ was a light to the world, but they loved darkness rather than light. So the Church also is a light, but, as the love of darkness was in the way of their knowing and receiving Christ, so the same love is still in the way of the world's knowing the Church, and receiving the truth which she presents to all who come within the sphere of her labors and influence.

It was evidently the will of God that the world should identify the Saviour at His coming; and to this end Moses, in the law, and the prophets, had spoken of His birth, life and passion so plainly that the Jews might have recognized Him, as He told them, John v.: "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." And, again (same chapter, verse 29), "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." By the Scriptures they might therefore have identified Him. But Christ did not merely come into the world, and call mankind to search the Scriptures to prove that He was the Christ; but He first wrought such miracles, and shed such light round about Him, as attracted

the attention of the people, and then called upon them to search the Scriptures, for a full testimony and confirmation of the truth, that He was indeed the very Christ. It was then the will of God that the world should know Christ, and gave the evidence or marks by which they could know Him. But the world was Christ's enemy, and it continually demanded and sought for such signs and evidences as God, in His wisdom, withheld; and it refused to observe or recognize those which God before promised and now had given. The god of this world so blinded their minds, that they could not see the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. There was no evidence by which Christ could be identified, outside of that train which God had ordained for that purpose. Now it certainly is the will of God that His Church and children shall also be identified; because he has pointed out marks and evidences by which this may be done. If we disregard the marks and evidences which Christ has indicated, and go about to set up others which He has not designated, and then adhere to these, and forget those which Christ has given, we will surely go as far astray, as those did who called on Christ for signs from heaven, and failed to discern those which were transpiring around them.

The first sign, mark or evidence which Christ gives, by which His Church and children shall be known, is love. "By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This is the first distinctive feature which characterizes the children of God. This is the principle upon which every command of Christ to His Church and children is based, and every mark and feature of the Church *must* be in harmony with this principle. These marks and features must also be such as can be perceived and understood by all men, not in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth, and must extend not only to friends and brethren, but to enemies, and those who entreat them despitefully. Christ said, in His sermon on the mount, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven," etc. The Saviour does not mean that this will make us children of the Father. We are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. iii). But this fruit will show us, or prove us to be so, otherwise we will not be known from the world.

Love is the principle or life which is begotten in the soul by conversion or regeneration ; and where the profession of regeneration is made, and the love of God does not follow as a fruit, the idea of the regeneration is a delusion, and that work which we took for it, will profit us nothing. Therefore Christ has also given the marks of evidence by which this may be known. The commands of Christ, we have already observed, are based upon love ; and Christ has said (John xiv.) : " If ye love me, keep my commandments ; " and again : " If a man love me *he will* keep my words ; and he that loveth me not, keepeth *not* my sayings." Again, Luke vi. : " And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say." From all this, it is evident that love is the first mark by which a child of God and His Church must be identified ; and obedience to the commands of Christ is the evidence of our possessing this love. Without this all our imaginings, professions and pretensions are vain. The Church of God being His house, and the home of His children, it is highly important that every child knows its own home, and its own brethren also. For this reason Christ has designated the marks by which these may be known, so that a child may not run into a strange house, or take an enemy into its embrace.

God has ordained prophets and teachers in His Church, which are its officers and leaders of its members. The term prophet here means such as explain the word of God, or teach by it. They explain or teach the will of God, as contained in His word. Christ and the apostles say there will be false prophets and false teachers. It must be very evident that whatever influence these exert, it must be very prejudicial to, and destructive of the Divine life, which it is the object of God to foster, encourage and preserve in the believer, and for which he has appointed the true prophets and teachers. For this reason Christ gives warning to His disciples to beware of them, and gives the marks of evidence also by which *they* may be known. They will show signs and lying wonders, but " by their fruits ye shall know them ; a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit ; wherefore ye shall know them by their fruits." These signs and evidences can never be set aside, for no matter what the pretensions of the prophet are, or what his power is, if his doctrine and walk does not agree with the Word of God, we may know that

God has not sent him. Of the beast, in Revelations, it is said: "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth," etc. Those whom Christ speaks of as coming in that day, and saying, "have we not *prophesied* in Thy name, and cast out devils, and *done many wonderful works*;" but whom Christ will call workers of iniquity, must be false prophets, else He would know them. These evidently deceived those whom they taught. If they had looked well to the fruits, they would not have been deceived, for Christ says by these they *shall* know them.

These fruits evidently are their life and doctrine. A man might preach true doctrine, and yet his walk be carnal. His carnal walk would give evidence that the tree is not good, or his life and walk might be unexceptionable, but his doctrine not pure. Then the false doctrine would be evidence against him. Therefore Paul says to Timothy: "Take heed unto *thyself* and unto the *doctrine*; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." (1 Timothy iv.) To the elders of the Church of Ephesus, Paul spoke pretty near the same words. They should take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers. (Acts xx.) John also says (2d Epist.): "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." Such, he also says, we shall not receive or bid God speed. Such are evidently deceivers and false prophets. The good fruits of Divine love, and obedience to the words and commands of Christ, are therefore the marks of identity which the Holy Ghost has given us, by which to know the Church, teachers and children of God.

In the time when Christ spake there was no Church organized, and the warnings were evidently designed for those who should come after. Those warnings of the Apostles, and the directions by which to identify the Church, had reference chiefly to some future time. We have no evidence of any such divisions occurring, or any other body claiming to be a Church, during the lifetime of the Apostles. They faithfully warned them whenever they saw danger approaching the flock. Paul says (2d Thes. iii.): "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work." But so long

as the Apostles lived, it would seem they had such influence with the churches that those who rose up with anything false or foreign could make no progress. In the 1st Epistle to Corinthians we find Paul warning them of some deviations from the strict path of righteousness and truth. There are four different places in this epistle in which he takes occasion to reprove them.

The whole epistle is full of wholesome instruction, but in these four places he charges them with some deviation from sound doctrine. In the first chapters he censures them for the contentions and divisions which existed amongst them; in the 5th, because they did not expel the fornicator; then, in the 6th chapter, he reproves them for going to law with one another, and in the 11th for their irregularity in holding their supper. He says in this way they do not hold the Lord's Supper. After Paul had given the charge to the elders of the Church of Ephesus (already spoken of) he told them: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx.) We have evidence, therefore, from this and other writings of the Apostles, that the enemy was active in the early ages of the Church; but so long as the Apostles lived their warning voice was heeded, so that the Church did not come to fall, or no divisions occurred. In the 2d Epistle to the Corinthians, it would seem as if the Apostle Paul's reproof wrought effectually. He says it wrought repentance, not to be repented of. In the Revelations, we read of the Spirit appearing to the Apostle John, and acquainting him with the spiritual condition of the seven Churches of Asia. Two of the number are commended for their steadfastness and adhesion to the Word and faith. One, the Church of Laodoea, was neither cold nor hot, but in a luke-warm state, which it would seem as if the Lord would even rather she were cold. Three of them had still some commendable qualities for which the Lord praised them; but they had also declined in some things. One had given way in no outward work or duty, but the inward life had abated, and they were threatened to be thrown into darkness, unless they repented and would do the first works. The Church of Pergamos had those amongst them who taught a false and perverted doctrine, which tended to seduce the servants of God. The

Church of Thyatira was commended for her works, charity, service, faith and patience; but she suffered that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce His servants. The Church of Sardis had the name that she was alive, but she was dead. There were, however, a few names, even in Sardis, which had not defiled themselves. If they took the warning here given them they might yet recover themselves, for it would seem as if it were only an inward dying of the Divine life, which had not resulted in open transgression. There is no act of disobedience, or outward violation of the principles of the Gospel, charged to them. Therefore, those who were yet worthy could not withdraw from them; and by repentance and turning to the Lord the life might be restored. There was nothing outward of an irregular character to correct. This was in the lifetime of the Apostle John, and is supposed to have been about the year 94 or 95 of the Christian era. As Christ is allowed to have been about 32 or 33 years old when He was crucified—soon after which the Church was first organized on the day of Pentecost—then this must have occurred at most not over 62 years from the time of the Church's first institution. If the Church in these places then declined so soon after the Apostles were taken away, we have reason to believe that she was also violently assaulted in other places.

None of the rest are named, so that we do not know their condition. If we had the means of tracing the Church accurately from the time of the Apostles, and being fully acquainted with what transpired, it would, at least, be very interesting, and I think also profitable. But the histories we have access to are not always entirely reliable. So much is however evident, that in the second and third centuries Paul's prediction was fully verified, as well as Christ's and Peter's. False prophets, false teachers and grievous wolves entered in amongst the lambs of Christ, which did not spare the flock. How long the Church withstood these assaults I have not the means of judging, but find it said repeatedly in the "Martyr's Mirror," that from the time of Pope Sylvester the Church fell into idolatry. This was about the year 315, at which time the bishop of Rome was not yet invested with that authority which would constitute a pope. There was, however, a bishop of that name at Rome about that time. From this time it is said the Church became so sadly corrupted that she was by many

esteemed as Antichrist. But from authentic accounts which we have of the condition of the Church, about the year 325, when Constantine had embraced the profession of the Christian faith, it is very evident that the Church was no more in that simplicity of faith in which the Apostles had delivered it to the saints.

Constantine, after a war with his father-in-law, who some say he strangled, but others that he caused him to commit suicide, was engaged in a war with his brother-in-law, Maxentius, whom he defeated, and the latter was drowned. This was sometime between the years 307 and 314. When he was about to engage in this war, he said he saw a fiery, or luminous cross in the heavens, on which was inscribed, "*Under this sign thou shalt conquer.*" He then caused his standard to be made in imitation of this cross. He afterward engaged in war with Licinus, whom he also overcame. Here it is said, he was *surrounded with bishops and priests, invoking the aid of the True God.* But after the lapse of nine years, Licinus renewed hostilities, but was again defeated, and fell into the hands of Constantine, who had solemnly promised to spare his life; but afterward ordered him to be put to death. He was now, about the year 324, sole head of the Eastern and Western Empires. He had before this espoused the Christian religion, and soon after convened the Council of Nice. At this council, there were about three hundred bishops in attendance; and some historians say, many of them were gorgeously arrayed, and decorated with gold and precious stones. This, if true, would certainly be in violation of the instruction of Paul and Peter, to the women; and if it would be improper for them, why not for the men? At any rate, there was great contrast between this, and the purple robe and crown which the Saviour wore.

Boyle, in his history of this council, in speaking of its origin, says, that Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, disputing one day in the presence of his presbyters and other clergy, *being desirous of making a display of his knowledge, &c.*, one of the presbyters took exception to his remarks, and from this little spark, a great fire was kindled.

Boyle says, on account of this dispute between Alexander and Arius, "the churches were filled with tumult and disorder; and the people disputed with great acrimony. The matter proceeded

at length to such a shameful extremity, that the Christian religion was publicly ridiculed, and afforded a subject of profane merriment to the Pagans, even in their theatrical exhibitions." In this history, there is much which goes to show, that there was anything but a gentle spirit prevailing amongst the bishops. I suppose it will be said, that a large portion of them were imbued with a better spirit. It may be so, but how could they bear with such irritable and petulant spirits as brethren and fellow-laborers in the cause of Christ? Or how could they regard such carnal fruits, as those of a good tree? And when Christ says we shall beware of them, as ravening wolves, how could they fraternize with them?

Whether the emperor was at this time held as a member of the Church, or not, we are not told; but they certainly held him as one of great distinction, and paid as much deference to him as if he had been the head of the Church, although, it is said, he was not baptized until very shortly before his death. He himself convened the council, and was present at their deliberations, and delivered an address to them at its opening. Many of the bishops also presented written complaints against their brother bishops to the emperor, petitioning him to redress their grievances. The emperor had recently been engaged in war, and still kept a very large standing army, and waged wars afterward. Whether he had any of the Christians in his army, or not, I do not know, but should not wonder if he had; as in all their proceedings we do not find any disapproval of war expressed, and do not know how they could, if in time of war they would cluster round him, and invoke the aid of God in his behalf. When he was ushered into the council, it is said his purple robe was so resplendent with gold and precious stones, as to dazzle the eyes of the beholder, and had a chair prepared for his reception that was burnished with gold.

The session lasted a month, and at its conclusion there was a great banquet given by the emperor, at which *all the bishops* were present; and, it is said by Boyle, "During the public rejoicings, Eusebius, of Cesaria, in the presence of Constantine, and surrounded by the bishops, pronounced a panegyric on the emperor." How a Christian bishop, imbued with the spirit of his Master, could flatter and eulogize a man of Constantine's temper and

principles, is hard to comprehend. The temper of the emperor may be judged by his perfidy toward Licinus, his treatment of Arius and two prelates who adhered to him in the council; all of whom he banished. The writings of Arius he ordered to be burnt wherever found, and any one convicted of concealing any book composed by Arius, shall suffer death immediately after his apprehension. But we need not wonder at this, when we are told that he had his nephew, fourteen years old, put to death, his own son Crispus, and lastly, *his wife, Fausta*.

I have dwelt thus lengthily on this subject, because certain authors who hold that the Church had fallen, date its decline from the time that it became identified with the worldly power. But I think it must be evident, from the proceedings here related, that the fall of the Church was not a consequence of the union of Church and State; but the union was a consequence of the fall, which had previously taken place! If the Church had not departed widely from the doctrine and commands of the Saviour and His Apostles, such union could never have taken place; and such a carnal, tyrannical and bloody monster could not have been received into the Church, nor would the bishops have paid such court to him, as has been related.

I have here spoken of the fall of the Church, but would not be understood to hold, that *the Church* had, or has fallen; but *that* part of it here considered. The kingdom of Christ was to be an everlasting kingdom; "On the throne of David would He sit, and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice; from henceforth even for ever." (Isaiah ix.) The Scriptures cannot be broken, and if the Church is this kingdom (which I suppose all will admit) then it can never be extinguished. Therefore, from the time the apostles established it till the present, it has stood, and will stand to the end of time. When Christ spoke of the straight gate and narrow way, He said: "There be few that find it." But many go in at the wide gate, and walk on the broad way. Those on the narrow way are surely on the way to Heaven, and must be in the Church, or those in the true Church are on the narrow way. By this we may very readily conclude that the Church was by-times very small. By the representations of the churches in Asia, as given in Revelations, we can see that a Church does not fall at once. The decline is

gradual, first taking place inwardly, and as the love or spiritual power diminishes, the carnal grows stronger, and gradually carnal fruits will begin to manifest themselves. Those members which are yet in the light will perceive this, and raise the voice of warning and reproof; but if the number of those in the true spiritual element is too small, their warnings will not be properly heeded. They grieve and labor, cry aloud and spare not; but at last being able to effect nothing, in order to remain undefiled they are necessitated to withdraw from the Church, as they would otherwise make themselves partakers of their sins. In this gloomy and declining state, unconverted persons enter the Church; finally such may be chosen to the ministry, and all spirit and life is lost in the body. Those who withdraw organize themselves into a body, and however few they are, *they are the Church*.

In the early ages of the Church, printing had not been discovered. Few could read, and perhaps still fewer could write. Those who withdrew were generally persecuted by the others; and if they had any writings they were destroyed, and themselves driven from place to place, so that they had little opportunity to write, if they even were able. We have, therefore, not such a succession from the apostles to the present time, as those may present who had the mass with them, and the government and its power to afford them every facility they desired. But we do find in the meager histories of the earlier years, that many withdrew from the Church, or were expelled from it. What their doctrines were we have not much means of knowing, except what we can gather from Catholic sources, and these are generally very unfairly given. In Eusebius' account of Novatus, he is represented as a very bad man who was justly expelled from the Church. But Newton Brown, in the "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," represents him very differently, and that he was a very worthy man, who left the Church because of its laxity in discipline, and the corruption tolerated in it. The Novatians observed regular church order, and most likely were such a dissenting Church as I have referred to. Novatus lived in the third century. There was a Novatian bishop invited to take part in the Council of Nice, whose short address to the emperor shows a very amiable and meek disposition. Eusebius mentions a number of heresies which sprang up, but what confidence can be placed in his history of them is hard to determine; but if

the history of Novatus and his followers is incorrect, that of others may be also. There is no doubt that men of very perverted minds and evil dispositions separated from the Church from time to time, whose lives were not virtuous and exemplary, and after the Church had lost the spirit, and fell into a carnal course of life, they would asperse the character and life of all that would withdraw from them, and charge them with all manner of error in doctrine, and irregularity of life. This we know to have been the case at a later period. There may have been little bands of brethren here and there of whom there is no account, and also some of those reported very corrupt may have been of the true faith and virtue. If they called the master of the house Beelzebub, no marvel if they do the same of his household.

If, as we have already observed, the Church declined soon after the time of the apostles, then there must have been such also as seceded, and kept up apostolic doctrine and ordinances; which is also attested by papistic writers, as we find asserted in the "Martyrs' Mirror," that there was such a sect as were afterward called "Poor Men of Lyons, Waldenses, Albigenses," etc., who were also called "Anabaptists." Papistic authors say, they were an ancient sect, and existed in the days of Sylvester, (315) and others say, from the days of the Apostles. Whether Novatus and his followers were of these, we cannot say; but one thing is certain, they protested against the corruption which existed in the dominant Church, and contended for a pure Church. If they held, as is asserted, that those who had apostatized, or fallen from the faith, should in no case be received into the Church again, even on true repentance, and renewal of faith in Christ, we should certainly say they were wrong in this. But if, as it is said, the Church was lax in discipline, and in times of religious liberty great numbers rushed to the Church, and were received without due regard to their conversion, and in times of persecution, they would fall away, and shamefully deny the faith, and again, on the cessation of persecution, would desire to return, it would seem reasonable they should exercise great care in their reception. The reply of Acesius, a Novatian bishop, to the Emperor Constantine, at the Council of Nice, would seem to indicate that they were in the habit of receiving forgiveness of the priests, and perhaps then restored to the Church. Acesius says: "They ought

indeed to be urged to repentance, but not encouraged to hope for pardon through the ministration of priests. For this they should look directly to God, who alone has the power and prerogative of remitting sins." This is certainly sound doctrine. The Novatians arose about the year 250. About 100 years later the Donatists arose, and are said to have become a very large sect." In many respects, we can recognize correct principles in their profession and practice. Whether those principles ascribed to them, which are not consistent with the true faith, were charged justly, we do not know; but as we find in after years, that those of whom we have good evidence that they did profess, and, in their weakness, seek to walk in the true faith and a holy life, had all manner of vicious principles and practices charged to them, we have reason to believe this might have been the case with such as preceded them, because they were evidently led by the same spirit, which those were who in after years traduced the character of the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Mennonites. About the middle of the 7th century, the Paulicians arose. Their enemies charge them with being Manichians; which was a favorite charge against all who differed from the dominant Church. There are doctrines and practices attributed to the Paulicians which we would certainly not regard as orthodox; but we have reason to doubt whether they are just, inasmuch as those who bring the charges were their bitter enemies, and sought to render them odious in the eyes of the people.

In the "Martyrs' Mirror," from the fifth to the eleventh century, there are a very great number of witnesses named, who protested privately and publicly against infant baptism, transubstantiation, purgatory, and other abuses and abominations practiced in the Roman Church. These insisted that no baptism was valid but that which was received on faith. They seem to have observed regular church order, and administered the ordinances, and great numbers suffered martyrdom. We are not informed of any particular name by which they were known, but it is evident that regular church order was kept up. There are two pious men of learning and celebrity named, who withdrew from the Catholic Church in this century (11th), and attracted more than ordinary attention. They were Bruno, bishop of Angiers, in France, and Berengarius. These openly spoke against infant

baptism, and other papistic abuses and malpractice, and openly supported the true Gospel doctrine and faith. They were at last brought before the council, which condemned them. Berengarius, however, wavered and recanted three several times, but when set at liberty, again took up and preached the same doctrine as before. This is much to be lamented, and mars the beauty of his otherwise fair reputation and character. Their followers were numerous, and were generally called Berengarians, and many suffered a martyr's death, remaining firm in faith and constant in profession.

About the year 1145, mention is made of Peter Bruce and Henry, of Taulouse, who were both monks, and very learned men. They vigorously attacked the errors and abominations of popery, "sparing neither small nor great." Peter preached twenty years with great success, and was finally burnt. Henry, his coadjutor, was apprehended a few years later by the pope's legate, and, it is supposed, was made way with. Their followers were very numerous, and were known by the name of "Petrobro-sians" and "Henricans," and were very cruelly persecuted.

About the year 1160, a wealthy citizen of Lyons, named Peter Waldo, became deeply impressed with a sense of the vanity of all things in this world, and the importance of securing an interest in Christ, whereby he would obtain a better and more enduring inheritance, forsook the world, and sought for life in Christ. The occasion which made the impression upon his mind, was that of one of his neighbors falling down and expiring suddenly in his presence. This so wrought upon his mind, that he determined to repent, and walk more in the fear of God than he had done heretofore. He began liberally to distribute of his wealth to the needy, and to admonish his household, and such persons as occasionally came to him, to repentance and true godliness. His zeal and energy increased daily, and as people continued to assemble in increased numbers, he taught them from the Holy Scriptures in the common French tongue. The bishops and ecclesiastics were highly offended that this illiterate and vulgar fellow (as they thought) should expound and explain the Scriptures in the common language. Great numbers repaired to his house, whom he instructed and admonished. The ecclesiastics strove by edicts and tyranny to suppress the teaching, which led Waldus and his

adherents more diligently to inquire into and examine the religion and schemes of the papists, and to oppose them with greater candor and independence. Waldus is said to have been a man of great ability and extensive relations, so that with all their cruel ferocity they could not, for four or five years, entirely expel him and his adherents from Lyons.

From Waldo, the people called Waldenses arose, who, by their persecutions, were scattered around into many of the surrounding countries, and were called many different names. In some places "Poor Men of Lyons," others "Albigenses," and in others "Catharians," etc. Those known by these names generally held the same views and principles, and in these respects they are also believed to be identical with many of those who had before them protested against the unscriptural doctrines, life and conduct of the Roman Church. The Waldenses maintained baptism on repentance and faith; opposed transubstantiation, purgatory, mass, absolution, and all papistic innovations; opposed oaths, war and holding offices in government by their members. I am aware that this is disputed by some authors, who hold that they practiced infant baptism, defended their rights, and held government offices. The Waldenses were dispersed by persecution into many different countries. In these they came in contact with many different classes of people, who protested against papistic abominations, but were not fully grounded on the Word of God, and, uniting with these, were carried away from the principles and doctrine of the old Waldenses; yet, holding the name, would be regarded as Waldenses. From this and various other causes, principles have been attributed to them, which the old Waldenses never held: There is a lengthy article in the "Martyrs' Mirror," in that part relative to those who suffered in the twelfth century, clearly showing that the old and true Waldenses rejected infant baptism, and contended against believers swearing, fighting, or holding magisterial offices. In the work referred to, it is clearly and, I think, indisputably shown, that the true Waldenses held the same doctrines and principles which Menno Simon afterward taught, with so much zeal and success, in the 16th century, and there was still an organization kept up on their distinctive principles until the time of the Reformation. To these people Menno has reference, in his "*Renunciation of the Church of Rome*,"

when he says: "I sought out the pious, and though they were few in numbers, I found some who were zealous and maintained the truth." Afterward he speaks of the mercy of God, who, he says, "turned me from the ways of death, and called me into the narrow path of life to the communion of the saints." He says nothing of having been baptized, or the circumstances under which he became united to the Church; but as he speaks of his being called into "*communion with the saints*," he must have united with some existing body of believers, or Church; and as he did not regard that baptism which he received of the Catholics as *Christian baptism*, we have reason to believe, also, that he was at this time baptized by those to whom he united himself. In the next paragraph he says: "About one year thereafter, at which time I exercised myself in writing and reading the Word of God in secret, it happened that six, seven or eight persons came to me who were of one heart and soul with myself, in their faith and life, and, as far as man can judge, were unblamable, separated from the world, and subdued to the cross. They cordially abhorred, not only the sect of Munster, but the anathemas and abominations of all other worldly sects. With much solicitude, they kindly requested me to reflect on the sufferings, the oppressions and distress of those souls whose spiritual hunger was great, whilst the faithful laborers were few. They desired that the talents which I had unmeritedly received from the Lord might be applied to advantage." Afterward he says: "At last, after much prayer, I placed myself and these circumstances before the Lord and His Church." This shows conclusively that there was a *Church* at this time in existence, which held the principles that Menno afterward so earnestly contended for.

There are certain names mentioned in the "*Martyrs' Mirror*," who had been of the old Waldenses, who, about the time of the commencement of the reformation in Germany, suffered martyrdom for their faith. These were of those with whom Menno Simon associated himself. We do not purpose to trace the history of what we deem the true Church of Christ further at this time, but will leave *it*, with the consideration of the claim of several other churches to have descended from the Waldenses, for a subsequent chapter.

It is asserted in the "*Martyrs' Mirror*," page 122, from the

evidence of papistic writers, that people holding the same sentiments as the Waldenses and Mennonites had existed in the days of Sylvester, (which was about 315), and that they were by no means a new sect, but had existed, as some say, even since the apostles. From this time on, they existed under various names, and propagated their views with various success, under unheard of hardships and persecutions, up to the time of the reformation. Some places they were called by one name, and others by another, according to the names of their different leaders, the country where they resided, or other circumstances and surroundings. No person with the least grain of humanity in his composition, can read the accounts of the hardships they endured, and their determined perseverance, without admiring their constancy and patience, and feeling sick at heart for the cruelty of their torturing persecutions.

Their enemies oftentimes testified themselves to the pious and exemplary lives these sufferers led, and their patience and cheerfulness under suffering; so that it is vain for any one at the present day to attempt to asperse their character. I have lately seen in a modern history, the character of the Waldenses and Albigenses represented in a very unfavorable light, on the authority of some recent publication, termed "*Facts and Documents.*" There are a great many authorities quoted in the "*Martyrs' Mirror,*" showing the character of the Waldenses and Albigenses, who, they agree, were one people, only living in different places, from which they sometimes received different names. The different authors also say they have been very grossly misrepresented by their enemies. Persons who persecute others unto death, would naturally try to make it appear that they had good reasons for their actions; neither would their conscience likely be so tender, as to cause them to hesitate at telling a falsehood for that justification. On page 230 of the "*Martyrs' Mirror,*" there are two confessions of faith of the Waldenses and Albigenses given, one of which was sent to the king of France, and publicly read in the king's parliament. This confession, Abraham Mellin says, he publishes in his book "to refute and repress all the disgraceful points of doctrine which have been unjustly imputed, not only to the Waldenses, but especially to the Albigenses, as though they were Manicheans." The testimony of their enemies, who were cotemporary

with themselves, as to their moral character and virtuous lives, their own confession of faith as to doctrine, with the testimony of Mellin, goes to show that these "facts and documents" represent these people very unfairly. It is said that in different places, people were called by these names whose doctrine and life was very widely different from that of the true Waldenses and Albigenses, and whom they would in no wise have acknowledged as brethren. From some such source, the "facts and documents" may have arisen. It would be very strange, if a people, about whom so much has been said and written so long since, should only now have their true history brought to light.

We find an account in the "Martyrs' Mirror," page 283-4, of certain prisoners taken in Moravia, by the Turks, and carried into Thessalonica, and sold as slaves. Getting acquainted with some Christians there, they told them that there were certain people in Moravia that were like them in their lives and actions, who were called Anabaptists. The Thessalonians then sent three of their brethren to Moravia, to inquire whether these things were so. They came to the Moravians, but did not agree with them in all points, and went away sorrowful. They then went to the Sweitzer brethren, with whom they agreed entirely, and afforded them great joy. "They acknowledged one another as brethren, and, as a sign of it, they commemorated the Lord's Supper, and declared that they were the true Church of God." And they further related, "that the Church of God remained unchanged in the faith from the days of the apostles; and that they had the letters which the Apostle Paul wrote to them with his own hand, in a good state of preservation to that day. After all this was done, they separated as good friends, and having commended each other, (weeping), with the kiss of peace, to the protection of the Lord, the brethren returned again to Thessalonica." The precise date when this occurred is not given, but think it was in the early part of the sixteenth century.

This relation here given of the Church having existed at Thessalonica, unchanged from the times of the apostles, may not be deemed sufficiently authentic to be reliable, although it cannot be said to be improbable. There may also have been more such bodies in isolated places, but whether or not, there is sufficient evidence in history, that there were at all times since the apostles,

people on earth who protested against the corruption and carnality which existed in the dominant church; who withdrew from its worship and communion, and who observed and kept up Gospel ordinances and church discipline, and also lived pious, self-denying lives, consistent with Christ's commands and the teaching of the apostles. These may not have continued in unbroken succession in one particular city, place or country, but that they existed, cannot be denied. These, we believe, constitute the undying Church, which seems to us much more reasonable and consistent with the spirit of the Gospel, as well as with Scripture prophecy and Scripture promise, than the idea of the abominably corrupt and murdering church of Rome being the Church and Bride of Christ, which he promised to be with, and in them, and they in Him, sup with, dwell with, and lead and guide by the Holy Spirit unto the end of the world. The Episcopalian Church claims to be *the* Church of Christ, on the ground of a regular succession of ordination in their ministry, from the apostles to the present time. To prove this, they must resort to the Catholic Church, and claim that it continued to be *the* Church of Christ till the time of the reformation, when the Church of England threw off the Papal yoke, and declared themselves independent. They confess, that if there was a time when the Roman Church was so essentially corrupt, that she ceased to be a Church of Christ, and her officers ceased to be ministers of Christ, then any connection with the past through that channel can be of no avail. The person ordained receives or derives his authority from Christ. The Holy Ghost is in the Church, and the Church without Him would be apostate. These are important admissions.

It remains to show, what degree of corruption renders a body, or a man, so "essentially corrupt" that they cannot be in Christ, or a member of Him. The Holy Ghost, without which the author referred to (W. D. Wilson) admits that the Church would be apostate, does not dwell in the Church collectively, or as a body, but in the individuals composing the Church. Nor has there ever been a Church into which individuals did not insinuate themselves, who were destitute of this Spirit, or power. But if the body claiming to be a Church, is under the influence of the Holy Ghost, or its power, then the fruits of the body will also be spiritual; that is, if the mass or majority of them are under this

power, for they will control the body, and whatever the carnal element may be, it will be kept in subjection, and the body purged of it, as it will manifest itself. If the members of the body are destitute of the Spirit, it is impossible that the body can possess it. I would ask this author, whether an unconverted person can receive the Holy Ghost? Can any one be under the power or influence of the Holy Ghost, and his habitual walk be carnal and wicked? Can any carnal and spiritless person receive or derive authority from Christ to preach? Was there ever a more carnal, and diabolically wicked class of people on earth, than the popes, cardinals, bishops and priests of the Roman church were, for one thousand years before the Reformation? Can a body be both Christian and Anti-Christian? "The colossal power of Papal Supremacy" had existed for centuries before the Reformation; and if it is "a power as fully anti-Christian as any the world has ever seen," how can this anti Christian power appoint ministers of Christ? How can any rational man pretend that these proud, haughty, unclean, covetous, extortionate, murderous and perfidious creatures, could be in possession of, or under the influence and power of the Holy Ghost? By his own admission, how can they be ministers of Christ, or how can any Christian Church have connection with the Apostolic churches through this channel?

The position taken by the author referred to, is based on the ground, that Christ gave the authority to preach, and exercise ministerial authority, to His apostles; they gave authority by ordination to others; and the authority has been thus conveyed from one authorized person to another, from the apostles' time down to the present; and besides this authority none exists. Consequently no one has authority from God to preach the Gospel, unless he has been ordained by, or received authority from some one who has also received his authority from an unbroken chain of ordination from the apostles.

That the Roman Catholic church was the Church of Christ at the time of the Reformation, and had not so far corrupted herself, that her officers ceased to be ministers of Christ, and that the Holy Ghost was still in the Church, they rely principally on the declaration of Christ to Peter, that "Upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it,"

(Matt. xvi.), and in Matt. xxviii.: "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Again, in the Prophet Daniel, chap. ii.: "And in the days of these kings, shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and the kingdom shall not be left to other people." It is contended, that if the Catholic church had become apostate, then the gates of hell must have prevailed against the Church, and Christ must have departed from her, contrary to His promise; and the kingdom must have been left to other people, contrary to the prophecy of Daniel. As this cannot be admitted, because the Scriptures cannot be broken, they contend that the Catholic must still be the Church of Christ, notwithstanding they admit that she had become very corrupt. "That darkness, gross darkness, corruption, and superstition had covered, as it were, the face of the earth, admits of no denial." "The Romish church," they say, "professes to teach something else as equally binding upon the conscience, and equally necessary to salvation, as what is contained in the Scriptures. The chief motive which lies at its foundation, is the building up of the colossal power of the papal supremacy; a power as fully anti-Christian as any the world has ever seen.

With all this, it must be the Church, because the prophecy or promise forbids the idea of its fall; and on this ground, and on the succession of the ordination of its ministers, the grounds of the church's identity is based. So far as their ground of ordination is concerned, we propose to show, in the proper place, that there is no scriptural ground for their claim. The prophecy of Daniel, and the promise of Christ, stands firm, and we have already shown that there has at all times been such a people on earth, since the time of the first organization of the Church, without admitting the claim of such a dark anti-Christian body as that referred to. The author referred to, admits that a branch of the Church may fall. I would then ask, is the possibility of any branch falling, to be measured by its size? Would we not rather conclude that a small shrub or twig, which was green and full of healthy leaves and fruit, was alive, than a large tree which was leafless, fruitless and rotten?

It is claimed that the matter of the Church's identity, is a matter of great importance, inasmuch as we cannot discharge the full duty of obedience out of it. This we freely admit; but to

identify the present Episcopal church with that which the apostles built, on the grounds which they propose, requires more intelligence and knowledge of history, than is possessed by the majority of people, even in this age of free schools and general intelligence, to say nothing of the difficulty and dependence in which those of the past ages must have been placed, when the mass could not so much as read. The matter of the identity of the Church, then, being one of such great importance, and one which Christ has charged His Church, or His disciples, to see well to, can we believe that He would have left it to be attended with such difficulty and uncertainty as that here proposed? Has Christ once alluded to such marks of identity as are here presented to those who are seeking it? Not once! But Christ has given marks and evidences by which His children can infallibly identify their home or house; and such marks, also, as the poorest, weakest and most illiterate may not err in this all important matter. Is it not strange, that the author never once names one of these, and presents for our consideration that which Christ has not named?

When Christ spake to His disciples, He did not address them as a people possessed of great learning, worldly wisdom, or of highly cultivated minds. He thanks His Heavenly Father, that He had "hid these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." (Matt. xii.) In 1st Cor., Paul says: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence." The wisdom and goodness of God is therefore displayed in giving the marks by which His disciples could identify His Church, in all ages of the world, in such simple and plain words, that the most ordinary understanding can easily comprehend them. Christ said, John xiii.: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." In Matt. vii., Christ says: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly

they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. *A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.* Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."*

These points, or marks of identity, are such as men of common understanding can easily comprehend. It requires no deep research, learning or inquiry, to be able to perceive these marks; and as Christ has given them for this purpose, they must be infallible! Now just apply them to that Catholic church (so-named) at the time of the Reformation. What could even our good friend Wilson make of it, by measuring it by this rule? Before printing was invented, few could read, and books were scarce and dear, and few could search and prove such an identity as the Episcopalian claim would require. What, then, would the poor illiterate class do? Have to take the words of the priests! And even now a large portion of the community could not trace the succession from the time of the apostles to satisfy themselves of the identity of the Church, if this were the mode of arriving at it. It would afford a good opportunity for making the exercise of priestcraft profitable. But the wisdom of God has made it so simple, "that fools may not err therein." (Isaiah xxxv.)

When the apostles received the charge to go and preach the gospel, they were told to tarry at Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high. They did so, and on the day of Pentecost they were thus endued by the power of the Holy Ghost. If these were not qualified for this duty before they had received this power, certainly no other one can be. The effect of it was to shed the love of God abroad in the heart. If these apostles had went and began to preach the gospel, before they were thus endued, God surely would not have blessed their labors. If these then, could not preach the gospel till they were thus endued, how can any other one? Can any one believe that those carnal, wicked priests were thus endued, or ever received any authority from Christ to do so?

An unconverted person in the Church, whether he be priest or layman, has not entered in by the door into the fold; and Christ

says all such are thieves and robbers ; and “ the thief cometh not *but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.*” (John v.) If we look at the Catholic church at the time of the Reformation, we surely can see none of the marks which Christ has given. The carnal and ungodly priests, monks and bishops, were surely not converted, and could not be any thing but a mass of thieves and robbers. Was there a vice in the dark catalogue of crime, of which the members of the church were not guilty, and the bishops and clergy leaders in it? They murdered and tortured poor, helpless and defenseless men, women, and even some so young that they might be called children, by thousands ; and this through a series of near a thousand years. John says, 1st Epistle iii: “ No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” W. D. Wilson says: “ The difference in the spiritual condition between Christians and those who are not, is the fruit and operation of the Holy Ghost in and upon their hearts.” This is very true ; but I would ask, where was the fruit in this case? Must not the fruit of this operation be love, and those which Paul calls fruits of the Spirit? Can we be a Church without being Christians? And can we be Christians without loving God? And can we love God without keeping His commandments? If we keep His commandments we will walk in love, and not kill and torture ! The author above named admits that the Church would be apostate without the Holy Ghost, and labors hard to prove that the Catholic church was in possession of this Spirit, but he applies none of those tests which Christ gives as evidence. He displays great ability and ingenious reasoning, but it is all carnal reasoning, which, without Scripture proof and Scripture tests, is worth nothing. Christ says, John xiv. : “ He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me ; and he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.” Again (verse 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. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings,” etc. In the 1st Epistle of John, ii. : “ He that saith I know Him, (Christ) and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word in him verily is the love of God perfected ; hereby know we that we are in Him.” In chap. v., same Epistle : “ For this is the

love of God, that we keep His commandments." And in chap. i.: "If we say that we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." In Luke vi., Christ says: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of the heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. And why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say." These fruits are some of the tests and evidences, which the Scripture gives, of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those who possess Him. It is not possible that there could have been true Divine love in the Roman church. If any one had possessed this, it would have constrained him to protest against the sins of his brethren; this would bring him before the council, and they would either silence him, or put him out of the way. The Catholics professed to have fellowship with God, but where is the light they walked in, when it is said: "gross darkness covered the earth?" Then if they did not walk in the light, they lied; if they said they know God, and kept not His commandments (which it cannot be pretended they did) then they were liars, and the truth was not in them. It is said thousands longed for a reformation, but what did that help them? if they did not obey the command of Paul, "come out from among them and be ye separate," etc.

Paul says, Rom. viii.: "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die;" and in Gal. v.: "The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. In Rom. viii. it is said: "But if ye through the spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;" and Gal. v.: "But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts." Now I must again say, compare the Catholic church *with this word of God*; and then ask yourself whether they brought the fruits of the spirit, and mortified the deeds of the body, or whether

they walked or lived after the flesh, and the works of the flesh attended their walk? Did they keep the commandments of Christ, or did they not? No candid mind can hesitate for an answer. Their conduct and fruits clearly prove that they were destitute of the love and Spirit of God, and according to the admission of the author referred to, must have been apostate, unless it can be shown that a good tree can bring corrupt fruit; and the declaration of Christ to the contrary must be wrong.

Christ gave His apostles authority to preach, to baptize and organize churches, and perform every ordinance and duty necessary for the promulgation and support of the gospel. We do not find, however, that He gave any command with regard to the ordination of successors, or such as were after them, to serve in the Church. Yet we find that the apostles did ordain ministers to serve the Church; but we do not find that they forbade any to labor without formal ordination, or that they declared it unlawful for any one to serve in that capacity, who had not received ordination from one who had descended by regular succession from the apostles. When the deacons were to be appointed, the apostles told the Church to look out among them seven men. The apostles do not appear to have had any agency in their choice, but esteemed the Church's action as an indication that the Lord had ordained these to that calling.

The word of God represents all mankind dead by nature; but through conversion they are made alive. They are carnal by nature; but by regeneration are made spiritual. The office and calling they received from Christ, was a spiritual calling or office, which they received by virtue of the divine life they had received through the influence of the Holy Ghost. The office being a spiritual one, could not be efficiently exercised by a carnal person, any more than a natural worldly office or calling could be exercised by one who is naturally dead. Therefore, when the apostles ordained, or appointed ministers or officers in the Church, they did it, not by virtue of any carnal authority or power they had received, but by virtue of the spiritual power or authority which Christ had bestowed upon them. They could no more confer spiritual power or authority on a carnally minded person, than a prince or king could confer authority or power on a person destitute of natural life. Let any one then ask himself, whether

the office of a minister of the gospel is a natural, or spiritual calling. If it is said that it is spiritual, then certainly none but one who has received the spirit can exercise it. Carnal persons may preach, and only too many do; but it must ever lack the demonstration and power of the Spirit. Neither can a carnal or unconverted person confer spiritual power or authority on another. Is ordination a spiritual or divine ordinance, or is it a carnal one? Surely every person will admit that it must be a divine ordinance, and every one will also admit, that a carnal person cannot perform divine or spiritual ministrations acceptable to God.

In many instances, we read of great intrigues, and wicked devices which were resorted to, for the obtaining of a bishoprick, or the papacy. Emperors and kings very frequently, if not generally, nominated or appointed the bishop to be installed. All the parties were oftentimes not only carnal, but very wicked men; and in what sense could their appointment be considered by authority of Jesus Christ? If even Christ and the apostles had taught and insisted on such a succession, as the Episcopaleans claim is essential to a valid ordination, I do not know how we could depend on the succession we have, in the line of the Roman Catholic church. How any reasonable men can claim for them, that Christ, with His Spirit and blessing, has been with such a succession of wicked men for more than one thousand years, is hard to conceive. But it is claimed, God still owned Israel as His people, though they had become wicked and debauched. But we must remember, they were not a spiritual people. Their promises were literal promises, and their ordinances carnal ordinances. They were installed in a natural office, and exercised it so long as they lived; but dead persons never were installed in office, or ministered any ordinance. But here spiritually dead persons are claimed to minister in spiritual callings. It is therefore doing violence to the spirit of the Gospel, to stretch the promise of the Saviour to His apostles, to be with them every day unto the end of the world, so far as to make it apply to a long succession, of not only unconverted or dead men, but as abominably wicked and ungodly men as ever lived upon the earth, merely because other wicked men had impiously laid their hands upon them, and blasphemously pronounced a benediction over them. I have read of priests expressing themselves that when they pronounce the words, "*Hoc est corpus meum,*" over the

bread and wine in the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ must descend into it, "*whether He is willing or not.*" Is this more presumptuous than to claim that the Holy Ghost must have been in and with succession of wicked men, for over one thousand years, merely because one wicked person invoked a blessing upon another? Is there any example on record where God blessed the ministrations of wicked men from generation to generation? Under the law, whenever a priest or king became very wicked, he was generally slain. Their office and calling was carnal, and whatever they did whilst living, they ceased to act when dead. Now the apostles received their authority from Christ, not in view of their natural, but of the spiritual life. They were born of the Spirit, and by virtue of its life they received power from Christ. The functions or ministrations they performed were spiritual, and they conveyed authority to, or ordained other living persons to succeed them in their calling. Those who were spiritually dead, could as little perform spiritual functions, as a naturally dead person could receive installment into office, or perform secular duties. A natural father has power to give or bequeath his estate to whom he pleases while he is living, but, when dead, this power ceases; neither can the heir receive gift or bequest when he is dead. Kings, and persons in high authority, had sometimes power to name their successors, or to bestow authority on others; but they had to do it in life, and the receiver had also to be living. Spiritual ministrations *must therefore* also be performed by living spiritual persons, and whatever power or authority is imparted by virtue of their ministrations, must be on living spiritual persons also.

The organization which the apostles formed the believers into in the beginning, was the Church of Christ. The Spirit is what made them the Church. Without the Spirit, the organization would not have been a Church of Christ, whatever their ministrations or exercises would have been. So long as this organization preserved the Spirit, they remained the Church of Christ; but when they lost the Spirit, the Church was fallen, whether the organization was continued or not. That the Roman Catholic church was the continuation of that organization which the apostles formed, I freely admit; but hold that it fell, having lost the Spirit. But *the Church* did not fall. The carnal element became predominant in the body, and oppressed every thing which was in the way of

carnal gratification, and their advancement in wealth and luxury. At what precise time this total extinction of Spirit took place, I am not prepared to say, or in what way the ministerial offices were transmitted into dead and spiritless hands, I do not know; but the spiritually dead got the ascendancy and control of the body, and the church lost every distinctive mark or feature which Christ had given for its identification.

A nation may have their rights, laws and privileges, hereditary or otherwise acquired. So long as the nation lives, they may transmit or leave them to their successors from generation to generation; but if they all die out, their powers and rights die with them. But if only a few remain, whatever of rights or authority the nation possessed, to those few their rights and privileges descend, and they are the nation. On this ground, therefore, we regard this great Catholic church (as it is called) as nothing but a dead body. The favors and blessings which God promised to His Church, as His children, remained with those who lived and remained when the others died, whether they be many or few; just as a father's living children are the inheritors of his estate, whether one or more be living, or however many may have died. I have no doubt, there were still faithful souls amongst them when the Church first declined, and that they earnestly protested against the carnal life and element which was intruding itself into the body; but they could not prevail; the carnal element became too strong, and nothing was left them but to withdraw from those who walked disorderly, as Paul commands in 2d Thess., iii.: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which he received of us." The living could not remain amongst the dead, without contracting deadly disease, and so would have to perish with them.

We have many examples of such protestations and withdrawals recorded in history. If a *little* leaven leaveneth the whole lump, they certainly could not remain with such a mass of leaven, without becoming leavened themselves. Whether these were now few or many, *they were the Church*; and on these rested all the blessings, rights and privileges which Christ had promised to His Church; for the rest were dead, and these survivors were in their stead. So, also, those who had become associated with the

church of Rome, from time to time, after it had fallen, when they would become awakened, and by the grace of God brought to perceive their situation in this charnel house, had no other way but withdraw themselves. Of these withdrawals, we have numerous examples and abundant evidence; but have not so full and complete a history of their numbers, doctrines and practices, in many instances, as would be desirable. This is not strange. Those who obey the calling of the Lord by His grace, are more frequently of the humbler order than of the higher, and, therefore, not generally so well qualified for historical productions. And, besides this, the dominant party persecuted them with such relentless fury as to deprive them, in a great measure, of the opportunity, if they did possess the qualifications. And, besides this, their enemies destroyed all their writings on which they could lay hands. Much of the history we have of these seceders, is the production of their enemies, whose object was to render them odious in the eyes of the people; and, besides, there were many wicked and heretical spirits arose and taught perverse doctrines, and their doctrines would be imputed to all who dissented from the Roman church. For a long time, the favorite charge was Manechianism, and at a later period Munsterite. From this cause the historical accounts vary very much. But enough is known to lead to the persuasion that sincere, upright and faithful witnesses existed at all times, and on these rested all the promises of the Father.

When Christ died on the tree of the cross, He died for every soul then living; and for those also who were to come after, who would believe on Him. So when He prayed to His Heavenly Father (John xvii.) that His disciples should be one, and that He should sanctify them through His truth. He further said: "Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." The promises which Christ gave, John, xiv.: "If ye ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments; and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever." And again: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Again: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you;

not as the world giveth, give I unto you ;” and in chap. xvi. : “ And ye now therefore have sorrow ; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” This prayer of the Saviour, and these, with all other promises, are to all believers to the end of time ; but certainly do never apply to unbelievers, whether in or out of the Church ; and when they claim these to themselves, they deceive themselves by their arrogance. And those who assume to be ministers of Christ, when they comfort the carnally minded by these promises, cry peace, when there is no peace.

The promise which the Saviour made to His apostles at the close of Matthew’s Gospel, is to them alone as ambassadors ; but it applies equally to all His ambassadors, to the end of time. But they are apostles, or ambassadors, by virtue of Christ’s choice. Although Christ says, He chose His *disciples* out of the world, yet when He chose His *apostles*, He did not choose them, *as such*, out of the world, but from amongst His *disciples*, whom He had before chosen out of the world, and were now no more of the world. So we find when the apostles and disciples, to the number of 120, were assembled at Jerusalem, and desired to select one from the number, to fill the place of Judas, they selected two, Barsabas, and Matthias, and prayed the Lord to show whether of the two He had *chosen*. So the Lord here *chose* Matthias. When Paul sent for the elders of the Church of Ephesus, he said : “ *The Holy Ghost made them overseers.*” It seems, therefore, the same authority still chooses them, which chose the first ambassadors, and the same promise is to them, which was to the apostles at first. The apostles had such a measure of the Holy Ghost, as imparted to them special powers to work miracles. The office or duty of the apostles was a special one, and to enable them to execute the office, or trust, special power was essential, and this the Lord imparted to them for this purpose. But the promise of Christ to be with them to the end of the world, extends beyond the apostles’ time, and is a general promise to all His servants. So is His prayer, and the promises quoted above from John, to all believers, to the end of time. Christ chose His apostles, and gave them this general promise, which extends to all those whom He shall afterward choose ; but He certainly chooses none to this calling but disciples ; and when any one who is not a disciple, assumes

the calling of an ambassador, he has no share in the promise. But whoever, however, or wherever, Christ chooses an ambassador, the promise to Him is sure. There is not a word said about succession, or that the promise is to descend to others by *it*. But we find that the apostles did ordain teachers, and that they ordered others to appoint them; but what preliminary measures they adopted, we have no account of, except Matthias, already referred to, and the case of the first ordination of deacons. Neither do we find that they warned the churches to beware of such as were not regularly ordained, by a regular successor of themselves. But Christ warns us to "beware of false prophets," and gives us the fruits as an index whereby they shall be known. Paul says, Rom x. : "How shall they preach, except they be sent." It is Christ who sends, but Hé does certainly send none but His own; and Paul says: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His." All such must, therefore, be false prophets, and they will manifest this in some way, by their fruits. All men will know Christ's ambassadors and teachers by their love. Love is a principle which can only be judged in others by its fruits, or by the walk; and when one walks in gospel obedience, he walks in love, and brings the fruits of love. But John says: "He that transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God; He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him god speed; for he that biddeth him god speed, is partaker of his evil deeds."

I would again ask those who hold the Roman church as the Church of Christ, whether the burnings, hangings, beheadings, drownings and horrible torturings and manglings of what the Catholics called heretics, for no other cause than that they could not conscientiously join them in worship, were murders? To order numbers from 50 to 100, and up to 400, defenseless, helpless creatures, male and female, to be burnt alive, is a fruit much more befitting a demon, than a child of God, and ambassador of Christ. Yet, it seems that not only men of intelligence in this nineteenth century, but even those of great learning, will set up for these wholesale murderers, the claim of being Christ's chosen people, under the influence of His Holy Spirit and the blessing of His promise.

In the "Martyr's Mirror," page 211-12, we find a record of about thirty persons, of both sexes, who had gone from Germany to England, in the year 1161, under the reign of Henry II. The account is taken from papistic authors, who say they were "Petrobrosians;" others say, "Poor Men of Lyons." They were charged with no crime, but were apprehended on account of their faith. The king called an *ecclesiastical council* at Oxford, where these poor people were examined and condemned as heretics, and were commanded to be publicly branded in the forehead as such, and to be whipped out of the town, the people being strictly forbidden to receive them into their houses, or afford them any comfort or assistance. This sentence was strictly executed. They were branded, as ordered, on their foreheads, and their leader, also, on the chin. Their upper clothes were cut off, and their bodies denuded to the waist; then publicly whipped out of the city, and the cold being rigorous, without clothing or shelter, they all perished. And this occurred in *England*, where, it is said, there was always protest against papal supremacy, and where it is claimed the Church was in truth "*the Church of England*." But I do not propose to speak of papistic corruption, further than is necessary to show that the claim of succession through that church cannot be supported.

As Christ, then, always had His Church, not always in the same place, because the persecution being so severe, and such determined efforts being made to extirpate the true children of God, they had to flee from one place or country to another, and their number sometimes not so large; yet they were always under the promise, and their teachers, so long as they were faithful, had the support of Christ being with them. Christ's promise to His apostles and their successors, is not an absolute or unconditional one. He gave them their command, first, of what they shall do, and then the promise is on condition of obedience. If they do not obey Christ, and teach to observe all things that He commanded, no one can claim that they are under the promise. That the Catholics did not do this is so evident, that I suppose W. D. Wilson himself would hardly pretend they did. Then, the promise does not concern them, and cannot support the pretensions which are based on it, in the least.

But the declaration of Christ to Peter, "On this rock will I

build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," is taken as evidence, that as Christ did build His Church, then, if it fell, the gates of hell must have prevailed against it. This could not be admitted, and, therefore, the Catholic church must still be *the Church*. When it is proven that this people had long since forsaken the doctrine and commands of Christ, and lost the marks of identity which Christ had given, and said it should be known by, is it not evidence that it has fallen, and the declaration which the Saviour made had reference to something else, than this particular organization? Is it not much more reasonable that another body, which bears the marks of identity which Christ gave, teaches the commands of Christ, and walks in love to all men, is that Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail? And the more especially so, when we see the shafts of hell hurled at it with such murderous enmity for so many centuries, without being able to overcome it, but had often to confess themselves that the more they killed, the more this people increased, and some one said, the blood of the saints is the seed of the Church. I believe the Catholics hold that Peter is the rock to which Christ here alludes, and that Christ built His Church on Peter. We think Christ did not refer to Peter himself, and that Peter was a man as all others are; as he says himself what he was in times past, and twice after this, also, showed his weakness; and even in this same chapter, where this is recorded, a little while after, Christ said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto Me." (Matt. xvi.) The occasion, when Christ made the expression under consideration, was after asking His disciples: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" After they had answered this question, He further asked them: "But whom say ye that I am?" and Simon Peter answered, and said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ told him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Now, we believe that the declaration of Christ, had reference to the confession which Peter here made. Surely, the Church cannot be built upon Peter, but the confession that Jesus is *the Christ*, the Son of the Living God. The Heavenly

Father had revealed this to him, and this brought from his heart and lips the confession of the ground of salvation. Christ is Himself called a Rock, and a Stone, and a Living Stone, and precious. Those who, by the revelation of God, can, from the heart, confess what Peter here did, are founded on the same rock that Peter was, but they will know it is not Peter, but Christ Himself. This is still the confession of the Church, and upon this it stands.

The prophecy of Daniel, chap. ii., is also relied on as evidence that the Roman church could not have fallen, else the kingdom must have been left to another people. It is said: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people." Now, I should think that if the Roman church, at the time of the Reformation, was this kingdom, then it must, indeed, have come to another people. The prophecy has reference to the Church of Christ; but we must consider to what people this kingdom came—those people who were born again, or regenerated; born of the Spirit, and were spiritual; who denied themselves, and took up the cross of Christ and followed Him; who walked not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and brought forth the blessed and Divine fruits of the Spirit. Many, very many more characteristics of the children of God could be given. Of such is the kingdom of heaven. It is within them, and has fused their hearts together, and made them one heart and soul, and this is the Church, or kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, or come to another people. Never to another people than the children of God, who are born of the Spirit. All those declarations of Christ, and this prophecy of Daniel, stand firmer than heaven and earth. They shall pass away, but this Word will stand firm. The Jews, at the time Christ came into the world, professed to believe Moses and the prophets, but they could not see that in Christ which the prophets had foretold of Him. They were carnal, and could not discern spiritual things. They looked for a carnal kingdom, and power to overcome, and bring into subjection carnal enemies, but the times and seasons they could not discern. That people who were born of the Spirit, of whom the Church was built, were the people of this kingdom; and when the Catholic church, or the mass of it, became so carnal

that Christ was necessitated to spew them out of his mouth, they were not the same people who had received the kingdom; but those who withdrew themselves from their disorderly brethren, and reprov'd their wickedness, were still the people of the kingdom, and it can never be taken from them.

The preaching of the Gospel, and administering of Church ordinances, is an appointment of God, for the benefit of His people, which serves the end of affording them spiritual comfort and enjoyment; and also securing them from contamination, by the spirit which prevails in the world around them. Christ prayed His Heavenly Father for all those whom He had given Him. When we consider the earnest appeal which He makes in their behalf, John xvii.: "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me," we must be convinced that the danger is indeed very great, and there is urgent necessity of the protecting care of the Lord. The Saviour says, He does not pray that the Father shall take them out of the world, "but that He shall keep them from the evil;" showing clearly that the evil is in the world, its influence surrounding them, and they are in danger of being ensnared by it. For this reason, God has established a Church and ordained a ministry, as the best means which infinite wisdom could devise, for preserving His children and perfecting them for His glory. It is therefore said, when "He ascended up on high He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, and He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." When God appoints means for a purpose, they must be of great importance; and a thing of importance, God does not place out of the reach of those who need and desire it. The Church, its ministry and ordinances, are the important means, then, which we have here under consideration; and we hold, that God has placed them within the reach of those who desire them, whenever there is any considerable number of souls hungering after those means which God has appointed. If Christ has ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men, for a certain purpose, He will supply those gifts wherever they are necessary. If the view we have taken of the Catholic church is correct, there must then be some means beside successive ordinations, to render the organization of a

Church, and its ministrations valid. Christ gave His apostles no command with regard to ordinations, or authority to empower others, or invest them with authority to minister in the Church. The apostles were, however, endowed with such a measure of the Holy Spirit, that what they done was by Divine authority. They did appoint and ordain others to act in this capacity, and by their example it has received sanction, amongst pretty nearly all parties professing to be churches of Christ. We hold, also, that this is right, and highly proper, wherever circumstances will admit of it; and proper regard for the example of those who have gone before us, would forbid us lightly to depart from this custom, unless unavoidable.

But the apostles nowhere forbade ministrations by those who had not been regularly ordained, or made any declaration that such ministrations are not valid. Whether there were no ministrations except by such as were regularly ordained, in the apostle's times, I do not know, and would not undertake to speak with assurance, one way or the other; but I am not aware of any occasion arising in that time, for such a departure from the common custom. In Paul's case, I think we have reason to believe the common custom was departed from; but yet there is no certain evidence of it. In the ninth chapter of the Acts, we have the statement of the Lord appearing unto him on his way to Damascus, when he fell to the earth. When Saul arose at the command of the Lord, he did not see, and was three days without sight. There was a "*certain disciple*" at Damascus, named Ananias, unto whom the Lord said in a vision: "Arise and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas, for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold, he prayeth." Ananias having heard of Saul's character, hesitated; but the Lord said unto him: "Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Ananias entered into the house, and put his hands on Saul, and said: "The Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized.

And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue, that He is the Son of God." In the twenty-second chapter of the Acts, where Paul is speaking to the Jews from the castle stairs at Jerusalem, where he related these circumstances, he says, he asked the Lord what he should do. The Lord said unto him: "Arise and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." Then it is further said: "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see the just one, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be His witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

The relation of these circumstances in these two chapters differs some little, but nothing of material importance. It will be observed, that Ananias is in neither place mentioned as an apostle, bishop, or presbyter; but in one place he is called "*a certain disciple*;" and in the other place "*a devout man according to the law, and of good report,*" etc. It is not said that Ananias baptized him, but the presumption is that he did. Then there is nothing said of his ordination, nor not a word of any gospel minister being at Damascus. He was certain days with the disciples, and straightway he preached Christ. I admit that there is not ground to say, that he was certainly not ordained, formally. If Christ or the apostles had given such a command, or declared its necessity, I should say the presumption would amount to a certainty that he had so been; but in the absence of any such command I think the presumption is the other way. Paul's conversion occurred so soon after the organization of the Church, that there is no account of any bishops or presbyters having been yet ordained by the apostles. There is nothing said of any preaching besides the apostles, up to this time. The apostles themselves were yet ignorant that the Gentiles also were included in the Gospel promise. In the ninth chapter there is

nothing said that any intimation was given of what the Lord said to Ananias; that he was a chosen vessel to bear His name to the Gentiles, etc. But it might be said, that what is related in chap. xxii.: "The God of our Fathers has chosen thee," etc., is an ordination, but it must be remembered, that this was before he was baptized, and this would certainly not be in order. Moreover, if Ananias was a regularly ordained minister in the Church, he certainly was not one of equal authority with the apostles, and in church ordinations, inferior officers do not ordain or install those of a higher order. Paul to the Galatians, chap. i., says: "The gospel which was preached of me, is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Then a few verses after he says: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal his son unto me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia," etc.

No ordinance in the Church can change the relation of man to his God. A man in a carnal state, is not made spiritual by baptism, or any ceremony man can perform; neither is it the will of God any such shall receive any divine ordinance. Much less can God choose a carnal man to minister in Holy offices; and if they should receive ordination by man, no blessing could possibly attend his ministrations. The Catholics themselves did not regard baptism by heretics valid. Neither do I know how any one who has any knowledge of divine things, could receive any ordinance or ordination, at the hands of one whom he could not regard as sent from God, or called by Him to the ministry. Being thus situated, those who withdrew from the church of Rome, could not receive ordination, or any ceremonial ordinance, from them. Whether there always was a source whence they could receive such installment in regular order, I do not know; but cannot think there was. At least, the first who withdrew could not do so, and had to receive it in some other manner. As all the world, so far as the Christian religion was known, was under the authority of the Catholic church, believers would have had to remain without the benefit of a Church, or gospel ordinances, if there was no

other source to obtain authority, than by successive ordination in regular descent from the apostles. Neither does this question seem to have been agitated, or the minds of the religious community exercised by it, in the days of the reformation. I do not remember to have noticed any thing in the "Martyr's Mirror" of any question about this matter, at that time; or that of the inquisitors interrogating any of the martyrs on this subject, or charging them with invalidity on this account.

If there were, in any place or neighborhood, a number of persons who had, by the grace of God, been brought to repentance and faith in Christ, and had full faith and confidence in one another, that they were indeed converted, and in fellowship with God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and by the spirit made one heart and soul, and had ardent desire to enjoy and partake of the ordinances of the Lord, but there was no regularly ordained minister among them, nor source whence they could obtain one, would they have forever to remain debarred of this favor? If in their prayers to the Lord for help, they would become impressed with the belief that a certain brother was endowed with suitable gifts, and full of the Spirit, what should hinder him, at their request, to assume the functions of the ministry, and administer the ordinances to them? Certainly no one could urge any command to the contrary, for there is none; and if the children of God are led by the Spirit of God, and that Spirit will lead them into all truth, and what they agree to pray the Father for, shall be given to them, no one could urge a scripture objection. This would be more rational, and more in the spirit of the Gospel, than a regular ordination from corrupt priests.

Every teacher in assuming the office of a gospel minister, professes to be sent of God; and if he is not so sent, then he professes something which is not true, and must be a false teacher, or prophet. But Christ does not bid His disciples to inquire into the mode of his calling, but his life and doctrine. If he keep and teach the commandments of Christ, they have reason to regard him as a teacher sent from God. I do not now speak of times and places where the Church is in existence, as an organized body, but of such times and places as existed in the dark ages of the reign of popery.

It would be very desirable to have a history of the proceedings

of such parties as withdrew from the dominant church, in the earlier ages of the Christian era; of the manner in which they proceeded in the appointment or ordination of their ministers; or how they were exercised in regard to what constituted a valid appointment. From their generally pious lives, and the respect and regard they paid to the word of God, we cannot believe they passed lightly, or carelessly, over such weighty matters. We know that they openly and freely declared, that they did not regard the church of Rome as the Church of God, but as the very anti-Christ; and that they did not regard the baptism which they received in it, as true christian baptism; so we may also very reasonably assume that they could not regard any ordination from that source, as of Divine authority.

Christ has given promise, that where two or three meet together in His name, He will be in the midst of them. The meeting together of believers tends to mutual comfort and edification, which makes their meetings, however small, happy occasions, and this creates a desire for these meetings. The Spirit, which begets in them this desire, and makes them happy in such meetings together, also begets in them a desire for the ordinances and means which God has appointed for the edification, comfort, and support of those who believe in Him. As God has appointed His Church and its ordinances for this purpose, they feel as if it were with them a necessity. This leads to prayer and supplication to the Lord to supply their wants; and Christ has promised, that whatever they ask in His name, shall be given. If, under these exercises, they are unitedly led to request one of their number to take upon himself the calling, and he, in the fear of the Lord, assumes the position, and they, together, walk in obedience to the commands of Christ, and teach His pure and unadulterated doctrine, neither the letter nor the spirit of the gospel is violated, and no man has authority to say the appointment is not valid. This, then, being the Church of God, His children will flock to it, and there is no fear of another arising in the same vicinity. Indeed, there could not be, because the Holy Spirit, without which there can be no Church, is a spirit of union, and not of schism. The minister or shepherd thus chosen, and teaching the doctrine of Christ, is known by Christ's sheep; the voice is familiar to them, and they follow him; he leads them in and out, and they find pasture. But

the voice of any teacher who does not bring the pure doctrine of Christ, is strange to them ; it is not the voice of Christ, and they will not, nor can they hear or follow it. Now, if it were not so, and no one could preach or minister in Holy things with God's approbation, unless he had been ordained thereto by one who was regularly descended from the apostles, then Christ and His apostles would have warned the disciples, to take heed that they do not follow any one, whom they do not know to have received his ordination in regular descent from the apostles. But we find nothing of this ; only "beware of false prophets, by their fruits ye shall know them." If their fruits are good, then know that the tree is good, for a corrupt tree cannot bring good fruit. If they teach the gospel doctrine of Jesus Christ, and walk in obedience to His commandments, we have nothing to fear from them.

The Scriptures compare the disciples of Christ, or children of God, to sheep, and those who minister to them in the ordinances, to shepherds ; the world as an element in which everything is opposed to the divine life of the children of God, and they being in danger of destruction. Therefore Christ said to his disciples : "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves ; be ye therefore wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." And, where He speaks in John x. of the fold, He says : "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep ; but he that is an hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep and fleeth, and the wolf catcheth them and scattereth the sheep." If the children of God are compared to sheep, the Church to a sheep-fold, the world to wolves, and the ministers to shepherds, then the great benefit and advantage of the Church to the children of God must be apparent ; indeed, we might say, an indispensable necessity ; and, also, the necessity of true and faithful Gospel ministers, who will stand by and protect the lambs of Christ against all the assaults of Satan, through the elements of the world, and their own flesh. The danger they are exposed to, without this protection and care, must be very great, or Christ would not have drawn this figure. The unity of the spirit and bond of peace, never could have been preserved, without a church and ministry. The wolf would catch and scatter the flock. Now the question would arise : Could Christ as the great shepherd, who said, "I am the good shepherd," leave His sheep

without the possibility of enjoying this benefit and protection? Purchase them with His blood, and then leave them to the mercy of ravenous wolves? To say that the church of Rome was the fold, is idle; for certainly no one could do the will of God, or obey Christ in it. If the Catholics, at the time we have in consideration, were an unconverted people, then they were the world, in every sense of the word. If they were converted, then they were the sheep and lambs of Christ, and they would hear His voice, and flee the voice of strangers; and their church was the true fold of Christ. Christ, in speaking of the world as wolves, and the danger of his disciples being torn and destroyed, has not reference to their natural lives. Their natural lives would generally have been more safe outside the church, than in it. But He had reference to their spiritual life. If the church of Rome was in *darkness*, yea, "*gross darkness*," (as the very men who contend for its being the Church of Christ confess,) then I do not see how the plea can be set up, that they were the people and Church of God. What benefit have we from being converted to Christ, if we are not brought from darkness to light? We are by nature in darkness, and out of Christ; but how can we be brought to Christ, and remain in darkness? John says: "If we say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." But the true children were not even personally safe in the church of Rome, if when any one was drawn by the grace of God, and prompted to confess the true Gospel doctrine of Christ, they were apprehended and had to die the death.

However we may choose to define the word *apostate*, or apostacy, the stern declaration of the Almighty stands firm: "A good tree cannot bring corrupt fruit;" and "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and again: "He that sayeth he knoweth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." A church may be apostate, and the members which compose it not. The church of Rome is the same organization which the apostles formed the believers into over eighteen hundred years ago. It was then the spouse and bride of Christ, flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone. The members were individually converted, and received the Holy Spirit, and were individually members of His body; and being by the Holy Spirit fused together, they collectively formed His body, or Church. They were in Him, and He

in them. Their preaching, their praying, their baptism, sacrament, or nothing they did, made them this, but their faith, and the Spirit consequent of that faith. So long as the members stood in this relation, it was the Church of Christ, led by his spirit, kept His Commandments, and walked in love. The Holy Ghost testifies that there is such a thing as a Church losing her first love, becoming luke warm, and dying. (Rev. ii., iii.) The Church will not be brought into this declining, or dead state, with a warm, loving, and living, ministry: but when the ministry is in a declining or dead state, unconverted and carnal persons will receive admission into the Church, and the ministry finally losing its life altogether, the unconverted world will enter, without either climbing up, or creeping in. The door will be open to every one, who chooses to make certain professions, whether only of the lips or not. In the Catholic church at the time of the reformation,⁶ the members usually had been baptized in their infancy, grew up in the world, and were members of the church, without any regard to conversion or newness of life; as their fruits and conduct plainly showed. That there were drunkards, fornicators, adulterers, murderers, and indeed those of every species of carnal works among them, no one can deny. That there were also moral, decent and upright persons in it, I freely admit. These also no doubt grieved and sorrowed because of the abomination they knew to exist among them. But did this help them? To say the best of the church that we can say, or any man can say with truth, they were of the world. The best of them must have been unconverted, and spiritually dark, or they could not have continued in fellowship with such a dark element, as the church then was. Now, as this was the same organization, or a continuation of that which was once in the light, but now so dark, we may unhesitatingly say, it was apostate. It had fallen and departed from what it once was.

As the Church had long been dead, its members carnal and unconverted, they as individuals could not apostatize. They never had true religion, and consequently could not lose it. They never were made alive in Christ, therefore could not die. In the time when the Church was alive, its living members might apostatize; but a person who has never been converted, and become a new creature, cannot. The members of this apostate church were

simply of the world, as all unconverted persons are ; some moral, some immoral, some decent, some indecent, some cold and hardened, and others more under conviction, as paying more heed to the convictions of the grace of God. As individuals they could not be apostate. But the Church or body, as being a continuation of the organization which the Apostles had formed, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, and led by it, they were apostate ; and as such they were destitute of any spiritual influence, or even conviction. But as individuals, the grace of God wrought upon their hearts, and strove with them. The Lord followed them and plead : " How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity ? and fools hate knowledge ? and scorners delight in your scorning ? Turn you at My reproof : behold I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you." Every one that thirsts was invited to come and receive, both wine and milk, without money and without price ; and even though they were here bound up by this body, seeking righteousness where it could not be found, the Lord says, " Why do ye spend your money for that which is not bread ? and your labor for that which satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently unto Me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (Isaiah lv.) These words are especially applicable to such poor souls, who, under the convictions of God's grace, may have sought in the means prescribed by this church, to obtain righteousness, and justification before God. Penances, masses, pilgrimages, and many devices were prescribed, to satisfy the hungry soul ; but it was not the bread of life, and could not satisfy. Therefore the Lord says, " why do you" do so.

Individuals may fall and rise again, but a church which has so far fallen, that the body is utterly dead, cannot be resuscitated. The case of the Church of Sardis may be urged, which had a conditional promise of life held out to it. The case of this church is, however, different, from that of the church of Rome. The ministry had been called of God, and ordained to this service ; the members had been converted, and by the Spirit baptized into one body. But they had yielded to some foreign influence, and seem together to have lost the Spirit and life. The Lord tells them they are dead, but are admonished to repent and remember the things which they have seen and heard. If they obeyed, this

would restore them to the state they had fallen from, and they would be a living Church, as they were before. If some of the members would not repent, but continue to walk in the carnal element, they would have to purge themselves of them.

W. D. Wilson says: "That the churches in the Roman obedience, were capable of *reformation*, is a position that has never been denied, that I know of, and I presume never will." That the Roman church was capable of reformation in morals, I do not deny; but if by this expression it is intended to assert, that the church of Rome was susceptible of resuscitation, (which I suppose is the meaning,) then I do utterly deny it. I hold it to be a charitable view of the church of Rome, to consider its members simply as unconverted spiritually dead people, carnal, and of the world, as if they were not members of the church, or made no profession of religion. They were in darkness, and knew not whither they were going. A man who was once enlightened, and yields again to the seductions of sin, our Saviour says, is worse than before enlightenment; and both Paul and Peter say, it were better never to have known the way of truth, than afterward to turn from the holy commandment; and in certain cases, where they have done despite to the spirit of grace, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing, and have trodden the Son of God under foot, and put Him to an open shame, it is impossible to renew them to repentance.

If the Church of Rome was spiritually dead, and anti-Christ, (which I hold that it was for one thousand years before the reformation), then it must have been under the influence of the spirit of darkness. They were opposing Christ, and persecuting, imprisoning, burning and torturing the best saints of that long period, and Christ said: What they did to the least of those who believe in Him, they did to Him. I can look upon them, then, as a body, in no other light than a corrupt dead mass, who were not and could not be, influenced by the holy spirit, in any of their pretended divine service, and that all their worship was essentially idolatrous; because the divine spirit never moved them to it. They were dead, unconverted persons, and the divine spirit moves all such to repentance and humiliation. The Church cannot be resuscitated, but by its members being made spiritually alive. This could not be done, but by repentance and conversion, and

this again cannot take place without confessing and forsaking their sins. Wilson says: "If it has the ministry and the Scriptures, it is competent to all the ecclesiastical functions necessary to life and vigor." If one of their ministers were fully awakened, I feel very sure his ministerial functions would appear one of the greatest sins and abominations he had been guilty of. Ministers and laymen are alike involved in idolatry, and as many as come to true repentance, must leave the body; and if it were possible for all to come to repentance, the body would be utterly dissolved. As well could one dead carcass bring another to life, as their dead ministry bring this dead church to life. They have the Scriptures, but these would lead every penitent soul away from this church.

I know that this position will not be well understood by the carnal part of my readers. They are of a legal disposition, and cannot understand why any one cannot begin to do good, and become acceptable to God. They cannot understand why the same act, done by two different people, should not be equally acceptable to God. To be carnally minded is death, and the carnal mind is enmity against God. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. All that the carnal person does to please God, is done in a legal spirit; and fails of the desired end. We must first become spiritual by conversion, and this will lead us away from all our carnal and legal works, and our works, wrought in love, will become acceptable to God. The Roman ministry were never called of God to the position they occupied, and would, if fully awakened, have to regard their calling as a wicked presumption, and the fruit of it would be that they would cease to exercise its functions. God never calls an unconverted person to the ministry. How can He? They are dead, and must first be raised up. Even the apostles who had been with him so long, and so plentifully instructed by Him, and were so well on the way to life, were not deemed qualified until they had received the Holy Ghost. No layman even, can be called of God to enter a dead, carnal church. The spirit that leads them there, whether priest or layman, must be the same as led and moved the Pagans into their religious exercises; and when awakened *must* and *would*, as certainly flee from this idolatry, as they did from theirs. For these reasons, I do not regard it as any more possible, that this church could be

resuscitated, than that Pagan idolatry can have life infused into its worship.

Perhaps friend Wilson would agree with me, that an actually dead church could not be revived. But he does not regard the one under consideration as dead. I understand the word *anti-Christ*, to mean one who is opposed to Christ. Now did not this body for centuries oppose every one who rose up and protested against the sin and darkness that reigned in it? Could any one in it be under the influence of the Holy Ghost, without protesting against this sin? Is it not what Christ Himself done, when He came to the Jewish people? And were those who opposed Him then, not anti-Christ? Unless anti-Christ can be a living Christian ordinance, I do not see how this church can be regarded an ordinance of God. But our friend Wilson must keep this body alive, or else abandon his own as dead.

I have dwelt more at length on this subject, because I regard every organized body (or church, if you please), which is not a living spiritual association, in the same light. It matters not whether they were in their inception heretical, or whether they were once in the true spirit and life, but had departed from it, and became a spiritless dead body. I do not deny repentance to any, or every individual of such organization; and all may come to life, but not as a body. If all did, the body must be dissolved.

The Episcopalean church claims to be the true Church of Christ, by right of successive ordination, from the time of the apostles; and that outside of that succession there can be no Church. To support this claim, they assume that the Catholic church, up to the time of the separation of the church of England, was still the Church of Christ, and that Christ still dwelt with the church, and it was under the influence of the Holy Ghost. These claims we have presented our views of, in which, if we are right, the whole claim of the Episcopal church must fall. They set up a further claim for the reformation of the church of England, which distinguishes it from the reformation in Germany, France and Switzerland. The reformation in England, they say, took place in the church, and was in this respect different from those of Luther, Calvin and others, whose reformation took place outside of the church, and resulted in the formation of new churches; whilst in England there was no new church formed. The clergy are represented as

working out the reformation, and the idea seems to be presented, that the clergy originated and carried out the reformation, which resulted in the rejection of the authority of the pope over the church of England.

The reformation in England does not seem to have originated with the clergy. It commenced outside of the bishops and leading officers of the church, and not only received no countenance or encouragement from them, but they actually sought to suppress it. Some of the bishops, who finally acted in the reformation, were eminent for their talents, and possessed such virtues as gave them distinction in their day. But when they could remain associated in fellowship with some of the worst characters the world ever seen, I cannot see how we can give them credit for possessing truly enlightened minds. The history of the world does not furnish us with worse characters than Henry VIII. of England, Cardinal Wolsey, and their fellows of the sixteenth century. Yet these very men, who are claimed as the reformers of the church, acted with them, held them as brethren, and did not separate from the church of Rome, until the king declared the church of England free and independent of the pope, and church of Rome. Henry VIII. did not desire the separation, because of any conscientious scruples about religion, or for the purpose of reforming the church, but because he desired the pope to divorce him from his wife Catharine, to enable him to marry Anne Boleyn. The pope hesitated, out of fear of the emperor of Spain. Henry becoming impatient, his advisers suggested to him to declare the separation. Whatever came of the separation, this is what caused it. Now with this bloody monster of intrigue and iniquity as the head of the church, the bishops set about reforming the church, after the pressure outside the clergy became so strong, that they could not resist. Not one of these reforming bishops raised their voices in favor of the New Testament, but looked on with complacency at their brethren *burning the Word of God*, and imprisoning, torturing, and even burning their neighbors, for no other reason, than because they *read the Word of God*, and not once raising the voice of warning, or uttering a word of rebuke. D'Aubigné says: "The Episcopate, which had *begun by opposing* the reformation, was *compelled* to accept it, in spite of its convictions. The majority of the bishops were opposed to it; but the better

portion were found to incline," etc. This "better portion" became "inclined," when they seen they could not avoid it, and could be done with safety to themselves. The same author says: "The then existing episcopal power, *was at enmity with the Word of God*, and the slave of its own abuses." It may well be said they were at "enmity with the Word of God," when they took every precaution in their power to prevent the people from reading it, searched for it wherever they suspected its existence, and burnt it, with those who read it. In our day, the man who is so careless or inconsiderate, or whose spirit has so little fervency, as to permit him habitually to neglect reading the Word of God, is regarded as very nearly destitute of religion. But these great reformers, as they are held to be, tried to prevent people from doing so, and to prevent their reading it, burnt it wherever they could lay hands on it, and even persecuted, imprisoned, and burnt poor hungry souls, who longed for the bread of life, *for reading it!* There is singular inconsistency in men who are now straining every nerve to give the Bible to the heathen nations, and put it into the hands of every one capable of reading, boasting of what they have accomplished, and holding up to commendation those who contribute liberally to this end; and in the same breath extoll men for their piety, and call them great and good men, who could sit and act with such men as formed the clerical element of England, in the early part of the sixteenth century.

We find that about the year 1516 or '17, Tyndale, Bilney and Fryth, three young men, by reading the New Testament, began to protest against the Roman church, with its false doctrine and abominations. They were among the first actors in the reformation in England, were persecuted, and had to flee the country. Some of them suffered great hardships, and endangered their lives, in translating and publishing the Scriptures, but received neither countenance or encouragement from the bishops, who are now receiving praise for having reformed the church of England. Bilney is said to have expressed himself in the following language: "What would be the use of being a hundred times consecrated, were it even by a thousand Papal Bulls, if the inward calling is wanting? To no purpose hath the bishop breathed on our heads, if we have never felt the breath of the Holy Ghost in our hearts." When poor Barnes, who was also one of the early reformers, was,

by threats of priests, and persuasion of friends, induced to sign a recantation of the sentiments he had professed, it was publicly read, and certain degrading performances enacted, at which it is said, Cardinal Wosley sat on a throne, dressed in scarlet, "and around him, thirty-six bishops, abbots, priors, and all his doctors, dressed in damask and satin." Not one of them came forward to offer poor Barnes a word of comfort or encouragement in the agony of his trial! The schools of Oxford and Cambridge, were the scenes where the controversy between the *Evangelicals* and *Catholics* were most lively. The former contended that the primitive Church of the Apostles, and the present Catholic church, were not *identical*. But it is not necessary to pursue this subject further. It is a historical fact, that the separation between the church of England and that of Rome, did not take place until the king denied the authority of the church of Rome, over the church of England, and declared himself the head of the church there, about the year 1534, at least seventeen years after Tyndale, Bilney, and others, had been laboring in the work, and the reformation had gained so much headway in England, that the clergy could not stay it, and Parliament had enacted laws to reform abuses, *chiefly among the clergy and monasteries*. It would seem, therefore, that instead of the clergy carrying through the reformation, the most flagrant abuses existed amongst themselves, and the laity first, by law, compelled them to reform themselves.

But now, since this "Episcopal Church" assumes to be the true and only Church of God in our country, by virtue of its descent, by regular order, from this church of England, and that the said church of England, is a continuation of the church of Rome, which before the reformation was the only one (as contended) in England, I would ask any candid mind to reflect on the state of the church in England, at the time of the reformation, and compare it with the marks of identity given by Christ in His Word, and ask, whether the assertion of the *Evangelicals* of the schools of Oxford and Cambridge, is not true; that the dominant church at that time was not *identical* with the Apostolical churches? And now what was this *reformed church*? Or what could be expected of it, under such a bloody head as Henry the VIII.? Persecution and bloodshed only commenced rightly after casting off the Roman supremacy. Even some of the most

exemplary characters that acted in this drama, imbrued their hands in the blood of their fellow creatures, for no other reason, crime or fault, but because they could not subscribe to the rules of faith and worship which they laid down for them. Even one hundred years after the reformation, they still persecuted those who dissented from their views, by inflicting severe penalties upon them. Among those thus distressed by imprisonment, were some very exemplary characters. John Bunyan lay in prison twelve years, for no other reason, but because he preached a doctrine different from the Episcopalians; but nothing immoral or vicious was ever charged to him or his doctrine. Where is the man now, professing the religion of Jesus Christ, who would take another by the hand, and call him brother, who had been guilty of causing the death of another for his religious views, unless his act had been followed by sincere repentance and conversion? When we read of the cruel torturings and barbarous treatment of the Christians by the Pagans, it causes one to shudder, and wonder how it is possible, that men possessed of souls, could inflict such sufferings on a fellow creature; but when we turn to those who themselves claimed to be the disciples of Christ, possessing the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus, and see that for hundreds of years they persecuted, tortured, racked and burnt their fellow creatures by thousands, the heart sickens, and we become utterly lost in amazement, at such diabolical malice and wickedness!

Yet people of education, refinement, and high mental culture, of this nineteenth century, claim that they were born of God, possessed His love, and were led by the Holy Spirit! In attempting to identify the Episcopal church on the ground of successive ordination from the time of the apostles, we must abandon the high ground claimed by the apostles, of the Church possessing a new and Divine life, wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit, which brings its members into obedience to Christ, and enables them to overcome the flesh, and walk in the Spirit; and must descend to the carnal and legal spirit of secular technicality. The whole argument is based upon human customs, and secular laws; and proves the truth of what Paul says, Rom. viii.: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," and in 1st Cor. ii.: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they

are foolishness to him : neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The pretension is based on the same ground as that of the Jews, when they said : " We be Abraham's seed ;" and again : " Abraham is our father." Christ said unto these Jews : " I know that ye are Abraham's seed," (that is, according to the flesh). But Christ did not regard their descent from Abraham, but referred to their works, to prove that they had no claim on that ground, and plainly told them : " If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God : *this did not Abraham.*" But Christ then said : " Ye do the deeds of your father ;" and again : " Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do." Christ here plainly shows that the children of God must, also, and will do the will of God ; and that all pretensions of being His children are vain, if our works and walk are carnal. John viii. This agrees well with what Paul teaches, Rom. vi. : " Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey ; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Now, I would ask, what made these people the children of the devil, but the spirit which prompted them to seek to kill the Saviour ? And what is the difference between the spirit which induced them to *seek* to kill Him, and those who not only *sought so*, but did actually *kill His children* ? Does not Christ expressly say, what they do to these they do to Him ?

These same charges will apply with equal force, to the principle parties in the reformation. Many of them persecuted those who dissented from them, when they obtained power ; and some of them long after the reformation. At the time of Cromwell's reign, when the Presbyterians were in the ascendancy, they petitioned Parliament, and exerted themselves to have acts of intolerance passed, expressing utter detestation of liberty of conscience. We hold that no man possessing the spirit of Christ, can do violence to his fellow man under any circumstances, even when he has wronged him, smitten him, or despitefully used him ; much less when he has done him no wrong, and desires only to do what he thinks the word of God teaches him, and his conscience approves as agreeing with it. Return good for evil, love for hatred, was Christ's rule ; and Paul says, resist not evil, but overcome it

with good. This we hold to be the teaching of the Spirit, according to the plain word of God ; which it was the cry in the reformation, should be the sole rule of our life and actions. John Tewksbury said to the Bishop of London in 1529 : " If there is a disagreement between you and the New Testament, put yourselves in harmony with it, rather than desire to put that in accord with you." This we acknowledge is sound doctrine. We must put ourselves in harmony with the Word of God, and unless our life does accord with it, it is vain to assume that we are, or call ourselves children of God ; for only those who are led by the spirit of God are the sons of God ; and the spirit of God cannot lead us differently from the word of God.

I would here say, I feel deeply grieved to be necessitated to reflect on the errors of those, who, with myself, profess to be seeking their own salvation, and laboring to assist others in its pursuit. I have no doubt, there are those who will read these reflections with sorrow, and will impute them to a want of charity ; and I will here take occasion to say myself, that if what I have written is not done in love or charity, I freely acknowledge my labor and religion is vain ! But I confess, that I cannot understand that charity, which will in silence pass by what they are convinced in their heart is sin, and not raise the voice of warning against it. There is very much written and spoken on the subject of religion ; very much which we cannot regard otherwise than as erroneous, and calculated to deceive and destroy. And should we pass by these errors, and from fear of wounding some one, or of incurring displeasure, be silent ? If we see a person in danger of drowning or perishing in fire, our feelings of humanity will not suffer us to be punctilious about rules of etiquette, or considerate of how we handle them, or whether we ourselves should be somewhat scorched, or hurt. The reformers did not refrain from exposing the errors of those against whom they contended, and they are now applauded ; yet we shall be silent about the error and deception we see existing around us, and out of *charity*, suffer them to go on in the way of destruction and perdition.

CHAPTER V.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ —Col. ii. 8.

In the last chapter, we have carried the consideration of the Church down to the time of the reformation of the sixteenth century. In doing so, we have labored under great disadvantage, on account of not having the history of the life, and confessions of faith, of those whom we can esteem as the children of God, composing His Church and kingdom, written by themselves. The meager accounts which we can arrive at, are mostly from their enemies, or at best from such as very imperfectly understood their principles. The histories are therefore mostly unreliable, and mixed up with gross misrepresentations. We now come to a period, however, in which we enjoy better advantages; yet we find the words of Paul verified, that he that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution; and wherever this is, there will also be misrepresentation. Although we have not much of the history of their acts, or particular account of their progress, we have what is of much more importance, the account of their doctrines, views and sentiments, written by themselves.

In the early part of the sixteenth century, at the time when Luther and the popular reformers of his day, began to agitate the subject of religious reform, there were in Germany and the Netherlands, a people, who, although not numerous, yet did firmly and stoutly protest against the errors and corruptions of the Roman church; and did not only protest against those errors and corruptions, but also came out from among them, and by their separation, set the example of obedience to the precepts which they taught, walking patiently on the narrow way of life.

These were mostly descendants of the old Waldenses, who, although they were sorely persecuted and dispersed into different countries, still adhered to the ancient faith and life. By these dispersions, parties were brought into contact with different persuasions, and by their surroundings, and its influence, many were induced to embrace principles widely differing from the true Waldenses. Many

who did not adhere to the ancient faith, still adhered to the name, but embraced principles of a very different character. This accounts for the different principles and doctrines attributed to the Waldenses, by different writers and historians. Prejudice and self-interest may have influenced some, in giving a prejudiced history of these people, whilst others may have only had acquaintance with some sect which the true Waldenses would not have received as brethren. But there were, in different parts of the old world, people uninfluenced by surroundings or circumstances, who firmly adhered to the principles of Peter Waldo, and his brethren of the twelfth century.

The earliest intimation we have of the existence of such a man as Menno Simon, is in his introduction to his renunciation of the church of Rome, where he says, that in the year 1524, being then in his 28th year of age, he undertook the duties of priest, in the village of Peningum, in Friesland. He says, he soon began to be troubled in regard to transubstantiation. He had never in his life touched the Holy Scriptures, fearing if he would read them, he would be misled. At length he resolved to read the New Testament attentively, in which he did not proceed far, ere he discovered that he had been deceived. This was some eight years after Luther had commenced his career as reformer in Germany. He says, his conscience, which was troubled on account of the sacramental bread, soon obtained relief, without any human aid or advice, "though I was encouraged by Luther in the belief, that human authority cannot bind to eternal death." Afterward, he says, he heard of the execution of a patient, pious man, named Sicke Snider, for having his baptism renewed. This sounded strange to him, to hear of a second baptism. In the "Martyr's Mirror," the execution of Sicke Snider, is given as occurring "about" the year 1533. The expression of *about* shows that the exact time of this occurrence is not certain. 1533 would make it be about seven or eight years after the time, when Menno first began to be troubled about the sacramental bread and wine. This is a longer time than I would gather from the relation he gives in his renunciation; and it may, therefore, be that the execution took place at an earlier date than 1533. Whether or not, this event led to his inquiry into the authority for infant baptism. When he could not satisfy his mind that there was

Scripture authority for this rite, he consulted ancient authors, and afterward Luther, Bucer, and Bullinger; but found they supported it on widely different grounds, none of which were scriptural. After this he removed to Witmarsum. Covetousness, and a desire for a great name, were the inducements which led to this change. He had obtained more light and knowledge in the Word of God, and the grace of God seems, by his relation, to have wrought mightily upon his mind; but he laments that he wasted his knowledge through the lusts of his youth, in an impure, sensual, and unprofitable life. "I sought nothing but gain, ease, favor of men, splendor, reputation, and honor; even as they all generally do, who embark in this same course of life."

After this, being painfully exercised in his mind, because of the carnal life he was leading, he began openly to preach the word of repentance, direct the people to the narrow path, reprove ungodliness and sin, all idolatry and false worship, and presented the truth concerning baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the doctrine of Christ. He faithfully warned every one in relation to the prevalent corruptions and abominations, till about the period of nine months, "when the gracious Lord granted me His Fatherly spirit and aid." Then he voluntarily renounced and resigned all his worldly honor and reputation, and willingly submitted to poverty, distress, and the yoke of Christ. He says: "*In my weakness I feared the Lord, I sought out the pious, and though they were few in number, I found some who were zealous, and maintained the truth.* Thus, my dear reader, the God of mercy, through the benign influence of His grace, exerted upon the heart of me, a miserable sinner, produced in me a new mind, humbled me in His fear, taught me to know myself in part, turned me from the way of death, and turned me into the narrow path of life, to the communion of His saints. To Him be praise for evermore."

Menno further says: "About a year after this, at which time I exercised myself in writing, and reading the Word of God, in secret," six or eight persons came to him, who were of one heart and soul with himself, and in life unblamable, as far as man could judge, separated from the world, and subdued to the cross. These earnestly besought him, to take upon himself the ministry of the Word. This brought him into much trouble, fear, and

anxiety. The great danger and hardships to which this would expose him, his own limited talents, his ignorance, weak nature, and timidity of the flesh, with the power and wickedness against which he would have to contend, pressed very sorely upon him; but on the other hand, the miserable, starving condition of Christians, who were erring as sheep without a shepherd, also exercised him painfully.

“At last, after much prayer, I placed myself and these circumstances before the Lord and His Church, in order that we might pray the Lord for a season, that should it accord with His holy will, He would give me such a mind and heart, as would enable me to say with Paul, woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel; for Christ says, that ‘if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I, in the midst of them.’”

Menno further says: “Thus, my reader, behold, I was not called to serve among the followers of Munster, nor of any other seditious sect, (as it is falsely reported concerning me,) but I have been called by a people who were ready to receive Christ and His Word, led a penitent life in the fear of God, served their neighbor in love, bore the cross, sought the welfare and salvation of all men, loved righteousness and truth, and abhorred wickedness. Thus they manifested that they were not such perverted persons as they are slanderously reported to have been. But they were true Christians, though unknown to the world, if we otherwise believe that Christ’s word is true, and His holy life and example unblamable.

“When the persons before mentioned did not desist from their supplications, and my own conscience in some degree made me uneasy, (although in weakness,) because I saw the great hunger and need, already named, I surrendered myself, soul and body, to the Lord, and committed myself to His grace, and commenced, according to the contents of His Holy Word, to teach, and to baptize, to labor in the vineyard of the Lord with my limited talents, to build up His Holy City and Temple, and to repair the dilapidated walls.

“The great and mighty God has made known the word of true repentance, the word of His grace and power, together with the

salutary use of His Holy Sacraments, through our insignificant service, and unlearned writings, together with the service, labor and help of our faithful brethren in many towns, and countries. The Lord made the condition of his churches glorious, and accompanied them with such subduing power, that many exalted and proud hearts were not only humbled; the unclean not only purified; the drunkard made sober; the avaricious, benevolent; the ferocious, mild; and the impious, pious; but they also faithfully renounced their possessions and blood, bodies and lives, for the testimony of Jesus, as may daily be seen."

After speaking of these fruits of the labors of himself and brethren, as differing from the fruits and evidences of false doctrine, and advertng briefly to the hardships they suffered under their severe persecution, he concludes as follows: "Behold, my faithful readers, in such fears, poverty, misery, and danger of death, have I, wretched man, performed to this hour, without change, the service of the Lord, and I hope, through His grace, to continue therein to His glory, as long as I remain in this earthly tabernacle. What I and my co-workers have sought in performing our arduous duties, is apparent to all the well-disposed, who may readily judge from the works and their fruits."

There is here a marked difference in the course pursued by Menno, from that of nearly, if not quite, all the great reformers of his age. They had mostly, like himself, been priests, or monks; and seem all to have been exercised by the grace of God operating on their hearts by His word; showing them that there was something not right in the religion they were teaching. It led them to deep reflection, and constrained them to protest against such things as they were convinced by the word of God, were contrary to His will. This light in all, was at first as a faint glimmering, but as they approached it, by giving it place in their hearts, it increased, and revealed to them such abominations in the church with which they were associated, as led them to the conclusion that the church was very Antichrist. From these convictions, they all began to change their course and mode of preaching; and as their light increased, they increased in boldness and power of denunciation, of what they were convinced was contrary to the word and will of God. So far, Menno pursued the same course as all the rest. But he gives an account in

his renunciation, of the conflict which he endured, between the convictions of God's grace, and the inclination of his own flesh, and carnal will. He had gained popularity, and distinction and honor he could see before him; but the grace of God showed him that it was not the way of life. He says: "My soul was troubled, and I reflected, if I should gain the whole world, and live a thousand years, and at last have to endure the wrath of God, what would I have gained?" These exercises, by the grace of God, led him to resign himself to the divine will, and voluntarily renounce all worldly honor and reputation, and willingly submit to poverty and distress, under the yoke of Christ; which, although it is to the spirit easy, and the burden light, is yet sore and grievous to the flesh, especially in times of deadly persecutions.

Here he laid down his calling as preacher, and sought such to associate with as were pious, and, as he says, though they were few in number, he found some who were zealous, and maintained the truth; and where he speaks of those men who solicited his acceptance of the ministry, he says: "They were of one heart and soul with myself, in their faith and life; and, as far as man could judge, were unblamable, separate from the world, and subdued to the cross." Here Menno gives us to understand what he considers the fruits of true repentance and conversion, and the unity of spirit and bond of peace, to which the Holy Spirit will bring all those who are under its influence. According to the best information I can receive, these people were descendants of the old Waldenses, and held to their ancient doctrine, principles and faith. To these, Menno seems to have joined himself in fellowship. I am not aware of his saying anything, in any of his writings about his own baptism, or of the particular time or circumstances under which he joined himself to the Church; but from the evidence we have in his writings, that he did not regard that baptism which he had received in his infancy, as being Christian baptism, and, also, that he insists on the duty of believers being baptized, we have no reason to doubt, that when he found such a people as he speaks of, he was baptized by them, and became a member of their church. Before he was called to the ministry, he calls these people *brethren*, and praises God for having called him into the communion of His saints.

I am not aware that any of the other reformers ceased to preach when they became convicted of their errors, or seen that the church of which they were members, was a dead body. They continued to preach, and exercise all the duties and functions of one called of God, to minister in this weighty and sacred calling. I cannot see how this is reconcilable with Scripture, or common sense and reason. When Christ came into the world, His desire was, that all mankind should avail themselves of the benefits accruing to man, by the atonement which He was about to make. Until the debt was paid, and the atonement completed, no one was saved. He therefore proclaimed, through His disciples, who He sent out to preach, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. But after he had made the atonement for our sins, having died in our stead, was buried, and arose again from the dead, and was about to ascend into heaven, He only gave the commission to His apostles, to go and preach the gospel; and then, not until they receive power from on high, by the Holy Ghost coming upon them. This was the first commission given to go and preach the gospel, and the qualification requisite to it is plainly indicated, by the command to tarry till they were endued with power from on high. The Lord Jesus sent no unbelievers to preach, nor even those who believed, until they received the endowment. If the apostles had not tarried, as the Lord commanded them, but had gone immediately to preach, could we say they were sent? Or can we believe that any blessing would have attended their labors? If, then, the Apostles were not qualified to preach the gospel, and administer gospel ordinances, without the endowment of the Holy Spirit, can any one now be qualified without such endowment?

I suppose no one will maintain that an unbeliever can receive or possess the Holy Ghost. We have neither promise nor example of any such thing. It is said in John ii.: "Many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men." And in chapter xii., He says: "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogues; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Neither is there example of any such believers

as these receiving the Holy Ghost; and if we go further, and take those who the Saviour said would come in that day, and say: "Have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" have these received the Holy Ghost? Undoubtedly not, or the Saviour would know them! And in truth none of these can be said to be believers, else they would have received the Holy Ghost and eternal life, because both are promised to those who believe. Saving faith believes all that Christ has said, and subdues the soul, so that it believes and receives all that the Scriptures teach and declare, and brings them into obedience and suffering with Christ, as well as to reign in glory with Him. Faith first embraces the law, which brings the knowledge and sense of sin, but it does not, and cannot, give the Holy Ghost. This knowledge and sense brings repentance, which, as a fruit, leads to a forsaking of sin and unrighteousness; but neither does this bring the Holy Spirit, any more than John could baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. But these operations being wrought by faith, lead to Christ, by faith in whom the soul is subdued into submission and obedience, humility and self-denial. These fulfill the condition of true discipleship, and have the promise of the Holy Ghost, which enlightens the heart, mind and understanding, so that they can discern the mystery of the Gospel. These are alone qualified to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which we see clearly exemplified in the case of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

At the commencement of the reformation, in the early part of the 16th century, all Germany, or indeed all Europe, belonged to the Catholic church, except only a few scattered dissenters. They had generally, or all been baptized in their infancy, and grew up from childhood as members of the church. But who that reflects upon the life which the mass of them led, can believe that they were converted, and spiritual children of God? They lived in the lusts of the flesh, and walked after the desires of the mind. Popes, cardinals, bishops, priests, friars and monks, according to all historical accounts, were alike corrupt and sensual, and had been so continuously, for many centuries. If there were any exceptions, (which I hope there were,) they were the exception, and not the rule; and were certainly not excusable, inasmuch as they continued to walk with them in fellowship, well knowing the

licentious lives their fellow believers were leading ; and Paul says, he which is joined to an harlot is one body with her. Of the lay members, no doubt there were many moral, virtuous and worthy people ; but they must have been blind, or they could not have suffered themselves to be led by such *blind* and darkened priests ; and must have been on the way to destruction, for Christ said, "if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch." There were among the gentiles also moral, decent, and virtuous people, but were they on that account Christians, or children of God ? Were they on that account under the promise ? Viewing the priests and monks in this light, they certainly could not be regarded as called of God to preach the Gospel. Paul says : "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," but then he says : "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard ? and how shall they hear without a preacher ? and how shall they preach, except they be sent ?" There is not a syllable of Scripture to warrant the idea, that these men were called of God ; and how could they then preach ? The best of these priests and monks were in darkness, lying under gross delusion and error. This they confessed themselves, and they must have been destitute of the Holy Spirit as a guide. How then could they regard themselves as being called of God to enlighten and direct others ? Paul says, 1st Cor. vi. : "Be not deceived ; neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Where is there a scripture which absolves a priest from the condemnation here denounced against these sins, some of which many of them so openly practiced and lived in ? Certainly no one will claim that these devilishly wicked popes and priests, were in possession of, or led by the Holy Spirit, and could therefore not have been called of the Lord to preach. They were, in short, of the world, carnal, unconverted, and dead in trespasses and sins, as all mankind are by nature ; and if they would ever come to attain life, must be brought under conviction, repentance and conversion, as all other men must do. If they are brought under conviction and repentance, they must also forsake their sins and iniquities, and confess them, as all other men must, for God is no respecter of persons.

The false prophets in Israel were an especial abomination to God, above all other people; and were the cause of the greatest iniquity that was practiced amongst the Jews. Is there an instance where one of these were converted, and continued to practice the prophetic office? These false prophets were all under the influence of Satan, and consequently serving him. The effects of the first enlightenment, must then be to abandon the service they were in. Can there be anything more abominable in the sight of God, than a man hypocritically pretending to be an ambassador of Christ, whilst he is in truth in the service of sin? I would again ask, how can any one regard such men as being called of God, and receiving power of Him to preach? If, then, they were not called of God, by whom were they called? And of whom did they receive power? Certainly of the enemy of God, and prince of darkness, whom they were serving. Every unconverted person is in the service of sin. Paul says: "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness?"

The reformers were mostly men of learning, and endowed with great natural talents; but these were not the endowments from on high, through the power of the Holy Spirit. They had to repent and be converted, just as all other men must. Conversion is never perfected, without a sense of our own utter destitution of virtue, and entire corruption and pollution. Divine light may have gradually entered the soul of these reformers, and first have revealed to them the outward corruption and iniquity which surrounded them, and not yet have revealed to them the inward sin, and depravity of their hearts; but a true conversion could not take place, without a true sense of this inward pollution. If this sense of sin existed, a sense of guilt must also have seized upon the soul, and brought them into the lost condition, to which Christ says He alone was sent. How, then, could they preach Christ, when they themselves did not yet know Him? Or how could they proclaim peace and liberty to others, whilst they themselves were yet the servants of corruption? Or whence, where, or how, did God call them to this sacred calling? Under any circumstances, whether they were moral or immoral, they were at least in darkness, and must conclude that God had called them to preach and teach, whilst they were unenlightened, and unendowed

by the Holy Spirit, and utterly ignorant of the way of righteousness and peace. If these could regard their calling as being of God, then they must admit that all the other priests and monks, who continued in popery, were also called of God; for they stood in regard to their calling, in precisely the same position they themselves did.

I think most of the great reformers, Luther, Zwingle, Calvin, and others, were admitted to orders in the Romish church, and preached before they had any particular conviction of the true condition of the church of Rome, or the relation in which it stood toward God. I think they afterward all held, that the church of which they had been members and teachers, was an anti-Christian body; and they do thereby admit that they themselves were engaged in anti-Christian and idolatrous abominations, and their deeds and acts, their services and ordinances, were sin. However ignorant they may have been in what they were doing, their ignorance could not excuse them; they were in darkness, and walking in darkness, knew not whither they were going; and, saying they had fellowship with God, they lied and did not the truth. (John 1st Epist. i.)

Their ignorance could not excuse them, or make them innocent. It might mitigate the heinousness of their crime, or guilt, but did not acquit them in the sight of God, any more than Paul's ignorance excused him. True, they might sooner receive grace, than if they had acted willfully, or presumptuously; but still they were inexcusable. The natural effect, then, of true awakening would be to pause, and not proceed in their ministerial calling, till they had come to the true light, and receive the Spirit which would guide them into all truth. They would pause, until they had good evidence that God had indeed called them, and in no way conclude, that because they had acted in such capacity before, God would any sooner call them. God may, by various ways, and means, call His servants to labor in His ministry; but such a thing as being called to this high and holy calling, to minister in holy things, whilst one is in the darkness of his carnal and unconverted state, I cannot comprehend the consistency, or reasonableness of. God calls His ministers by the operation of His spirit; but how can an unconverted, or unenlightened person, know anything of the operation of the Holy Spirit?

Menno Simon had assumed this calling, as the great reformers before-named also had, and when the Divine light began to dawn upon his soul, he also continued to preach, as they did, and the popular sentiment seemed also to encourage and flatter him; but the grace of God convicted him that this calling was not of God, and led him to lay it down, and receive the kingdom of God as a little child, and to seek the society and fellowship of the children of God, as any other newly converted person would do. He undoubtedly regarded his call to the ministry, under which he had been serving, as not being from God; and to continue in it, or act under it, would be dishonorable to God, and inconsistent with the profession which he was now making. It would be countenancing that which, by word and deed, he did in other ways declare as anti-Christian, and a service of the devil. After he had laid down his calling, and united himself with the church, and associated with the brethren for a season; then about a year after he was solicited by them to take up the calling of the gospel ministry. He tells us, also, with what fear and distrust, he engaged in this sacred calling. He besought the brethren who made the request, and the church also, to pray with him to the Lord for a season, that if it was the will of God, he might manifest his will unto them. He felt his own weakness and incompetency, and the seriousness and weightiness of the calling. He pursued the sure and safe way, to wait and ask direction of God.

This is a feature of the reformation, which is especially worthy of observation. The reformers denounced the Roman church in the strongest terms, and especially the pope, bishops and clergy. They give the priests and monks generally the character of a lazy, indolent, luxurious and lascivious class of men. If they were anything like what they charge them with, they certainly were as destitute of Divine life, and as much the children of the wicked one, as any class of people could be. The active and prominent reformers were pretty much all of this class. They had received their orders and authority from them, they had been associated with them in fellowship, they ministered in their superstitions and idolatrous rites, and, in short, were, in every appearance and fact, one with them. Many of them had never as much as read the word of God. I would then ask any reasonable person, how they could esteem them as, at the best, anything but carnal, unconverted

men? and how the authority to preach, could possibly be regarded as of God? Certainly, then, with only a faint illumination, they would have had to perceive that their call and authority to preach was not of God; and, consequently, must have been sin. Regarding them as carnal, unconverted persons, and the dawning of light upon the soul, as the convictions of God's grace, we must regard it as altogether out of the order of God's appointment, that such persons should now begin to preach, so soon as they only had some convictions of God's truth. If those who preach must be called of God, and endowed from on high, then we must regard virtue and authority, as coming from or through that dark, corrupt and wicked element of the church of Rome, if these were called. Does it not look very inconsistent in the reformers, to denounce the church of Rome as anti-Christ, and the mother of harlots and abominations, and having stepped out from her, and preached the gospel under authority or ordination received from her? The Pagans had their priests and officers, who officiated in their rites and ceremonies; but we do not find that when the apostles preached Christ, and they believed, that these priests stepped out of Paganism into Christianity, and preached Christ by virtue of the office, or authority they held in Paganism. What they did after the church fell from its primitive purity and virtue, I do not know, but it certainly was not so under the apostolic mission. It may be said, this is not a fair comparison, or they are not parallel cases; but where is the difference? The devil is the author of all error, sin and wickedness; and it matters not under what shadow or pretext it is practiced. If that wickedness and abomination exists in Popery, which the reformers themselves charge, then it could not well be worse in Paganism, and certainly the author of sin exerts his influence over both. It would be hard to draw a distinction between Pagan priests, and those ministers of Satan whom he transforms into ministers of righteousness.

After Menno Simon accepted the call to the ministry, he became very active in disseminating the true doctrine of the Gospel. He traveled over a great part of Germany and the Netherlands, laboring assiduously and successfully, to the close of his life, in 1561. His traveling was attended with great danger to himself, as he and his brethren were especial objects of persecution by the Catholics. Whilst other Protestants were hated by the Catholics,

and occasionally one or a few cast into prison, or executed, the Mennonites were almost unremittingly persecuted; and whilst kings and princes protected other protestants, no hand was raised to protect the poor ana-baptists, as the Mennonites were termed. The capture of Menno Simon was an object especially desired by his enemies. A price was set upon him, which should be the reward of whomsoever would capture him, and criminals were offered pardon and favor, if they would effect his apprehension. But with all this, the Lord protected him, under great suffering and affliction, until he died a natural death, (as said, in 1561), in the sixty-sixth year of his age.

But as our object is not specially to speak of the life of Menno, further than is necessary to a right understanding of the doctrine and principles of the Mennonite church, we will leave the consideration of what relates to him personally, and turn our attention to the doctrine which he and his brethren confessed, practiced and insisted on, as the true gospel principle.

Menno Simon, so far as I know, never claimed to found or organize a church, or to revive one which had existed before, but had declined or fallen into decay. But, as he says in his renunciation of Popery, when he entirely renounced his former principles, and resigned himself to the will of God, and submitted himself to poverty, distress, and the yoke of Christ, sought out the pious, of whom he found some. Then, as he says, about a year after, whilst exercising himself in reading and writing, he was approached by six or eight persons, who were of one heart and soul with himself, who solicited him to take upon himself the office of the ministry. He says he laid the matter before the Lord and His Church. He did therefore recognize a church, and communion of saints, by which he was called to the ministry; and in which he labored faithfully, diligently and fearlessly, and also with such efficiency, as to give the church the appearance as if it were a new thing. From his prominence in the church, it came to be distinguished by the attachment of his name.

We have, in the last chapter, referred to the early decline of the Church, and its departure from the faith once delivered to the saints, and the purely spiritual life, which the apostles taught as the fruits of that faith. We have also adverted to the many different persons and their associates, who, from time to time,

dissented from the dominant church, and who were known by different names, according to their leaders, or some local circumstances connected with them, and the strong probability that they constituted the true Church of Christ; or that it was by such dissenters in different places, continued from the time of the apostles, so that the kingdom of Christ was never extinguished on earth, since its establishment by Christ. I have also adverted to the circumstances, which render it difficult at this day to arrive at a true knowledge of what these different people really were, and what their profession was.

The Waldenses arose in the twelfth century, and derive their name from Peter Waldo, of Lyons, in France. This is disputed by some, who claim a much earlier origin for them, and claim their name as having been derived from some different source. We admit that there were people at a much earlier period, who professed the same faith and principles as these did, and when, where, or from what source the name was derived, is immaterial. In the latter part of the twelfth century, through the instrumentality of Peter Waldo, their number became very large, and continued numerous throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and were very cruelly and distressingly persecuted. They were very widely dispersed by this persecution, which was so relentlessly persisted in, that they became nearly extinct in some localities. By this dispersion they were brought under influences, which, in some places, brought about a departure from their original profession and principles. Nevertheless, there was still, until the reformers, a church in existence, which professed the pure Waldensian doctrine and principles; which were the same as that held by Menno Simon, and those who were named after him, in the sixteenth century. These Waldenses were the people with whom Menno associated himself; and by his prominence, his name became attached to them, and that of Waldenses became extinct, but their principles were continued.

During the several centuries immediately preceding the time of the reformation, I know of no considerable party existing, besides the Catholics, except the Waldenses and Albigenses. These are said to be the same people in life and faith, the latter only receiving a different name, from a certain locality where they were numerous. Wickliffe and Huss were of the fourteenth century, and

their principles did not differ widely, if at all, from that of the Waldenses; but neither seem to have had any very considerable number of adherents. They were both persecuted by the Catholic bishops and priests, but Wickliffe died a natural death, whilst Huss was honored by a martyr's crown. Wickliffe's bones were afterward disinterred and burned by the Catholics, to show the detestation in which they held his principles, and their regret that he had not been served in life, as his bones were in death. But the Waldenses were cruelly and relentlessly persecuted, until the name was merged into that of Mennonite, who, with the adoption of their principles, also received the full measure of their sufferings.

In the sixteenth century, the Mennonites became more numerous; the different sects of popular Protestants, also, became large and numerous; and it is very singular that, whilst the Mennonites have the testimony even from their enemies, that they were a pious, virtuous and inoffensive people, that they were so sorely persecuted, and such great numbers martyred, throughout the sixteenth, and the greatest part of the seventeenth century; whilst the Lutherans and Zwinglians, being much more numerous, besides often committing acts of violence, and uttering threats and defiance, were not much molested, and only occasionally imprisoned or martyred; and when one or a few were threatened, or offered any violence, the whole community was in an uproar of excitement, and threats freely made of avenging themselves upon their persecutors. But all this time the Mennonites were imprisoned, burnt, drowned, and beheaded, by dozens and scores; and never a voice of horror raised by these Protestants against such barbarity; and even after the Lutherans and Zwinglians had obtained for themselves free toleration, the Mennonites were still severely persecuted. We find in the "Martyr's Mirror," page 788, an account of thirty-six persons, thirty women and six men, being drowned and burnt at Antwerp, in 1571. Again, on page 902, we have an account of fifty-four persons, thirty-seven taken at Antwerp, and seventeen at Brabant; men, women, widows and young ladies. The whole fifty-four remained unshaken in their faith. They were all imprisoned and cruelly tortured, to induce them to renounce their faith; but, proving steadfast, they were all burnt at different times. To prevent them from speaking to the people, they gagged them; but fearing they might still speak,

they seared their tongues with a hot iron, so that the swelling should prevent utterance. This was in 1574. On page 915 is an account of twenty-five persons, who had fled from Flanders on account of persecution, and went to London, where they were maintaining their families quietly; but on Easter-day, in 1575, when they had assembled to worship, in the suburbs of the town, they were apprehended. After being shamefully treated by the bishop, four questions were propounded to them in writing, which they were required to sign, or be burnt. Five of the number signed the recantation, and were liberated, but were exposed at St. Paul's church, and branded for having been deceived. Fifteen women, and a young lad, were driven on board a ship, to be transported. The lad was tied to a cart, and scourged. The five men were cast into a very loathsome prison, where one soon died; two were burnt at Smithfield, and two liberated. This was under the reign of Queen Elizabeth, a *Protestant reign, under reformed Episcopalian government*. No offense was charged to them, except their refusal to sign the articles of faith presented to them.

About the year 1635, there was a very distressing persecution broke out against the Mennonites, in Switzerland, after a season of about twenty years religious liberty. The account of this persecution commences on page 1008 of the "Martyr's Mirror." Switzerland was at this time under Protestant government, and was more than one hundred years after the death of Zwingli. The chief complaint against them, was their refusal to go to the "Reformed church." No criminal charge was made against any one of them, that I can find. When they asked their inquisitors, whether a person could not be saved on the doctrines they had confessed? the reply was: "Yes, a person certainly can be saved who holds such faith." Nevertheless, they took all their property from them, and gave them the choice, either to go with them to church, or die in prison. They offered to leave the country, if they would leave them take their property with them, but were refused.

In this persecution there were not many executions; but very many imprisonments of males and females, in all conditions and circumstances, and such inhuman cruelty practiced, that very many died in prison. Some lay in prison in irons, and kept on bread and water, under such barbarous treatment, as to make the

heart sick to read it. In 1671, there were seven hundred persons, old and young, in the department at Berne; compelled to leave their homes, their property and friends, and seek shelter, and a home in other countries. The Mennonites in Holland, at this time enjoyed religious liberty, and sympathizing with their brethren in Switzerland, chiefly in the department of Berne and Zurich, applied to the authorities of Holland to intercede in behalf of their persecuted and suffering brethren.

The authorities seem cheerfully to have complied with the request of the Mennonites, and several petitions were sent to the councils of Berne and Zurich, one of which we will here transcribe, to show the favorable testimony given to the Mennonites by the authorities of Rotterdam:

To the Lords and Councils of the City and Commonwealth of Berne, the Burgomasters and Lords of Rotterdam, greeting:

HONORABLE LORDS AND ESTEEMED FRIENDS: A few days since, a petition was presented to us, in the name of the church called Mennonites, after its pastor Menno Simon, as the representatives of said church, which contained a long complaint that such cruelty is practiced in your city toward their fellow-believers, called, in derision, Anabaptists, that by reason of edicts, they are not permitted, though unaccused of any crimes, to remove their effects from your city or territory; nay, that some, out of pure hatred of their faith, have been deprived of their property, and secured in prison. Moreover, the petitioners have requested us to use our intercession to avert, if possible, the punishment designed for their brethren. As this their petition, being founded on correct principles and the unvarnished truth, we could not in duty disregard it. We, therefore, desire your honorable lordships, nay, we entreat your honors, for the sake of religion and the faith in Christ, that we hold in common with you, that it might please your lordships to repeal the aforesaid severe edicts and resolutions passed against the innocent, erring people; or, if your lordships should deem this incompatible with the circumstances of your government, of which your lordships are the judges, to grant, at least, that the poor people may sell their property, make the necessary preparations, and remove with their funds to where they expect to live in greater repose and security. As regards ourselves, honorable lords, we have been of the opinion, ever since the formation of this government, that this kind of men can be safely tolerated in the commonwealth, without prejudice to the same.

And for this judgment, we have to thank William, Prince of

Orange, of blessed memory, who, through his bravery, established for us liberty of conscience, and who could never be induced by the petitions and perverted zeal of some ill-disposed people, to deprive the Mennonites of the privilege of citizenship. In truth, we have never repented of this, our experience never having informed us, that the Mennonites, under the cloak of religion, have ever sought to excite a sedition in the commonwealth; but, on the contrary, that they have cheerfully and promptly paid their taxes, and performed every duty that a subject owes his prince; nay, that they kindly afforded pecuniary aid to the reformed who were oppressed in other places for their faith, and not long since to the Waldenses, our brethren, who were treated with great cruelty by the Duke of Savoy, who was instigated thereto by the minister of the pope. We are aware that some insane persons strive, through misguided zeal, to persuade your lordships that the toleration of the Mennonites is prejudicial to the commonwealth; but their reasons are so puerile, as never to have induced us to oppress the Mennonites with any rigorous laws.

For their confession, that Christians are not permitted to act as officers of government, and their being conscientiously opposed to swearing, (the two principal charges preferred against them), cannot be prejudicial to the commonwealth, since they do not refuse obedience to the authorities, which they consider their bounden duty, even when onerous restrictions are imposed upon them, and this from the conviction of their own consciences; and therefore they will bind themselves so strictly, by their word, that if they are convicted of a violation of truth, they are willing to undergo punishment due to perjury. Now, so long as these things remain established, we cannot see what injury the commonwealth has to apprehend therefrom.

Though some, through devotion or superstitious awe, abstain from magisterial offices and taking of oaths, yet what can be said against them by those who, under the glorious name of the reformed, follow the tyranny of the pope, and under the favor of the excellent titles of reformation and purity of faith, introduce popery; the remembrance of which, as often as we reflect upon its cruelties formerly practiced in this city, and *especially against the Mennonites*, (the details of which are recorded in our register's office,) our minds are oppressed, and our souls are terrified, and we rejoice that we are freed by the blood formerly shed, from the yoke of the raging harlot. But, we indulge the hope that, when this shall be properly considered by your excellencies, your lordships will either repeal the onerous decree against the Mennonites, or, at least, after the example of those of Schaffhausen, a canton of Switzerland, and that of the Roman Catholic prince of Neuberg, grant the poor wanderers sufficient time to make their preparations, and procure residences in other places. When this

is effected, your lordships will have accomplished a measure well-pleasing to God, advantageous to the name of the reformed, salutary to the wanderers, and gratifying to us who are connected with your lordships by the close ties of religion, and will serve as an influential example to all those who strive under the glorious name of the meek Saviour. We entreat the Mighty God, that He would shed the light of His truth upon your lordships, and upon the commonwealth, and grant you long prosperity.

Your lordships humble friends, the burgomasters and regents of Rotterdam, Feb. 14th, 1660. ROTTERDAM.

It does seem very strange, that intelligent and learned men, and such also who have read the Scriptures, and profess and pretend to preach and teach the religion of Jesus Christ, and to be endued with His spirit, and have themselves also tasted something of persecution, because of which they had to flee from one country to another for safety, should not have reflected so much, and so deeply, as to perceive whence the foul spirit of persecution emanates! It is said to have been at the instance of Calvin, that Servetus was burnt, and that Melancthon and Bullinger approved the sentence. (Appleton's *Encyclopædiæ*.) Charity is a Divine virtue, and much to be admired; but to call darkness light is not charity, no matter in whom it manifests itself. This act of these great men was surely a very dark one. Sorry indeed am I to say it, but how can we, by the Word of God, regard men as in the light and fellowship with God, who walk so darkly, as to imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow creature? These men no doubt felt justified in their act, and, so far as I know, never receded from the stand here taken. I suppose no enlightened person will say anything else, than it was an evil, dark, and bitter act. They held it to be the contrary. The Lord says by the Prophet Isaiah, chap. v. : "Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" It is not pleasant to reflect on any man, and especially such as stand so high in estimation as these; but I think that thousands living might be benefitted, by perceiving, not only the error by which they were captivated, but the still more dangerous one, of admitting that persons may have been under the influence of Divine light, whilst they walked in gross darkness. This is both unscriptural and unreasonable.

We find the following in a small work, entitled, "Life and Times of Menno," by I. Newton Brown, on page 58: "Of these myriads of noble sufferers for our New Testament faith, too little is known in this country. The Mennonites of Holland, however, have preserved many precious memorials, in a work published in the seventeenth century, called, "The Bloody Theatre; or Martyr's Mirror," of more than one thousand pages. It is now in course of translation and publication, by the Hanserd Knolleys Society, in England." (This work has long since been translated into the German language, published, and in the hands of the Mennonites, and their descendants, in the United States. It was translated from the German into English, by I. D. Rupp, for David Miller, by whom it was published in 1837.)

"Dr. Benedict, who has made free use of this work in his late history of the Baptists, characterizes it thus: The martyrs generally exhibit not only uncommon firmness and decision, amidst the awful havoc which was made with their feelings, property and lives, but displayed, moreover, most edifying and consoling specimens of ardent piety and devotion, and plain, common, good sense, in their long and frequent conflicts with their inquisitorial Examiners, before the civil and ecclesiastical tribunals."

"The following brief extracts from the edicts of their persecutors, both Papal and Protestant, will show what must have been the nature and extent of their sufferings. Let it be remembered that the *baptism of believers* was then, as now, falsely called *re-baptism*."

"In 1525, the then Protestant canton of Zurich, Switzerland, issued the following decree. We ordain and require that all men, women, boys, and girls, forsake *re-baptism*, and shall not make use of it hereafter, and they shall let infants be baptized. The disobedient we shall punish according to his deserts, without fail; by this all are to conduct themselves."

"In 1530, finding all previous severities insufficient to prevent the growth of the Baptists, the magistrates issued an edict worthy of the most barbarous heathen emperors of Rome: 'We, therefore, determinately command all the citizens of this land, and all those who are in the least connected therewith, namely, the chief and under officers, town councils, judges, church deacons and deaconesses, that if they meet with any *Anabaptists* they will

report them to us, according to their oath, *not to suffer them any where, nor let them increase*, but to imprison them and to deliver them to us; *for we will, according to law, punish with death all Anabaptists, and those who adhere to them*; and we will punish also without mercy those who *aid* them, who will not report or disperse them, or do not surrender them to us to be imprisoned," etc.

"Who, without horror, can read the above, drawn up by Bullinger, the Presbyterian reformer of Switzerland, years before the Munster tragedy?"

"We will only add the following specimen of Papal decrees of the same period, but five years later. It is from an edict of Charles V., Emperor of Germany, issued in 1535, and is addressed to the Governors, etc., in all the countries of Europe under his control:

"And since we have been informed, that, notwithstanding our former edicts, many heretics, *some of whom call themselves Baptists*, have undertaken, and still persist, to promulgate their aforementioned abuses and errors, to sow and to preach privately in order to deceive a large number of men and women, and to gain them over to their false doctrine and rejected sect; nay, to *re-baptize* them, to the great reproach of the sacrament of holy baptism, and, with utter disregard to our commands, laws and ordinances; therefore, have we, who have been solicitous in this matter, commanded you, immediately on the receipt of this, that you have it proclaimed everywhere within the borders of your dominions, that all those who shall be found contaminated, or stained with the accursed sect of Baptists, or Re-baptists, of whatever conditions, their ring-leaders, adherents, and all who participate, shall forfeit their lives and possessions, and *shall be severely punished by fire*, and that without delay; as regards the rest who have been re-baptized, or who have entertained any of these Anabaptists knowingly, *if they sincerely regret it, they shall be executed with the sword; but the women shall be buried in a pit*. He that does publish and make them known, *shall have one-third of their confiscated property, if the accused is convicted.*"

"We further command all our subjects, on the penalty of falling into our voluntary punishments, that they do not grant the afore-mentioned Baptists any grace, mercy, or favor whatever, *or intercede for them in any way whatever*. For we do not desire,

nor will we suffer it, that *any of the Baptists*, on account of their wicked doctrines, *should have any favor shown them*; but in order to deter others, it is our will that they be punished immediately, without favor or affection. Now in order to put all in execution, we give each and every one of you plenary powers."

"Given at Brussels, under our counter-seal pressed upon the margin, the 10th of June, A. D., 1535. Sealed and signed by the Emperor and his council, and subscribed, PENSART."

The Lord says, by the Prophet Jeremiah, xvii.: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it." If any man can persuade himself that he is possessed of the meek and gentle spirit of Christ, whilst he utters or approves such sentiments as these edicts contain, he certainly proves the words true which the prophet declares; and, as such seems to be the case with their authors, it should teach every God-fearing soul, the necessity of greatly fearing the influence of such an enemy, and praying the Lord, with David, to search him and prove him, whether there is any evil way with him, and lead him on the way everlasting. Charles V. professed to be a Christian, but he was a popish Christian. Bullinger, by whom it is said the first was drawn up, was a great reformer of popery. The "Baptists" say the "reformation needed reforming." Truly, there is room for reformation of a heart that would dictate such an edict.

The Mennonite confession of faith, is published at length in the Martyr's Mirror, from which it has been copied, and published in various works and forms, for which reason I will not insert it here; but will give a short sketch of such points of doctrine, as distinguish them from most other churches.

I know of nothing peculiar in their belief in God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which would have forbidden their union with most other denominations of protestants. Neither was there anything peculiar in their faith about the fall of man, differing from what is generally received, so far as I know what they generally hold. That since the fall, man is by nature depraved, and nothing good in him, and thus all have gone out of the way, all become unprofitable, and none that doeth good, "*no, not one.*" That all being thus defiled and polluted, forbade their approach to God, or having any fellowship with Him; and being thus defiled, and unable to cleanse himself, or to do or bring any work

of righteousness, which could change his relation to God, he would have had thus eternally to remain, separated from God, and shut out from his presence; because His eyes are too pure to behold iniquity, and nothing impure can dwell in His presence. If God, in His love, had not sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world, to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin, to wash away the guilt from the soul, and clothe it with divine purity, virtue and righteousness, which makes it acceptable to God, man would forever have had to remain thus separated from God, and had to dwell with the author of sin, to whom he had yielded himself as servant, and, as consequence, have had to reap the wages of sin. But being clothed with the virtue, merit, and righteousness of Jesus Christ, he is thereby made acceptable to God, and enabled to approach to, and have fellowship with God. That the virtue of Christ's sacrifice is the only means which can justify man, and make him acceptable to God, because it is said there is no other name given under heaven whereby he can be saved, but only in the name of Jesus Christ, and that he is made partaker of the merits of this sacrifice, *only* by faith; not because of any virtue, merit, or righteousness in himself, because he has none; all the righteousness of man being but as filthy rags in the sight of God. To the faith which embraces Christ and His merits, is given the promise of the Holy Spirit, which sanctifies the soul, and clothes it with divine peace and comfort, and gives it assurance of heaven and glory in eternity. This Holy Spirit also gives the soul power to bring the body, with its carnal nature and corrupt disposition, into subjection and obedience to Christ's word, and the semblance of the Divine nature. This faith, and its consequent change of heart and life, they hold, is what constitutes the new birth, regeneration or conversion, which Christ declares that without it, we cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven. The Mennonites fully, entirely and cordially agree with Luther, that *faith alone* justifies and saves, and that works are not a cause, but a consequence of salvation by grace, through faith. But as good works are a fruit of faith, so they hold that there can be no true living faith, without these attendant works; and whatever the profession of faith may be, where obedience to the commands of Christ and the apostles does not exist, there also can be no true faith.

They held that the Church *must* consist of Christians, and that no man is a Christian until he is converted from a carnal to a spiritual mind; and this is always indicated by the fruits which he brings. Christ says, the tree shall be known by its fruit. A good tree cannot bring corrupt fruit, nor a corrupt tree good fruit; make the tree good, and his fruit will be good. The good tree, here referred to, or the making the tree good, evidently has reference to conversion. If a man is converted, his walk and life will be spiritual, but if he is carnal he will lead a carnal life. The Mennonites held that by receiving a carnal, unconverted person into the church, they receive an element into the body of Christ, which exerts a deleterious influence, and counteracts the design God has in view, in the institution of the Church. Such are by Christ said to be thieves and robbers. The Mennonite custom has ever been to receive their members into the church by the ordinance of baptism. Menno expresses himself very strongly on page 38, in regard to baptizing and receiving carnal, unconverted persons. He says: "My faithful reader, think not that we put great stress upon the elements and rites; I tell you the truth in Christ, and lie not. If any one were to come to me, even the emperor, or the king, and would desire to be baptized, still walking in the unclean, ungodly lusts of the flesh, and were not unblamable, penitent and regenerated, I hope by the grace of God, I would rather die, than to baptize such an impenitent and sensual man. For where there is no renewing, regenerating faith, leading to obedience, there is no baptism." By receiving such into the church, as they knew by their walk that they do not possess a renewing faith, they would make themselves partakers of their sins. For this reason, they also felt themselves constrained to put away from their fellowship such members, who after their reception fell into a carnal course of life, showing thereby that they are carnally minded; and as a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, they could not retain them in their fellowship, without becoming leavened and defiled themselves.

However sound and orthodox the Mennonites might have considered the doctrine of any church to have been, if their walk and conduct had been carnal, they could not have united with them in fellowship and worship. They insisted on purity of doctrine and life, as an evidence or fruit of conversion, and the

possession of a true living faith. In our carnal, unconverted state, we are said to be in the flesh, and live and walk after the flesh. But, in the regenerated state, we are said to be in the spirit, and we live and walk in the spirit. The churches to whom the Apostle Paul wrote his epistles, undoubtedly held the true apostolical Christian doctrine; yet the apostle tells them: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Again, he says: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh;" again: "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. v.) It is evident, then, that the children of God possess the Spirit of God, and walk in the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; and where these are wanting, and carnal fruits appear, they concluded Christ did not dwell in their hearts, and could not be the true Church of God.

Menno renounced popery about the year 1530, at which time, and long before, the mass of the people held to the Catholic church; and as this church had become so corrupt, the walk and conversation of its members being carnal, and after the flesh, he felt himself constrained to withdraw from the church and communion, and testify against their wickedness, as well as also against the unscriptural doctrines they held, such as absolution, mass, purgatory, merit by works, indulgences, infant baptism, oaths, war, and many other things which he considered at variance with the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, and only the commandments of men.

Luther, Zwingle, and other great reformers, had, before this, separated themselves from the church of Rome, and protested against many of its unscriptural points of doctrine, as well as also of many of their evil practices; and many followers had also, with them, withdrawn. Menno could not unite with these, because he thought they retained, or adhered to some of the doctrines of Rome, which he regarded as unscriptural; besides, the walk and conversation of many of their people he regarded as carnal, and some even sensual and impious. He had, therefore, also to withdraw from these, as well as from the Catholics, and seek out the pious, who were few in number, but still found some who were

zealous and maintained the truth. With these, he says, he was one, heart and soul, and joined himself in church and Christian fellowship.

There were several points of doctrine which the Mennonites regarded as cardinal principles of the gospel, as non-resistance, non-conformity to the vanities of the world; and they also regarded infant baptism, and swearing of oaths, either judicial or extra-judicial, as unscriptural. The Lutherans and Zwinglians upheld infant baptism as a Gospel ordinance, oaths and self-defense as a duty, and conformity to the fashions and vain style of the world as a privilege of believers. There were other points of doctrine which they did not agree in, and would have forbidden their union with them, but these were the most prominent, and engaged most attention.

About infant baptism there has been much disputation, both verbal and written. Whoever desires to examine the views which the Mennonites held on this subject, will find it treated of at length, both in the writings of Menno Simon, and by various writers in the "Martyr's Mirror." It would require too much space to present, or enforce the arguments of the Mennonites against infant baptism, but will only make a few remarks, relative to its tendency. I believe all Pedobaptists admit that there is no command in the Scripture to baptize infants. It does seem somewhat strange, that whilst the reformers based their opposition to papistic abuses, on the word of God, and in their disputations with the Catholics, made the Scriptures their base, and by it always triumphed, they turn about and uphold what they themselves admit, that the Scriptures do not teach; and, more especially, as they had the example of its fruits before them. They may be said to have stoutly contended against the fruit, whilst they were upholding that which may fairly be regarded as the source from which the disorder and corruption in the Catholic church, in a great measure, sprang; and by their support of this unscriptural rite, have sown the seed in their own churches also.

That we have no promise in the word of God, without being born again, is admitted by all. Few persons of any religious experience, or even rational understanding, will assert that an infant is regenerated by baptism; and every attentive observer must know, and, if candid, confess also, that a child which has

been baptized in infancy will grow up as carnal, and will be as readily brought under any influence which may surround it, as one that is not baptized. If they are brought up under religious instruction, or are surrounded by a religious element, they may partake of that element; but not by virtue of their baptism, or any more than they would under the same circumstances, if they had not been baptized. Experience teaches us that many with the best care of parents, or others having them in charge, will grow up vicious and immoral. But those who have been baptized are now members of the church and body of Christ, as is supposed, and are certainly an offense to everything of a Divine nature, and exert a deadly influence on the body. They are a leaven, and, Paul says: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Every denomination which advocates and practices infant baptism, knows that many such baptized children grow up carnal, and oftentimes immoral and vicious; and become a reproach to religion, and its profession. Yet they are members of the church, and every such church is forced into the position, that they must deny the doctrine of a pure and unblamable Church. I have said, the reformers had the example before their eyes in the Catholic church, and their experience to the present day, in all such churches, is the same. Look at all Pedobaptist churches, and do we not see the carnal element largely predominant? And not only such carnal fruits, as by the world are considered innocent, or moral, but even such as lying, defrauding, drunkenness, cursing, swearing, with strifes, quarreling, etc. This every member of these churches knows to be true, and their pastors, better than we do. But they cannot, they *dare* not, rid the church of them, or purge out the leaven. Only a few days ago, I heard a church member remark, that there were members in their church that were immoral, and not fit to be in a church; and when asked why they do not expel them, he replied, if one would move in that, all the friends of the parties would turn against them, and a great disturbance would be created! I know their members are not all immoral, but they all know that immoral members are in their body; and by their continuing in fellowship with such, they make themselves partakers with them. This is a fruit which unavoidably follows this unscriptural doctrine and practice.

War, or self-defense, was, in the estimation of the Mennonites

altogether inconsistent with what Christ and the apostles taught the disciples. This almost all the religious reformers of the sixteenth century justified. Menno, and those who held the same views with him, were thereby utterly forbidden to identify themselves with those whom they looked upon as rejecting the strict and plain command of Christ, and thereby making themselves partakers with them in their disobedience.

The Mennonites held, that to the believer all oaths were forbidden; whether judicial, or extra-judicial. Christ said, swear not at all, neither by Heaven, nor by any creature; but let your yea be yea, and your nay be nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. This was to them a fundamental principle of doctrine, which forbade them to unite with any of the reformers, or their adherents. These all held to the lawfulness of legal swearing, and some of them afterward made it a pretext for persecuting the Mennonites. It seems the Apostle James, who was one of Christ's constant attendants, understood Him to forbid swearing. He says: "But above all things, my brethren, *swear not*, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." When the reformers so strenuously urged obedience to the Word, it is difficult to understand how they could get over such plain expressions and commands as those in reference to resistance of evil, and oaths. They all admitted that it was a command of Christ to baptize, and to commemorate His suffering by the supper; but I would ask, is the command for these any plainer than that forbidding war and oaths? Or do the apostles acknowledge the former more fully than the latter? Can there be a stronger testimony to the doctrine of non-resistance, than that given by Paul in the latter part of the Romans xii.? Or can any language more strongly confirm the unlawfulness of oaths, than that of James, in the fifth chapter of his epistle? With the doctrine held by the reformers, on this subject, it was not possible that they could keep up a scriptural discipline in their churches; and hence arose the frequent disorders which ever have, and ever will occur, in all churches admitting such doctrine. The command is so plain, that it seems some of the chief reformers did at first acknowledge it, as we find the evidence of in the "Martyr's Mirror," pages 1013, 1014.

Near the middle of the seventeenth century, during the severe persecution of the Mennonites in some parts of Switzerland, the canton of Zurich published an apology for the severity with which they treated those people. The Mennonites considered themselves unfairly represented in this apology, and published the following reply. The article in the "Mirror," does not purport to give the whole reply, but only such parts as the author thought of most importance. To the first charge of the lords of Zurich, that the Mennonites had withdrawn from the obedience they owed to the Christian Church, they reply :

" Here, as in the commencement, great injustice is done to us; for we, by no means, desire to separate from the Christian Church, but endeavor to abide by the same, and the unadulterated word of God; nay, to risk therein our lives and property. But the reason why we cannot conform to their (the Reformed) church, is, that their doctrine in many respects agrees neither with the primitive, unadulterated apostolic doctrine, nor with the words and commandments of Christ, and that we have a better way before us by the divine illumination, namely, the true apostolic foundation, by which, by the help of God, we hope to abide. That not only we ourselves, but the principal literati, and some among their church, held with us, in the beginning of the reformation, in regard to baptism, supper, excommunication, and defense or revenge, but afterward abandoned it, will be evident, if we carefully examine their primitive doctrines and writings of upward of one hundred years' standing." Here, the reply notices what teachers taught correctly, in the beginning of the reformation, in regard to the aforesaid articles, which opinions they, and especially their descendants, abandoned, as appears from the words: " In the first place, as regards baptism, the conference of Zuinglius and Balthaser Hubmor, held at Zurich, A. D. 1523, at the Graef, is evidence in point, where Zuinglius publicly confessed that children ought not to be baptized before they grow up, and attain a proper age. He promised, moreover, to notice this in his book of articles, which he accordingly did in his eighteenth article concerning confirmation. He then observes, that it was not customary, in former times, to baptize children, but that they were taught publicly and in concert; when arrived at years of discretion, they were styled catechumens, that is, persons instructed in the Word;

whereupon, after the principles of faith had been firmly fixed in their minds, and they had made oral confession of the same, they were baptized. He said, that it was his desire that this use of the doctrine might be reinstated in this, our day. Moreover, his companion, Ecolampadeus, in his epistle to the aforesaid Hubmor, says: "Up to this time, we have met with no passage of Scripture which would authorize us to confess infant baptism, so far as we, in our humble capacity, are capable of perceiving. Likewise, in treating of the phrase, '*know ye not,*' Rom. vi. 3, he remarks, that every Christian must first confess Christ, and afterward be baptized with the outward baptism (of water)."

"Sebastian Hofmeister, (a preacher of Schaffhausen,) writes to the same Hubmor, thus: We confessed publicly before the council of Schaffhausen, that our brother Zuinglius, in allowing, in some measure, that infants ought to be baptized, contrary to his former opinion, takes an erroneous view of the subject, and does not act in accordance with the truth of the Holy Gospel. In continuation, he says: In fact, I could not be constrained to baptize my child Zachariah; do you, therefore, also act the part of Christians, and reinstate the true baptism of Christ, which has long been discarded; we will also exert our influence for the accomplishment of the same purpose."

"Christopher Hogendorf remarks, on 1st Peter, iii.: You perceive that faith is made to precede baptism, for the reason, that it is not the baptism, but the faith of the baptism, that saves us. Celarius, in writing to the aforesaid Hubmor, says: As you desire an expression of my opinion relative to baptism and the Lord's Supper, I will send it you with great pleasure. In the first place infant baptism, is an abomination in the sight of God; for it is sustained neither by the Holy Scriptures, nor by the example of the holy apostles; nay, it is opposed by the judgments of God, which are declared by the disposition of the works of creation; for in the beginning the earth was without form," etc.

"The preachers of Strasburg, Wolfgang Capito, Casper Hedio, Matthew Zell, Symphonas Polio, Theobald Niger, John Lotamus, Anthony Firm, Martin Hatk and Martin Butzer, observe, in the book styled '*Grund und ursachen,*' etc., page 1, that, at the origin of the Church, none were baptized but those who had wholly submitted to the Word of God. The foundation and

reason for such doctrine, they educe from the Holy Scriptures, saying: Our life, prior to becoming Christians, is sin; therefore, John the Baptist, Christ and the apostles, always commenced with *repent*, etc. Again, in the meeting of the primitive Church of God, confession of sin always preceded baptism; for the practice was, to baptize persons of understanding, and not infants. Again, pages 2 and 3, without baptism of the Holy Ghost, water and water baptism are mere flummery.

“As regards the article respecting war or defense, the principal Lutherans (who originally held the same sentiments as the Calvinist Reformed) and the Zwinglians, agreed with us in the belief, that it is not proper for the Christian to wage war, or to stand up in self-defense, among whom, says the writer, we quote Andrew Carlstadt, who in a small work, entitled, ‘Should men forgive injuries and offenses?’ printed at Zurich, A. D. 1534, writes thus concerning defense: We must not be misled by the replication, ‘That war is a Divine punishment, therefore, there must always be some one to wage war against others.’ Again: ‘Men under the Old Testament dispensation, carried on war,’ etc. In answer to the first, hear what Christ says, Matt. xviii.: ‘It must needs be that offenses come, but wo to that man by whom the offense cometh,’ etc. Thus some meriting the inclemency of God, He punishes them with war; but wo to him who wages war against them, for He (God) punishes the wicked through the instrumentality of the wicked. As respects the second, the Israelites waged war either against the wicked nations who opposed them in their journey to the promised land, or against those who would not suffer them to live in peace after their arrival; all which is typical of, the spiritual war, which we, who are regenerated in Christ Jesus, are constrained to carry on against every species of vice and unbelief. He adds, soon after: They further object, saying, ‘Those who will not do right, must be compelled by force of arms,’ etc. But, in reply to speak properly and christian-like on the subject, war does not become us in any shape. It is our duty, in accordance with the doctrine of Christ, to pray for those who speak all manner of evil of us, and consider us as fools; nay, when they smite us on one cheek, we ought to turn the other also; then we would be the children of the Most High.” (So much for Carlstadt.)

“From Carlstadt, the writer proceeds to Luther, and says: In a small work printed at Wittenberg, A. D. 1520, Luther assigns his reasons for burning the pope’s books, which was, as appears from the 22d article, because the Pope taught that it is right for a Christian to repel force by force, in contrariety to the declaration of Christ, Math. v.: ‘Whosoever taketh away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.’ In another small work, also printed at Wittenberg, it appears among other articles cited by a member of the University of Paris, from Luther’s works, as heretical, that he (Luther) taught that the words of Christ, Math. v.: ‘Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also,’ etc.; and the expression, Rom. xii.: ‘Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves,’ are no requisitions which a person may, or may not comply with, at option, as many divines erroneously suppose, but that they are commands which it is incumbent upon us to observe, etc. Again: ‘Christians are forbidden to go to law.’ Again, ‘As a christian is not allowed to place his affections on worldly goods, neither is he permitted *to take an oath* in regard to them,’ etc. In short, it is evident that for a considerable time, Luther opposed resistance or defense, both orally and in his writings, till at last he was seduced from the orthodox faith, as is shown by Sleydanus, book 8th, page 561, oldest edition.”

“A few pages further on, the author adduces Pomeranium Brennum, with several others, who, about A. D., 1520-’30-’40, and afterward, were engaged in the work of reformation, of which they were powerful coadjutors. These men opposed not only resistance to enemies, but also infant baptism, oaths, and other articles, not supported by the gospel of Jesus Christ, teaching and maintaining such counterviews as are founded in the Scriptures, and inculcated by the Baptists at the present day; though these principles were abandoned by some of the aforesaid reformers, but especially, and in a great measure, by their descendants.”

The author of the “Martyr’s Mirror” makes the following remarks, at the conclusion of the foregoing reply: “These and similar facts were stated as confirmatory proofs in the aforesaid reply of the persecuted Baptists in Switzerland, and delivered to the lords of Zurich, and to those who published the aforesaid advertisements in palliation of the persecution in progress; these

facts clearly evince that it was not the Baptists, but they themselves, who had departed from the fundamental principles of the reformation; that, consequently, not the Baptists, who had remained firm to their primitive principles, but the apostate reformed were to blame in the matter; that, for this reason, the publishers of this advertisement did wrong in accusing the Baptists of having separated from the requisite obedience of the true Christian Church, merely because they would not go to church with those styled the Reformed, nor adopt their mode of worship, contrary to the dictates of their own conscience. Besides this charge of disobedience to the church, the brethren in Switzerland were also accused, in the aforesaid advertisement, of being disobedient to the civil authorities, etc. But they proved clearly, in their reply, the injustice of this charge, and established the fact, that they were prompt to obey the authorities in all things reasonable, to pray for them, to render them the tribute, honor and fear, due, and even when wronged by them, not to retaliate, but to endure it patiently for the Lord's sake, etc. These were the chief points noticed in the advertisement, and refuted by the persecuted brethren; the others are of minor importance, and therefore not necessary to be introduced here. This act, however, was not succeeded by any relief; but the persecution continued unmitigated, as appears from the following account "

I have before spoken of the clearness, and plainness, of the commands of Christ, in reference to oaths and self-defense; also, of the want of Scripture authority for infant baptism. In the foregoing defense of the Mennonites, we have proof that many of the leading reformers, in the early part of their career, understood the commands of Christ above referred to, just as the Mennonites did. Whether their convictions in regard to these points of doctrine were ever changed, we do not know; but we know that in practice they did depart from them. We have reason to fear, that their change of practice was dictated more by policy, than conviction of error in their earlier view. If these men were persuaded in their minds, that they were called of God to bring about a reformation in religion, and were confident that they were "guides to the blind, lights to them that are in darkness, instructors of the foolish, and teachers of babes, who have the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law," Rom. ii.,

then, if they had taught, printed, and published things in the early part of their career, which they were afterward convinced was wrong, why did they not humbly acknowledge it, and come out openly and explain wherein their error lay? Why did they not show in what manner light was imparted to their minds, so that those who were deceived by their earlier teaching, might have been relieved also? These men had upon them a fearful responsibility, of which they were either insensible, or else conscious that they could not give scriptural grounds for their change of practice.

The earliest convictions and impressions made upon the mind and understanding of the reformers, is likely to have been the purest. Then they could not foresee the result of what they were engaging in, but more likely they looked for persecution and death, than anything else. They did not expect the favor of the nobility. But when they perceived that there was prospect of bringing them over to their favor, policy would soon dictate such a course as to secure this. Any system of religion which this class would favor, would be likely to flourish; but without it, or with their opposition, if it preserved an existence at all, it must be a very precarious and languishing one. The dukes, lords, land-graves, and electors, could never be expected to embrace such a system of religion, as could be based on the ground they had embraced. The clergy had so long been accustomed to enjoy the favor of the rulers of the land, that they saw no way of getting along without them. There must also be government in the world, and if government, then also the sword and oaths; otherwise it could not sustain itself. Then, if these titled classes are admitted into the church, the oath and sword must go with them. Here policy got the mastery of conviction, and both spirit and word of the gospel had to yield to this policy.

That these men all willfully rejected and abandoned what they were fully convinced was taught as being the will of God, I can hardly think; but they did not take their carnal thoughts and reason captive under the obedience of Christ, and the consequence was, they were taken captive by their own reason, and became the servants of man, instead of the servants of Christ. Whatever God's Word teaches, man must submit to, whether he be duke or earl, lord or king. God is no respecter of persons. The Scriptures cannot be broken.

A national church could not be kept up, without bringing up the rising generation in it. If the rising generation were not brought up, and included in the church, an element would grow up, which would destroy its character. Hence, an institution which would accomplish this desirable end, must be proven to harmonize with the Scriptures, and by the aid of human wisdom and ingenuity, infant baptism was made to harmonize with the Word of God. No government could stand without the oath and sword, consequently the Scripture must be so construed as to admit them. They saw plainly, that with such a doctrine, they would have to exclude the authorities of the world from the church. The high, noble and learned must forsake their rank, distinction, enjoyments and gratifications; and this could never be thought of. What would be the consequence of such a thing? All order would be subverted, and the world would fall into anarchy and chaotic confusion. They therefore looked at the consequences, and departed from the Word of God. Whereas, a true living and saving faith adheres to the Word of God, takes all thoughts, reasonings, and carnal fears captive under the obedience of Christ, and *leaves the consequences to God*. No one attempts to deny, that it is a plain command of Christ, that we shall not swear at all, or that we shall not resist evil; that we shall return good for evil, love our enemies, feed and give them drink, love them and pray for them; but because there must be government, and government must have oaths of allegiance and fidelity, with law and sword to enforce order and obedience, these commands of Christ, and their recognition by the apostles, must be so construed as to harmonize with this necessity. Here, instead of taking their carnal reason captive under the obedience of Christ, they gave the former ascendancy, and Christ's commands had to yield to the ideas and ways of man.

These great and learned men have long since gone the way of all flesh, and will have to give account of themselves; and to Him who knows all things we will commit them. I am sorry to have so much cause to dissent from them; but esteem it better to agree with Christ, though I should stand alone with regard to man. Whatever may have been the standing of man, his learning or wisdom, we cannot in conscience call that right, which we are convinced is contrary to the word of God. The word of God must ever be our rule, and all things must bend to it. John

Tewksbury's advice to the bishops at London is so apt that I cannot refrain from repeating it again: "If there is disagreement between you and the New Testament, *put yourself in harmony with it*, rather than desire to put that in accord with you." (D'Aubigné, vol. v., page 332.) The reformers sought to put the Scriptures into accord with themselves, and those worldly institutions of human government and laws, instead of concluding that no matter what it requires of us, we *must* put ourselves in harmony with the Word of God. These men, by their early views, show how they understood the sacred writings; but they have failed, so far as I know, to give any satisfactory explanation of the grounds upon which they changed their practice.

The church, by uniting itself with the secular powers, must ever bar the way for keeping up its purity, or a wholesome discipline and obedience to Christ. These reformers seem to have had a partial view of the inconsistency of the Church of God sustaining itself by carnal weapons; but their assimilation of the church with the State, and not properly discriminating between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of this world, they could not carry out the non-resistant principles with which the Word of God first impressed them, and they had either to let go gospel commands, or lose the favor and friendship of kings, princes and noblemen.

The Mennonites, on the contrary, whilst they admitted that the government is an ordinance of God, and it was their duty to obey it in all things, where it does not require them to violate the commands of Christ, held that wherever government required anything of them which was contrary to the gospel, they considered it their duty to obey God, rather than man. Because the office of magistrate would require duties of them which the gospel of Jesus Christ forbids, they refused to serve in any such capacity. Neither could they receive one into their church, whose *conscience* did not constrain him to abandon such office, if he held it. The Mennonites considered it their duty to refuse admission into the church, of any one who did not give evidence of being under the influence of the Divine Spirit. This Spirit would lead them to obey the teachings of the gospel. When a magisterial office would require violence to be done to any one, it would require something which Christ has forbidden; therefore the Spirit

would lead them to resign such a calling, as inconsistent with the gospel. To admit that the government is an ordinance of God, and that its officers are ministers of God, and to yet refuse to serve as such minister, or even to refuse to receive such minister into the church as a member of the body of Christ, may seem very inconsistent, to those who do not clearly see the distinction between these two kingdoms.

Mankind are divided into two classes; the children of God, which embraces all those who are converted, and are led by the Holy Spirit, who compose the Church of Christ, and the children of this world, which embraces all the unconverted, and compose what is called "*the world.*" Both classes are alike God's creatures. He alike preserves, provides, and cares for them, and He also governs and controls both parties; but He governs and controls them by different means.

The world, or unconverted class of mankind, have the law of justice written, or impressed in their hearts; which, if obeyed, will lead them to do that which is right and just to all men, and so far will need no restraint, or coercion, to preserve him in decency and order. A large portion of mankind do obey this law, and faithfully fulfill all the duties and relations of life. But this is not the religion of Jesus Christ, it is only that of Moses; it is law, and leaves them under the law. There is, however, a large portion of this class, who do unfortunately not obey this law, but yield to the evil influences of our fallen nature, and commit acts of injustice and violence, who, if not restrained by some other power, would subvert all decency and order in the community. To restrain these, God has instituted government, and given it the sword, as Paul says, Rom. xiii. The just and faithful element usually so largely predominates, as to keep the lawless in subjection, and protect those who are good and faithful. This ordinance of government is not a gospel ordinance. God had ordained and instituted it long before Christ came and promulgated the gospel; and when He did publish the gospel, He changed nothing of this institution which He had before ordained, nor gave His disciples one single command in reference to duties as officers of government. When James and John manifested a desire to exercise authority in this capacity, Christ called the disciples to Him, and said: "Ye know that the princes (or kings)

of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are *great*, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you." Luke says they are called "Benefactors." The same class of people still have the sword, as had it before Christ came. The Prophet Daniel says, iv. : "The Most High ruleth among the children of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will;" and in Daniel ii. he said to Nebuchadnezzar: "The God of Heaven hath *given thee* a kingdom, power, strength, and glory." The Lord also repeatedly calls Nebuchadnezzar His servant. God gave the sword to the ruler, but Christ not only gave none to His children, but expressly told Peter to put it up, in his place, and gave such charges to His children, as will utterly forbid them to use a sword, or any violence. Government, then, is nothing the less God's ordinance, because it is exercised by the world; nor are they who exercise it any the less God's ministers, or servants, because they are of the unconverted world, And because they are, and must be of the unconverted world, therefore the faithful ministers of Christ's Church could not receive such an one into the church, until he had become converted, and willing to come out of the kingdom of the world, and be joined to the kingdom of God's dear Son. Solomon also says: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will."

The first class mentioned who are the children of God, were, before conversion, also of the world. Christ said to his disciples: "Ye were of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world;" and Paul says: "In times past, we all had our conversation among the children of disobedience, but God hath quickened us by grace, etc." By repentance for sin, and faith in Jesus Christ, they come to receive the Holy Spirit, which has renewed them, and shed the love of God abroad in their hearts; and they are now no more governed by the law in their hearts, but by the love of God which is shed abroad therein. The love and Spirit of God now restrains them from violence and injustice. These need no government or sword to restrain them from injustice, because the law of love which governs them, will not permit them to do injustice or violence to any one. To these Christ gives his commandments, and all his commands are in the nature of love. The divine nature which they have been made partakers of, would for

bid them to do that violence, which magisterial offices would require of them ; and to support the authority and power of this life and disposition within them, Christ has given such commands to His disciples, as would forbid them, or make it impossible for them to exercise such office. The very design of the magisterial office is to resist evil, and this duty is required of them, and for this they have the sword given them. But Christ tells his children not to resist evil, but to overcome it with good. This is what forbids them to exercise such office ; but they do not despise such office, or its officers, but honor and respect them as of God's appointment for good ; and for this reason they also pay them tribute, custom, tax, or whatever by virtue of their authority they demand of them.

The Mennonites, therefore, feeling themselves in this sense called out of the world, and as strangers and pilgrims in the world, refused to be used in any governmental office, where oaths and violence were required, or anything connected with, or requiring their use. They left these to the world, to whose element they belonged. They never condemned the world for their use, but only contended that Christians could not be used in that capacity. They respected and honored the government, and obeyed it in all things which were not forbidden by the Gospel of Christ. They never censured the government for using the sword in support of justice ; for God has given the sword to it, and it was His intention it should be used for this purpose. But when they would abuse the trust reposed in them, and unjustly use the sword, either to oppress their own subjects, or by the superiority of their might, inflict injustice on innocent powers, who happen to be weaker than themselves, they would reprove and rebuke their iniquity ; but never resist or resent any injury they might do to themselves. Their language may sometimes have sounded as if they condemned the government for using the sword, but it was not their doctrine ; for they held that it was the duty of the government to punish evil doers, and there could be no punishment, if there were no sword. But because at that time the officers were all members of church, and professed to be Christ's disciples, they may have told them, if they were true Christians, they could not act in such capacity. Or some persons or parties who had degenerated, or did not rightly or truly understand the principles of

the Mennonites, may have contended in this way; but it was not the doctrine of Menno, or his brethren, in his day.

It has been said, they condemned capital punishment, even for crime; but this was not the doctrine of the true Mennonites. They may have said a true Christian could not serve an office which would require such service of them, or they might have told such as executed this office, that, as Christians, it is not right; but it never was their doctrine that it was wrong for government to order capital punishment in criminal cases, where justice required it. In the Baptist History of J. M. Cramp, published at Toronto, the Mennonite church of the sixteenth century, is claimed as being identical with the present Baptist church, and used as a link to connect what he calls Baptists of the earlier ages, with the church known by the name of Baptist, of the present day. In this, I think, injustice is done to Menno Simon, and his brethren.

In the view that infant baptism is unscriptural, and that none but adult believers are fit subjects for baptism, they agree. Cramp also maintains with the Mennonites, that baptism possesses no virtue of cleansing from sin, but is only a testimony or emblem of the virtue received by faith in Jesus Christ. But, in regard to what constitutes true conversion, or the stature to which a true believer is wrought by faith in Jesus Christ, their views differ very widely. The Mennonites of that century would not have received any one into their church, or communion, whose faith would permit him to profess the principles which the present Baptists do. And if a church had at that time existed, in all respects the same as the present Baptist church is, the Mennonites would have regarded them as forming a part of the great Babylonian structure which they felt themselves constrained to protest against; and would not only have refused to join with them in fellowship and communion, but would have refused to worship with them, or hear them preach; considering any one who held, and taught, such sentiments, as a stranger, whose voice the sheep of Christ would flee. On page 198, Cramp notices the refusal of the Mennonites to serve magisterial offices, take oaths, bear arms, or defend themselves, as "*a harmless notion,*" which might have been borne with. But the Mennonites regarded this doctrine of non-resistance as a vital principle, begotten in the believer by the seed of the Word of God, through faith; and regarded those as

unbelievers, and unconverted, whose consciences did not forbid them such liberties.

On the same page, speaking of this refusal, he says: "What ever may be thought of these sentiments now, it is evident that they originated by the Baptists respecting the purity of the church. Maintaining that a church should consist exclusively of pious persons, they concluded, necessarily, that such persons would not be law breakers, that they would abhor all violence, and that their word might be relied on. Among *them*, then, no magistrate would be required. Their principles would be incompatible with the employment of force, even in self-defense. It would be outrageous to call upon *them* to confirm any statement with an oath, since the word of true men ought always to be taken. All this may be admitted. Mennó Simon and his friends seem to have forgotten, however, that they were living in the world, and there were certain duties incumbent on them, as members of society. Yet these were harmless notions, and might have been borne with. They would have been borne with, had forbearance been the temper of the age."

This sentence conveys the idea, that the doctrine of non-resistance, and refusal to swear, etc., was with the Mennonites derived by inference only, from certain other doctrines or commands of the gospel. That because the church was to be pure, etc., they would need no government. They knew very well that government was for the law-breakers, the wicked and ungodly; and they knew that these were abundant in the world, and must have the restraint of governmental power. We might say, that the refusal to serve magisterial offices is drawn by inference, from such commands as forbid violence, and because it requires duties which are strictly forbidden by Christ. The inference is therefore unavoidable; and, it is true also, as he says, their *principles* are incompatible with the employment of such force, as the office of magistrate would require. But their refusal to take an oath, bear arms, or defend themselves, is not the result of *inference*. Christ has given a direct and plain command not to do so; and the Mennonite's refusal is not, as Cramp says, drawn by inference from the idea of the purity of the church. This command they hold goes so far, as even to require them, if smitten on one cheek, to turn the other also; if they were sued at the law, they should not resist, and if

their coat were taken, let them have the cloak also. Christ reminded them, that under the law it was different. It suffered them to exact justice, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but now Christ said return good for evil. This Menno Simon, and his brethren in his day, held as a plain command of Christ; and they observed it, not by inference from the doctrine of the purity of the church, but being born of the Spirit, and being children of their Father in Heaven, it was incumbent on them to manifest the Divine nature, which they were made partakers of, by the new birth.

They held that conversion changes man from that revengeful or exacting spirit, which would require an eye for an eye, etc., to that divinely forgiving disposition of returning good for evil, whereby they show or prove the spirit of which they are born; and whosoever has not, by what they consider their conversion, been changed into this self-denying and forbearing disposition, cannot be born of God, or be His child. The returning good for evil, or forbearing to resist evil, does not make them children of God, but is one of the evidences of the Divine life, without which they would look upon all profession, power, knowledge, or whatever gifts they may have attained, as but an empty sound. They held the same of oaths. The Saviour said: "Swear not at all." He made no exceptions of legal oaths, and James, who was no doubt among those who heard Him say it, says: "Swear not by *any* oath." This, the Mennonites of the sixteenth century considered as a plain, and positive command, and included amongst those which the Saviour charged His Apostles to teach their converts, saying: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Menno and his brethren did not consider it an "*outrage*" that the magistrate should ask them to confirm their testimony with an oath. I have never seen any evidence of it. They merely asserted their conscientious belief. Not only was this not so, but they offered that, if relieved of this requisition, and were found guilty of asserting a falsehood, they were willing to suffer the pains and penalties of perjury. ("*Martyr's Mirror*," page 1029.)

I would ask those who call this a "*harmless notion*," whether any Christian can look upon a command of Christ, as a *notion*? That it is a command, no one can deny. Is there a more plain

command in the Bible, than these commands of Christ? But if this is not a command of Christ, how can the *notion* be "harmless?" If it is an "incumbent duty" to swear, defend our country, and serve magisterial offices, how can the omission be harmless? Can the refusal of the porter of the house of God, be considered "harmless," when he refuses to admit one of God's children into His house, because they will not omit what is an incumbent duty?

On the same page (198) in the "Baptist History," it is said: "It is manifest that the doctrinal opinions of the Baptists," (meaning Mennonites,) "of this period, harmonized with few exceptions, not of great moment, with those entertained by the reformers of all persuasions. With regard to the constitution and government of Christian churches, they and the reformers materially differed." It would seem from this, that the author does not regard the views of the Mennonites in relation to government, the magistracy, war, and oaths, matters of doctrine, or, at least, of great moment. Church government was with them a matter of doctrine, and its duties as much a matter of conscience, as any charge or doctrine in the Word of God. But the matter of oaths, and resistance of evil, the Mennonites did not look upon as belonging to Church government, so much as to the doctrine of regeneration, being begotten in them by the spiritual birth, which they would have felt themselves constrained to observe, if they had been isolated, and not a member of a visible church. I cannot see in what light their doctrinal opinions can be viewed, so as to say, they "manifestly harmonized with the reformers of all persuasions," when they nearly all persecuted them, by despoiling them of their goods and property, banishing them from home and country, casting them into prison, racking and torturing them, and even burning them at the stake, for their difference of opinion in regard to matters of doctrine. To say the least, we must regard this expression of the author on this point, as very inconsiderate.

On the 199th page, "Baptist History," the author says: "We do not find any material difference between them, (the Mennonites,) and ourselves, with regard to the organization and management of churches." If the author here means, the mode of procedure in organizing a number of believers into a visible body,

where there had been no such organization before, he may be right. I have no account how the Mennonites then proceeded in such cases. But if any reference is had to general initiation of members into the church, where it existed before, I could not admit that there was no difference. So far as my observation goes, members are received into the Baptist church, who would in no wise have been admitted amongst the Mennonites. I do not here intend to charge that the Baptists received immoral characters into their church, but I know the Mennonites of that age would not have received one on the profession which the Baptists now make. If by "management," is meant, the care of the pastor, as to the purity of life and conversation of the members, and the reproof and expulsion of such as do not walk in gospel order, there is certainly a very "material difference." The Mennonites, according to their doctrine and profession, would expel any member who would accept a magisterial office, swear, contend at law, or serve in any military capacity; whilst the Baptists do, and approve all these. In the Mennonite management, there was such avoidance of those who were excommunicated, as to tend to put them to shame, which the author admits; and then says, it is "far harsher, than the New Testament would warrant." People might differ very widely in their judgment, as to who is right in these disputed points; but they could not well differ in judgment, as to whether there is a "material difference in management."

A very singular feature in the reformation, was the inconsistency of the Reformed, in that, so long as they were weak and in the power of the Catholics, and were somewhat persecuted, they all protested against the Catholics for their anti-christian cruelty and barbarity. But when by numbers they became strong, and were supported by the government, they nearly all persecuted those who differed from them, but were too weak to defend themselves. Many of the reformers were men of great learning, and extraordinary intellectual power, yet they could not see this great absurdity, and devilish tyranny. The question might well be asked, whether, with all their learning, their power, their ingenuity, their zeal and enthusiasm, they themselves were true Christians, and wrought a true Christian reformation? They unquestionably wrought a great religious reformation, but religion is not christianity. I am

aware that I am approaching ground here, which will bring a storm of denunciation upon my head; and in the days of the reformers, would have brought down upon me something more than denunciation; but should we, to avoid the enmity of man, withhold the truth of God? That these men did a great deal of good, I will not deny; but that, when they were acting as reformers, they were led by the Holy Spirit, I cannot reconcile with the Holy Scriptures. First, the spirit of intolerance and persecution which they generally manifested, the bitterness and strife which existed between them, was certainly foreign to the spirit which Christ manifested; and Paul says: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

The Mennonites were a people whose profession forbade their being injurious to any one, either individually or as a community. That they practiced what they professed, and carried out their principles in their walk and conversation, I have never seen denied. Even their enemies and opponents accede this, in numerous instances. In the petition of the authorities of Rotterdam, to the council of Berne, in Switzerland, in behalf of the Mennonites, which we have copied into these pages, the reader will find the testimony given, that they are a worthy class of people, from whom no danger need be apprehended. In the "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," page 776, under the head of Mennonites, we find the following high testimony of their character, extracted from an account of the Dutch Baptists, or Mennonites; published by Dr. Ypeij, and Rev. I. Dermont, said to be learned Pedobaptists:

Speaking of the early Mennonites of Holland and Zealand, these authors say: "The Mennonites are descended from the tolerably pure Waldenses, who were driven by persecution into various countries, and who, during the latter part of the twelfth century, fled into Flanders, and into the provinces of Holland and Zealand; where they lived simple and exemplary lives, in the villages as farmers, and in the towns by trades, free from the charge of any gross immoralities, and professing the most pure and simple principles, which they exemplified in a holy conversation.

"There were then two sects among them; the one distinguished by the name of *perfect*, (who held to a community of goods,) and the other the *imperfect*. By far the greater part of the first sect,

and the whole of the second, were certainly among the most pious Christians the church ever saw, and the worthiest citizens the State ever had. History removes every doubt on this subject." The author further says: "These scattered communities were brought into order, by the labors of Menno Simon; some of the *perfects* were reclaimed to order, and others were excluded. The church was united, and separate from all Dutch and German reformers. These pious, innocent, and inoffensive people, were relentlessly persecuted by the papists, the Protestants also countenancing it; and where the Catholics had lost the power, the Protestants still, in many places, continued to persecute the Mennonites."

Luther with all his arrogance, and impatience of contradiction, seems to have had less of this intolerant persecuting spirit, than most of the other reformers. Yet the Mennonites or Anabaptists (as they were called) were such especial objects of hatred, that those who would tolerate almost all others, would admit of persecuting these. On the 143d page of Cramp's Baptist History, it is said: "It is distressing to observe how completely the reformers of those days were imbued with the persecuting spirit. At a diet held in Hamburg, in Hesse Cassel, in 1536, the opinions of many divines were adduced, sanctioning the punishment of the Baptists, (meaning the Mennonites,) by the magistrates. Some would have them scourged; some branded; some banished; but most of them held that death should be the infliction, and Luther, Melanchthon, and Bucer were of the number." This was in a Lutheran government, where Luther's influence would have prevailed to stop the persecution, if he had desired it. Bucer, one of Luther's companions, especially supported it in a discussion with the Baptists at Marburg.

Calvin is known to have been very intolerant, and it was by his instigation and influence, that Servetus was arrested, condemned and burnt for heresy and blasphemy. Appleton's Encyclopedia asserts, that the mild and amiable Melanchthon approved this sentence. Zwingle approved the enactment in 1526, that those who were rebaptized should be drowned; which is said to have been no vain threat. In 1527-8, different men and women were drowned at Zurich. We have already spoken of Henry Bullinger, the companion and successor of Zwingle, and given the edict he drew up in 1530 In England, Latimer, Cranmer, Ridley, Cover-

dale, and Philpot, all countenanced, encouraged, and directed the persecution of the Anabaptists, and signed their death warrants.

These were truly great men, and it is with pain and sorrow that we speak of them as we do. If they had sometimes been betrayed into error, through weakness, we would cast the mantle of charity over their failings, because no one is perfect. But when we see them deliberately, calmly, continually and persistently continuing in this bloody persecuting spirit, we cannot but conclude, that the light they possessed was but natural light, for we do not see how divine light, could have left so dark a recess, without some little ray penetrating it, if it had at all shone into their hearts. No one now will dare deny that the spirit which influenced these great men, and prompted them to these deeds, was a dark and foul one; that they were grossly deceived, and they were instrumental in leading and holding others in this dark delusion. Any one now reading the history of the reign of popery, cannot help but feel amazed, that rational, intelligent beings could be so deluded and darkened as they must have been then. They had not the Scriptures, as their leaders and teachers made it an object to keep these out of their hands. A blind reliance in their leaders, and adherence to the customs of their forefathers, kept them bound in delusion and darkness. Now we have the word of God. Every family has the Holy Scriptures in their house, and many read them likewise; but do they follow them? What does it profit us to have the Scriptures, and read them, and then follow the instructions of men? The priests and monks in those dark ages could satisfy the people, because they allowed them to gratify the lusts of the flesh, and the desires of the mind. In this same way men suffer themselves to be deluded and deceived now. Because their leaders allow them to indulge in so many carnal amusements, they willingly accept their guidance, instead of the word of God. Popular opinion deluded the reformers, and instead of taking the word of God for their guide, they took carnal reason, and the great and dark delusion was the result. Carnal reason and popular opinion, still deludes and darkens the minds of a vast number of mankind. To call their attention to this, and lead them to reflection and searching the word of God, and appealing to Him as the source of wisdom and light, instead

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of looking to man, and the opinion of the religious world, is the reason I dwell so much on this subject. I hope the reader will not be impatient under it.

The reformers were truly great men, and when we read the history of their sore trials, persecutions, and sufferings, and their struggles with the wicked tyranny of the papists, our sympathies become strongly enlisted in their favor; as in the contest between them and the papists, they had right and justice on their side, and we cannot help but admire their courage, constancy, fortitude, and patience. But if we compare the fruits of their reformation with the word of God, and the spirit of the gospel, we cannot perceive the fruits of a true living faith, in their conversion from popery to the reformed religion. True disciples of Jesus Christ learn from Him. The word *disciple* signifies a scholar, or learner; and if we do not learn of Him, we cannot justly claim to be His disciples, or, as He says, disciples indeed. Meekness and lowliness of heart, gentleness, kindness, love and mercy, is what Christ teaches His disciples; and those who are destitute of these virtues, can certainly not be said to have learned of Christ.

The reformers themselves were oftentimes carried away by passion, and gave vent to expressions, far from the meekness and lowliness of heart, which we learn from Jesus. Luther's expressions are often-times unjustifiably rash, and passionate. D'Aubigné speaks of his reply to Carlstadt, as being *outrageous*. His manner and expression on different occasions, was intolerant and highly offensive. He calls Dr. Eck an ass, Henry VIII. a hog, and Emser a he-goat. Is there anything in such expressions characteristic of the spirit of Christ? True, he was a man of like passions as all others, and all men are weak and fallible; but we never hear of him retracting his excited expressions, or making confession of their unchristian character. We must, however, make large allowance for the age in which he lived, with the nation and customs of the people among whom he dwelt; but these do not justify passion. Self-love and anger were always sin, and expressions arising from their influence are acts of sin, which require repentance and humiliation in any age, or amongst any nation, or custom of people. If the Holy Spirit brings to the mind of the believer all that Christ has taught, and leads into all truth, I cannot see how it could fail to remind Luther of these ebullitions of temper, and if

he obeyed, and was led by the Spirit, how he could rest without acknowledging his error, and asking for forgiveness. We never hear of any acknowledgment or retraction of his unkind expressions, or of his brethren, or co-laborers, ever reproving him, or laboring in love to make him sensible of his errors; and we have reason to think they were altogether alike strangers to, and ignorant of the true Christian spirit and duty. Menno Simon also made strong expressions, and applied epithets to his opponents, which in our day we would rather not hear; but they were true. When he called his persecutors blood-thirsty tyrants, and hypocrites, he told the truth; but we would rather have truth couched in milder language. But the character of the people amongst whom he lived and labored, with the customs of expression at the time, are mitigating circumstances. But Emser was not a he-goat, Eck an ass, or Henry VIII. a hog; and when Luther called them that, he said what was not true; besides, it was highly offensive, and rather calculated to destroy than promote peace; and as he never humbled himself, or recalled the expressions, we have reason to conclude that he was not sensible of the spirit which dictated them.

In the second part of the complete works of Menno Simon, recently published in the English language, by Funk & Brother, of Elkhart, Indiana, on page 363 and 364, in his controversy with Martin Micron, Menno also lost his temper several times, and gave indiscreet answers to his adversary; but he humbles himself, expresses sorrow for it, and asks to be forgiven. But from the great and popular reformers we hear of no acknowledgments or retractions. Even the gentle Melancthon, as related by D'Aubigné, 4th volume, page 187, when the Chancellor of Lunenburg (one of his friends) suggested at the diet of Augsburg, that the Protestants were conceding too much to the Catholic party, Melancthon raised himself up, and replied in a very sharp and harsh tone of voice: "He who dares assert that the means indicated are not Christian, is a liar and a scoundrel!" "The Chancellor repaid him in his own coin." "But," says D'Aubigné, "these expressions cannot, however, detract from Melancthon's reputation for mildness." Perhaps not, but unacknowledged and unrecalled, they certainly do detract from his character as a Christian.

The people at the commencement of the reformation were mostly all Catholics. Then, and long before, they were generally blinded by prejudice and superstition, such as we now can scarcely conceive how it is possible, that rational creatures could receive such absurdities, as were upheld by the priests and monks. They were certainly carnal and unconverted, as all their fruits plainly showed. Priests and monks were equally blind. When they were moved by the grace of God, and perceived some of these wicked abominations, and began to preach against them, the people could not fail to perceive these flagrant errors, and so were carried along with the reformers. The reformers acted under the idea, that they themselves were the servants of God. I have already spoken of this inconsistency, and now, under this view, they treated and held this rude and unenlightened people, as regenerated children of God. All who would join in with the reformers, were held and regarded by them as brethren. This may, therefore, truly be called, a political reformation. We see nothing of a full awakening to a sense of sin in themselves. Thus, there being no true sense of sin, there could also be no true sense or knowledge of righteousness; without which there never can be a child of God begotten, or a regeneration accomplished. From this cause the reformation was only an external one, or, we might say, a carnal reformation. The people were carnal, and remained carnal; and whenever anything occurred which was calculated to excite their passions, they were aroused to enthusiasm; but it was not a spiritual enthusiasm, but only a carnal one. The people were reformed, but not renewed. Poor Luther himself, toward the close of his life, became so much disgusted with the carnality of his own people, at Wittenberg, that he left it, never intending to return to them; but by the persuasion of the elector, and others, he was prevailed on to return. John Wesley says, that before his death, Luther, "uttered these melancholy words; 'I have spent my strength for nought! those who are called by my name, are, it is true, reformed in opinions and modes of worship; but in their hearts and lives, in their tempers and practice, they are not a jot better than the Papists!'"

D'Aubigné makes the remark, that a reformation is not a formation. I suppose the idea intended to be conveyed by this remark, is to show the difference between the work of the

apostles, in founding the Church, and that of the reformers, in restoring a church, which had departed from its primitive virtue, but was still a church. This I believe was the error of the reformers, and the cause of their failure to produce, or beget true spiritual children of God, living and walking in the spirit and life of the Divine nature. The Church of God is a community of Christians; but we surely cannot regard the Catholic church, at the time of the reformation, as being such a community. To be a Christian, is to have Christ dwell in the heart, and be led and guided by His spirit; and a man destitute of this spirit, is in truth no Christian, whether in the church or out of it; and his service, although in the church, is as little a true Christian service, as that of the Pagans in their temples. The mass of the people in the Roman church, at the commencement of the reformation, were as little true spiritual believers in Christ, as the Jews were when Christ began to preach, or the Gentiles were in any part of the world, when the apostles began to preach the Gospel to them. The Jews were a religious people, and the Gentile nations also had their religion; but these could not be reformed into Christians. The old structure had to be erased, and the very foundation destroyed, and a new foundation laid, and a new creation formed. This is just as much the case with a sinner hardened, blinded, and depending on an imaginary righteousness, with the name of Christ in his mouth, as it was with the Jews, with the name of Moses and the God of Israel, or the Gentiles with the name of their Pagan deities in their mouths. Their eyes had to be opened; they had to have their imaginary virtue and righteousness taken from them. They had to become lost, before they could come to Christ, for he says, He was only sent to the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel. No sinner can become a child of God, without being regenerated; and surely the Roman church was as complete a mass of sinners, as ever existed in the world. They had been baptized in their infancy, and grew up in carnality, under the instruction and guidance of as corrupt and wicked a priesthood, as ever profaned or disgraced the sacred name of religion. There never had been in them a "*formation*" of true religion, or a Christian life. To this, with the name of Christ in their mouth, they were as much strangers, as any Pagan ever was! Then how could a "*reformation*" take place, where

there never was a "*formation*" preceded it? The Roman Catholic religion of that time, was as little spiritual, or Christian, as the Jews or Gentiles ever were, and was as verily idolatrous, as that of any Pagan nation on earth, and had as necessarily to be destroyed, and its foundation broken up, before a true Christian structure could be built up, as that of the Pagan superstition.

This was the difference between the work of Menno Simon and his brethren, and that of Luther and Zwingle, with the popular reformers of their day. The one was a "*formation*," and the other a "*reformation*." If it was a "*reformation*," it had only to act on, or could only change that which was "*formed*;" and as no true Christian faith, or inward life, had a "*formation*" in the heart of the community, the "*reformation*" had of necessity only to act upon, and "*reform*" what it found in existence, which was an outward dead profession; and "*reforming*" this, left the people still carnal, as Luther lamented at the close of life, and poor Zwingle witnessed, and paid the penalty of in his. Menno and his brethren regarded these Catholic church-members as unconverted and dead. They sought to make them sensible of this, and bring them to conversion and a new life, by putting off the old man, and putting on the new; dying to the old corrupt nature and bringing about a new spiritual life in Christ.

This we cannot impress with sufficient earnestness on the mind of the reader. We are naturally inclined to legalism, and to rest on outward forms and professions. But, in truth, nothing will avail us, if we do not possess the divine life in our souls; and this we cannot possess with the old carnal life in existence. Therefore, Paul tells us to put off the old man which is corrupt, etc., and put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. iv. This is what Menno and his brethren labored for. They labored with individuals. This must ever be an individual work. The true religion of Jesus Christ never was, or never can be, national. If a whole nation is converted, it must be a separate work in each individual. Religious doctrines and opinions may become national, but true Divine life cannot. These labored with individuals, well knowing that whatever success attended their efforts, it must be effected in this way; and knowing, also, that one soul brought to a true Christian faith, and Divine life, is of more worth than the conversion

of a whole nation, in outward form and doctrine, where the true living faith, that worketh by love, is wanting.

In the 3d volume of D'Aubigné's history, page 6, it is said that four years after the commencement of the reformation, there was no change, either in the social circle, or in the church. All things continued as they had before; monks and nuns took the monastic vows, pastors lived single, pilgrimages were undertaken, votive offerings suspended on the pillars of the chapels; the priests in the pulpit thundered against the mass as idolatrous, then came down to the altar, and would go through the ceremony of mass, with scrupulous exactness. Soon after this, there were changes made. Mass was discontinued, clergy married, monks and nuns abandoned their lives, images were discarded, and pilgrimages abandoned. Religious ordinances were now abandoned and changed, but we have no account of a change "at the domestic hearth, and social circle." Pomp and vanity, strife and contention, hatred and variance, amusements and follies, went on as before. Faith was preached, but it was not the faith that worketh by love. Electors, landgraves, dukes, and barons indulged in all the pomp and extravagance, as they did before; and no wonder the lower order indulged in their beer and wine, their brawls and riots. Where was the new creature? Where was the Divine life? D'Aubigné says: "A new faith was abroad, but new works were not yet seen." In a simple *religious* revolution or reformation, this might be so. He further says: "The vernal sun had risen, but winter still bound the earth, neither flower, nor leaf, nor any sign of vegetation was visible. But this aspect of things was deceptive; a vigorous sap was secretly circulating beneath the surface, and was about to change the face of the world." Luther preached faith in Christ, and justification by nothing else. In this he was right; but why did he not preach, that faith without works is dead, and no better than a body without a spirit? The first work or fruit of faith, is the forsaking of sin, in repentance. Faith must embrace the threatenings of God's law, before it is possible that it can embrace Christ for justification.

Neither can it truly regard the threatenings of the law, and continue to live in sin. Repentance must precede conversion, and the fruit of repentance is forsaking the sinful life. The knowledge of sin by the law, is the first work of grace in the soul, and must

exist before it is possible there can be repentance, and no true repentance can exist, where there is a life of sin. No more than Christ could come into the world before Moses, and John the Baptist, can we receive Christ, and be justified by faith in Him, before the ministration of Moses has been effected in our hearts, and been followed by John's ministration of repentance. The faith spoken of by D'Aubigné, I can regard as nothing but a dead faith. By the four years preaching of Luther and his fellows, there was a preparation going on, which shortly afterward changed the face of the world. It was a change in ceremonial religion, and its ordinances, but not of the heart and life, else Luther could not have lamented as he did.

D'Aubigné says, Luther "seemed to expect, that whilst men received his writings with enthusiasm, they should continue devout observers of the corruptions those writings exposed." This D'Aubigné admires, as the wisdom of God, ordering and directing the work. He seems to regard the people, as Luther and other reformers did also. They all looked upon them as Christians, who had been led into error and delusion, in regard to ceremonial ordinances, and duties; and all their energies were directed to the correcting of these irregularities. Had they looked upon them in the light of God's word, they could not have regarded them otherwise than as sinners, who are strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope or God in the world. They would then have called upon them to repent of their sins, and forsake their carnal and ungodly lives, and live soberly, righteously and godly. Had D'Aubigné seen these things in their proper light, he would certainly not have so much to admire, as the directing hand of God, but much more to deplore, that these men did not yield their great talents and power to the Lord, to direct according to His word. Let any person of sound mind ask himself whether these people could have been born of God, and led by His spirit? They are represented as being a carnal, debauched, violent and riotous people. Can these be children of God, and the word of God be true? That Luther lamented their condition as he did, before his death, is proof enough that it is true which is said of them. If the reformers had taught the people what they truly were, and what God's word requires of them, they would have had fewer followers; but what they would have had, would have been more devout, and

led more exemplary lives. They would not have the praise of men, but that which is of infinitely more value, the praise of God.

In the "Martyr's Mirror," page 1014, the author gives the acknowledgment of Zwingle, Œcolampadius, Zell, Polio, Niger, Lotamus, and others, that infant baptism is unscriptural. It is also shown, that Luther, Carlstadt, Pomeranium, Brentium, and several others, opposed resistance of enemies, oaths, and infant baptism, in the early part of their career. They could not, however, persevere in these views and principles, without sacrificing the countenance and support of the rulers and privileged characters of the world. Then they would have stood, where Menno Simon and his brethren also stood, and their followers would not have been very numerous. D'Aubigné, speaking of those who in earlier days protested against Roman superstition and corruption, says: "They only lopped off the branches, whilst they left the root stand. Their work was good so far as it went, but they were not prepared for the work, or the work not for them." Luther and his coadjutors, he seems to think, destroyed both root and branch. So far as Peter Bruce, Waldo, and some others, are concerned, I would differ very widely with D'Aubigné. True, they effected no national reformation, but they made many individual converts, and those they did make, became truly pious Christians. The root of bitterness in the heart was destroyed, by a true living faith, and the walk and conversation which had been after the flesh, became spiritual, and their mind, from being carnal, became heavenly. The popular reformers had many followers, even whole nations; but, as Luther himself deploras, the change was only in doctrine and mode of worship, whilst their lives remained carnal, as they were before! These are facts that cannot be denied; which is most like lopping off branches, large work half done, or less work well done? The reformed, under the popular preachers, remained warriors and knights, many of them rioters and drunkards, living in bitterness, strife and contention; and favored and connived at the persecution of the true, defenseless and harmless children of God. At the Diet of Spires, in 1529, when the reformation had been progressing some eight or ten years, and nearly all the notable reformers, and their preachers, in great numbers were present, the landgrave of Hesse, and the elector of Saxony, thought it necessary to draw up an order, to forbid

drunkenness, debauchery, and other vicious customs, during the diet. Was this order necessary, on account of the large number of divines assembled? A sad commentary on reformers and reformation! This same elector gave a banquet, at which twenty-six princes, etc., etc., were present, and the company continued *playing till a very late hour*. If the leading men of the reformed party, assembled on so solemn an occasion, needed such restraint, is it a wonder that the common people should fall into disorder?

The work of Menno Simon and his brethren, was quite a different one. They preached against the pope, and the antichristian doctrine and practices of the Catholic church. They did not begin by preaching faith in Christ, but first preached, and declared the wrath of God, which is revealed from Heaven, against all such ungodly works, as the mass of the Catholics lived in; and the more moral and conscientious part, also made themselves guilty, by continuing in fellowship with the others, knowing the wicked lives they led. Paul says, we shall have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; and shall withdraw ourselves from every brother that walks disorderly. They themselves withdrew from all such idolatry, and called upon all who were desirous of being saved, to come out from, and forsake all sin and iniquity; that they cannot enjoy the favor of God, whilst they live after the flesh, and fulfill its desires. Here, then, there could be no drinking, no rioting, no brawls, strife or contention. They not only preached against such things, but they withdrew themselves from them, and would receive no one into their church or fellowship, whose conscience did not constrain him to forsake and testify, by word and deed, against all such dark and carnal things. They received none into their church or communion, who lived carnal or sensual lives, whatever his standing and position in society might be; as Menno says, he hopes by the grace of God rather to die, than to baptize any such, were they even emperor or king. They looked upon all who lived and walked after the flesh, to be unconverted sinners, and under the curse and wrath of God, whether they professed religion, or were in the church, or not, just as much as any Jew or Gentile, who never knew or heard anything of Christ or the gospel.

The Mennonites held that the Church of Christ *must* be a community of believers, who, by their conversion, were led to forsake

all sinful practices, and carnal pleasures; walking in the spirit, being blameless, and showing by the fruits of their walk and conversation, that they are disciples indeed, and learning from Christ, meekness and lowliness of heart. They held that where the conscience permitted any one to walk disorderly, in pride and wantonness, displaying a haughty, aristocratic disposition, revengeful, contentious, or riotous, or, in short, any thing of the nature of what Paul terms the work of the flesh, and contrary to that which he designates the fruits of the spirit, it was evidence that he had not, by what he looked upon as his conversion, been brought to the right knowledge of God, and His Son Jesus Christ. They could, under no circumstances, receive such an one into their communion, or baptize him. Yet Menno says: "But, nevertheless, you ought to know, that, should the person to be baptized, come with a hypocritical heart, under semblance of faith, that his hypocrisy would not be imputed to the baptizer as a sin, but to the dissembler; for no man knoweth the heart of man, save the spirit of man which is in him." It is plain then, that Menno would have considered it sin, to baptize any one who he knew was not truly converted, and walked in newness of life. As the Mennonites considered any one guilty, who would baptize a carnal, unconverted person, knowing him to be such, and as-being partaker of the guilt of him who made the false pretension in baptism; so they also considered any member, partaker of his guilt, who knew the candidate for baptism was unregenerate and carnal, and connived at his reception, by not revealing the knowledge of anything carnal or dark in his life or profession. (See Menno Simon, page 32.)

A pure, blameless church is everywhere insisted on by Menno and his brethren; and I never find that they are charged with violating their profession, or with immoral or licentious conduct, except by such as confound them with the Munster sect. The Catholics, and all such as upheld infant baptism, called all those who rejected it, Anabaptists; and as the Munsterites and Mennonites both protested against infant baptism, they were by some confounded, and led to the Mennonites, being charged with holding the doctrine and sentiments of the Munsterites, being one people with them, and guilty of their evil deeds. Formerly, all those who dissented from the Catholics, and protested against

their errors and corruptions, were called Manechians. This being an unpopular and corrupt sect, their name was applied to all who protested against papistic corruption, thinking thereby to weaken the force of their charges, by making them odious in the eyes of the people. So, since the Munsterites were guilty of gross violations of humanity, justice, and decency, and by their fanatical and violently outrageous conduct, had rendered their names hateful, so the Catholics called the Mennonites, Munsterites, for the purpose of incensing the people against them. Neither were the reformed party averse to the existence of such impressions, inasmuch as the Mennonites strongly protested against some doctrines which they held, as well as also some of their practices. These protestations were not altogether without effect, and if the impression, that they were Munsterites, could be brought to prevail it would greatly weaken the effect of their protestations. We do accordingly find, that Protestant historians, even much later than the times of the reformers, if they noticed the Mennonites at all, charged them with having been connected with, or descended from the Munsterites. We cannot perceive the justice of such persistent charges. From Menno's own declaration, in his renunciation of Rome, it seems that he spoke against them publicly and privately, before he had withdrawn from the church of Rome, and that those who urged him to take on himself the ministry, were such as "cordially abhorred the sect of Munster." If he did visit their meeting for the purpose of persuading them of their error, it gives no one reason to lay any such charges against him, as the Pedobaptists seem so ready to do. All parties agree, that there were many innocent and upright persons amongst the Munsterites, and that he should have felt a deep concern for them, and labored to disabuse them, is altogether probable, and is no discredit to his name. We do utterly deny that there is in the doctrine of Menno, anything which could tend to lead men to the commission of any act of sedition, or turbulence, or any kind of crime, as we find charged in a note in Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History; or that any tumult or commotion of a violent character, ever occurred amongst true Mennonites; and also deny the insinuation, as if at the present day there were still something of a reprehensible nature occurring amongst them.

I may here take occasion to say, what is not a little to the credit

of Menno, that however those who bear his name may have become divided, and however widely they may have departed from the doctrine and principles which Menno taught, we may still defy the world to produce a better record for industry, honesty, morality, decency, and faithfulness, in all the relations of life, than that presented by those who bear the name, and profess the doctrine of Menno Simon! Historians almost invariably speak of them as being good citizens, honest, kind, and benevolent; but when they speak of their origin, or the source from whence they descend, represent them, or leave the impression, that they have descended from the Munsterites. This may arise, in a great measure, from ignorance of the true sentiments of the Mennonites, and their taking their accounts from those who misrepresented them from prejudice, and perhaps a considerable mixture of enmity. If the claim we have set up is true, that the Mennonites were a continuation of the Waldenses and Albigenses; that there was an organization of these professors existing at the time of the commencement of the reformation, and that Menno united himself to these, and afterward the church was so prosperous under his ministry, as to have his name attached to it; then there is proof here, that the church existed long before any of the Munsterite pretension or profession was known or heard of. This is partly conceded by Mosheim, and Ypeij, and Dr. I. Dermont, in their account of the origin of the Mennonites, also admit it. The Mennonites have always strenuously upheld it. During that time, when Menno may be said to have been in a state of transition between popery and his final profession and doctrine when the Munster excitement was at its height, he protested against them, and their pretensions. He himself says, in his renunciation of Rome: "Afterward the sect of Munster made inroads, by whom many pious hearts in our quarter, were led into error. My soul was much troubled, for I perceived, that though they were zealous, they erred in doctrine. I exerted my feeble efforts, as far as I was able, in opposing them by preaching and exhortations. I conferred twice with one of their leaders, once in private, and once in public; but my admonitions availed nothing, because I did that myself which I well knew was not right." He afterward speaks of his painful exercises on account of the deception of many honest and upright hearts, by what he

calls "the ungodly doctrine of Munster," until, he says, "his soul was grieved beyond endurance." Now after he entirely withdrew from the Romanists, and about a year after was solicited by some six or eight persons to take upon himself the calling of a public minister, he says those who approached him on the subject, "cordially abhorred the sect of Munster." Menno also wrote a small work against John Von Leyden, the Munster king. In all his writings, as well as those of his brethren who mention any thing of the Munsterites, he declared himself free from any connection or sympathy with them. Because the Mennonites always insisted on a pure church, and exposed the inconsistency of those churches which tolerated so much vice and immorality in their communities, they have in turn brought these charges against them, to weaken the force of their protestations. I do not see the ground for such charges as fanaticism, turbulence and inconsistency. The Mennonites never made pretensions to any direct, or special revelation, but based their views of a pure church on the Word of God, by which they professed to be able to prove, that the idea and doctrine was scriptural. It would be more creditable to their opponents, to prove by the Scripture that the idea is unscriptural, than by insinuations and charges, without proof.

In an article published in a supplement to the "Public Ledger," of June 1st, 1872, we find that the same idea still prevails, that the Mennonites are identical with the Munsterites, but were reformed and converted into an orderly, virtuous, and industrious community, by the labors of Menno Simon. The church to which Menno Simon attached himself, existed long before the Munster sect was known, and continued separate and distinct from them, during all the time of the Munster excitement, and whilst their tragic scenes were enacting; and all the time protested against their violent conduct, and extravagant assumptions; and never in any way identified themselves with them. The Mennonites never held, that in the church all things ought to be common, among the faithful, that every Christian is invested with the power to preach the gospel, and, consequently, the church stood in no need of ministers or pastors, and that God still continued to reveal His will to chosen persons, by dreams and visions. They never fell into the excesses attributed to them in this article; nor is it just in any way to couple their name with this infatuated

people. There was no cause for thus confounding them, except that it afforded their enemies a pretext for the cruel persecutions they inflicted upon them. Mosheim says, Menno retained the doctrine of the *Millennium*, or thousand years reign of Christ with the saints on earth. I do not think he has this information from Menno's writings, or that of any of his brethren of his day. I have never found anything of this kind.

At the conclusion of Menno Simon's renunciation of popery he says: "I will here humbly entreat the reader, for Jesus sake, to accept in love, this, my confession, in relation to my illumination, conversion, and calling, and to meditate thereon. I have made it on account of urgent necessity; because I was slandered by the clergy, and am accused, without foundation of truth, of being called and ordained to the service of a seditious and heretical sect. He that feareth God, let him read and judge. It may be true that some, and even numbers, of the Munsterites did unite with the Mennonites; but this gives no more reason to charge that Menno ever was united with them, than that he was a Lutheran or Zwinglian, because some of them joined his church or communion. D'Aubigné, in the preface to his history, says: "God is in history." But God is not in all that purports to be history; for much of it is not true, and God is in nothing that is untrue.

The Mennonites held, that all believers were by one Spirit baptized into one body, and became one heart and one soul. Therefore, no believer can, by the Holy Spirit, be led or drawn to a corrupt or disobedient sect, but ever to the true Church of obedient believers. Then there could not be more than one Church of Christ, because all believers, being led by this one Holy Spirit, He would lead them all the one way, and could not possibly be led to different and dissenting bodies. They therefore looked upon, and held all churches that were disobedient to the teaching of Christ and His apostles, as anti-christian, and would not have fellowship with them, hear their preaching, or in any way join in worship with them; but protested against their assumption of being spiritual worshippers, by withdrawing themselves from all worship, or spiritual exercises of such people. This separation caused great offense with the reformed churches of Switzerland, where they persecuted the Mennonites very sorely. On one oc-

casion, seven preachers and deacons were arrested at Berne, sometime between 1650 and '60. They were imprisoned, and kept at very hard labor, and bad food. They were, besides, greatly reviled and scorned, but they endured all patiently, committing themselves to God, and expecting their imprisonment should be for life. At last the following conditions were proposed to them; either to go with them to their church, or be perpetually consigned to the galleys, or die in the hands of the executioner. "Martyr's Mirror," page 1021. In what manner those faithful confessors were finally disposed of, is not known; but it is known, that they were still in prison in 1665. We can hereby learn how conscientiously they avoided what they deemed false worship. We can also see, how dark the minds of these professed reformers must have been. They were great and learned men, indeed, in worldly wisdom, but must have been dark as night, in regard to Divine influence, or they could not have so cruelly tortured those against whom they could bring no other accusation, than that they dissented from them in their religious views, and refused to join with them in worship. And this was more than one hundred years after their boasted reformation.

There is not now, I suppose, a nation on earth, professing the Christian religion, which will justify such persecution, as was countenanced and practiced by the reformed churches, on those who dissented from their views, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This is attributed to an enlightened Christian sentiment, or spirit. Indeed, there are but few Pagan nations, who do not tolerate professing Christians, and allow them to live in peace in their midst. If the religious liberty now everywhere enjoyed, is the result of an enlightened Christian spirit, I would ask, can a Christian spirit be anything else but enlightened? Or, I would ask, can a spirit which is so dark, as to allow such inhuman barbarities to be inflicted on their fellow creatures, be a Christian spirit at all? I cannot but regard the spirit which would inflict such cruelty on another, and even feeble old men and women, delicate and often pregnant women, some young, and in the bloom of innocence, as most dark and diabolical? Christ says: "A good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit." Such fruit is certainly most darkly corrupt, and can flow from no other source, than the spirit of darkness, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning,

and must have been the prompter of such deeds. When the Jews persecuted Christ, and said, they were Abraham's seed, He said: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him." For centuries before the reformation, and at the time it was in progress, the Catholics persecuted those who dissented from them, in their views of religion. The reformers looked upon this as a gross outrage, when inflicted upon themselves; but so soon as they obtained power, turned about and persecuted those who differed with them. How must the Reformed church of the present day, feel, when they look back upon the bloody record left by their brethren of Switzerland, from whom they claim to have descended? And the Episcopalian, which claims its origin from the reformed church of England, must with shame remember the bloody persecutions their brethren inflicted on the dissenters, several centuries back. It is somewhat strange, that D'Aubigné, who wrote in the present century, and claims to be a native of Switzerland, and shows some partiality for the reformers of his native land, should never say one word about their cruel and relentless persecution of the defenseless Mennonites. And, W. D. Wilson, also of the present century, speaking of the reformation in England, and the subsequent progress of the church, never says one word about the shameful and cruel burnings at Smithfield, and other places, over one hundred years after the reformation.

The Mennonites of the present day, can look back upon their brethren of those ages, and their Waldensian brethren of several centuries earlier, who, although they do not compare with the great reformers, in the extent of their learning, or natural abilities, yet they have left behind them a record, of which we need not now be ashamed. When they look back upon their unsullied character, the purity of their lives, the soundness of their doctrine, their deeply enlightened minds, and the Christian patience and fortitude with which they endured all manner of injustice and hardships, and their indomitable courage under the most inhuman torturings, and distress; we can thank God for the grace bestowed upon them, and the glorious record they have left behind them, with the honor and glory it still reflects upon His name; of

whom we may well say, "though they are dead, they yet speak." The supper was held and conducted consistently with their profession. No one was admitted as a member of the church, who did not give evidence of true repentance and conversion, by leading a renewed life; and whenever any one would be found guilty of carnal behavior, or walk after the flesh, he was brought under reproof, and either suspended in his privileges as a member, or was removed from the church. He was not admitted to the ordinances, or to partake of the privileges of membership, until a satisfactory amendment was apparent. Every member feeling it his conscientious duty to apprise the church of any irregularity in the life and walk of a brother or sister, and to withdraw himself from every brother that walks disorderly, they had little trouble in preserving their supper in its purity. They held that in receiving this ordinance, they had no direct merit or virtue imparted to them; but that its tendency was to impress the mind with a sense of the great love which Christ bore to the Church, the price he paid for its redemption, and His worthiness to be held in remembrance by every believer; whereby he is strengthened, and confirmed in faith, and his affections more fervently drawn to Christ, and things above. Moreover, it admonishes us to Christian unity, peace, and love, which is the essence of true Christian religion; after which all believers should earnestly seek and strive, and without which our faith and profession is vain. They excluded all from their supper, who they knew in any way to violate the precepts of the gospel. (Read Menno, page 44-5-6.)

They also held the washing of the saints' feet, to be a command of Christ, which, as obedient children, they felt themselves constrained, through love, to observe amongst one another, as Christ had said: "If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

We find a great deal of argument in the writings of Menno and his brethren, concerning the proper use and application of the ordinances; who are proper subjects to observe them; of their design, and of their abuse; but we find very little said about the

mode of administration. With regard to the washing of feet, we find no particular mode of doing it specified. The Saviour's example is so plainly described, that I suppose there is not much variation in the mode of procedure, amongst those who observe the ordinance. The idea of its signification, they held, was to teach us meekness, lowliness, and humility of heart; to impress upon the mind, a sense of the benefits received from Christ, by His washing us, and purifying us of our sins, and also, to remind us of our duty to serve one another, in body and spirit; all of which they profess by washing, and being washed. In the confession of faith, in the "Martyr's Mirror," it is recommended to be done on suitable occasions, when they visit one another. But no particular rule is laid down, except that it is a command and ordinance of God, which they felt constrained, out of love to their Lord and Master, to observe; the meanwhile, humbly meditating on the great love of Christ, in humbling Himself unto the death of the cross, and there shedding His blood, to wash and cleanse us from our sins.

The avoidance or shunning of excommunicated members, was also considered by them as a command of God, which it was incumbent on them to observe. About the propriety of this, there has been a great deal of contention. I am not aware that any other professed Christians make this a point of doctrine, except such as claim to hold and follow the doctrine of Menno Simon. Almost all churches excommunicate members for certain offenses, but none, that I am aware of, shun or avoid them, in their common intercourse. For this cause, Menno and his brethren have been severely censured and reflected on. Amongst those calling themselves Mennonites, the extent to which this avoidance should be carried, is viewed very differently, and is said to have been the cause of some divisions amongst them.

As I shall have occasion to speak somewhat on this subject in a subsequent chapter, I will leave its consideration for that place; but, nevertheless, observe here, that the Old Mennonites of the 16th century, held it as a command of Christ and his apostles, and insisted on its observance by their brethren. This Menno held so firmly, that he would not be willing to hold any one as a member of the church, who would not observe it. (See Menno's complete works, page 276, second part.)

The persecution of the Mennonites continued, in Germany and the Netherlands, until about the year 1660; not generally all the time, or at all places. There were still places where at times they enjoyed more liberty; but in some parts they suffered severely; and as we have already intimated, after the Catholics lost the power, the Protestants commenced to persecute them, and seemed to do so with great virulence and animosity, for a long time, in some places, and especially at Berne, and Zurich, in Switzerland. So long as the church was thus persecuted, we have no evidence of decline in spiritual vigor and healthfulness. From some remarks, in the preface to the second part of the "Martyr's Mirror," it would seem as if they soon began to decline in their ardor and zeal, after the persecution ceased. The preface to the first part of the "Martyr's Mirror" is dated 1659. That of the second part bears no date, but the last edict we find noticed, which the city of Berne issued against the Anabaptists, bears date of August, 1659, and the several appeals of the States general of Holland, to the authorities of Zurich and Berne, in behalf of the Mennonites, are dated 1660; and we find some martyrdoms noticed as taking place in 1671 and 1672. From this, it is evident that the work must have been published considerably later than the date of the preface to the first part. At the time of the appeal of the authorities of Holland, to those of Berne and Zurich, the Mennonites had there enjoyed liberty for a considerable time, so that the inclination to worldliness and luxury, noticed in the preface to the second part of the "Mirror," may have shown itself in those countries where they enjoyed liberty, whilst there still was persecution and distress in other parts, or kingdoms and countries. It is certain that the enjoyment of peace and plenty tends to strengthen the desires of the flesh and the mind; and in order to preserve the ascendancy of the spirit over the flesh, it is necessary to exercise more vigilance in such times, than when the flesh is restrained by the violence of the world. And there is more need of mortifying the deeds of the body, by the Spirit, than when Satan is unintentionally helping to keep down the flesh. If God can "make the wrath of man to praise Him," he surely also can make the wrath of Satan tend to the glory of His saints. Although we are taught to pray for government and rulers, that we may have a peaceable and quiet life, in all Godliness and

honesty, I feel assured that every one who has experienced the love of God, and has acquaintance with his own heart, will also feel that they have need, whilst they thank God for the enjoyment of a peaceable and quiet life, also to pray Him that He may guard and protect them, so that their liberty does not become a snare to them, to draw their mind and affections from heavenly to earthly things.

There is an effort being made at the present time by the Baptists to identify Menno Simon, and the Mennonites of the sixteenth century, with what is at present known as the "Baptist church," which I think does the Mennonites injustice. Justice to them, as well as the service of honest inquirers after truth, forbid us to pass it by unnoticed. This effort is especially apparent in Cramp's late "Baptist History," who seems desirous to trace a continuous succession of their church, from the apostolic age, to the present time. For this purpose, recourse is had to the different communities which had arisen from time to time, previous to the great reformation of the sixteenth century, who dissented from the Catholic church, and kept up a separate organization. Many of these they assume were identical with themselves; and to complete the chain outside of the Catholics and popular reformers, they use the Mennonites as a link. They also argue, that the Albigenses, and Waldenses, were identical with the Mennonites, and that the latter were a continuation of the old orthodox Waldenses, which only took another name, under the zealous, energetic, and efficient ministry of Menno Simon. In this they confirm the claim of the Mennonites.

That the doctrine and profession of the Mennonites and Baptists agree in some particulars, I will not deny; but that the agreement in some particulars, whilst in other important points they widely disagree, should justify the assumption of identity, I cannot perceive, unless we reject all distinction, and claim that all professors who have, in their doctrine and practice, *some features* in which they agree, are one and the same people. But then we need not resort to the dissenting sects, because the Catholics also hold some doctrines which all others hold, and their descent from the apostles time is undisputed. But in our day, when we claim affinity with any sect of professors, and that our principles are identical with theirs, we claim something more

than this common brotherhood ; and are expected to mean something more.

The Mennonites, because of particular religious opinions and principles which they held, refused to worship, or commune with the Catholics, or any of the Protestant reformers of their time ; and perhaps all these (or at least most of them) would have refused also to commune with them. The Episcopalians would have communed with none of the dissenting sects, and the Lutheran and Zwinglians could not agree in some particulars, whilst in others they agreed. These distinctive features forbade their union then, although in some features of their profession they did agree. It would therefore not be considered fair now, for any church or party to claim identity with any of these, because they held some article of faith, or a few points of doctrine in common ; whilst it is known that they would have utterly repudiated much of the doctrine or view, held by those who at present are claiming this affinity.

It is well known and proven, that Menno and his brethren of the sixteenth century, held that a Christian cannot defend his rights of person or property, swear an oath, serve magisterial office, or serve his country in any military capacity. These were held by them as cardinal principles, and they would have united or worshipped with no one holding the contrary views. All these the Baptists hold as Christian duties. Menno and his brethren held that obedience to the commands of Christ and His apostles, required them to avoid dealings and company with all excommunicated members ; and that the faithful should greet one another with the holy kiss. Cramp says, this avoidance is far harsher than the New Testament will warrant ; and Brown pronounces the kiss of charity, "without warrant of Scripture." The Mennonites held these things to be among the commands which Christ charged His apostles to teach their converts to observe, and that obedience to them constitutes a fruit, which proves their faith to be a true living one, and where they do not exist, it is an evidence that the tree is not good, or a true living faith does not exist.

Upon what ground, then, the present Baptist church can claim identity with the Mennonites, is hard to comprehend. By their confession of faith, and the tenor of their writings, it is certain that the Mennonites of the sixteenth century, would in no wise have

admitted any one professing the doctrine of the Baptists, into their communion, or even worshiped with them, or went into their churches to take part with, or acknowledge their worship as divine service.

The Mennonites of the sixteenth century are admitted by Cramp as refusing to bear arms, swear, or serve magisterial offices; yet he claims them as Baptists, whilst at the same time he condemns their practice. What is at this time understood by the term "*Baptist*," is a church, or party, who baptize exclusively by immersion, and admit of no other mode of administration, as constituting baptism. There are different churches, however, which hold these sentiments, who are not popularly considered as identical with what is known as the "Baptist church." There are Dunkers (different sects), Disciples, Church of God, or Winebrennerian, Mormons, and perhaps some others. But the distinctive appellation of none of these is *Baptist*. In the "*Martyr's Mirror*," the Mennonites are very frequently called Baptists, but it is invariably applied to the Mennonites there. That church which is now known by the name of Baptist, is not, to my knowledge, once mentioned, or noticed in that large work, and had its origin at a later date, than most of the martyrdoms there noticed.

The original Petrosians, Henricans, Waldenses, and Albigenses, evidently condemned infant baptism, as unscriptural, and maintained baptism on faith. But as time advanced, and they were widely dispersed by persecution, and brought under the influence of various surroundings, many of them may have departed from the distinctive features of the profession which these people originally held. Some may have taken up one doctrine, and others a different one, and still held the ancient name. Some may have taken up infant baptism, oaths, and self defense; and some may also have held, that immersion is the proper mode of administering baptism. But their original principles were different; and there were those who maintained them, until the time of the reformation in the sixteenth century.

Cramp claims that the *universal* mode of baptism by the Waldenses, was immersion. I have not the means of knowing how this assertion can be fairly maintained. That some calling themselves Waldenses, did baptize by immersion, may be correct; but that they universally held the sentiments of the present

Baptists on this subject, is questionable. The Waldenses published a confession of faith, which is given in the "Martyr's Mirror," page 230, wherein they plainly give their views, in regard to points of doctrine in dispute at the time. There are also allusions in the "Mirror," to other confessions of faith made by them, and extracts taken from them, and declarations made of principles which governed them; but we never find a word with regard to the external mode or manner of administering the rite of baptism. Baptism was not at this time so wholly, and entirely practised by immersion, that no other mode was known or thought of; and, if the Waldenses had held the views on the mode of baptism, which the Baptists now do; that no other mode but immersion is *baptism*, and treated all those who had been baptized in any other way, as if they had not been baptized at all; it could hardly have escaped notice. Can any one point to a Baptist work of the present century, in which this distinctive feature of their profession is left in doubt? In the absence of any intimation in their confession of faith, or in their controversies, or interrogations with, and by their enemies, that they held the sentiments attributed to them, we may very fairly question, whether their universal custom was immersion.

With regard to the Mennonites of the sixteenth century, we have very good reason to *know*, that the assertion of the Baptists of the present time, that Menno Simon and his brethren held views on the mode of baptism, identical with their own, is an assumption which they cannot maintain. At the time of the reformation, sprinkling was the general mode of baptism practiced by the Catholic church; and I suppose by all Pedito-baptists. In the "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," under the head of baptism, it is asserted, that Luther said: "He would have introduced immersion into his church, if he had followed his own opinions," etc. This shows that immersion was not the common mode of the time. At least, other modes were known and practiced. If this was so, and the Mennonites held the views attributed to them, it is inexplicable, why we do not find a word of plain declaration on the subject of the mode of administering the ordinance, by any Mennonite writer of the age.

In all the disputations and controversies given in the "Martyr's Mirror," as occurring between the Mennonites and Catholics, and

in Menno Simon's own writings, where the subject of baptism was so much under consideration, and each party so persistently urged the other, with regard to what they considered a departure from scriptural teaching, we never find that the Mennonites charged the Catholics, or the Protestant reformers, with a departure from the scriptural, or apostolical mode of administering the rite. Neither do we find that the Catholics once charged the Mennonites with departing from the usages of the church, whilst they so severely censured, and even punished them, for every trivial departure from its customs. If the Mennonites held the sentiments attributed to them by the Baptists, this silence on both sides would be altogether unaccountable. And whilst the Mennonites held all departure from scriptural teachings rendered ordinances null and void, and treated them as if they had not occurred, or, as they did all works of unbelief, we never find that they baptized any one who had before been baptized, on the ground that the mode of administration was invalid; nor do we find, that I know of, any declaration that the mode of administration would render any baptism invalid.

We do not propose here to defend, or controvert any mode of baptism, but to show that, when the Baptists assert, that Menno and the brethren of his day, taught and practiced baptism by immersion, they assert what they cannot prove, and that we have presumptive evidence to the contrary, much more weighty and reliable than their own positive assertions, unsupported by reliable authority. In the "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," edited by I. Newton Brown, (a Baptist,) we find under the head of Mennonites, the assertion, that a "Mr. Gan," (said to be a Mennonite minister), said that the mode of baptism "consists of immersion or pouring upon of water." There are a number of different associations of professors, claiming to be Mennonites, some of whom may baptize by immersion; but that Menno Simon, or those of his day, who were recognized by him as brethren, baptized by immersion, I have seen no evidence of; and that it was their mode, I do not believe. I think the evidence we shall give fully justifies our incredulity. In the same article, Brown says: "The practice of pouring or sprinkling is a wide departure from the views of Menno." He then purports to give the words of Menno as his authority: "After we have searched ever so

diligently, we shall find no other baptism but dipping in water, which is acceptable to God, and approved in His word." He makes no reference whence this language of Menno is derived.

In a small work, entitled "Life and Times of Menno," published also by I. Newton Brown, we find the following note in the appendix: "Morgan Edwards, (as quoted by Benedict in his history of the Baptists, page 132) says: The Mennonites of Pennsylvania, and in other parts of the world, have somewhat deviated from Menno in matters of faith and practice; particularly in that of baptism. He in his declaration concerning Christian baptism in the water, printed in 1539, page 24, expressly saith, 'after we have searched ever so diligently, we shall find no other baptism besides dipping in water, which is acceptable to God, and maintained in His word.' After which he adds, page 39: 'Let who will oppose, this is the only mode of baptism that Jesus Christ instituted, and the apostles taught and practiced.' *Accordingly Menno was dipped and did dip others.*" In note 4th, in the appendix to this work, is a letter from Dr. Chase, in which he says: The departure of the Mennonites from immersion is, "an error of modern times which should be corrected."

I have lately read with close attention, "The complete works of Menno Simon," lately translated from the original dutch language, and published by I. F. Funk & Brother. Some of this work I had frequently read before, both in the English and German language; but other parts I had never before seen. I can find no authority for the assertion of Dr. Chase, in the letter referred to, that "Menno taught and practiced immersion by the Scriptures." I do not find one word in the whole book, wherein Menno teaches anything in reference to the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, nor a word of information how he did administer it. There are some expressions in his works, which, if taken singly, might lead to the inference, that he did favor immersion; but there are others more strongly indicating the contrary. I will mention all the expressions I observed. Some might have escaped my attention, but I think none of importance. In his treatise concerning baptism, page 26, (I quote from Funk's works,) when speaking of the washing of regeneration, he says: "O Lord, how lamentably Thy word is abused. Is it not greatly to be lamented, that men are attempting, notwithstanding these plain passages, to

maintain their idolatrous invention of infant baptism, and set forth that infants are regenerated thereby, as if regeneration were simply a *pressing into the water*." (Rupp, in his translation which was made from the German, renders the word here made *pressing, immersion*.) In speaking on the subject of faith, on page 153, he says: "As soon as they are born, they are carried to the idolatrous false bath (baptism)." In his reply to Gellius Fabre, vol. ii., page 41, he says: "But to us the blood sign of circumcision is not commanded, but baptism in the water."

In the recent translation referred to, I find a work which I had never seen before, and seems to be the work referred to in the note in the "Life and Times of Menno." The title of the work is: "An Explanation of Christian Baptism in the water, from the Word of God. In what manner it was commanded by Christ Jesus, and how it was taught and practiced by His Holy Apostles." From the title of this work, we would naturally expect to see something in relation to the mode of procedure in performing the ceremony of baptism. But strange to say, there is in the whole work not one word in relation to the mode of administering the ordinance; showing clearly, that the expressions have no reference to mode of administration. The whole work is devoted to the object of refuting infant baptism, and supporting the doctrine of baptism of adult believers; without any reference whatever to the mode by which it is performed.

In this work, the expression of "baptism in the water," occurs different times, and on page 204, vol. ii., the passage occurs, which is quoted by Benedict and Brown, from Morgan Edwards. The word which the Baptists referred to render "*dipping*," Funk, in his translation, renders, "*baptism in the water*." The manner in which this short sentence is presented by Brown, in his Encyclopedia, and in the "Life and Times of Menno," which I had also seen quoted by other immersionists, I do not regard as altogether a fair and honest representation of Menno. It has given the impression to Baptist readers generally, that Menno unquestionably taught immersion, as the only true Christian baptism. To willfully misrepresent an author, is a thing so low, that I would be loth to charge friend Brown with so treating Menno. But, apart from the question, whether Menno did teach or practice immersion or not, the manner in which these short sentences are

presented to the reader, by the Baptists, conveys a *false* impression. Who can read the quotation referred to, without concluding that Menno had reference altogether to the mode of performing the ceremony of baptizing, and that this is plainly teaching immersion, and would naturally infer that he "*was dipped, and did dip others.*"

The quotation reads: "After we have searched ever so diligently, we shall find no other baptism besides dipping in water, which is acceptable to God, and maintained in His word. After which he adds, page 39, let who will oppose, this is the only mode of baptism that Jesus Christ instituted, and the apostles taught and practiced." In neither of these paragraphs, where the different sentences occur, has Menno any reference to mode of baptizing; but altogether to *baptism on faith*. Whoever is the author of this deception, he has very artfully presented the words, so that the second passage is made to support the first. The work as published by Funk is in quarto form, containing 36 pages, running from 195 to 231. The first extract is from page 204, and the second from 231, quite at the close of the work, and has no connection with, or reference to the first. But that the reader may judge for himself, we will give both paragraphs entire as rendered by Funk.

"In the third place they say, 'that children should be baptized, that they may the better be trained in the word of God and His commandments.' To this we reply again: That we desire to know where such a thing is expressed and written in the Holy Scriptures. Give a discreet answer, we pray you, who assert infant baptism to be right, just and necessary, and who so lamentably slander and profane us on account of baptism, that we may no longer be deceived in our hearts; but that we may assuredly know by the word of God where to find this infant baptism. *For however industriously* we may search day and night, we yet find but one baptism in the water, pleasing to God, which is expressed and contained in His word, namely, baptism on the confession of faith, commanded by Christ Jesus, taught and administered by His holy apostles, which is received and administered for the forgiveness and remission of sins, in such a manner, as we have fully proven above by the words of Peter, Acts ii. 38. But of this other baptism, that is, infant baptism, we find nothing."

The paragraph quoted, occurs on page 204, and on page 231 the second, and following paragraph occurs: "Herein, reader,

you have most devoutly what the mode of God's baptism, which perished through the long degeneracy of the ages, in the church, ought to be, being restored whole by the unspeakable gift of God. Therefore, let the writers oppose as they please; let the learned oppose by their shrewdness as they know how; let all the world under the heavens oppose in every way in which they are able, this is the only mode of baptism which Christ Jesus himself instituted, and the apostles taught and practiced."

The expression of "mode of baptism," in this last paragraph, has reference entirely to the argument in the preceding part of the work, and is relating to infant baptism, and baptism on faith. As I have said before, there is in the whole work not one word of argument, or instruction, which has reference to the mode of administering the rite of baptism. Who can compare the garbled quotation of Morgan Edwards, (so widely circulated by Benedict and Brown,) with the paragraphs as given here, word for word, as it is translated by Funk, without concluding that intentional violence has been done to the work of Menno? *

* Since writing the above, I have received a letter from a friend, who had written to Ira Chase, of Newton Centre, Mass., in June, 1863, on the subject of this quotation from Menno. Friend Chase replies: "Menno has, indeed, been supposed to say expressly, that, after we have searched ever so diligently, we shall find no other baptism besides dipping in water, which is acceptable to God, and maintained in His word. But when he makes the statement thus understood, and quoted by the venerable Morgan Edwards, he is replying to the representation of some, that Christ and His holy Apostles, *have taught two different baptisms in water*; one of believers, and the other of unconscious infants, and he takes occasion to say: However diligently we seek, night and day, yet we find not more than one baptism in the water, that is pleasing to God, expressed and contained in God's word, namely, this baptism upon faith, commanded by Christ, taught and practiced by his holy Apostles, which is administered and received unto the forgiveness and remission of sins, with such measure [rule or limitation] as we have very amply set forth above, in the first words of Peter. (Acts ii. 38.) *But this other baptism, namely, of little children we never find.*

"Mr. Edwards, we doubt not, misunderstood the words which he quoted. Had he been familiar with the Dutch language, and had he examined what precedes, and what follows those words, he would not have quoted them for the purpose for which he brought them forward. It would be entirely wrong to suspect him of any intention to deceive his readers. We can see how the mistake here was very easily made; and this naturally led to a similar mistake in regard to the Latin passage mentioned also by him in this connection. By

On the 206th, 207th, and 209th pages, Menno speaks of lifting children to the basin, and holding them to the basin, or fountain. Whether they held them to the basin or fountain, for the purpose of the priest taking the infant from their hands, and dipping them in the water; or, whether they held them there for the priest to sprinkle, or pour water on them from the basin, is not said; but, I think the latter quite as likely as the former. He is here speaking of infants, and laboring to show the fallacy of the doctrine of infant baptism, but has in no instance any reference to the manner of baptizing.

On the 444th page, in "a kind admonition," he again says: "baptized in water." These expressions are somewhat singular, if Menno did not baptize in water; yet they do not prove that he immersed, or dipped. He may have gone into the water, and baptized with water. I cannot believe he did immerse, much less hold the view, that nothing but immersion is baptism, as the present Baptists do. If he did so, it would be very strange indeed that he should have passed by in silence, and not raised the warning voice against such a perversion of gospel ordinances, and especially as he took so much pains to convince his readers of other abuses of the ordinance of baptism. I have written to friend Funk to inquire about the word which he renders "*baptism*,"

the passage, *modus baptisanti*, we suppose that Menno there referred, not to what is now commonly understood when we speak of the *mode of baptizing*, but to such a baptism, as he had been advocating, namely the baptism of believers."

Whether Morgan Edwards intended to deceive his readers or not, he is certainly guilty of very great carelessness in making such an assertion without understanding the language, and without observing "what preceded or what followed after;" and how did he happen to find the two passages so artfully coupled together, without discovering that the author had reference to quite another subject, than the mode of administering the rite; and how did he come to get the word "*dipping in*," where there is no sense in its application?

Our friend Chase confirms the view we have taken of the design of Menno's expression and argument. Newton Brown, in a letter to the same person to whom Chase sent the above acknowledgment, written in May, 1863, says: "He has no reason to doubt the correctness of the citations of Morgan Edwards, and never heard of any one acquainted with the original language, who pretended to dispute them." Did friend Brown not see the article of Ira Chase, in the *Christian Review*, for July, 1861? If I am not mistaken, it is a Baptist publication.

whilst Morgan Edwards makes it "*dipping*;" whether he is unquestionably right in his rendering, whilst others use a different word? His reply was, that the word used in the original is *doopsal*, and is the same as the German *taufe*, and says the expression is strangely falsified to render it *dipping*.

Whether the Baptists have any other ground for the assertion, that "Menno was dipped, and did dip others," and that he "taught and practiced immersion according to the Scriptures," and that the departure from immersion, is an error of the Mennonites of modern origin, I do not know, but presume if they had, they would have given it. When men resort to unfair means to substantiate a position, it is equivalent to an admission that their ground is very weak, and certainly, no one can dispute the fact that the manner in which they present the words of Menno conveys an idea, or leaves an impression, which a fair rendering does not do. Further, if Menno used a word which in the English is usually rendered *baptism* and the German *taufe*, and the Baptists have given it *dipping*, without any explanation or doubts, they also do violence to the word. If Menno had really said *dipping*, we would all know he could mean nothing else; but by *baptism* he may mean something very different. Again, whether we take the word *doopsal* to be dipping or baptism, there is another little word in the text, which the Baptists have seen fit to leave out of their quotations. Menno says, in *the* water. The Baptists have in every instance left the little article *the* out. There is no question but what this omission was made with design. Dipping in water is a stronger expression than dipping in *the* water. Truth never needs artifice to sustain it; and when any one resorts to it, he weakens instead of strengthens his position.

We will now proceed to give our reasons, for not believing that Menno, or the Mennonites of the sixteenth century, or at any subsequent period, did practice baptism by immersion, or ever held the doctrine or sentiments on the subject, which is attributed to them by the afore-mentioned Baptist writers. First, from Menno's own writings; second, from other early Mennonite writers; and lastly, from the Mennonite church itself.

In his "admonition addressed to the scorers of the word concerning baptism," Menno makes a remark, which we think goes far to show, that he did not consider immersion essential to

baptism, or that it was their mode of administering it. On page 38 (Funk's edition) Menno says: "Are you a sincere Christian, born of God? Then why do you dread baptism; which is among the least that God commands you? It has always been a difficult and important command to love your enemy; to do good to those who hate you; to pray, in spirit and in truth, for those who persecute you; to crucify your wicked and ungodly flesh, with its impure lusts and desires; to subdue your arrogant pride; your eating and drinking to excess; to renounce your accursed idolatry; your avariciousness; your offensive unchastity; your bloody hatred; to desist from your envious revilings; to curb your slanderous tongue; to govern your heart, and flesh; to love and fear with all your heart, your Lord and God, your Creator and Redeemer, and in all things to submit to His holy word; and to serve your neighbor in sincere and unfeigned love, with all your powers, with all your possessions, with your counsel, with your labor; yea, if required, with your death and blood; with a sincere heart to suffer misery, disdain, and the oppressive cross of Christ for the Lord's word; and to confess the Lord Jesus before lords and princes, in prison and in bonds, by words and deeds, unto death."

"We think that these, and the like commands, are more painful and difficult to perverse flesh, which is naturally so prone to have its own way, *than to have a handful of water applied*, and a sincere Christian must at all times be ready to do all this; if not he is not born of God; for the regenerated are of one mind with Christ Jesus.

On the 124th page, in the work on faith, Menno says the same thing. He is speaking of the command of water-baptism on the confession of faith, and of those who refuse to receive it. He says: "Therefore, it is all in vain to excuse ourselves, or seek evasion. How any one who is so unbelieving and rebellious, *that he refuses God a handful of water*, can conform himself, to love his enemies, mortify his flesh to the service of his neighbor, and to take up the cross of Christ, I will leave the serious reader to reflect upon, in the fear of God.

We regard these two expressions of Menno, as clear indications of the mode of baptism he was accustomed to administer. Besides this strong testimony, we find no expression in all his

writings, where he uttered one word of disapproval of the mode of baptism by pouring or sprinkling ; which could scarcely be the case, if he held the views attributed to him by the Baptists ; seeing he wrote so much on the subject, and so clearly defined his views, on all controverted points. We must conclude that the mind of the religious community, was at the time not agitated by the question of mode of administration. If there were different modes of administration common at the time, it must have been admitted as a matter of indifference by all parties ; otherwise the total silence on the subject is unaccountable.

Dietrich Philips, a Mennonite writer, who was cotemporary with Menno, says nothing on the subject. He has written a small work on Christian baptism, and speaks a great deal about its perversion, and the substitution of infant baptism ; but never a word on the mode of its administration.

The "Martyr's Mirror," a large work, published toward the close of the seventeenth century, by T. J. V. Bracht, (a Mennonite,) the greater part of which is devoted to a history of the sufferings and martyrdoms of the Mennonites, with many controversies and confessions about baptism, and all unscriptural observances, and perversion of ordinances, held with Catholics and Protestants, in which their history is brought down to the year 1672. In all this large work, the second part of which embraces a period of near 150 years, from 1524 to 1672, I do not know of any assertion favoring the idea that they baptized at all by immersion, much less that it was their exclusive mode, or that they held any sentiments agreeing with the Baptists of the present day, except in the repudiation of infant baptism, and upholding adult baptism on faith. Mennonites and Baptists agree also in their profession, that believers only should be received into the church, and that the church should be preserved pure. But in regard to what constitutes a believer, there is a very wide difference in their views ; and in a comparison of their practice, there is also a difference so wide, that the Mennonites would have considered the practice of the Baptists, as rendering their profession a nullity.

There is in this large work and extended history, (I mean that period which embraces the Mennonites,) no instance mentioned, that I have knowledge of, where they went out to any

stream, or water, where they could be conveniently immersed; nor any reference made to any thing countenancing such ideas. Their persecutors often interrogated them very closely, about the time, place, and attendant circumstances of their baptism. But I know of neither question nor answer, in reference to the stream, or particular water, where this occurred. On the contrary, we find on page 363, it is said that in 1529, "Christianna Tollinger confessed, that brother George Blaurock had administered the true Christian baptism *in her house*." On page 379, in 1538, Annecken Jans, "orally confessed that she was re-baptized by one Meynert, of whom it is reported that he was unmarried; this took place about four years ago, *in her own house*, in Briel, in Copper street. She also stated that her husband was re-baptized, by the same man, at the same time." On the same page it is also said: "Christina Michael Barentz, born at Leuven, aged about fifty, confessed that she was re-baptized about four years ago, at Leuven, *in her own house*, in Stein street, by one John, who she believed was from Mastrick, or near it." Christina said further, that her husband, called Master Matteis von der Dank, at that time a practicing physician, was also re-baptized, at the same time, by the said John.

The afore-mentioned Christina said, that "two women were also baptized at the same time, one of whom died a natural death at Brussels, and the other died of pestilence, in England; both women were called Lynken. So far as she knew, the one was mother and the other daughter." On page 479, in the year 1556, Claes de Praet, and two others were baptized at Antwerp, *in a small new house*, between St. Jaris gate and the Koepergate. On page 659, in the year 1569, Dirk Willems, and it is said others, were also baptized *in his house*. Of this man it is said, that "he escaped, and was closely pursued by the jailer; but as there was ice on the water, Dirk Willems got over with some danger, but the jailer who was pursuing broke through and fell in. Observing that he was in danger of his life, Willems ran immediately to the jailer's assistance, and helped him out, and saved his life. The jailer wanted to let him go, but the Burgomaster called sharply to him, that he should consider his oath; thus he was retaken by the jailer, and after steadfast endurance, he was burnt." On page 764, in the year 1570, Faes Dirks was burnt, after having made three several confessions, or had three examinations, in all of

which he confessed that he was baptized *in a large room in a house* in Rotterdam, and that he did not know to whom the house belonged, but afterward learned that it belonged to a man named Michael, who lives in Amsterdam. Says there were eight or nine baptized when he was. On page 967, in the year 1588, there is an account of Christian Rycen, of Hanshoten, in Flanders, who was apprehended, and says of his examination: "They asked me whether I had been baptized? I answered, yes. They inquired how long since? I told them eight years ago. Then they interrogated me respecting my children, whether they were baptized? I told them, no. They asked whether my wife was of my opinion? I said, yes. Then they inquired *in what house I was baptized*. I informed them it was situated at the south-east corner, etc. They demanded the name of the man that lived there? I said Peter. And his surname? asked they. I replied that we did not make much inquiry respecting the surname."

On page 498, in the year 1558, we find that one Jan Hendricks, of Utrecht, was baptized. He confessed that he was baptized in the town, but would not tell when, where, or by whom. But the German copy says, he "was baptized *at the wood place*." His daughter Styntgen says, she was *baptized in the house of one Gerrit*. She and her father were baptized by one Leonard, but did not know his surname, or where he was from. Did not know who her companions were, so that she would not bring them into difficulty.

In most of these cases, there were a great many more questions asked than I have here given, but in none of them is there any question about what stream, pool, or fountain, they were baptized in, or any allusion made to any thing necessary, or relating to immersion. But they sometimes asked them in what *house* it occurred; and Faes Dirks said, water was poured on his head out of a basin, in the presence of twelve persons.

Most of these cases occurred within the life time of Menno, and the rest soon after his death, which took place in 1561, and was in the countries where he himself labored. Now if this had been so contrary to his doctrine and teaching, it could not have escaped his notice, or censure. If it should be said, that the difficulties under which they labored on account of the severe persecution, was the cause of their departure from their usual custom, we might certainly expect some reference to it by the

relators. The Catholics undoubtedly knew what their usual mode of baptism was, and if it had been different from what the parties told them they had received, they would undoubtedly have made some remarks about it. Those who confessed and related it, do not make any remarks about it, as if it were not customary to baptize in that way, or that they regard baptism in any other way more scriptural or proper; but, on the contrary, speak of it as if it were common and unquestionable.

The author of the "Martyr's Mirror," who wrote over one hundred years after Menno's death, and only some ten or fifteen years before the first Mennonites emigrated to this country, must certainly have known the fact, if any change had been made before the time of his writing the history of the martyrs. If it had been made since that time, it is not reasonable that it could have been made in the old countries, and in our own, simultaneously, without so much agitation and excitement, that its history would have been handed down, either in writing or by tradition. Think of the extent of country over which the Mennonite church was spread, and think of the unreasonableness of changing the mode of administration of so important an ordinance, quietly, without protest, confusion, or discussion, and in such a writing age as this would have had to occur in, especially among a people holding the sentiments attributed to Menno by the Baptists!

I think, then, that from the writings of Menno, and those of his brethren for more than a century after his death, it is evident that the present Baptist sentiment, was not entertained by the Mennonites during that time, and that from the want of evidence of any change having been made since that time, by any excitement, agitation, or discord having existed on the subject, we have every reason to believe that the practice of pouring has always been the common mode of baptizing by the Mennonites, and that no question of its validity existed in their minds.

Menno Simon may have held that baptism, by immersion, or baptism in water, and with water, would be valid baptism, if the baptized party is a truly converted person, fully answering to that of which baptism is a signification; and from this idea or view, the several expressions of "baptism in the water" may have been made. With the evidence we have, that it never was their general mode of baptizing, I can put no more reasonable construction on

his words. Baptism signifies a washing, and it would seem as if he thought it immaterial whether it was done in water, or out of water, if only the subject washed was truly washed inwardly, and that the outward washing was not to them a meaningless operation. Menno's expressions of receiving a handful of water in baptism, is, at least, evidence that he considered such application baptism, where all other circumstances harmonized, and implies, also, that such was his common custom. I am therefore persuaded that the conclusion of Menno's views being in harmony with the present Baptist church, was arrived at without due consideration; and upon grounds unworthy of men of such sound judgment, learning, and probity, as those are esteemed, who have given such wide circulation to a report, based on so unworthy a foundation.

Benedict, Brown and Chase, seem to have based their conclusion on what Morgan Edwards gives, as a representation of several expressions made by Menno in his writings. I have shown that it is not a fair and candid representation. Whatever conclusion rests upon this foundation, must, therefore, be equally erroneous and deceptive. They, and many others, may be comparatively innocent, or have unintentionally circulated a falsehood; yet I do think they were rather easily persuaded, because they desired it to be so. I cannot but regard the attempt of the Baptists, to identify the Mennonites of the sixteenth century with the present Baptist church, as equally disingenuous, and proceeding from the same motives. We regard the Mennonites of that time as occupying a position which has seldom been equalled, and perhaps never excelled. To be able to point to them as their brethren, is a credit to any church or community. This would make the identity very desirable to the Baptists, and more especially, as it would serve as a link to join them to some other worthy people who preceded them, and whom they claim as brethren, with perhaps as little justice as they do the Mennonites.

To show that they were brethren, they must show that they professed principles, which, if living at the same time, would not have forbidden their joining in fellowship, and as Paul said, make them of the same mind, and speak the same thing. The Mennonites held different tenets which the Baptists reject. They held that oaths, whether judicial or extra-judicial, are forbidden to

Christians ; that they cannot resist evil or injustice, either by civil law or military force ; that no Christian can exercise the office of magistrate under any form of government. This was not to them a matter of indifference, which one could observe or not, according to his own views or faith, as Paul teaches with certain meats, holy days, and things sacrificed to idols. It was with them a principle of life, which they held as being an essential fruit of the Holy Spirit, whose influence it was which taught it to them. They looked upon these as commands of Christ, into which the Holy Spirit would lead them ; and all those who were not thus led, they could not admit as being under His influence, not led by the spirit of Christ, and consequently none of His. They held, that there were amongst the children of men, two kingdoms ; that of this world, and that of Christ. That prior to conversion, all mankind are of the kingdom of this world ; but by conversion, they are translated out of the kingdom of this world, into the kingdom of God's dear Son. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the heart is renewed, and its possessor led to walk in newness of life. They held that, although they were in the world, they were no more of the world ; but it was their duty to obey the powers that be, and made conscience of obeying the powers in all things they required of them, which were not contrary to the commands of Christ. But when any such service was required of them, they held, " we must obey God rather than man."

There are other differences which might be pointed out, but we deem these sufficient for our purpose. All these principles the Baptists utterly repudiate, and Cramp calls them " harmless notions." Dr. Chase says, they are " errors which in a just and free government like ours, might lead to very evil consequences." Cramp further says : " Menno Simon and his friends seem to have forgotten, however, that they were living in the world, and that there were certain duties incumbent on them as members of society." I would first say, they had good reason *not to forget*, " that they were living in the world." The world kept them in constant remembrance of it, by their severe and cruel persecutions ; and both Brown and Chase make Menno say in his renunciation of the Church of Rome : " Whilst the priests lie on soft beds and cushions, we must hide ourselves in secret corners. Whilst they, at all nuptials and christenings, and at other times, make

themselves merry, with fifes, drums and various kinds of music *we must look out for every dog, lest he be one employed to catch us.*"

This work of Menno's was originally written in the Holland or Dutch language, was translated into the German, and from the German into the English, by I. D. Rupp. Funk's translation (recently published) was made from the original language. Both Rupp and Funk, make Menno say, "*We must look out when the dogs bark, lest the captors are at hand.*" The German translation gives the same sense. Whence Cramp and Brown have their rendering, I do not know; but it seems to me, a little better acquaintance with the spirit of Menno, would have shown them the impropriety of using such language, as they put into his mouth. He is thought by many to be severe in his language; but he never calls his enemies dogs. He calls them robbers, murderers, and blood-thirsty tyrants; and severe, as it may sound, it is true; but they were not dogs, and he did not call them so.

In any case, they knew well that they were in the world, and also that they had duties to perform; but they did not recognize those things which Cramp and Chase allude to, as duties. I would ask these worthy men, how an error can become "a harmless notion?" especially when it is in the way of performing our duty, and will lead to evil consequences?

Menno and his brethren, would never have knowingly received any one into the church, who held the doctrine of the Baptists. Nor would they have united with them in worship, or entered their public service. The doctrine they held, would have been to them as a strange voice, which they would not hear; and as not being the doctrine of Christ, they would not have received them into their house, or bid them God-speed, as John teaches. This is so plainly declared in the writings of Menno and his brethren, that I cannot but feel surprise, at the pretension of the Baptists. A brotherhood formed of such incongruous material, could surely not be long maintained.

Cramp seems also not to have been at home amongst the Mennonites, and takes the earliest opportunity presented, to get away from them. The English Baptist church, sprang up about the beginning of the seventeenth century. The first organization mentioned by Cramp is in Amsterdam, whither John Smyth and other Brownists had fled from England, on account of persecution.

If the Mennonites and Baptists were identical in faith and practice, why did Smyth form a new church in the vicinity of an old one, which stood on the true ground and foundation? After the death of Smyth, which took place about the year 1611, Thomas Helwys became his successor, and shortly afterward, he, with most of his members, returned to England; where, on account of persecution, they worshiped privately. From this time Cramp utterly abandons the Mennonites, and follows the Baptists. This is strange, as the Mennonite church was an old organization, and he had before so much admired her virtue, patience, constancy and heroic firmness, under persecution, and whilst she was still under such wholesale proscription, persecution, banishment, imprisonment, torturings and death, as the English Baptists never had to endure. He follows the early emigrants to North America, and records their trials and progress; but is altogether silent about his Mennonite brethren, in their great conflict in Europe, or ever even notices their emigration to North America, how they fared, or what progress they made in the new world.

Is it not fair to conclude that he did not feel himself at home amongst them? He had followed the Mennonites for near a century, with high esteem and admiration, and now abandons them in the midst of a great conflict, and never informs the reader of the issue; or what became of those whom before he so much admired? So soon as the Baptist church is formed, we find its members in the army, and some in mutiny and rebellion. This is the legitimate effect or offspring of "*combative Christianity*." Baptists contend for separation of Church and State. They desire the State shall not interfere with the affairs of the Church, but they seem to have no objection to the Church taking part in State affairs. At the time of the American Revolution, Baptists were numerous in both armies, brother fighting against brother, maiming and killing one another; whereas Christ says we shall love one another, and Paul says, we shall lay down our life for our brother; and even love our enemies, and do good to them. Prominent Baptists joined in Lord Monmouth's rebellion, and a leading minister named Denny, joined the army, and engaged in mutiny. Great numbers joined the army of Cromwell, and boast of their prowess in battle. In our own late rebellion of the southern States against the general government, the Baptists of the south went with the

mass to resist the powers that be, which Paul says are of God's appointment, and they that resist, resist the ordinance of God, and shall receive to themselves damnation. These are the legitimate fruits of the doctrine taught by the Baptists, and are as contrary to the word of God, as persecution and death for opinion's sake.

Baptists speak of a Christian's duty to society; but who is to decide what is his duty? God's word points out our duty unerringly, which is obedience to His commands; but when we, by our weak and erring reason, set aside the plain command of God under the plea of duty, nothing but inconsistency and confusion can be expected to result. Dr. Chase beseeches the Mennonites, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, to let him teach them the way of God more perfectly in some things. I would ask Dr. Chase, or any one of those who hold the Mennonite doctrine in this respect as error, to compare the harmless withdrawal of the Mennonites from the political strife and contention of the world, with its turmoil, wars and fightings, patiently and passively submitting to spoliation of goods and property, liberty and life, without bitterness or railing, but praying for, and doing good in return. Whether they or the Baptists in their political strife, defamation, mutiny, rebellion, and war, present the most striking impress of the Divine image, true Mennonites always feel the necessity of learning; but they must learn of Christ, and what? *Meekness and lowliness of heart.* If the more perfect way which Dr. Chase desires to teach the Mennonites, is to swear and fight, it is strange that he pleads by the *meekness and gentleness of Christ.* There is nothing meek and gentle in fighting; and it would be much more in place, for the Mennonites to plead on these principles with the Baptists, to lay aside their contentious fightings, and wars. Nothing can be more plain than the command of Christ, to love and do good to all men, even our enemies, and not resist evil; and to "swear not at all." Then, when men talk about duties to the community, requiring these things of us, they set their own view or sense of duty above the command of God. Dr. Chase thinks the errors of the Mennonites might lead to very evil consequences, in a government like ours! Why does he not point out the evil consequences that might result? And I would ask, where has there ever any evil consequences followed Mennonite

principles, in this or any other government? and how could they do so? I speak of the principles professed, and so far as I know, carried out by the Mennonites of the sixteenth century. Whenever they do not carry out Mennonite principles, they are not Mennonites, whatever their profession may be, or the name they bear. I would further ask Dr. Chase, whether no evil consequences arise from the Baptist doctrines? Was there no evil consequences arose from the Hewlings' joining the rebellion of Lord Monmouth? And was there no evil consequences followed the mutiny of Henry Denny, a celebrated Baptist preacher, and who still preached afterward as before?

Dr. Chase is right in the assertion, that Mennonites "deny the necessity of university learning for the gospel ministry, but have never denied its usefulness." But if the Mennonites of Amsterdam have established and kept up a *theological college*, they have certainly departed from the profession and principles of their brethren in the sixteenth century. Let any one read what Menno says, on pages 53, 54, 55, and 56, of Funk's complete works, and then judge whether this is not a gross violation of his principles? On page 55, whilst speaking of how preachers are called, he says: "Yes, it was with this calling and sending, that all the prophets, apostles, and servants of God came forth. *They assumed not the honor to themselves*, as do the preachers of this world; but like Aaron, they were called of God, or, as has been said, by the spotless church. They were brought by the Spirit of God, with pious hearts, into His service; they had always esteemed themselves unfit to serve the people of God, or stand forth in such a high and responsible station."

In considering whether university learning is necessary for the gospel ministry, several questions present themselves. First, were there no learned men amongst the disciples of Jesus Christ, who He could have chosen as apostles; secondly, were there no other learned men in the Church besides Paul, in the apostolic age of the Church? Christ seems to have chosen his apostles from a class of people, who were low in the social scale, mostly fishermen, who are generally an illiterate and uncultivated class of people. No doubt, there were men of higher mental culture and literary attainments among His disciples; but He chose these, perhaps in part, because they were of such disposition and quality of heart,

as made them suitable for the purpose for which He designed to use them; and perhaps, also, to serve as a wholesome lesson to us, who are so apt to look to that which is esteemed of men; and that His gospel should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. The stamp of Divine influence, power, and authority, was much more perceptible under the ministry of such men, than it would have been, had He chosen men of learning and eloquence. There is no doubt that there were men in the Church in the apostolic age, who were as learned as Paul, and perhaps in the ministry also; but God had chosen him as an instrument, and endowed him with power, sufficient to accomplish His design. By this God teaches us, that we should neither choose nor reject any one because of his learning, and acquirements, or for his want of them; but because of the measure of spirit he possesses, and the quality of heart which he exhibits in his walk and conversation.

Although we believe that all true gospel teachers are chosen of God, yet it is generally by human instrumentality. The apostles were chosen without any human influence or instrumentality, and the very large majority were not men of learning, but rude and illiterate. They underwent no preparatory process of study to acquaint themselves with letters, but only waited till they were endued with power from on high. The Holy Spirit gave directions how to make choice of ministers, naming some qualities which they should possess, but never one word about literary acquirements; no collegiate education required, neither intimation that they should afterward be prepared by any such education or instruction. The idea, then, of a theological college is not supported by any authority from the Scripture. To educate a man to preach, is not only without command in the Scripture, but there is no encouragement or countenance of such idea. All example and instruction is at variance with collegiate instruction for the ministry of the gospel.

Christ called a number of illiterate men, with one educated, to the apostleship. They all labored, but Paul, who was learned, says, he labored more than all the rest. But this was not because of his learning, but because God had endowed him with special gifts. He says: "Yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me." Paul also says: "He that wrought effectually in Peter

to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles." There is here no superiority claimed because of his learning. The Lord wrought mightily, and to Him all is ascribed. Neither have we any example where Paul made so large a conversion as Peter did at Jerusalem. Paul says: "The gospel which was preached of me is not after man; For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." So we might say also of the other apostles; they were chosen of Christ, and then when they tarried at Jerusalem as commanded, they were endued with power from on high. They were not taught, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. He whom the Lord calls, to them He makes such revelation of Himself and His gospel, as enables them to discharge the calling to which He has called them.

Paul asks: "How can they preach, except they be sent." We might then ask him, by whom must they be sent? Unquestionably by the Lord Himself! They are laborers in the Lord's vineyard; they are His ambassadors; they are His shepherds; they are His stewards; they are His ministers. Who then chooses them but God Himself? It may be done through the church; but if God is not in and with the church, it is not His Church. That which is done by the Church, with which God is and dwells, is done by Himself. But God never chooses His servant, and sends him away to be prepared by man for His service. And who is he, or who are they, who set themselves up to be theological teachers, to prepare workmen for the Lord? Is it not presumption? a bringing down, or degrading of God's ministry to a level with secular callings, or natural sciences? Christ said to His disciples, when they are led before rulers and kings, they shall take no thought what they shall speak, nor premeditate; but whatsoever shall be given them in that hour, they shall speak; for it is not you that speaketh, but the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the porter that openeth the door of utterance to the shepherd; and he preaches with demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

The calling by the church of one to minister in the Word, or preach the gospel, is a very weighty duty, and one that is never lightly entered into, but with feelings of great solemnity; with prayer, supplication, and earnest entreaty, that the Lord shall direct the work. Jesus Christ said: "Pray the Lord of the

harvest to send laborers." Every child of God feels its importance; and knowing their own weakness, and how easily some carnal influence might prevail, they greatly fear and pray the Lord to direct the choice. No man also taketh this calling upon himself lightly, but with great fear, trembling, and earnest prayer to God, lest they should run, and God had not sent them, as the Lord said by Jeremiah: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran."

But how is it with these theological schools and colleges? Parents, guardians and friends send their youths to be educated for the ministry, because they think they have suitable qualifications, or as a calling by which they may gain distinction. Or, perhaps, some youth feels such inclination himself, and makes such choice; but verily the operation of the Holy Spirit would send them to another source than these schools, to receive qualification for such a high and holy calling. How can parents know that God will call their son? Not every one who has gifts to speak, or can preach, is called of God to do so. God does not see as partial parents and friends do. All the sons of Jesse were made to pass before the prophet, before David, the little one, was thought of.

God is abundantly able to qualify His servants for their work, without any human instrumentality; of which the success of Peter and the rest of the apostles gives evidence; and Paul also, though he was learned, bears evidence that it was not by this he prevailed. He says: "My speech and my preaching, was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power. That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." If God had not opened the heart of Lydia, to what purpose would Paul's speech have been, however eloquent and learned? When Paul and Barnabas so spake at Iconium, that great multitudes both of Jews and Greeks believed, it was not because of the learned manner of their address, but by the power of the spirit which was in them.

In the time of the reformation, everywhere these learned and talented men, with all the advantages of schools, colleges and universities, could not attain to true spiritual light. The persecuting spirit; the carnal, selfish language which would escape their lips in times of temptation; the carnal and sensual lives of their disciples

and followers, all showed that their hearts were not renewed, nor their minds spiritually enlightened. This Luther experienced of his followers toward the close of his life, as we have already related.

The poor illiterate Mennonites, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, clearly saw that a child of God could not persecute; that they could not walk and live after the flesh; that in meekness and humility they must follow their Saviour on the narrow way of self-denial, leading such pious and Christian lives, that even their enemies had to bear testimony, that they were blameless. Their ministry possessed qualities, which university learning and theological colleges could not give the great reformers. What good, then, comes of their great learning? If their churches were not so pure, members not so pious and devoted, not so meek and self-denying, what good comes of the great learning of their preachers? No doubt they are greater speakers, display more eloquence and ingenuity; but if it is not by the influence of the Spirit, it may tickle the ear, but will not warm the heart, or satisfy the hungry soul.

A little reflection upon the object of the ministry, and then a little reflection upon what our experience teaches us, must convince every one, that there is something requisite in a preacher of the gospel, which no learning or natural qualification can supply. I have already observed, that the great learning and ability of Luther, did not enable him to preserve his flock in that Divine and Spiritual state, which the New Testament teaches, that alone gives promise. This was equally true of all the other popular reformers. They had large churches; but this is not the object of the ministry. What would it profit a shepherd, if he had a large flock, but they were all wolves or goats? The object of the shepherd is, to take care of, and keep his sheep. So, also, the minister; his first care is, to feed and take care of the lambs and sheep of Christ. Our experience now teaches us the same thing. Those large congregations of the learned and popular ministers, are generally not a whit better than non-professors. If we look to the fruits, which Christ bids us do, we see there as much pride, as much envy, as much variance, emulation, and strife, as we do in the non-professors. I know there are also many unlearned ministers, whose flocks are no better. It is not the learning which produces the effect; it is the want of the Spirit; but where the

teacher possesses the Spirit, his flock will walk on the narrow way of self-denial, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, whether the minister is a university scholar, or not. The proof is patent to every one that desires it, that university learning cannot qualify a man to preach the gospel; and it is also equally patent to every one, that those destitute of it, may fill the office of minister, effectually. Why will any one then say, it is necessary? The idea of the theological schools, and studying for the ministry, takes from God the choice of his servants. At the best, it is dictating to God, whom He shall choose. If it is said, the inclination, or feeling in the party to engage in the ministry, is evidence of God's calling, then it takes away the dependence on God, and places it in human wisdom and learning.

We, therefore, with the old Mennonites of the sixteenth century, "deny the necessity of university learning for the ministry of the gospel," and unhesitatingly declare, that, if the Mennonites of Amsterdam have established an ecclesiastical college, for the education of their ministers, they have departed from the ground held and maintained by Menno and his brethren of his day; and that, in so doing, they have introduced an innovation which is without precept or example in the gospel of Christ, and foreign and contrary to its spirit. No one can know before they are called of God to preach, whether they ever will be called or not; and those whom the Lord does call. He desires shall obey and preach, trusting in Him who has called them, for qualification; and not go to schools to obtain it.

Dr. Chase, in the letter noticed in the "Life and Times of Menno," speaks of the diversities of opinion which have prevailed amongst the Mennonites, and the errors into which many have fallen. This view, we think, arises from an imperfect knowledge of what Menno and his brethren of the sixteenth century held, and practiced. They held that the church must be a united, pure, body; or it could not be the Church of Christ. If any one embraced perverted views, or was unwilling to bring his body under, and keep it in subjection to the gospel rule, or obedience to Christ, they were not tolerated as members of the body. These restless spirits would sometimes rise up against the church and take some adherents with them; as Paul told the elders of the church of Ephesus, saying, "For I know this, that after my departure shall grievous

wolves enter in among you, *not sparing the flock*. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Those who would thus withdraw, would still claim to be followers of Christ; and after the death of Menno, claimed to be Mennonites. There are at present four or five different associations in our own county, who claim to be Mennonites; and we could name perhaps as many more, out of the county; but this does not prove diversities of opinion to exist amongst true Mennonites, any more than the different sects which sprang up in, or shortly after the apostles' times, prove diversities of opinion to have existed among the Christians of their day.

Paul writes to the Corinthian church, beseeching them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that they all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and the same judgment. To the Roman church, Paul writes, beseeching them to mark such as caused divisions and offenses, and avoid them. This teaching of the apostle is in perfect agreement with what Christ prayed His Heavenly Father for His disciples, John xvii. If Christ laid down a certain rule, on which conditions we may become His disciples, and be included in His prayer, then certainly all those who reject the conditions, and deny His word, cannot be disciples or members of His church; whatever they may profess themselves. If the church stood firm, and marked those who caused divisions and offenses, no matter how many of them they were, they still continued to be the United Christian Church, and there could never be any other. There is no doubt, the faithful followers of Paul marked, and withdrew from the contentious, and avoided them. Hymenius and Philetus, in Paul's own day, overthrew the faith of some; and Hymenius and Alexander made shipwreck of faith, and He gave them over to Satan to learn not to blaspheme. Again, John, in Revelations, speaks of a sect of Nicolaitanes, who are said to have called themselves Christians. This, with what the apostles speak of taking place after their times, shows that it has ever been the case, that in the church such separations would take place; but the true church will still be united. If they marked, and avoided those who caused offenses and divisions, they were no more of the church, and it remained pure, united and blameless; whatever the others taught, practiced, or

called themselves, did not affect them. This is the ground the Mennonites held ; and though spirits rose up amongst them, and taught perverse things, if they marked and avoided them, they could in justice no more be called Mennonites, than those dividing and contentious spirits could be called Christians, in the apostolic times. These called themselves Christians, and no doubt Gentile historians would have said, the Christians hold diversities of opinion ; whereas the true Christian doctrine held, that there could be no divisions, and that they all should be of the same mind, and speak the same thing.

It may be proper here to say, that the Church of Christ is peculiarly liable to have contentions and divisions spring up in it, more so than any other association of people, and the true church more than any sect, or, as we might say, false church ; for the reason, that the true church is founded on the principle of *self-denial*. Persons creep into the true church, who have never been converted ; consequently they become restive under the restraint imposed upon them ; others have never been so fully dead to self, as they were supposed to be ; and others again give way by degrees, to that life of self which they had once died to ; this, therefore, obtaining life, seeks gratification. Because the doctrine, rules and discipline of the church, together with the influences by which they are surrounded, strikes at the very root of all such gratification and enjoyment, they will begin to quibble at one or another point of doctrine ; which spirit, by indulgence, grows stronger, until a dividing or contentious spirit is begotten. With sects and false churches, this is not so. They may embrace some self-denying points of doctrine, but they never can cover the whole ground. They still leave something for the life of self to enjoy, and self-love is of such a nature, that it will bear restriction in one point, if it only can have life in some other direction. But where the whole ground is covered, that it can have no enjoyment anywhere, it requires constant dying, and mortification, to prevent a quibbling spirit from arising. But where it only need not die altogether, there it is content to abide.

However much contention may have arisen, or how many divisions may have sprung up, the Church of God still remained the same thing. It remained united, pure and blameless, without spot or wrinkle. The Mennonites held this as their fundamental

principle; and, although we know that many did fall away, and drew parties after them, and called themselves Mennonites, the true Mennonites still stood, without diversity of opinion. And though in time the main body became lax in their faith and practice, and finally became wholly leavened, they were then no more entitled to the name of Mennonite, than the Catholic church was, to the title of the "Holy Catholic or Apostolic Church," which it still claimed, after its shameful apostacy. So long as the main body was pure and unpolluted, they could expel, or put away from them such as were offensive; but when once the mass became defiled, the true hearts existing amongst them could no longer do this; and nothing remained for them, but separate themselves. Come out from amongst them, says Paul, and touch not the unclean thing. And in Revelations, the Spirit says, come out of Babylon, my people, that ye partake not of their sins, and receive of their plagues.

Thus with the Apostolic Church; so long as the mass or lump was unleavened, no matter how many sprung up around her, or separated themselves from her, she still stood as the pure and chaste bride and spouse of Christ. But when at last she herself turned harlot, there was nothing remaining for the faithful, but to withdraw from the mass; and however few, or however despised and persecuted they were, they were still the true Church and spouse of Christ. In this light we look upon the Mennonite church. We deem them to have been the true united Church of Christ. At first small and inconsiderable in number, they grew and finally became numerous. First, disputers and dissenters arose amongst them, but such they put away, and avoided them, as Paul teaches, until finally the mass became defiled; they no more purged out the leaven, withdrew from the disorderly, or avoided those who caused offenses; and then the faithful, to avoid contamination, had to withdraw themselves from the body.

The idea, that the Church of Christ *is* divided, and that there are diversities of opinion amongst Christians, has become popular. The whole world, as we may say, has received it; and not only the heathen nations would say, the Christians hold diversities of opinion, but those professing to be Christians, and calling themselves such, say it. Looking at the Mennonites in this light, or view, Dr. Chase may well and truly say, they hold divers opinions.

But we hold that no one can fairly, or justly claim a distinctive name, when they reject the doctrine, and violate the principles which gave that name distinction. On this ground we claim that many who call themselves Mennonites, do so unjustly, and we believe no one can dispute the position.

I have already adverted to the testimony of Dr. Ypeij, and J. J. Dermont, to the character of the Mennonites of Holland and Zealand; and I believe wherever known, they have the reputation of being good citizens, and faithful in all the relations of life. So far as I know, the testimony of Ypeij and Dermont, that the Mennonites "are among the most worthy citizens the State ever had," is still due to any and all sects, *claiming* to be Mennonites. They are, wherever I have knowledge of them, as a class, moral, industrious, frugal, and upright. In their dealings with their neighbors, and the community, they are just and faithful. There may be individual exceptions, but I speak of them as communities.

But Menno Simon held, that this does not make Christians. A person may be all this, and not even *profess* to be a Christian, which every one can say of numbers of his neighbors. We cannot be Christians, without being good citizens; but we may be good citizens, and even very religious, and not be Christians "*indeed.*" To be a Christian *indeed*, we must possess the Spirit of Christ, and as a fruit of the Spirit, obey what He has commanded us.

This was the doctrine held by Menno, and according to the best testimony we can obtain, we think he and his brethren of his day, tried faithfully to follow; and as the doctrine of Christ and His apostles, taught them to purge the Church of all leaven, they felt themselves constrained to put away from their communion and fellowship, all wicked, disorderly, and disobedient members. If they were even moral in their general demeanor, but would not obey the gospel commands, such as separating from all false worship, or withdrawing themselves from disorderly brethren, or other like gospel duties, they could not hold them as brethren. By this means they not only kept their Church free from gross immoralities, but free from spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and blameless, as Paul teaches in the fifth of Ephesians. Thinking that by knowingly tolerating impure and sinful members, they would make themselves partakers of their sins, they zealously purged the Church of all that was disobedient and offensive.

It was a fundamental feature in their doctrine, that the worship of any people who were disobedient to, or rejected the teaching of Christ and His apostles, must be false, and idolatrous; for which reason they refused to worship with, or be present at the service of the Catholics, or any of the Reformed churches, whose lives were carnal, and after the flesh; and who upheld doctrines which they conceived was contrary to what Christ and the apostles taught. In this they were so conscientious, that we find instances mentioned in the "Martyr's Mirror," where during the persecution in Switzerland, in the seventeenth century, the reformed offered to liberate them from prison, if they would go with them into their church services; but they preferred to remain in prison, and suffer all things, rather than violate their conscience, by doing what they considered was contrary to the teaching of Christ and the apostles.

If this, then, was considered a vital principle, and formed a fundamental part and distinctive feature of their doctrine, can any one complain, or wonder, that we refuse to recognize such as Mennonites, who reject these distinctive features, no matter from whence they claim their origin, or whether they do in some other features, approximate them in some of their doctrines?

It may seem to some that we have more frequently used the name of Menno, and the word Mennonite, than is altogether comely; and perhaps if we had made it our study, we might have used them more seldom; but we desired to make ourselves understood, and this seemed the way we could best attain our end. I regret very much that such names are at all necessary, but under certain circumstances, it cannot well be avoided. Christ is our only head, the sole author of our salvation; our Captain, Lord and Master, whom we alone must follow and obey. But we regard Menno as His faithful ambassador, who more than any other author with whom I am acquainted, conformed his views with the Word of God. For his firm adhesion to the Word of God, he and his brethren suffered as few men have ever done; yet they endured all meekly and patiently, but firmly and heroically. We believe their views and motives were scriptural, and their walk, so far as we can learn, was consistent. So many of them sealed their testimony with their own blood, that we deem their views worthy of high esteem, and most serious regard. But the Word

of God must be the rule, by which all men, and all authorities must be measured.

Between the zealous labors of the ministry, and the severe persecutions they suffered, the Mennonites were scattered over most of the European countries; and although there may from time to time small parties have separated from the main body, or the church been constrained to expel parties from their fellowship, who departed from their principles, yet the main body, so far as we can learn from their writings, remained steadfast, and faithful to their doctrine, till near the close of the seventeenth century. They seem not to have been concerned about transmitting a history of their proceedings and progress to posterity. Most of their writings were designed to support certain points of doctrine, but a history of their acts and proceedings, or of their progress, we find little that is reliable.

As the Mennonites of the eighteenth century departed very widely from the faith and practice of their brethren of the sixteenth century, different divisions occurred amongst them, and separate organizations took place, whose communities still exist, but profess to adhere to the doctrine of Menno. The largest body of dissenters, of which I have knowledge, are called Omish or Amish, after the originator of their society. Another considerable body are called "Sweitzer Mennonites." These also profess to maintain the doctrine and principles of Menno and his brethren of the sixteenth century. Of the time when these divisions took place, or the particular circumstances which brought them about, I am not acquainted, and deem it unimportant. In numbers, both these parties are considerable, at the present time. In dress, manners and mode of life, they are plain and simple; the Omish especially so. They are generally frugal, economical, and industrious; hence they enjoy moderate prosperity, and are generally considered honest, upright and good citizens. Their religion consists chiefly in certain external duties and ceremonies, together with certain ordinances, in which they manifest little spirit or life. In regard to society, they are generally isolated, and their social intercourse, carnal and light-minded. The youthful portion engage in plays and amusements, of a nature calculated alone to gratify the flesh.

There are in our country, different small bodies calling them-

selves Mennonites, which have chiefly separated from what is known as "*The Old Mennonites*," being a continuation of the old organization, of the sixteenth century. There may also be other dissenting parties who separated from them in Europe, of whom I have no knowledge.

These different communities all claiming to be, and calling themselves Mennonites, may in a great measure account for the conflicting accounts historians give of this church. So long as they protested against all denominations of Christians, who in doctrine and practice did not agree with the gospel teaching, they brought upon themselves the enmity of all parties around them, and they were grossly misrepresented, reviled and slandered. But when they began to court their friendship, and unite with them in worship, this hatred ceased, and notice of them by historians was in a more friendly spirit; but representations from any of these sources, cannot convey an idea of the principles and life of the Mennonites of the sixteenth, and early part of the seventeenth centuries; which we regard as alone the true spirit and life which Menno and his brethren maintained, and suffered so much for upholding. But whatever either enemies, misinformed friends, or those under misconceptions, may have said of them, their doctrine is one which certainly cannot be injurious to any one, and a more humble, self-denying, and harmless doctrine, has never been professed by any body of men upon earth.

It was the doctrine of Christ, and no improvement can be made upon it. It brings peace and joy to every heart that embraces it, and this peace no one can take away. The martyrs proved, that no imprisonment, scourging, racking, torturing, or even death, could take this peace from them. They were in the world, but were not of the world; the world hated them, but they knew that it hated their master before it hated them.

CHAPTER VI.

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. xviii. 4.

By the preceding chapters of this work, it will be perceived what our views are, of what constitutes a true Church of God: That a Church cannot be composed of unregenerated persons, and that no one can be regenerate, and at the same time disobedient to the commands of the gospel. Those who are regenerated receive the Holy Spirit, and are led by it; and this Spirit cannot lead any one differently from what the Word teaches. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one, and God's Word is spirit and life; therefore the Holy Spirit must always lead His possessors in accordance with the Word of God. The Word of God commands the children of God, to try the spirits, and to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. Those then whom the Lord thus commands to try the spirits, and prove all things, must have a standard or rule whereby to judge, or their judgment would not agree. On this principle the early Mennonites held, that there could be but one Church, and this a united one; and that if the Holy Spirit leads the Church, then among those churches and people who disagree, there *must* be different spiritual influences guiding them. If the Holy Spirit was not with them, it could not be the Church, for it could not be that the Holy Spirit would lead one in one way, and another in another way. Christ has said, this Spirit would lead the believer into all truth. When Luther held that the body and blood of Christ was in the bread and wine of the Eucharist, and Zwingli contradicted it, they were certainly not both in the truth. One of these positions was not true; and it could not have been the Holy Spirit, which led the one who was in error, into this error. When the chief reformers, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli, all held that infant baptism is a divine institution, and Menno Simon and his brethren, held that it is contrary to the command of Christ, and an idolatrous institution, they certainly could not all be right, and all in the truth! They could not all be led by the same Spirit into

these different beliefs. So likewise with regard to election and reprobation, and with regard to resisting evil, use of the sword, oaths, and the union of Church and State. These diverse views held by these different parties, could not be the teaching of one and the same spirit. This is a truth which is as self-evident as any truth in philosophy. These ideas were not all true, and those which were erroneous, must have been led by a foreign or strange spirit. But modern nominal Christianity is willing to accord a true Christian spirit or principle to all these, however opposite they may be to each other. But in doing so, must we not reject the declaration of Christ, and take our own reason as guide?

When Christ has said that the Holy Spirit will lead us into all truth, and we see that some one is manifestly in error, must we not conclude that they are not, and cannot be, led by this Spirit? We must, therefore, either abandon the position that Christ laid down, that the Holy Spirit *will* lead us into all truth, or else the idea that these different parties can all be led by this Holy Spirit. In admitting all these, then, to be Churches of God, we must either abandon the idea that the Holy Spirit is an essential necessity in the Church, or else that He will do what Christ says He shall, namely, lead His possessor into all truth. We cannot hold both these positions to be true, namely, that the Holy Spirit must be with the Church, and that He leads into all truth, unless we deny that these different parties can all be Churches.

I hope the kind reader will pardon my warmth and earnestness. The matter under consideration is one of such infinite importance and weight, that we cannot, with sufficient earnestness and power, impress it upon the minds of our fellow-travelers to eternity. I beg of every one to pause, and ask himself whether he is in the way of truth or error. The religion of Jesus Christ never was popular. Whenever religious ideas become popular, we have reason to fear there is delusion connected with it. We know that mankind have been deluded, fearfully and awfully deluded, and why? Because they did not prove their doctrine and religion by the Word of God. Do, therefore, I beseech you, reader, diligently and prayerfully compare the popular idea referred to with the Word of God, but be careful that the understanding which God has given you be free and untrammelled. Take heed that carnal reason does not captivate it; but, as Paul says, take every thought captive under obedience to Christ.

On the ground referred to, the Mennonites rejected the pretension of these different sects, to the claim of being Churches; and treated them and their members, as being of the unconverted world. It may be objected, that this position was unjustifiable, inasmuch as they would hereby make themselves judges, which Christ forbids. But can a church at all be conducted without this same judgment? and do not all churches exercise this same judgment, in receiving and expelling members? Besides, it must be remembered that Christ does give the authority, and also commands His disciples to do so, where he says, "beware of false prophets, by their fruits ye shall know them." The rejection of the plain commands of Christ and the apostles, they looked upon as a fruit which was not good gospel fruit, and sufficient evidence that they did not possess the true love of God.

It does seem strange, that commands so plain, as that we shall not resist evil, but overcome evil with good; and that we shall swear not at all, etc., could be understood in any other way than the plain sense of the word. They surely would do so, if they would take their carnal thoughts and reasoning captive under the obedience of Christ. But these are in the way of the gratification of the flesh and the mind, and this offers a strong motive for people to seek to construe them into such meaning as will suit their desires; and when this is the case, they will always find some pretext, by which to justify it.

I hope the reader will excuse our frequent reference to the subject of persecution. We desire to exercise the understanding and reasoning faculties of the reader, and it sometimes requires strong points to do so. All, I suppose, will agree, that man cannot at the same time possess, and be under the influence of the Divine, or Holy Spirit, and that of the infernal, or Spirit of Darkness.

I would then ask, is there any one in our day, who would uphold the idea, that the Holy Spirit would lead one person to persecute another, for the sake of his religious opinions? Is there any one who would pretend, that the Holy Spirit would lead one person to imprison, rack, banish, torture, drown, burn alive, or decapitate another, whose only offense was, that they did not believe and act in religion as certain others do? Such persecution is now unpopular; but there was a time when the most popular religionists known, advocated it. Certainly no one now will contend that it was right *then*. I do not know that there is

any account on record of any civilized nations or people treating their fellow creatures for any cause, for such a length of time, as these poor, helpless and defenseless people were, who were guilty of no crime, but often had the testimony of their own enemies, that they were worthy, virtuous and good citizens. Such outrages on humanity, certainly could have been prompted by no other, than the infernal spirit itself. Could the infernal spirit and the Divine Spirit then both have been leading these people at the same time? Could a person *now* be considered a Christian, who would do so? If not now, how could those persons then have been? Those, then, who countenanced, encouraged and advised it, must have been instigated to it by the murderous and destructive spirit of the Devil; and yet our modern Christians, who boast of the light of the nineteenth century, call them great and good men, exemplary Christians, and their associations, Churches of Christ! It is true, the longest persecution, and perhaps the most bloody, was perpetrated by the Catholics; but the leading reformers of England, of Germany, and Switzerland, also countenanced and encouraged it.

Because the great parties in the reformation, all, more or less, countenanced these atrocities, besides other unchristian works and practices, the Mennonites could not so far countenance their pretensions to be worshipers of the true God, as to unite with them, or take any part with them in worship. They held that carnal, sensual persons, living after the flesh, in pride and wantonness, strife and contention, envy or hatred, or in vain talking and amusements, could not possess the Holy Spirit, and consequently, could not be fit subjects for the kingdom of Heaven. They held, that the Church of God was established for the mutual edification, comfort and support of believers, and that all, or everything of a carnal nature or character, must have the contrary effect; and for this reason, association with such as were carnal and sensual, or any unconverted person, must tend to the destruction of the Divine life in believers.

The Divine life, begotten in the soul of the believer, by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit, is what God desires to protect and preserve; because without this all religion is vain, and all religious ordinances, duties, and performances, are utterly worthless. The Church itself, with all its ordinances, is designed

to preserve, foster and strengthen this life. But that which is of a carnal nature, is opposed to the Holy Spirit, and destructive of its influence; and therefore God has commanded this destructive element to be purged from, or out of the Church. All the commands to the individual, are, to resist, purge from the heart, and die to every thing of this nature; and the directions to the Church are the same. Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump; put away from among you that wicked person; withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly; and who ever will not obey our word by this epistle, note them, and have no company with them. Mark those who cause divisions and contentions, and avoid them; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them. If any man errs, restore them, in the spirit of meekness, ye that are spiritual. These are direct commands of the Apostle Paul, dictated by the Holy Spirit; and if we love God, we will surely obey, or keep them. Christ makes obedience a test of our love, and it is vain that we profess, or pretend to love Him, whilst we are walking contrary to His commands. Christ said: "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," and "he that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me." Again: "He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings." (John 14th.) As Christ Himself makes obedience an evidence of love, it must be clear, that where there is not obedience, there can be no true divine love.

As the reformed churches did not regard the commandments of the Lord, the Mennonites could not regard them as being under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit; and, consequently, could not be Churches of God. If they were not under the influence of the *Holy Spirit*, they must have been under the guidance of some foreign spirit, and, consequently, opposing the work of Christ, and necessarily anti-christian and idolatrous. For this reason they refused to join in worship with them, or in any way to do anything, which would have the appearance of recognizing their worship, as Divine service. They shunned them as a reproof of their idolatry, and to lay off a testimony against them.

This principle and its practice, brought down upon the Mennonites the envy and hatred of those professors against whom they thus protested; and in their case, the saying of Christ, that all men should hate His disciples, was verified. Paul says: He

that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution. After the authorities forbade the molestation of the Mennonites, the hatred and persecuting spirit still continued, with many; and for a long time, strenuous efforts were made to induce the authorities to refuse to tolerate these people amongst them.

The Mennonites adhered firmly to these principles, throughout the sixteenth, and until near, or perhaps altogether, the close of the seventeenth century. But when the rod of persecution was withdrawn, they seem soon to have cooled in their ardor, and devotion to God. Charity, or love, is said to be the bond of perfection. But to be this, it must be pure, unmixed, or unadulterated. So long as it existed in fervency, so long these people esteemed the love and favor of God, above the favor of men; so long, also, they were steadfast in their obedience to God. But when the love of self, or of the world, began to insinuate itself too much, then the love of God abated, and this finally led to disobedience. They certainly did not intend to forsake the Lord, or to depart from His truth; but, when a love that is foreign to the Divine nature, does too much insinuate itself into the heart, the love of God will proportionately abate. The love of God makes the enmity of the world easy to be borne; but as this love abates, the enmity of the world seems more grievous, and its friendship more enticing and desirable. This leads to debate within ourselves, with regard to the necessity, or propriety, of self-denial, or at least, the extent to which it should be carried. The question arises, whether these denials, or strict non-conformity, are necessary, and as the flesh, and our carnal reason, so readily coincides with such insinuations of Satan, we may very easily be ensnared and captivated. All the time we would, in truth, rather give up all that is in the world, and our own life also, than to forsake the Lord; and are not aware that we are already too much forsaking Him.

Nothing so much provokes the enmity of the world, as to testify of her works, that they are evil. This provoked the Jews to such a bitter hatred of the Saviour, who had done so much good before their eyes, and never done anything but good; but for this simple reason they hated Him unto death. Even He had to be tempted, through one of His dear disciples, to be more sparing in His denunciations, and He would escape their persecutions. (Math. xvi.)

(The German version renders the approach of Peter more plain, than the English.) When this spirit gains ascendancy, it will lead to silence on those points which are offensive to the world; and, finally, to the countenance, encouragement, and support of such ideas and things as will please the world, and elicit its admiration and applause. In this way the enemy, in times of peace and prosperity, insinuates himself; and finally, darkness overtakes the soul, and walking in darkness, they know not whither they go. Thus it seems to have gone with this glorious Mennonite church, which God had so highly glorified, and adorned with the Divine virtues, and so abundantly ministered unto her an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This glory Satan, with all his persecutions, imprisonments, torturings, fire, sword and rack, could not dim the lustre of. But by the enticing charms of the world, she was finally induced, like Samson, to lay her head in the lap of this enchanting Delilah.

This could not occur, without full and sufficient warning. The Saviour had said, the Holy Spirit would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said unto them, and would lead them into all truth. So the Lord must have raised the voice of warning and protestation, either by an inward emotion of the soul, or by the voice of some humble but faithful member of the body. But the warning voice was not heeded, and finally they fell into the snare of the devil.

I have already alluded to the fact, that liberty of conscience in worship was allowed in the Netherlands for a considerable time, before it was granted to Switzerland and some parts of Germany. According to the writer of the preface to the second part of the "Martyr's Mirror," evidences of the decline of Divine love in the hearts of some of the members soon became manifest, after full liberty was allowed them. This did not appear, from what he says, to have yet been productive of any particular violation of the commands of Christ, but only symptoms of abatement of the love of God in the soul. This seems to be the beginning of the decline of the Divine work. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," says the Saviour, so that it seems there must be an abatement of love, before the commands of Christ will be violated, either in the individual or the Church. It was so with the Church of Ephesus. They were yet blameless in regard to their

outward walk, when the Spirit sent the message to them ; but the love was too much lost, and, unless they would repent and do the first works, the Lord said He would take away their candlestick.

I am not aware of any history in which the time is particularly indicated when the church began in her doctrine, or practice, to depart from the principles held by Menno, and his brethren of the sixteenth century. We find in some histories, that considerable dissension had occurred on account of the avoidance of those who were by the church placed in excommunication, and some schisms had taken place in consequence. Menno, in his time, had written admonitory epistles to his brethren on this subject ; but from what I can find, I think the body of the church was still firm on this ground for a long time. They did finally abandon it, but at what time I cannot ascertain. They also in time abandoned the doctrine of shunning the worship of those who they could not recognize as brethren.

In a book of sermons, by Jacob Denner ; who was born at Hamburg in 1659, and was elected to the ministry in 1684, at Altona, near Hamburg, and died in 1746 ; in the introduction, giving a short sketch of his life, the author says, to his praise, that he held, that God has His people in every nation and amongst all religions. That God may have His people in every nation, the Mennonites never denied ; but that amongst all religions, or, as I suppose he means, all sects of professors of religion, is at variance with the doctrine of Menno and his brethren, who so earnestly protested against the possibility, that light could have communion with darkness. The author says, this doctrine of Denner's, was not very acceptable to such members and churches, as desire to limit the everlasting love of God, and assume to themselves a preference of salvation. It is not unlikely that these " members and churches " were some of his own brethren in other parts, and if so, shows how the warning voice was raised.

I do not design here to enter into argument on this subject, one way or the other, but merely to show, that it was contrary to the doctrine of the early Mennonites. For evidence of this, I will refer the reader to the complete works of Menno, part first, pages 52, 61, 66, and in part second, page 264, besides many writers in the " Martyr's Mirror."

If this doctrine prevailed generally, at the time when Jacob

Denner began to preach, in the year 1684, then we may believe, that at the time the first Mennonites emigrated to this country, which is said to have been in 1683, then they had at that time already departed somewhat from the true principles of their brethren of the preceding century. But as the first Mennonite emigrants came from countries where they were oppressed at the time, it may be that they were yet more pure in faith, than those who lived in the Netherlands, where they had enjoyed religious liberty for a considerable time before. But I have heard old people express doubts, whether the first Mennonites who emigrated to this country, had not already at the time, somewhat departed from the principles which Menno and his brethren held.

Be this as it may, they called themselves Mennonites, and maintained an organization, which was called the Mennonite church, and maintained at least some of the doctrine and practices of the old Mennonites. This organization has been kept up, and descended to us under the same name and profession. But whether they were in the true faith or not when they first came to this country, it is well known to those who are acquainted with the doctrine of Menno, and are at all conversant with the history and affairs of the Mennonites of this country, that they had very widely departed from the faith and practice of Menno and his brethren, long before the close of the eighteenth century. This many of their own members freely acknowledged in the early part of the present century. Whether they would do so now or not, I do not know.

The work on which we are engaged makes it necessary to speak of this "Old Mennonite church," in a way which we would very willingly forbear to do, did not necessity require it of us. We hold that Christ established but one Church, and that He can have but one. Adam had but one Eve, and Abraham but one Sarah. God had but one Israel, which had but one Jerusalem, and one temple. So Christ has but one spouse, and we nowhere find any figure representing more than one united Church; and if the Church is the body of Christ, there can be no schism in it; for a kingdom divided against itself cometh to nought, and a house divided against itself cannot stand.

The apostles built that church in the beginning, according to the command of Christ, as a house, or home, for His children to

dwell in. Had it been built, or established differently from His command, it would not have been His Church, but a human institution, as all other organizations of man are. The Holy Spirit, which this organization possessed, was what made it the Church, or spouse of Christ. Wheresoever this Spirit had His abode, there was the Church of Christ; but He could not dwell in an unclean, sinful, and disobedient body. When our natural body dies, the Spirit does not die; it remains the same as it was before, but the body is dead, because the spirit has departed from it. Thus, the Holy Spirit is what gives life to the Church, and wherever the Holy Spirit is, there is the Church, and that is God's house, and the home of His children. When that organization, which was a continuation of what the apostles had formed, became unbelieving and disobedient, the Holy Spirit no more dwelt with it, and it became a dead body, nothing different from any other human organization, however long it might have continued in existence. But the Church of God was not extinct. Wheresoever two or three were met together in the name of Christ, there He was in the midst of them by His Spirit; and here was the Church of God; and these were united, and one with all others in the world, for they were, by the Spirit which they possessed, baptized into one body, and were made one heart and one soul. Thus, though this particular organization lost the Spirit and life which made it a Church, the Church was not extinguished, nor lost. Though this organization continued many centuries, it lost every mark, evidence or character of its original divine nature. However many such organizations took place in different parts and ages of the world, so long as they were true and faithful believers, the life-giving Spirit abode with them; but when they would become unbelieving and disobedient, the Spirit would forsake that body, and however long the organization and form of worship might be kept up, it would nevertheless be but a spiritless, dead body.

In this light we look upon the "Old Mennonite church." We believe it was once the Church of Christ, possessed of the Holy life-giving Spirit, and so continued for many years; but as it had gone with the Roman church, (which was the continuation of the first organization,) it became unbelieving, disobedient, lost the Spirit, and with this the marks or evidence of the Divine

nature. As such it had come down to the people of our country at the close of the eighteenth, and beginning of the present century.

The originators of the organization, known as the "Reformed Mennonite church," held, that Menno Simon and his brethren of his day, held sound and orthodox doctrine; and that the church which bore his name at that time, was the pure, true, and united Church of Christ. To justify the course they took in forming a new organization, it became their duty at the time, to show that the Mennonite church of their day, whose organization had descended from this recognized church, had become apostate, or a spiritless, dead body. This they freely did at the time, which brought them much enmity from many sources.

From all the evidences I can gather, I believe they were right in their judgment. They looked upon the members of this church, as unconverted, carnal people of the world, as all non-professors are. We propose to show this from evidence which I have never heard contradicted, nor do I believe it can be. We will give traditional evidence, of persons who lived amongst them, and saw and knew what they related; then written evidence, of persons of unquestionable character for truth; and lastly, my own observation of what I seen, heard and know.

From such persons as were friendly to the church, I learned in my early youth, that at the time alluded to, viz: the latter part of the last, and the beginning of the present century, the members of the church were, in regard to inward or spiritual life, as ignorant, cold and dead as any carnal, unconverted person could be. It was the custom generally, that when their children would grow up to the years of maturity, they were baptized, and received into the church; that their preachers or teachers were altogether inexperienced, and ignorant in spiritual matters; and, as a consequence, their preparatory instruction, and examination, was a mere matter of form. Their birth might be said to be of blood; that is, from natural descent or generation. They had neither the knowledge of sin, or righteousness. Their parents belonged to the church, and they were told they should also be joined to it. There was nothing in the step which forbade the enjoyment of what the flesh could have life and gratification in, and they generally agreed to the proposition of the parents. The natural result of such a course, was a carnal, cold and senseless religion. The public service

was generally cold and formal, and private religious exercises was something almost unknown. They had their amusements and pastimes in rustic sports and plays, telling stories, jesting and making fun generally. They were generally what the world accounts moral, industrious, frugal and honest. But as there are always dispositions which tend to extravagance in conduct and behavior, there were not wanting many instances, where the conduct rather exceeded the bounds of propriety; but there were so many precedents where these were passed over without notice, that they had to be very flagrant, if any notice was taken of them by the church authorities; and if notice was taken of them, it was often in a mere formal manner, which excited more merriment and sport in the church, than grief and sorrow. At that time, spirituous liquor was more freely used in all families than at present; and inebriation was a thing not at all uncommon, and had to be very aggravated, if any notice was taken of it. Cases were related to me, where members got outrageously disorderly, and no notice was taken of it.

It was a very customary thing, at the time we refer to, for the younger members to meet together on Sunday afternoon, from church service, and spend the afternoon in such sports as wrestling, jumping, running foot-races, playing ball, or whatever sports and games of the kind were in vogue at the time. The older members, with preachers, would look on as spectators, and had for a proverb, honorable sports or diversions, no one can forbid. At their marriages, feasting, drinking, and noisy mirth were carried to great extremes.

At that time the old-fashioned fairs were annually held at all the towns of any size, even down to small villages. At Lancaster, the gatherings were usually very large. Numbers of the members of the church attended also. There was, as may well be supposed, all kinds of wickedness and ungodly deeds practiced here. I have no information how far the members of the church took part in these acts of wickedness, but by their presence they showed them such countenance, as tended to uphold and support them. The old portion of the community usually attended the second day, when many of the elderly members also attended. It was the custom of these old men to have their bottle of wine, round which they would sit, and often become partially intoxicated, and sometimes

considerably more than partially. At this time, nearly all attended elections, and many of them participated very actively in electioneering, to further the chances of their favorite candidate. This I have myself seen, and heard one say openly, that he had on one occasion voted twice, at the same election. These things were not of accidental or private occurrence. They were common, open, and known to the world; and well known to the church also, and even some of their preachers were not free from the charge.

John Herr, in his writings, from which I purpose to make some extracts, makes some allusion to these things. I have heard that some of the younger members of the church say, they know nothing of such things, and assert that they are not true. It may be they do know nothing of it; but they have members of their church who do know better, and if they would, could testify to their truth; and the day is coming which will reveal it. When John Herr and his co-workers commenced laboring to build up a church, the "Old Mennonites" generally, charged them with motives of enmity and selfishness, which prompted them to the course they took. This charge is now still reiterated, and the generation which has knowledge of the things referred to is fast passing away, and in a few generations more, or only a few short years, none will be left, who from actual knowledge, can attest to the truth of what he wrote. From my own knowledge and observations, I know that such things as he writes are true. In saying this, I know to whom I must give account, and it is to Him I appeal for its truth. I am sorry Herr was under the necessity of saying it, and still more deeply grieved, that the necessity exists for our re-asserting it. Much, yea, very much, rather would I have left these things to oblivion. There are yet many old members in the Mennonite church, who know well that these things are true; and if they think that their church is now reformed, and in a truly living and spiritual state, it would be much more to their credit to come out and say openly, that the time was when the church had fallen into such shameful practices, but she is now reformed, revived and renovated.

They still, as a general thing, were plain in their dress, and manner of life. They also still professed to be non-resistant, and refused to swear; but they very grossly violated their profession

of non-resistance, by acts tending to countenance and abet warfare, and more especially, by seeking for redress of grievance, at law, and defending themselves at law against claims which they considered unjust. This was violating a very decided principle of Menno's profession. The washing of feet, if not rejected, was at least practically omitted for many years. The kiss of peace was very little, if at all, practiced. The refusal to hear the service, or join in worship with those who reject and refuse to obey the plain commands of the gospel, together with avoiding excommunicated members, both of which Menno so strenuously upheld, they rejected altogether, and do so still, to the present day, in our part of the country.

In many of these things, there is in the church a marked change since then, as I can freely bear testimony. Their general conduct is not so loose and carnal, and the walk and conduct of many quite exemplary. They now uphold some things which they practically ignored. The kiss of peace, if not generally exercised between them, is at least frequently observed; and the washing of feet is also practiced to a certain extent, if not generally.

A church that does not walk in the love of God, must be destitute of the Spirit, and consequently a dead body. If the members of this church lived and walked as we have related, that tradition reports they did, they certainly were not obedient to Christ. Although there may have been exemplary and worthy characters amongst them, and even some who seemed pious and God-fearing, yet being cognizant of these things in other members, they could not obey Christ, without making such protest against these things, as would bring them to an issue before the church; and if the church would refuse to obey the gospel command, they must withdraw from them, in order to full obedience. There were occasional withdrawals, as I have been informed, and these proved themselves obedient, and possessed of the love of God. But the mass who still clave together, and bore with those disorderly and carnal members, were surely not obedient, and, consequently, by Christ's own declaration, did not love Him. If they did not love Christ, they must surely have been destitute of the Holy Spirit, and must have been dead. I do not hold that every failure in obedience is evidence that a soul is void of grace. We are poor, weak creatures, and may be overtaken in many ways. But when a

congregation of people continue for many years to walk habitually and persistently in a carnal course, and despite the motions of grace in the heart, and the protests and reproofs of others, I do not see how we can conclude otherwise, than that they are dead. On this ground, I conclude this church was dead, and I should like to see upon what Scripture grounds the position could be overthrown.

We will now proceed to append the testimony of some, who were familiar with the doings of the church, and have left their testimony on record, whilst they themselves have been gathered to their fathers. The former, as the reader will understand, was traditional, but from such sources as we have every reason to believe, it is substantially true. I might have given incidents, tending very strongly to confirm its truth, but lest it might be regarded as unkind, I forbear.

Christian Kauffman, a citizen of Hempfield township, Lancaster county, Pa., left behind him at his death, a manuscript, which some of his descendants gave me to read, as, being written in the German language, they could not read it themselves. It was not given me for the purpose for which I am now using it, as they knew nothing of my design to publish such a work; but, upon request, have consented to its use. We can hardly discern what his object was in writing it, but rather think it was to leave to his family, as its contents are mostly of a private nature. We will give some extracts, to show his view of the church at the time. He was a member of the church for a considerable time, and was quite familiar with its doings, but relates nothing but what he had a personal interest in. He says nothing in the manuscript about any separation or withdrawal from the church, but learn from his grandson, that he ceased to attend their meetings, for some time before his death.

He was born in Hempfield township, in the year 1759. He relates many incidents and occurrences of his childhood and youth. After considerable convictions, and some experience of a work of grace, he says, he had strong religious inclinations, and great respect for preachers, and such society as exercised themselves in Christian ordinances. He had some acquaintance with Martin Boehm, and frequently attended his preaching. After he had reflected seriously over the matter, and, as he says, perceiving that these things require a certain order, he felt a desire to unite

with the visible church, and receive water baptism, according to the custom of the times. "After making my desires known, I expected to be well instructed, and taught by them, as I had great confidence in the teachers, that they were well acquainted with the way of salvation, and how we must walk to obtain it; and could help those who desire it, to walk on the way to attain to happiness, in time and eternity. After making my desires known, I was readily accepted. I and others were called together several times by the preachers. There was a little spoken about several things, chiefly about pride and dress, and how we should walk and conduct ourselves. This was well enough; *but it was not what my spirit sought.* I expected to hear of regeneration, and of Christ, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, and how we become acquainted with the nature and disposition of God and Christ. *But of these things we heard little.* They took good care not to tread too heavily on our toes. This I plainly observed, and was greatly surprised at. However, I still expected to hear or experience something more at our final examination, at which I expected, when the time came, now I will hear something more. When the time came for me to come forward, I was asked what prompted me to desire baptism. As I began freely and honestly to relate how I was exercised, and that I confidently believed, that according to the Scriptures, it is the duty of man to observe it. I was told *that will do; I may withdraw.* They have no time to spare, as they have more yet to examine. This is the history of my preparation for baptism. I thought, may God have mercy! What is this? I was much concerned, and reflected deeply on these circumstances, and was rather discouraged and dissatisfied with the preachers, that they acted so carelessly, as if these things were not of much importance. I did not obtain what I expected. I reflected, and revolved the matter hither and thither. One time, I thought to defer my baptism, and then again to proceed. At last I concluded, I have no one to be concerned about but myself. I must care for myself, and deliver my own soul. So we proceeded, and I was baptized according to the custom of these parts. This was about the year 1780.

"Through this I soon became aware that the preachers were very cold-hearted, and had little experience of true regeneration, and the Divine life; and are strangers to true repentance, and o

the translation from darkness to light. And as to how the Divine life is obtained, or wrought within and without, so as to come to a true Christian life, I found no trace of with them. Here the superstitious confidence, in which I looked upon these learned preachers, as such pious people, who would unquestionably be saved, received a severe shock. Oh, now my soul felt quite different. I felt ashamed, when I viewed the principles I entertained, and beheld how far I had failed toward the good God, and had so greatly erred in view of these people, who, like myself, were but dust and ashes.

“Thus far the enemy had kept me in darkness in this matter, but by Providential interposition, I was brought to better light; so that I could see the error I was hitherto in, and how Satan seeks to lead us about in darkness, and to keep us in the way of error. I did on one occasion engage in a short conversation with one of these preachers, and acquainted him with my views about these things; but I soon perceived that it was not well received by them, and found that they observed me very closely afterward.”

After considerable relation of experience in different matters and ways, he comes to relate his experience, on an occasion when the church proposed to make a preacher. So far as I can understand, their mode of procedure on such occasions, was, to first take the sense of the church, by each member indicating by vote, who they think would be a suitable person for this calling. From amongst those thus receiving votes, a certain number are selected; and from amongst these thus selected, one is taken by lot, to be the preacher. Their manner of proceeding in casting lots, is, to take as many books as there are persons from whom the lot is to be taken, or as we might say, candidates. In one of these books a slip of paper is put, on which the word preacher is written; or, some indication, that he who gets this book, shall be the preacher. After these books are prepared, they are manipulated in such manner, that no one knows which book contains the important paper. These books are set in a row on the table, and each candidate walks forward and takes a book. The one who gets the book in which the paper is found, is considered chosen of God to this position. On the occasion referred to, Kauffman was one amongst eight who were to cast lots, to indicate which among them God had chosen.

Kauffman said he considered that he himself was not fit for the calling, and he did not think any of the rest were any more fit. But, under their mode of procedure, one of them would *have to be chosen*. He contended, that the Lord also should have a lot. That is, if the Lord directs the choice, then there should be nine books set down, so that if there was none amongst the candidates whom God would choose, he could thus have an opportunity to reject them all. Reflecting on these things, he concluded not to appear on the day lots were to be cast, but there were several preachers rode into his yard on that day, who he thought were more cheerful, and their manner more light-minded, than the solemnity of the occasion would justify. These insisted on his going along with them to the meeting-house, which he finally did; and there they talked and disputed, he says, for about four hours. He told them he did not believe the church, or this work, was conducted in such a Godly manner, as they pretended. He thought things did not go as Christ and the apostles teach. The church was to be as one body, and when one member suffers, they all suffer; but he had sometimes seen two or three members cut off from the body at once, and no one seemed to suffer, or be distressed. They oftentimes had their jokes and light-minded remarks about it, saying, to-day such and such an one was thrown over the fence, now he can eat acorns. He cannot conceive how things can be done in a proper spirit. He urged them to go on in their proceedings without him. They protested they could not, as he is one of the highest in vote, and urged him to resign himself to God, and the will of the church. They finally concluded to adjourn for a week, and meet again on the same day of the next week, hoping he would change his mind in the meantime.

Speaking of the manner in which his mind was exercised in the meantime, about this matter, he says: "It was to me incomprehensible. I could not see how God could, in the manner proposed, make a free and impartial choice. By a momentary reflection upon the proceedings of the present Christianity, and comparing it with the Holy Scriptures, I found an *unquestionable contradiction*. There must, therefore, certainly be a different tone in these things, if they are done in a proper manner; because the mercy, the pure, unadulterated brotherly love, brotherly harmony,

love to your neighbor, peace, and the true love of God, had already suffered a fearful shipwreck, according to the teaching of Christ and His apostles. This occasioned a great conflict in my mind. I prayed fervently to God, that He should support me, and give me such perceptions in this matter, that I might do nothing contrary to His will. The more I revolved the matter in my mind, the more I became convinced, that an opportunity should be given for God to make a free and impartial choice, in such a weighty matter. My convictions, also, led me to the conclusion, that for the present I was too far behind the mark, and not qualified, or worthy to take upon myself so weighty a calling, unless God would further reveal His will to me."

He therefore came to the conclusion, not to appear at the second meeting, but was again called on by some of the preachers, and again went to the meeting-house, where he found the parties not yet all assembled; and whilst waiting for them to come, those present engaged in conversation about the market, and trade, custom and money, as is generally the manner of worldly people. After they were all assembled, he says, they treated him very unkindly, and slandered him shamefully, till he finally rose up and left the house. This ended the proceedings; at least he relates but little more about what took place after that day. There were some very sharp and biting words passed between them, but with all their protestations, criminations and recriminations, the matters seem to have rested, and Kauffman continued a member, as before. He commenced a relation of another matter, in which he reflects severely on the preachers, but he does not conclude the relation. Kauffman's experience in his church-fellowship, and his convictions of their spiritual condition, goes far to confirm the traditionary account before given.

That Kauffman was one of the highest in vote for preacher, and the preachers seemed so anxious to have him submit to the desire of the church, goes to show that he must have been a man of good character and standing, which gives credibility to his relation of what took place between him and the ministry, at his entrance into their body; and, also, of his experience and impressions of their spiritual condition. So far as we can judge, he would seem, at the time he made application to the church to be received, to have been under a true work of grace; and if he had received proper

instruction and direction, might have been brought to a right knowledge of the truth; which, from what he says in the subsequent part of the manuscript, it is very evident he had then not yet arrived at. Nor need we wonder, for by what he says of his examination, and instruction preparatory to baptism, it is very evident that his guides were blind; and if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch. Does not their conduct show plainly, that these teachers must have been destitute of the Spirit of God, and, consequently, as we have said of the church, *dead*?

The following is extracted from an unpublished manuscript, left by Abraham Landis, late of East Lampeter township, Lancaster county, Pa. He was for a time a member of the Old Mennonite church, but after a time withdrew from them, and was one of those who assisted in the organization of the Reformed Mennonite church. The exact time in which it was written I cannot tell, but it must have been in the early part of the present century. It is also written in the German language. I will endeavor to give the sense, as correctly as I can:

“The times in which we live are truly sorrowful, and it has often deeply grieved me that the truth is so little regarded by many, and every one walks according to his own ideas, or as his carnal wisdom would teach him, whilst the holy doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we must come to the Father, is so little regarded. Christ says (Matt. vii.): ‘Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, that built his house upon the sand.’ Here the Saviour makes a great difference between these two persons. The one who built upon the rock, or the Word of God, will be able to stand in time and eternity, and can enter in with the wise virgins to the eternal marriage. (Matt. xxv.) But he that built upon the sand, or on his own ideas or wisdom, will, with the foolish virgins, be rejected, and told to depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

“But God, of His great mercy and grace, taught me, a poor sinner, and of His paternal love and faithfulness, revealed to me, that the house which I had built, and for a season tenanted, was built upon the sand, and not upon the Word or doctrine of Christ.

In the year 1802, it occurred, that I and several of my companions, were moved to receive the ordinance of baptism, because I believed it to be a command of God, which it also verily is, if observed in proper order. But I, poor ignorant creature, did not see at the time what must precede baptism. Neither had I any better example from those who before me had become members of the church, for I saw that they took such carnal liberties as I at the time could not engage in. I saw several of the brethren join with others in such Satanic service, as dancing, and reveling, which I at the same time was convinced, that it was not right to engage in such frivolity. However, I cannot justify myself, that I was not partaker with them. If I did not join with them in their sports, I was spectator, and had my enjoyment in it, and walked after the flesh, as all other carnal people do.

“Now as we were to be baptized, they read to us from the seventeenth verse to the end of the twelfth chapter of Romans, and we were told, that in times past it was customary, that when brethren met, they would give each other the hand, and greet one another with a kiss, and say, “The Lord be with us;” but it has by degrees been omitted, by most of them. We were also asked whether we were willing to renounce the Devil, the world, and our own flesh? which we all acknowledged we were; and whether we were willing to resign ourselves entirely to the obedience of the doctrine of Christ? which we also answered in the affirmative. But, my beloved reader, we did not keep our promise, neither could we keep it, because we were yet carnal.

“I must confess for myself, that I, at that time, did not know myself, or I would not have made such a promise, if I had seen the weightiness of it. My spiritual eyes were not yet opened, and the veil of Moses yet hung before the door of my heart, so that I could not see the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, which bringeth with it an exceeding glory: as Paul says (2d Cor. iii.) But as the merciful Heavenly Father has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but much more that he turn from his ways and live (Ezkl. xxxiii.), therefore He called through His Spirit to my poor soul, and by-times wrought within me such deep convictions, that I was constrained to acknowledge to my companions, that it is not right to indulge in such frivolity, as we do amongst one another. But it did not help either me or them. It did not

help me, because I did not desist, but tended more to my condemnation, because God had shown me that it was not right, and I did not obey; neither did it help them, because they saw that I still ran with them.

"Now I began at last to read somewhat more in the Holy Scriptures. I soon found, from many testimonies in the Scriptures, that in the life I was now leading, I could not stand before God; that I must be born again, must become a new creature, must repent, deny myself, take up the cross, and follow Christ. (Math. iii., John iii., 2d Cor. v.) I perceived that I was destitute of all this. But the tempter sought to quiet my fears, by pointing out other persons to me, who took more carnal liberties than I could at that time, and yet they could go to the communion-table. He also presented to me the cross which I must take up, if I would put my hand to the plow, and follow Christ; which I also richly experienced afterward."

"As I was not willing to take up the cross, and foresake my own will, God could not lead me further, and, in consequence, I remained standing at the cross. But the words of Peter were brought to my mind: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrary-wise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." (1 Pet. iii.)

"Now I saw that the life I myself, or my brethren led, did not agree with these words. I knew that we were not of the same mind; that by many compassion was lost; that brotherly love, pity, and courtesy, was little regarded, for one brother sought to overreach the other in trade, the other had no mercy on his poor brother, but would assail him with the sword of worldly authority or power if he would fail to pay him a small sum of money; another could render evil for evil, and railing for railing; yea, we could say, this one is a drunkard, and that is avaricious, and with others there is nothing but world and treasure, and another again is a high-minded man, etc.

"My dear reader, do not seek to controvert these words, I beg of you; for I know that they are truth, because I have heard with my ears, and have seen with mine own eyes, what I here write. Yet I still for the time walked with them, in hypocrisy;

nevertheless, I could no more go with them to the ordinance of breaking of the bread ; because I saw that this ordinance required an entire unity of spirit, as Paul teaches. (Cor. x. and Eph. iv.) Here I was constrained to hold still, and refrain from joining with my brethren in this ordinance ; because I could not feel united in spirit with the church.

“But to return to the words of Peter, referred to before. He further says : ‘ For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile : let him eschew evil, and do good : let him seek peace and ensue it.’ By these Scriptures I saw that if I would walk on the right ways of the Lord, I must forsake that which is evil ; wherefore I did seek in some measure to withdraw myself from it, and to lead a consistent life before the world ; which brought me more respect in the world, and also among the members of the church.

“About three or four years after I became a member of the church, one of the preachers departed out of time into eternity. Soon after this, necessity seemed to require another to be appointed in his place ; and the church seemed willing to take measures to this end. There were nine brethren received votes, of whom it was concluded, that five should cast lots, to determine who should assume the calling. Of these five, I was one. This oppressed me very heavily ; for, on the one hand, I saw the fallen state of the church, the carnal liberties taken by many of the members, the want of harmony which I perceived amongst the members, and the carelessness and indifference in regard to the obedience of Christ ; which so closed the way for me, that I could not see how I could get through. On the other hand, my great timidity, my illiterateness, and the weakness which I felt, sat heavily upon me. Now I began to make excuses ; I said I was too young. (I was then in my 26th year of age.) They replied, it is said, ‘ say not that thou art yet too young.’ They admonished me to obedience, that I must be obedient. I saw no way to escape, which drew me closely to the Lord. I prayed day and night to God, that He should help me, a poor sinner ; that if it was not His will that this calling should be laid upon me, He should hinder it. This the Lord also did, for my mind was singularly wrought upon. Before the books were placed before us, I had made up my mind, that as I was the worst, and the poorest of those with whom I was

to cast lots, I should take the lowest book. But when the time came, and I rose to take the book, I could not take the one intended, but I left it stand, and took the one beside it. The book I had intended to take, contained the lot, and it therefore fell upon another. This was a great relief to me; yet I exercised myself more diligently in reading the Scriptures than I had done before; but found in many places that we do not according to its teaching. In John, chap. xiii., I found the command for the washing of feet, which I had not seen observed in our church. I found that brethren should not speak evil of one another, (James iv.) yet I knew we do so amongst us. I reproved this sometimes, and said it is not right for us to do so amongst one another; for I well saw that this was not the nature of love, for true love abhorreth that which is evil, and cleaveth to that which is good. (Rom. xii.)

“But we did not possess the true love amongst us, or we would have done that which love dictates. Yea, poor creature that I am, I oftentimes did not know what to do; I saw that the fruits which we brought forth were not good, and God could have no pleasure in the works we carried on amongst one another. I saw that the preachers with the hearers, could spend their time in all manner of conversation, which was not profitable to Godliness, but much more the contrary, as I oftentimes experienced. There we heard little that was edifying. For my part, I can say, that I do not remember that any preacher ever once asked me how I find myself, in regard to my journey to Mount Zion; which would certainly have been a bounden duty, especially to inquire why I do not commune with the church. But here was no inquiry, although I had not gone to communion for six or seven years. Yet I regularly attended church, because I thought it is commanded to hold church, and also communion; and we can read that the Saviour said: ‘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. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not my sayings.’ (John xiv.) Again, (1st Epistle John v.): ‘By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.’

“Herein I was greatly perplexed, and knew not where to find counsel, for I saw that the commandments of God should be kept according to the order which the Scriptures teach, yet I saw the great discord which existed amongst us; for one preacher complained of the other, one brother reproached another, and one sister could not rightly endure the other; and if a preacher undertook to reprove, he was told just to go home and sweep before his own door. I saw that our condition was sorrowful; but with all this, I had twice thought I would go to communion, but could not get it accomplished. One time something particular came in the way, that I could not go to meeting. The next time I went to meeting, and intended to go with my brethren to communion; but when the preacher began to give the bread to the communicants, there was one arose and received it, who, I had been told by a brother, and also had it from other sources, that he had been playing cards. Therefore, I could not accomplish my design, for with such a brother I could not feel united; and knew, also, that it is not right to testify unity with the church, when the heart is not united. It would only have been hypocrisy.

“Here I feel constrained, through love, to admonish all faithful souls seriously to reflect upon what they do, when they represent the unity by holding the communion with such souls who they are not united with in heart. Paul says: ‘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? For, we being many, are one bread and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.’ (1st Cor. x.; Matt. xxvi.) Here we can see what a weighty matter it is to commune, and how the members of the church are bound together, and how each one must do his duty, and one rescue the other from destruction by admonishing him when he sees his brother not walking according to love.

“But to return to the matter referred to before. I did not know how to proceed in regard to the brother spoken of; for I thought if I should go to him, and reprove him, he would be offended at me; as previous experience had taught me. And a sister also told me, on one occasion, that the whole connexion would become offended, and be at enmity, if one or the other was reproved for a little folly. Now, I shunned the cross, as all

hypocrites do ; yet I went to one of the preachers, and brought complaint against him. I was asked whether it could be proven. I said I think it can, but I was never called on to prove it ; which convinced me that what I heard was true. Nevertheless, he was never brought before the church, to give any satisfaction. I also disclosed my feelings further to the preachers, and complained of the decline of the church ; of the pride, and disagreement which prevails in the church. They admitted that I was right ; that pride has become prevalent, but they see no way to effect a change ; but to have patience, lest we might do more harm than good. To this my sinful flesh readily assented, so that it might still continue to walk on the broad way. But in spirit, I found no peace within myself, or within the church. However I still was diligent in my attendance at church, but could not go to communion, for I found we are not such a people as the Word requires. The Word requires a people who crucify the flesh, with its lusts and desires ; and put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness ; yea, who with Abraham have left the land of their fathers, and were obedient to the voice of the Lord, until He brought them into the land of promise. (Gen. xii.) Such as have risen with the prodigal, left the swine with their husks, and returned to the Heavenly Father, who with grief and sorrow have lamented their sinful life, and with contrite hearts humbled themselves before God, and willingly submit to contempt and derision, affliction and cross. (Luke v.) Under all this conflict, they have taken the shield of faith, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God. (Eph. vi.) Yea, beloved reader, such people as are here described, the Word requires. These can together partake of the Lord's table, and keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, edify one another in love, and wash one another's feet in true humility, submitting themselves one to the other in a childlike manner. (John xiii.) They are not ashamed to confess Christ crucified, with life and walk, word and deed ; and, as obedient children, are ever willing to obey the Word the Heavenly Father has given us, through Jesus Christ His son. But woe to all such as regard his Word lightly, and think it is no more necessary to keep his Word so punctually, so that they may enjoy more liberty on the broad way.

“That the flesh ever desires the broad road, I have in my time had plentiful experience; but the immortal spirit found no peace or rest thereon. This oft-times caused great conflict between spirit and flesh, so that I was driven to fervent prayer and supplication, and many times with bowed knees besought the Most High, to bestow me wisdom and understanding; and that God would open the eyes of my spirit, and bestow upon me an obedient heart; that when I come to lay down this mortal body, my poor soul might enter into rest. But here I was again brought into temptation by the church. The sense of the church was again taken, with a view to making a preacher; under which proceeding, the lot lay between me and another brother. The other brother made excuses, and was not willing to cast lots. He said he has a worldly office to serve, and those two do not suit together. (As they do not, for Christ said, no man can serve two masters.) I said if he even did feel willing, I could not, for I had not communed with the church for six or seven years, and as the church now stands, I could not serve it, for our condition was a very sad one. One brother sought the advantage of the other in trade, to such a degree, that one could scarcely believe the other, but had to fear that he would be defrauded in any business transactions. It was as the Lord said by the prophet Isaiah, chap. ix.: “Take ye heed every one of his neighbor, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanderers.” But on the words that I said, that I could not serve the church, there was a great deal said, which I do not feel to relate. Yet, the result was, that there was no lot cast for preacher at that time. I, and several other professors, whom God had illuminated by His Divine light, so that they had been brought to see and know the corruption of their nature, and sought to adhere to the Word of God, held together. We contended against the fallen church with the Word. The preachers gave us no assent, but we became opposed to each other, and could not agree in the Word. They upheld liberties, with which we could not agree. The next Sunday we went to meeting again, but the preacher directed his sermon in such a way, that we were rather discouraged in going to hear them more. He sought so to bend the truth, that unrighteousness might be supported.

“ You may think, dear reader, that we were greatly discouraged, because we saw that the old heads of the church regarded the Word of God so little. Now, we were in great affliction, and earnestly wished that the church might be reformed, and again brought into proper order. But we could effect nothing. It was, as a preacher once acknowledged to me, that if one desires to build up, the other will tear down. This was the result with us. We sought to build up the church, but others opposed us, so that we saw that our labor was in vain, which distressed us very greatly. Now, we sought to adhere to God and His Word, to take up the cross, and give ourselves up to self-denial, scorn and derision, which seemed very hard to the flesh; and we realized the words of Paul, Gal. v.: ‘They that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.’ We now searched the Scriptures very diligently, and found that from the beginning, the people of God were separate from the kingdom of darkness, and could not endure the disobedient in their community, but put them away, or separated themselves from them. So long as the people of God, in the first age of the world, suffered His Spirit to direct them, they were preserved; but when they looked upon the daughters of men, they became corrupted, and had to be destroyed by a flood of waters; and the children of Israel, also, had to put away from them all unclean and leprous persons. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, but once arose against Moses, the servant of God, and several others, with two hundred and fifty of the princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown, and spake to Moses and Aaron, saying, ‘Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them; and the Lord is among them.’ But the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, saying: “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.’ The earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that pertained unto Korah, and all their goods. (Numb. xvi.) Joshua could not take the city of Ai, until the accursed Achan was put away. The prophet Isaiah says, chap. lii.: ‘Depart ye, depart ye, out from them, touch no unclean thing: go ye out of the midst of her; and be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.’ Paul says, 2d Cor. vi.: ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for, what fellowship

has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Again, in 2d Thess. iii., Paul says: 'Now we command you brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.'

"We also found in the "Martyr's Mirror," in the articles of faith, that they separated the sinners from the church, according to the Scriptures. We also found in the old catechism, in Menno Simon, and in Detrich Philips' writings, that sinners must be separated from the church, according to the Word of God. Now, after we had examined all these writings, besides others also, we perceived plainly that the church of which we were members, did not accord with the Word of God, inasmuch as transgressors were not separated. (Cor. v.)

"About this time we met an old professor of the truth, who, as Christ taught, would not hear the voice of strangers, and separated, or fled from all idolatry, and openly reprov'd it by the Word of God, to which he firmly adhered. This faithful confessor encouraged us very much, and admonished us only to be faithful, and adhere to the Word of God. Now we began openly to affirm, before preachers, and members, that a true Christian could not serve as an officer of worldly government, or assist in electing others to offices; neither to act as jurors, to help to judge, or condemn others, or to repel injury or injustice by law. There was an old preacher of our church acknowledged that he testifies against all these things; but it was only a confession of the lips, inasmuch as he still walked, and communed with such brethren, as took these liberties. Therefore Christ says: 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven;' and Paul says: 'The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power;' and again: 'We also believe and therefore speak.' (Math. vii., 1 Cor. iv., and 2 Cor. iv.) Therefore the Scriptures witness, that this preacher's words were not the fruit of a living faith, for faith without works is dead. (James ii.) As we then saw that the faith of this preacher did not accord with the word of God, we had to do as Christ says: 'Let them alone, they be

blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.' (Math. xv.)

"Another preacher said to us, that Jacob Kertzenieser writes in a letter, that in times of declension in the church, we should not be too ready to excommunicate. Then we examined the writings of Kertzenieser, and found that he would not tolerate such carnal liberties in the church, as are now tolerated in ours. We found in a letter written to a brother minister of the Word, that such as would not obey the charge of Paul, to keep no company, or refrain from dealing with those who are placed in excommunication by the church, should themselves be avoided or shunned. However, in another letter, he speaks about adjusting differences by excommunication, in times of apostacy, which he does not approve; but this is quite a different thing from setting aside excommunication and avoidance altogether, as has been done in our parts. The same preacher also referred to Judas, that Christ knew him, and yet he was with His disciples. I replied, that this was quite a different case; that the Scriptures had to be fulfilled, and it was said, he that eateth My bread hath lifted up his heel against Me; and "the son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man, by whom the son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." (Math. xxvi.) Besides, he was not yet revealed to the other disciples, and they were greatly distressed when their beloved Lord told them that one of them should betray Him; and inquired who it was that should do this thing; but after the thing was revealed, he no more walked with them. We therefore found that this preacher was not grounded on the Word of God, and had also to give him over, and adhere to the Word of God."

Here I omit a part of the manuscript, which has no reference to the matter under consideration; after which he proceeds:

"We now met another teacher of the church, who, with the two former, was a bishop. We had much conversation, of which I will give a short sketch. We spake of baptism. I told him they baptized the people too much in light-mindedness. This he would not admit, and remarked, that if we plant an apple-tree, we do not seek fruit from it the first year. I admitted this, but yet said, we are so discreet, that we make inquiry of what nature the tree is, whether fruitful or not. Then we plant it, and wait

for the fruit. If it is good, we let the tree stand ; but if bad, we cut it down. Every person, therefore, who is received into the church, should have the nature and disposition of virtue and righteousness ; should be conformed to the Word of God, and withdraw themselves from all false doctrine, and no more be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, but crucify their flesh, with its lusts and desires. With such persons we can well have patience, and if the fruit they bring is good, it is said they shall be purged that they may bring more fruit. But if they bring corrupt fruit, they must be cut off. Such persons as are generally conformed to the world, in pride and vanity, live according to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and carnal folly ; who are earthly minded and seek earthly things, that they may have esteem and a great name in the world, but do not seek the honor of God. Such persons as these I cannot compare to a fruitful apple-tree, but much more to a bramble.

“We also spoke of avoiding excommunicated members. He professed still to observe it, and said, there had been a sister in their vicinity, who was separated from the church, and the preacher who did it, said, whoever desires to walk in apostolical order, should avoid her. I told him I was very much surprised, for the same preacher had put a brother in our vicinity from the church, who was guilty of adultery, but I heard nothing of avoidance. He said he is put out of the church, and should no more be called a brother, until he repents.

“I told him this is not right. If it was the duty of those to avoid the fallen sister, then it was also our duty to avoid the fallen brother ; and if he feels it his duty, as he professes, to avoid fallen brethren, he should also teach his brethren to do so. Paul tells us all to be of one mind, and speak the same thing. I saw, therefore, that this preacher also did not accord with the Word of God, and was necessitated to give him up also, and still cling to the Word of God.

“I also had much conversation with another preacher, but we could not agree in all things, yet he confessed that there is in many things too much liberty taken by the members. I told him I look upon the washing of feet, to be a command of Christ ; yet with us it is not observed. He said, with them it is observed. I inquired who held it ? When he told me, I said, the same man

also held communion with us, but I saw no feet washing. I inquired why this was so, but he seemed not to know what to reply. I told him, this preacher does not do right. If it is a command with them, then it must also be with us; for Paul says, we shall walk by the same rule, and be of the same mind.

"While we saw that these preachers were not of the same mind, and did not walk by the same rule, we knew, certainly, that they could not be led by the Spirit of Christ, for His Spirit is unchangable. We saw no other way for us, but the narrow way of the cross. This we must take, and whatsoever would not concur with this, we had to leave back. The Lord says by the Prophet Isaiah (chap. ix.): "Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel, head and tail, branch and rush, in one day. The ancient and honorable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail. For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led by them are destroyed." Here, there was every thing cut away from us. We had to leave the teachers, the aged and honorable, and all that would not submit to the Word of God, but will seek a way on which they need not bear the cross, seek liberty in the world, make fellowship with all sects and parties, call them brethren, and say they have brethren amongst all communities."

We will here close our extracts from Abraham Landis' manuscript. There might be more testimony of the same kind extracted, but we deem these amply sufficient to confirm the traditional history, or account of the church, as it was at the time alluded to, viz.: the close of the last, and early part of the present century.

We will now give some extracts from the published writings of John Herr. The first extract is from a work published in 1815, in the German language, with the title of "*Der wahre und selige weg gen Himmel.*" It was translated into the English language, and published in 1816.

From chapter v. 199th page: "If any one would think or ask, what can be the reason that we will not hear the Mennonite teachers, since they maintain the same confession and ground that we also maintain and teach?"

"To which I answer, first, that this is the reason: because they confess it with their mouth, and falsely boast themselves to be the unarmed, defenseless people, and pretend to have the real ground

of the apostles and prophets, where Jesus Christ is the rock and corner-stone, which our first reformers, Menno Simon and Detrich Philip, so earnestly taught and inculcated, and which many thousands sealed with their blood and testified to the truth in all places, as the "Martyr's Mirror" plainly portrays.

"But according to this, these of our time are far from doing, and esteem the doctrine of their reformer, in many points, but lightly. The cause of which, is this: Menno Simon's and Detrich Philip's writings and doctrine, sets their present community quite out of the order of Christ and His apostles, as in truth it is entirely out of that order; which is testified before the whole world, by their evident fruits.

"Therefore I will direct thee, my dear reader, to them. Search the above mentioned writings with an unprejudiced heart, and spiritual mind, and observe how they pictured the Church of Christ, and how gloriously they set forth by the testimony of apostolic truth and Divine power, and which also their church members testified by their fruits and sealed with their blood; and when thou hast rightly apprehended this truth, then look over also on the present community with a spiritual eye, and view their fleshly life, their proud, arrogant deportment, and their careless, cold hearts in Divine things; their insatiable world-spirit, their dealing and their way, how sensual it is in every point, almost throughout the whole of them. And when thou hast observed this, then go a little further, where thou wilt find a great many defenseless, unarmed men. Then ask the judge and the attorney; they will tell you that some of them are engaged in strife and law suits, as much as others. And then go on and ask the debtors and criminals; they will tell you that they see none more frequently on the seats of judgment, passing sentence upon them and assisting to judge them, than these. Then ask the tavern-keepers, and they will also tell thee that many resort thither, who are lovers of spirituous drink, and from which even some of their teachers are not free; and if thou wouldst ask the race-riders and their like, they would tell thee that *they* also have some of them as spectators, as well as of all others. And if thou wilt search all these fruits impartially, according to the gospel, then thou wilt soon find that they falsely term themselves the Church of Christ; and far as the evening is from the morning, or

darkness from the light, so far are they separated from our first reformers' doctrine or community, or from the community of Christ. And it is to be feared that the candlestick is removed from them, that they cannot see; and if even they do see it and do not repent, it will ultimately be taken from them, because they will not receive the truth which is yet offered to them. (Rev. ii.) And again, it is a sure sign that a teacher is faithful, if he holds fast the Word of Truth, and turns neither to the right nor to the left, and shewing no favor, but reprove them that transgress before all, that others may fear (1st Tim. v.), and keep the commandment until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (chap. vi.), and know no man after the flesh, that is, they respect no person, but refuse all carnal liberties to every one, and knowingly consent to no sin whatever, but candidly reproveth, admonishes and rebukes them (2d Tim. iv.), and watcheth well over his flock when he sees danger, nor suffers them to go where he cannot go himself, for, 'their blood will be required at his hands,' (Ezkl. xxxiii.) and must always be ready to give an account of their souls. (Heb. xii.)

"But, on the other hand, it is easy to know, that these present teachers do not so. They complain indeed of the ruin of their community, and see not that they themselves are also fallen amidst the general ruin; and truly they are the chief cause of it, because they do not watch over their flocks, and allow them fleshly liberties to prosecute at law, to sit on the seats of judgment, and assist in law business, and more such freedoms; and beside all this, they lead such a vain dissipated, earthly and impenitent life, that the world can see no more light. All is gloom and darkness, and through them the name of Christ is profaned; but still they bear with them after all this, with a fleshly and damnable patience, contrary to the Word of the Lord; and if in charity they are reprov'd for it, then some of them will confess, that it ought not to be so; that for their own part they could not take such sensual freedoms, as above mentioned, but that they must leave it to them, and, notwithstanding, bear with them patiently, and not reprove them. And thus they testify that they are not true shepherds to watch over the souls of their flock, neither can they obtain the testimony which Christ gave through the spirit of Revelation, to the Church of Ephesus, where He saith: "I know thy works, and thy labor,

and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." (Rev. ii.) A faithful shepherd must say as did the apostle, follow me as I follow Christ. (1st Cor. xi.) And if they will not obey, they must be reprov'd. (1st Tim. iv.) And if they will not receive reproof, but continue in sin, then they must be lopped off as unfruitful branches. (1st Cor. v.) Now if these teachers were faithful, they would be aware of this rule, and do according to it, and encourage none in their fleshly pursuits, with bread and wine, but much rather put them back to true repentance, by which they may come to Jesus, and first gain admittance with Him, and forgiveness of sins; nor administer baptism to them, nor comfort them with the sacred token of the broken body and sprinkled blood of Christ, before they perceive by their fruits that they are altered men, and that old things are passed away, and all is become new. (2d Cor. v.)

"But as the new things of the Spirit are not regarded, and are lost to the teachers of our time, and generally nothing but the outward forms of worship are attended to, in part only, and thus all is well and they are content therewith, therefore, the consequence is, that either the teachers must be false and unfaithful, and neglect to put the Lord's talent to usury, or they must be blind themselves; 'and when the blind lead the blind, both must fall into the ditch.' (Math. xiv.) Therefore all truly awakened souls must follow the advice of Christ, and let them alone and flee from them, and avoid them, until the time when they observe their Lord's Word better, and act according with it.

"And thirdly, Christ tells us: '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; he that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings; and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me.' (John xiv.) Item: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and, if ye love Me, keep My commandments." (Verses 15 and 21.)

"Now it is manifest, that these teachers do not love Christ, because they do not keep His commandments, nor act conformably to them. For Christ commanded His apostles, first to teach men, and if they believe, to baptize them. Now it is evident,

that a man cannot have saving faith in Christ, unless he is first brought through true repentance, by the hearing of preaching, or without means by God's assistance, to feel himself broken, wounded, and stripped, so as to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and earnestly to seek and desire Christ his Redeemer; and when he really finds Him, and obtains His mercy, which is the forgiveness of his sins, then the man only begins to believe thoroughly in Him, and to trust, and to give himself up entirely to Him, for he hath experienced, in the boundless riches of Christ and His merits, what he would not have believed before, namely, that such a profligate, miserable, and cursed sinner, as he felt himself to be, should rise to such high honor, to be accepted as a son by the Father, as a child of God, as an heir with Christ. This we may know by the parable of the lost, or prodigal son, when he returned to his Father, and like Esther the queen say, 'If I perish, I perish,' nevertheless I will venture, for my father hath bread enough; but who knows, perhaps he may receive me as a poor hired servant. But when he went and met such a kind reception from his father, then his doubtful heart was cheered; then he believed firmly that his father loved him with a boundless love; then they could rejoice together with inexpressible joy; the father rejoiced over his son that had been lost, and the son rejoiced that he had received such unexpected grace from his father.

"And Nathaniel, also, who was an Israelite indeed, and in whom there was no guile, would not believe when Philip told him of the Messiah, until he went thither himself, and saw and heard Him; but then he believed, and confessed that He was the Son of God. (John i.)

"He that fell among thieves, and was stripped, and left half dead in his blood, had probably but little faith when the priest and the Levite passed ungraciously by him, that such a merciful Samaritan would come at length and so affectionately raise him, as he afterward experienced. (Luke x.)

"Thus the true faith, that works by love, is 'The power of God unto salvation,' and is not in an impenitent man. For where the true faith is, there is also the new birth; there the old man must first be crucified, and be buried with Christ, wherein also they are risen again, through the faith of the operation of God, to the new things of the spirit. (Col. ii.)

“But if any one would say, that a man must nevertheless come through faith to repentance, and approach his Creator, this I also confess; for Adam, when he saw that he fell by his transgression, believed in the righteousness of God in His word, and felt that through it he was condemned to eternal death, and was afraid of his God, until He raised him again, and consoled him with promises, whereby he was led, from his first fearful faith in the righteousness of God, into the saving faith, by which he obtained a sure confidence in God, in this, that he hoped without doubting for things not seen.

“Thus all men must, through faith in the inherent righteousness of God, be humbled, cast down, and made contrite, whereby and through which they are made fit to receive Christ and His promises, to be comforted through Him, and to be washed from their sin, so that, through Christ, and a child-like faith, he is engrafted into the Vine, and as a member of His body, which is the Church (John xv. and 1st Cor. xii.), and thus he is partaker of His Divine nature, and like unto His image; for then the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon him (1st Pet. iv.), and is thus, through this saving faith, united with Christ, and is justified through His blood, and lives by his faith. (Rom. xvii.) And, as I have said, that these teachers do not love Christ, because they do not keep His commandments, nor do according to them; the reason of which is, that they baptize men without any sign of repentance, or reformation, and without the living and saving faith, that works alone by love. This their fruits testify full well, for they are fleshly, and were fleshly-minded before they received baptism; and when they have received it, they remain in their old fleshly habits, and imagine that they are baptized Christians, and comfort themselves in it, and reflect not on what St. Paul said: ‘That in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature’ (Gal. vi.), or the ‘faith that worketh by love;’ and where these are not, how then can baptism be used according to Christ’s doctrine, and the doctrine of the apostles? How, then, can we be baptized into the death of Jesus Christ, and the communion of His body through the Holy Spirit? How, then, shall the crucifying of the old man, the burial of sin, and the resurrection to a new life, be rightly considered and accomplished? How shall we thus

put on Christ, and make a covenant, in a good conscience, with God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ? (1 Pet. iii.) I presume it can never be; for Christ said: 'Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit; ye generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' (Matt. xii.) But that these are not well planted, their fruits fully testify; for a penitent, believing, and truly baptized new-born Christian, hath a Divine nature, and is like unto the image of Christ, and is minded as He was minded, (Phil. ii.), and prays without ceasing, and is thankful in all things; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus towards him, so that his light shineth in all places, in the midst of a rude and perverse generation, holding forth the word of life, and counting all earthly things but loss for Christ's sake; for He is his life, and in death He is his gain; for through Him he overcame, and yet daily overcometh the frailties of the flesh, and always bears the good fruits of the Spirit, as a goodly tree, planted by the rivers of water; and those who enjoy his fruit and receive his doctrine shall live, and are in harmony with one another, like as Christ is one with the Father, and, consequently, there is no condemnation on them, for they walk no more after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made them free from the law of sin and death (Rom. viii.), and are received into the inheritance of God, and are joint heirs with Christ.

"And, again, they do not love Christ, because they do not obey the commandment of love, between brother and brother; for whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. But he that loveth God, loveth his brother also; for by this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. God's commandment is through Christ, given to us in this sense, that if our brother trespass against us, then we must reprove him, between him and ourselves alone; if he hears us, then we have gained a brother, but if he will not hear us, then we may take one or two more with us; and if he shall neglect to hear them, we may tell it to the church; but if he will not hear the church, then we may hold him as a heathen man, and a publican. (Math. xviii.)

Herein may plainly be seen what true brotherly love is, namely: when we see our brother transgress, or hear that he sinneth, then we must examine and in love reprove him, and strive with all diligence to recover his soul from death; (James v.) or, as the Apostle Jude said: "Save his soul with fear;" and if we neglect to do this, we transgress the commandment of God, nor do we love the brethren, and are therefore murderers; for we suffer them to meet death without warning, and we are in darkness, and know not whither we go, for darkness hath blinded our eyes. But these teachers not only suffer their brethren to go unreprieved, but likewise the public sins that occur before the whole world; that is through the lusts of the eye, and fleshly gratifications, arrogant distinctions, yea, and sometimes they loiter in public places till they become inebriated with wine, which occasions disorder, and in general they lead such an evil, dissipated life, that the heart of the true Christian must bleed for them.

"All this, I say, they suffer to pass on, which is proved by their open acts, and even encourage them in it, when they come to the sacrament or supper, as if they were members of Christ; and by this they show that they are in darkness, for they love not the brethren; for if they had any love for them, they would pull them out of the fire. (Jude xxiii.) And since they neglect to do this, and much rather comfort them with the holy token of the broken body and blood of Christ; and thus they are also manslaughterers, or murderers, for they lead their souls onward to death, under a false comfort; so that they imagine all is well with them, in the midst of their fleshly pursuits; and thus they rest in a deceitful security, till death overtakes them, and bears them to eternity, where they shall knock and say: 'Lord, we have eaten and drank in Thy presence, (the supper,) and on the streets (or meeting-houses) hast Thou taught us;' but He shall answer: 'Depart from Me for I know you not.' (Luke xiii.)

"Thirdly, brotherly love, when joined with Divine love, is of such a nature, that when the brethren meet together, they converse about the state of their souls, of their duty to God, and subduing themselves; of daily self-denial, and their increase in holiness, without which no man can see the Lord (Hebrew xii.); of the daily dangers with which they see themselves surrounded; and comforting one another; strengthening themselves in faith; that they

may add to their faith virtue ; and to virtue knowledge ; and to knowledge temperance ; and to temperance patience ; and to patience godliness ; and to godliness brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness charity ; for if these things be in them and abound, they make them that they shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (2d Peter i.)

“But as nothing of this is seen in the present Mennonite Society, but rather the reverse, with both teachers and hearers, as every godly person may see ; so that, according to St. Peter’s doctrine, they must be blind, and ‘grope as if they had no eyes, and stumble at noonday as in the night ; and are in desolate places as dead men, for the way of peace they know not ; and there is no judgment in their goings ; they have made them crooked paths ; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.’ (Isaiah lix.) ‘For their vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah. Their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitter.’ (Deut. xxxii.)

My dear reader, do not pervert these words for me ; for Christ says (John xv.), that He is the true vine, and we the branches. Now, it is incontestible, if we are Christ’s disciples and branches in Him, that we must bear His spiritual fruits, and always produce the purifying wine of true holiness, and grow and increase therein, and receive from the fullness of Christ, and grace for grace ; for if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy ; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. (Rom. xi.) And all nature teaches us, that like begets its like, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and produceth the substance and fruit of the Spirit ; and thus we must know the tree by the fruit, the vine by the grapes, and the church by its members, whether they be fleshly or spiritual, whether the clusters be bitter or sweet, or whether the fruit is corrupt or good, for by the fruit the tree is known. (Math. vii.) And Christ, the spiritual vine, who stands in the midst of the church, bears spiritual branches, and they bring forth spiritual and sweet clusters, of which the purifying and holy wine is born, that the good fruits of the Spirit may be manifest, which are love, peace, joy, humility and patience, faith, hope, and true godliness, with self-denial. (Col. iii.)

"While, on the contrary, the prince of this world, or the poisonous and corrupt vine, stands in the spiritual Sodom, in the midst of the congregation or church of darkness, and puts forth such fleshly and sour branches, from his corrupt moisture or sap, which produces bitter clusters, of which is born the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps (Deut. xxxii.), namely, fleshly minded men, and members who bear the fruits of the flesh, which are, hatred, malice, wrath, strifes, seditions, emulations, drunkenness, revelings, fornication, adultery, cursing, swearing, lying, and deceiving, and coveting their neighbors' goods, having hearts overgrown with avarice, which is idolatry, and the root of all evil. (Gal. v.) They seek after great riches and honor in the world, which is also given to them, because they fall down and worship him, and serve him (Math. iv.), and testify by their works, what spirit they are of."

The remaining part of this chapter, is chiefly devoted to argument, which those who desire can peruse. We will not swell our work by its addition. Our object being to prove the condition of the church at the time spoken of, we would bespeak the reader's serious consideration of the arguments accompanying the attestations in the extracts quoted. We will yet add several extracts from the appendix to the "Illustrating Mirror," also written by John Herr, in the German language, and first published in the year 1827. The appendix gives a short account of his conversion, and call to the ministry. The extracts are taken from the first English edition, published in 1834.

On page 381, speaking of his early religious experience, he says: "At that time, I and some others assembled together at times, in order to admonish and strengthen one another in the love of God, and His word. For we saw clearly, by the light of Christ and His doctrine, that in Christendom there was a great apostacy from God, and that almost all flesh took its own way on the earth; for pride, vanity, lying and deceit, suing and going to law, party spirit, and striving for worldly superiority, increased in appearance from day to day, even among those who boast of a Christian faith, opposed to the use of weapons, offensive or defensive. They would not take the sword in hand against their enemies, but they bore it in their mouth against the opposite party, in order to overcome them. One party persecuted another

with invectives and calumny; so great a tongue-war and contention arising thereffom, that neighbor often detested neighbor, and friend, friend; for both parties strove by falsehood and misrepresentation to make themselves strong against the day of general election, which would decide the mighty contest. Considering all these things, one with another, by the doctrine and spirit of Christ, we perceived clearly, that not only the Protestant churches, and great sects who approve the use of the sword, but also those who style themselves indefensive, depend upon the arm of flesh, having their hearts turned away from the Lord; an evil greatly to be lamented. Ah, the vail of Moses is upon their heart, and remains untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which vail is done away in Christ. (2d Cor. iii.)

“ Together with these things, we observed the carnal, vain and haughty life of the baptized members, their living in the lusts of the world and of the flesh, which I often observed and experienced in my time; for I have been in company with the old, middle-aged, and young men (who, as they supposed, had received baptism upon their own confession), in drinking and rioting, where a person could hear nothing but the world, jests, folly, buffoonery and uninstrucive discourses; though we should let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. (Eph. iv.)

“ As regards myself, I am free to confess before God and man, that at that time I lived without God and His Word, and was going the broad way of the flesh that leadeth to destruction; this I have since felt in its full weight. At the same time, I was sensible that such baptized and defenseless members (as they styled themselves) were no more circumspect in their walk than myself, as was evidenced by their fruits; though by repentance they should already have risen through faith from dead works of the flesh, before they were baptized, and thus through faith have been buried by the baptism of their sins into the death of Christ, and consequently have walked with Him in newness of life. (Rom vi.) From all this we could plainly discover, that the teachers must be blind and asleep to their charge, at the time that it is their duty to watch; for they do not examine the subjects before baptism, whether they have been brought from death to life, and from the

bondage of sin, to the obedience of righteousness, so that, on account of the forgiveness of their sins, they may have the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But they baptize them while they are yet the servants of sin and death; hence no good fruit is to be expected, even after the baptism, as long as they remain unconverted. Therefore Christ says, either make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by his fruit. O, ye generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. (Math. xii.)

“Had the Mennonite teachers of our day possessed the Spirit of God, like Menno Simon, and carried out their doctrine to the same extent, we would never have separated from them. For he speaks of baptism as follows: “Attend to the Word of the Lord.” The Apostle Paul, who did not receive his gospel from man, but from God, informs us, that as Christ died and was buried, so we also should die unto our sins, and be buried with Christ in baptism; not that it behooves us to do this after baptism, but we must have commenced and accomplished all this beforehand, even as he says, if we are planted with Him to a like death, we shall have with Him a like resurrection, knowing that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be done away; for he that is dead is free from sin, and as Christ, having once died, and taken away sin, lives now unto God, so all true Christians die also unto their sins, and live unto God.”

Here follows another quotation from Menno Simon, and extracts from the 27th, 28th and 29th articles of faith, published by the early Mennonites, and has also been published in this country, by the early emigrants of the Mennonite persuasion. From these quotations and extracts, he shows that the Mennonites of that time had widely deviated from those whose name they bear. After this, he concludes as follows:

“Dear reader, observe how far the Mennonites have departed from their original principles. The separation of offending members is practiced very seldom; the shunning of the separated has fallen entirely into disuse, at least in our part of the world, as far as my information extends. The article last cited says, that it is incumbent upon the followers of Christ to take no part in the

administration of the magisterial office, or any branch of it. Now the Mennonites, though they may be unwilling to hold an office themselves, yet they assist others in getting into office, are free to sit in courts of justice, and pronounce sentence of guilty or not guilty upon prisoners arraigned at the bar, sue and go to law, repel force with force; and all in direct contrariety to the doctrine of Christ, and the principles of their own confession of faith, which I could abundantly illustrate with proof from the Holy Scriptures; nay, I have already explained it in my writings, and even teachers have frequently confessed to me, that this state of things ought not to be, and that they themselves had no such freedom. But notwithstanding all this, they leave the matter rest, and, with deep regret be it said, they proceed according to their former usage, not considering that they will have to render an account to God, when the blood of their hearers will be required at their hands.

"For-as-much as we clearly perceived, as above mentioned, that this Church was far departed from her first love, and from the fundamental principles of Christian faith, and had then fallen short of the true doctrine, so that most generally every one sought his own, and not the things of Jesus, which it is to be feared, is too much the case the present day in regard to all sects; therefore, I and several others were unable to see any other way, according to the tenor of the word of God, than with Noah, Abraham, the prophets and true Israelites, the apostles and witnesses of the truth, to separate ourselves from all unrighteousness and false doctrine, and in our secession to abide alone in God and His Word, and to pray to God that He would grant to us, and all sincere souls, a greater and greater knowledge of the way of truth, which is Christ, and that He would send forth faithful laborers into His harvest."

These three witnesses give a pitiful account of the church in their day. C. Kauffman was born in 1759, and his manuscript is dated 1806. A. Landis was born in 1781, and John Herr in 1782. They all three lived in the midst of Mennonite communities, and their social intercourse was chiefly with that class of people. I have said before, that Kauffman withdrew from the church before his death, but how long I do not know. I do not think he ever united with any other church. He had, therefore, full knowledge of the doings of the church and its members, for the last

twenty-five years of the last, and the early part of the present century. Landis and Herr, with some knowledge of the close of the last, had full knowledge of the first twenty or thirty years of the present. Landis became a member of the church in 1802, and withdrew from it about 1809 or '10.

I have before observed, that the believer receives no merit or righteousness from the Church, or from the observance of any ordinance or duty which he performs in it. All the merit or righteousness he can, or does possess, is by virtue of what Christ has done, and is imputed to him through grace, on account of his faith. Christ promised the Holy Spirit to every believer, and this Spirit begets a new, Divine, and heavenly life, in the soul of every one who receives it. The receiving of this Spirit and life, is what constitutes the new birth, regeneration or conversion; and without this there is, and can be no salvation. God has therefore especial care and regard for this life, and has appointed means for its preservation and security. For this purpose the Church, its officers, and all its duties and ordinances, were appointed of God. It is His will that in this, His children might enjoy peace and love, with comfort, and a happy security. Social and secular duties bring every believer unavoidably into contact with the world, and they are thereby exposed, more or less, to influences deleterious to this Divine life; but God has ordained and built up the Church, as a means to counteract this deleterious influence; and has so organized it, and given such commands, and prescribed such duties, which, if faithfully observed, and adhered to, will effectually secure the end and object which God has designed. The Church is a community of believers, which forms a place of retreat, whereunto they can retire, for comfort, refreshment, and enjoyment, which tends to strengthen, build up, establish, and confirm them in the true living faith. This end cannot be obtained in the society of unbelievers. Therefore God has given special commands and directions, to exclude all unbelievers from the Church, or assembly of the righteous. "The wicked shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous." (1st Psalm.) Christ did not authorize the reception of any but believers into the Church. He commanded the apostles to baptize those who receive their teaching. Any others would be received without warrant. This would make an assembly of true believers. But Christ knew that in our

weakness some would be admitted who were not true believers, or disciples indeed; and that such would exert a deleterious influence, or neutralize the influence of the Church; and therefore gave instructions that if they trespass, and will not hear the instruction of the Church, they shall be separated, and held as heathen men and publicans. Again, Christ says: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." (John x.) Further on in this chapter, Christ says: "I am the door." I suppose no one will dispute, that the sheep-fold He has in view, is the visible Church. Does not this single expression of Christ show very clearly, how exceedingly careful the ministry of the Church should be, not to receive any as members into the Church, who are not truly converted? for this is the amount of entering in through Christ.

The Holy Ghost, through the apostles, also represents the Church as being a united, holy body. Paul says of the believers, they are by one Spirit baptized into one body. In Acts ii. it is said of those who believed, that they "continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine," and in chap. iv. it is said: "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and one soul." Whenever any symptoms of divisions or dissensions became apparent, Paul re-proved them sharply; and said they should all be of the same mind, and speak the same thing; and be *perfectly* joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. (1st Cor. i.) Again Paul represents the Church as an unleavened lump, and declares that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Cor. v., and Eph. v., he says: "Christ gave Himself for the Church, that He might sanctify it, and present it to Himself a glorious Church, having neither spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it might be holy and blameless."

Now, when the Holy Ghost represents the Church in this light, it is evidently the will of God it should be so. For this reason we find the directions so plentifully given, for the Church to purge itself of every person whose life and actions, or practice, tends in any way to corruption or carnality. To the Romans, Paul says (xvi.): "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." In 2d Thess. iii., Paul says: "Now, we *command* you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus

Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." In Cor. v., where there was but one unclean person amongst them, he told them their glorying was not good, and asked them whether they did not know that a *little* leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Again, if any man will not obey his word by that epistle, they shall note them, and have no company with them.

God's design in these plain declarations and commands, evidently is to keep the Church a pure and holy body, so that it will serve the purpose for which it was designed. Put out, and keep out, all the thieves and robbers, so that the sheep and lambs of Christ may have a pleasant and secure retreat to retire to, to be fed and enjoy themselves. To this end, all carnal enjoyments, and evil passions and emotions, are commanded to be put away from amongst them. Envy, hatred, malice, wrath, strife, etc., etc., with foolish talking and jesting, and, "let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers." No bitterness, clamor, evil speaking, or malice. (Eph. iv.) These all belong to the destructive element of the unconverted world, and if it should be admitted into the Church, what advantage would the Church be of?

It is an unpleasant duty to speak of the Old Mennonite church in the manner I have done in this chapter, and one I would very willingly have omitted, as I know it will be offensive to many, whose good will and esteem my natural disposition would lead me to court. It may be said, what good can come from relating the doings of those who have long since gone to the tomb, and are awaiting the time when all that are in the grave shall come forth, and receive their final reward. There I would very willingly leave them, and not say one word about them, if a sense of duty did not urge me to it.

A number of the associates of John Herr, in the early part of this century, at the time when they organized themselves into a church, had withdrawn from the Old Mennonite church, and they were very severely reflected on, for the course they had taken. It was charged, that it was a contentious and schismatic spirit, which influenced them; and that they were selfish and self-righteous. We also hear the same charge made against our church or brethren

of the present day, that it is only selfishness, that keeps us from uniting. This charge we would very willingly bear, and commit all to Him who judgeth righteously. Indeed, I know that instead of removing this feeling toward us, I will likely much increase it; but hope the work will fall into the hands of some who will give it serious consideration. This I will say here: If those who organized the church were actuated by the spirit which is attributed to them, then all their labor was vain; and if we now are under the influence charged to us, our situation is truly pitiful, and we of all men most miserable. But I hope to be able to show to every candid mind, that they had no other way to pursue, and that they acted in the true fear of God. The question of whether John Herr and his associates were justifiable in organizing the Reformed Mennonite church, rests entirely upon that of whether the Old Mennonite church was at the time a dead or a living body. If it was a true, living Church of God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and led by it, then the others were not justifiable in the course they took, and it could not be the Holy Spirit which led them to it, but much more an anti-christian spirit. The Holy Spirit leads all those who are under its influence together, and never separates them. But if the Old Mennonite church was dead, then they were fully justified in the course they took; as much so as the reformers were in the sixteenth century.

In speaking of the Mennonites, I wish to be distinctly understood, as referring to the latter part of the last and the early part of the present century. In speaking of them as dead, I do not wish to be understood as looking upon them as wicked or ungodly, in the common acceptation of the word, but as carnal, unconverted, and destitute of the Holy Spirit; of which class we have amongst us in our day, a large number, who make no profession or pretension to any religion. They are good, moral citizens, faithfully fulfilling their moral obligations. Some are more loose and careless, and do not discharge their duties so well, but still not accounted wicked or bad men. But they are all spiritually dead. Their sports, enjoyments, intercourse and amusements are all carnal. This I think was the condition of the Old Mennonite church at the time alluded to. From the traditional account I have had of it, from persons who lived at the time, and knew and saw what

they spoke of, I cannot conscientiously say I believe differently. The accounts Kauffman, Landis and Herr give, fully confirms it.

The Catholic church always claimed regular descent from the apostles; that they were the only true Church, and there could be no other. They claimed to be established on the true apostolical doctrine, that they were led by the apostolical spirit, and to be walking in true apostolical order. Menno Simon, and most of his brethren, had belonged to the Roman church, and admitted that the outward organization had descended from the apostles, but that they were, nevertheless, spiritually dead, and utterly denied that they walked in such order, as they claimed. The corruptions and abominations that existed amongst the Catholics, first disturbed the reformers, and led them to protest, and contend against the disorder they perceived, and sought to bring about a reformation in the church; but the heads of the church resisted all their efforts, so that they had no alternative left, but either remain and be partakers with them, or withdraw and protest against them. Menno and his brethren went further than the other reformers. They insisted on a more radical change than any of the others; a change not only of doctrine and mode of worship, but one which would pervade their whole course of life also; a change which would transform them from a carnal to a spiritual life, and which would make them new creatures. This they held essential to salvation, and it was the state to which a true conversion would bring man, and where this fruit did not exist, there could be no true conversion. All those who were thus thoroughly converted, and were made partakers of this Divine life, were by the Spirit united, and made, or became one heart and one soul; and as a consequence there could be but one Church. In the idea that there could be but one Church, they agreed with the Catholics, but based their ideas on different grounds from what they did. This the reformers generally denied, or if they did not in the early part of the reformation, they all imbibed the principle in time. The Mennonites held their ground throughout the sixteenth, and the greater part of the seventeenth century. Holding the doctrine of a single united Church, the Mennonites could not consistently have left the Catholic church, unless they believed it to be apostate, and dead. I have before remarked, that at the time of Menno's conversion, there was a church in existence which

he recognized as being this true united Christian Church ; founded and based on pure apostolical doctrine ; whose members led pure and holy lives, consistent with the doctrine they professed. To this church he united himself, and devoted all his powers to its advancement, and the propagation of its doctrine and principles.

To the position that the Catholic church was at this time apostate, and dead, I suppose the Mennonites will all agree ; but to the idea of the unity of the Church, or that there can be but one true Church, I know they will not agree ; yet they cannot deny that it was the doctrine of Menno, and the brethren of his day. The Reformed Mennonites hold the same doctrine which Menno and his brethren did, with regard to the unity of the Church, and that there can be but one true Church. Then, if the Mennonite church, at the commencement of the present century, was *the Church of Christ*, the same as they admit it was in the sixteenth century, John Herr and his associates, by their own profession, did wrong, and were in no wise justifiable in organizing another. The Holy Spirit could not have led them to it, and consequently the work could not have been of God, and must have been to Him an anti-christian, and an idolatrous work, and an abomination in His sight.

We desire to be distinctly understood in regard to what constitutes a dead, or a living Church. We have said, we hold that the Catholic church, at the time of the Reformation, was dead, and also that we believe that the Mennonite church, at the close of the last and beginning of the present century, was dead. Although this would in one sense place them in the same relation to God, and the influence of the Divine Spirit, yet we by no means think, or hold, that the Mennonite church was as corrupt, as deeply steeped in iniquity, and as devilishly wicked, as the Catholic church was at the time alluded to. We hold that all men are by nature dead, and that they remain dead, until they are brought by true repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, into possession of the Holy Spirit, by which they are made alive. Of those who are thus dead, there is a very great difference in their outward demeanor, and conduct. Some are moral, decent, honorable, and, so far as moral virtues are concerned, are unblamable. Others are immoral, indecent, violent, and wicked. They nevertheless stand in the same relation to God with regard

to promise. . God has included all under unbelief, and alike says to all: "*Ye must be born again.*" The life they lead is a carnal life, and serves to gratify the flesh, and proves that they are dead. The most moral and virtuous have their enjoyments and gratification in those things of the world; others may have them in things more vicious; but they all alike flow from the same source, and are said to be after the flesh.

Those who are converted possess the Holy Spirit, which leads them to deny that selfish principle which prompts them to live after the flesh, and to crucify it, or as Paul says, Rom. viii.: "Through the spirit mortify the deeds of the body." The whole gospel so plainly makes this distinction and division, that no person sincerely desiring to understand it, can mistake its meaning. The same sentence in Gal. v., where Paul says: "Murderers, adulterers, fornicators, and drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" also says: "Those who indulge in hatred, variance, emulations, wraths, strife, and revelings, shall not inherit the Kingdom." They all proceed from the same source, viz., the flesh. Again, in Eph. iv. and v., Paul says: "Foolish talking and jesting are not convenient, and they shall let no corrupt communication proceed out of their mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." The apostle pleads so earnestly, and in such paternal solicitude, Phil. i.: "*Only* let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Jesus Christ." Surely nothing that tends to minister gratification to the flesh, becometh the gospel.

But those who are converted, and possess the Spirit, have put off the old man, who is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and being renewed in the spirit of their mind, have put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. These feel the deleterious and destructive influence of everything that ministers to the gratification of the flesh, and, consequently, flee, mortify and crucify it, so that they may preserve the spiritual life which God had imparted to them, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The whole Scriptures teach, that those who live after the flesh are dead, and those who are alive, live after the Spirit, and flee and mortify fleshly lusts.

As those who live after the flesh are dead, so all associations or societies of carnal or unconverted people are also dead. It matters

not what the object or design of the institution is, or what it calls itself, or its pretensions, if the members that compose it are destitute of the Holy Spirit, then the *body* cannot possess it, and must be dead. Every person may be known by his fruits, whether he is spiritual or carnal. A spiritually minded person will bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and a carnally minded one, will bring carnal fruits. So will, also, a spiritual association or living Church, bring forth living spiritual fruits, but a carnal one will be disobedient, and show its carnality. The Church, as we have already said, is a community of believers; and if believers, then they are spiritual, for all believers possess the Spirit. Then the fruits of the Church must be spiritual, and will beget spiritual children also. But, now I would ask, can a person be spiritual, and yet be disobedient? Christ and Paul teach us, that the Spirit leads its possessor into all truth. Then, when we see persons walking in a carnal and fleshly manner, we cannot believe that they possess the Spirit, whatever they may profess. Those members of the church, who Kauffman, Landis and Herr speak of, could surely not have had the Spirit of Christ. Paul says, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. Christ also says, those who do not keep His sayings, do not love Him; and John says, if we say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. Now, these persons did certainly not keep Christ's sayings; they did certainly walk in darkness; and surely this could not have been so, if they had possessed the spirit of Christ. Reflect upon this, every sincere and piously disposed soul, and see whether your own conscience will not tell you, it cannot be so, or else the words of Paul and Christ are not true. Their conduct, life and actions all go to show that they were carnal, and dead. The children of God could then have no retreat there, or place of retirement for edification and comfort; in short, they not only could not be edified, but they could not live in such a body; because it was a mass of leaven, and nothing could be in contact with it, without becoming leavened. A child of God cannot live without obeying Christ, and in that church it was not possible they could do so. Poor Abraham Landis, half awakened, half enlightened, and half willing, as he for a time was, could not live in comfort amongst them.

That the traditional history or account I have given of the Mennonites of the times referred to, agrees perfectly with what Kauffman, Landis and Herr have written, is evident to every one; and that it is true, my own personal observation fully confirms. I am too young to have any knowledge of what transpired in the quite early part of the present century, but I have had considerable intercourse and distinct recollection of what might be called the earlier part of the century, and it goes to confirm the truth of what I have before said.

Every one will agree, that if the individual does not possess the Holy Spirit, he is dead; and I suppose no one will contend, that a man may possess the Holy Spirit, and yet walk in carnality, after the flesh. If he possesses the Holy Spirit, he also possesses the love of God, and this will constrain him to obey Christ. Therefore, if he does not obey Christ, it is conclusive evidence that he is dead. We hold the same with the Church. If it does not possess the Holy Spirit, it is dead. The Church as a body cannot possess the Holy Spirit, without the members individually possess it. But now, when so many of the members walked in such a carnal manner as has been related, it surely cannot be pretended that they possessed the Holy Spirit, or were any thing else but spiritually dead. But, it may be said, the members did not all walk in this loose and carnal manner; there were many who walked circumspectly, and whose deportment was blameless. This we do not dispute; but to prove that they were living members in Christ, they must show by their obedience to Christ and the apostles, that they really do possess the Spirit. The Spirit would have led them to reprove offenders, in a scriptural manner; and if they would not receive their reproof, they would have to put away from among them those wicked and disorderly persons. Paul says, purge out the leaven, and commands them, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly. Now, in the face of these express commands of the holy Apostle Paul, given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, how can any one claim for these circumspect and devout members, that they were under the influence of the life-giving Spirit? They must have been asleep. If they ever were at all awakened to a sense of sin, and righteousness, they must again have fallen into the sleep of carnal security. There can be no pretension set up for them, that

they were obedient, and, consequently, neither can there be any that they possessed the love or Spirit of Christ. If any one did, by-times, raise the voice of warning, and denounce their practices, instead of rising and supporting the effort at reform, they rose up and suppressed those who made the protest, and supported, or protected the offenders from scriptural reproof. Now where is there room to base a pretense, that spiritual life could have existed there?

I do not wish to be understood, that I think the mass of these people, amongst whom were my own ancestors, were a bad people, or that I charge any acts against them, such as historians assert, in regard to iniquity and diabolical wickedness, as existing amongst the Catholics, or anything so vile as the imprisonment, torturings and burnings which the reformers practiced against those who dissented from them. On the contrary, I believe the mass of them to have been good citizens; moral, upright, and faithful in their moral and social duties. But this makes no one a Christian. It is the absence of the Christian virtues, of obedience to gospel commands and duties, which their own confession of faith and doctrine require as fruits evincing the possession of Spirit and life. The absence of these fruits of the Spirit, and the impossibility that any one could obey Christ and the apostles, and be a member of that body, is the ground upon which we base our conclusion that the church was destitute of the Holy Spirit, and *dead*.

The Church of Christ is called the House of God, and is a home for His children to dwell in. So long as this Church is truly God's house, so long His children can dwell in it in safety. So long as the Holy Spirit is in the Church, so long it will be such a house, and a safe abode. But when the Spirit departs from it, it ceases to be the Church or house of God, and a child of God can no longer preserve its life in it. Now, I hold, that it was not possible that a child of God could live in the Mennonite church, at the time referred to. A child of God cannot live without keeping the commandments of Christ, or doing the will of the Father in Heaven. This will and command is given, that where one trespasses against another, they shall reprove them; if they will not hear, take one or two more with them, and seek to bring them to repentance; and if he will not hear these, tell the Church, and if they will not hear the Church, then regard them

as heathen men and publicans. This is the command of Christ, and will of God; and a child of God cannot live without obeying it. But if the Church does not sustain its members who desire to obey this command, they cannot do it. The will of God is, that His children shall not walk in the way of the flesh, or according to their own will, but after the Spirit, and in the Divine virtues. Those who do not obey are declared to be a leaven, and walking disorderly. The will of God, as declared by Paul, is, that the children of God shall purge out of their communion, or assembly, all such leaven. But when the Church will not sustain one who would desire to do this, they could not obey, or do the will of God. Further, the will of God, as declared by Paul, and commanded in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is, that His children shall withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly. When their preachers so far sanctioned the disorder spoken of, as to retain these members in the church and communion, how could any one do the will of God in this particular, and be a member of this body? They *must* leave the church, or disobey God.

John Herr and his associates could therefore not possibly enter that church, if they possessed the love of God, or His fear in their hearts. The very first step would have to be one of hypocrisy before God and man. In receiving the members of the church as brethren, they would have to acknowledge before God and man, that they believe them to be regenerated children of God, walking in love, and led by the Spirit of God. Knowing what their walk and conversation was, they could not possibly do this. They had, therefore, no other way left to them, but either remain isolated, and without the comfort and advantages of church fellowship, and church ordinances, or else do as they did, organize themselves into a church, and observe the order and duties commanded of God to His Church and children. They believed themselves called of God to organize themselves into a church, and observe the duties and order which God had prescribed for His Church to walk in. But, it may be said, there have dark and shameful deeds occurred in this church since its organization. It was once said to me: "John Herr proposed to build a church which should be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but there have many spots and wrinkles occurred in it." We freely admit, and have never sought to conceal the fact, that shameful

and grievous lapses and falls have occurred amongst its members, but the church has ever promptly dealt with them, according to the Divine command, and minor offenses or carnal misconduct, have ever received strict and faithful attention from the ministry, where anything has come to their knowledge. We do not censure the Old Mennonite church because these things have occurred amongst their members, but because they did not deal with such offenders according to what God's Word directs. When the church administers scriptural reproof to offenders without respect to persons, the offense leaves no spot or wrinkle on the church; but when they fail to do this, the whole body is justly blamable, and chargable with the deed. Paul very severely censures the Corinthian Church, for their toleration of the fornicator amongst them. The one sinner tolerated amongst them, would defile and make them all guilty. Afterward Paul commends them for their obedience, and the zeal they manifested in the discharge of their duty, and says: "In all things ye approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." Thus, when the church labors, and deals with offenders as the Word of God directs, it approves itself to be free in the matter; and no one can justly charge them with any fault. The church has washed itself by the Word, and is blameless. But when they do not purge out the leaven, knowing it to exist, the whole body becomes leavened and justly blamable. And when Paul beseeches and commands, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from *every* brother that walks disorderly, and when such disorder as drinking and carousing, plays and idle mirth exists, and there is no withdrawal or purging out follows, how can the church be free from blame, or becoming altogether leavened?

The carnal works which I have spoken of as having learned by tradition, I have from so many sources, and from such authority, that I cannot help but believe it to be true. The whole church and the world, well knew of their existence; and yet they were suffered to exist from year to year, for several generations. The carnal conduct which Kauffman, Landis, and Herr speak of, was well known to every one who chose to acquaint themselves with it; yet their ministers tolerated them as members, and admitted them to communion. How could it be that the whole lump was not defiled? The carelessness of the ministers in inquiring into the

experience of those they received into the church, as Landis and Kauffman testify, shows very plainly that they were unfaithful porters, and had little concern for the souls of those whom it was their duty to care for. The truth is, there was no evidence of life here, amongst either teachers or lay members. In my youth, I was considerably amongst them, and all I ever heard was light, carnal conversation, about the world and worldly things. One feature of their social intercourse especially attracted my attention, which was their habit of telling stories, joking, and relating sharp tricks and sayings, which was attended with much idle mirth. This I observed amongst old and young, and at which the old generally were the most apt. Paul says these things are not convenient, and our conversation shall be calculated to minister grace to the hearers. Young and ignorant as I was, this made the impression on my mind that there can be no life here.

There are yet people living (and of their own members too), who know that drinking to excess, revelry, strife and envyings, were very common amongst members of the church; and that the church generally (ministers amongst the rest), knew it, and no notice was taken of it. They knew that foolish talking and jesting, with idle mirth, was common amongst all classes; that generally the best exercises was talking about the world and worldly matters, and such a thing as a conversation about Divine things, about their own experience, how they were exercised between themselves and God, exhorting and encouraging one another to be earnest and steadfast, or exercising themselves in prayer, was in their social meetings an extremely rare thing, if it occurred at all.

The Old Mennonite church, in our vicinity, is in our day more sober and temperate in their walk and deportment, than they were at the time we have specially under consideration (the early part of the present century), and I have frequently heard, that the younger members of the church assert, that in the extract which we have made from the "Way to Heaven," Herr writes what is not true; and that they know nothing of such things existing among them. How far this may be true at the present day, I do not know. I am not conversant with their doings, and cannot say; but I have reason to believe, that there is a great reformation in manner and deportment amongst them. I freely bear testimony to the moral worth, good citizenship, kindness, benevolence, and

general worthiness, of many of their members; for whom I have a very high esteem, and would on no account wantonly grieve or wound their feelings. And why should they be grieved? I conscientiously believe it to be true, and if I am in error, I beg of them to convince me by the Word of God, and I will freely retract. But I believe it my duty to vindicate the truth, and I beg of every one to divest themselves of all prejudice and partiality, and consider the matter in the fear of the Lord. I have made no assertion lightly, and without due consideration, and am willing to bear the consequences. I think those things which I have had most special reference to, and those most aggravated, have been done away; but there are old members of the church, who, if they would be candid, could relieve the minds of their younger brethren in this matter; and if they wish to tell the truth in relation to it, must admit it. They know that it was a common thing for their members to sit on juries; that it was not an uncommon thing for them to have law suits, and some of them being lovers of strong drink. I myself, know of different persons, who were commonly reported at the time as addicted to drunkenness, and also seen them intoxicated. Yet they were members till their death; and to my own certain knowledge, their habits were well known to the preachers. Of their being spectators at race-ridings, I have seen myself in my younger days; and of helping to elect men to such office and position, as they themselves would consent was not consistent for them as Christians to hold, it is scarcely necessary to speak, because it is yet very common amongst them; but not so general as it was then. But at that time they did not only vote, but were active politicians in their districts, causing bitterness and strife; which I have myself seen, and know to be true; and their elder brethren cannot deny it.

I think the ministers at that time generally admitted that the church had degenerated. This both Landis and Herr say they admitted to them. But I do not suppose they thought she was *dead*. Jacob Stauffer, in his book, speaking of the condition of the church, represents that she stood in good condition, and was faithful to her principles, until after the year 1800, and that the faithful element still had the ascendancy, until about the year 1830, after which the carnal element became ascendant; and

disorder, discord, and confusion prevailed to such an extent, that he admits the church had become quite degenerate. In this he is in error, for according to all the information I can gather, the church was very far departed from her original principles and practice, long before the close of the last century; and at the time he gives, that it totally departed from the grounds of faith and practice, by which he and others were separated from her communion, there had actually been some reformation in outward things, and some things being introduced, which had long fallen out of use.

Was then John Herr, Landis, and their associates, justifiable in organizing the Reformed Mennonite church? If the old church was dead, they were unquestionably justifiable; as much so as any reformer in the days of Luther and the reformation. That it was dead, Herr and his associates firmly believed, and we think we have proven with very good reason. All admit that if a church have lost the Holy Spirit, it must be dead, as any body without a spirit, is dead. If they possessed the Spirit, spiritual fruits and works must attest its presence. "By their fruits ye shall know them." If they had possessed the Spirit, it would have shed the love of God abroad in their hearts, and this would have prompted them to obey Christ. If they had a faith, which was of God's operation, it would have been a fruitful living one, and testified its existence, by its works. But as their works were carnal, dead works, it proves that they had neither faith, love, nor the Spirit of life. If even the members did not all indulge in such carnal deeds, as have been named of some, their ministers knew it well, and every intelligent member knew it; and as they did not reprove and purge the church of these offenders, it is proof that they themselves were destitute of the love of God, and of His Holy Spirit, and consequently dead. The end and object for which the Church was instituted, could in no wise be accomplished in it. Its influence was destructive of the Divine life, which the Church was ordained for the purpose of cherishing and preserving.

The reformers held that the Catholic church was dead, and there was no better evidence of this, than their bitter hatred and persecution of all those who sought to reform her. Almost all the reformers sought first to work a reformation in the church, and

only abandoned her, when they found she resisted all their efforts to help her. So it was with the Mennonite church. Kauffman says, he soon found that the preachers observed him very closely, when he gave them a little to understand his views of the condition of the church. So Abraham Landis, and his associates, also protested against the abuses that had insinuated themselves into the church. The preachers could not deny it, but would not lend their help to reform. There may have been many more of whom I have no knowledge, who sought a reformation. Francis Herr, of this vicinity, became awakened in the last century, and after exhausting every means to make his brethren sensible of the error of their ways, he was necessitated to withdraw from their fellowship, as all his protestations were disregarded and opposed. For many years he privately and publicly protested and cried aloud against the iniquity. The church would not hear, but slandered and defamed him, to drown the voice that sounded in their ears, as well as to neutralize its effects on others. When Landis and his companions labored with the bishops, none were willing to stand in the gap. They said if one did try to build up, another would pull down. They could not withstand the truth, but were not willing to enter the breach, and seek to heal it. There was no life here, and, consequently, no feeling could be excited, or impression made. When John Herr rose up, and privately and publicly, by speaking and writing, sought to alarm and awaken them to a sense of their misery, he was met by calumny and detraction on every side. If there had been life, the probing of their wounds would have caused smarting; but they were dead, and all the labor of love only caused enmity and hatred.

There was, therefore, no way by which Herr and his companions could obey Christ, and keep His Word, in this church. Without obedience to Christ, they knew they could not be saved. God had given them light and life, and His will was they should preserve it; but this they saw they could not do in such a charnel house as this. Moreover, being children of God, they were led by the Spirit of God; and this would never lead them into such a destructive element. As God has designed His Church as a home for the comfort and security of His children, and as there was no such home or retreat within their knowledge, to which they could repair for the enjoyment of the privileges and blessings which God

has provided in His Church, I think every candid mind must admit, they were entirely right and justifiable in the course they pursued.

But now as this church is still in existence, and has been changed in its outer aspect, people often ask, why we cannot now unite with them. And we frequently hear it said by their friends, that it is only selfishness in us, that keeps us from uniting with them. It therefore becomes necessary to inquire, whether it is possible they can now be a living Church. This is very clear, that they and we cannot both be living Churches, led and guided by the Holy Spirit. Christ cannot be divided, neither can His spouse be; therefore there cannot be two Churches in the same place. The Holy Spirit leads together, and unites everything which is under Its influence.

I suppose every one will admit, that a carnal, unconverted person, taking up the outward duties of a Christian, will not make him a Christian. No outward work or thing, of whatever kind or character, can make him a child of God. Repentance, and faith in Christ, and that alone can make him a child of God; and without this, all Christian duties, ordinances, ceremonies, and services, will leave him carnal and destitute of the power to become a son of God. It is the same with regard to any association of unconverted people. They may assume the name of a Church, may have their officers, bishops, presbyters, deacons, or whatever appertains to a Church, and strictly conform to the duties prescribed for the Church; but still, it cannot be a Church, if its members have not been converted, and received the Holy Spirit, by which they are made one. The name of Church would not make them one; and whatever they would do, they would still be unconverted, carnal, destitute of the Spirit, and, in truth, *dead*. Can any service, or anything they do, be wrought through the Spirit of God? Surely not, if they do not possess the Spirit. Can any blessings attend their ministrations? Again, I say, surely not! The association is impious, without any command or countenance of God, and all its ministrations are blasphemous! There is no way for any person who is destitute of the Holy Spirit and Divine life, to obtain it, but by true repentance and faith in Christ. In this way, every unconverted and spiritually dead person, can be brought to life and spirituality. But a dead church

cannot be brought to life, because it cannot repent, or believe; therefore it cannot obtain life. A living Church has its life from its members. They were made alive by faith in Christ, and the Spirit in the members unites their hearts together, and makes them one body; and the life is the union of the Spirit, which each individual soul possesses. Every soul who is thus brought by repentance and faith in Christ to this Divine and Spiritual life, when they are joined to the Church in the outward bond, is also by the inward bond, or fusion of the Divine Spirit which they have received, with the spirit of the brethren in the Church, made one heart and soul with them. Such a Church may unwittingly receive into their body an unconverted person; but he does not possess the Spirit; and he cannot receive it from the Church, and exerts a deleterious influence there, and is what Christ calls a thief and a robber. Whenever his true character becomes manifest, the Church will rid itself of him.

Now, if a church cannot repent and believe, how is it possible that a dead church can be made alive, and spiritual? You may perhaps say: "If the members all repent and believe in Christ, they will all be spiritual, and the body spiritual and alive." But this would be an unscriptural mode of procedure. There is neither precept or example of such a thing in the Scripture. Nor is it possible to bring such an association of individuals to repentance and conversion at the same time; for these things are not wrought after the will of man, but of God, who does all things after the counsel of His own will. But there is still another, and an insuperable barrier to such a thing, as any such dead church being brought to life and light as a body. Every individual member of such a body might become converted, and brought to life, but not as a member of such church. They must first repent, and in repentance they will forsake their sins, and this impious, hypocritical, and blasphemous association, and pretended worship, preaching, or whatever, would surely be among the first that they would forsake and abandon. No person could regard their union with, or any office or calling in such a body, as of Divine authority, and would consequently have to abandon it. Then the body would be dissolved, even if it were possible for them all to come to repentance and life at the same time. Whatever number, few or many, that would be brought to repentance and life, would

have to withdraw from this body, as from that for which God has ever expressed great abhorrence.

A church which was once in the true light and life, but has apostatized and become a dead body, stands in precisely the same position. It is carnal and dead, and the same obstacles are in the way of resuscitation; and however long the organization may be kept up, and whatever outward reformation they may make, it is still only a carnal reformation; their ordinances are carnal ordinances, and their worship is a spiritless worship, because they themselves are carnal, and can bring forth no other than carnal fruits.

Let any one reflect. If a church declines, and dies, but the organization is still kept up, but is a dead body, what is it else but an idolatrous body? Whatever their ideas or imaginations may be, is it possible that the Lord has drawn one member to it? Neither is it possible that one minister, preacher, deacon, or whatever, was appointed or called to serve in that body by the Lord. How then can they come to life, but by repentance and forsaking what they have assumed, contrary to the will of God?

A late bishop of the Mennonite church, confessed before he united himself with the church, that he knew it had become degenerate, or decayed. Whether he then meant that it was dead, I do not know; but suppose not. Most likely he meant only in a state of decline. In conversation with a friend, who objected to uniting with the church, on account of her decadency, he observed, that such people as see this, should not walk away from her, but join to, and labor to restore and build her up. When the church receives a member, it testifies by the act, that it believes him to have been received by Christ, and all the members receive them as brother or sister in Christ. They, who are received, also lay off a testimony that they receive the members of the church as brothers and sisters in Christ, and the church as the spouse and bride of Christ. Our custom is, to make known to the church in the vicinity where the applicant for reception resides, that their request is to be received into the church, and the members are individually and privately examined, whether they have full confidence, and can receive the party as a brother or sister. Inquiry is also made of the candidates for reception, whether they have full confidence in all the members, and no

knowledge of anything which would forbid them to receive all as brothers and sisters. It has frequently happened, that matters were brought to light which required correction; but no reception could take place till full satisfaction was given by the party at fault, so that they could receive each other in full confidence. But how could this person lay off this testimony before God and man, that he receives the members of this church as brothers and sisters, when he knew of things in existence which he could not approve? Would it not have been more consistent, and his duty, to tell the heads of the church, there are things existing amongst you which are not Scriptural, and which I cannot approve; and I cannot unite with you until I am better reconciled? Then, if the complaint is just, and there is life with the ministry, they must remove the obstacle. If the complainant was in error, then the duty would be to make him sensible of his error, and bring about a reconciliation in that way, before a reception could take place. But whilst this solemn rite of water baptism was administering, the open testimony of receiving one another as brother and sister laid off, and then sealed by that solemn token of unity in the breaking of the bread, and drinking of the cup of the Lord, there must have been in the heart of this person a *mental reservation*.

The reformation, which has taken place in the church since the withdrawal of Landis and his friends, show that they had just cause of complaint. If there had been no degeneracy, there would have been no room for reformation. The bishop who took up Landis, said, they had formerly greeted one another with the kiss of peace, but it had gradually gone out of custom, or practice. Now they again exercise it to a certain extent; and feet-washing had also been omitted, but is now again practiced. These were among the things complained of, but the preachers would not support them. Had the preachers and bishops freely and fully acknowledged their delinquency, and declared their determination to stand by the Word, and lead the flock according to Christ's teaching, and the church humbled herself and acknowledged her sin, Landis and his party would not have left them. Then there would have been evidence of life; but they withstood them, and refused to obey the Word, so that those who desired reform could not conclude otherwise, than that they are dead.

In all natural systems, organizations, policies, or any carnal affairs, there may be very gradual changes made, and perfection arrived at by very slow degrees. But in spiritual works, it is not so. We are, and must be, either carnal or spiritual. If the degeneracy in the church was not a total one, so that there was susceptibility of restoration to spiritual health and vigor, there must first have been inward light, which would bring repentance and confession of sin, and a complete and entire return to obedience, and walk in love, and a production of spiritual fruit. Those who would not humble themselves, and submit to the commands of Christ, would have to be rejected. If their walk was disorderly, they would have to be withdrawn from. The trumpet would have to give a certain sound, and light and darkness have to be separated. The thing of a gradual reformation in a church which has degenerated, is a carnal idea, and can never effect anything but a carnal reformation. In the reformation we have under consideration, which took place in the old Mennonite church, the old members who indulged in their cups, could not be prevailed on to deny themselves; and the reformation went on around them, and they continued their course, and remained members till they died. Those who took part in politics, also continued to vote, and take part in such affairs. Those who felt it too much cross to exercise the kiss of peace, or practice washing feet, were permitted to omit them. Gradually, a young and more submissive element grew up, and the conformity became more general. Thus a gradual reformation is wrought without, as Kauffman observes, "treading very heavily upon one another's toes." If the preachers and elders of the church consider it *their* duty to greet one another with the kiss, is it not the duty of all the members to do so? God is no respecter of persons. And if Breneman, Funk, and others of the West, in solemn conference, felt themselves constrained to declare to their brethren that the gospel forbids the followers of Christ to take part in political affairs of the world, and vote for officers of government, what will they make of their brethren of the East, who have for many years, and still do, take the liberty? Voting is not now so common in our county as it formerly was, and no doubt by a gradual reform it will be put away. If it is wrong, why not come out openly and declare the truth, and confess that for many years they have been living

in open transgression of the spirit of the gospel? If it is right, openly defend the right.

In a degeneracy, either of an individual or the church, there is always first a decline of inward light and life; and as a fruit of this inward degeneracy, an outward decline of duties and life will follow. Now, unless there is an inward awakening, and revival of life, outward reformation will avail nothing. But if the inward life is restored, it is impossible that the outward disorder should continue, and gradually die away. If the church had given way, and gradually lost the inward light, and had fallen into some irregularities in consequence, and God would raise up a reformer, they might, by the evidence of the outward life and conduct, be made sensible of the inward loss; but unless there was an inward awakening, and a restoration of inward light, there never could be a truly Christian life restored in the church. This would have to be the deduction the reformer would draw from the evidence of the outward lapse, and on this the reformation must be founded. By outward natural light, a person may be able to perceive a great deal, and may labor and effect a great deal; but what does it avail? They are carnal, and will remain carnal still. If the Old Mennonite church had declined, there was no way for restoration, but by the members becoming fully sensible of the fall, and thereby being brought to true repentance and humble acknowledgment of their decline and sin. Then God would lift them up, and then no one need tell the members, to quit their foolish talking and jesting, their idle mirth and revelry, their strife and contention, their voting, holding offices, and sitting on juries; that they should greet one another with the holy kiss, or that they should wash one another's feet. These would follow as the effect of the inward light, enkindling the love of God in the soul; and there would be no need of councils, resolutions, or determinations of conferences, to instruct their members what to do.

But we hold the church was dead, and no reformation or change can ever bring it to light and life as a church. Individually, we must die before we can be raised from the dead; we must die to sin, before we can be made alive to righteousness; and this the church cannot do, as a church. Individual members of a dead body may be awakened and converted; but they cannot remain with a dead body, because they cannot obey Christ there,

they cannot carry out their duty as Christ prescribes. Paul says, we shall withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly; and when all walk disorderly; we must withdraw from all. In a fallen church, all do walk disorderly, - for however blameless some may be in their general deportment and demeanor, if they do not withdraw from the disorderly part, they do not obey the order which the Holy Spirit has prescribed for them, and this is disorderly, and the faithful must withdraw from them also. In short, it is not possible that a true and faithful child of God can remain in a fallen, or carnal church. They must come out from among them and be separate, or else make themselves partaker of their evil deeds.

I do not believe that it can be possible, that a church that is not dead, will altogether reject the protest of those who are yet faithful. If the church had not been altogether dead, there would have been some attest given to the protestations of Landis and his companions. Some would have supported them in the position they had taken. There was at least none among the preachers, or none that were willing to take the cross upon them. There may have been some poor souls sorrowing and pining, here and there, who did not bow the knee to Baal, but had not the light and knowledge of their duty. We will commit them to God. If there was true uprightness with them, God would have a way for them, and could lead them out in due time; or make some way for them, that they would not perish in the overthrow.

I do not see that Francis Herr, in his time, or Landis, and his associates, in theirs, had any other way to rescue their souls, but by the way they took. They saw, and were fully convinced, that the church had departed from her faith, and obedience. They made themselves free, by reproving and protesting against that which was contrary to Scripture; and desired to obey, and carry out the commands of Christ and the apostles; but they could not. They received no encouragement or support from the heads of the church, and could not do otherwise than withdraw from them, in order to avoid making themselves partakers with them in their sins.

CHAPTER VII.

"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."—1st Tim. iii.

We purpose, in this chapter, to give a short account of the origin, organization, and progress of the Reformed Mennonite church, together with the mode of procedure in observing the ordinances, and the principles which govern them in that procedure. It will, however, be necessary briefly to notice some preceding events, which tended to prepare the way for its final accomplishment. I have, in the preceding chapter, specially noticed the lapse of the Old Mennonite church, and said, that protestations were from time to time made against the degeneracy, in virtue and morals, of its members; and that there were also with these protests occasional withdrawals from the church, of persons who considered that, by continuing to act in fellowship with them, they would make themselves partakers of their sins and iniquities.

This departure from the principles and practice of Menno and his brethren, was the first and prime cause which the founders of the new organization always alleged was the reason of their procedure. That they did depart from the doctrine and practice of Menno, I suppose they will not deny; because they do still openly reject, and contend against several of the distinctive features of his profession, which he held as cardinal principles, without which the Church cannot stand. The most prominent of these withdrawals, of which I have knowledge, and who continued to maintain the Mennonite doctrine, was Francis Herr, who was born in Strasburg township, Lancaster county, Pa. Martin Boehm had been a member of the Mennonite church; but in his withdrawal from them, he united himself with Otterbein, and others, in forming the church of the United Brethren. I think the Engles, of Donegal township, in Lancaster county, were also Mennonites, or at least of Mennonite extraction. They formed the society of "River Brethren," and adopted immersion

as their mode of baptism. But Francis Herr, although he seceded, or withdrew from the Mennonite church, never became united with any other church, but firmly adhered to the doctrine of Menno Simon, and only protested against the church with which he had associated himself, on account of her departure from the doctrine and practice of Menno and his brethren, of the sixteenth century.

Francis Herr was born in August, 1748. His father, John Herr, was a prominent preacher (whether bishop or not, I do not know) in the Mennonite church. He was united with the church before his marriage. I have heard it said, that when he arrived at the age of maturity, his father urged him to unite himself with the church; but he objected, on account of the looseness of life and morals, which prevailed with many of its members at that time. On this account his reception into the church was delayed for a time; but he finally yielded to the solicitations of his father, and became a member. This may likely be true, but I have no certain account of it. After his union with the church, he was joined in marriage with Fanny Barr, also of Strasburg township. Some time after his marriage, he became deeply convicted of sin. I do not know how soon after his marriage this was, but it was whilst yet a young man. He seen and felt, that, although he was baptized, and a member of the church, he was not a member of Christ; that he was yet in his sins, and under condemnation, a stranger to the covenants of promise, and without hope or God in the world. After a season of great distress, true sorrow and penitence for sin, he obtained peace with God, as he believed, through faith in Jesus Christ, and professed to be converted. He now became troubled about the state of the church to which he had attached himself, as he could not conscientiously walk with them in the course he saw they were pursuing. This led him to disclose the state of his mind and feelings, in regard to the church, to his father, who he succeeded in bringing partially to sympathize with him in his views and feelings. What time elapsed in this transition, during which he was in this state of painful mental exercise, I cannot tell; or how much conference he may have had with the church, or other ministers, besides his father, I do not know; but, not unlikely, it was considerable, as it resulted in the appointment of a meeting, at Mellinger's meeting-house, (I think,) where the matter of his protest was to be taken into consideration.

Whether this was a general meeting of the church, or whether only of the preachers and deacons, I do not rightly know, but rather think it was the latter only. He and his father went to this meeting together. Being no other company with them, and, as he expected there would be strenuous efforts made to move his father to recede from the position he had taken, he admonished him very earnestly on the way, not to yield from his position, but to stand firmly and immovably to the word of God, and in support of the truth. At this meeting, Francis Herr spake openly to those assembled, and freely gave his views of what the Scriptures require the Church of Christ to be, and what he looked at theirs as having become; and, also, what he considered the Scriptures to require of the bishops, ministers and deacons of the church. After Francis had given his views, I think John Herr also gave his views, as coinciding with those of his son. I do not know that any other person spoke one way or the other, but hardly think they did. After whatever conversation was had, the parties began to go out of the house, one after another, or perhaps several at a time, until they were all out except John and Francis Herr. Now, Francis had good reason to expect strong opposition to what he had proposed, and again admonished his father not to let himself be moved, but to stand firmly to the word of God. After some time, some one came in and called John Herr out, and Francis, the son, was left alone. After consulting and deliberating for a time outside the house, John Herr came in and spake to his son, saying: "Oh, Francis, we must give way to our brethren; we cannot stand against them." What further transpired between them, I never heard, or at least do not remember; but we have reason to think, that when the preachers came in they gave their views of the matter under consideration; but the result was, they refused to accede to his proposals, or to make efforts to effect the reform which he desired. It may also be supposed that Francis Herr further urged his views upon them, and also told them what he would consider his duty under the circumstances; but I have no knowledge of what further transpired at this meeting. But from this time Francis Herr withdrew from the church, and I think, never heard his father, or any of the Mennonites preach, or joined with them in worship afterward.

Francis Herr settled in what is now West Lampeter township,

in Lancaster county, and was by occupation a farmer. He was a firm believer in the doctrine of the gospel, as set forth in the writings of Menno Simon, and as he could find, or knew of no church, or organization, which held and carried out these views in practice, he never, after he left the Old Mennonites, united himself with any visible body, or association of professed Christians. He, however, sought to walk in the ways of the Lord, freely professed his faith in Christ, and belief to have an interest in that redemption which He wrought on the tree of the cross; and I never heard that it was charged, that his walk and conversation was inconsistent with his profession. He so freely spake his sentiments in regard to the religion of the times, and especially of the church from which he had withdrawn, that it would be strange if he had not provoked reflection on himself; but I know of nothing of the kind, except a story which has been circulated, that he had been expelled from the Old Mennonite church, on account of unfair dealing in a horse-trade. His expulsion caused a vindictive feeling in him, which led to the course he pursued.

What the character, disposition, or behavior of Francis Herr was, before his conversion, I know nothing. If he had been censured, or expelled from the church for any misconduct, and he had afterward repented, and been truly converted, and led a devoted Christian life, reprov'd sin, and protested against the irregularity of life in his former brethren, I do not see that any act of his former life, could have given any just cause to object to the position of truth which he afterward assumed. Paul says: "*We ourselves* also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." (Titus iii.) If Francis Herr did wrong, no doubt he repented of it; and as a fruit of the repentance, made restitution to any one he knew he had injured. But I do not believe this story is true. I have made diligent inquiry of those who, I think, could not fail to have known it, if true; but they said they never knew or heard anything of it, until long after his death. The manner of his withdrawal from the church which I have related, I believe to be strictly and substantially true, and is altogether inconsistent with the story of the horse-trade. I believe this story to be a sheer calumny, and would not have deemed it worthy of notice, if I had not thought it might, at

some future time, find its way into history, and being uncontradicted, would be received as truth. I therefore thought it not out of place to give it this denial, so that it could not be advanced as an undisputed truth. We get to hear it very frequently, and meet with it sent out far and wide, and variously represented, with the design of bringing our church into disrepute and reproach. I once saw it in print, without the name of the author or printer. Since writing the above, I have seen it published in a small periodical sheet, published at Lancaster, called the "Waffenlose Wächter," in an article on the Mennonites, in which a number of unfounded assertions are made.

After Francis Herr withdrew from the Mennonites, he held public meetings at his house, at which he freely exhorted and instructed those who assembled (which were generally in considerable numbers), and exercised himself in singing and prayer. Whether these meetings commenced immediately after his withdrawal from the church, I do not know, but hardly think they did; but after they were commenced they were regularly continued till his death; or at least till his health became so feeble that he could not officiate. He was also frequently called upon in the neighborhood, to preach or exhort at funerals. In these exercises, or (if I may so call them) ministerial services, he did not assume to be a minister of the gospel, as he had never been regularly ordained thereto, by any body of believers, or church. Consequently, he did not assume the position of a preacher, by standing up to address his auditory, but to signify what he esteemed himself, kept his seat as an exhorter.

Many of his neighbors sympathized and consorted with him. Some, or perhaps most of them, had belonged to the Mennonites also, but withdrew from the church, and associated with him. Some also from a distance visited, worshiped, and professed to be one with him; and all openly contended for the principles he maintained. I do not think, however, from what I have learned, that he would have owned all these as brethren, or acknowledged that the Holy Spirit had joined their hearts together in love. It may have been so with some, but others not. They had been professors, and members of the church before; and were convinced by their judgment and natural understanding, that there was more light in his life, and reason in his doctrine, than in that of the

church, and they left the church and consorted with him; but their carnal nature was not subdued, and they were not inwardly renewed; and consequently the inner life was too much wanting; and this Francis Herr could well perceive; and if there had been a church at the time which he could have recognized as the house of God, he could not have united with them in church fellowship. As said, with some he might, but not with all.

Now, if Francis Herr had been expelled from church for dishonesty, it is not likely that he would have been esteemed highly in his own neighborhood. If because of the church justly reproving him, he had given way to a vindictive feeling, and raised up an opposition to it, it is not likely to have received any countenance from his neighbors, unless it would have been of the viler class. But the contrary was the case; it was the better class, and such as felt constrained to withdraw, and protest against the loose and carnal conduct that was tolerated in the church. Herr and his associates led a more blameless, virtuous, and self-denying life, than those who adhered to the church; hence they were more sought after by those who had some experience of a Divine work in the soul.

Toward the close of his life he became acquainted with Abraham Landis, and those who had with him withdrawn from the Mennonite church. These now associated with him also, and with these I think he was fully united, and were one heart and soul; but he did not live long after he became acquainted with them. He died January 2d, 1810, in the 62d year of his age; leaving behind him a widow, three sons, and five daughters. His wife was the only one of his family, who at that time shared with him the comforts of the religion he professed. His children, though affectionately attached to him, and having full confidence in his religion, were yet, at the time of his death, all living carnal lives; and although they were decent and respectable, and in the eyes of the world, esteemed moral, yet they were of the world, and sought their enjoyment in it.

His oldest son John, born in September 1782, seems to have been seriously exercised by the grace of God, from his early youth; and oftentimes greatly distressed by the consideration, that he was not prepared for death and eternity. He has published a short sketch of his early life, with an account of his

conversion, and call to the ministry, in an appendix to the "Illustrating Mirror," published in the German language, in the year 1827, wherein he relates some of his convictions and experience, and how he was led up to the time of his father's death. Up to this time he seems to have resisted the grace of God, which would have led him to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and would have taught him to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

Near the close of his father's life, his convictions became very strong; his father's many admonitions were brought afresh to his mind, and his final exhortation and death, wrought so heavily upon him, that he could no longer conceal his distress, and he revealed his feelings to some of his father's associates. But some time after the death of his father, these feelings grew weaker, and he says, he rather regretted that he had told others how he felt. He was, as he says, for a time tossed to and fro, with doubts and fears, like a ship without a rudder. After some time, however, an incident occurred which aroused him; and induced him fully to surrender himself to God, and submit to His word and will; and seems soon after to have received comfort and consolation, by faith in Jesus Christ. At this time he met occasionally with Abraham Landis, and some others, that used to associate with his father, for mutual edification and encouragement. His wife, five sisters, and three brothers-in-law, also became willing about the same time, to resign themselves to the will of God, and take up their cross and follow their Saviour on the narrow way of self-denial. His father's old associates visited him frequently, and I often heard him speak of how much he was encouraged and strengthened by them.

John Herr, and all those who were associated with him at this time, have been gathered to their fathers. Jacob Weaver, of West Lampeter township, survived longest, and was still living when I made the first draft of this work. I visited him, and sought information of him, in regard specially to the manner in which these early meetings were conducted; as well as, also, any recollections he might have of the events of the times; but I found that, although his mind was good for his years (ninety-one), yet his memory failed him so much, that I could elicit nothing reliable. He died in November, 1872, in the ninety-third year of his age. I was well and intimately acquainted with John Herr,

and a number of others, who were participators with him in these exercises, as well as in the anxieties, perplexities, fears and trials, he had to undergo at this period. John Herr related many things connected with the times and events referred to, to me; and I often heard him, and others, who were connected with him, conversing about those times, and what transpired in connection with their proceedings. Others also frequently related many incidents connected with the events of that time, but more especially the manner in which they were exercised within themselves; of their inward trials, their doubts, their fears, perplexities, and great discouragements by-times; and also of their comforts, their encouragements, and their joys, their hope and their faith. I enjoyed many a happy, and, I trust, profitable, hour listening to the relation of their early experience.

From what I remember, as well as what he relates in the appendix to the "Mirror," my impression is, that these meetings for encouragement and edification, were entirely of a conversational character. They sang, and prayed, and related to one another their experience and exercise of mind, comforted and encouraged those whose souls were cast down, despondent, or who were exercised by painful and distressing doubts and fears, by holding out to them the fullness and freeness of the gospel promises, and the faithfulness of God to His Word; as also their own experience in similar trials, and how God had relieved them. Paul says, 1 Cor. i.: God is a God of all comfort, "who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Thus they sought to be mutual helps and comforts to one another, and no doubt they also exhorted one another to earnestness, and steadfastness in the work to which they had given themselves. These meetings were at first entirely private, or composed only of such, as were concerned about their souls' salvation, and took part in the exercises.

It might be enquired, why these people thus met in private, and did not seek aid and comfort in those public meetings, usually resorted to for such purposes? It was because they saw, or knew, of no people who they thought walked in obedience to the gospel of Christ. They looked upon conversion, as so changing the walk and conversation of man, as to bring him into

obedience to the commandments of Christ; and those who were not so wrought upon, they could not regard as converted persons. Consequently, those sects lived in conformity to the world, and walked after the flesh, in pride and vain display in dress, manners or equipage, and also in strife and contention, justifying wars, and resistance of evil, which every one knows is customary amongst all the popular religious associations of the day. Christ says, Matt. vii., and Luke vi.: "Beware of false prophets; by their fruits ye shall know them. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." These hungering and thirsting souls sought the pure, unadulterated milk of the Word; and how could they seek it from a source where pure gospel fruits did not manifest themselves? For this reason, they chose to cleave to God's word of promise, and meet with those in whom they could have assurance that Christ would be with them; and, though they were all poor, weak, illiterate, and inexperienced, if God was with them, they could not want for a supply of the pure bread of life. They could, therefore, not regard these persons as converted, living Christians, bringing the fruits of the Spirit; and their conscience constrained them to take heed of, and flee from them, lest they would make themselves partakers of that which they committed and justified. For further reasons why they could not take part with the religious professors around them, I would refer the reader to the preceding chapter.

But to proceed with the narration of the conduct of those meetings. John Herr says, that as their meetings became considerably augmented, they concluded, that as God is a God of order, and Paul advises all things to be done decently and in order, so they concluded to conduct their meetings in a more formal manner. They would open their meeting by singing a hymn; then prayer; then, in a sincere and childlike manner, they would each speak their minds in succession, according to the manifestation of the Spirit; then they concluded their meeting with prayer, thanksgiving, and a spiritual song, or hymn.

In these more formally conducted meetings, John Herr says in the appendix referred to, his brethren (for they now considered themselves to be such, being born of the same spirit) requested him to open the services. Now, whether they had any one specially appointed as a leader in their exercises, before this change in the

manner of conducting their meetings, I do not know. But I distinctly remember that John Herr told me, that they had consulted together as to who should be the leader in their exercises, and they concluded on David Buckwalter, one of those who, with Abraham Landis, had withdrawn from the Old Mennonite church, and that he for a time officiated in this capacity. There are others also who remember to have heard John Herr say the same thing.

If the appointment of David Buckwalter to lead in their exercises, was before this change in the manner of conducting their meetings, then they may have changed their leader at this time. But my impression is, that they had no special leader until the time they changed the mode of conducting their exercises. Then they first appointed Buckwalter, and afterward, for some reason, changed to John Herr.

I have already observed, that I had intimate personal acquaintance with a number of those who participated in these meetings, and often conversed with them on the subject; and from what I heard of them, my impression is, that when they first began to hold these meetings, they had not the remotest idea of organizing a church, but merely that they might, by the blessing of God, comfort, encourage, edify, and strengthen one another, trusting in the promise of the Saviour, that where two or three meet together in His name He will be in the midst of them. After they had thus met for some time, and experienced blessing and comfort, numbers of others also joining with them, they began to get hopes that God would bless them, by leading them into the organization of a visible church. It may be that the change in the mode of conducting their meetings, was made with a view of preparing the way for such an event, or placing themselves in a position, that God could more clearly manifest His will; and that by each one giving themselves up to the Lord, to speak their minds, God might reveal those gifts and qualifications which would be useful in it.

At this time, their meetings were still intended to be private, but a few others began to meet with them occasionally. They were then censured for the privacy of their meetings. People said to them, if they have anything good, why not leave others, also, be partakers with them? Whether they opened their meetings fully for the admission of the public, before the organization of the church, I do not rightly know; but I rather think they did,

although it may not have been long. John Herr's narration in the appendix, would rather seem to contradict this, yet he does not say distinctly that they did not; and my impression is quite decided, that I heard from some of the party, that they did for some time.

When it became known that John Herr had embraced a profession of religion, and advocated the principles which his father held, some of those who sympathized with his father, requested him to preach, or exhort at funerals, which occurred in their families, as his father had done. By this, and the exercises at their private meetings, it became apparent that he was possessed of some gifts in speaking, and his brethren then chose him as their leader in their meetings. It soon became apparent, that "God opened unto him a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ," and bestowed a blessing upon his labors. His brethren, and all those who were interested about the salvation of their souls, insisted that they were much encouraged by his discourses, and greatly edified; and became unanimous in their feelings, that it was the will of God that they should organize themselves into church order, and that John Herr should be their minister. Of this he also had some impression himself, by a remarkable Divine manifestation, of which he gives an account in the appendix already referred to. Whilst this greatly encouraged and supported him, it also caused him great anxiety, and gave rise to very exciting mental emotions. The work was not engaged in without due consideration, deep reflection, and earnest prayer to God, with earnest entreaty that He would direct them, and not let them do anything that would be contrary to His will. John Herr says, in the appendix referred to, they "prayed fervently to God that he would not forsake them, but lead them at will; that being neither too hasty, nor too tardy, they might walk in all things according to His good pleasure." Their greatest anxiety was, that only the will of God might be done. They felt assured, that if it was the will of God they should proceed to organize a church, that He would also bless and support them; but if they should proceed contrary to His will, confusion and disaster must be the result. But as the number of those who were convicted, and deeply interested, increased, all seemed to be edified and encouraged; he was, by their continued encouragement and earnest

solicitation, together with the impression which he believed the Lord had wrought upon himself, at last induced to give himself up, to accept the ministry under their new organization.

Although they were now unanimous in their feelings, and fully impressed with the idea, that it was the will of God they should form themselves into church order, they were still earnest in their prayers, that God would be with and direct them. Any person reflecting upon the position they had taken, and the views they held, may form some idea of the anxiety and deep concern they must have felt, when about to take the step they now proposed to do. If they had held the common popular view of the church of God, it would not have weighed so heavily upon them. If they had looked upon the many different sects around them, as all together composing the Church of God, and each sect only a branch of one common stock, and although there were errors amongst them, and gross errors committed by them, that they were still a branch of the vine, Jesus Christ, it would not have been so severe a trial. But holding that all these different sects and societies, were only branches of the anti-christian church, and together formed the great spiritual Babylon, and knowing of no association which they could esteem and admit as a true Church of Christ, and they themselves few in number, comparatively illiterate, and inexperienced, to come out, oppose and protest against such a combination of opponents, many of them aged, experienced, and highly educated, was a trial for poor, weak human nature, which nothing but Divine power could uphold; especially as they were fully persuaded, that if they were not under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the special care and protection of Almighty God, their work must come to nought, and they be covered with confusion of face. They proposed to raise up a standard for the children of God to seek to, and a refuge or a retreat for them to flee to; and knowing the deceitfulness of the human heart, and knowing, also, how impossible it would be for them to succeed, if iniquity were found amongst them, it is most reasonable that they should have advanced in this most holy and Divine work, with solemn fear and trembling steps.

The mode of procedure in forming an organization, was also another matter which engaged their serious attention, and most anxious consideration. There was no source from whence they

could conscientiously receive either baptism or ordination. John Herr, and some others of their associates, had never been baptized, or belonged to any church. Abraham Landis, and some others, had been baptized, and belonged to the Mennonite church, as has already been intimated; but they did not regard this as Christian baptism. They themselves were in unbelief, and they regarded those who baptized them as not anything but carnal, unregenerated men, and could not therefore regard the ordinance they had received, as being in any way of God's appointment, or under His blessing. They neither knew Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, in whose name they were baptized, or whose name was pronounced over them in baptism; and they did not believe that those who baptized them, knew any thing more of this Triune God, than they did themselves; consequently they would not regard their baptism, as any thing but a nullity. In this respect, they therefore looked upon themselves, as all standing upon the same footing or ground. None by virtue of their former baptism or church membership, felt themselves authorized to administer any Christian ordinance. They now believed themselves to be truly regenerated, and the Holy Spirit had united their hearts in love, and were, as Paul says, 1st Cor. xii.: "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have been made to drink into one Spirit." If so, then they were fit subjects for baptism, seeing they had received that from God, which is signified by baptism, and were members of Christ, and of God's invisible church.

After much prayer and intercession, they unanimously elected John Herr to be their pastor and bishop; and, also, unanimously agreed in the appointment of Abraham Landis, to administer to him the rite of baptism. I am not aware of any diary, or written account, being kept by any one of any of their transactions, or proceedings. I have, however, found a slip of paper amongst some writings of John Herr, on which was written the following sentence, in his own handwriting: "The first evangelical order—that is, baptism—administered at meeting at John Herr's, on the 30th May, A. D. 1812. First, Abraham Landis baptized John Herr, and likewise John Herr baptized Abraham Landis and Abraham Groff." I think, at the same time that John Herr was elected pastor and bishop, Abraham Groff was elected deacon. At any rate, he was the first deacon. Not long after their

organization, Abraham Landis was elected an additional preacher. I cannot determine exactly how soon, but know that he was the first preacher chosen after John Herr, and the fall of the same year, after the organization was effected, John Landis was appointed to the ministry; so that Abraham's appointment must have been the summer previous, soon after they organized.

I have never understood how they arrived at the conclusion they did, in the mode of procedure in organizing the church. Whether they had any precedent, or whether it was based on any particular Scripture injunction, or whether it was from impressions which they believed was a Divine direction, I never inquired in the time when I might have gained the information; and now no source remains from which to obtain it. If I had thought of ever engaging in such an undertaking, I might have obtained much information, that would be very gratifying. But this I know, that the parties never had any scruples in their minds, with regard to the validity of their baptism and ordinations, and that their proceedings were had under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and was entirely according to the will of God, and attended by His blessing.

It is usually the case, where there is a schism takes place in a church, that there is considerable acerbity of feeling between the parties separated; but whatever acrimony is engendered, is usually confined to those two parties. All others can accord to either party, what they did to the one before; but with these it was different. This was not a schism of any church, although it assumed the doctrine, and received the name of one existing before. Some had previously belonged to no church, some did to one, and others, perhaps, to another. But they protested against all other denominations, with which they were acquainted, knowing of none with whom they could hold fellowship, and, consequently, withdrew from all. If they had known any party which they could have recognized as a Church of God, they could not have organized another.

This brought upon them severe reflections and censures, with much unkind criticism, from all the different sects and denominations of Christian professors around them. Their mode of organization was much criticised, and by some utterly condemned; and we still hear it referred to very frequently, as an objection

against us, as a true Christian church. The preachers of the Reformed Mennonite church have always, and do yet, loudly and vehemently protest against, and condemn whatever the Word of God declares to be sin; and insist on obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They hold that the love of God constrains every faithful Gospel-minister to be free and faithful in this duty, without respect to person or party, who may be reprov'd or aggrieved thereby. They are generally censured as if they condemned all others; but can they, in true charity, do less than expose error, and try to convince mankind of it? Although we are accounted uncharitable, we cannot see that there is any true charity in withholding what we believe to be true, because it will provoke enmity in the minds of others. Our natural feelings would not, in this respect, be different from that of all others. The good will and esteem of our fellowmen would be gratifying to us, as well as to any one else; but, whenever we can be prevailed upon to purchase it by withholding truth, we will cease to be the servants of God. If our protestations against the sects and societies around us, and our refusal to worship with them, arises from selfishness or self-righteousness, as is generally charged to us, or from prejudice, or a sectarian or party spirit, or partizan feeling, then I freely admit we cannot stand before God, our spirit is foreign to the nature of Christ, and we are in the way of ruin and destruction. This, I freely admit, but I know no other love except that which declares to my fellowman the whole counsel of God, let the effect to myself be what it may. Why do all the different denominations of Christian professors so loudly cry against us? Is it because we cry against them? If so, it must be from carnal influence, and cannot be a Divine motive.

I have not thus digressed, by alluding to the prejudice which so generally exists against us, because I am unwilling to bear it; indeed I believe it is for our good, and will most willingly bear it; but I feel sorry for every one, who, through erroneous views, remains a captive to the spirit of delusion. As the manner of organizing the church, the first baptism and ordination, was not according to the common order, and as I have known some persons, who I believe to have been upright, to be somewhat exercised about it, I feel to give the views which, so far as I could learn, I believe to have influenced them in the course they pursued.

Although we believe baptism to have been generally administered by regularly ordained ministers of the church, and the ordination of ministers and deacons, also, to have been performed by other regularly ordained preachers; yet we find no command given with special reference to it, or any expression indicating disapproval of any irregular proceeding in reference to it. We believe, also, that such regular proceeding is quite proper and right; and because it was the general custom of the Apostolic Churches, it should not be lightly departed from, without there is good and sufficient reason for so doing.

The Church is God's own institution, and in relation to man was designed for two special purposes; and for one special purpose in relation to God Himself. The first special design in relation to man, was the spreading and propagation of the gospel, and leading mankind to embrace it. This could have been done without the organization of a Church, but not so effectually. It could be more effectually accomplished by the united efforts of believers, than by any individual exertion or effort. The other special purpose in regard to man, and the most important one, indeed, was the comfort, enjoyment, and security of believers. For both these purposes, God has given full and ample instruction, which no true and sincere believer can have any difficulty about understanding. God has an especial love and regard for his children, and in the institution of the Church, has provided the best means for their security and enjoyment, so long as they are in this mortal body, which infinite wisdom could devise. In full obedience to the gospel commands, the believer enjoys entire security, and the highest degree of happiness, which can be enjoyed on earth. The design in relation to God Himself, is His own glory. God is glorified in His saints on earth, both by the effusion of love which flows from their souls, as also by the fruits of the spirit which they bring forth by their walk and conversation. By obedience to Christ and His gospel, the believer shows his love, and glorifies God. There is no position, or situation, in which the believer can so fully and effectually obey the Gospel commands, as in the Church; and, consequently, in no other position can he bring forth the fruits of the spirit in such perfection and abundance. By these God is glorified, and in the promotion of these Divine virtues by the Church, it tends to the glory of

God. The love and care which God has for His children, and the regard He has for His own glory, would not permit Him to place His children in such a position, in which this end could not be obtained. If there were no way of organizing a Church, where regular ordination could not be obtained, these earnest and devoted disciples of Christ, would have had to remain debarred of the benefits and privileges of the Church.

No true believer could consent to receive either baptism or ordination, at the hands of one whom he did not believe was called of God to serve, or minister, in sacred things. How could he give himself up to an ungodly person, to invoke the blessing of God upon him? Or how could he believe that God had called an impenitent, unconverted child of this world, or subject of the prince of darkness, to take His holy name in his mouth, and minister in His holy temple, when He knew he was His enemy? Or how could he think that God would install him as doorkeeper in His house, when He knew he was a thief and a robber? Our Saviour said to His disciples, beware of false prophets, etc. ; by their fruits ye shall know them. Now, when the children of God can see or know of none but such ministers, whose fruits are carnal, they would have to be altogether debarred of the benefits of God's means of enjoyment and safety, or in exercising themselves in the most efficient manner of spreading the gospel, and rescuing of sinners from perdition, or the glorifying of God's holy name. God requires believers to obey His commandments, and there are certain commands which can only be obeyed in the Church ; and if the Church is inaccessible to the believer, he cannot obey them.

Every believer ardently desires to do the will of God. This he has no means of knowing, except by the revelation given in the Word of God. Christ has given promise, that where two or three are met together in His name, He will be in the midst of them ; and whatsoever they pray for in His name, shall be given to them. The Holy Spirit shall be in them, and direct them, according to the will of God. The Holy Spirit cannot move their hearts, or lead them differently from what the Word of God teaches them. The Word of God teaches them to observe and do certain things. The Holy Spirit begets in their hearts a vehement desire to do those things, which the Word of God directs them to do ; but they cannot do them. To do and perform these duties, they must

be in the Church, and there is no Church here for them to enter for this purpose. They pray and entreat the Lord to open the way for them; so to direct them that they may possess the means which He has appointed for their benefit, and by which they may glorify Him, by walking in His ways, and ordinances. Now, if God by His Holy Spirit has wrought such desires in their hearts, and by the promise in His Word, has led them to believe He will satisfy these desires, can it be otherwise but God will hear them? This is their individual and united prayer, and Christ has promised, what they agree to pray for in His name, shall be done for them. If now they are led to desire a certain brother amongst them, to assume the office and calling of the ministry, so that they may organize themselves into church order, and may enjoy the benefits of God's ordinances, which they feel that they greatly need, and God has wrought such earnest desires for in their hearts, and that they may also glorify God thereby, in keeping His commandments, and bring forth more abundantly the fruits of the Spirit. This being their unanimous feeling and desire, and the brother also feels an inward conviction that it is his duty to respond to the request, who can say that it is not the will of God he shall do so? If there were any Scripture authority here to forbid such a course, all the feelings and impressions would have to be disregarded, for they could then not be wrought by the Lord. It could then not be a Divine work. But there is no Scripture authority to forbid it, or in any way condemning it. Or if the life of those taking such a step were irregular, and unscriptural, it would be proof that the Holy Spirit could not be leading them. But if their life, walk or fruit is good, the evidence which Christ tells us to look to is here, and I know of no authority to reject them.

I would ask any candid or reflective mind, whether such baptism, ordination, and organization, is not infinitely more in accordance with the spirit and letter of the Gospel, than receiving baptism or ordination at the hands of carnal, worldly persons, whencesoever they may have received their authority, or appointment. The gospel ministry is a spiritual calling, and cannot possibly be exercised by carnal persons, and wheresoever it is assumed by such, they are not Christian, but anti-christian ministers.

Christ Himself said: "He that entereth not by the door into

the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Christ is the door, and no unconverted person can have entered through Him, whether we look upon him as in the Church, or out of it. When such pretend to teach, they can only "steal, kill, and destroy." They steal and destroy the Divine virtues with which the Holy Spirit adorns God's children, and destroy their souls by countenancing and encouraging carnal liberties, and works of the flesh. Every unconverted person who assumes the office of a teacher of righteousness, or to minister in holy things, is by Christ called a *stranger*, and He says the sheep will not hear him. He is not born of God, and has not received power to become a son of God; consequently he cannot be brother to the children of God, and is a stranger, whose voice the sheep know not, and will flee. The Holy Spirit never could have moved or authorized any such person to preach or minister in any such capacity; and whatever his talents or eloquence may be, a child of God cannot recognize such an one as a gospel minister, who teaches not the doctrine of Christ, or brings forth carnal fruits. (John x. and 2d Epist. John.)

John Herr and his associates had been persons of the world, and walked and lived according to the world, and the desires of the flesh and the mind. They were awakened by the grace of God, to see their error, and the misery of their situation; and by grace were made willing to submit themselves to God, and walk in the narrow way of self-denial; thus leaving the world, with its vanities and pleasures, and laying off testimony against its works, that they are evil. God also gave them witness, by His Spirit shedding his love abroad in their hearts, that they were born of Him. They met together for the purpose of mutual edification and encouragement. God blessed their efforts. They were strengthened and confirmed in their faith; their numbers increased; and they were constrained to believe that God heard their prayers, and regarded the desires of their hearts. When it became manifest that the Lord specially blessed the admonitions and exhortations of John Herr, both by their own encouragement and edification, and also by opening the hearts of others to receive the Word, they became fully persuaded in their minds, that God was with them, and that it was His will John Herr should fully assume the functions of a minister of the gospel, and the administration of

the gospel ordinances of baptism, the Lord's Supper, and other functions, and take upon himself the oversight of the church.

They were desirous of observing the ordinances of God's church, but there was no church here with which their conscience would permit them to unite. None of them were yet baptized, which they esteemed the first gospel ordinance. They were, after much serious reflections, and earnest prayer, unanimously led to ask Abraham Landis, to administer the ordinance of baptism to John Herr. Such an election and appointment, I cannot but regard as much a work of the Lord, as any I could well conceive. What is it that makes baptism a Divine ordinance, or what makes it acceptable to God? Is it the power or authority of the officiating parson? Is it the water? Or the words spoken? Or what is it? Certainly none of these, in themselves, or all of them together, make true Christian baptism. But on the part of him that is baptized, there is made a solemn vow of faith, hope, love, confidence, resignation, and a full and entire submission to God, and devotion to His honor and glory. The officiating minister, on his part, in solemn trust and confidence, applies the water, as an emblem, or token, of the regeneration, and effusion of the Holy Spirit, by which the Divine virtues have been imparted to the soul, and devoutly invokes a blessing in the name of the Holy Trinity. I cannot well conceive a situation, or circumstances, better calculated to inspire these Divine emotions, than those under which this first ordinance of baptism was administered, and the church organized. Neither can I well conceive circumstances less calculated to prompt carnal motives. The esteem and friendship of the world, which is so near and dear to the flesh, had to be utterly renounced, for they knew they were taking a position which would bring upon them reproach and contempt, with much enmity and hatred. Those who made this election and appointment, were in their first love, ardent and sincere; no gain, no honor, no good will to be obtained, or anything after which the flesh would seek, but entirely the contrary in every respect.

The work also received blessing from God, which is another evidence that God was in it. Many souls were won to the Lord by this ministry, thus instituted; and many God-fearing souls were edified and encouraged, and led to thank and praise God,

for the benefits bestowed upon them through this ministration. It bears with it the evidence of God's approval, and has for sixty years continued to grow and increase, under the united opposition of all other church organizations around it; not so rapidly indeed as those systems of religion often do, where the flesh can go along and have enjoyment and life; but it has been a refuge and shelter for the defenseless lambs of Christ to seek to, and no opposition could overthrow it. I cannot conceive what better evidence could be desired, that it was a work of the Lord. Neither can I see one Scriptural objection to the course they pursued. It was no fault of John Herr's that he was not baptized by a regularly ordained minister; and in what other way could they have proceeded, without leaving the church destitute of a shepherd or pastor. But God led their hearts into a way that tended to their joy and comfort, and to His honor and glory.

For further argument in confirmation of the validity of such baptism and ordination, I would refer the reader to the fourth chapter of this work. The meeting at which the first baptism was observed, and a full and regular church order assumed, was as before said, held at the house of John Herr, in Strasburg township, Lancaster County, Pa. Whether it was a fully public meeting or not, I do not rightly know; but I know it was not entirely private, or did not entirely consist of such as sympathized with them. I know that others were invited, and think they were present also.

At this time, they had no meeting-house, and held their meetings in their dwellings, school-houses, and in summer often-times in their barns. I distinctly remember to have heard those who participated in those proceedings, say, that soon after the organization at John Herr's, there were twenty-five baptized at David Buckwalter's, in what is now East Lampeter township. Soon after this, there were again sixteen baptized at Jacob Weaver's, in West Lampeter township. Amongst these was John Herr's mother, and I think five sisters and two brothers-in-law. Abraham Groff, who was baptized the first day at John Herr's, was also his brother-in-law. His wife, being in feeble health, was baptized at a private meeting in their own house. Their mode of procedure in the administration of the ordinance of baptism, was after the custom of the Old Mennonite church. In the morning, before opening the service, the bishop,

and generally another minister or deacon, converse with the candidates for baptism, and enquire into the state of their minds, and whether they still desire to receive the ordinance. After this, the bishop preaches a sermon, on some Scripture text relating to water baptism. After this, he invites those who still feel as they did in the morning, to come forward. He then asks them in general, such questions as pertain to a confession of faith in Jesus Christ, believing to have received the forgiveness of sins, and have renounced the devil, the world, and their own flesh; and have resolved by the help of God, to live henceforth not to themselves, but to Him that has died for them. To these several questions, they each one in succession answer affirmatively. The bishop then, with those to be baptized, kneels down, whilst the audience rise to their feet. After a prayer by the officiating bishop, he rises, whilst those who receive the ordinance remain in the kneeling posture. The bishop now holding his hands over the head of the person to be baptized, and a deacon or some assistant, pours a portion of water out of a vessel which he bears with him, into the hands of the bishop, who suffers it to pass through his hands on to the head of the person baptized. Whilst doing so, the bishop utters the words attending the baptismal ordinance. Those who are baptized remain on their knees, until all are baptized; when the officiating bishop offers each one in succession the hand, and as they take the hand, they arise from their knees, and the bishop greets the males with a kiss, and announces to them that he receives them as brethren into fellowship and communion with the church, usually invoking a short blessing upon them, and their further efforts to glorify God. The females are also given the hand, and received in the same manner as the males, only omitting the kiss; after which a sister greets them severally with the kiss of peace. After this they all take their seats. This mode of administering the ordinance of baptism was continued for some time, till on an occasion when some were baptized, a stranger, who was a spectator, asked the question, which of the two baptized? Whether it was the one who poured the water, or whether it was he who left it pass through his hands? This raised no question in their minds about the validity of baptizing in that way or mode; but to avoid such appearance which might disturb the feelings of any one, or give advantage to the enemy to raise a quibble, the

church concluded to change it so far, that the deacon or assistant bore the water in a basin, from which the bishop, holding his hands together, took water, and applied or poured it on the head of the person baptized. Since that time, this has been the invariable mode of procedure, in the administration of this ordinance. Although we have spoken of the bishop as usually officiating in the administration of the baptismal rite, yet it is not held as an indispensable necessity. Common ministers do also administer the ordinance sometimes, when no bishop is present.

The mode of pouring, in administering the ordinance of baptism, was not adopted without due consideration. In the first place, they did not regard the ordinance as imparting any virtue to those receiving it, or that it washed away any sin, or in any way changed the relation of the party to God. All mankind are by nature sinners, and no merit of their own, or ordinance, or duty, can absolve them from its guilt. Remission of sin comes alone and entirely, by faith in Jesus Christ, through the atonement which He made on the tree of the cross. Faith in the virtue of this atonement, speaks us free from sin; and by it we have access to God, through Christ, and become one with God in Christ. Baptism they regarded as a testimony of what they have already received. They are baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and their baptism is an acknowledgment that they have come to know God, in those attributes which are revealed of Him in the Word, and that we have become sensible of our sins, have buried them in the grave of repentance, and by faith in Jesus Christ, have risen to newness of life. That we have come to know Christ, also, as our Redeemer, Mediator, Intercessor, and High Priest, and by faith come to receive the Holy Spirit, by whom the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts; none of this having been received in baptism, or by baptism, but alone by faith in Jesus Christ. By baptism we make an open confession of this, and are initiated into the Church of Christ.

Because the Saviour gave no command, or the apostles no indication of one mode of baptism being preferable to another, and no evidence, that as a rule, they adopted any special mode of baptizing, they held there could no one particular mode be preferable to another. They felt it all important that the party baptized had received the inner spiritual baptism spoken of by

Christ, of the Holy Ghost and with fire ; of which the outer water baptism was a sign and signification.

As there has long been much contention about the mode in which baptism *must* be performed, they gave it deep consideration. The advocates of immersion were very persistent in their claim that no other mode of administration constitutes baptism, except total immersion in water. They, therefore, gave the matter serious consideration ; and whilst John Herr, or his associates, never denied that baptism by immersion is valid baptism, if it is administered on a true living faith ; yet they considered that there is more scripture evidence for baptism by pouring than by immersion. John baptized in water, but that he immersed his subjects we have no proof ; and although I do not deem it important, whether he immersed or not, I would venture to say, the strongest argument is against his having done so. But that he baptized in water no one will dispute. But John's baptism they did not consider Christian baptism, or at all the baptism which Christ commanded the apostles to administer to believers. John preached the baptism of repentance, and pointed to Christ, who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire. John did not preach the gospel, but repentance, and said the kingdom of God is at hand. So 'Christ's disciples also preached, and baptized also. Their preaching and baptizing was the same as John's, so long as Christ had not yet been crucified. John, referring to Christ, said : " He must increase, but I must decrease." After Christ suffered on the cross, died, and rose again, and during the forty days between His death and ascension into Heaven, we read nothing of the disciples preaching or baptizing. When Christ was about to depart from His disciples, and ascend to Heaven, He charged His apostles to preach the gospel and baptize believers ; but told them to tarry at Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high. It is evident from this, that the preaching and baptizing which they were charged with now, required a *power*, which was not required in that which they had performed before. They did not possess *power* to do what was charged to them now, as a duty ; but they were promised it not many days hence. This shows that the preaching and baptizing which they were henceforth to perform, was of much more weight and importance than that which they did before Christ's

suffering. To preach the gospel and administer Christian baptism, required a qualification, which the disciples or apostles had not received, before the Holy Spirit descended upon them on the day of Pentecost. That Paul did not consider the baptism of John, Christian baptism, is evident, from the fact of his ordering those twelve men who had received John's baptism, to be baptized in the name of Christ. Apollos also, who was mighty in the Word, but knew only the baptism of John, had to be taught the way of God more perfectly.

Moses has died, and all the legal ceremonies which were commanded to be observed under the law, have ceased ; but, although all the legal ordinances and ceremonies have ceased, the ministration of Moses has not ceased. The law which came by Moses, must still exert its influence on every heart, before they can come to Christ. So, also, John was cast into prison, and beheaded, and his preaching and baptism was discontinued ; but his ministration is not discontinued. Every soul that comes to Christ, must first have the way prepared by repentance, which was John's mission. So Moses is dead, and John is dead, and Christ, also, died, on the cross, arose again, and is ascended into Heaven ; but their ministrations all continue. Moses could not save the soul, John could not, nor he and Moses together could not ; but Christ, coming after, perfected the work for which Moses and John prepared the way.

Those who were baptized by John, confessed their sins. Those who received Christian baptism, had confessed their sins in repentance, but only received baptism when they had come to the knowledge of Christ. To know God, and Christ, constitutes eternal life ; so they could not be baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, until they had come to the knowledge of the true God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They could not be baptized in a name which they did not know. Now as the baptism which Christ commanded His apostles to observe, signified something very different from John's baptism, it is not unreasonable to suppose, that they may have varied the mode of administration also. But that they also have baptized in water, and perhaps *may* have immersed in water, John Herr or his associates, or any of their followers, never denied. Philip and the Eunuch went into the water ; but that any others did so, we have

no evidence, or even intimation that such a supposition could be based upon. The expressions relative to John's baptizing, and that of the apostles baptizing, also differ so much, as to amount to strong presumptive evidence, that the apostles did not generally baptize in water, as John did. Where the Evangelists speak of John baptizing, they almost invariably speak of the parties *going to John*, as if he were at certain places, and those who desired baptism *went* to him. But in speaking of Christian baptism, the apostles never speak of going out to any water, except in the single instance of Philip and the Eunuch. Their case was an extraordinary one. The Eunuch was traveling; Philip came to him and preached to him as he journeyed; and when they came to water, the Eunuch desired to be baptized. In the case of Cornelius, and those with him, Peter said, who can *forbid water*. This expression is much more reasonable, in connection with the idea of their bringing water to the parties, than that of their going out to some stream, or place where they could be immersed.

But it is not necessary to prolong the argument on this subject, further than to give a clear understanding of the views of the church on the subject. They held, that as Christ or His apostles gave no *command* on the subject, it is not the will of God that man shall add any. Under the law, when man was in a legal spirit, and under a legal dispensation, God gave very strict commands, in regard to the time, manner and mode of the performance of every ordinance and ceremony; and the law did not permit them to depart from these commands. But under the gospel, there is no such command given, in relation to any ordinance. They were commanded to baptize, to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to wash one another's feet; but in no instance is there any command, when, where, or how, these ceremonies are to be performed. If it had been important, or the will of God had been, that we should observe some special mode, time, or place, He would unquestionably have given strict charges, as He did under the law. Thousands of honest and upright souls have been deeply perplexed about this question, and would willingly, and gladly, have submitted to any mode, manner, or form, if they only knew which would be most acceptable to God. God knew this from eternity, and would certainly have given charges, if it had been important. But we might ask, why did not God

give some direction, or say that it mattered not how, so that we are only baptized? God's Word is perfect, and nothing either omitted by oversight, or inadvertently inserted. There is design in everything connected with the Word of God; and there is unquestionably, also, design in the silence on this subject, which tends to our good, and the glory of God. When a believer receives baptism in a true gospel spirit, or if he observes any other ordinance, or performs any duty, in a true gospel spirit, he honors God, and his faith is strengthened and confirmed. But when he observes any ordinance, or performs any duty in a legal spirit, he dishonors God, and deceives his own soul. Paul says (Gal. v.): "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." We might then ask, why did Paul circumcise Timothy? (Acts xvi.) Certainly, Timothy was not debarred from an interest in Christ by this act; then why should the Galatians be? Paul here unquestionably refers to the spirit in which this thing is done. It is not the circumcision which Paul refers to, as debarring the Galatians from an interest in Christ, but the spirit in which they are circumcised, else it would have had the same effect in Timothy's case. The Galatians were somewhat captivated by a legal spirit. Persons had come amongst them, and told them, they must do certain things, or they could not be saved. This was legalism, and in this spirit they would be circumcised, and were thereby brought under the law, and not by the act itself, but the spirit in which the deed was performed. Now, any gospel ordinance performed, or duty observed in the same spirit, would have the same effect.

All mankind are by nature under the law, and are of a legal spirit and disposition; and in this spirit and disposition they cannot please God. In this disposition Satan tries to keep them, knowing that he can thereby keep them from Christ, the only means of salvation; for no one can come to Christ in a legal spirit. So soon as we are disturbed in our sins, by the grace of God, our natural disposition, aided by the craft of Satan, leads us to seek to serve the Lord, by legal means, or in a legal spirit, so that we may work peace with Him. In this spirit we may do many things, and things which in themselves are right and good. We may hear the Word gladly, as Herod did John, and may have a zeal of God, but lack true knowledge of Godliness. As long as

we do such things for the purpose of making peace with God, and to be saved thereby, so long we are under the law, or, we may say, our doings are of the works of the law; and Paul says, as many as are so, are under the curse; and here is where Satan tries to keep us. So long as we perform our religious duties and services *to be saved*, we are under the law, and it matters not, whether it is baptism, Lord's supper, services of our neighbor, or charity, or whatsoever it is, it is done under a legal spirit, and it debars us from an interest in Christ. But the soul that has embraced Christ by faith, and makes Him his righteousness alone, and performs his duties and services out of love to Christ for having saved him, pleases God by his faith, and honors Him by his works. Those of whom Christ speaks as coming in that day, and saying: "Have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?" are such as Satan has kept bound by this legal fetter, and thereby kept them from Christ. Those, also, of whom Christ speaks in Luke, of whom He says: "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets;" these are evidently captivated under the same spirit, and held under the law. Now, if Christ and the apostles had given strict charges in regard to the mode or manner of being baptized, or of performing any gospel duty or ordinance, it would favor the device of Satan, to lead us to seek merit or favor of God, by strict conformity to that mode or rule. But by the absence of any special command of how we shall perform any ceremony, although we may be sorely perplexed, and painfully exercised, this very exercise will drive us to God by prayer, for light, understanding, and direction, and by this means we will be brought more clearly to discover God's design in His commandments, and thereby be led more entirely out from under the legal bonds, by which Satan tries to keep us bound, and are brought more fully into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Satan certainly carries on a great work, and very advantageous to his kingdom, in keeping up this contention about the proper mode of the administration of ordinances. It is very significant, that under the law, the manner of observing the ordinances was so strictly prescribed; the month, the day, and even the time of the day, and the mode of procedure, so strictly

laid down, whilst, under the gospel, there is not a word of the kind. I repeatedly heard John Herr say, and have manuscript writings in my possession, wherein he says, he does not reject other modes of baptism, than the one he practices, if it is administered on a living faith. If he would meet with a people who baptize by immersion, and were sound in faith and Scriptural practice, their mode of baptism would not separate him from them. This, also, is the sentiment of the church to the present day, so far as I have knowledge. The main object with him and the church has ever been, to ascertain that those who desire baptism have truly come to the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He hath sent. The object of the ministry has ever been, so to teach and instruct their converts, that they are fully sensible of what sin is, and, also, wherein true righteousness consists, so that their faith should not stand in that which they learn of men, but that their inward experience should agree with the Word of God, so that their faith, also, would stand in the power of God.

Infant baptism they do not regard as Christian baptism, seeing they could not have the knowledge of the name in which they are baptized, or possibly have the knowledge which they conceive requisite to constitute true Christian baptism; consequently, they baptize all such as have been baptised in infancy, if they come to repentance and true conversion, and desire to be received into the church's fellowship. They regard all fallen or apostate churches, as well as all churches that have never been based on true apostolic ground, and do not walk in obedience to the gospel commands and order, as anti-christian associations, and as opposing true gospel principles and life; consequently, such baptism as has been received in their churches, they cannot regard as true Christian baptism, inasmuch as a true Christian ordinance cannot be received from Anti-christ. Therefore, such adult persons as have received baptism in such churches, also feel themselves constrained, if they come to true light and knowledge, to lay off a testimony against their former practice, and against those who administered the ordinance to them, and all who uphold and support it, that they do not regard the ordinance they there received as true Christian baptism, not having had true Divine light, or they could not have submitted to it, and not having followed the leading of the Spirit of Christ, which would never have led one of His children to the house of a stranger, but to

the true house of God, the fold of His own sheep. Therefore, whatever their experience may have been, or however good their intentions may have been, they must have been deceived and in error, and feel constrained publicly to recall what they had thus done in ignorance and partial darkness; and by receiving true Christian baptism, lay off a testimony and reproof against those who are deceived, as they were, or have been instrumental in deceiving them. Let it, therefore, be called Anabaptism, or whatever people please, names will prejudice no one in the sight of God, whose favor and honor we seek, and will very willingly bear the scorn and derision of the world.

As before said, at the time of the organization of the church, they had no meeting-house, and held their meetings in private houses, and often-times in school-houses. Frequent requests were soon made for preaching at different places, in some instances at considerable distance, so that it soon became apparent that more laborers were needed. The harvest seemed great, and the laborers few; whereupon the church was requested to pray the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers into the field. After a season, the church then elected Abraham Landis, of what was then Lampeter, but now East Lampeter township, as a gospel minister, to labor and minister in that calling. This must have been the summer following the spring in which they organized the church. It is well-known that he was the first minister appointed after John Herr. On the same slip of paper, on which John Herr has written the date of his own baptism, he has written: "Oct. 10th, John Landis was taken into meeting as an evangelical preacher, agreeable to the Scripture form. The 31st, he preached his first sermon." John Landis was a brother of Abraham Landis, and also resided in what is now East Lampeter township. They also built a meeting-house in the same summer, in what is now West Lampeter township, on land they got of Francis Herr, near John Longenecker's, on the road leading from Strasburg to Lancaster. John Herr has written on the same slip of paper above alluded to: "Nov. 7th, the first meeting was held in the new meeting-house, at John Longenecker's." John Longenecker has long since died, and the place fallen into other hands of a different name, but the meeting-house still goes by the old name of "Longenecker's Meeting-house."

In the appointment of preachers, they also pursue a course

somewhat different from that of the Old Mennonite church, already alluded to in a former chapter. I do not know how long that practice had prevailed among the Mennonites, or whether it does now prevail in Europe, or whether it is only in America. We find no notice of, or allusion to it, in the writings of Menno Simon, or Detrich Philips, or that I know of in the "Martyr's Mirror." The mode I suppose is taken from the manner in which the choice was made by the disciples, between Matthias and Barsabas, to fill the place in the apostleship, made vacant by the fall of Judas. We do not find that the apostles recommended this mode of procedure, in the Acts, after this one instance, or in any of their Epistles. The mode of casting lots was of Jewish origin, where it was frequently directed by the Lord; but in the Gospel we nowhere find it commanded. All the time Christ was with the Disciples, they were still under the law, and so long as they were under it, they could not clearly comprehend the teachings and declarations of Christ, because His words were spiritual and they were yet carnal. Therefore he said John xvi.: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now; howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." The Spirit of Truth had not yet come at this time, and they could consequently not be led by Him; and had to proceed by such authority as they had, until He came. The proceedings of the church in the appointment of the deacons, was not by lot, nor does Paul to Timothy or Titus say anything about casting lots. He says he left Titus at Crete, that he should *appoint* elders in every city. He thus gives to Titus, and also to Timothy, directions concerning the qualifications those whom they appoint should have, and also some traits of character, which would render them ineligible. The church therefore concluded, that although the Disciples did proceed as said, to decide between these two, they were then yet under the law, and had to proceed by legal authority; but after the Spirit had made them free, and became their leader, they no more proceeded by legal authority, but after the motions of the Spirit. They, therefore, proceeded something after the manner which the apostles recommended, in the appointment of the first deacons. When the ministry felt the need of more help in their field of labor, they recommended the members of the church, brothers and sisters, to

do as Christ directed the disciples, pray the Lord to supply the requisite help, and that the brethren, especially, resign themselves to the Lord, to use them as He sees fit. After a time, the church is called together, and each one is requested to indicate privately, to one of the ministers, such brother or brethren as they think possess the requisite qualifications.

The election is made from the whole brotherhood, regard being had, primarily, to the spiritual stature, as the apostles recommended to the disciples in the selection of deacons: "Look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost." (Acts vi.) Education is no objection, but none are ever educated with this design. Aptness to teach, virtuous deportment, and a good report of those that are without, are requisite. The ministry then appoint a meeting of those who have been presented to them in this manner by the church; and inquire into the state of their feelings, in regard to the proposed calling; and what promptings they have themselves had in this direction. They also inquire into their soundness in doctrine, and gospel principles. The church is then again called together, and those who the ministry, in their private examination, think might be suitable for the calling, then make a statement to the church of the state of their feelings, and how they have been exercised by the action of the church; and also make a short confession of their faith and their views, and doctrinal points. After this, another meeting of the church is appointed, at which all the members are requested again to make known their feelings, privately, to some one of the ministry. If any one has any ground of objection to any of those brethren being appointed to this position, they are requested also now to make them known, to some of the ministry. Those who are considered most suitable, and seem to enjoy the confidence of the church, are then publicly announced as being put on probation for the ministry, and directed to assume the duties of the calling. After exercising themselves in the calling for a season, and being found blameless, and their own feelings not being averse to it, the appointment is then confirmed by public ordination; and the laying on of the hands of the bishop, whilst he invokes the help and blessing of the Lord.

As the church increased, more laborers were required, and Abraham Snavely, Christian Frantz, Henry Bowman, and a

number of others, were subsequently called to the ministry, all of whom have been gathered to their fathers, and others arisen and taken their place. Christian Frantz resided in Warwick township, and was chosen bishop, and moved to Franklin county, Pa., where he settled near Waynesboro', on the Antietam creek, and labored faithfully for many years, and gathered a considerable congregation, who have by many been called "Frantzites." Although he has been dead some ten or fifteen years, the church in the county is still preserved, and has at present five preachers, one of whom is a bishop. Henry Bowman resided in Martic township, and was appointed bishop after Christian Frantz removed to Franklin county. He labored in conjunction with John Herr for some years. John Herr died in May, 1850, in Humberstone township, Welland county, Canada West, whilst on a visit to the churches in Western New York, and the province of Canada. Since his death, several other bishops have been appointed in the county. Henry Bowman died in 1863. John Harnish, residing in Hempfield township, was called to the ministry about the year 1832-'3, and subsequently moved to Clark county, Ohio, where he was soon after appointed bishop, and labored to the close of his life, in 1870. There was a considerable church in his vicinity. John Hershey, of Dauphin county, Pa., was also an active and efficient laborer and bishop; but was removed by death at the age of about fifty, in the year 1851. The earlier ministers have all been removed by death, and their place taken by a younger generation; but the distinctive features of the doctrine and profession of the earlier brethren are still, strictly adhered to.

The church has spread over a considerable part of the county and also to some of the adjacent counties of Montgomery, Lebanon, Dauphin, York, Cumberland, and Franklin, in most of which are pastors, and several have bishops. There are also communities in different States—Maryland, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, and a number of communities in Canada West. At most places there are pastors, and at some several.

The distinctive features of the Mennonite profession, are not generally well understood. They, however, might be, seeing their confession of faith has been long since published, in various

forms; yet with all, we meet with men of intelligence, who seem to know little or nothing about them. Divisions and sub-divisions of sects and societies have become so numerous, and often-times so little difference in their sentiments, that people lose interest in them. Nearly all church histories which notice the Mennonite church, have been written by such persons as differed with them in sentiment; and often-times do not represent them altogether fairly. Nearly all modern histories, represent them as having departed considerably from the principles which governed the Mennonites of the earlier times, and generally represent them as having modified their principles. This is true with regard to the Mennonites of the United States, as we have already admitted; and according to the accounts which historians give, it is the same in Germany and the Netherlands. Sound Christian doctrine and sentiments, admit of no modification. The doctrine, as given us by Christ and His apostles, was perfect, and can never be improved. If the doctrine which Menno taught, was true, it cannot be modified. If it was not true, then reject it at once, and abandon the name which gave it distinction. We contend that those who have departed from the distinctive features of Menno's profession, are not fairly entitled to the name of Mennonite; seeing they have abandoned the principles which distinguished Menno and his people, of the sixteenth century, from the other reformers and professors of his day, and was what gave rise to the name.

It is said the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, and it was to distinguish them from the professors of Paganism that the name was given. If any one abandoned the principles and doctrine of Christ, and assimilated himself with the Pagan doctrine and principles, even though he would still call himself a Christian, every one would admit that he was not justly entitled to the name he claims. So when the professors of the Christian religion became divided, and received distinctive names, by which it is intended one party should be known from another, and this name is indicative of some peculiarity of their doctrine or profession, when they depart from the distinctive features of the doctrine which the name indicates, it seems reasonable that they would forfeit their title to the name also. Thus, if those who are called Lutherans, should abandon the principles which Luther taught, and which distinguished him and his church from that

of Calvin, and others, they can no longer fairly be called Lutherans. If even their principles and doctrine should be more pure, and nearer the truth, if they abandon that which he insisted on, and uphold that which he condemned, they cannot fairly be called by his name, because that indicates that they are of the same views and opinions which he held, and the assumption of the name is calculated to deceive, and is a false pretense. Methodism, we know, is a peculiar feature of the Methodist church. If a body professing to be a Methodist church, abandon the principles of Methodism, they would certainly be considered unworthy of the name, and true Methodists would not recognise them as brethren. Therefore, if Mennonite signifies one holding the doctrine and sentiments of Menno, then those who have departed from the principles which governed the early Mennonites, and have modified the distinctive features of his doctrine and profession, and uphold sentiments against which he strenuously contended, cannot be considered as fairly entitled to the name.

Menno and his brethren held views and principles, which are common to most other denominations of professing Christians. In their doctrine of baptism, they differ from almost all others, in the strictness of their limitation of what constitutes true Christian baptism. This we have already briefly treated on; but if any one desires a more full explanation of our views, he will find the subject more extendedly treated, in a pamphlet recently published by Jacob Geist, of Baltimore county, Maryland, and to be had of Dr. J. H. Musser, of Bird in Hand, Lancaster county, Pa. In regard to the purity of the Church, the Mennonites differ in doctrine from almost all other denominations of Christian professors, and in practice, from all of which we have any knowledge. The doctrine of the Mennonites of the sixteenth century was, that it is the duty of the ministry, as the porters of the house of God, well to guard against the admission of any member into the church, who had not come to true repentance, and conversion. Menno says, that, if even the emperor, or the king, would come to him and desire to be baptized, and were not blameless, penitent, and regenerated, he would rather die by the grace of God, than to baptize such an impenitent, sensual man. And if any did creep in unawares, or would lapse into a carnal life, it was an incumbent duty for the church to purge itself of all such offensive members,

whenever their condition became manifest. At that time, the church was under such severe persecution, that there was little motive for any but truly regenerated persons, to seek entrance into it. But now, in the time of religious liberty, many motives may exist, to induce persons to seek admission, which are not pure, or at least do not proceed from a true knowledge or acquaintance with the gospel spirit. For this reason, the Reformed Mennonite church, consider it a duty, not only for the ministry to visit and seek familiar acquaintance with those requesting admission into the church, but those desiring it, are published as applicants, and the members, as well as the ministry, are invited to seek acquaintance with them, and the knowledge of Divine things they have attained to. After being thus published for a season, the church is usually examined, and if any one has knowledge of any irregularity in their lives, or if they are discovered to be defective in knowledge, or not well established in the truth, their baptism is deferred till they are taught the way of truth more perfectly. This is impressed on each member as a duty they should make conscience of, and any one who is known to fail in it, or neglects to discharge it, falls under the censure of the church. Thus the utmost care is taken, to prevent any from entering the sheepfold, in any other way than by the door, Jesus Christ.

They look upon the Church as designed of God to consist of true believers, and as such only can the full measure of benefit which the believer derives from the Church, be enjoyed. They believe that an unconverted person in the Church, is prejudicial to its interest and welfare, even though the members should not be aware of the existence of such a member in their community. No member will incur guilt by the existence of such an one in the body, if they are ignorant of the fact; but they, nevertheless, exert a deleterious influence in the Church, for they are said by Christ to be a thief and a robber; and are come to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. But if any one or more of the members are aware that such an enemy is in the body, and conceal the fact, they become partakers with them, and are equally guilty before God. If there were a camp of soldiers in service, and one of the enemy would get into their camp, he might do them a great injury; but if none of the soldiers knew that he was an enemy, no one would incur guilt. But if some one knew that the person

was an enemy, and would not reveal his knowledge, he would be looked upon as equally guilty with the spy himself, and would be justly chargeable with the injury the other done. Thus, whenever the carnal thief and robber becomes known in the camp, or Church of Christ, and those who know it, do not reveal it, they become partakers of their evil deeds; and if the ministry have knowledge of such things, and connive at them, they betray the trust which has been committed to them, and the blood of those that perish will be required at their hands. Paul asks the question: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" Therefore, when by the carnal fruits it becomes manifest, that the tree is not good, and the church does not expel them, they are all chargeable before God with the evil consequences that must result from his presence in the church. This is a position which is denied by most churches, and is one of the distinctive features of the Mennonite profession; and is in direct contradiction of the popular idea, that God's children dwell amongst all the different denominations, or sects, of Christendom; or, as is most commonly said: "There are good and bad amongst all sects and churches." This idea is intended to be charitable. If it is scriptural, it may be true, and charitable; but if it is not scriptural, it cannot be true, neither can it be charitable, however fair and specious it may appear. The idea intended to be conveyed by this expression of "good and bad," is, that there are true and faithful children of God, and false, or unfaithful and hypocritical persons, in all sects and churches. This the Reformed Mennonites hold, is not scriptural; and can, consequently, not be true. Unless it can be shown, that a man can be a true Christian, without obeying the gospel of Christ, or keeping the gospel commandments, the position cannot be maintained, that good Christians can exist in all churches.

What was it that the Church of Corinth gloried in, that Paul told them, "Your glorying is not good?" Undoubtedly, they gloried in being the Church and spouse of Christ; but they gloried in vain, if they maintained their present position. The Church *is* the spouse of Christ, and they gloried in being the Church, but their glorying was not good. Christ would not own a spouse which was polluted. These were polluting themselves, and unless they would purge out the leaven, the whole mass would become

polluted or leavened. The leaven here spoken of, was the sin of fornication ; but all sin is leaven ; and can there be anything plainer than, if we know the leaven of sin to exist in the Church, and we do not purge it out, the whole Church will become leavened ? Here the Holy Ghost *commands* the Church to purge out the leaven. If she does not, she is not obedient, and falls under the condemnation which the Holy Ghost declares against all such as refuse to obey. When Paul says, we shall purge out the leaven, and that we shall withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly ; and we know that there is leaven in the church, and she will not purge it out ; and we know that brethren do walk disorderly, and the church will not withdraw from them ; how is it possible that a true child of God can remain in that church, without disobeying the gospel of Jesus Christ ? These commands of Paul are certainly *gospel*, and how can we be a true child of God, and not obey ? Let no false charity intrude here ; no carnal reason, no good meaning, but face the question fairly ! when Paul says : "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, *and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (2d Thess. i.)

Those of whom Paul speaks, Gal. v., and says, "They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God," can certainly not be good, in the common acceptation of the word, if they cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Then every one doing such things as Paul here alludes to, is leavened ; and if a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, then a little of this sin, which Paul calls works of the flesh, must leaven or defile the whole church, or make it sinful. One can certainly not be "good," and be leavened at the same time. Every one knows that in many of the churches envy, hatred, wrath, strife and emulations, are no secret. How, then, can any one exist in such a body, and not become leavened ? They belong to what Paul calls the *lump*, and with this leaven in *the lump*, they *must* become leavened, or else Paul does not tell the truth. Paul says *they will*. These say *they will not*.

I have often heard persons say, they spoke to their ministers about certain things, which they thought ought not to exist in the church ; but the preacher would say, they should only do right themselves, and what others do will not hurt them. Now, is this

not a strange voice," to one of the true lambs of Christ? Christ himself, nor the Holy Ghost through the apostles, never uttered such language. Love will constrain every child of God, to try to rescue a brother or sister who is in the way of error; and that minister who gives such counsel is a blind guide, and those who are so blind as to let themselves be led by them, must fall with them into the ditch. If they possess the true love of God, they will, by a walk in love, and labor of love, try to win such an one to repentance, and submission to true gospel order, or else they must put them away, and withdraw from them. When a minister admits that a thing is wrong, as Abraham Landis says one of the preachers did to him, but say they cannot help it, if one desires to build up, another will pull down; and when you reprove, they will tell you, "go home and sweep before your own door, and you will have enough to do;" he virtually admits that the whole lump has become leavened; that the whole head is indeed sick, and the whole heart faint. (Isaiah i.) Christian Kauffman also says, that he himself told one of the preachers, when they spoke rather derisively to him, to go home and sweep before his own door, and he would find enough to do.

Is it not lamentable, is it not sorrowful, indeed, to think of such a state of things? And I would ask, how could any one remain in such a body, and obey the commands of the gospel? And how could he remain "*good*," without obeying the commands of the gospel? The leaven is in the church, and they cannot purge it out; because it has been there so long, that the whole body has become leavened, and, consequently, it can no more be purged out; and no wonder they say, they do not know what to do. Did not, I ask again, these preachers admit that the whole lump is leavened? There is no other way. If we assume that we can be "*good*" in any church, and there are such in all churches, then we must take one of the two following positions: either that the Scripture does not teach us the will of the Heavenly Father; or else we can be "*good*," and enter the kingdom of Heaven, without doing the will of God!

It is not worth while; we may turn the matter about as we will, no evasion, no equivocation, or no carnal reasoning will serve us, by which we can get round, or deny the fact, that obedience to the commands of Christ and the apostles will present to us a pure

and spotless Church! I will admit that there never has been a Church, and never can be one, in which leaven has not existed. So long, however, as no fruit is manifest, this leaven cannot leaven the whole body, or lump; but when it becomes apparent, and is not purged out, then the whole body becomes defiled, or else, we say again, the word of God cannot be true. Let our opponents sneer at, and ridicule the idea of an unspotted Church, as they will, the Scriptures certainly teach it. We very readily admit, that on this principle the Church is not likely to grow very rapidly, or become very large, but Christ said: "The gate is straight and the way narrow that leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it."

Christ did not come into the world to reform its secular affairs, or to improve the physical condition of man. Every approach in that direction, was met by reproof and refusal. His purpose was to bring life and immortality to light; to restore the life which our first parents had lost, and to appoint means for the security and preservation of the Divine life, when restored to believers. Their intercourse with the world tended to weaken and destroy Divine life, and God instituted the Church to counteract this pernicious influence. This afforded a retreat, wherein the believer could retire from the influence of the world, and be surrounded by a spiritual element, tending to nourish and quicken the Divine life. Every command of the gospel tends to this end and object. Nothing tends more to beget love than the exercise of love, or to walk in love, as Paul says, Eph. v., and Peter says, 1st Epist. i.: "Love one another with pure hearts fervently." Christ also charges His disciples, John xv.: "This is my commandment, that ye love one another." Every command given is of the nature of the purest love, and tends to rescue those in whom this love is abating. This is the ground of the command, Matt. xviii. concerning offenses; and Paul says, in Gal. v.: "If any one is overtaken in a fault, restore them in the spirit of meekness." But if they will not receive these offices of pure Divine love, then Christ says: "Let them be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Paul says, 1st Cor. v.: "Purge out the old leaven, and withdraw thyself from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition he received of us." (2d Thess. iii.) And in Rom. xvi.: "Mark them that cause divisions and offenses, and avoid them."

Now, every command here given, is for the purpose of preserving the Church pure and free from carnal influence. The carnal influence in the world is pernicious, and is excluded from the Church, and provision made, and authority given to purge the Church of it, by whatever way or means it may have found an entrance into it, for the purpose of its own preservation. And why, pray, would any one plead to retain a carnal person in the Church? If the carnal element in the world is prejudicial to the Divine life, what do you want with it in the Church? And how much more must it be prejudicial there? In the world, the believer expects to meet opposition, and an influence which is detrimental to his best interests, and he arms himself, and is on an especial guard; but in the Church, every door and lock is open in confidence, and a thief or robber has every opportunity to steal, to kill, and to destroy. Well does Christ say, they are thieves and robbers. Dr. Mosheim, alluding to the doctrine of a pure Church, calls it a fanatical principle, which the ancient Mennonites frankly avowed, but their descendants sought to conceal, and afterward almost wholly relinquished. "A dismal experience has convinced them of the absurdity of this chimerical principle, which the dictates of reason, and the declaration of Scripture, had demonstrated sufficiently, but without effect. Now that the Mennonites have opened their eyes, they seem to be pretty generally agreed about the following tenets: First, that there is an invisible Church, which is universal in its extent, and is composed of members from all the sects and communities that bear the Christian name; secondly, that the mark of the true Church is not, as their former doctrine supposed, to be sought in the unspotted sanctity of all the members, (since they acknowledge that the visible church is promiscuously composed of the righteous and the wicked,) but in the knowledge of the truth, as it was delivered by Christ, and in the agreement of all the members of the Church in professing and defending it."

He further says: "The Mennonites have in many other respects, departed from the principles and maxims of their ancestors; have also given a striking instance of their defection in the case now before us, and have almost wholly relinquished this fundamental doctrine of their sect, relating to the nature of the Christian Church." This, I acknowledge, is a melancholy truth, with most

of those who call themselves Mennonites; and is the main reason why we cannot unite with them, and must protest against them. Dr. Mosheim here speaks of the Mennonites of Europe, but those of America stand upon the same ground; and, standing upon this platform, we need not be surprised at meeting with much loose conduct amongst its members. But whatever others may hold, we profess, and hold firmly to this fundamental doctrine of the ancient Mennonites, and take no pains to conceal, disguise, or in any way to express ourselves in ambiguous, or equivocal phrases. That there will ever be members in the church who are not sanctified, we freely admit; but they cannot knowingly be received or retained in the church, and it remain the Church of Christ. Every member, as well as every pastor, is in duty bound to labor for the purity of the church; and where this care is relinquished, the church must become leavened. If a little leaven, leaveneth the whole lump, how can the visible church be "composed of righteous and sinners?" And where, I would ask Dr. Mosheim, does the "Scriptures demonstrate" that the Church shall not be kept pure? And in what does the dictates of reason demonstrate the contrary? Every dictate of reason, Scripture, and sound theology, demonstrate that the children of God, who are led by the Holy Spirit, who dwell in Christ, and Christ in them, with whom the Father and Son make their abode, and with whom the Son says He will sup, and they with Him, must be composed of such as the Scriptures pronounce holy. Not that they are personally so holy, but they have a living faith, which leads them to a holy life and walk; and when they, through weakness or inadvertence, happen to step aside from the path of rectitude, they freely acknowledge their error, ask for forgiveness, and make what restitution they can for the wrong they have done. Dr. Mosheim's idea, that the "visible Church is promiscuously composed of the righteous, and the wicked," suggests the question, whether a person who is *leavened*, can be righteous? A righteous person being at the same time *leavened*, seems to me to be a contradiction, and does not well agree with sound reason. As wickedness is unquestionably *leaven*, and a little of it, will leaven the whole lump, I do not see how, in such a church, the righteous are to remain pure! Dr. Mosheim was a great man; but great men sometimes say very weak things, especially when they undertake

to measure the things of God by the weak and erring reason of man. But Paul says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I do not wonder, therefore, that he thought the idea of a pure Church was *fanatical, absurd, and chimerical*; but I do wonder, that a man of his learning and ability should say, that *Scripture demonstrates* the absurdity of such an idea.

The historical accounts of the ancient Mennonites, are mostly from those who entertained violent prejudices against them. Their persistent efforts in charging them with being descendants of the Munster sect, seems to show their disposition and desire to heap calumny upon them. If Anabaptism signifies the baptism of such as had been baptized in infancy, when they in after life were converted and embraced the gospel, then certainly the ancient Mennonites, and we also, with the Waldenses, Albigenses, Petrosians, and others, were Anabaptists. I have never understood that any of these ancient witnesses of the truth, were studious to conceal their sentiments in this respect; and we certainly do not only not care who knows it, but freely and openly declare it, and have not the least objection to the name, if people choose to call us by it. But that the profession of these principles should justify their opponents or enemies in calling them Munsterites, I cannot see any more reason, than there would be in charging the Lutherans with the atrocities committed by the Catholics, because they both practiced infant baptism.

Menno Simon was violently opposed to the Munster sect before he left the Catholics, and opposed them in speaking and writing, with all the ability he was master of. He wrote a work of considerable size, especially against John von Leyden. There is no evidence, from any of his writings, that he ever, in the least, sympathized with them, but always earnestly denounced their pretensions, and deplored their course and conduct. That many of the Munsterites were comparatively innocent, is admitted by all; and that some of these, and perhaps many, should have come to better knowledge afterward, and joined themselves to Menno, is altogether probable. But that the doctrine of Menno Simon tended to promote sedition, or uproar, is unreasonable; because it is directly and fundamentally in opposition to all violence.

Neither can I find any evidence, that they had any aversion to the execution of justice by the magistracy. I think they held that it is the duty of the officers in the kingdom of this world, to execute justice. This, at least, is the sentiment of the Reformed Mennonites, of the present day. For their views, more extendedly given on this subject, with the magistracy and non-resistance, I would refer the reader to a pamphlet, published in 1864, entitled "Non-resistance Asserted," and now appended to this work.

Dr. Mosheim is also in error, in regard to the relation existing between Menno and Detrich Philips, (who he calls Theodore Philips). They have both written considerably, and I find, in their writings they speak of each other in very affectionate terms; and, although I have read the works of both repeatedly, I have never observed any discrepancy in their views and sentiments. They both strenuously uphold the duty of avoiding excommunicated members, but not in the manner Dr. Mosheim asserts, that they regarded them as the "*pests of society*;" but, on the contrary, as Paul teaches: "Not to hold them as enemies, but admonish them as brethren." Neither did they hold, that offenders of all classes or grades should be excommunicated, without any previous warning or admonition, as asserted by Mosheim. Menno, in reply to Gellius Fabre, speaks of this charge, and says, they had by-times, borne with offenders a year, and near two, with all Christian patience and forbearance, before they were expelled. And in his work on excommunication he speaks of our duty with the erring; to admonish them, not only twice or thrice, but as often as we have opportunity, or occasion presents, until they in all things submit to true gospel order, or else that they become raving, unclean dogs, or swine; but on the grounds of what Paul says of the Corinthian fornicator, that, although he was absent, he had judged what to do with such an one. In cases of such flagrant offenses, Menno did not regard any previous admonition necessary. If it was known to be unquestionably true, they did not consider it a duty to admonish them previously; but knowing their sin to be unto death, do as Paul says, commit, or give them over to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

In this work on excommunication, referred to, Menno admits that he had formerly labored under some misapprehension about

Scriptural authority, in reference to excommunication. Christ directs, if a brother trespasses against us, we shall reprove him between ourselves and him alone ; then take one or two with us ; then bring the matter before the Church, and, finally, if he will not hear, to hold him as an heathen man and publican ; which he understood as expulsion from the Church. Here there are manifestly three admonitions ordered before expulsion. On this ground, Menno had concluded, that there must in all cases be three several admonitions, before excommunication ; and if in all cases they would give evidence of penitence, they must bear with them. Paul's summary dealings with this Corinthian, however, convinced him that he was in error, and gave him perception of the difference in the grades of offense. When one brother sins against another, he *may* be spiritually dead, but he *may* also have offended only through weakness, or through inadvertance. The three admonitions are therefore ordered, which will prove whether he is really dead, or only erring. If he is not really dead, the three several admonitions will reveal the remaining life ; but if this has no effect, it is proof that he is spiritually dead, and necessary to separate him from the living. There are also cases where a member errs grievously, as Menno says, and still thinks he is right. In this case labor and care may bring him to a right knowledge of his error, and as he recommends, great patience and forbearance is necessary ; and he would have us admonish such, not only twice or thrice, but as often as God gives grace and opportunity, until they are fully restored to spiritual health and vigor, or else give full evidence that they are spiritually dead. But in such cases as fornication, and like offenses, where reason and Scripture prove that they are dead, no further evidence is necessary ; the fruit proves what they are, and here Menno says, such admonition is not necessary. It is true, even such offenders as fornicators may receive grace, and may be stricken with sudden penitence, and sorrow, and grieve sorely for their sin ; but such would willingly submit to the reproof of the Church, severe though it be, in order to wipe out the stain and reproach they have brought upon it. They would not feel to accept of anything less than that which the Word of God inflicts upon them.

The doctrine of Menno has been of so little esteem with the popular religionists of all ages, and has been so offensive to many

of them, that even their great historians have not thought it worth the pains of patient research, in order to come to a right understanding of his views, or the principles which governed the ancient Mennonites. I would not impute willful misrepresentation to Dr. Mosheim, but in the matter of the early Mennonites dealing so summarily with offenders, without explaining the views of the Mennonites, he does them great injustice ; which I cannot account for, on any other grounds, than too lightly taking up reports, or the accounts of some other writer, who had, perhaps, been equally uninformed, or even influenced by less honorable motives. The doctrine of Menno does deal them some pretty severe thrusts, so that we need not wonder that they feel badly under it, and that some bitter spleen should be vented against both it, and him. But we must remember what the effects of Christ's declaration of truth had, upon the popular religionists of His day, and how they gnashed with their teeth on Stephen, when he told them the plain truth.

Lest some might understand the expression of the sin of fornication, being a sin unto death, as intending to mean that it is *unpardonable*, I would say, it is not intended to convey that idea. All mankind are by nature spiritually dead ; and, being so, all their sins are unto death, to which they bring fruit. By sincere repentance and true conversion, they become spiritually alive. Then they, through the Spirit, bring forth fruits unto God. Satan, the world and the flesh, are always warring against this Divine life, seeking its destruction, and to bring the soul again under the power of death. This warfare against the three great powers of devil, world, and the flesh, all true living Christians must lead, and in it, all will receive many wounds ; but may still not be overcome. When, therefore, we see a fellow-believer fall into error, we cannot know whether he has been overcome, and lost the Divine life or not ; and our duty is to enquire into his case, to discover his true condition ; and if it is found, that there is still Spirit and life here, endeavor all we can, to rescue him from the hand of the destroyer, who is upon him ; that is, to make him sensible of his error, and lead him to humiliation and repentance. But if it be found that he is destitute of spiritual life, by not acknowledging his sin, and shows no repentance or humiliation, it becomes apparent that his sins proceed not from weakness, but from a lapse

into the dead state, in which we all lie by nature ; and his works are fruits unto death. Such sins as fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, or extortion, cannot be sins of mere weakness or inadvertance, so as to be committed by one who may yet be in possession of Spiritual life. The act is, in itself, evidence that he is dead, and, consequently, his sin must be unto death, because he is bringing fruit unto death. Whether his sin is pardonable or not, we leave to God ; and treat all such as have committed sins unto death, as the Scripture instructs ; and admonish all to repentance, as often as we have grace and opportunity, so long as they give any ear, or in patience receive our reproof and admonition.

If it can be shown that the Mennonite doctrine of dealing with offenders, is Scriptural, then it is not the doctrine of man, but of God ; and is the most rational, the most pure, and the most loving, that infinite wisdom could devise. No system of man's devising can improve on it, because all that God does is perfect. God is love ; and all His acts and dealings with man, so long as he is within the bounds of grace, are in love ; and all His commands to the saints, relative to their dealings with their fellowman, are commands of love. They are never so far to conclude that another is without the pale of God's mercy, or not within the extent of His grace, as to be unworthy of the means of grace being extended to them. Christ has said, that those who sin against the Holy Ghost, shall never be forgiven, either in this world, or in the world to come ; and Paul says: If we sin willfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, and tread the Son of God under foot, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame, it is impossible to renew us to repentance ; because to such there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. (Heb. vi. x.) We may fear this of obstinate apostates, but God will not have us so far to conclude it, that we omit the use of the means He has commanded us to use, to bring all backsliders, or apostates, to repentance. The knowledge of those who are without the reach of His grace, God has reserved to Himself. The believer, by his walk in the light, reproveth all sin, and admonishes all sinners to repent and forsake the way of sin ; and where opportunity offers, and on suitable

occasions, he also in word is to reprove, rebuke and exhort. (2d Tim. iv.)

The Reformed Mennonites hold that the doctrine of the gospel teaches it as the duty of members of the church, on all occasions, so to walk, and conduct themselves toward one another in such a manner, as to incite, incline, encourage, and provoke one another to love, and to good works; and whenever one observes another incline to light-mindedness and frivolity, or to any thing that is contrary to true Godliness, or sound gospel doctrine, it is their duty, in love to their souls, so to approach them, as to alarm them of the danger they are exposing themselves to. If one member trespasses against another, love will neither permit them to pass it by in silence, or to speak of it to another; but impel them to speak to the offender themselves. This is so plain a command of the Saviour, that no one can misunderstand it. Whoever violates it, violates the law of love, for Christ has given it in pure Divine love; and if we love the Saviour, it will impel us to obey Him; and, if we love our brother or sister, love will impel us to approach them in the manner the Saviour has commanded, as the best means of rescuing them from the snare of the devil, and the danger of perdition to which we see their souls exposed. Paul says, Rom. viii.: "He that hath not the spirit of Christ, is none of His." (Weighty declaration, and worthy of every professor's earnest consideration.) Christ's spirit is love, and if we have His spirit, or love in us, it will lead us to obey His word, and proceed toward our erring brother or sister, as Christ has commanded. In short, it is vain for any professor, or member of a church, to pretend to love Christ, or their brother or sister, if they can pass by without obeying this command. For this reason, we urge it as a conscientious duty upon every member, and also reprove every violation of it, in our brothers and sisters, which comes to our knowledge. Neither does the duty end here; but if they hear, or receive the reproof, then forgive them; and although it is not mentioned in the command, but it is certainly intended, that then nothing more shall be said about it, or no exposure made; for this would not be love, or tend to provoke love. But, if they will not hear, then take one or two more with thee, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. If he hear these, forgive him; but if not, tell it

unto the church, and if he will now hear the church, forgive him ; but, if he will not hear the church, then let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Now, the matter has become that of the whole church, and the whole church is also bound to hold him, as Christ has commanded.

Paul says, Gal. vi. : "If a man" (that is, a brother) "be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness." This is not a sin, or fault, specially wronging any particular brother, yet every brother who has knowledge of it, is charged to perform a duty in regard to it. The charge is to restore them, and, in laboring to do this, we are commanded to deal with them kindly and gently ; for unkindness, or ungentleness, would not be in the spirit of meekness. In a meek deportment there can be no rashness, or severity, but patience and forbearance. But if, with all the labor of love, they will not let themselves be restored, there will ultimately be no other way but for the church to purge themselves of such leaven, otherwise the whole body will become leavened.

The church holds this as a duty of love they owe to any member that is overtaken in a fault ; and it is the duty of the church to labor with such member, so long as there is hope of success, as we would naturally do with a sick member of the family, or household ; but when the sick one dies, however near and dear they may have been, or however hard it may go with the family, they consent to put them out of the house. So long, then, as there is evidence of Divine life in such erring member, the household of faith will also labor in love, with all diligence, to restore them to spiritual health and vigor ; but when it becomes evident that they are spiritually dead, however deeply they may grieve, they know that there is no other way but to put them out of the house of God, or the whole family, or church, will become leavened with the deadly disease of sin.

The Apostle Paul repeatedly commands the members of the Church, to greet one another with the holy kiss. This is a command which the Reformed Mennonites consider that the apostle, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, charges believers to observe ; and esteem it to be both becoming and edifying, as a token of love and acknowledgment of brotherhood in Christ. It is not, however, deemed comely, or that it would be a good light to the

world, or edifying to the church, that this practice should be exercised between the sexes; but that brethren greet one another, and sisters the same. We have the example of Paul, that he reproveth those who sinned, and commands the Church to rebuke those who sin, before all. It is also evident, that if we are to restore those who commit a fault, there must also be power of reproof, and in 1st Thess. v. it is said, we shall "warn them that are unruly;" and in 2d Tim. iv. he also says: "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." It is evident, therefore, that there are such faults, errors and sins, which the Holy Ghost does not class among the sins which are unto death; and John also says, 1st Epist. v., there is a sin unto death; and he speaks also of a sin which is not unto death; and Christ's direction in regard to one brother trespassing against another, also makes this evident. But when they will not receive the labor of love from their brothers, it becomes evident that the party is spiritually dead. In these cases, where it is evident that the party is in error, and they are labored with in love, at the Scriptures teach, some immediately perceive their error, acknowledge it, and ask for forgiveness. Upon evidence of true repentance, and humiliation, this forgiveness *must*, and will, also, be freely granted; but if there is true repentance, it must also lead the offender to a willingness to make reparation for any injury they have done, so far as they have ability. If any one has committed a fault, which is in violation of the principles of the gospel, their act becomes a reproach to the church, and, consequently, to Christ; which, if they are truly sensible of their sin, must grieve them very deeply; and in order to make restitution, they freely confess their error openly before the world, taking the fault on themselves, and absolve the church from all blame; as by their action they show that they do not approve or tolerate such deeds in the church. But, sometimes the erring party cannot so directly see their error, or cannot be brought so speedily into the humble spirit and frame of mind, which will enable them to make satisfactory acknowledgment of their sin, and it is yet so public that it would neither be edifying to the church, or a good testimony to the world, to greet them with the kiss of peace; neither would we do so with a conscience altogether void of offense; yet hoping and believing that there is still life

remaining, the church has, as a means of open rebuke, and testimony that we can give no countenance to such conduct, suspended such offenders from the full privileges of membership; yet they are not altogether expelled from the church. They are not admitted to the communion of the Lord's Supper, the washing of feet, kiss of peace, or councils of the church; but are not considered as excommunicated members, until, by the further labors of the church with them, it becomes apparent that they are destitute of life, when entire excommunication takes place. This suspension is not designed to be of long continuance, but to be attended with active labors, and efforts of all who have opportunity, to bring them to a full sensibility of their sins, and a consequent humiliation and submission to the church; when they are again fully restored to all the privileges of membership.

There is no direct command in the gospel for any intermediate state between full membership and excommunication. This has caused some exceptions to be taken to this suspension, saying, there is no Scriptural support for it. We deem it to be Scriptural, because its design and tendency is entirely in accordance with the spirit of the gospel. Besides, we do not see how we could carry out the principles of the gospel, if there was no power to suspend any one from church privileges. Every one will admit that no one can be excommunicated, until there is evidence that death has taken place. But, as such cases do frequently occur, where members have fallen into something which it would be a reproach to the church to admit them to communion, or to greet them with the kiss of peace, it would be laying off a testimony in many instances, which we could not do with a clear conscience, and many would have to withdraw from communion, and would lead to personally avoiding one another, because they could not freely greet one another with the kiss of peace; whilst the church would still not have sufficient evidence that they are spiritually dead, and, consequently, would not be proper to excommunicate them.

The church, therefore, deems it a measure of prudence, comfort, and great advantage, which tends to edification and true spiritual life and piety, where it is used and exercised with prudence, and true Christian charity. That it is subject to abuse, no one will deny; but what ordinance may not be abused? and abuse is never

an argument against the proper use of any measures. Whether the apostles used any such means I do not know. Paul speaks of reproving, and rebuking. This I cannot think has reference to excommunication. It is true, reproving and rebuking may be done by words alone, without any other measures effecting the parties, or their privileges. But it may also be attended with measures affecting their privileges, which would make the reproof more efficient. It would be inconsistent to reprove or rebuke a brother, and turn about and greet him with the kiss of peace, or comfort him by giving him the holy emblems of communion with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. One of two things we would have to do in such cases, both of which are contrary to the spirit of the gospel. We would either have to excommunicate where we have not complete evidence that the party is dead, or else show by the holy emblems of unity and peace, as if unity and peace existed, where it in truth is not so.

It is not at all unlikely, that there was some such suspension accompanied the reproofs and rebukings spoken of by Paul. In the writings of Menno Simon, or the early Mennonites, we find no mention made of any such suspension; yet it is hardly reasonable to suppose, that in such cases as Menno speaks of in his reply to Gellius Fabre, where they labored a year, or near two, with much patience and Christian forbearance, that they all this time admitted them to the full privileges of membership; or that those of whom he speaks, in his work on excommunication, page 259, part first, of Funk's complete works, could possibly, under such circumstances, have stood in full communion. He says: "But when any one of our Father's little ones, Christ's sheep, err, and begin to turn their ear to false doctrine, which is adorned with fair words; who suffer themselves, through their lusts, to be led from the truth, and begin to set their feet upon the broad way, and bow their hearts again to covetousness, pride, haughtiness, etc., entertain inordinate desires for the property, wives, daughters, maids, or the ungodly, vain company of their neighbors, become cold, and weak in their faith, dislike the truth and err grievously, and yet suppose that they go upon the right way; such erring ones, we should not suffer to be lost, but should seek them with all our power and might, not with one or two admonitions only, as is done with heretics (Titus iii.), nor but three times, as is the case in

a dissension between brother and brother (Matthew xviii.), but as often as the Lord gives spirit and grace, till they again conform, in all things, to the truth, depart from their errors, and enter upon the right way, or till they become as ravening, biting dogs or unclean swine." The Divine nature may, in such cases, not be entirely lost; but if such fruits manifested themselves, I can hardly think that they publicly greeted them as brethren in full communion, or admitted them to the Lord's supper. It would be altogether contrary to what Menno himself teaches, when writing of the Lord's supper. I would suppose they held them under a reproof, from which they were not released until "they again conformed, in all things, to the truth, departed from their errors and entered upon the right way."

There is evidently a difference in the offenses, or sins, into which professed believers may fall. Some are of such a nature as it would be impossible for one to fall into, without having lost his interest in Christ, or, as we might say, proving itself to be a sin unto death. Paul gave no instructions to give any over unto Satan, who was not spiritually dead. The brother who commits a trespass against another may be spiritually dead, but Christ does not give us authority to conclude so, until there are such means used, as will prove him to be dead. Then he gives instruction to put him away as dead. Of a heretic, Paul says: "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject." The German translation says, "Meide," (that is shun). When Paul speaks of those whom we shall reprove, rebuke, and restore, he evidently has in view, such as there is hope that there is yet some spiritual or Divine life in them. But of the Corinthian fornicator, he says: "I as absent in the body but present in the Spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed." He judged so, because this was such a sin, as no gracious soul could fall into, and he does not instruct them to labor with him, or have any preliminary inquiry into his feelings, or spiritual condition. Of course, it must always be determined whether the charge is true. It may be that in some such cases, Menno and Philips would sanction excommunication, notwithstanding the expressions of regret and sorrow of the parties, and I think quite justly. Paul gives no instructions to inquire whether he is sorry or not. Wherever I have knowledge of persons who have

fallen into such offenses, and manifested true godly sorrow, they have notwithstanding willingly submitted to excommunication, and fully justified the church in doing so. In such cases, and some sins of a similar nature, we take the act itself as being full evidence that they are destitute of Divine life, and a leaven, which the Holy Spirit directs us to put away from among us such wicked person. Those who will not submit to the reproof of the church, after being scripturally admonished, and reprov'd, let their offense be disorderly walk, idleness and refusal to work, heresy, or trespass against a brother, it is evidence that they have lost the Divine life, and because of this they shall be removed as unfruitful branches in the vine Jesus Christ.

Now, although these may have thus fallen, and given evidence that they have lost the Divine life, the Holy Ghost will not have the Church to conclude that they are irretrievably lost, but still to admonish them as a brother, and as Paul says, give them over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The Reformed Mennonite church, as well as Menno Simon, and his brethren of the sixteenth century, have been much censured by almost all churches and parties, for their treatment of such members as have thus fallen, or apostatized. They do not only refuse them communion and church privileges, but also refuse to deal with, or hold other social intercourse with them, further than is necessary to supply their natural wants, or what would be necessary to instruct and admonish them to repentance and reformation. They on no account show them ill will, enmity, or unkindness, but due respect and kindness; yet, at the same time, by refusing ordinary social intercourse remind them of their fall, and admonish them of the necessity and importance of repentance and renewal of life. This avoidance we hold is commanded of God, and as such, must be of love, and in love the church is bound to observe it. This, of course, is disputed and denied by those who oppose us; but, we trust we shall be able to show by the Word of God, that it is in truth a command; and if this can be done, then every question as to duty is solved.

At the time Christ was upon earth, the Jews did not eat with, or have any social intercourse with publicans and sinners, or the heathen. This is evident from many Scriptures. The Jews

constantly accused Him for eating with publicans and sinners, and the Pharisee with whom Jesus dined, thought it out of order to be touched by a sinful woman, as Mary was accounted. (Luke vii.) The woman of Samaria whom the Saviour met at Jacob's well, when the Saviour asked water of her, replied: "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria, for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." (John iv.) Again, the Jewish disciples accused Peter of violating Jewish ordinances, when he went at the request of Cornelius to Cesarea, and, as they said: "Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them." (Acts xi.) The law which God gave Israel in the beginning, did not require such strict avoidance of the heathen, neither did it forbid them to eat with publicans and sinners. But God gave Israel a law, and that was to stone to death, such as violated certain statutes of the law He had given them. Such a woman as Mary is reputed to have been, would have been stoned to death; and, also, such publicans and sinners as they refused to eat or deal with. But now they were under the Roman power, and the Romans did not regard the Jewish law, and forbade them under their law, to put any man to death; which may be perceived by the reply of the Jews to Pilate, (John xviii.) when he told them to take Jesus, and judge Him according to their law. They said, their law would adjudge Him to death; but now it was not lawful for them to put any one to death. Therefore they could not crucify Christ, until they had leave from Roman authority. Now, because they could not execute Jewish law on the sinners and Gentiles, they put them under the ban of non-intercourse. This I believe is admitted as the reason why the Jews held the heathen men and publicans as they did, at that time. But, this is not material. That they did hold them in such a ban of exclusion, cannot be denied. They did not eat, or have social intercourse with them.

Then, when the Saviour told His disciples that they should hold such as refused to receive the reproof of the Church as heathen men and publicans, it is evident He intended they should hold them, as it was the custom of the times to hold and do with heathen men and publicans. If this was not the design of the Saviour, I am at a loss to know what He intended. Now, if we deal with and treat excommunicated members the same as we do

all others who are not, or never were members of the church, it is not holding them as the Jews held heathen men and publicans. But, as the Christians did, perhaps, not hold the heathen and publicans differently from what they did the Jews, (at least, after the lapse of some time), there might be a question raised ; but, if the Saviour did not mean to make a distinction between such as had been, and such as never had been members of the Church, why did He not take all outside the Church together, and call them the *world*, as He so often did when speaking of all unsanctified people ? Why did He not say, Let him be to thee as all the world ?

But the Apostle Paul here comes to our relief, and places the matter beyond dispute. He, under Divine inspiration, places the matter in the same light as we understand it. In 1st Cor. v., Paul speaks of an aggravated case of fornication which had occurred amongst them, and reproves them for their tolerance of him in the Church, who had committed it. It seems, from what Paul says in this chapter, that he had written to them before, not to company with fornicators ; and they understood him to mean, they should have no company with any one who is guilty of such conduct. But he tells them this was not his meaning, or they would have to leave the world, if they would not dare to keep company with fornicators, covetous, extortioners, or idolaters. "But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner ; *with such a one no not to eat.*" Now it is evident that Paul here gives a command. These words are a plain command, and no man can deny it. I presume also, no one will deny that it is the duty of every Christian, to keep the commands which by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, are given unto us. Then here is a command, which it is our duty to keep ; and we have a deep interest in knowing what it is. The command *is* not to keep company with a certain class of men ; but who are they ? Any one who is called a brother, and is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner. We shall keep company with no such one. Nothing can be plainer than that the Church, or its members, shall not keep company with such. Does this not agree well with the idea we have presented, as being the Saviour's

command to hold them as heathen men and publicans? The Jews had no social intercourse with such, nor did not eat with them, and here Paul tells the Corinthians the same: have no company with them, no not so much as to eat with them. But now a little further to enquire into the nature of this company which is thus forbidden. It is evident that Paul forbids an intercourse with one who is called a brother, which he allows with one of the same habits and character, who has never been called a brother. Is then the company forbidden, the common social intercourse, which believers and unbelievers have with each other; or is it the spiritual communion, fellowship or intercourse, which believers have with each other?

Nothing is plainer, than that the apostle means a keeping of company, or an intercourse which believers, and unbelievers, can enjoy with one another. This is self-evident, because the apostle would not speak of allowing a thing which cannot take place. I have spoken with many people on this subject, and have never yet heard any one deny, that the apostle forbids a certain kind of intercourse with apostates; but it is wonderful what expedients they will resort to, in order to avoid the plain meaning of the Word. The idea has been advanced, that the apostle means a spiritual intercommunication, such as believers enjoy when they converse about Divine things, and their spirits thus, as it were, having sweet converse, or company; and as the Word of God is called the bread of life, and believers are said to receive this as meat, this is the eating which the apostle has in view. It would seem that a very little reflection would satisfy any one of the absurdity of such an idea. I have already said, that the company must be one which believers, or such as are spiritual, can have with a carnal person, who is destitute of the Spirit; and even such as are fornicators, drunkards, etc. Now, I would ask, is such a thing possible, as such spiritual company, or eating of a spiritual person with one who does not possess the Spirit? Or would there be any need of such a prohibition; for the apostate being spiritually dead, would be as incapable of giving such company to, or eating with a living believer, as a naturally dead person, would be of keeping social company or eating with the living? The advancing of this idea shows one thing, and that is, that those advancing it, must themselves be strangers to the Spirit. Spiritual and carnal

people, can have social company, and eat social meals with each other; but spiritual association, it is not possible they can have.

It is very evident that it is a *personal* company which the apostle has in view, and that he desires to impress the importance of the avoidance which he means, very deeply on their minds. Those who deny the position we hold in this command, generally maintain, that the eating which is forbidden, is the eating at the Lord's table, or supper. It is certainly very important that we should know what this command is, for, whatever it is, it is the will of God, and we should keep it. Christ said: Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Whatever the eating is which the apostle has reference to, it is the will of God we shall obey, without which we have no promise. There are but two "*eatings*" which the apostle possibly can have reference to. The one is the social eating of common meals; the other is the communion of the Lord's supper. The eating which the apostle has in view, is one which he gives the believer liberty to do with the fornicators, covetous, railers, drunkards, idolaters, and extortioners of this world, who have never been called brothers. This, no man can deny. He says: "I wrote unto you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators, yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters, for then must ye needs go out of the world." The German translation, after saying He had written to them not to company with fornicators, says: "I do not at all mean the fornicators of this world." Let us garble, or pervert these words as we will, the plain intention of the Word is, to deny something to one who has been called a brother, which he allows to those of the same character, who have never been so called. Now, if it can be shown, that the Word of God countenances the admission of fornicators, covetous, idolaters, drunkards, railers, and extortioners, of any class, to the communion table, then there is a plea for the idea, that the apostle *might* mean, that it is only at the communion, that we shall not eat with a brother that is guilty of any of these sins. We cannot get over this. If we hold that it is the eating in the communion which Paul means, then he gives liberty to eat the Lord's supper with such vile characters, if they only have never been called

brothers. I suppose no one will contend, that Paul, or any other apostle, ever countenanced the idea of admitting such characters to the communion table. It would amount to an indiscriminate admission of the world, because he has here named the worst characters of the world, and if these are not to be rejected, we could have little ground to reject others. But the common meals, Christians in all times partook of with the world, without any inquiry as to their character for morality, or anything else. But when the disciples of Corinth got the first epistle from Paul, telling them not to company with fornicators, etc., they took him to mean those of the world, who were such. But he wrote this second epistle, telling them he did not mean these, but one that is called a brother. Now, whilst the cavilers hold that it is the sacrament of the Lord's supper that is meant, they *must* admit, that then the apostle gives liberty to admit to the Lord's table, idolaters, railers, drunkards, fornicators, covetous and extortioners! I beg of every candid mind to reflect well upon the position in which this idea will place us, and what kind of a Lord's table this would be. There is no ingenuity or device of man can get over this position.

Some persons take the ground, that when one is expelled from the church, he is no longer called a brother, and therefore the command hath not reference to him. I would ask them to whom has it reference? This would make the charge to be without signification, sense, or meaning. So soon as one is known to be guilty of such offense, he is expelled from the church; and if he is not to be avoided after that, it would leave no time for any avoidance. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, they no doubt put away that wicked person immediately. When, then, did they show their indignation, zeal and revenge? If they immediately put him away, and then associated with him as they did with any other person of the world, I do not see the point of Paul's expressions in 2d Cor. vii. 7. I look upon this as only a subterfuge, to evade that which is a heavy cross to the flesh; but let the words of Christ and Paul have their full force upon the mind, and all these pretexts must fall to the ground. The time when Christ's command to hold them as heathen men and publicans takes effect, is when they have rejected the counsel of the church. There is no authority to do it before, and if it was not to be after, then there would be no time at all; and what is the use of the Saviour's command?

Since it is well known, that Menno Simon, and his brethren of the sixteenth century, strenuously held to the position I here advance; and the Mennonites of our day, who claim descent from him, but have in this matter grown wiser, and reject and denounce this position, I would be much pleased if some of them would explain, and publish to the world, how they reconcile the difficulty we would labor under, in adopting their views and policy. This avoidance of apostates is a very severe cross to the flesh, and often times imposes a very heavy burden on innocent persons, which, if it is not the will of God, would indeed be very hard.

If the apostle had forbidden nothing but eating, I would know of no way of getting round it; but still I think our position would not be quite so strong; but he says, they shall not keep company with any such. Eating together at a social meal, would certainly be keeping company, and Paul evidently has allusion to other company besides eating. I would then ask, what is the other company from which he is to be excluded? If he is only to be shunned in church affairs, then the same difficulty presents itself which we have to encounter in eating. When a brother gives way in anything, so that he falls under reproof, the Lord's supper is usually the first thing that is forbidden him. Then, if he persists in his evil course, other privileges are denied him. The privilege of being in council with the church at its deliberations, would be amongst the last things which could be refused to him; and if the company alluded to refers to church privileges and ordinances, Paul would likely have first spoken of the eating, and ended with the most extreme extent of intercourse, or the last thing withheld or forbidden. But here the apostle ends with the eating. They shall not keep company with such an one, no not so much as to eat. If the apostle had not specially mentioned eating, they might well have thought, that as it is such a necessity, and might often subject to great inconvenience, such company as eating would be of no importance; but he named it as the extremity of the denial of company.

Is it not then reasonable, and evident to every impartial mind, that the apostle must have meant the eating of the common social meal, and that the company he speaks of is the common social companionship? If we examine the further testimony of Paul, we will find that it supports and confirms this view. Those

persons of the character he mentions, gave evidence that they were dead. They are such as have once received grace of God, and from whose heart the evil, unclean spirit had once gone out. (Luke xi.) They once gave evidence that they were enlightened, but now have fallen into uncleanness, and the works of darkness, and give evidence that they are dead; and as Christ said, their last end is worse than the first. So the great love of God is displayed, in employing stronger means, by the administering of more severe reproof, rebuke, and exhortation, than he does to those who never had enjoyed the benefits, blessings, and advantages which they had. The children of God, by withdrawing themselves from the evil practices of the world, reprove and rebuke it, but here they also withdraw themselves from social intercourse, thereby admonishing them more loudly of the necessity of repentance, than they do the world, and showing them that God has set a higher mark upon them, than He has upon the world.

In Romans xvi., Paul says, "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them." Paul is very earnest in his desire when he says, he "beseeches" them. If there were no other expressions of the kind, this one singly, might not be considered so strong; but in connection with the others, it is confirmatory of the truth of the views we have taken. It is evident, Paul is here speaking of members in the Church, who cause divisions and offenses, because the whole world is always causing divisions and offenses. Christ said: "He that is not with Me, is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth abroad." (Matt. xii.) And Paul, in Eph. ii., speaks of the author of sin, as the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. All unconverted persons are children of disobedience, and Satan has his work in them; and his work is, especially to oppose the work of God. The work of God is to gather the children of God together into one, that are scattered abroad, for which purpose Christ died. (John xi.) Then the whole unconverted world work offenses and divisions in the Church. Although it may in many be unintentional, yet the words of Christ and Paul bear us out in the assertion; and if it were the world which Paul means we should mark and avoid, for working divisions and offenses, then

it would be, as he says of the case of fornicators, covetous, idolatrous, etc., we must needs go out of the world. If we avoid them, we cannot have company with them. Whenever a member of the Church works divisions and offenses, it is evidence that he is under the influence of Satan, and his influence will be deleterious. If he should only be avoided in Church fellowship, he would, in his social intercourse, still be able to work divisions and offenses in the Church, "and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." It is evident, therefore, that his person and social company shall be avoided, by all the believers, so as to counteract his pernicious influence.

In 2d Thess. iii. 4, Paul says: "And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you." Paul believed them to be faithful, and, if faithful, they would also be obedient. In the fifth verse he continues: "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ;" that is, in this obedience he prays the Lord thus to direct their hearts, and by his prayer also gives them assurance of this favor from the Lord. But surely they had no encouragement that they could believe that the Lord would direct their hearts into his love, if they were disobedient. Now, immediately on this, as if he had desired to prepare their hearts for a deep impression, he says, in verse 6: "*Now we command* you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." A charge could not well be couched in more impressive language, and, no question, Paul intended it should be observed to the end of time by all faithful believers. There are many things which might not be altogether according to the tradition which the apostle gave them, or agreeable to the example he had set them, which would be far from the nature of what he speaks in Cor. v., which might proceed from inadvertance, or from want of judgment or capacity, in which, or through which a brother might be overtaken in a fault, as Paul says in Gal., with whom, no doubt, he would have them labor in love, to restore them; and when he says they shall withdraw themselves from every brother that walks disorderly, he, no doubt, means such as will not receive reproof, but remain incorrigible. These give evidence

that they are dead, and the apostle will have them not only removed from the Church, but they shall also withdraw themselves from such.

Then the apostle, after giving further charges not to be busybodies, nor live in idleness, but to walk orderly, work in quietness, and eat their own bread, then as a part of the command before referred to, he says in verse 14: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." The children of God withdraw from the foolish and simple behavior of the world. But this does not put them to shame. Neither are they ashamed of our withholding church ordinances, or fellowship from them. This withdrawal, or refusing company, is something special, and personal, or it would not make them ashamed. Withdrawing from a person, is different from expelling one from church. When Paul speaks of the Corinthian fornicator, he says: "Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from you." Then, in the last verse, he says: "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." This is speaking of putting away from the Church, such as offend and do wickedly. The Church and its members still stand where they did before. By virtue of her authority, the Church puts away from her fellowship, and communion, all wicked and disorderly persons. But the Church has no right to forbid any offender to have personal company, or social intercourse, with any one who will choose to give them such company. But now the apostle says, the Church, or its members, shall withdraw themselves from such persons. This is different from putting them from the Church. In putting one from the Church, the Church remains as it was before, but the offender is put away. In withdrawal, we do not affect the offender; we leave him where he has been placed by the Church, but we withdraw ourselves from him. If this withdrawal was the Church-fellowship, then we would have to leave him in the Church, and we withdraw from him. It is, therefore, plain that the withdrawing, and having no company, is a different thing from putting them away. If the keeping no company, and putting them away was the same thing, why does Paul first command the one, and then the other. In putting them out of the Church, they suspend all spiritual

intercourse, or communion, and is all that the Church can do with him. But now they can withdraw from him in social intercourse, and dealings. This avoidance is calculated to mortify the flesh, and put the party to shame; and being of frequent occurrence, tends to bring them to repentance and humiliation. Although Paul will have the believers to avoid and put such to shame, he will not have them to count them as enemies, but admonish them as brothers.

This idea of avoidance, or refusing social intercourse with such stubborn, apostate, or carnal members, is perfectly in agreement with Christ's teaching, to hold such as give evidence that they are spiritually dead, as heathen men and publicans. Paul further says, Titus iii.: "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject." Salvation by Jesus Christ, requires us to hold sound gospel doctrine. The denial of sound gospel doctrine, is called heresy. A person may do this, who never was a brother in the Church, or perhaps never held or believed sound gospel doctrine, and would therefore be a heretic. But this is not the man whom the apostle will have us reject. The man of whom the apostle speaks, is "*subverted*." A man who has never held sound doctrine cannot be "*subverted*." Such an one, therefore, who has been a brother, and held sound gospel doctrine, but has been "*subverted*," and now holds heretical doctrine, shall be rejected. Or, as the German renders it, shun, or avoid. The man shall be shunned.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is a mystery, which the carnal mind never has been, and never will be able to solve. All the philosophy, genius, and wisdom of man, could not conceive or devise such a thing, as the plan of gospel salvation. It is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. Man's carnal reason will therefore ever rise up and question the propriety of what the gospel teaches, and blindly pronounce it audacious, unkind, rigid, and severe. But this only comes from the fact, "that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1st Cor. ii.) It seems that it requires a warfare, even in the most glorious of Christ's saints. It requires weapons of warfare, to pull down strongholds, and cast down imaginations, and such high things, as exalt themselves

against the knowledge of God, and enable them to bring into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Christ. (2d Cor. x.) What Paul teaches is by the Holy Ghost, and He is one with the Father and the Son, and we must bring every thought into captivity, and obedience of what is taught of Paul, as well as what is taught by Christ himself. Obedience to this command, subjects us to many unpleasant and inconvenient duties, which the flesh would willingly shrink from, and Satan has great power under such circumstances to work an influence on the mind; so that we truly have reason to take every thought captive under obedience of Christ. Christ and Paul evidently mean something by these commands, and our duty is to give every word full force, and submit ourselves to their teaching and requirements. If obedience to this command, as we understand it, did not subject us to duties which are painful and unpleasant to the flesh, I verily believe that all would understand it as we do. The words lead naturally to this conclusion; but because it subjects us to unpleasant and inconvenient duties, strenuous efforts are made to construe them in such manner as to relieve us of it.

The extent of this shunning, or avoidance, has caused our adversaries to urge very strong objections to it. The disturbing of the family relation, is urged as a very strong objection; but we consider that this is something we have nothing to do with. The only question is, is it a command? If so, then every objection falls. If it is a command of God, then we must leave the effect to God. If God has commanded it, then it is unquestionably good, if it even does sometimes disturb families. Christ said he did not come to bring peace on earth, but rather division, and refers specially to family divisions which should result from His mission on earth. (Matt. x. and Luke xii.) I must say again, the only question is, has God commanded it? Then, in confidence in God, that He will cause it to redound to His glory, firmly adhere to God and His Word, and commit the result to Him. If it is a command, it is to all the Church. The Church is one body, and there is no exception made of any. The voice of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, is in the Church, in declaring the party to be worthy of excommunication; and must of necessity also carry out what the Holy Ghost charges as duty, in such cases. The Word makes no

exceptions; and where the Word makes none, we have no right to make any. The order of this avoidance is based on the law of love, and must be given for the benefit of those to be avoided, and can consequently never be injurious to any one, except such as resist the means of grace which God has appointed. It is not the fault of Christ that He works division, but the perverseness of man, in resisting the means of grace which Christ has brought; and His bringing divisions, can never be an argument against His gospel. Thus, although this resistance of man should disturb the family relation, it is not the fault of the means, but of man in not submitting to God's order. Paul says, 2d Cor. ii.: "To one we are a savor of death unto death, and to the other a savor of life unto life." It was not the fault of Paul that he was a savor of death unto death to some, but their own, because they did not submit to the gospel which Paul preached. The command being given in love, its observance can never be in violation of the law of love. It is not intended to destroy, but to save. Therefore, in any case of necessity, where the party is poor, sick, or in distress, it is the duty of the Church to help to relieve them. They are specially commanded to admonish them as a brother. Unquestionably, if they are to admonish them, they must also do them good, where they have opportunity, which will tend to give force and power to their admonition. For this reason, the steadfast party, whether husband or wife, parent or child, must ever obey or be governed by the law of love, and serve the other in love, so far as no request is made which is contrary to the Word of God. All company necessary to admonish, or to minister to their necessities, should be freely given; but eating social meals, or keeping social company, or having commercial intercourse, the Word of God forbids; and when it is demanded, must be denied under all circumstances.

This may be denounced as working great hardships in families. But we must remember the ban of Israel. It was the same God of love, then, who commanded their ban, as He who commanded our gospel ban. Those whom the law of Israel banned, had to be stoned to death without mercy, and the wife or husband, father or mother, brother, sister or child, had to concur; and sometimes the nearest relative, had to cast the first stone. The affections, in their case, was, no doubt, as strong then, as in any case now;

and the family relation was more seriously disturbed than in the Christian ban. There was no hopes of restoration in their case, but in the gospel ban there is hopes of their restoration to God, the church and their family. The suspending of the social and conjugal relation between husband and wife, is especially urged as objectionable. But the question ever is, does God command it? If it is a command, it is to believers; and, unless a certain class of believers are exempted, we certainly have no right to except any. Under the law, the nearest kin's hand had, in certain cases, to be first upon the offender; and nowhere do we find any exceptions on account of relationship. The Lord said to Israel: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us go and serve other Gods, thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him; thy hand shall be first upon him, to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die." (Deut. xiii.) Surely, this command disturbed the sacred family relation much more seriously than the gospel command. Besides, the espousals of Christ are above the espousals of man. The duties of wedlock must ever yield to our duties to God. To be faithful to God, is the first duty of man; and consequences can never enter into consideration. If the Jewish ban was a figure of the Christian, or gospel ban, then, I think, the figure is very significant and instructive. The Jewish ban was commanded of God, but had to be executed by man; and, when husband or wife, parent or child, brother or sister, or the friend that is as thine own soul, committed such sin as the law declared worthy of death, the hand of the nearest kin had to be first upon them, as shown before from Deut. xiii. Now, under the gospel, when husband or wife, brother or sister, parent or child, commit sin worthy of excommunication, the nearest friend may well be said to cast, at least, the heaviest stones. That which lies most heavily upon them, is the refusal of husband or wife, parent or child, to have company with them; so that it may be said, their hand is first upon them; and, though the hand of all the rest is also upon them, and they also refuse to company socially with

them, their hand comes, as it were, after the near and dear ones, according to the flesh. If the avoidance is a means which God has appointed, as Paul says, for the destruction of the flesh, those nearest of kin, or according to the flesh, certainly exert the most influence, and tend more to the end and design of God than any others.

The whole matter rests upon the question, whether it is a command of God, for the faithful members of the Church, to withdraw from the unfaithful and disorderly one? Paul does say, they shall withdraw from them, and have no company with them, that they may be ashamed. How far this avoiding of company shall be carried, cannot easily be prescribed in every instance, but it is to put them to shame; and whatever intercourse duty might dictate, they should ever preserve toward them such a bearing, as to remind them of their fall, and the great necessity and importance of seeking to rise again. It is generally contended that the command has reference only to spiritual fellowship; and to exclude them from church-fellowship, is the withdrawal and avoidance which Paul refers to. This shows that they consent that there is a command, and I have already shown that the shunning or avoiding they advocate, is not consistent with Paul's directions in 1st Cor. v., and no man can get round his language there; besides, in Thess. Paul says, it shall be for the purpose of putting them to shame. The world is not put to shame by the refusal of the Church to admit them to Christian fellowship, neither would a fallen brother be; but when special marks of non-intercourse are laid upon him, he cannot help but remember the cause. If he receives it as God designs he shall, as a reproof, and a reminding of his apostacy, the grace of God may make it a means for his amendment; but if not, and he suffers his evil nature to be moved thereby, it may prove a savor of death unto him. In Cor. v. Paul commanded the fallen brother to be given over to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh; that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. From this it is evident, that the flesh is laid under some special chastening or punishment which the world is not under. It is nowhere said, that the world, or any one that never was a brother, should be thus given over. The effect of this avoidance is to destroy the flesh, and save the Spirit; and Paul, in 2 Cor. ii., calls it a punishment, and says, he wrote the command to them in much affliction

and anguish of heart, with many tears; not to grieve them, but that they might know his love to them. There was a punishment inflicted, and it seems it was effectual, for Paul says, it was sufficient. Sufficient for what? Undoubtedly the destruction of the flesh, and the saving of the spirit. This surely all goes to show, that some special affliction was laid upon this person, more than a mere separation from the Church, for then it would not have enabled them to show themselves so clear in such things. It was a special means for them to show their indignation, fear, vehement desire, zeal, and revenge; and prove that they abhor, and will not tolerate such things. Their treatment of him was to be something which Paul specially tells them he does not ask of them toward others out of the Church, who do the same thing.

If Paul gave the command with affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears, then undoubtedly the brethren who executed the command, being possessed of the same spirit, were not less sorrowful in obeying his order. It is the flesh which has not been crucified with diligence, that leads astray; and this flesh must be destroyed, if the soul is to be saved. This is the means which God has appointed for this purpose, and who will rise up and say that it is not of wisdom, that it is not of love, or of power. If the devil can instigate persons placed in this position, to a feeling of bitterness and ill-will toward the Church, for their treatment of him, the effect will be lost. At this time he has succeeded in enlisting almost the whole world in his service, in trying to excite in them a hatred and enmity, and rejection of the counsel of God; and even those who desire to be called servants of God, and Doctors of Divinity, rise up, and by word and writing, with their might, seek to render this ordinance of God nugatory and inefficient; but they will assuredly once find out that they have been fighting against God, and that the foolishness of God is wiser than man.

Paul says, there was also another object in his writing to them as he did; that he might know the proof of them, whether they are obedient in all things. In chap. vii., same epistle, Paul further speaks of the effect his reproof had, and what godly sorrow it wrought, and how they approved themselves clear in the matter. Now would they have approved themselves clear in the matter if they had not obeyed, and inflicted the punishment on

the man which Paul prescribed? Certainly they would not, or the apostle's language conveys no sense. Paul says they approved themselves clear in the matter. Now, if they had not separated this fornicator, they would not have been charged personally with incontinence; but it would have given countenance to the sin; and the testimony which Paul commends, was deep sorrow, zeal, revenge, and vehement desire. This proved them to all the world clear of in any way countenancing such abomination; and it also proved their obedience. This zeal, vehemence, and revenge, they did not show toward the fornicators of the world, and their merely placing him out of the Church, would have forbidden them to show any further disapprobation, than they do to all others. But their avoiding him, set on him a higher mark, and enabled them to show their zeal, revenge, and vehement desire, to keep the Church pure, and without blemish. But how do those prove their obedience now, who not only neglect to obey, but direct their zeal, vehemence and revenge, against the command itself, and those who obey it? Persons, through unbelief, may quibble, and ask what benefit is to result from the practice; they may ridicule it, and cast invidious reflections upon those who observe the command; but this is all nothing to the true believer. He knows God has commanded it, he sees God's wisdom and love in it, and in his obedience he adores his Lord and Master. Infidels have ridiculed and scoffed at circumcision, and have asked what benefit can result from the water in baptism, or the eating of a little bread, and taking a small sup of wine in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. But they are all God's command, and this is enough for every believer to know, that it is the will of God they shall obey; and their experience has proven the love and wisdom of Him who commanded it.

The unconverted part of mankind, are very frequently called *the world*, in Scripture; but more particulary so in the New Testament. It is because they have their enjoyment and life in the things of this world. Being destitute of the Spirit, they can not enjoy spiritual things, and, consequently, pursue that which the flesh can enjoy; and their life is therefore called a living or walking after the flesh. Those who are converted receive the Holy Spirit, and by it a Divine life, or nature, by which they are enabled to enjoy Spiritual or Heavenly things; and although

they possess a natural body, which has the same necessities and wants, and is subject to the same desires and inclinations, which the unconverted also are, yet by the power of the Spirit, they are enabled to keep the flesh, or the natural inclination of the body, in subjection; and are thereby prevented from running into those extremes which the world does, which is not under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. The unconverted world, then, live for the gratification of the flesh and the mind, which leads them into various extravagances and follies. Some seek their enjoyment in base sensual gratifications, which are often-times more or less injurious or prejudicial to the welfare of society, and are for that reason, generally tabooed by the community at large. Every unconverted person has their life and enjoyment in carnal things, of some shape or form. They are earthly minded, and they seek and enjoy perishable things, because they are destitute of the Divine Spirit, which alone can make them Heavenly minded. In many ways this carnal disposition can find life and enjoyment, which are not *directly* prejudicial to the welfare of society, in which the flesh can have free scope; and because it is not *directly* injurious to the community, is not considered immoral, or disreputable; and the flesh being insatiable, leads many to very great extravagance and display, in many and various ways. The Apostle Paul then sums up all those things which proceed from this source, and calls them works of the flesh, and says they are *manifest*; That is, they can be plainly seen (Gal. v.), and says they that do such thing, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

As the same affections and inclinations exist in those who are converted, as there does in the unconverted, and Satan takes occasion of this disposition, to incite believers to pursue these carnal pleasures, we find that Christ and the apostles have very earnestly urged believers to strive against, and by the power of the Spirit, overcome, and bring into subjection, all such inclinations and dispositions. But as the Scripture teaches us, that sin consists in the emotions of the heart which prompts the act, Satan has taken such advantage of the minds of many, as to lead them to the persuasion, that it is quite lawful and justifiable for them thus to indulge in extravagance and fashion, after the manner of the world, if their hearts are only free from vanity; and they will protest that their hearts are free from this emotion, and assert

that those in plain and simple dress or manner, who do not conform to the fashions of the world, may in heart be as vain as any who pursue an opposite course. We will admit, that the heart may be very proud, and very carnal, even though the garb and outward appearance would indicate great humility and contrition. We know that dress and outward appearance has nothing to do with making a Christian, and that pride is something quite distinct from garb or outward appearance; and although it does betray itself in dress and display, it may also betray its existence in various other ways, and it is of so subtle a nature, that it may exert a very great influence over the heart, and can scarcely, or not at all, be perceived by those who are around us. I do not believe that any one is free from such emotions, and he who asserts that he is, I would question much whether he knows himself. But the true and faithful believer has always with him the Spirit, which, as a faithful monitor, apprises him of the nature of these emotions, which the devil through the flesh incites and prompts the heart to; and by the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith, is enabled to protect himself from fatal injury by these fiery darts, even though he should sometimes receive a slight wound. Believers who are in the fear of God, and led by His Spirit, will watch over their hearts, and when these emotions arise, will crucify and subdue them. But we cannot well see why a person who is free from vanity, and is of an humble spirit, and contrite heart, should follow customs and styles, which are often both very expensive, and very inconvenient. The Word of God declares vanity to be an evil. Whether it is possible for any one to follow the style of the world, with its fashions and customs, and be free from vanity, or not, it must be evident to every one, that these things originated in vanity, and are an evil, and have its appearance, and those who follow them, do not, "abstain from all appearance of evil," as Paul in 1 Thess. v. says we shall.

I do not believe that any person who follows the styles and fashions of the world, can be free from vanity, and it is not gratifying the flesh by the course they are pursuing; but aside from the question of motive which prompts to this extravagance, it is not possible that we can be obedient to the command of the Holy Scriptures, and live after the fashion of the world; even if it were possible that we could do so, without being influenced

by vanity. Paul says, Rom. xii.: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies*, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. *And be not conformed to this world*; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." And in verse xvi.: "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." In 1st Tim. ii., Paul also says, he will, "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." Peter also says in his first epistle, the "adorning shall not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel." These are certainly as plain commands as can be produced from the Word of God. The spirit of the gospel as plainly forbids conformity to the world in these things, as the Word itself here does; so that both the spirit and the letter, condemn it. Such things elicit esteem among men, and Christ said: "That which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God." (Luke xvi.) Professors of religion, in defending the lawfulness of such fashionable dress, have said to me: "It becomes the children of God to adorn themselves, and no one better than they," and that their minister told them so. The mind of such person is evidently blinded by Satan transforming himself into an angel of light: A very little attention to the Word, would unmask this spirit; but when God suffers the mind to become blinded, who can give light?

Menno Simon and his brethren, in the sixteenth century, did not conform to the world in their manner and style of dress and living, but condescended to those of low estate. Indeed, the persecution and hardships which they then had to endure, of itself forbade much extravagance or luxury. But the writings of Menno and the brethren of his time, go to show that they upheld great simplicity, and an humble style of life. I think, however, Mosheim has been imposed upon, or he could not have asserted, that "they excluded from their communion, all such as deviated in the least, from the most rigorous rules of simplicity and gravity, *in their looks, their gestures, their clothing, and their tables*; all whose desires surpassed the dictates of *mere necessity*, and even all who observed a *decent decorum* in their manners, and paid *decent* regard to the

innocent customs of the world." That they opposed luxury and extravagance, I believe; and also that they lived simply and plainly; but that they had any rule of gesture, or looks, I do not believe; or that they insisted on not deviating from the dictates of mere necessity in their mode of life, I never saw anything in their writings to support. So far as they had opportunity, they enjoyed the comforts and conveniencies of life, in their houses, at their tables, and in their dress; yet always avoiding ostentation and display. Decency and decorum in their manners and intercourse with the world, they insisted on, and never objected to conformity to *innocent* customs of the world.

But no doubt they differed with the world, in their views about what was *innocent*. That they relaxed in their simplicity of life, after they became very opulent, may well be, as we see they did in other things yield to the influence of the world, both in matters of faith and practice generally. If it is true, as is asserted in a note in Mosheim's history, that, "it is certain that the Mennonites in Holland, at this day, are, in their tables, their equipages, and their country seats, the most luxurious part of the Dutch nation," they must indeed have deviated very far from their primitive simplicity.

So far as I know, the Mennonites of America (of whatever division) have always been a plain, unostentatious class of people; and although Abraham Landis and John Herr speak of pride in the church, I do not suppose they intended the charge to apply to the members generally, but that there were cases in which individuals made too much display, in which they thought the ministers did not do their duty. The Reformed Mennonites, when they organized their church, adopted the mode of dress which was at the time considered the dress of the plain class of people amongst which they lived. Indeed, I suppose most, if not all of them, did before dress in this mode. They never, to my knowledge, formally adopted any particular mode of dress. The first brethren dressed in this manner, and those who subsequently united with the church, desiring not to be conformed to the world, but to condescend to those of low estate, got their dress in conformity with the older, or earlier brethren; and in this way their dress has become uniform, without any special action in regard to it. They deem their dress altogether becoming, comfortable, and convenient,

and have, without any specific rule or law, by common consent adhered to it, not, as has been supposed by many, that they have ever attached any particular importance to this form of dress, above any other plain mode or form, or did they ever hold that they were any better, for any form of dress, or manner of life. But because there is so much vanity displayed in dress in the world, and the flesh is so strongly inclined to conformity to the world, and its vanities, and is so unwilling to bear the reproach of the world, they have even felt it their duty to lay off such testimony against its vanities; and, they also regard it as a safe means, which God has appointed in His Word, to preserve His Church from being carried away by the allurements of the world, the wiles of Satan, and the promptings of our own wicked, and deceitful hearts. In all things they have great regard for comfort and convenience; but guard against display, or conformity to the world, in things which add nothing to comfort, or convenience. They have ever regarded a true work of grace in the soul, as bringing the individual under such a sense of the sinfulness of gratifying this vain and carnal disposition of the flesh, that a true child of God, born of the Spirit, will, of their own convictions, lay aside all vain display, and guard against any revival of its influence in the heart.

The Lord's Holy Supper, they have ever regarded as an ordinance which Christ instituted in His Church, for its own benefit, and the honor and glory of His name. To this end, it is essential that the parties celebrating the ordinance are truly regenerated children of God. When Christ instituted the supper, he took bread and break it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, take, eat, this is My body; and in like manner the cup, and said: "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." Luke says, he said: "This do in remembrance of me."

When God led Israel out of Egypt, it was a natural work. They were bodily under bondage to Pharaoh, and God wrought a bodily deliverance for them. Every one of them knew that they were in bondage, and knew what that bondage was; and when they were led out and made free, they also knew what *that* was. So they also knew the means which God used. They saw and knew the signs and wonders wrought in Egypt, the killing of the lamb, the sprinkling of the blood upon the door-posts and lintels of their

houses, the roasting and eating of the lamb, and, also, how God slew the first born in every house of the Egyptians where this blood was not found, and how He passed over the houses of the Israelites. They were a carnal people, and their benefit was a carnal one; and their being carnal was no bar or hindrance to their observing the ordinance of the passover acceptably and intelligently. The natural condition of Israel in their servitude and bondage, was figurative of the spiritual bondage and servitude of man by nature. Their deliverance, with the means used to effect it, was a figure of man's spiritual deliverance from this spiritual bondage, and the means used through Christ to effect it. They were commanded to keep the feast of the passover every year, on the particular day in which their deliverance occurred; and it was to be in remembrance of what God had done for them, and they were to tell their children, and their children's children, what the meaning of it was, and what God had done for them. Though they were carnal, they could tell their children; and though their children were carnal, they could comprehend and understand it. Israel was commanded to circumcise their male children. This circumcision, which was in the flesh, was a type or figure of the circumcision of the heart, in putting off the carnal or fleshly lusts, in repentance. No uncircumcised person was permitted to partake of the passover, for they would not have been considered true Israelites, and this ordinance was designed for Israel alone.

Whether any Israelites remained in Egyptian bondage, when the others were delivered, I do not know, but hardly think there were, from the language of the Pentateuch; and if not a hoof of their cattle was left behind, it is not reasonable to suppose that any of their families remained. But if there had, they certainly could never have celebrated the passover; or if they did, it could not have begotten any sense of gratitude, or admiration of God's mercy toward them. These could not have kept the passover in remembrance of what God had done for them. So, also, no one who has never known and felt his bondage in sin, or felt his deliverance, through the blood of Christ, can possibly partake of the Lord's supper, in remembrance of Christ.

I suppose it is not necessary here to say anything about this bread and wine, in the Lord's supper, not being really the body

and blood of Christ, but a symbol, or representation of His body and blood ; by the partaking of which, Christ desired to bring to their remembrance His death and suffering, and by it exercise them in consideration of what He had done for them ; thereby warming their affections, increasing their love, and confirming their faith. The Lord's supper, as well as the passover, has reference to a deliverance from bondage, but it is altogether of a spiritual nature. The bondage was spiritual, and the deliverance is spiritual. So long as we are carnal, we can have no true conception of spiritual things, and consequently no true idea of the nature and object of the Lord's supper, any more than a naturally dead person could partake or enjoy any advantage of the literal passover of the children of Israel. The Lord Jesus, therefore, only instituted it for the benefit of the true believer, and they alone can partake of it worthily. They who partake unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of Christ, or eat and drink damnation to themselves. The believer receives no virtue or merit, or no righteousness, by partaking of this symbol ; but by the consideration of what he is representing, his faith is confirmed, and strengthened, and his love increased in fervency ; and in this consists the benefit to him. All of virtue, merit, or righteousness, in the sight of God, which man can possibly obtain, is by faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore all the benefit he can have of the Church, or any of its ordinances, is their effect of tending to the confirming, strengthening, and preserving his faith.

Christ, knowing how weak we are, and how much Satan, the world, and our own flesh, will seek and tend to weaken our faith, has instituted the Church and its ordinances, for the purpose of strengthening and supporting this faith. For this reason, Paul says (1st Cor. xi.): "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The rendering of the German would be: "Ye *shall* declare the Lord's death." Every pious, God-fearing soul, about to observe this solemn ordinance, and, under the consideration of what Christ has done for them, is led back to the time when he was in bondage to sin, and under the wrath of God, and just sentence of death, by God's holy law ; and how Jesus, out of love, left the glory of his Father and came into this world, and took upon Himself our sins, and died in our stead on the tree of the cross ; there breaking His body,

and shedding His blood, to free me from the curse and wrath under which I lay, and hath now clothed me with the garments of righteousness; and now I am about to profess before God and man, that I have become partaker of this benefit and favor. It cannot be otherwise, but if we have been made partaker of these benefits, the observance of this ordinance will tend to revive and support our faith, and quicken the motions of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, by which the love of God will be more abundantly shed abroad there. The Apostle Paul, in 1st Cor. x., when speaking of the Lord's supper, says: "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? for we being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." The apostle here does not intend to be understood, that the cup, and the bread, *is* the communion, any more than Christ desired to be understood, that this bread and cup really is His body and blood. But it represents the communion of the body of Christ (that is His Church); "For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." That is, the Church now in this ordinance represents, that although they are many individuals, they are only one body. They have by one Spirit been baptized into one body, and are one heart and one soul. As this bread, and this wine (which constitutes the cup) were originally contained in many different grains of wheat, and berries of grapes, but the wheat being ground, wetted and baked, has become one body, and the grapes by being crushed, have united their juice and become one drink, or cup, so we were originally all carnal, and every one seeking his own; but, by the grace of God, we have been awakened, and our hearts been broken by the power of God's law, and been brought to see our lost and destitute condition. By this we were brought to Christ, by whom we have redemption in His blood; and now being made free from the curse of the law, and clothed with the righteousness of Christ, who by the Holy Spirit hath shed the love of God abroad in our hearts, by which we are now made one in Christ. The partaking of the bread and wine, are, therefore, fit emblems of the unity of the Church, and the oneness of its members in Christ, their Head.

When, therefore, believers break the bread, and drink the cup,

they set forth before the world, and solemnly profess before God, that they are partakers by faith, of the broken body and shed blood of Christ; and also, that they are in spiritual communion with the body of Christ, which is His Church; and that they believe that their brothers and sisters are also partakers of the same benefits. If this is not true on our part, that we know we are not in a state of grace, not being partaker of the merits of Christ, we are guilty of hypocrisy, and acting a lie, by professing before God and man what we know is not true, and therefore become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Those who, out of malice, nailed the body of Christ to the tree of the cross, and shed His blood, dyed their souls in a deeper stain of guilt than ordinary sinners; and those who mock Him, and deride the sacrifice which he there made, by impiously and presumptively partaking of those holy emblems of His body and blood, professing before God and man what they know is not true, do thereby treat Christ with the same scorn, contempt, and disdain, as those did who crucified Him, and make themselves equally guilty. The minister, also, who administers the sacrament of the Lord's supper, by giving to his members the bread and cup, sets forth the same testimony, that he believes his brothers and sisters all to be in communion with Christ, and his body, or Church; and as such offers them the tokens or emblems of the broken body of Christ. If he knows that the Church is not in unity and love, or any of the members violate the principles of the gospel, he is deeply guilty before God; because he represents that before God and man which is not true, and offers comfort to those who he knows are guilty before God.

On this account, the Reformed Mennonite church, has ever urged upon every member, the duty of making themselves free at all times, when they know, or hear, of any member committing anything which is contrary to the spirit of the gospel, to speak to them, and if they find it true, to labor according to gospel command, to bring them to right gospel order; and where members neglect this duty, they are reprov'd. Their custom is to hold a meeting before communing, followed by a sermon, generally by the bishop, setting forth the importance of union and love, and also the duties of members toward God and one another. The preachers and deacons then privately inquire into the feelings and

state of mind of each individual member; how they believe themselves to stand with God, and whether they are in union and harmony with all their brothers and sisters; and if anything is found, that there is discord, or no full unity of spirit, the parties are requested to refrain from coming forward to communion, until there is time afforded to reconcile the difficulty.

The servitude of Israel in Egypt; the means used for their deliverance; the paschal lamb; the passage through the sea; the journey through the wilderness, and the final land of rest, are such evident types of our bondage in sin, the operation and effect of the grace of God, our final deliverance by Christ our passover, and the destruction and overthrow of Satan by the blood of Christ, our journey through the wilderness of this world, and our final arrival at *that rest*, which Paul speaks of in Heb. iv., that I suppose their aptness will not be disputed. So, as the Jews kept their passover in commemoration of their literal or typical deliverance, the believer now, under the new covenant, keeps the feast of the Lord's supper, in commemoration of the deliverance wrought for them through Christ. So it seems to me, there is no impropriety in saying, that what the passover then was, naturally and typically, the Lord's supper now is, spiritually, and the reality. Those literal things connected with the passover, were also typical of the circumstances which shall attend the Lord's supper.

The passover was given to Israel, and to no other nation or people, neither did God require it of any other; and if they kept it, the Lord did not regard it, because the circumstances did not exist with them, which made it acceptable to God. Neither could they enjoy any comfort in it, for they had never experienced what it signified, and it must have been to them a meaningless ceremony. The Jews were all to be circumcised, and their passover was to be kept by circumcised people. None other were to be admitted, or to partake of it; and if the priest permitted it, instead of receiving blessing of God, they brought His displeasure upon themselves. Besides being circumcised, they were also to be sanctified, or clean. There were certain things which God had declared should render them unclean, and all such persons were strictly forbidden to partake of the passover, until they offered such sacrifices, and performed such duty, as God had appointed for their cleansing.

Now, I think the thing typified in this, is very evident. Christ gave the supper to His disciples. He did not give it to any other people but His disciples, and those who should believe on Him through their word, which are comprised under the term believers or Christians; all such as have come through true repentance, and have been renewed in Christ, or been made free by His blood. If any unconverted persons undertake to keep the Lord's supper together, that is, a worldly unconverted people, it cannot be regarded of the Lord, because it is not of faith. Neither can they receive blessing or comfort of the Lord, because it is to them a meaningless ceremony. But to true believers it is commanded, and to them it will also be a blessing; but, they must also as well exclude from their supper, all such as have not, by true repentance, forsaken their former life of sin, and walk after the flesh; which is what was represented, or typified by circumcision. And as the Jews were rendered unfit to partake of the passover, even if they were circumcised, and afterward defiled themselves by any of those things which the Lord had said should render them unclean, so the believer, under the new or Spiritual covenant, even if he had been converted, and made free by the blood of Christ, if he should again defile his garments, by some carnal conduct or behavior, which renders him unfit to represent in spirit, what the communion of the Lord's supper signifies, cannot be admitted to the supper. This the church and the whole ministry are interested in, and if they admit an unconverted person, who they know by their walk and conduct, could not have been circumcised in heart, or such as even have been converted, but have again fallen into some offensive conduct, for which they have not made reconciliation, they cannot receive blessing of God, but fall, rather, under condemnation. I think the signification is very evident, and the instruction intended to be given us very plain.

When pastors teach their flocks, that no one is responsible for the sin of another, and if they do know that some of their brothers or sisters walk carnally, this will not harm them. Each one eats for themselves. If they themselves are faithful, that is all that is necessary to make their offering acceptable to God. Such supper in no way answers to the type in the passover, because there all who were uncircumcised, or unclean, were forbidden to eat the passover. How then will pastor or flock answer for allowing

brother or sister to approach the Lord's table, when they know they do not walk worthily? Do they not together eat and drink damnation to themselves, when they do not better discern the Lord's body? Can they escape condemnation, when they do not raise the voice of warning, when they see any one about to profane the Lord's ordinance in this manner? God had commanded Israel (Lev. xix.) that they shall not suffer sin upon their neighbor, but should in any wise rebuke him. Paul well says: "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?"

The Lord's supper was unquestionably designed as a means to preserve in the soul of each and every individual member, that Divine life, without which all religion is vain. It was not designed to generate the life in the soul of those who are destitute of it. This can only be done or accomplished, by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ; and as we show, by partaking of this supper, that we are in possession of this life, and out of love to Christ for having given His body to be broken on the cross, where He shed His blood to wash away our sins, we do, in remembrance of Him, eat this bread, and drink this cup. In the consideration of this love and mercy, we are revived in spirit, confirmed in faith, and enjoy an increase of love. Therefore we feel constrained to admonish every member, who by their walk, or conduct, have shown that they are not in possession of this life, to repent of their backsliding, or sin, and humble themselves before God, so that He may again lift them up, and set them in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; and further, because we show by partaking of this supper, that we are in full communion with our brothers and sisters who partake with us. If we know that some of the members are not in unity and love, or that some one has given evidence that they are not in the Spirit, we cannot, with a pure conscience, approach the Lord's table; and if we do, instead of being strengthened, we are weakened, because our conscience is defiled. And if ministry and members know that unity does not exist in the church, or that some amongst them do not walk worthily, and yet together observe or hold the supper, they defile their consciences, and the supper does not serve the purpose for which it was instituted; and, as Paul says in Cor. xi., when he speaks of what he heard of them, that there were divisions amongst them, he cannot praise them, and declares that their coming together in this way is not for the

better, but for the worse. He further says, when they come together in this way, it is not to eat the Lord's supper. The holding of the Lord's supper, the Reformed Mennonites have ever held as a very weighty and important matter; in partaking of which, each individual member is enjoined as Paul says, to examine themselves, and discern the Lord's body (or Church) also; so that they do not become guilty of the body and blood of Christ, nor eat and drink damnation to themselves. And herein they have ever held, that the duty of the true shepherd and pastor is a very delicate and important one. There are in every flock such as are of tender conscience, who are timid, and fearful that they might not be worthy. Their weakness and imperfections, their unworthiness and corruptions, with the low state of their graces, seems to them such, as is altogether unbefitting a child of God. Satan takes advantage of this, and by temptations, and discouraging thoughts and fears, would drive them from the use of those means which God has appointed for their edification, comfort and support. These it is the duty of the pastor to encourage, by holding up to their view the fullness, and freeness, of the offer of grace in Christ Jesus; how He has wrought for us all the virtue and righteousness we can desire, or that is necessary for us to have, to enable us to stand in the presence of God; and that this is given to us freely, without anything done on our part. He bestows it because of His love, and His love is not changed because of our weakness and imperfections, but it is an unchanging, and everlasting love; so that though we are weak, He is strong; though we are poor, He is rich; though we are destitute, He is full of all the virtue, merit, and righteousness which is acceptable and available before God; and our very sense of destitution only fits us the better to come to Him, and receive all we have need of. The gospel is full of invitation and encouragement to all such timid and weak souls. The Lord says by the Prophet Isaiah, xxxv. : "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, *be strong; fear not;*" and again, chap. xl. : "Oh Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain. O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong *hand*, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a

shepherd ; He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead them that are with young."

But there are also, by-times, members who are not of such tender conscience, whose walk is not so orderly as would be desirable, with whom it is the pastor's duty to labor to make them sensible of their want of vitality. Where there is too much looseness or carnality in the walk, there must be want of a sense of sin, and here it becomes the duty of the pastor to press the pricking power of the law ; for unless the law is alive in the heart, there will never be any true resting in Christ. There are, also, cases of weakness of intellectual faculties, where it is difficult to distinguish between a froward spirit, or a want of the faculty of perception; wherein it would be wrong to press them hardly, for their dereliction or error. But in all cases where there is offense given, or apparent carnality, the duty is always to reprove and instruct, with all wisdom and care, and direct them to seek reconciliation with all who have been grieved, or offended. To deal faithfully and impartially with all, and know no one after the flesh, is the highest duty of all, but especially the pastor. These duties are so very delicate and weighty, that we might well say with Paul, 2d Cor. ii. : "And who is sufficient for these things?" The pastor, therefore, if he discharge his duty faithfully, must ever lean on the Lord for strength, help, wisdom, and direction ; and whenever he forgets this, he will surely depart far from the true path which the Holy Ghost pointed out to him, saying : "This is the way, walk ye in it."

The washing of the saints' feet, is also an ordinance which the church has ever deemed a duty enjoined on them by the Lord Jesus. Many churches and professors do not admit this to be an ordinance the Saviour instituted, with the design of being perpetuated in the Church. Some argue, that because three of the four Evangelists are silent on the subject, goes to weaken the idea that it was intended to be observed as an ordinance by the Church. Every reader knows, that there are a number of things in John's Gospel, which are omitted by the other three, and some also are omitted by him, which are noticed by the others. But does this in any way weaken the force of a single expression in either? By no means! There can be no doubt, that the Saviour did wash the disciples' feet, as John relates He did. To doubt this, we

must reject John's Gospel altogether; and I suppose no one does doubt it. Neither do I suppose any one doubts that He said all on the occasion, which John says He did. Then, if what John says favors the idea that it was Christ's design that it should be perpetuated in the Church, why is the silence of the other Evangelists on the subject, any reason to the contrary? No one doubts that it was the design of the Saviour, that the supper should be perpetuated in the Church; and yet only one of the four Evangelists say Christ commanded it. John says nothing about Christ's instituting it. Matthew and Mark say nothing about Christ saying, they should afterwards do it; but Luke says, He said, "This do in remembrance of Me." That it is a command of the Saviour, and His wish that His disciples should do as He had done, is too plain to admit of a doubt. "If I then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one anothers' feet." In John xiii. 17, He says: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

The question of command, cannot fairly be raised; but was it to be perpetuated? The plain command that they should do as He had done, should be enough; and, as he gave no order of discontinuance, I do not see when, where, or how it could be discontinued. It is said, the custom of the times was to walk in bare feet, or at least only to wear sandals, and washing feet was a service which every one had need of in the evening, and that it was customary for servants to wash the feet of guests, when they would tarry over night; and as this was one of the most menial services, which servants rendered, Christ, in washing His disciples' feet desired by His example to impress on their minds a sense of humility, and of duty to serve one another in every capacity, where they have need. But as the custom now is to wear boots and shoes, with stockings also, which preserve the feet from becoming soiled, there is no necessity for the service, and no duty remains to us of rendering this service; but the virtue and duty of humility and kindness we should still seek to cultivate, and impress upon the minds of our brethren. If this had been all that Christ desired to impress, I suppose he could have done it as effectually by words then, as we can now. The disciples knew as well then what humility and kindness was, as we do in our day, and we have no reason to think that they would have been less

easily impressed by the Saviour's language, than we are now by that of one another. Then, if this were all, and the act of washing the disciples' feet by the Saviour, was only intended to impress their minds more deeply with a sense of those Christian virtues of humility and kindness, than mere words could do, I think it is derogatory to Christ, and shows some arrogance on our part, to suppose that we, without the act, can now accomplish that desirable object, whilst Christ found it necessary to accompany His words with this humble service. Besides, I think if ever the pride and selfishness of man needed something to make language more impressive, or effective in rooting it out of the heart, it would need it at the present day.

But we hold, that the Saviour intended more than this. He intended to impress their minds with something which had reference to His washing them from sin, and something which the disciples did not then yet know. When the Saviour came to Peter, he said to him, "*Lord, dost thou wash my feet?*" These words imply that Peter thought it out of place for Christ to perform such a menial service for him; and it implies, also, that he fully knew what the mere service of washing his feet was. But the reply of the Saviour shows, that He meant to teach them something more than this, and something which they were not in a capacity to understand at that time. To Peter's expression, Christ replied: "What I do; thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Then Peter refused, saying: "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Christ's reply shows, that He desired to impress something on their minds, which had reference to a spiritual washing. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." This shows, that what He did had reference to that which gives us an interest in Christ, and that of such a nature as not to be comprehended by them then. They were then in a capacity to know what personal service Christ had done to them, and they were also in a capacity to know, and did know, as Peter's words imply, that it was a very humble service. They were also in a capacity to know, *and did then know*, what kindness and humility is; and they perhaps never knew any better what it is, than they did then. If Christ had not replied to Peter, as we have above quoted, we might infer, from what He said to the disciples, when He took His garments, and was set down again, that He did only

desire to impress them with a sense of duty, to be kind and humble. In conclusion, Christ promises happiness: "If ye know these things and do them." He does not give promise of happiness upon knowing, alone, nor upon doing, alone, but upon *knowing and doing*.

The ordinance of baptism, and of breaking of bread, have each a spiritual signification, the knowledge of which is essential to the right and profitable observance of these ordinances. No carnal person can have this knowledge, because the carnal mind receiveth not the things of the Spirit; and what we cannot receive, we cannot know. Therefore, the unconverted, carnal mind, cannot understand the spiritual signification of these ordinances; and on this ground the Saviour said, what I do thou knowest not now; but, He knew, that Peter and the rest of the apostles, would shortly receive the Holy Spirit, when they would become spiritual, and would know these things. The spiritual signification of the washing of feet, as instituted by Christ, has reference to the saints being washed by Him, from the guilt and pollution of those sins of the flesh, which adhere to them whilst they are on earth; and which by them is as unavoidable as it is for us to keep our feet from being soiled, or fouled, by walking upon the earth.

The happiness of the children of God, consists in the assurance of favor and acceptance with Him. They know that they cannot be acceptable to God, without being entirely clean, or free from sin. If they have right knowledge of God, they will know that they are continually defiling themselves with sin; and this would forbid their approach to God, and, consequently, mar their happiness, and indeed make them miserable, if they had no source to flee to, where they could wash and cleanse themselves from this defilement. The consideration of this, caused Paul to exclaim, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Paul had not forgotten the source whence deliverance comes, but for our instruction through the Holy Ghost, he draws the picture of our misery, if it were not for the washing we continually receive from Christ. But to fix this source of cleansing upon our minds also, as well as also to point to the means of defense against Satan, he exclaims: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." To suppose that God does not

regard, or that He overlooks these sins, is derogating from the attributes of His justice, purity, and holiness. To enjoy comfort on that ground, has a cooling, darkening, and damning influence. To have comfort on the ground of ignorance of these lusts and emotions being sin, has about the same effect; and though the conscience may not be disturbed, yet there can be neither love, or admiration of God, begotten in such soul; or proper conception of His glory and majesty. Nothing can do this but a full knowledge of sin, and a lively sensibility to it. This is essential to true happiness, because without it we cannot possibly have a full and true knowledge of what Christ has done, and is daily doing for us. Neither can we have a true sense of love to Him, without this knowledge, that *His blood* is sufficient to wash and cleanse us from all this guilt; that by one offering He forever perfected those who believe and trust in Him. This is the only true ground of happiness, upon which the child of God can stand, and here he can look calmly upon the devil with all his rage, the world with all its allurements, and the flesh with all its lusts.

We may wash our bodies as frequently and as effectually as we will, the tread of the earth by the feet, will defile them again; and to be entirely clean, we must also wash the feet again. So with the spiritual believer. He is made entirely clean by the blood of Christ, but by his contact with the dead world, he again defiles himself, so that he has need of again coming to Christ, to be washed and purified. Washing only the feet, has, in itself, a significance, expressive of the difference of the sins resulting from this weakness of the flesh, and that of which we are guilty when we live in sin, and freely yield our members to its service. There is nothing in the washing of feet, to signify the washing of a sinner, who is dead in trespasses and sins. The washing of our feet would not make our whole body clean, if it were altogether defiled. The sinner is altogether defiled with sin, and when he comes to Christ with a truly penitent heart, he comes not as an erring child, but as a guilty rebel and sinner; not as having sinned through weakness, but as having yielded his will, and all the powers of his soul, to sin; and if he is to be made free from guilt, must be altogether washed. This is the washing which Christ has reference to, when He said to Peter, "he that is washed." When the believer who has been thus washed by coming to Christ, and

finds comfort and rest in Him, feels his conscience accused by those sins of weakness, which he feels he has not power to avoid, comes to Christ, he does not come in the same feeling of guiltiness and slavish fear of God, in which he approached Him at his first coming ; but he comes as a child to its parent, knowing that for naughtiness it is worthy of chastisement and stripes, and may even expect to receive it, but knows that its parent loves it, and will not cast it off, even though he does correct it. The assurance which such believer feels of forgiveness through Christ, is what is represented by the washing of feet. He does not regard God as not noticing his sin ; that because he is converted, God will not regard his sin ; and even though he does commit sin, God will not impute it to him. But he looks upon himself as being in Christ, and he continually washes himself in His blood, so that he is clean by his constant embracing of that meritorious sacrifice which Christ made, and may be said to be continually washing himself in the blood of Christ, and is consequently clean ; but not because sin does not defile him. Christ came to save from sin, but not to serve in sin. It is essential to salvation, and true Christian religion, that the believer has a sense and knowledge of sin ; and that all sin is offensive to God, and will separate them from Him, if it is not washed away, or its guilt expiated. This is done alone by Christ, and causes the believer to hold or cleave to Him firmly by faith. Jesus Christ was desirous of impressing every principle on the mind and soul of man, which is essential to peace, comfort, security, and happiness, in this life, and glory in the world to come ; and therefore gave full instruction, so that all might enjoy these great benefits, and sought to impress it the more deeply by this ordinance of washing His disciples' feet, and bidding them do as He had done.

Peter, and the rest of the apostles, were at this time yet destitute of the Holy Spirit, and of necessity were yet carnal, as every person destitute of the Spirit must be. In this destitute state, they were bound in legalism. They could not know the things of the Spirit, and, consequently, could not understand what Christ intended by this feet-washing. Therefore Christ said : "What I do, thou knowest not now." This could not have had reference to the act or deed which the Saviour performed ; this they did know. But the spiritual signification of what He did, they did

not know, because of their carnal and legal state of mind. The soul being unenlightened by the Spirit, they could not know anything about their own weakness, the sinfulness of their nature, and the need they would have of the continual washing of Christ. But Christ knew they would shortly receive the Holy Spirit, which would enlighten their souls and minds, and show them the true state of the inward man; and then they would know their need, and the true signification of what Christ had done for them. He said: "What I do ye know not now, *but shall know hereafter.*" Is it not clear, that there was in this work a mystery too deep for their understanding then to embrace, or comprehend? The design of what Christ did, was therefore not intended to exert its influence on them then, for it could not; but afterward they should know it. The believer must be altogether clean, and to be so, it is essentially necessary that he has this knowledge; and Christ instituted this ordinance, for the purpose of awakening, keeping alive, strengthening, and confirming the believer in the principles of this truth; for without this he cannot be preserved every whit clean. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet; but is clean every whit;" as if He would say, he that is once washed from his sins, needeth no more to come to me to be washed, in the manner I first washed him; but only to come as a child, to be cleansed of his sins of weakness, and infirmity of the flesh; and then he shall be clean every whit.

If this was the signification and intention of feet-washing, can there be any reason for its discontinuance? The knowledge intended to be conveyed by it, is as necessary now as it ever was; and if the ordinance was necessary once, why should it not be now? Every true believer will thank God, for every ordinance and means He has appointed for his comfort and security, and esteem none unnecessary or unimportant.

When the believer observes this ordinance, he confesses before God and man, that he has, through true repentance, been brought to Christ, and by faith in Him, been purged and cleansed of his old sins; and that he is sensible of his weak and sinful nature, by which he would again be speedily brought under guilt and condemnation, if it were not for the continual washing which he receives from Christ; and as he here washes these members which tread the earth, so he has continual need of mortifying his

members which are on the earth, and being washed by Christ from the pollution which his soul receives by them. This knowledge of our constant need of washing, is a necessity of the children of God, and it is the duty of the ministry, diligently to labor to impress this truth on the minds of the members of the Church. Christ has given them this solemn and impressive ordinance, for the purpose of more effectually accomplishing this object. Unconverted persons may engage in the ceremony of feet-washing, but they cannot possibly enjoy the happiness which Christ promised to those persons who "*know these things and do them,*" because, no unconverted person can know what is done, any more than Peter could at the time when Christ spoke to him. Every such person deceives himself, and brings condemnation upon his soul, because he is making a confession, and representation which is not true.

When Christ commanded this ordinance to be observed, He gave a promise also, which He did not connect with any other command He gave. He said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." This is not promised, either on the knowledge alone, or on the doing alone, but on the *knowing and doing*. Those who contend for the idea, that Christ only designed to impress the virtue of kindness and humility on the minds of the disciples, it is to be feared are too much destitute of this requisite knowledge, to make it a blessed ordinance to them; and it is also to be feared, that the humility essential to its observance is a virtue which is rather rare amongst many of them. This may go far toward blinding their minds to the force of the command.

The ordinance of washing feet, having a spiritual signification, relating to Christ's continual washing of His saints, so it also illustrates the spiritual service which the believers in the church render to one another, in bringing about this important washing. It is the duty of the members of the church, to labor for the edification and encouragement of one another; and in so doing, they assist one another by increasing their spiritual sensibilities and perceptions, by which they are made more keenly alive to those imperfections which makes Christ's washing such a great necessity. In this way they may often reprove one another, without thinking, intending, or even knowing of what they are

doing. One, perhaps, relates to another some inward exercise they have undergone, or some chastening they have endured; and by this means, God, by His grace, opens the eyes of another to some influence under which they themselves have been too much exercised, without perceiving the Spirit which actuated them; but by the relation of their brother or sister of their experience, they perceive the influence which has been working on themselves, or their own short-comings and derelictions are made apparent to them. In consequence, they are led, in humble submission, to Christ; for to Him every faithful believer flees for deliverance. So also if one is overtaken in a fault, Paul says we shall restore them in the spirit of meekness. We are also commanded to rebuke and reprove all waywardness and error. All such dealings as the apostle commands, with what Christ teaches, (Math. xviii.) tends to bring the erring party to a sense of their error, whereby they are brought to Christ, in penitence and humility, and all such are washed by Him from the guilty stains of sin. Herein the fellow-believer has been serviceable in promoting the spiritual washing, by bringing his brother to the knowledge which is essential to the seeking of Christ. How much have we then reason to thank the Lord for the service of our brethren, without the aid of whom we might have continued to stray still further, and finally have perished in our transgressions.

In the washing of feet, two things are necessary. First, that he who would wash his brother's feet, gives himself up to serve his brother; and secondly, that he who is to be washed, yields himself up passively to be served, or to have his feet washed by his brother. The ordinance is certainly very impressive; and it is indicative of simplicity, meekness, humility and submission. These are virtues of a Divine nature, and when we present ourselves to serve, or be served by our brother, in this manner, we represent ourselves as being of this spirit and Divine disposition. In performing the duty of reproofing an erring brother, or restoring one who has been overtaken in a fault, if it is to be effectual, these virtues must prevail with both parties. If we are destitute of these virtues, we are not fit to administer reproof; neither can we receive it with advantage, if we are destitute of them. It requires some self-denial on the part of him who reproofs; he must give himself up to serve his brother, and if he does it in the spirit of

meekness, as Paul says he shall, (Gal. v.) it requires humiliation, and submission. On the part of him who is in fault, it requires submission, and a yielding of themselves up to him who reproveth, or would restore them. Without this, the work of the spiritual washing never can be carried out. This we represent ourselves, as willing at all times, by the grace of God, to do, when we observe the ordinance of washing one another's feet. The washing of feet by the saints, is significant of the spirit which must always prevail in the Church of God. In this view, the ordinance is eminently instructive, and must tend to impress every faithful soul, with a deep sense of duty toward God, his fellow-believer, and his own soul. It is important, therefore, that the members of the church, at all times keep this in remembrance; that whether they have occasion to reprove, or whether they receive reproof, they have in remembrance what they showed before God and man, in the ordinance of washing one another's feet. If we do not approach one another, or receive one another's approach, in an humble, meek, and submissive spirit, we give the lie to the profession we there made, when we washed one another's feet. There is, perhaps, no other duty enjoined upon us, in which we have so much need to take heed to ourselves, as in reproveth, or receiving reproof. Self-love is such a subtle spirit, and can disguise itself in such a delusive manner, that we have great need of grace and clear Divine light, to be able to perceive its influence in ourselves.

This humble, meek, and submissive spirit, which we have set forth, as represented in the washing of feet, all will admit are Christian virtues, which it is of importance that we possess. But some will contend, we can possess them without the practice of washing feet; the washing of feet does not give us these virtues. This we admit, that the washing of feet gives no merit or virtue. Neither does baptism, or breaking of bread. But the consideration of what is represented by these ordinances, leads faithful souls to close scrutiny of their hearts, whether they really possess that which is here represented; and by the grace which prompts and directs this scrutiny, they will be led to the source whence all virtue is derived. This we ever hold, and contend for, and consider it our duty to set forth, and labor to impress on every mind, that there is no merit or virtue derived from any ordinance or duty prescribed in the Word of God. All merit and virtue

proceeds from Christ alone, and is imparted to us alone by grace through faith. But this merit and virtue can never be obtained by man, without a sense of his destitution, and need of it. The ordinances and duties, then, which are prescribed for believers to observe and perform, are designed for the double purpose of making him sensible of this need, and pointing him to the source, and leading him to the fountain, where help is obtained in time of need. Every true believer will feel so much need of these means of help and safety, that they will not willingly omit, or be deprived of any of them. But since there are so many churches (as they are called), some of which wash feet, and others do not, but all admit the principle as important, and profess to possess it, I would ask them, one and all, whether it is possible that this spirit of humility and kindness can exist in a church, where bickering and strife, crimination and recrimination, exists? The one does practice washing of feet, and yet, for the most part, do not labor in a meek and gentle spirit, to reclaim their erring brother or sister; not willing to humble themselves, to perform in spirit what they represent in the flesh. Can they possibly possess the spirit and knowledge of true kindness, when they can see their brother or sister err, and go on in sin, without trying to save them? Or if they do approach them at all, it is generally in severity, and is also generally met in a petulant spirit; both very widely different from what they represent when they wash one-anothers' feet. They wash feet, without knowing what the Saviour has reference to, and cannot possibly reap the happiness which He promised to those "*who know these things and do them.*" Again, those who maintain that the spirit of kindness and humility, which the Saviour taught to His disciples in the act of washing feet, is the matter of importance, and the act is not necessary, where the signified spirit reigns, and yet neglect to reprove and rebuke, in Scripture manner, the froward and unruly, and labor in meekness to restore the erring, but, on the contrary, whatever they do in this respect, is done in an acrimonious spirit, with severity, and, perhaps, received in the same impatient manner, are very far from knowing what the Saviour alludes to, or has in view; and neither "*knowing or doing,*" they can surely not enjoy the promised happiness.

The usual custom in the Reformed Mennonite church, in

observing this ordinance, is: After breaking bread, some of the ministers usually read the first part of John xiii., where he relates the manner in which the Saviour instituted the ordinance, and His accompanying remarks; and, after some explanation of the text, and the design and signification of the ordinance, they proceed to the performance of the ceremony. The preachers and elders, or deacons, usually wash the feet of the brethren, whilst some of the sisters officiate amongst the females. If there is but one preacher present, and no deacon, some other brother usually washes the feet of the officiating minister. The minister thus shows that he is willing to labor for the spiritual welfare of his brothers and sisters, and also confesses that he needs their assistance, and desires they shall also correct him and help him, when he strays from the true path of rectitude.

There is no command of time, or circumstances, when, where, or how the ordinance shall be observed. The Saviour instituted it after supper. Whether this was the supper Matthew, Mark and Luke speak of, where Christ instituted the sacrament of bread and wine, I do not know, but hardly think it was. The manner of His doing it is so plainly described, that we feel it most suitable to follow His example. But where there is no plain command, we make none. The ancient Mennonites, by what I can gather from their confession of faith, and other writings, practiced it on any suitable occasion, when a number of them were met together, or at times of visiting one another; but recommended it to be done in profound meditation on the love, humility and condescension of our blessed Saviour, in giving Himself to death, and by His precious blood washing away our sins. In this view, and the knowledge of the Saviour's design, I have no doubt they enjoyed the happiness promised by Him. With what particular view John Herr and his associates adopted the time and manner I have related as now pursued by us, I do not know; but it seems to me altogether a proper time and place, as many members are usually present, and all have an opportunity of participating in the ordinance, which many would, under other circumstances, not enjoy. Besides, there is better opportunity to present the design and signification of the ordinance. We think we enjoy blessing from God under this mode of procedure, and are happy under its influence.

The Reformed Mennonites have ever held, that no system of religion can be sound, or of divine authority, which does not inculcate a system of strict moral virtues. Men may be moral, without being Christians; but they cannot be Christians without being moral. We cannot be Christ's disciples, without being obedient to His commands. One especial charge in His Sermon on the Mount was: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." Christians cannot desire that any one should do anything for, or to them, but what is just and right; and this their principles will impel them to do to all others.

There are moral duties, however, which in strictness we could not say justice requires of them. Some may have means, which would enable them to live without any employment or calling; but they consider, that it is the duty of every person who is physically able, to be employed in some way useful to his fellow man. Every laborer, although he receives a just value for his service, is nevertheless a public benefactor. Paul earnestly urges all to work in quietness, and eat their own bread, and they that will not work, neither shall they eat; and also speaks very disparagingly of those who "work not at all." In this they hold, that every one is at liberty to make choice of such occupation, or calling, as their inclination or circumstances most favor, so that it is a lawful calling, and one which requires no duty inconsistent with the commands of the gospel. To assist the poor, and relieve those in distress, they hold as a duty, of whatever class they may be; but Paul says, especially those of the household of faith.

When Adam transgressed the command of God, the ground was cursed for his sake; and it was said, in the sweat of his face he should eat his bread, until he would return to the ground from which he was taken. There is no question but this decree was intended for man's benefit; that in his fallen state, idleness would have increased his unhappiness and misery. We usually see that those who are unemployed, fall into evil practices, and become a plague to society. The old proverb, that "Satan finds some mischief for idle hands to do," is a true one.

The laws and customs of the land, have so well regulated trade, commerce, and the compensation of labor, that the church generally

allows its members in this respect, to regulate themselves by the customs which are sanctioned by the community, except where the law sometimes sanctions what would be disadvantageous to another, which is not in any case countenanced or sanctioned. They generally favor the humbler pursuits of life, as agriculture, and the mechanical trades. Mercantile pursuits, or such callings as are attended with much care and anxiety of mind, are usually avoided, yet not forbidden, or altogether rejected. Such callings, although they are lawful, and useful in society, and we may say, necessary, they by no means hold that a Christian could not engage in them; yet they consider their tendency to be distracting, and rather prejudicial to the Divine life, and the general feeling is, to avoid such occupations.

The marriage relation they regard as a Divine order, instituted by God, in the garden of Eden, afterward sanctioned and encouraged under the law, and directed and regulated under the Gospel. When God had created man, He said it was not good for him to be alone. There could have been nothing about him in Paradise to make him unhappy; but there was something wanting to make happiness complete. God had created him with affections and sympathies, and there was no object here on which to bestow or lavish them. When God created woman and presented her to man, the void in his heart seems to have been filled, the object on which to bestow his affections was supplied, and he received her in a rapture of joy and delight, as a being which would render his happiness complete. This was an object of worth above all others, and for it a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh. "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," was an exclamation, expressive of the intimate relation existing between man and wife, which, for significance, the advance of man in sentiment and refinement of language, has never been able to improve. Christ declares it a Divine union, in saying, "what God hath joined together." God had wrought in them such affection and attachment, as made them necessary to one another for complete happiness; and, inasmuch as He had blessed them, and said they should be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, it is evident that the expression of Adam, that a man shall leave father and mother, and cleave unto his

wife, had reference to their primeval or Paradisical state, and that he looked upon this institution as designed to be perpetuated; for he as yet knew of no other condition, than the blessed and happy one which they were then in. The declaration of Adam has proven true, even in man's fallen state. They still do, after the great lapse of time, and amidst all the changes that have taken place, leave father and mother, and cleave unto their wives.

This ordinance was designed of God to render man completely happy, and the end was attained, because all God's means must be effectual. So long as man was in his primeval state, he was supremely happy. But when he fell, all nature became changed, and man by it was also rendered vile and depraved, and the marriage relation also became greatly disturbed. The sympathy and affection between man and woman continued, and the desire for association and companionship was still strong; but as that Divine love which existed in the soul of man was displaced by self-love, this disturbing element tended greatly to mar the happiness of the relation; which disturbance was always in proportion to the latitude they would give to this principle of self-love.

The devil is a destructive spirit, and if he had power, would destroy the whole human family; and for this purpose infused the disturbing, and destructive principle of self-love into the heart of man, when he obtained power over him; and by it would have effected his object, if God had not interposed an obstacle, in his way. God designed to restore man, and must of consequence preserve him from destruction. To this end, God impressed His law upon the heart of man, for the purpose of exerting an influence, to preserve the human race from destruction by the baneful influence of self-love. By His Spirit, God convicted man, and caused his conscience to accuse him, when he transgressed this law. But this law could not entirely destroy this self-love, neither could it restore the Spirit and love of God to the soul. Therefore, it could not in any sense render man completely happy, or restore him to the condition from which he had fallen. In proportion as he was obedient to the law, would be his comfort; and in proportion to his faith in the promised Redeemer, would he be happy. To those who sought to obey this law, the ordinance of marriage was one of the greatest sources of enjoyment; but to those who did not obey it, but left the evil spirit of self-love

rule, it also became one of the greatest sources of misery and wretchedness.

From the fall of man, until the time of God's choosing Israel and giving them the law engraven in tables of stone, with further orders and statutes for the regulation of their conduct and life, we do not find that He gave any command, or direction, to man in regard to the relation existing between man and wife; yet there is evidence that marriage was not contrary to His will, and He frequently countenanced and encouraged it. And as man did, in the darkest ages of the world, pay more regard to the sanctity of this relation, than he did to almost any of the other proprieties of life, it would seem as if God exercised an especial care and protection over this ordinance.

We have instances mentioned in the Bible, where, within this time, the marriage relation was particularly blessed and happy; and there were no doubt many more, which are not mentioned. Those which are mentioned, were always such as have the testimony that they had regard to the law of the Lord. But, even amongst these, we can perceive gross violations of the principles which Christ instituted when He came "to restore all things."

God, in giving the law and statutes to Israel, did not change their spiritual relation to Himself. He only gave them clearer perceptions of that which He had before impressed upon their minds. But the law which He engraved on tables of stone, and all the statutes and judgments which He gave them, could not eradicate that self-love from the heart, or restore to them the lost Spirit and love of God. Consequently, although God did in this age of the world, give to Israel commands and directions in regard to marriage, and the duties of husbands and wives, and these greatly improved the existing state of the relation, and modified many evils which existed before, yet they could not restore it to its primitive purity, or its efficacy for comfort and happiness, for the reason that this was still a part of that age of ignorance at which God winked, and that hardness of heart in which He gave statutes or precepts corresponding to their perceptions and capacity to fulfill.

This is the ground upon which many of those commands, or precepts, were given, which are so different from what they are under the gospel. The carnal mind cannot understand why they should differ; because they cannot, without the aid of the Spirit,

comprehend the difference between the old and the new covenant, or the legal and the gospel dispensation. Thus it was with the Pharisees. When Jesus Christ, the promised woman's seed, came into the world, as the Messiah who was to restore all things, those who believed on Him received the Holy Spirit, and consequent Divine life, and were able to discern spiritually; but the Pharisees, and those who did not believe, continued under bondage, and destitute of the Divine life, and, consequently, could not discern the spiritual things which the Saviour taught.

When Christ taught in His Sermon on the Mount, (Math. v.) He said: "It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery." This was quite different language from what the Jews heard from Moses, or what they had learned from the scribes and Pharisees. The latter, not knowing Christ, or comprehending the nature of the kingdom He was about to establish, could not understand His teaching, and sought every opportunity and means to entangle Him in His words, so that they might have occasion to accuse Him. The Pharisees hearing His teaching (Math. v.), and perceiving that it differed from what Moses taught, thought they might here find occasion to bring an accusation against Him. With this view, they put the following tempting question to Him in Math. xix.: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, have ye not read, that He which made them in the beginning, made them male and female, and said, for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto Him, why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He said unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her which is put away, doth

commit adultery. His disciples say unto Him, if the case of a man be so with his wife it is not good to marry."

The Pharisees evidently thought they could convict Christ, which ever way He would reply to them. If He would say, it is lawful to put her away, they could charge Him with inconsistency, as he had before taught differently, in Matt. v. And if He reiterated what He there taught, they could convict Him of contradicting Moses, the servant of God. Thus they thought He had involved Himself in inextricable difficulties. But infinite wisdom silenced all their captious schemes, and left wholesome instruction for believers in all time to come, and a sure guide for all to follow in safety.

As man was constituted when God instituted the marriage ordinance, there could be no desire for separation between man and wife ; because they were under the influence and guidance of the Divine Spirit, which is one of union and harmony ; and being no cause of separation, no effect could be produced. But by the fall, man lost that Spirit which constituted the Divine image. Instead of the love of God, the love of self became the controlling power ; and this being a spirit of discord, confusion and contention, and indeed the very source and fountain from whence every evil work flows, the marriage relation could not flow on in uninterrupted harmony and felicity. Many motives springing from self-love, prompted the union in marriage of very discordant elements. The parties would not let themselves be influenced by the law of God, and such discord and confusion, with strife and contention, resulted, in many instances, as would render not only the parties themselves, but children, and all that were connected with the household, miserable, and would tend to their destruction. Therefore God gave permission, through Moses, to allow them to separate. Their hearts were hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and the Spirit was not there to ameliorate and soften them, so that these difficulties could be healed. Therefore Christ said, because of the hardness of your hearts, Moses gave you this precept, but from the beginning, before the hearts were hardened, it was not so. The Pharisees seem not to have had any thing to reply to Christ. But the disciples concluded, that, "if the case of a man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry." The disciples were at this time yet destitute of the Spirit, and had no conception

of its power ; and knowing the discord and confusion that often existed between husband and wife, they concluded that if this tie is indissoluble, it were better not to marry, than run the risk of being bound for life, to dwell in such an element of discord.

God allowed the Jews to sever their marriage contracts, on the same ground that He allowed them to exact justice, avenge injuries, and wage wars. It was because of the impossibility that they could do otherwise in their fallen condition, or the hardened state of their hearts. But now, under the new covenant, when he receives power by the Holy Spirit to overcome the deeds of the body, God requires him to subdue this disposition of the body, and instead of exacting justice, and retaliating injuries, he shall return good for evil ; and thereby manifest the Divine nature which he has been made partaker of. Because the law could not give them the Divine nature, by which they could subdue those passions and emotions which excited and promoted discord, God allowed them to separate ; but now being brought into the relation of children of God, love, union, and harmony must attest the Divine work wrought in them. To separate from their wives, would be inconsistent with the nature they had received, and not be that light to the world, which God had called His children to be, and walk in.

When God instituted the marriage covenant, it is evident that it was designed to be an abiding covenant of union. There was no command, allowance, or intimation, on God's part, of any severance of this union, until man's heart had become hardened. Neither was there on the part of man in accepting the order of God, any reservation, or suggestion, that it might become onerous, or ever render them unhappy.

In the restored state of man under the gospel, Christ does not only intimate a lasting union, but plainly declares, that believers cannot sever the marriage tie. He declares it a union which God has formed ; and says man shall not sever it. We therefore hold that under the gospel, the marriage tie of two believers, *cannot be severed*. If two believers are united in wedlock, one or the other must deny the faith, before it is possible the marriage tie can be broken ; and even the denying the faith, does not justify believers in separating themselves from their marriage companion, unless they have fallen into adultery.

Although God did say in the beginning, that it is not good for man to be alone, and mankind did in all ages of the world, generally seek marriage companionship, yet we do not find that God ever made it an obligation of man, to enter into this relation. There is no doubt, that under the law it was optional with every one, to do in this matter as they thought proper, as we find no command given making it obligatory; nor do we find any disapproval expressed, for any one not entering into this relation. From this it appears evident, that it was left to every one's free will, to marry or not, as they would judge most expedient. But in the gospel we have an express declaration of the Holy Ghost, that every one is at liberty in this respect to do as they think best. If they marry, they do not sin; but to remain unmarried, Paul thought better for some reasons, if they have power over their own will.

The declaration of Christ, of the indissolubility of the marriage rite under the gospel, has reference to believers. Unbelievers in the gospel era, differ nothing from what they were in any other age of the world. They are under the law, as they ever were, and gospel commands, and gospel institutions, do not effect or concern them. As God himself thought it better for those under the law to separate under certain circumstances, we will also admit, there are circumstances now in which it would be better if the tie were severed. The Church has therefore never objected to the world exercising this liberty. God gave it to them, and never took it from them. There may, however, be instances, where a believer, and an unbeliever are joined together in wedlock. We do not believe that a believer can unite with an unbeliever in marriage; but two unbelievers being united, one of the parties may be converted, whilst the other remains in unbelief. In these cases Paul says, the believing party shall not seek to be loosed, if the unbelieving party be pleased to dwell with them. But if the unbelieving party separate themselves, the believing party is not under bonds in such case. Nevertheless, they are still the husband or wife of the other, unless they fall into fornication, which the Saviour says, gives liberty to dissolve the marriage tie. Therefore, Paul says, they shall remain unmarried, or else be reconciled with their lawful husband or wife.

Although we look upon marriage as being an ordinance of God,

yet we regard it as differing from the spiritual ordinances, which God has given to His Church. These ordinances God has given to His Church alone for the spiritual benefit and welfare of believers. No carnal benefit, or temporal advantage, can accrue to any one from their observance, if they are conducted in true gospel order, and in the spirit in which, or for which, they were designed. Neither were they given to, or designed that, any unregenerated person should observe them, or take part therein. In truth, we may say, they cannot possibly observe any of the ordinances which Christ has given specially to His Church. On the contrary, God has expressed disapprobation of unbelievers observing gospel ordinances. But He has never expressed disapprobation of their entering into the marriage relation, but rather has approved it as a means of preserving decency and order in society. All moral duties are commanded under the law, and the comfort and happiness of individuals, and society at large, will depend in a great measure upon the degree of faithfulness in which they observe and perform these duties. Under the gospel, we do not find many special commands in regard to moral duties, but a great deal in regard to love, and walking in love, as also to live and walk in the Spirit. If this is done, all moral duties will be performed, because Paul says: "Love is the fulfilling of the law, or he that loves another, hath fulfilled the law;" and again: "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Gal. v.)

As all that pertains to the moral law is obligatory on those who are under the law (and we have shown that marriage was not made obligatory on any one under the law), we cannot properly call it a moral duty, or an ordinance, strictly speaking, as belonging to the moral law. Neither can we regard it as a spiritual ordinance, or as belonging or pertaining to man as a spiritual being, for these his spiritual nature will impel him to observe; and spiritual ordinances are not left to the free will of man to observe, or not, as he shall chose, whilst we are told in the gospel that, in regard to marriage, there is not only no obligation, but that those who refrain from it do best. Neither can we class it under the head of natural wants, or such an order of nature as eating, drinking, sleeping, etc., because it is not an absolute want of nature. We cannot, therefore, better

characterize it, than to call it a *carnal ordinance*. God has ordained it as a carnal comfort, or blessing bestowed upon man, in whatever state or condition he may be placed. Paul says: "Marriage is honorable in all;" so that the testimony of Scripture is, that God approves it, and has made it a blessing and comfort in all states of society. To believers, however, it is a special blessing, as they may be helped, both in the temporal and spiritual life. Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines, but to Isaac he gave all that he had.

As Satan sought to corrupt every blessing and favor which God bestowed upon mankind, and render them a curse, instead of a blessing, so he sought to corrupt marriage, and did also succeed in many instances, in making the parties miserable, instead of happy. The relation existing between husband and wife, rendered those who did not regard the Lord, convenient and special instruments of evil in the hands of Satan, to bring their companions in marriage under his power, where one of the parties lived in the fear of God. To protect His people of old, God gave the precept of divorce. Under the new covenant, He provided that believers should not marry with unbelievers.

In the first age of the world, we find no command given, in regard to believers and unbelievers intermarrying, yet we have the example of very baneful influences being exerted upon the believers by it. In the early age of the world, it is related, that the sons of God looked upon the daughters of men, that they were fair; and took them wives of all which they chose. These sons of God, were the sons of believers of that age, as of the lineage of Seth, who was born in Abel's stead. The daughters noticed as born unto men, were the daughters of the lineage of Cain, or those who were not believers. Although these intermarriages could, in themselves, not have been sin, inasmuch as there was at that time no command to forbid it; and Paul says, where there is no command, there can be no transgression. So, although this, in itself, was not sin, yet the influence which the daughters of men had on the sons of God by this intermarriage, is specially mentioned by the inspired writer, no doubt for the purpose of impressing believers in every age, with a sense of danger in such intermarriage, and of its being contrary to the will of God. The effect here mentioned was to corrupt them, and

render them so vile, that God was necessitated to destroy them from the face of the earth, by a flood of water.

Abraham, who was a believer especially faithful and honored of God, was sensible of this danger. God said of him: "For I know that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment," etc. Abraham no doubt knew the result of the sons of God taking the daughters of men for wives, in the Antideluvian age, and his experience no doubt had taught him what the tendency of such marriages with unbelievers was. This made him very solicitous about his son Isaac. He therefore, sware his servant, "by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son, of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell." This solicitude, felt by one who is called the friend of God, should certainly impress every one possessed of the fear of God, with a sense of the great importance of the step they are about to take, when they propose to enter into the marriage relation. God's regard for this solicitude of Abraham, and His blessing and prospering his efforts to protect his son from the evil influence of an unbelieving alliance in marriage, is also worthy of every faithful believer's notice; and is full of encouragement to every one who desires to walk in the footsteps of faithful Abraham. Isaac and Rebekah were also greatly concerned about their sons marrying. It is said, it was a grief of mind to them, when their son Esau took a wife of the daughters of Heth. And "Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me." They sent Jacob away to take a wife from their kindred, who were not yet so wholly sunken in idolatry, as the Canaanites. This occurred before God gave any law or command in relation to marriage, and shows us how those were exercised who lived in the fear of God, and enjoyed His especial favor.

After Moses had received the law and statutes of Israel, from the hands of the Lord, and the children of Israel had come to the borders of the land of Canaan, when they were in the plains of Moab, the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab; for which the Lord sent a plague upon them,

by which twenty-four thousand perished. Josephus, in his Jewish history, tells us that Balaam counseled Balak to send the fairest of their daughters to the borders of the camp of Israel, and when their youths would become enamored with them, they should pretend as though they would return to their own country; and when the enamored youths would lament their departure, they should propose to them to worship and sacrifice to their gods, and take up their customs. When the daughters of Moab did as they were advised, the youths of Israel consented, and sacrificed and bowed down to their gods, for which the plague was sent, and a great number perished. (Num. xxii., xxiii., xxiv., and xxv.) The 31st chapter has some reference to the counsel Balaam gave to Balak. By this, the influence may be perceived, which an unbelieving wife can exert upon a believing husband. In Deut. vii., the Lord gives plain command in regard to Israel's inter-marrying with the idolatrous nations around them. He first directs them utterly to destroy the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, and says: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give to his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take to thy son; for they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other Gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly." King Solomon, of whom it is said, he loved the Lord, and the Lord appeared unto him twice, and he was so highly endowed of God, and very great favor shown him; but, at last, it is said (1st Kings xi.): "Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh; women of the Moabites, Amorites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which, the Lord said unto the children of Israel, ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you, *for surely, they will turn away your heart after their gods.*" His wives turned away his heart after other gods, and went after Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites, and the Lord was angry with Solomon.

The Lord's care for His people is manifested by these commands and warnings; and the effect and influence which He said such intermarriages between believers and unbelievers would have, experience proved to be true, and admonishes all believers of the

certain ruin, such alliance must bring upon themselves. Then all unbelievers were considered idolaters, and they are nothing the less so now, and their influence as pernicious as theirs was then.

In the New Testament, there is not so much said by our Saviour in regard to marriage, as the Lord said in the Old Testament; yet He countenanced it, and made such declarations as show plainly how He regarded it. We have already said, that what Christ teaches in regard to it, is quite different from what Moses taught. Moses taught by divine instruction, and his teaching was as well the Word of God, as what Christ taught. The question might then arise, why did God at one time teach one thing, and at another time teach differently? The law and precept which God gave to Israel, was undoubtedly the *best* for them that could be given; and that which the Saviour gave under the gospel, was the best that could be given to a gospel believer. This shows the change wrought in man, and shows the power of regeneration under the gospel. If man's situation was such under the law, that it was necessary for his happiness for God to give a precept, permitting him to put away his wife, and under the gospel such as to forbid it, there must have been a very great change wrought, to enable man to obey the injunction, and be happy. The change which is wrought by regeneration, which enables believers to be happy in the marriage relation, under an indissoluble union, is because regeneration imparts to them the love of God, and the influence of the Holy Spirit, which enables them to keep the body in subjection, and prompts them to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; and these promote union, harmony, peace, and love. Here there can be no necessity, or desire for separation. The law could not give man this Spirit and Divine love; consequently they could not bring its fruits; and the union, harmony, peace, and love, could not be secured, which was necessary to insure happiness in an indissoluble union. The disciples who concluded that if a man could not put away his wife, it was not good to marry, were not yet regenerated, and had no knowledge of its power, and the change it would work in the spirit and disposition of man.

The difference of man's relation to God under the law, or under the gospel, and the incapacity of those under the law to fulfill, or observe gospel duties, is apparent in the language the inspired writers use in speaking of marriage in the Old Testament,

where man was under the law, and destitute of the Holy Spirit; and in the New Testament, where believers are under the gospel, are regenerated, and possessed of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, in Gen., chap. ii., where marriage is first spoken of, when man was in his primitive purity and possessed of the Spirit and love of God, it is said, husband and wife are one flesh. Adam said his wife was bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh; and a man shall leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they shall be one flesh. But from the fall of man to the coming of Christ, of all that is spoken of marriage, of the relation into which man and woman are brought to bear to one another by marriage, or their duties toward each other, I do not know of its being once said, that one is bone and flesh of the other, or that they are one flesh. Neither is there anything said of its being an indissoluble union. In the New Testament, this intimacy of relation or union, is used as an argument to enforce the duty of one party in marriage toward the other; but in the Old Testament, where there is so much said about the duties of the marriage relation, this is never used to enforce the argument, or the reasonableness of the command. If the consideration of this intimate relation has force under the gospel, would it not have had force also under the law, if the intimate union had existed? The wisdom or knowledge which dictated the argument in one case, was not wanting in the other. But man, in his fallen state, from the time of the transgression, until the time of his restoration in Christ, was not in a capacity to form such a union as the gospel contemplates between two believers.

Man, in his primitive state, was in a capacity to form such a union as is there represented; bone of each other's bone, and flesh of each other's flesh, forming one flesh; and such a union as it is as impossible to sever, as it is to sever the flesh and bones of the body. But, by the fall, the loss of the Holy Spirit and Divine love, with the infusion of the discordant spirit of self-love, man lost this capacity; and although the ordinance of marriage was continued in man's corrupted and perverted state, the marriage had to be such as could be formed of such material as man then presented. When man was restored through Christ, made partaker of the Holy Spirit and Divine love, he was brought into a capacity to form such a union as was instituted in the

Garden of Eden in the beginning. Therefore, Christ, when He speaks of marriage, speaks of it, and orders it, as it was in the beginning. When Christ speaks of the marriage relation, He speaks of an intimacy of union, which was not alluded to under the law. The reason is obvious. It is a union of different material. Believers under the gospel have by one Spirit been baptized into one body, and become one heart and one soul. Believers under the law were never brought into such a relation to one another; and no marvel that the marriage union should be more intimate, than where such a fusion does not exist. It is, therefore, not possible that the marriage bond between two believers can be severed, unless the bond of their union with Christ is first severed. The union with Christ was first formed, and, so long as this union is preserved, there is obedience to His Word, and they are guided by His Spirit, and, as a fruit, the outward, or carnal union will be preserved. Just as Christ says, those that love Him, will keep His commandments. Obedience is an effect, or fruit of His love; and this makes the union secure. These are joined together by the Lord, which we never read of marriage under the Mosaic dispensation. No doubt, the Lord was often instrumental in bringing about a marriage; but He did not join them together in the sense in which He does the gospel believers.

For this reason, we hold that a gospel believer cannot be joined in marriage to an unbeliever. In the first place, the principle does not exist in the unbelieving party, which is essential to such a union, as the gospel contemplates. A believer cannot be joined in marriage, but by and in the Lord; and an unbeliever cannot be joined in the Lord, because they do not stand in Him. A true and faithful believer in Christ, cannot entertain the idea of uniting themselves in marriage to an unbeliever. In the second place, the same cause which God assigns for forbidding the children of Israel from taking the daughters of the Gentiles to wife, or giving their daughters to the Gentiles in marriage, would forbid the gospel believer, to take an unbelieving man or woman to be their wedded companion. Knowing their own weakness, and their danger of being drawn away from the Lord by such an alliance, would forbid their entertaining such an idea. The fear of God will ever exert a preservative influence over His children.

Besides, the Holy Spirit which leads the children of God, would not guide them to such a union ; because it would be impossible that the Lord could join them together, or that they could be made one flesh, or an indissoluble union formed.

The position that a believer in Christ, or one who is regenerate, cannot be united in marriage with an unbeliever, I know is disputed by most religious professors, yet I believe they generally disapprove it ; but whether they think they have not sufficient Scripture ground entirely to forbid it, or whether they only lack firmness in carrying out what they believe the word to teach, I do not know ; but their disapproval of it, is enough to show that they have some conviction of the truth of the position we hold.

The liberty which I have before spoken of, in regard to marrying or not, as any one may deem expedient, seems, also, to be allowed to those who incline, or desire to enter into the marriage relation, as to who they will choose as a companion. Paul says of a widow, that she is at liberty to be married to whom she will. This liberty, no doubt, every unmarried person enjoys ; but here Paul confirms the position we have before taken, that a believer cannot marry an unbeliever. In 1st Cor., chap. vii., he writes at length on the subject of marriage, and the duties of the relation, and then, in the 39th verse, he says : "The wife is bound, by the law, as long as her husband liveth ; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will : *only in the Lord.*"

What the apostle has written in this chapter on marriage, has reference entirely to believers. The case of widows, referred to, is unquestionably that of a believing widow. In confining her liberty to marry, as *only in the Lord*, does evidently confine her to a believer. If she could be married *in the Lord*, to an unbeliever, it would remove all restriction ; for then she could not marry otherwise than in the Lord. But the expression, "*only in the Lord,*" undoubtedly means, *only a believer*. All believers are in the Lord, and all unbelievers are out of Him. This we consider as a positive and binding command of the apostle to all believers, and one which no faithful believer will disregard.

In the ninth chapter of this same epistle, Paul alludes to some question that had been addressed to him, and answers it by asking a question of those who examined him, saying : "Have we not

power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles," etc. He here appeals to his liberty, and to a privilege which brethren and apostles enjoyed. But what was it? To lead about a sister, a wife. If his liberty, or *power* (as he calls it), had been to lead about any woman he might choose, he would not have put *sister* to it. And the practice of the "other apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas," was to lead a *sister as their wife*. They had power, and they exercised it; and no doubt if they, or Paul and Barnabas, would have felt that they had liberty to lead about any woman whom their fancy might choose, the apostle would have spoken of that liberty or power, and not confined himself to a *sister*.

All positive commands in the gospel, rest on some principle which the Spirit impresses on the mind and feelings of believers. The principles we have alluded to, as forbidding such a marriage as the gospel contemplates, by a believer with an unbeliever, is the principle which underlies the command forbidding such marriage to believers. The danger and inconvenience are serious and weighty matters, which no true believer would regard lightly. In the forming of a marriage union, the Spirit of God, which guides and directs believers, would incline their hearts to seek a believer for a companion, as one that would be an help-meet and comfort to them in their spiritual life and duties, as well as in the natural affairs of life, and with whom they could hold spiritual companionship, and enjoy spiritual intercourse. All true believers regard their spiritual interests, above any carnal or worldly interests, and they will naturally avoid any thing, and every thing, whose tendency is destructive to the Divine life. Believers are by one Spirit baptized into one body, and are made one heart and one soul, and naturally seek each others' society, and shun such as tends to weaken their interest in, and affection for Divine things. In all their dealings and social intercourse, they give a preference to believers; and why not in so important a matter, as the choice of a companion, whom they would take into such an intimate relation, as wife or husband?

I have observed, that the Spirit will incline believers who desire to seek a wife or husband, to seek a believer; nevertheless, the flesh is a potent instrument in the hands of the devil, by which to tempt to license in this respect; so that the spiritual influence

might not in all cases be strong enough to guard him against the wiles of Satan, and the carnal influence of the flesh, if the apostle had not added these few words, clearly bounding the liberty in marriage. The words are few, but they are positive and plain, and agree entirely with the whole spirit of the gospel. But the apostle speaks, in this same chapter, of believing husbands having unbelieving wives, and believing wives having unbelieving husbands. The apostle writes this to relieve the minds of such believers as might be placed in this situation, and might be exercised in mind about the lawfulness of their marriage. It is evident that the apostle does not refer here to cases where believers married unbelievers, otherwise their minds would not likely be exercised about the matter. But they were, as I conceive, such as had married in unbelief, and afterward one of the parties were converted, whilst the other remained in their carnal state. The question arising with them, whether it was lawful for them to live with their unbelieving wife or husband, goes far to prove our position. If they had not regarded the marriage of an unbeliever unlawful, they would not likely have been disturbed by their situation. Paul tells such believers they shall not separate from their wives or husbands, if the unbelieving party be pleased to dwell with the other. But this by no means sanctions, or gives any countenance, to believers intermarrying with unbelievers, but, on the contrary, is strong evidence, that they did not regard such marriage justifiable.

It is then very clear, that neither the spirit or the letter of the gospel gives liberty to a believer to marry an unbeliever; and if it does not do so, then any one professing to be a believer, and forming such marriage, must first have broken their marriage covenant with Christ, and is fallen from grace. Their doing so has ever been regarded by the church as conclusive evidence that they have fallen, and such are invariably separated from the church as disorderly and offensive members. I have never known an instance where there was a voice in the church dissenting from this position, or the party themselves did not freely admit, and justify the position the church takes, and their action on it in their case. There may have been cases where members were excommunicated on this ground, did not justify it, but if so they are unknown to me.

Regarding marriage, then, as a carnal ordinance, or natural

covenant, entered into between a brother and a sister in Christ, as mutual helps and comfort to one another, both in their spiritual and natural life, we regard it as directed and regulated by the spirit and letter of the gospel, as these regulate all the natural duties of man; and every one is at liberty to enter into the covenant, or not, according to their own judgment or inclination. But Paul says: "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that," and some have "power over their own will," and this would indicate that some have not. Those, then, who have power over their own will, and the gift of God to be contented and happy in the unmarried state, may, and generally do, prefer to remain in that state; but those who are differently constituted, and incline to enter into the wedded state, of whom it might be said, it is not good for them to be alone, for such we believe God will provide an help-meet. But God does not always see as man sees, and His ways are not as ours are; consequently some might think it would be for their comfort and advantage to have a companion in marriage, but God would see differently. Then we might expect God would thwart their efforts, and undertakings. But the believer is taught to pray: "*Thy will be done,*" and to be resigned to the will of God, and confidently believe that God knows what is for their good, and will provide accordingly. All such we believe will receive grace and strength from God, to be at least measurably contented, believing that God provides that for them which is most for His honor, and conducive of their eternal welfare. Paul directs servants not to care for it; but if they may be made free, use it rather; and tells them to be obedient, and serve their masters faithfully; and Peter says, they shall be subject to their masters; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. This is the spirit and frame of mind which should govern every child of God, in relation to marriage. If their inclination is to enter the married state, and an opportunity presents itself to do so, "*use it rather;*" but if not, submit to the Lord, and wait on Him, in this confidence, that He cares for them, and will never leave nor forsake them.

Marriage is the most weighty and important of all earthly engagements, which a person can make or enter into, or the most weighty step they can take in life. Every truly God-fearing soul will be seriously exercised thereby, and driven to earnest entreaty

of the Lord, to guard them from all foreign or unlawful influence, and that they might not be carried away by any carnal consideration; that God would not suffer them to enter into any engagement which might be prejudicial to their spiritual welfare, and that He would support them and protect them; and if it is His will they shall consummate a marriage, it might be such an one as would redound to His honor, and to their own welfare, in body and in spirit. Persons under such fear of God, and resignation to His will, God has promised to care for; and a marriage consummated by them will be in the Lord, and He will have joined them together.

Although we do not hold that God hath decreed, foreordained or particularly appointed every certain man and woman who marry in the Lord, to be the husband or wife of that particular person, yet we believe, that such as live in the fear of God, and resignation to His will, which we have before set forth, if their affections and confidence are mutually drawn together, that God has so ordered and appointed their union; and we can have confidence that the work is of the Lord, as Bethuel and Laban answered the servant of Abraham.

All proposals of marriage are strictly inquired into, in regard to the feelings and exercises of the parties; and if nothing is known or revealed which is inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, the parties are joined in marriage. We do not pretend to say that all marriages in the church are brought about under the influence here represented. Experience has proven the contrary. The corruption that is in the flesh sometimes exerts an influence, and the natural inclinations may be so strong, that the motions or warnings of the Spirit are not heeded; or they may mistake the motions of the flesh for those of the Spirit, and a marriage may be consummated, which is too much after the flesh, and not in the true fear of God: Such marriages may result in severe chastening of the parties, and they be thereby brought to repentance, and renewal of life; or they may also result in their fall.

To avoid, as far as possible, all carnal influence in bringing about marriages, it has never been considered becoming, or a good light, for unmarried brothers and sisters to meet together in private company, as the custom of the world is, or with most of religious professors. Every one who has any knowledge or experience of

such meetings and company, know that the best exercises are light-minded and trifling conversation, tending to exert a carnal influence over one another, and serving the life of the flesh, and would tend to extinguish whatever spiritual or Divine life the parties might be possessed of. The most important acquaintance to be made with a view to marriage, is to know the spiritual stature of the party, and the disposition for piety and virtue. Private company is not necessary to this end, and will in no way favor the acquisition of any important knowledge of one another's disposition. There has never been any rule established, or decision made on this subject; but the consent has been universal, and there has never been any difficulty in relation to it.

Proposals of marriage are usually made through a third person, and the parties themselves do not usually converse with each other on the subject, until such proposal is made; and then, generally, not unless there is a disposition manifested on the part of the party proposed to, to accede to the wishes of the other party. After this, they visit each other, and confer privately with each other; but their private interviews are generally not more than is necessary to make proper arrangements for the important event. When the marriage is determined on, the bans are published in church, and after some time the rite is solemnized, usually at a public meeting in church on the Sabbath. The services are conducted in the same manner as at any ordinary meeting. The text is usually taken from some passage of Scripture referring to the subject of marriage. At the close of the sermon, the ceremony is performed, after which the services are closed, the same as any ordinary meeting.

Those who marry in the Lord were, before their espousals to one another, made one in Christ by regeneration, by which they were made members of His body, and were brought under the obligations which the gospel prescribes as the duty of believers, or members of the Church of Christ, to one another. They were, before their marriage, brother and sister in Christ; and their entrance into the marriage relation with each other does not change their previous relation of brother and sister, or relieve them of any duty or responsibility which that relation prescribes, but rather makes those duties more special, and offers new motives for faithfulness in their discharge.

Believers are said by Paul (Rom. vii.) to be married to Christ. This union with Him is prior to, and above, the carnal union which husband and wife form by their marriage with one another. Their marriage with Christ is not annulled, and their duties to Him, with whom they were first espoused, are above any duty which they owe to one another. So long as they remain faithful to their first espousals, they will not violate the duties of the second. These duties can never come in conflict. The duties of the first espousals must be violated before those of the second can be. As the love of God is the bond of union in the first covenant or marriage with Christ, and this had joined the hearts of the parties in spiritual union, before their marriage, and is a necessary constituent to insure a permanent and happy union with each other, their highest duty and interest consists in the preservation of inviolable faithfulness to God, and the troth they have plighted to Him.

But, as we have before said, marriage is a carnal ordinance, and imposes many duties on those who assume the relation, which might also be called carnal duties. In these duties, the Spirit does not make believers of one mind, and it became necessary for the Holy Ghost to give such directions as will govern believers under such circumstances, that no strife or disagreement can take place, to mar or destroy their happiness. Both Paul and Peter command believers to submit themselves to one another, in the fear of the Lord. This applies to believers generally, and as such includes the husband and wife, but has reference to differences about carnal things, for in spiritual things the Spirit will unite them. The younger are admonished to submit themselves to the elder, and the church in general is admonished to submit themselves to those which have the rule over them, and all are admonished to submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. The Spirit of Christ is a submissive spirit, and where all are under its influence, this submission is so graceful and gentle, as scarcely to be perceived. But, as Satan is very crafty, and can transform himself into an angel of light, the wisdom of God has graciously indicated where the first duty of submission rests; the younger to the elder, and the Church, to those who have the rule over them.

There is very little said in the gospel, about special duties between husband and wife. Love and submission are the prin-

ciples which are specially to govern them; and here the wisdom of God has also prescribed, whose is the first duty of submission. Paul says: "As the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands *in everything*." In the general charge which the apostle gives to all believers, of submitting themselves one to the other in the fear of the Lord, the husband is included, as well as the wife. All submission is not to be on the side of the wife; but in matters of importance, where they cannot see things in the same light, it becomes the wife's duty to submit. If both parties are in the Lord, this can never be a hardship to the wife, because Paul also says: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." And he further says: So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies, and nourish and cherish them, as the Lord does the church. The Church has never felt it a hardship to submit to Christ, but looks upon it, and proves it, to be for her comfort and happiness. Neither can a loving husband impose any burthen or hardship on his wife, or her submission to her husband be onerous; but, on the contrary, will conduce to her peace and happiness. If the husband exacts more of his wife than love would dictate, or the wife refuses proper submission to her husband, they violate the principles which the Holy Spirit has prescribed for their government. Then it becomes their duty, as brother or sister in Christ, under their espousals to Him, to labor in gospel order to make the erring party sensible of their dereliction from duty, and bring them to repentance and submission to the Lord. The happiness of believers in the marriage relation, therefore, depends upon the faithfulness of the parties to their espousals with Christ; and where unhappiness exists between them, there must be a departure of one, or both, from their duties to their God.

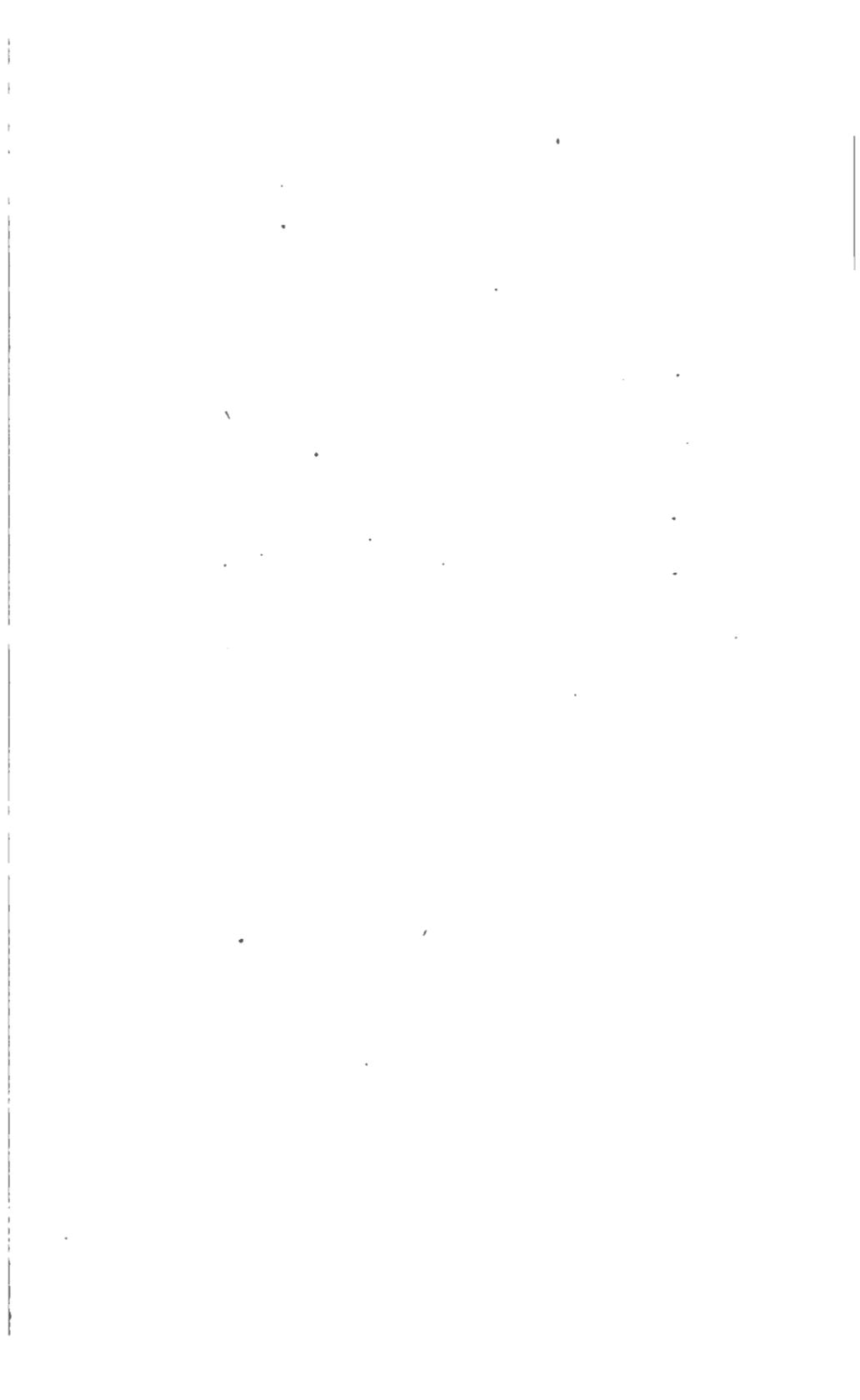
Such a thing as believers not agreeing, is a reproach to the Church of Christ; but especially so of married believers. The principle by which Christ governs His kingdom, needs very few special commands, or directions. Love never offends, and always does that which is right and good; and wherever disquietude, confusion, or discord arises, the principle by which He rules has suffered some violence.

There is no condition in life subject to more anxieties, perplexities, vexations and annoyances, than may arise in the marriage

relation, and none calling more loudly for the exercise of the Divine virtues of gentleness, meekness, long-suffering, patience, and fortitude, than is frequently required under it. Faithfulness to God, and obedience to the motions of the Spirit which begets these virtues, is therefore what we seek to impress, and inculcate as their duty to God as believers, and to one another as husbands and wives.

From the preceding part of this work it will be perceived, that the Reformed Mennonite church holds the non-resistant doctrine, as being one of the cardinal principles of the gospel. For argument in support of the doctrine, I will refer the reader to a pamphlet published in 1864, entitled "Non-resistance Asserted," where he will find our reasons for the ground we maintain, given at length. Our reasons for refusing to worship with those from whom we differ in faith, will also be found appended to the same pamphlet. For the convenience of the reader I have appended it to this work.

In conclusion, we pray the Lord to bless this weak and unworthy effort to edify God's children, and instruct those who desire to know the truth. AMEN.



NON-RESISTANCE ASSERTED,

OR THE

KINGDOM OF CHRIST

AND THE

KINGDOM OF THIS WORLD

SEPARATED:

AND

NO CONCORD BETWEEN CHRIST AND BELIAL.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY DANIEL MUSSER.

1864.

PREFACE.

I HAVE little to say, by way of preface to the following pages, or apology to make for presenting them to the public. We have each a never-dying soul entrusted to our care, the preparation for whose eternal welfare is the highest duty which the Lord enjoins upon us in his Word. When we remember that it is impossible for this soul to be eternally happy, except we do, in this life, submit ourselves to the will of God, as declared in His Word, we cannot fail to be painfully impressed with the indifference with which that Word is generally regarded, even by those who *profess* the religion of Jesus Christ. The desire to awaken interest, to incite inquiry, exercise the understanding, and impress the mind with a sense of the truth and unchangeableness of God's Word, is the only apology I have to make; and I desire hereby to bespeak the reader's earnest attention to the doctrine and argument therein contained.

In order to make truth perceptible and clear, it is necessary to expose error; in doing which we must necessarily take notice of such doctrine and practice as we conceive to be erroneous, and detrimental to truth. In doing this, the originators of that doctrine, or their friends and adherents, may feel themselves aggrieved. Unnecessarily to wound or irritate the feelings of those with whom we disagree, is unjustifiable and injurious. Prejudice bars the heart against conviction, and makes the presentation of truth to the understanding vain. But whatever is necessary for the vindication or support of truth, needs no apology. Whilst I have withheld nothing which presented itself, which I thought would be calculated to effect the object proposed, I have yet endeavored to use no language which would be offensive, or, by creating prejudice, stand in the way of conviction. I am a firm believer in the truth of what is here presented, and know I must answer for it at the bar of God; and, if I know myself, I have not been influenced by any other motive than that of love in presenting it to the public.

After the completion of the first part, I was induced, by the solicitation of my brethren, to undertake the second part of the work. If this had been designed originally, it might, perhaps, have been differently and more advantageously arranged.

With these remarks, I will commit the work, with the reader and myself, to the Lord, praying him to bless it, and make it effectual to the end for which it was designed.

DANIEL MUSSER.

LAMPETER, Lancaster County, Pa.

NON-RESISTANCE ASSERTED.

"But I say unto you that ye resist not evil"—*Matthew v. 39.*

"Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor:—*Eph. v. 1, 2.*

It is well known that there are great numbers of people in the United States, who profess to be conscientiously opposed to war. They are mostly called non-resistants, or defenseless Christians; and refuse to defend their country, or take up arms at the call of the government, and go forth to battle against its enemies. Hitherto this conscientious scruple has been respected by the government in this country, and those claiming it have been relieved or excused from this service. Since the commencement of the present civil war in the United States, the public mind has been unusually agitated on this subject.

It is not unreasonable, that such persons as feel it to be their duty to go forth and endure the hardships of camp life, and imperil health, life and limb, in defense of their country and government, should feel some jealousy of those who have, with themselves, long enjoyed the protection and benefits of the government, and yet, in the hour of its need, refuse to share the burden of its defense and protection. Neither is it strange that such a position should be looked upon as most unreasonable and monstrous, and those who hold it be regarded with some suspicion.

The true principles of non-resistance are very imperfectly understood by a large proportion even of those who profess to be conscientiously opposed to war. No wonder, then, that such a position should be looked upon with suspicion, as being unreasonable and unjust to those who discharge their duty to the government and country.

Many able speakers and writers (no doubt with honest intentions

and good disposition) have raised their voices and pens, to refute the idea of non-resistance, as both unreasonable and unscriptural. This is not to be wondered at, seeing those who profess the principle and do not possess it, or correctly understand it, act inconsistently, and thereby bring the profession into disrepute and contempt. However much misapplication or abuse of a principle may prejudice the minds of those who are unacquainted with a subject, it is yet no argument against its truth.

These considerations have induced me to undertake (by the help of God) to set forth the true Scriptural grounds of the non-resistant profession, so that those who profess the defenseless doctrine, and do not fully comprehend its meaning, may be induced to compare their profession and practice with the truth, and thereby be enabled to perceive their error; and those who contend that the principle is unscriptural, may also have an opportunity to learn the true grounds of our profession, and be enabled to act understandingly.

Every professor of the Christian religion, will acknowledge that the Bible must be his rule of life; and when man, either with or without human authority, attempts to impose a duty upon him which is contrary to, or inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible, it is his duty to refuse obedience, even though to disobey would cost him his life. "Judge ye, whether it is right to obey man rather than God," said Peter and John. The truth, then, of the principle of non-resistance, rests on the Bible. The Bible is consistent. No position which is inconsistent can be maintained by the Bible. If, then, it can be shown that the Bible teaches non-resistance, it must be admitted to be both just and reasonable; and we must subscribe to it, or be found to "fight against God," for "the Scripture cannot be broken."

The Bible consists of the books of the Old and New Testament, which were given to man as a means whereby he might know the will of God; and that part of it containing God's commandments to man is written in such plain and comprehensible language, that men of common capacity, or common natural understanding, can comprehend so much of it as is necessary to the working out of their soul's salvation. In studying the Bible, there are certain truths to be borne in mind. We must receive it as the word of an unchangeable God; harmony must exist throughout the whole

work. When the different commands *seem* to conflict, they must be made to harmonize—not by rejecting one, or rendering it nugatory, but by reflecting upon all the attendant circumstances and relations attending the command, aided by the light which revelation has imparted, in the different ages of the world, and the circumstances under which the command was given.

The Old Testament does, very plainly, command and countenance resistance of evil; and if the taking away of life, or war and destruction were necessary to make that resistance effectual, it was justified and commanded. This no one will pretend to deny. But that the New Testament, equally as plainly, commands non-resistance of evil, and passive submission to injustice and wrong, and that the whole tenor, as well as the spirit breathed throughout the gospel, is as plainly inconsistent with war, every candid mind must also admit. If the Old Testament had never existed, is there a man in the world who could gather the shadow of a pretext from the New Testament to justify him in resisting evil by violence? Now these two Testaments must be made to harmonize, not by disregarding one and rejecting its commands, but by making them agree and be consistent with God's immutability, without making one of His declared attributes do violence to the other.

There is but one way in which non-resistants can be consistent. That is, by entirely separating the kingdom of Christ and that of this world. By this separation I do not only mean that the government do not control the church, or the church the government. But I mean that those who constitute the church do not take any part in, or exert any influence over the government, either individually or collectively.

I have observed that the true principle of non-resistance is imperfectly understood by large numbers of those who profess to be conscientiously opposed to war. This arises from their not being truly and thoroughly converted, which alone can bring man into possession of this principle. They read the New Testament, and there perceive that the duties which Christ and His apostles teach the Christians are inconsistent with war; hence they conclude it is wrong to fight; and they are conscientious non-combatants. Great numbers are sincere, and truly conscientious, and would rather sacrifice their lives than violate their conscience

by going to war. They look upon God's command as being imperative; but they do not perceive the principle on which the command is based. God does not give any arbitrary commands. There is a principle underlying every command of God. To be zealous and strenuous in adhering to the command, without possessing or understanding the principle, is legalism, and begets inconsistency. It was this principle which the Saviour so severely reproved in the Jews, telling them they strain at a gnat, but swallow a camel, and, by their traditions, violate the spirit of the law. Paul also says: "They abhor idols, but commit sacrilege; and have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

True and thorough conversion brings the soul into possession of the love of God. To be possessed of this is to possess the Divine nature. This is the principle which underlies the command not to fight or to resist evil. Those who possess it walk in love toward all men, either friend or enemy; it looses us from the world, places our treasure in Heaven, and leads us to show, by our walk and conversation on earth, that our treasure is above. That which we love, we will contend for and defend. We cannot serve two masters; either we will love the one and hate the other, or cleave to the one and despise the other. Scripture calls those who are unconverted "the world," because they love the world—their affections and their chief interests are there. They show their attachment to the world by an eager pursuit of those things which are in it—contend, strive and fight for them. Government was ordained for the protection of life and property, and as these belong to this world, it is called the kingdom of this world; and as the unconverted have so deep an interest in this kingdom, they show their attachment to and interest in it, by laboring and contending for such government and officers as will secure to them the largest share of this enjoyment; and the more devotedly they labor in this direction, the more love and attachment they show to the things of this world, and the stronger their attachment grows also.

We are all by nature of the world, and our inclinations are as above stated; but Christ has chosen his disciples out of the world, and by changing their hearts and renewing their minds by conversion, has set their affections on things that are above, and says they "*are no more of the world.*" Their "treasure is laid up in

Heaven;" their heart is there, and "their life is hid with Christ in God." Christ is their head and king; they follow, obey and keep His commandments, by which they show their love to him. These constitute the kingdom of Christ. It would therefore not be consistent, if His subjects would labor, strive, contend and fight for earthly things, or those of the kingdom of this world, out of which Christ has chosen them; and the doing so would tend to weaken and destroy the principle on which His kingdom is founded.

Government is established for the security of justice, and protection of life and property; and Paul says it is an ordinance of God. All government is based on the law of justice, and its laws are presumed to be consistent with this principle. Law is the means by which government acts, and it implies the presence of power, and power consists in the sword. Law, without the sword, would be worthless. No law would restrain the lawless or unjust, if it were not for the sword behind the law. There is, therefore, no difference in principle between civil and military law. It is customary to make a distinction between civil and military law, and men who are conscientiously scrupulous about taking the sword and going to battle, will yet appeal to civil law for the protection of their rights. But analyze civil and military law, and they are brought together in the executive branch, which must exist in every government, and without which all law is worthless, and government cannot exist. If a man takes away my goods, or does me any other injustice, and refuses, upon my personal application, to do me justice—if I appeal to the law for the redress of grievance, and take out a warrant to have the offender arrested, he may resist the officer, who now calls in assistance, and, if necessary to enforce the law, deadly weapons may be used, blood shed and life destroyed. What is this but war? In the case of refusal to pay a debt, it is the same; if it were not for the military, behind the civil law, the unjust would no more regard the civil process, than they would the individual request of the creditor. Civil law is only an arm of the military power, and when we threaten a man by an appeal to the law, we point to the sword, and threaten him with its vengeance. Therefore, as there can be no government without law, so there can be no law without sword. By the sword government is almost universally

set up; by this it stands, and by this it almost universally falls, or perishes again.

Every intelligent reader knows, that amongst those who profess to be conscientious in bearing arms, some will serve offices in the kingdom of this world; will appeal to law if a man refuses to pay them a debt which he owes, or refuses to do them justice in any transaction between them; or if property is stolen, or injury done to their person or estate, they will appeal to the law for redress. They will serve as legislators, jurors, arbitrators, etc., and will vote at elections for any and every officer elected by the people.

I have observed that those who profess non-resistance, and do not understand the principle, act inconsistently, and thereby bring the profession into disrepute. When men enjoy the honors and emoluments of office in the kingdom of this world, assist as legislators to make laws, vote for, and thereby appoint men as their representatives to make laws for them, petition them for the enactment of laws favorable to their interests, appeal to law for justice and protection, and then, after having made and used the law, sued for and enjoyed its protection, to plead their conscience in the way of defending or supporting that law in its hour of danger, is certainly very inconsistent, and is a position which cannot be supported by the Bible. I would further ask this class of non-resistants, with what consistency a man could say it would be wrong for him to fight, and yet sue or prosecute a man for debt or crime, when he knows that he is appealing to the sword for justice, and if the offender persists, that open war and bloodshed will be the consequence? Or with what consistency can a man serve as a legislator, and assist to make laws, and then say it is sin to enforce those laws? Or with what consistency can a man sit as a juror or arbitrator, and decide the penalty or award due to a party, and then say he who enforces the award or penalty commits sin? Or with what consistency can a man vote to place another in an office which imposes an executive duty upon him, and then say he does wrong in executing that duty?

The Chief Magistrate of these United States is the head of the army. The constitution and law, by authority of which he holds his office or position, has strictly specified his duties, and ordered that, before he takes his position, he shall bind his conscience by an oath to be faithful in the discharge of every duty which the

constitution and law prescribes. One of the chief of these duties is to be Commander-in-chief of the Army, to repel invasion and quell insurrection. He bears the sword, and it is fair to presume that every man who voted to place him there, desired him to use that sword, and the whole power of the army and navy, in the discharge of this duty, in the event of its becoming necessary. At least, every man who voted for him did so with this knowledge, and thereby delegated to him his share of authority; and it would be very unreasonable that, as a conscientious man, he should place him there, and desire or expect that he would perjure himself, by disregarding his oath. Those who cast their suffrages for the President, placed him in office, and put the sword into his hands; and I do not see how any one can contend that it is sin for him to use it, and not for them to give him power to do so! Or how can they deny that it was their *wish* that he should do so! He could not have done it, if they had not given him power. When a President is elected, there is a virtual understanding between him and his constituents. He promises that he will be a good and faithful officer; they, that they will be good and faithful subjects. He, that he will be the head of the army; they, that they will compose that army. He promises that he will protect them in their rights and liberties, repel invasion and quell insurrection. But no one understands him to promise, or expects him to do this, by his own arm. Every one expects and knows that, if necessary, the President will call upon the people to discharge their duty by responding to his call for troops, to enable him to discharge *his* duty. This is as distinctly implied and understood as the President's duties are. Then, when they have placed him in this responsible position, with as full an understanding of duty on the one part as the other, they certainly act very inconsistently, and are as unfaithful to the trust they have themselves assumed, as the President would be if he neglected or refused to discharge his duty.

Last fall a year, Thaddeus Stevens was the avowed war candidate for Congress from this county—pledged to support the administration in a vigorous prosecution of the war. Great numbers of young men voted for him on this ground. At least, it was with that knowledge, and it is fair to presume that they desired him to do as he promised. Shortly after the election, the

first draft for men to supply the army came off. Now there were numbers of these same young men who had so voted, came forward and affirmed that they were conscientious, and could not fight! Their spiritual teachers and guides testified that they were members of their "church," and that these conscientious scruples are embodied in their tenets. Was this consistent? Or is it possible that these teachers could themselves have had a clear and consistent view of the true principles of non-resistance?

At the last election for Governor of this State, very large numbers of these "non-resistants," both young and old, voted for Governor Curtin; but if a call were to be made on them to take the sword, they would plead their conscience in the way. Yet they voted to place the sword in his hand, knowing that he was an earnest advocate of an active and vigorous prosecution of the war; and that he had, on different occasions, called upon them to come to his assistance, armed and equipped, to repel the invading enemy, and rescue the commonwealth from his grasp. I do not intend this as any reflection on the policy or principles of either our Governor or Congressman. I have not a word to say against them, or any other officer. They are officers in the kingdom of this world, and acted consistently with their position and profession; but those of their constituents alluded to did not. Neither do I think that their voting for the opposite candidate would have been any more consistent. I only cite these particular cases, because they serve to elucidate my position, and may serve to lead men to inquire into truth. Whenever a person seeks to influence or control the kingdom of this world, or mould it according to his interests or fancy, and then, in the hour of its need, refuses it his support, it is no wonder he should be looked upon with suspicion and disgust.

Every person professing to be a Christian, must acknowledge that there are two classes of people in the world—converted and unconverted. The Bible recognizes this distinction, and every Christian acknowledges it. Great numbers of those who are unconverted are moral, just, humane and honorable; but a very large proportion, also, are the reverse. They are unjust, immoral, and dishonorable. If there were no government in the world, the latter class would bring ruin and destruction on the former. For the purpose, then, of restraining those evil-disposed persons,

and preventing them from corrupting those of better disposition, God has appointed government, (as Peter says,) "for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise (or protection) of those that do well." Therefore every Christian must acknowledge that government is a Divine institution—that it is his duty to honor and obey it in all things, except when it asks that of him which God has forbidden.

The whole Bible must be recognized by the Christian, as being a declaration of the will of God to man. When men read the Bible, they perceive that in the part called the Old Testament, God has countenanced, sanctioned, and even commanded war and destruction, and that in the New Testament He has taught a doctrine quite the contrary, and altogether inconsistent with war. This seems to many as a contradiction, and gives skeptics a pretext for rejecting the Bible altogether. Others, who regard the Bible as the Word of God, fail to make the proper distinction between law and gospel, and make the New Testament yield to the Old. They perceive that God did clearly command war in the Old Testament, and as the whole Bible declares God to be immutable, and as war was right then, so it must be now; and thus are guilty of the inconsistency of making the New Testament subservient to the Old. These constitute the "combatant Christians." Others again, perceive the inconsistency of the idea that the Old Testament has precedence of the New, inasmuch as every new revelation of God to man gave him a more perfect and clear testimony or declaration of the Divine will, and that which had been previously given must be subservient to the last—so the New Testament must be more binding, and consequently war, which is so manifestly contrary to the teaching of the gospel, must be wrong. These constitute the "non-combatant Christians." But a very large portion of these non-combatants are not possessed of the spirit of the gospel, and do not perceive the principle upon which non-resistance is founded. These, consequently, do not separate the kingdom of Christ and that of this world; and the consequence is the different degrees of violation of the true principles of non-resistance mentioned before, with its whole train of inconsistencies.

I have observed before that the Bible is consistent. It must be so, for it is of God, and He cannot be inconsistent. Therefore, if we are born of God, we must be consistent with the Bible;

otherwise our inconsistency is evidence that God's work of true conversion has not been wrought in us, and we consequently have no promise of eternal life.

All God's dealings with man have respect to the condition he is in at the time. His commands to man are in accordance with man's necessity. In order, then, to perceive the perfect harmony and agreement, with the perfect consistency of the Old and New Testament, or of the law and gospel, it becomes necessary to take a view of the different states or conditions that man was in, at the time in which God gave His different revelations.

In relation to God, man can stand only in that of saint or sinner, at peace or enmity, in his love or under his wrath, in the Spirit or in the flesh. In one of these two conditions every man in creation stands. God's commands to man have relation to these two conditions, and are in accordance with them. In his primitive state, man was possessed of the Spirit of God. The love of God and the Divine nature, were consequents of the possession of this Spirit. This Spirit, and love of God, is what constituted the image of God, in which man was created. In this state man needed no government. The influence of the Spirit of God would lead him to do what was right and just. God gave him but a single command, which was designed for, and was sufficient (if it had been obeyed) to preserve him in this blessed and happy state.

When man fell, by disobedience, he lost this Spirit and its consequent life and love; and, in its stead, love of self and carnal desires were infused into the heart, and became the motive power or principle which influenced his actions. Here man's condition and relation to God was changed; the Spirit of God had forsaken him; he was defiled with sin, and unfit to be the temple of God, as the Holy Spirit could not dwell in a heart of sin. Man had no power to cleanse himself of sin, or to change his relation to God; but God gave him a promise of the "woman's seed," which should bruise the serpent's head. This was a present promise of future good; but all the comfort it could bring was the hope of a prospective favor. The "woman's seed" would restore man to the state from which he had fallen, by restoring the lost image or love of God. Until this time, man must be content to remain in this destitute condition, and in faith wait for the promised Redeemer, or Deliverer.

By the voluntary act of man, in transgressing the command of

God, he yielded himself into the service of sin ; and as the love of God wherein he was created was the image of God, so the self-love which took possession of the heart in the fall, may be said to be the image of Satan, whose servant he now became.

Without self-love, there would be neither injustice nor violence ; but where this principle reigns, strife, contention, injustice and violence are sure to follow. Consequent upon this principle, which man imbibed in his disobedience, all manner of evil speedily followed. Man had fallen from the Spirit to the flesh, and the works of the flesh became so manifest that "the Earth was filled with violence, and every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was evil continually."

Man, by his transgression, did not fall beyond the power of God to restore him, as the fallen angels did. He lost the love and image of God, yet the Divine impress was not wholly extinguished. There still remained a "seed," consisting of the law of God, written, stamped or impressed on the heart, together with a degree of sympathy and affection for his fellow-creature. Those persons who obeyed this law and impulse, acted justly and right toward their fellow-man. Many did not obey this Divine impress, but followed the lusts and desires of the flesh and mind, which led to the commission of acts of injustice and violence ; and, as they would not be restrained by the law which God had written in their hearts, or the sense of justice which he had impressed on their minds, it became necessary for God to establish government on earth, and put in its hands the sword, by the fear of which those who regarded the law of justice written in their hearts, could keep the lawless and violent in subjection. Otherwise all order and decency would have been subverted, great misery and distress would have ensued on earth, and even the species become extinct.

It is here easy to be perceived that it was man's self-love which made government necessary ; and to keep it in subjection God has established government on earth. It is therefore God's ordinance and institution, and is good, and will be necessary, *till the cause which made it so is removed.*

These general principles, I wish the reader to bear in mind. It is certain that man, before the fall, needed no government, and, in possession of the principle which he there lost, would never have needed any. It is certain that self-love is what made it

necessary, and that it was for the restraining of this principle that it was instituted or ordained. It is also certain that self-love was infused into the heart of man in his fall, and that it is the work and offspring of the devil.

Government was founded and established on the law of justice, which I have observed was stamped or impressed on the heart of man; and was good and effectual, in proportion as those who exercised it, had clear perceptions from this law, of what was right and wrong, and were themselves willing to suffer this sense to control their self-love and carnal desires.

The mere impression of this law upon the mind does not seem to have given man in general, so clear a perception of its force as was necessary for its proper effect, nor does he seem to have been properly sensible of the consequences of its violation, till God, in His infinite mercy; engraved it on tables of stone, so that it could be the more clearly embraced by the understanding; and also attended it by the declaration that the curse, or death, should be the reward of his transgression. We do not, therefore, have any account of any well-digested code of general law, or of any just and equitable administration of it, until after the giving of the law to Moses from Mount Sinai. Here God gave to man the first well-digested code of laws we have any account of, as well as the most strictly just one that has ever been enacted.

The calling of Abraham, and the choosing of Israel, form a new era in the history of the world, but it does not change man's relation to God. The virtues of Abraham, Moses, David and others, are highly commended. Abraham was called the friend of God, Moses was faithful in all his house and the Lord spoke to him face to face, and David was a man after God's own heart; but these characters did not change their relation to God. Their faith gave them confidence that they would once be delivered; but they, in their life-time, were still in bondage. The additional revelation God made to them, and the promises he gave them, did not change their relation to God, from that which believers were in before these revelations and promises were given. Adam, Enoch and Noah, stood in the same relation, in every respect, as they did. They had fallen with the whole world under sin, and nothing but the blood of Christ could wash away that sin. The justice of God required the suffering of death as the penalty of sin,

and until Christ had died, God's justice was not satisfied. Christ was their surety, and they knew he would pay the debt, and God knew that his justice would be satisfied ; but they were not released until after the debt *was* paid. Herein lies the difference between Old and New Testament believers ; or believers before and after Christ's suffering. Christ gives John the Baptist the testimony that he is *more* than a prophet, and that of all that have been born of woman, there hath not risen a greater than he ; notwithstanding, he that is *least* in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.

It is argued that David, and other Old Testament believers, stood in the same relation to God as the New Testament saints do. But in this we do violence to God's attribute of justice, and reject the teaching of the Apostle Paul. A man who is imprisoned for debt, and knows that his creditor will hold him bound till the debt is paid, and knows, also, that he can never acquire means to pay it, may feel a degree of comfort and consolation under a promise that his debt will be paid, and he released. If he feels a full assurance, and no doubt that it will be done, he may feel joyous in hope ; but he must still feel a higher degree of bliss when it is paid, and he is led out of prison, and can enjoy the pleasures of liberty. God's justice must be satisfied, and this is not done till payment is made.

The Lord foretold by the prophet Isaiah that he would send Christ, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Now, who were those that were captive and bound in prison ? Was not the whole human family thus bound ? And was there ever a deliverance or opening of the prison till Christ came ? Christ says, *this day* is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. David, therefore, and all Old Testament believers, were still captives, and this is what made them desire to see the days of Christ ; because they knew they would be released. Sin gave Satan power to hold them bound till Christ took away their sin, and overcame him that held the power of death.

There are many expressions in the Old Testament in relation to the forgiveness of sins, and promises that their sins shall be forgiven, and are forgiven ; but we cannot understand this as changing their relation to God, or relieving their souls from the guilt of sin before God. Nothing could take away sin but the

blood of Christ, and this was not yet shed ; consequently, it could not have taken it away. If it had been possible that the devil could have brought Jesus Christ to sin, and fall under the curse of the law, where would David and the patriarchs have been ? Certainly death would have held Christ, and, with Him, all those who had died in hope and faith in Him. Paul says, if Christ is not risen your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins, and they that have fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

David in his Psalm li. expresses his penitence for sin, and prays the Lord to have mercy on him, according to His loving kindness, and according to the multitude of His tender mercies, to blot out his transgressions ; to wash him thoroughly from his iniquities, and cleanse him from his sin. " Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ; create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me ; cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

In this prayer, no doubt David looked unto Christ, and the offering which he knew he would make for his sin, and desired the interest in the blood and merits of Christ, which would make his soul whiter than snow. But it must be evident that the blood of Christ could only do this when it was once shed ; for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Paul, in speaking of Noah, Abraham, David and others, in Hebrews xi., says : " They obtained a good report through faith, and all died in faith ; but they did *not* receive the promise." If David had his sins forgiven in the sense which New Testament saints have, and received the Holy Spirit (as is contended he did from his expression in this Psalm) as the disciples of Jesus did, what was the promise that he did not receive ? And what were those better things, which Paul says in this same chapter, were prepared for us ? Paul says : " God having provided some better thing for us." Christ says, Abraham saw his day, and was glad ; and David says his heart was glad, and his flesh would rest in hope, because the Holy One should not see corruption, nor his soul be left in hell. David also says, and Paul quotes and verifies it in Romans, that God looked down from heaven, to see if there was any that did good, but the answer was, they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no not *one*. Paul, arguing

this same point with those who thought they were clean from sin, because of their obedience to, or the righteousness of the law, says: "Are we (the Jews) better than they (the Gentiles)? No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin." And again: "God has included all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all."

I have observed that the expression in Psalm li., that God should not take his Holy Spirit from him, does not imply that David was in possession of, or under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the sense in which the New Testament saints enjoyed it. We find the word "Holy" applied to many Divine operations, or things connected with Divine worship. And it may be said, that anything and everything which is of God is Holy. God is a Spirit, and all his influence must be spiritual, and is holy; but it is not the same holy influence which Christ promised to His disciples, and He said they could not receive without He would go to the Father. The law which God had written in the heart of man, was an operation of His Spirit, and was holy. This law, David had violated, and he felt that God might justly deal with him, as Paul says he did with the Gentiles; who, when they knew God, did not honor him as God. He gave them over to hardness of heart; his Spirit ceased to strive with them. This Spirit now looked most holy to David, in view of his own unholy act; and he saw that if this Spirit were taken from him, he would be in a most deplorable situation. Therefore he prayed the Lord, not to take that Holy Spirit from him, which would cause his conscience to accuse him, when he violated its precepts.

It does not follow, that because David and the prophets of the Lord spoke by the Holy Ghost, they must have been under His sanctifying influence, as the New Testament believer is. God, by His Spirit, revealed and spake through them of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; but Peter expressly says (1st Epist. i.): "Not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister," etc. God moved them by the Holy Spirit to speak certain things, and prophesy of the grace that should come to the believers to whom Peter speaks; but if believers under the old covenant had possessed these things, they would not have been matters of prophesy which they searched into beforehand.

God said by the Prophet Jeremiah, (chap. xxxi.), that the day

would come, that he would make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah; not according to the one he made with them when he took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt. But he would "forgive their iniquity, and remember their sins no more." Now, God here expressly says, that the new shall not be like the old covenant in this thing; that he will in it, or under it, *forgive sin*. This shows plainly, that under the old covenant, sin was not forgiven.

Those who under the old covenant had obtained a good report, were under the law. They had transgressed it, and it declared the curse and sentence of death against them. Jesus Christ became their surety. In the fullness of time he would shed his blood, and lay down his life for them. This, though it did not take the sin away, gave the confidence that it would do so in time; and made the possessor of the faith comfortable and happy. God also could, through the mediator, look upon those who believe in Him with joy and delight. These died in faith, but did not see their hope realized in their life-time. Therefore, the relation of these men to God was not changed by the law, commandments, and promises of Israel. To Adam it was said, the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head. To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the promise was renewed, and said, "*all the families of the earth shall be blessed by him.*"

The law, ordinances, and ceremonies of Israel, therefore, made no change in man's relation to God. It could not take away sin, neither did it destroy self-love in the heart, or restore the lost image of Divine love. It gave them a better knowledge of sin, and a clearer revelation of God's design in sending the woman's seed, and assurance that he should come of the seed of Abraham, from the loins of David. But still, Israel was not changed. Only in so far as they would let themselves be instructed through these revelations, they would be more just and faithful in their relations to their fellow-man, and act their faith more firmly on the promises of the seed which was to come. The great majority, however, did not regard these advantages, and suffered the flesh, with its lusts and desires, to rule them, and had to be kept in subjection by the means which God had appointed for this purpose from the beginning.

The chief part of the history, as well as the commands and

promises contained in the Old Testament, is in relation to Israel, and mainly relates to their external state. The chief events of this history, are instructive to the Christian, as being literal figures and types of spiritual operations which must transpire within us. Paul says of some of them, they happened as examples to us, and are written for our instruction.

The first ordinances commanded in the Scripture, which have relation to Divine worship, are in connection with this people. They are called by Paul "carnal ordinances." But they are especially typical of the true spiritual service which every true believer must render. The promises under these commands, were chiefly of a temporal character. It is worthy of especial observation; that under the old covenant, God gave great promises of earthly blessings; whilst in the gospel, it is quite the contrary. The reason is obvious. Israel was carnal; they could not comprehend spiritual things, and their kingdom was an earthly one, whilst that of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, as his subjects are spiritual and spiritually minded. As the kingdom of Israel was a natural earthly kingdom, and their blessings natural earthly blessings, they could not be established or maintained by any other than natural means, which is the sword. The kingdom of Israel was established on the same grounds and principles as all other governments were, and differed from them only in God having given them a clearer knowledge of those principles.

God called the people of Israel His people, a peculiar people, etc., but their peculiarity consisted only in an outward observance of the law He gave them. So long as the rulers were faithful and obedient, and kept the nation in subjection, they continued under all the blessings God had promised them. If they committed some trespass, they had to bring their trespass offering, and their sin was forgiven. But this related only to the outward natural consequences, curse, disadvantage, or disability, it would entail upon them. The sin before God it would not take away; for in offerings and burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin, God had no pleasure; nor was it possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.

These offerings were the types of the offering of Christ's body for sin, but yet they served for the personal purification of those who brought them. That is, their person was absolved from the

disabilities which would attach to their transgression. This was the case, whether those who offered them had knowledge of the spiritual signification, or not, or whether they believed in Christ, or not; their outward obedience entitled them to the benefit of outward absolution. The revelation which God made to Israel, was only preparatory to the perfect will which he would reveal in the gospel.

The state of mind man was in under the law and Jewish dispensation, and the impossibility of his comprehending spiritual things, may be very clearly perceived by the feeling which the apostles evinced during the public ministry of the Saviour. They went in and out with Him, and companied with Him continually from His baptism till the time of His departure from them, when He ascended into Heaven. They heard and saw all that He said and did, and He spoke as never man spake; and still they could not comprehend His teaching. Any natural thing He would direct, they could understand and do; but the nature of His kingdom they could not comprehend. Their minds were carnal, and could not comprehend spiritual things till they received the Holy Spirit. It is fair to presume, that the apostles were at least as far (if not further) enlightened, as any of those whom Paul mentions as having obtained a good report. Christ spoke to them of the nature of His kingdom, of its joys, of Heaven, and eternal life; but still all their hopes and aspirations were for a natural kingdom, and enjoying distinction in it. And when He would speak to them of spiritual things, they would put carnal constructions upon them; and so soon as Christ was crucified, they were filled with sorrow, and their hopes ended.

Is it not very plain that man's state under the law, was very different from that under the gospel? And that this is the reason why God gave different commands under the one, from what he did under the other? The law could not give the Spirit which would change and renew the heart. John says, when speaking of this Spirit: "For the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." And Jesus himself says, that if he did not go to the Father, the Holy Spirit would not come to them; and He says, He has many things to say to His disciples, but they cannot bear them now; howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide them into all truth. Why could they not bear

them? Because they were yet carnal. Man could not overcome the flesh or deeds of the body, without the Spirit of God; and therefore God did not require it of him, till He would endow him with the power to accomplish the work.

God's purpose was to prepare man for the reception of Christ, and the benefits of his mission; and so He established an earthly kingdom, with such laws and statutes as would tend to impress the mind with a just sense of what is right and good; which, in itself, should be instructive in the kingdom of Christ, which He designed to establish afterward, and of which the first was a type or figure.

In this figurative kingdom it was said, that if they would "hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord their God, and observe and do all the commandments which the Lord commanded them," that he would "set them on high above all the nations of the earth. 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. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: They shall come out against thee one way, and shall flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessings upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thy hand unto; and He shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The opposite of all these blessings was threatened as a curse for disobedience of God's laws and commandments.

Because this kingdom was earthly and natural, and the promises to Israel for obedience were earthly and natural, the means by which it was established and maintained, or upheld, must of necessity be of the same nature. Their dealings with each other, as well as their neighbors and surrounding nations, were to be characterized by justice and righteousness. They were promised to have the victory over their enemies. Under the law which God gave them, they could do no injustice to individuals, or nations; consequently, their enemies were such without cause; and when they would come out against Israel, they must act unjustly, and God's blessing would be with Israel, so that they would scatter them seven ways. If they did any injustice to a

neighboring nation, they had no such promise, but the contrary. They should be dispersed seven ways. Consequently, the Jews could have no unrighteous war with God's approval. Neither could an individual do any violence, but in a just cause. God commanded Israel to take the sword and use it, but in no other case, except in defense of right and justice; and whenever they unsheathed the sword in any other cause, God was not with them; and it being in violation of his command, would bring them under His displeasure, and under the curse which He declared would follow disobedience. Therefore, it would ever be impossible for true Israelites to fight against each other, or in an unjust cause, with any one.

The purpose, therefore, for which God ordained government is very clear. God designed that order should be preserved in the world; and as man had fallen from the Spirit under the flesh, and would not be controlled by the law which was written in his heart, God ordained government for the purpose, and gave to it the sword, as a means by which to keep the lawless and violent in subjection. And when it became necessary to this end, He commanded man to use the sword against offenders, whether they be individuals or nations.

Before the fall, there was no such ordinance; and that God commanded it after the fall in man's altered relation, shows no change in God! Man had changed, but God was still the same. Under the Mosaic dispensation, man's relation to God, or his fellow-man, was not changed from what it was before. The same cause existing, the same remedy had of necessity to be continued. But Moses, by whom the law was given to Israel, spoke of another prophet whom the Lord would raise up, and him they should hear "in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you." Now, is this not as verily a disannulling of what has gone before, as the promise of a change in the priesthood? Man's relation to God was changed by the coming of the prophet spoken of by Moses, and it argues no change in God, to change his law under this altered relation, any more than it does, that he imposed new duties on him after he had fallen from the relation in which he created him. All the duties of the ceremonial law ended with the establishing of the gospel, and it proves no more change in God, that He should absolve the New Testament believer from certain moral

duties, which he was subject to under the law, than that he should be absolved from the ceremonial duties he was under obligation to perform then.

What God says in the Law and the Prophets (or what He there commands), He says to man under the law, but therein speaks of another law, covenant or kingdom, which he will establish afterward. Moses, in the Law and the Prophets, speaks of and refers to Christ, as higher authority than they. Moses spoke of the prophet which God would raise, as already observed. And Peter says, that prophet was Christ. "All the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Now in this prophet, and in those days, there was made a change in the priesthood, and Paul says: "There must of necessity also be made a change of the law;" evidently because the change of priesthood made a change of circumstances. Does this then argue that God is mutable? The prophets, in speaking of this new covenant and kingdom, these times and days, have spoken of them as being of grace and love, peace and unity.

Christ came to restore the lost image in man, and establish the kingdom of Heaven within him, and bring him under the new covenant or relation, spoken of in the Old Testament. This change was effected by Christ coming into the world, and being put under the law, and fulfilling all its righteous requirements, taking the sins of the world upon himself, offered himself upon the cross to satisfy the justice of God, for the sins man had committed. The virtue and merit of Christ's life and death now became that of the believer, and justified him in the sight of God. Here was now a changed relation of man toward God. The virtue of Christ's death purified his soul from sin, and being clothed with his righteousness, he was pure, holy and acceptable in the beloved.

The Saviour had made an especial promise of the Holy Spirit, to those who believed in him. But no one received this Spirit till after Christ's death and resurrection. This Christ plainly told them. He must first be glorified, and if he did not go hence, the Comforter would not come. This promise was not made to Old Testament believers, nor to those who believed whilst Christ was yet in the flesh on earth; for the reason that their souls were

not yet purified from sin. The love of self, and the world, was yet in possession of the heart, and the Spirit and love of God could not dwell with it, till the heart or soul was purged by the blood of Christ.

The reception of this Spirit is what finished the work of conversion. By it the lost love and image of God was restored, and man received power to overcome the flesh, or carnal desires. Before this, he was earthly minded, but now he became Heavenly minded. This is very plainly discerned in the conduct and conversation of the apostles before and after they had received the Holy Spirit. They now stood in a new relation to God, and a new influence took possession of them and brought forth new fruits.

Here now is where Christ's kingdom had its origin in the hearts of those true believers, who were wrought by the Spirit into the image of Christ.

Christ plainly told His apostles, "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." This amounts to a plain declaration that they were at that time not yet converted, in that sense in which the Saviour applied the word. This position is denied by great numbers of professors, and to explain myself briefly, is the reason for this digression. In the first place, the plain declaration of the Saviour should be enough to set the question at rest. He was speaking to his apostles, and he says "ye," that is, they to whom he was speaking, "except ye be converted." Now if they were at that time such converted persons as the Saviour had in-view, he could not have addressed them as he did.

The word "conversion," we all know, signifies change. When applied to man, it means that his views, sentiments, or faith, is changed. But every such change in man is not the conversion which the Saviour had in view. The language of the apostles plainly shows that they had no conception of the nature of the kingdom which Christ was about to establish; and it also plainly betrays the self-love which dwelt in the heart. I do not allude to their language on this occasion only, but to their language generally, whilst the Saviour was with them in the flesh. The kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, and spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. The apostles at this time had not

yet received the Spirit, consequently they could not discern the kingdom, or the Saviour's description of it.

The greatest and most marvelous change in the mind, sentiments, or affections of man, which is recorded in the Bible, is that which was wrought on the apostles and disciples by the power of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost; as well as what followed on other believers afterward. From that time we do not observe a single expression betraying ignorance of the nature of Christ's kingdom, or betraying self-love in them. The love of God in the heart was displayed in all they said and did, and their love to the brethren, and even their enemies, was perceptible in their deeds and actions. There was no asking who was to be the greatest, who should sit on the right or left in the kingdom; no asking shall we smite with the sword, or shall we pray that fire fall down from Heaven and consume our enemies. They prayed God whilst being stoned to death: "Lord lay not this sin to their charge;" and when they were buffeted, they went away rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. This was the change, or conversion, which I believe the Saviour had in view, when He addressed the apostles as above quoted, and without which they could not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. God winked at the times of man's ignorance, but now the time had come when the true light appeared, and He commanded all men everywhere to repent. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of Heaven was set up in the heart, and until this was done, I conceive the change which the Saviour alluded to was not wrought.

The reason why Christ said to his disciples, that they could not bear those many things which He had to say unto them, was, because they were yet carnal; their hearts were not yet changed by the Holy Spirit. But when this Spirit would come, He would lead them into all truth. This is the reason why God did not give man the commands under the law, which he did under the gospel. They were yet carnal; they could not bear or comprehend gospel commands. Their hearts were in the world, and to direct them in a way in which they would be required to sacrifice worldly interests, would have deprived them of all comfort, and made them miserable. They could not "bear" it. Therefore they had to be directed in such a way as to make them as happy,

as the circumstances of their condition and relation to God, would permit them to be made. For this reason, they were directed in such a way under the law, as to improve their material condition, yet still directing their attention to some future good, and advanced condition far surpassing their present state.

It is very evident, that Christ did not come into the world to improve its political condition, to advance worldly wisdom, to favor external interests, or in any way to improve the material condition of man. Every question having relation to any such end was evaded, and answered so as to tend to the spiritual welfare of man, and the salvation of his soul. Man's inclinations were already too strongly bent in this direction, and Christ's teaching and instructions were to draw him from it, and to direct him to the attainment of a higher, better, and more enduring substance. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added." He tells us not to care for what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed. Rather enter into life lame, maimed, or with one eye, than having all our members, and be cast into hell. And again, fear not them that kill the body, but after that can do no more, etc. These were his teachings in a general way, and show clearly the purpose which brought Him into the world. The blessings which are amongst the first of His recorded promises, are of a spiritual, or eternal kind. The blessings promised in the beginning of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, I do not believe are intended to be bestowed on any one who is possessed of only one of the traits of character therein named, and destitute of all the others (if indeed this could be so). But I think the whole taken together is intended to form the complete character of a Christian, who from a motive of love to God obeys the further commands given in this sermon.

Moses, the law, or all the legal ordinances and ceremonies, could not take away sin, or give the Spirit of God. Christ did this, showing that His power far exceeded that of the law. Christ as the son, over His own house, having given Moses the law and ceremonies (as his servants), all the authority they possessed, could very properly at His coming assume higher authority than they possessed; and especially as He only authorized them to act till He came; and they by His authority spoke of His coming, and referred the faithful to Him for a better knowledge of the will of God.

Christ now at His coming says: "Of old it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." By that "of old," is evidently meant that statute of Moses, which was, under the old covenant, based on the law, for there it says so. But I, as the new Lawgiver, say unto you: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." He also says: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you, that you resist not evil. But whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and whosoever will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Christ tells us why we shall do this. He wishes the children of God to be distinguished from those of the world. He says: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." He will have us by this to show our parentage, and how it distinguishes us from others. "For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? Or if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" Christ will have His disciples to conduct themselves, so as to distinguish them from the world, and show that they partake of the Divine nature.

All will admit that Christ does give commands, and that we must obey them. I would ask, what those here cited are, if they are not commands. Is there a single command given by our Saviour which sounds more imperative than these here named? He says, of old it was said, so they shall do. *But now I say unto you, do thus.*

Christ told His disciples plainly, that they would have to suffer. But He told them if they were persecuted in one city, they should flee to another. When His apostles showed their self-love by asking who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he reproved them severely, by telling them in very emphatic language, that unless they were converted and became as little children, they could not enter into His kingdom at all. And when several of them asked Him whether they should pray for fire to come down from heaven and consume their enemies, He told them they did not know what manner of spirit they were of. When Peter drew his sword, the Saviour told him to put up his sword in his place.

All Christ's conduct and actions were in accordance with these teachings and declarations. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Peter says, He left us an example that *we should follow His steps*. I would ask our opponents, *what is the example of Christ, which we are to follow?*

These are Christ's direct teachings, and they are as plain as I would know how to make language. If the Saviour does not mean this, I am at a loss to know what the purpose of His language is. Every syllable of His teaching is in this spirit of passive submission and non-resistance; and every action of His life was in accordance with the same spirit.

In view of the charge of Moses, that we shall hear Christ, and His own repeated declarations that we must obey His commands, and do the will of the Heavenly Father, it is highly important that we form correct conclusions in regard to what He did teach. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" And again: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings. If ye love me, keep my commandments. The Father which hath sent me, gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that His commandment is life everlasting." Now, what are we to understand by His commandment, if those here alluded to are not such. Go into the world and preach and baptize, is His command, but what are we to preach. Evidently, what he preached and taught; and as He says: "Teach them to *observe all things whatsoever I command you*." The first question with us should be, what are His commands. Then, the Old Testament, reason, and necessity, all must yield to Him, for Christ is supreme commander. The Old Testament, sound reason, and necessity, all harmonize with Christ's teaching, if examined and directed by the Spirit of God; but if it should be dark to us, that we cannot bring them to harmonize, we must yet give Christ supremacy, for we are commanded to take every thought captive under obedience to Him.

Paul says the mind shall be in us, which also was in Christ

Jesus. How are we to know Christ's mind, if not by his words and actions. The scribes and Pharisees evidently understood the Saviour to teach non-resistance, or else they would not have concluded as they did. "If we let this man thus alone, all men will believe on Him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." The Christian nations are the greatest warriors known; and it is often asserted, that the best Christians make the best soldiers. If this is so, why did these wily and sagacious Jews come to the conclusion they did? If Christ's religion made them better soldiers than they were before, why could the Romans any easier take away their place and nation, than if they were not Christians? The same argument is made use of now against the non-resistant doctrine. "If all men would do so, what would become of the country and nation?" they ask.

So long as the apostles' hearts were not changed by the Holy Spirit, they could not rightly understand the Saviour's doctrine, or comprehend His meaning, when He spoke of His kingdom; hence the expressions before alluded to. But after they had received this Spirit, we hear them make no more such expressions; but all their teaching, with their acts and deeds, harmonize and agree most perfectly with this self-sacrificing non-resistant Spirit. Paul says (Rom. xii.): "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Now, does not the apostle here show an exact agreement with our idea of what the Saviour teaches? Again, Paul says (Eph. v.): "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and *walk* in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor." This is very exactly to the point of Christ's expression, when He commanded His disciples to love and do good to their enemies. He says, they shall do so, "that they may be the children of their Father in Heaven," who deals so graciously with the children of men, as to send rain and let His sun shine on good and evil. The evil and unjust are God's enemies. The expressions of Paul and Christ are very nearly in the same words, and surely mean the same thing. "Be ye

followers of God, as dear children." The more obedient a child is to a parent, the dearer it is; and parents do address them with expressions of endearment. But such children as are disobedient are not usually addressed as *dear* children. Children who love their parents and are attached to them, usually imitate their good example. Therefore, the apostle addressing his fellow believers, says, as dear children they shall obey God. Since they have been made children of God by faith, and partakers of the Divine nature by the Spirit of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, He will have them show their birth, nature, and nationality, by displaying in their deeds and actions the distinctive attributes of the parent. But Paul says further, we shall "walk in love." What is walking in love? We have all experienced a sense of love, and know what it is; but this is a thing which we cannot command in ourselves, nor can others command it in us; and if we do experience the sensation, it is not walking in it. We read a great deal in the Scriptures about walking. Walking in the ways of the Lord, in the law of the Lord, in the ways of their Father. Walking in the ways of the ungodly, in sin, in unrighteousness, etc., and walking before the Lord, with God, and worthy of our vocation, etc., etc. It is evident therefore, that to *walk* in the sense here intended, is meant our words, deeds, and actions. These shall be in accordance with the idea expressed by that in which we are said to walk. To walk in love, then, is evidently intended to mean, that we shall speak, do, and act the part which love would dictate. But toward whom shall we thus conduct ourselves, or *walk*? Evidently, toward all men; even our enemies. Christ especially mentions them; our friends he need not mention; nature will teach us this, for even the Gentiles do so. But the apostle makes his meaning very plain by telling us how we shall love and walk. He says: "Walk in love as Christ also has loved us, and gave himself for us." Now Christ loved us when we were His enemies, and showed His love by giving himself for us! Whilst we were doing despite to the spirit of His grace, He loved us, and gave himself for us, and washed us in His own blood! Is it not evident, then, that if we walk in love, as Christ loved us, we cannot take the life of any man? The apostle's language is in complete agreement with what Christ taught in His Sermon on the Mount. We can take no other sense out of it without doing violence to plain language.

People sometimes say: "They can love a man and smite him; they are not angry with those against whom they fight in battle; and by prosecuting a man for crime, they are doing him good." But it would be hard to convince a man that you love him, when you are thrusting at him with a sword or bayonet. At least, it would not be "*walking in love*" toward him. Christ did not walk thus toward us. He could have prayed his Father, and He would have given him legions of angels to punish His wicked and malicious enemies. He gave Himself for us, our sins pierced his soul, and the wrath he was under for our sins, caused him to sweat blood. Thus He loved us, and thus he walked toward us; and the apostle will have us to lay down our life, rather than to take that of another. John says: "If we say we know God, and do not keep His commandments, we lie, and the truth is not in us. But if we keep His Word, then verily the love of God is perfected in us." And again: "Herein is the love of God manifested toward us, because God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." To follow God and walk in love, is evidently, then, to manifest our love by our deeds and actions, in the way that God manifested His love toward us; namely, by His dealings with us.

The Epistles and "Acts of the Apostles" throughout, breathe this passive non-resistant spirit, and without doing violence to their language, no one can gather anything else from them. Their actions, or walk and conduct throughout, as well, show how they were led by the Spirit, and how they understood the Saviour Paul says, being "reviled we bless, being persecuted we suffer it, being defamed we entreat; we are made the filth and off-scourings of all things unto this day." Not a single instance of resistance of evil is recorded, or a command given that can be tortured into such an idea.

One of our opponents, endeavoring to prove "non-resistance a false doctrine," says: "Now I grant that the gospel, adopted and followed out, would prevent war." This is all we assert, and shows that the language of the gospel is so plain, and our position so strongly maintained therein, that even our opponents are constrained to admit its truth! Whoever adopts the gospel and follows it out, will not engage in war. But this will not prevent those who do not adopt and follow it out from doing so. No

worldly government can adopt and follow out the gospel. Government is founded upon law and justice; and this must have the executive power of the sword. The gospel is founded on grace and mercy, and this the lawless and violent will not regard. This same author says: "Christ teaches the *individual*, and not the State." And again: "Governments have no future beyond this life, therefore they are not directly addressed by the gospel message." This we admit, therefore it was not expected, nor intended, that government should "adopt and follow out the gospel;" but can any one deny that it was intended, that those who *are* addressed in the gospel, should also adopt and follow it out? The individuals are addressed, and it is intended and expected that they will "adopt and follow out the gospel." And what then? Why, according to the author's own admission, "war will be prevented." I would ask the author, whether there ever was a Christian who did not "*adopt and carry out the gospel?*"

The mass of mankind did not receive or accept the benefits of Christ's mission; and their relation to God was consequently not changed by the gospel. "He came to His own but His own did not receive Him, but as many as received Him, He gave power to become the sons of God." To those who did not believe on Him, He said, they shall die in their sins, and whither He goes they cannot come. They shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon them; their sin remaineth, and they are condemned already. Christ came to restore the lost image in man, and establish the kingdom of Heaven within him. Every one can perceive, then, that this work was only wrought in those who received Him, who believed in His name, or who were converted. But the condition of those who did not believe was not changed. They remained in their sins under the law and condemnation, where all men, both Jews and Gentiles, lay before the advent of Christ, or even before the giving of the law or choosing of Israel. Their relation to God was not changed; their hearts were the same as before; their self-love was not destroyed, consequently they still remained where they had been since the fall of man. These have no new command under the gospel, other than the invitation to repent and believe the gospel; but as long as they did not accept the invitation, God could give them no better command than that which He had long since given them, and under which

they could enjoy all the happiness they were susceptible of enjoying in their present condition and relation. Christ is not their priest till they embrace Him by faith; consequently to them there is no change of the law.

All those who truly believed on the Saviour were cleansed from their sins, and received the gift of the Holy Ghost, by the power of which their hearts were renewed, and the lost image restored, by shedding the love of God abroad in the heart. Self-love was destroyed, and as injustice and violence are the effects of self-love, so the cause being removed the effect must of necessity cease; and as the principle of Divine love which took its place would lead its possessor to walk in love to all men, there would, as a consequence, be no necessity for government. But as a vast majority of mankind did not believe, they could not receive the Spirit, and their hearts continued unchanged; and amongst these there will ever be unjust, lawless and violent persons, who need government and sword, to keep them in subjection. These unbelievers the Saviour labored to convict of their sins, and grieved because they would not know the things which were for their peace; but He gave them no commandment except that they repent and be converted. There was no necessity for any to them, for obedience to no other command could change their relation to God; and this was the whole object of the Saviour's mission. Besides they had all the moral commands in the law.

Before the coming of Christ, the whole world, Jew and Gentile, moral and immoral, just and unjust, were under sin; and their relation to God was the same, except that those who believed had the promise of justification through what Christ would do at His coming, and their faith brought consolation and hope with it; but they did not realize their hope in this life. Those who did not believe in Christ's coming, stood in the same relation to God as if there had never been a promise given. Yet they had the same law written in their hearts as the others had; and if they obeyed its moral teaching, they enjoyed the natural reward of earthly prosperity and happiness, which was promised to faithfulness under the law. Thus after Christ came, those who did not believe were not benefitted by the gospel. Their relation to God was not changed. They remained where they were before in the world, and under the kingdom of this world; and were in no way relieved

from any duty, or deprived of any privilege, interest or reward, which faithfulness to moral duties entitled them to before.

Christ's kingdom is not of this world, therefore He did not interfere in the affairs of the world. He recognized the kingdom of this world and its authority, as one king recognizes that of another kingdom or nation. But He gave the kingdom, or those in it, no command, except the one before alluded to. He came to establish His kingdom, and as there may be said to have been but one kingdom on earth hitherto (all nations and kingdoms together composed the kingdom of this world), He had to take the subjects who would compose His kingdom out of that of this world. These having been brought into a new relation, and their circumstances changed, Christ gives new commandments. All the commands Christ gives must be considered as given to His disciples only.

God had created man in a supremely happy state. This happiness consisted in the love of God, and fellowship with Him. This love and fellowship was restored to the believer, and constituted a source of exceeding joy and comfort to Him. Now, Christ says we cannot serve God and mammon. God will not dwell in a heart filled with world, or worldly care. Therefore, He purges the heart of these, and gives such a law to His subjects as will preserve them from the evil influence the world would exert upon them. If we invest a person with the principles and virtues which Christ commands to His disciples, is the image not Divine? God is love, and they that love dwell in God, and God in them. These commands are all in love, and show to what stature we must be wrought, if we bear the image of Christ.

The Holy Spirit imparts the love of God, and brings us into fellowship with God and His Son Jesus Christ; and this affords infinitely more happiness than all the world can give, and enables its possessor to be joyful under persecutions, afflictions, scoffings, derisions, or whatever the world may inflict upon us. In short, this joy no man can take from us. To show that we prize the love of God higher than anything in the world, is an honor to God, and to obey Christ's command of not resisting evil, or contending for earthly treasures, or worldly honors, shows the value we set on heavenly things. If Christ had enjoined on His followers the duty to defend their personal rights and liberties, to

serve in office, exert themselves to uphold the government, or discharge obligations which our opponents would impose upon us, what anxiety and distraction of mind would it not create; and just in proportion would it draw the heart and affections away from God. But if the heart and affections are above where Jesus is, and we hold our earthly possessions as though they were not ours, then when they are taken away we can say: "The Lord hath given and the Lord hath taken away." If all things work together for good, to those who love the Lord, then whatever befalls us must be for our good, and we will commit all to the Lord who judgeth righteously. Must not this state of resignation and submission to the will of God, be the most happy that He could have devised; in short, does not the plan and all that is connected with it, prove that it is Divine?

The ground on which we propose to prove non-resistance to be consistent with the Bible, and the Old and New Testaments to be consistent with each other, and both to be in harmony with the idea of God's immutability, is, that God had created man in such a state that he possessed a principle within him, which would have preserved order, decency, justice, and righteousness on earth (however great the number), without any law or government. This principle within man, which constitutes God's image, was His love, and was both government and law to man. This principle was lost in the fall, consequently he lost the governing power, and in its stead self-love, which is a principle of disorder and confusion, was received in the heart. Now, as it was the will of God that order should be preserved on earth, and a governing influence had to be exerted, He established government, with all its necessary attendants of law, and sword, to exert this controlling influence over the restive, unholy and unruly principle of self-love. This was made necessary by man's change, and is perfectly consistent with God's immutability, and is a confirmation of God's unchanging love to man. In love God had created man, and His unchanging love and good will to him, induced Him to give man government, as the only means which would control him till he was brought back again to the state from which he had fallen. From the fall of man to the coming of Christ, all men stood in the same relation to God, and were in the same condition and circumstances. By the coming of Christ, and the sacrifice

of His body on the tree of the cross, all those who embraced His merits by faith were restored, in their relation to God, to the state they were in before the fall. They are made partakers of the Holy Spirit, by which the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and, as Peter says, are made partakers of the Divine nature, which is the image of God. Here, now, man is brought into a new relation to God, his sins are washed away, and his circumstances and condition is changed, and God also changes his law. It is God's unchanging love which induced Him to send His Son into the world, to give Himself for man's redemption; and having redeemed him, and brought him into this new relation, He gives him a spirit and law, with commandments consistent with his changed circumstances and condition. These now need no outward governing influence of law, or commandment, to lead them to do what is right. They will do right, and obey the law of love written in their hearts, regardless of law or commandment, either of God or man. That is, not because God's word commands it, but because of the love they possess in their hearts, they would be constrained to do so, if God never had given the command.

As these now stand under a new relation to God, by which their condition and circumstances are changed, it is no violation of God's immutability to change the law which is to govern their conduct and actions. The Old Testament gave man the law which should be his rule of life in the condition he was then in, but spoke of a change which was to come.

The New Testament or gospel, gives the law which is to be the rule of life, under the changed condition referred to in the Old. There is, therefore, no disagreement between the Old and New Testament, or any violation of God's immutability.

But all men were not changed in their relation to God by the coming of Christ, and the institution of the gospel. Those who did not believe remained in their sins and under the law, and were not effected by the gospel, until they believed and embraced it; consequently the principle of self-love was not destroyed, and this being what made government and law necessary, it had to be continued in the world, the same as it had before the coming of Christ.

The commands in the New Testament are therefore not given

to the unconverted. They still stand where man did before the gospel was promulgated, and are under the same influence. This is the reason why government is still recognized in the New Testament. Because a very large proportion of mankind do not accept the gospel offer, God is still necessitated to continue government in the world, and He has so ordered that there can be no conflict between the kingdom of Christ, and that of this world. Whenever Christ spoke of the world and its institutions, He spoke of them as something foreign. Of His disciples He says, they are not of the world; if they were so, the world would love them, but now He has chosen them out of the world, therefore the world hateth them. When his disciples showed their self-love and the spirit of envy, He called them to *Him*, and told them very affectionately: "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exercise Lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. *But so shall it not be among you.*" This shows that Christ separated His kingdom from that of this world, as His commands make it impossible for those of His kingdom, to take part with that of this world. They are in the world, but they are not of the world.

When man fell by transgression, he was placed under the law. Paul says, as many as are under the law are under the curse. Now all men must have been under that curse till Christ came, and became a curse for them, and thereby delivered them. Our opponents say all men are under the law. Then, according to Paul, all would have to be under the curse. But Paul says: "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." Certainly those who embrace Christ by faith are made free from the law; but those who do not believe, remain under the law and under its curse. Under this law God commanded Israel to fight, and the opponents of non-resistance say, because God approved it then, it must be right now also. In one sense this is true. To all who are now in the same circumstances, or in the same relation to God now, that those were then, it is right. They to whom it was right then were under the law. To all who are under the law now it is still right. But it does not follow that because it was right for those who were under the law then, and is also right for those who are under it now, that it must be right for those who are under the gospel. It is urged that "right is right at all times, and in all places." This is true, but the inference drawn from it is not true. Because

it was right for the Jews to fight, it is right for the Christians to fight, is a misconception. I would ask the author of that sentiment, whether it is right for us to eat swine's flesh; and whether it was right for the Jews to do so? Whether it is right for us to wear garments partly of flax, and partly wool; and whether it was right for the Jews to do so. Is God then mutable?

Moses permitted the Jews to put away their wives for certain causes, which our Saviour did not approve in his kingdom, and tells us there is but one cause which would justify such act. Now, if Moses allowed this or gave the Jews this precept, it was certainly not sin for them to do so. But can any one say that it would not be so for a Christian now? In the beginning, there was no such liberty; "it was not so;" but when man's relation to God was changed, because of sin, and the flesh was weakened, and the heart hardened, God permitted it. But when man's condition was improved, being made partaker of the Divine nature, and his relation to God changed, Christ, as the perfect lawgiver, restored the ordinance to its primitive state again. It might perhaps be said, speaking strictly, that neither war, nor the Jewish mode of divorce were right in themselves; but man's condition made it a necessary evil, or the lesser of two evils, one of which was inevitable. But with Israel, God permitted it, yet in man's altered relation under the gospel Christ forbids it. When I say "man's altered relation under the gospel," I always mean those who are truly converted. The relation of the unconverted is not changed.

One of our opponents says: "Non-resistants fail to see any law in the gospel, yet there it is with all its majesty, demanding *repentance* or death." We do hold that there is no other law in the gospel except the law of love. The gospel does not demand *repentance* of those who are under the gospel. It demands it of those who are under the law. The children of God who are in the kingdom of Christ, are not demanded to *repent*. They have nothing to repent of, unless they fall into sin. Their sins are forgiven and washed away, and they are clean every whit. But those who are under the law, who, though they believe in Christ, are yet ashamed to confess Him, or are afraid of the persecution, or do not believe in Him, or have said in their hearts they will not have Christ to rule over them, these are invited to repent and come over to Christ's kingdom, and receive His favor.

The kingdom of Christ is certainly distinct from that of this

world. The unconverted compose the kingdom of this world. The converted compose the kingdom of Christ, kingdom of God, or Church of God. Those of the kingdom of this world certainly have no lot, part, or interest in the kingdom of Christ. The law of Christ's kingdom, or the law of love, necessarily prohibits those of the kingdom of Christ from taking any part in the affairs of that of this world. This mystery is dark to great multitudes; but how can it be otherwise? The self-love of those of the kingdom of this world, forbids them to take part in the kingdom of Christ. No one can be a citizen of two kingdoms at the same time; he cannot serve two masters. The kingdom of Christ and that of this world, might be compared to two natural kingdoms, whose authority was over territory which lay in contiguity with each other. The laws of these two kingdoms might be very different, yet the subjects of each would be satisfied that they have justice done them, and so would be happy. But the king of one of the powers offers those of his kingdom a very exceeding rich reward or treasure, at some future period. He also offers or makes it known in the other kingdom, that any of its subjects who will leave their king and come over to him, shall be considered as his subjects, and receive the reward on an equality with his own subjects. Those who would refuse to accept this offer, would of course fail of the reward, but they would not fail because they obeyed the laws of the king whose subjects they were, but they would fail because they did not come over to him who offered the favor. They would not be censured for obeying the law of their king, only they could not expect to receive the favor of him, whose offer they had rejected. Thus Christ came and established His kingdom, and invited those in the kingdom of this world to repent and be converted to Him, and they should have the reward of eternal life. But those who are contented with the reward of this world, will not heed His invitation, and we cannot find a single promise to them of eternal life, on any other condition. Now, we confess that God had made those duties under the law which our opponents claim, and it is their duty still, so long as they are subjects of the kingdom of this world. But if Christ is our king, we must bear him. No one will be condemned for doing those things which are duties under the old law. There are numbers of unconverted persons, who are as moral, honest, upright, and faithful in the

discharge of all their moral and social duties, as any disciple of Jesus Christ. Even an infidel may be this. These enjoy their reward of natural prosperity, comfort and enjoyment of the blessings of this life. But it is not possible they can enjoy the love of God, unless they are converted and receive the Holy Spirit. Neither have they promise of eternal life. If this were not so, salvation would be obtained of works without faith. These men may be officers in government, may be generals in the field, or soldiers in the ranks, and commit no sin in those duties; and will not be condemned for them, any more than they will for any other moral duty they perform. It is asked: "Is there one law for sinners, and another for Christians?" I say, yes! Sinners are under the law of justice, where all men were before Christ came. Christians are under the law of grace and love, where Christ put them. The others are where Christ left them, because they would not obey his call.

There are great numbers of persons whom we must esteem very highly for the excellence of their moral virtues and honorable principles, who would yet be as the young man was, very sorrowful, if they must sell or give up all the respect and esteem they have in the world, to become a disciple of Christ. But as I have said, an infidel may be all this; so that these virtues however estimable do not make a Christian.

One of our opponents says: "The law of God allows the individual to defend himself except in one case, that of persecution for righteousness sake; I am permitted, yea enjoined, to *resist all evil.*" If by "the law of God," the author means the Mosaic law, there is this error in it—that the law alluded to makes no exceptions for righteousness sake. It plainly says: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," etc., and there are no exceptions made. And if by the "law of God," is meant the commands of Christ to his disciples, then the other part is without warrant. Christ plainly says, we shall "*not resist evil,*" and there are no exceptions made in regard to the *evil*. Christ says: "If they sue thee at the law, if they take away thy goods, if they smite thee on the cheek." He here notices three different kinds of evil—legal injustice, theft, and personal violence—in none of which we shall *resist*. There is neither command or precept, in the whole gospel, which says *we shall resist evil of any*

kind. If a man attacks me with intent to kill, no matter what the object is, it is an evil; and if I choose to kill him (as the author says) to prevent him from killing me, I certainly resist that evil. In such case I recompense evil for evil, and Paul says we shall do this *to no man*. Men may argue that it is no evil to kill a man under such circumstances, but it evidently was the meaning of Paul, for he afterward says, in the same chapter (Romans xii.) "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord. Be not overcome of evil, but *overcome evil with good.*"

This argument shows that the author does understand that Christ forbids resistance to some kinds of evil, but where is his warrant for confining it to that of persecution for religion only. This is certainly a clear assumption! Christ named the most aggravated cases of evil. To sue one by law and take away their coat, is certainly very oppressive. There can hardly be a case imagined which would be harder than this. To smite one in the face, is as great an indignity and insult as could be offered; and to take our goods by stealth is very provoking; and persecution for righteousness' sake is the most unjustifiable of all persecution. To persecute from motives of interest would not seem to be so utterly diabolical, as for *righteousness, doing good*. This is so unreasonable, so fiendish, that no man will admit it. They will always frame some pretext for an excuse. Christ has evidently mentioned the most extreme and aggravating cases for some purpose. Now, is it reasonable that we should not resist in such aggravated cases of evil, and yet do so for some minor or trivial cause? Christ could not mention every individual species of evil, so he mentioned the most aggravated cases, knowing that if these must be borne, there are no others that could justify resistance.

It is said that "the key to the whole scope of the New Testament is, that Jesus Christ teaches the individual and not the State. Governments have no future beyond this life, and are incapable of immorality. Christ teaches the individual duty to the individual." Assuming that all which the apostles taught is the same as if Christ had taught it himself, it is evident that we are taught more than individual duty to individuals. He taught all the duty we have to perform. It is true, Christ or the apostles, do not teach the State, nor any individual, their duty as a servant, or

officer of the State. Families have no future, nor are they capable of immorality; yet we are taught in the gospel what is the duty of the husband to the wife, of the father to the children, of the master to the servant, of the wife to the husband and children, of the children to the parents, and of the servants to the masters. These are highly important duties, and cannot be violated or neglected with impunity, and serious consequences may result even to society from their neglect. But how much more important is the duty of the governor of nations, or the fate of vast armies, where one man often has the comfort and even life of thousands of persons in his hands. The highly important trust of many officers of government, and the many allurements attending their position, would certainly call for some warning and wholesome instruction, to enable them to escape the danger to which they are exposed. Is it not singular, that Christ and His apostles should have omitted giving any instructions to the believer, in such important positions and dangerous exposures, if it were, as is often asserted, the duty of Christians to serve their country in the ranks, or as an officer in the field, according as he could best serve the interests of his government, or to serve in other positions in the government, when they pointed out their duty in so many positions of so much less importance. Their duty *to the government* is especially dwelt upon, but never a word about their duty *in the government*. This, in connection with Christ's commands, is conclusive evidence, that Christ never designed they should occupy a place there.

This absence of direction in regard to duties in the government, also shows very conclusively that none of Christ's commands are given to the unconverted. They had the government, and he left it to them and the directions they had before, which were all they had need of.

It is said: "Non-resistants fail to recognize any organization but their own contracted sects," and that they "ignore the authority of the United States as far as they dare." This is an error. True non-resistants admit the authority of the government of the United States, admit that it is God's ordinance to man for good. *Not one* will ignore its authority or resist its power, even if they had opportunity or ability to do so. They acknowledge their duty to honor and obey it in all things, except where a duty is

attempted to be imposed which is contrary to the teaching of the gospel. Here they think they should obey God rather than man, but in no case resist. We are told to "read chap. xiii. of Romans, and open our eyes to the light of Heaven." The Apostle Paul is here speaking to his brethren, and has no allusion to the unconverted. Every soul of them is commanded to be subject to the higher powers. The apostle evidently does not intend here to assert that his brethren should obey the powers when they would make an unscriptural request of them. No professed Christian will assert this, and it would be at variance with the apostle's own practice. Then it proves nothing for our opponents, till they prove that the gospel makes it a duty to fight. More than this, we may refuse to obey and still be subject. If the powers ask that which we cannot conscientiously perform, they can but attach a penalty for disobedience. We submit our body and our all to them; they may visit a fine, confiscation of property, imprisonment, or death upon us. If we submit without resistance we are still *subject* to them.

The Apostles Peter and Jude, reprobate those who speak evil of dignitaries. Peter likewise says, we shall be subject to every ordinance of man for the *Lord's sake*; and Paul says he would not have spoken evil of the high priest, if he had known that he was ruler of the nation. Of these things true non-resistants make conscience.

We freely admit that there is no power but of God; that the powers that be are ordained of God. And also, that whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. Non-resistants do not resist the government when they refuse to fight. What have they done? The government first called for volunteers. No true non-resistant could respond to the call. They remained at home, and pursued their peaceful avocations as before. The powers next ordered a draft for men, but generously offered to exempt such as were conscientiously non-resistant. The non-resistants are not responsible for the conduct of knaves, who perjured themselves. Next, the powers again ordered a draft without exempting any for conscience sake. The request was personal service, or three hundred dollars of money. The personal service they could not render. The money belongs to the kingdom

of this world, and they had a right to demand it as their own. Paul says we shall pay tribute and custom to whom it is due, due, and says we shall do so because of the duties the government has to discharge. They now ask our person or the money. The latter is theirs, and we make conscience of the duty to pay it, and feel that it would be wrong to refuse to do so. But suppose the powers would order a draft, and refuse anything but personal service. Then there would be no way but submit to the consequence of refusing to obey, whatever the consequences would be; but resist the power we could not.

The commands of the gospel are founded on a different principle from what those of the law are. The law holds out a promise to those who are under it, that they shall receive a reward for doing its commandments. The gospel invites those under the law to embrace *its* principles, and receive its favors, and prompts those under *it*, by a principle of love, to obey its commands, out of gratitude for the favor already bestowed on an unworthy object. The motive of obedience under the law is to receive reward. These Paul calls servants. But the motive of obedience to the commands of Christ in true New Testament believers, is gratitude for the favor God has already bestowed. These Paul calls sons. The true believer does not inquire so much what it is his duty to do to be saved, as what he can do to honor God for saving him. The one is the legal principle; the other is Divine love.

The kingdom of Christ is founded on the principle of love, forbearance, patience, and passive submission to injustice and wrong, or evil, in any shape. The kingdom of this world is founded on the principle of justice, and resistance of evil. The kingdom of Christ is composed of truly converted, or new born souls, who have received the spirit of Christ, and must be actuated by the same principle which influenced Christ, and moved him to come into the world to save sinners who were his enemies. It is plainly to be perceived, that this spirit or principle is directly opposed to the principle which must rule in the kingdom of this world. The first is that of love, returning good for evil, long suffering, forbearance, and, in short, what Paul terms the fruits of the Spirit. The latter is an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; punishment of evil by retaliation, or overcoming evil by coercion. The believer, being in possession of the spirit of

Christ, and under the influence which actuated Christ, must, of necessity, be prompted to the same course of conduct and actions toward his fellow man as Christ was. It is plain, then, that this would forbid him to take any part in an institution, organization or ordinance, in which he must of necessity violate the principle on which his own kingdom is founded, or the Spirit of which he is born.

This is the ground upon which non-resistance is based. It is the Spirit which influenced Christ, and if the Spirit of Christ is not in us we are none of His. To be consistent, then, we must be in this world as pilgrims and strangers. A pilgrim and stranger has no rights, and does not belong to the country or kingdom where he stands in that relation. A pilgrim or stranger is ineligible to office, and not fit, by reason of some disqualifying principle which is attached to him, to discharge the duties or trust of an officer of the government. Thus the children of God, by reason of the principle above referred to, are disqualified to discharge the duties of office in the kingdom of this world, and are said to be pilgrims and strangers on earth. They live in the kingdom of this world by tolerance only, and hold possessions or property only by permission of the powers that be. When one is in a strange country, so long as their affections and interests are in their native land, they are satisfied to bear the disadvantages they labor under there. They do not feel concerned about the laws or institutions of the country wherein they are strangers. They have no right as a citizen to vote at elections, or to seek to influence legislation, or in any way to control the policy of the government; and if they have any petition to make, they make it through their own governments or their accredited agents. Thus it is with non-resistants. They are disqualified to discharge the duties of office in the government, by reason of a responsibility they are under to obey a higher power, and to discharge duties which are inconsistent with the best interests of the government. They have higher interests at stake than they have in the kingdom of this world, and they are satisfied to suffer the disadvantage of being aliens, in view of the attachment, or affection and interest, they feel in the land of their birth. They are commanded to pray for kings and all in authority, that we may have a peaceable and quiet life. Thus, if they have any petition to make, they make it through the head

of their own government, who has promised to protect His own, and they have the confidence that He will protect them, not in property and person, but in spirit, and in the joy and comfort which believers enjoy, by the love shed abroad in their hearts through the Holy Spirit. If God sees fit, he can move the hearts of those in power, to grant a peaceable and quiet life to his people, which they are in duty bound to receive with gratitude from His hand.

Government is bound together by mutual interests, and is established for the good of the community, on the ground of mutual benefits, and mutually to bear the burdens attending its support. For any one to seek to influence or control the authorities or laws for their advantage, or claim the protection of the power, and then refuse to bear their proportion of the burden of defending the power, is inconsistent and dishonest. Strangers have no right to come into a country, unless the authorities permit them. Neither will they allow them to do so, unless it is their interest they should do so. If they permit or invite them to do so, they have yet no rights but what are given them, till they renounce their allegiance to their native land, and swear fealty to the land of their adoption. Then they not only obtain rights, but are also under all the obligations of native inhabitants.

No government can exist without the sword, and occasionally having war; and the idea of having government without it is an absurdity. Therefore, if we will not use the sword, we must separate ourselves from the kingdom of this world, otherwise we are inconsistent, and liable to censure and suspicion. Foreigners who would claim exemption from military duty, and would yet criticise the acts of those in authority, seek to control elections, shape the laws of the country, or influence the policy of the government and nation, would be looked upon with a great deal of suspicion.

True non-resistants do not censure the present Chief Magistrate for the policy he has adopted, or the measures he is endeavoring to carry out. It may be the very best for the country he could have done. Neither have they any right to censure his predecessor. Neither of them claim to be infallible in judgment, and it is fair to presume they both acted from honest convictions. The Lord himself says: He "rules in the kingdoms of men, and

gives them to whomsoever He will;" and Solomon says: "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts. The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it withersoever He will." If nations are just, upright and faithful to the law on which government is founded, God will also give them wise and prudent rulers, and they will enjoy peace and prosperity. But if they become proud, arrogant, unjust and unfaithful, God also has ways to reach them with the rod of affliction and vengeance. Our nation, in time past, has been signally favored and blessed. It has grown and prospered almost beyond precedent. It was called a Christian nation, and boasted of the number and splendor of its churches. But where was the spirit of Christ? There was little of the contrite heart and humble spirit, with which the Lord delighteth to dwell; or the trembling at God's word, to which He will look. But there was in the heart of man much of that spirit which made Nebuchadnezzar say: "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the house of the kingdom?" King Nebuchadnezzar was visited with an awful judgment from God, to make him "know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." The king was warned of God, and advised to break off his sins, do righteousness and show mercy to the poor, and it might tend to the lengthening of his tranquility. Must we not admit that our nation has long been warned? Has not the threatening rod long been held out over us? But, we may say, no man regarded. True, days of fasting and prayer were appointed and observed; but were they such fasts as the Lord chooses? Did any break off their sins, and work righteousness? They acknowledged with their mouth that they are sinners, but in their hearts they continued in pride, folly and wantonness, and all unrighteousness, as they did before. Let no one therefore look to the powers as being the cause, or to bring the end of this calamitous war; but every one look to his own heart, break off his sins and do righteousness, and there will assuredly be a lengthening of tranquility where it yet exists, and a speedy return to it where it has been lost.

Whenever there is war, one party must be on the side of injustice and wrong. Both may, but one must be. This must be the case in our present civil war; yet we must all believe that

very great numbers, even on the unjust side, honestly and sincerely believe that their cause is just. Great numbers of men, with the highest order of intellect, and enjoying favorable opportunities for forming correct conclusions, after giving the subject in dispute their most careful attention for years, have arrived at very different and opposite conclusions, in regard to the side which is right and just. It is fair to presume, that numbers on either side are honest in the views they hold. The judgment of the most able men is liable to be influenced, more or less, by their interests, and all are by their surroundings. We, of the North, mostly think the Northern cause is just. Perhaps if we were in the South, under different circumstances, we would think differently. One of these parties must be wrong; and if men of good minds, and well-informed, do thus err in their judgment, how is the mass, who are less favored with natural gifts, and are less intelligent, to be expected to judge correctly, in such intricate and complicated affairs?

There are, then, here hundreds of thousands of men, on either side, arrayed in deadly strife against each other, the mass of whom do not know that they are fighting in an unjust cause. The one party must be, and the majority are ignorantly slaying their fellow-creatures, who are contending for right and justice. This is truly lamentable, yet in all wars it is unavoidable. Let any candid mind ask itself whether it is possible that God could place his children in a situation where it would become their duty to kill, or try to kill, his brother or fellow-creature, who is fighting for justice and right? The first and highest interest of a child of God is in Heaven, about which their minds are most engaged; and it is not to be expected that they should be able to form correct conclusions about the complex affairs of State, or the intricacies of international law. There may certain facts come to their knowledge, and from those they may make conclusions of what is right and wrong; but when they know that there may be circumstances connected with the case, of which they are ignorant, they do not pretend to be competent to form conclusions upon which they can rely for truth. Some of our opponents admit that it is wrong to fight in an unjust cause. But how are we to know certainly that our cause is just, so that we might not be found to fight against God? Look at those of every denomination

who take up arms in self-defense. There is brother arrayed against brother. No doubt each thinks he is right. And even in the North, amongst our own neighbors, we find one brother denouncing the other as disloyal, and using the most vile epithets that language can invent, to make each other odious and hateful. This is unavoidable under the doctrine they advocate, and must ever be the case. But God has so provided for his children, that, whether North or South, or under whatever external influence they are placed, their duty is plain. They are called, or chosen out of the world. Their duty is to suffer wrong, rather than to resist evil; and so they are not perplexed or harrassed about political questions. There is no impediment in the way of union and harmony between them, and nothing to hinder the world from seeing the love that exists between them. Christ tells his disciples very frequently that they shall love one another, and that the world shall know them by the love they have for one another. Peter says they have purified their souls unto *unfeigned* love of the brethren, and charges them to love one another with a *pure heart, fervently*. John says: "Beloved, let us love one another;" and he says: "We shall love, not in word, but in deed and in truth." Now, is it reasonable that God should impose such a duty upon us as to fight, maim and kill our brother? We cannot get over this. The doctrine will place us in this position. But take the true non-resistant doctrine, and see how beautifully it harmonizes with the gospel teaching, and how free and untrammelled it leaves us. It ever leaves the way open, and the poorest, most illiterate, or least-informed disciple of Jesus has a sure and unerring guide, in the most difficult and intricate questions of State which can arise. They are commanded to submit to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake; to obey magistrates, not speak evil of dignities, pay tribute, custom and honor to whom it is due; fear God and honor the king, and give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, but to God the things that are God's.

In religion, we must have a standard. There must be supreme authority, and everything else must yield to it. The New Testament is this authority, in the Christian religion. To this all other things must yield and become subservient. Reason, necessity, and even the Old Testament, must yield to and subserve the New. In

studying the New Testament, the principle or spirit which pervades its teachings must be observed. This, with its chief and plain commands, must form the ground of explanation for those which are more dark or obscure in their meaning; and our reasoning, our conduct and our life, must be in accordance with this spirit, principle, or plain command. Any person who reads the New Testament with attention, and an unprejudiced mind, must be convinced that its general tenor of instruction is that of submission to injustice and wrong, and non-resistance of evil. But this doctrine is at variance with our carnal nature and will. We desire to convince ourselves differently, and so call in the Old Testament, and make it take precedence of the New; and then necessity, and uncaptivated reason are called to the assistance of the carnal will, and those passages in the New Testament, which can be wrested so as to favor the idea, are construed so that the plain declarations of the gospel, with its evident spirit and principle, are made subordinate to carnal reason and necessity.

Thus it is with the passage referred to in Romans xiii. The apostle there says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation." We all know that there are times when certain laws are enacted, which are offensive to certain communities, and they threaten, or do resist the execution of such laws. Now, if we had non-resistant brethren living in any such infected district, or if we had knowledge of any residing in the South, at the time when the present rebellion broke out, who we feared might be carried away by the current of popular feeling, I know of no language more suitable to address to them than the words of the apostle here quoted. I have before observed that Christ and the apostles give their commands to believers only. This is especially to be borne in mind, in considering this command of Paul. These words must be made to harmonize with the general tone and spirit of the gospel, and they can only be made to do so on the true ground of non-resistance. Scripture must be so construed, as never to close the way to the humblest believer, or to bind one and loose another. The gospel is given to serve every creature alike. God is no respecter of persons, and is

unchangeable; and as He is unchangeable, so must his religion be. It has been the misfortune of popular religion to change with popular opinion; but the religion of Jesus Christ is the same everywhere, and at all times and places.

For some centuries before the Reformation, the Catholic religion was almost universal, in what was called the Christian world. The ecclesiastical and temporal power were united, and the Catholic religion was the national religion of all Christian nations. This was popular opinion, and popular opinion also favored persecution of those who dissented in their religion from the established creed. After the success of the Reformation, and the national religion of different powers had changed to that of Protestantism, the popular feeling of favor to a union of Church and State, and persecuting those who dissented from the established religion, still continued; and we find Calvin, with many other great and learned reformers, countenancing and advising it. These are facts proven by history, and cannot be denied. In our day, I suppose none of their professed followers would justify persecution for religion, under any circumstances. How was it that these learned and enlightened men did not discover this principle of the gospel? It may be urged that mankind have advanced in light and knowledge since then, and they excused on account of the "semi-barbarous" age in which they lived, having just emerged from Papal darkness and superstition. But how comes it that for several centuries before, and at that very time, there was a poor, despised and persecuted people, who were comparatively ignorant as regards literary attainments and worldly knowledge, who had then this light, and protested so strongly against this spirit of persecution, as being anti-christian and diabolical? The Albigenses and Waldenses, for several centuries before the Reformation, and the Mennonites in the days of Luther and Calvin, professed this same non-resistant doctrine, declared persecution to be contrary to both letter and spirit of the gospel, and insisted on an entire separation of Church and State. Popular opinion then did not favor religious toleration, nor the separation of Church and State, and popular religion was with it. But now, several centuries later, popular opinion has changed, and so has popular religion. Now, religious persecution is denounced everywhere, and no man dares support such an idea. In some of the

nations of Europe, there is still a national church or religion, and Church and State are partially united; but in our country it is unpopular, and professed Christians generally protest against it, as being contrary to the spirit of the gospel. Now, how does it come that it took these great and learned men a whole century to discover what these poor, illiterate, despised and persecuted people had discovered so long before? All admit now that it is truth; and how does it come that the Spirit of truth did not lead men into it? Christ's promise must have failed, or these men *must have been destitute of it*; for he made an absolute promise, that it would lead men into *all truth*. This would look as if Divine truth could not be received till natural light revealed it.

At the time of our Revolutionary war, popular opinion made it a virtue to resist the government of Great Britain, which, at the time, was the power referred to in Romans xiii. Then almost every pulpit in the land resounded with calls to arm, and overthrow the power. In our day, popular religion, with one breath, eulogizes the fathers of the Revolution for resisting and overthrowing the powers; and in the next quote the passage of Paul referred to, to prove that they that resist shall receive damnation! Can such people believe, or do they know what they say, when they say God is immutable? I question whether one of the clergymen, who preached up the duty of Christians to support the colonies in their Revolution, ever once quoted Romans xiii.

The Declaration of Independence of the colonies, sets forth the right of the people to revolutionize and change their form of government, when it fails to effect the purpose for which it was established. But now I ask, How can this be done, in agreement with Paul's instruction in Romans xiii.? He there says: "Let *every soul* be subject unto the higher powers. For *there is no power but of God*; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." It will not do to say: "The power may become corrupt, and oppressive, and destructive of the end for which it was established;" that the "government of Great Britain over the colonies was so at the time they revolutionized." This does not meet the difficulty. Paul says every soul shall be subject, and not resist; for "*there is no power but of God*." Then, to whomsoever

this command is given, it is impossible to resist the government without violating Paul's instruction. No government or power is here excepted; whether good or bad, it is of God; for "there is no power but of God, and whosoever resisteth it, resisteth God's ordinance, and shall receive to himself damnation." Now, certainly, if this command is given to the Church, then it can take no part in any revolution. If it is given to the world, then *it* cannot. Then the gospel would not recognize any revolution at all. But separate the kingdom of Christ and that of this world, and the solution is easy. The command of Paul here is to Christ's kingdom, and does not concern the world, or unconverted, at all. They are left where God long before placed them, under the law, and in the kingdom of the world, which is under the power of the sword, yet ruled by the Most High, who ruleth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; giveth the kingdom to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.

Amongst the Jews and heathen nations of old, who were all under the law, when a government became wicked, unjust and ungodly, God raised up adversaries, and punished them; or He divided their territory, or overthrew their government, and gave the power to others. It is expressly said that the Lord raised up the adversaries; and when Israel was separated from Judea, the Lord said it was "*from him.*" Thus the Lord setteth up the king, and removeth him again. These were under the law, and the unconverted are there still, under the same principle as they ever were, and under the same control as they ever were. The government of Great Britain was corrupt, and oppressed the colonies, and subverted the end for which God established government. God raised up an adversary to the power of Great Britain, in the hearts of the people of the colonies, and they rebelled against the government, overthrew its power, and established the government of the United States in its stead.

We are accustomed to look upon the "Fathers of the Revolution," as being models of virtue, patriotism and honesty; and in this respect, I am ready to accord all that is claimed for them. They may have been just, honorable and faithful, in the discharge of their duties in all the relations of life. I admit that they were instruments in the hand of God, to effect this particular purpose.

They were faithful in the discharge of their duty in the kingdom of this world, and God bestowed upon them those natural blessings which such faithfulness has promise of. When we assert what we believe the Scripture to teach, that Christians cannot fight or resist evil, we are met by the objection of Washington and his compeers being Christians, and yet they fought. With all our reverence for the character of Washington, can we compare him with Christ? Or must we not still look to Christ, as our guide and director, who alone has words of eternal life? And when we find his example and the teaching of Christ to disagree, can we hesitate to choose Christ as our leader? Certainly no one will pretend that all the services rendered to the country by the patriots of the Revolution, would of itself prove them to be Christians. One, at least, of them, who rendered most signal service to the country, and who showed a most self-sacrificing spirit, was an avowed infidel. It is not our purpose, as it is no part of our duty, to criticise the religion of those who have departed, any further than to meet the objections which are urged against what we believe to be truth, and to point our readers to the true test of undefiled religion.

My purpose is to show what Christ and the apostles teach, as the duty of the believer. The commands which they taught are imperative, and no one dare either reject or disregard them, because of what any man has believed or done, however bright his moral virtues may shine. If Christ and his apostles teach us that we shall not resist evil, then non-resistance must be the believer's duty, even though all the great and wise men in the world should disregard it. I yield to no man in admiration of moral virtue, but Christ must still remain the rule of my faith.

Can a man be a Christian, in the true sense of the word, and not obey Christ's and the apostles' commands? Then, if Christ teaches that we shall not resist the powers that be, how can they be true Christians who resist and overthrow their government? I again assert, that it is not my purpose to criticise the religion of any man, whether living or dead. The natural desire to retain the friendship and good-will of man, would forbid allusion to the wise and great men of the present or preceding ages, whose religious opinions we cannot approve, if duty did not constrain us to assert what we believe to be truth. Our opponents make

these allusions necessary, by urging the opinion and practice of popular men, and we may not shrink from the consequences of meeting whatever force there is in such argument, if argument it may be called. We are accustomed to boast of our manhood and independence; but I am unable to conceive either manhood or independence in the idea, that because a thing is popular, it must be true, or because certain men, however high their standing in society, believe, say or do a thing, it must be right.

Our opponents admit that the New Testament teaches a higher morality than the Old; and yet they would impose duties on Christians, which were held to be immoral under the Old Testament. The law which God gave the Jews, forbids the use of the sword, except to defend or vindicate justice. Under this law, it could not become the duty of one faithful Israelite to fight against another faithful one. This could not be. They could not fight without cause; and if they were faithful to the law, they would give no cause. But, if we take the view of Romans xiii. which our opponents say is the meaning of Paul, it would become the duty of one Christian to fight against and try to kill another! And it would even become the duty of one to take up the sword, knowing that the cause is unjust, and go forth and kill his brother, who is fighting for right and justice! Paul says: "Every soul shall be subject to the higher powers;" and they say this makes it the duty of a Christian to obey the call, take up arms and go forth to battle, when the power calls for or demands our services in the battle-field. If this is Paul's meaning, he would not teach a higher morality than the law, for it provided against this immoral and unreasonable occurrence. I suppose our opponents will admit that there are Christians in England, France and Germany. Now, suppose there should war break out between one of these powers and our own. Our powers would issue a call for men to arm in defense of our rights. The opposite power would do the same, for Paul speaks to one as well as the other. One side must be wrong; therefore this view of Paul's teaching would make it the duty of one Christian to fight and kill another, who was contending for right and justice. The position of our opponents makes this occurrence unavoidable. Is this consistent? Is it reasonable? Or is there anything of the spirit of the gospel in it?

It may be said, we should not engage in an unjust war. But this will not do, as Paul makes no exceptions; and this would overthrow their own position. And if this exception was admitted, what would it amount to? They would differ in opinion, as they always do. One would say "it is just," and would fight; another would say "it is unjust," and would refuse to obey the power; and, by their own argument, they would place themselves in the position we stand on. Paul says to the Corinthians, chap. i.: "Not many wise, mighty or noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish, weak and despised, to confound the wise and mighty." Persons of this class are but little acquainted with international law and disputes; consequently, could not be expected to make correct decisions. Therefore, the difficulty and danger could not be avoided.

To prevent all such difficulty, inconsistency and embarrassment, as well as to preserve the hearts of his children from anxiety and distracting care, God has chosen his children out of the world, to serve him in spirit and in truth, in singleness of heart, and says, they cannot serve God and mammon. He has commanded them to labor with their hands, the thing which is good, so that they may have to give to them that need. For this reason, it is the duty of every Christian to follow some calling, trade or profession, so that they may be useful to their fellow-man, and not to eat the bread of idleness. Care and idleness are alike unfavorable to devotion; and God has so ordained that His children shall be preserved free from either. The Saviour says, we shall make our first care be for the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto us. He does not intend that the things we need for our natural life shall be given to us without our labor or effort to obtain them, or he would not have commanded us to labor with our hands. But He will have us to do our duty, and commit the rest to God, without care for the consequences; for with all our care we cannot change the result. Who by care and thought, can add a cubit to his stature, or make one hair white or black?

God desires the undivided affections of his children. He has given them his Spirit, which sheds his love abroad in their hearts, and has separated them from every duty which would tend to alienate or divide their affections. The world has this tendency, and

for this reason God has separated his children from it, so far as it is possible. The various and exciting duties of office in the kingdom of this world, suits at law, and politics, all have a tendency to distract the mind, and draw the affections away from God, and things pertaining to life eternal. Therefore, the Lord has denied them these privileges, so that he may retain their affections; and their separation from them may show to the world that their treasure is in Heaven, and their affections there. Whilst consistency requires that they should take no part, or seek to shape or influence the laws of the worldly kingdom, God was necessitated, nevertheless, so to direct, that his children should not come into collision with the world. Christ told his disciples, the children should be free, but to avoid offense, He commanded them to submit in a matter which involved no principle. The tribute-money bearing Cæsar's image and superscription, he told them to give to Cæsar; and Paul says we shall be subject to, and not resist the powers, and pay them what is due to them. Peter says we shall submit to every ordinance of kings and governors, for the Lord's sake. Neither of these intend that we shall obey, regardless of what Christ has taught. They suffered martyrdom rather than disobey God, or violate the principles of the gospel.

Government is necessary; it is right and good; and it cannot exist without law; and law must be supported by the sword. No law would be regarded without the sword was with it. All officers in the government are supported by the sword, and their duties discharged by virtue of its power. It is plain, then, that if the New Testament forbids the use of the sword to Christians, it must also forbid them to hold office in the government; for these all belong to the same kingdom and are supported by the same power. If they cannot exercise this duty themselves, then they cannot consistently delegate it to another. If they cannot themselves use the sword, they cannot consistently put it into the hands of another to use for them. The true principle of non-resistance, therefore, separates its possessor entirely from the kingdom of this world. They are in the world, but not of the world; and as they are not of it, so they have no right to take part in its affairs, or seek redress at its hands for any grievances they may have suffered from any source, or from any cause. It would be unreasonable that they seek protection, or assist in electing officers, or make and shape laws, or direct the policy of

a foreign power, especially if they will not share the burden and responsibility of its support or defense in the hour of danger. They live in the kingdom of this world by its tolerance; and if the world think them worthy to dwell amongst them in peace, and let them enjoy the rights and privileges of citizens, they accept the favor with gratitude, and are in duty bound to be obedient to all their laws and regulations, and to pay all taxes, duties, fines, or whatever rates or levies the government may see fit to impose upon them. This duty, the Apostle Paul says, we shall make conscience of; not from fear of the penalty which would follow a refusal, but for conscience sake. The kingdom of this world has power over the things of the world, and whatever portion of its goods we have possession of, when they ask it of us, it is our duty to give it. It is theirs, and they only ask their own when they demand it of us. We recognize and acknowledge the authority of the government over our bodies, and all we possess. When government demands our personal service, in any matter which is contrary to what God's Word teaches, we may resign our bodies into their hands, to bear whatever they see fit to visit upon us. Resist, we dare not; it would be contrary to Paul's teaching. Obey them where God has forbidden, we cannot; therefore, submission is the only course they can pursue.

I have before said, we find no fault with the government for the course it has pursued, or is now pursuing. We do not pretend to say whether its course to the South has been just or unjust. Herein the wisdom of God is displayed. The duty of His children is the same, whether they live North or South; or whether the government has dealt justly or unjustly; whether the rebellion is justifiable or unjustifiable. Their duties cannot be affected by what the world does. We have hitherto been well contented under the power which has dominion over us. We acknowledge that it has been an ordinance for good to us, and feel grateful for the favor it has hitherto shown us, and feel it to be our duty to pray the Lord for His blessing upon those who have been instruments in His hand in dispensing this great favor; and that He will further endow them with wisdom and discretion, so that they may be able to discern what is right and just; and, above all, that He may give them grace to know His truth, and a willing mind to obey it.

But to pray for the success of any measure or policy of the

government, or to pray for the success of the army, North or South, I find no warrant for in the gospel, either in letter or spirit. God sees not as man sees; His ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. No man can stay His hand, or say: "What doest thou?" It may appear very desirable to us that the Union should be restored, slavery abolished, and other reforms instituted under the restored Union; but God may have higher objects in view than it is possible man can divine. No one can be otherwise than pained at the thoughts of the effusion of blood this war has induced; at the great suffering consequent upon it. That His object may be speedily accomplished, should be our earnest prayer, and that men everywhere, both friend and enemy, may turn to the Lord with all their hearts, and find grace and favor with Him, should be our sincere and earnest prayer.

We do not recognize those as true non-resistants who profess to have conscientious scruples about bearing arms, and yet identify themselves so far with the kingdom of this world, as to appeal to the powers for protection from suffering, or to redress any grievance they may suffer; who will serve what are called civil offices, under the powers that be; or who will vote for officers to make or execute laws in the kingdom of this world; or such as will not go to the battle-field themselves, but will hire substitutes to go, and do that for them which, they say, they dare not do themselves.

True non-resistants do not put their trust in an arm of flesh. God has promised to care for them, and in Him they trust. They do not profess to believe that God will protect them from suffering, but He is able to do so, if it is His will; and if it is not His will, man cannot prevent it. If He wills it, He has a purpose in it, and we should pray the Lord that His purpose may be attained in us, and we only be made worthy to suffer for His name, and not do anything whereby God may be dishonored. They know that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. They glory neither in their wisdom, in their might, nor in their riches; but they glory in this, that they know the Lord, who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth. Their life and worldly goods are in the hands of the Lord. He gave them, and He has many ways by which to take them away again. Their concern is not so much how they may preserve these, as it is to preserve the life which is begotten in the soul, by the power of the

incorruptible seed of the Word of God. They look upon the commotions in the world as being in the hand of the Lord, who can control them according to His pleasure ; and the interest they might take in them, or the efforts they might make to control them, could have no effect, except the effect it would have on themselves, in drawing their minds and affections away from more important objects.

The world has not this trust in God. Their all is in the world. Their treasure is earthly, and their heart and affections are with their treasure, on earth. To preserve this treasure is their object ; and as they are carnal, so they resort to carnal means to effect their end. This is natural and reasonable, and so long as they resort to fair and honorable means, are not at all to be censured.

Since the commencement of the present war, when the War Department called for fresh levies of troops, and when our State was threatened with invasion, people have collected money to arm and equip militia, for local or State service, and also for bounty to induce men to volunteer in the national service. This is not inconsistent for the world, or such as profess that it is the duty of Christians to take up arms in defense of their rights and country. But it is certainly inconsistent in those who profess to be non-resistant, to pay, or arm others, to go and do what they say is wrong for themselves to do.

The principle of non-resistance is, that God is the portion of the believer, and no harm can befall those who trust in Him. If He suffers them to be robbed, plundered of their goods and property, they do not look upon it as being necessarily a harm to them. God has said, all things must work together for good to those that love Him. This consideration induces an exercise in their minds, which will bring peaceable fruits of righteousness, from the chastening of the Lord. God has given them the Holy Spirit, and this affords joy, comfort and consolation, under any bodily affliction or deprivation with which they can be visited. They can therefore thank God that he has given them a treasure which man cannot take from them.

It would be a very gross violation of this principle for non-resistants to show their reliance in, or dependence on an arm of flesh, by joining in with the world, to contribute money for bounty to induce men to volunteer, or to arm and equip men to go forth

and defend their person and property. They are weak flesh, with all other men; and this flesh will ever shrink from suffering. Their weak and timid nature may suggest the desire to see a strong army stand between them and danger, and even feel a secret wish, or be gratified to see men enlist for defense. These are the natural promptings of our perverse nature, at which every faithful believer will be alarmed, and will be more concerned to resist this evil, or more fearful of being overcome by it, than they will be about the enemy of the State. They will pray God to enable them to overcome this enemy, and deliver them from its power; and also that, if it is His will to permit the enemies of the country to inflict any injury on their person or property, that He would give them grace to bear it in true Christian submission, and in all trials to walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing. It would be very inconsistent to indulge or gratify this weakness, by yielding ourselves up in obedience to the flesh. Christ says we shall "be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves." The dove will flee from the falcon till it is captured, when it submits without resistance. It would seem as if the disciples of Jesus might use their natural reason, or ingenuity, to escape capture or injury by their enemies, but must be harmless when captured, and never prevent capture by defense; flee, or secrete themselves, but never resist evil.

There is at the present time quite an excitement in the country on account of the pending draft. Meetings have been held in the different sub-districts to devise means to induce men to enlist, so as to make up the quota of men required for each township. This is all right and proper, in men who do not profess to be defenseless; and many are induced to engage in it from motives of humanity or consideration for the feelings of their neighbors, upon whom it would operate seriously. But how can those who profess to be disciples of Jesus Christ, and say as such, Christ has forbidden them to fight, join in with our opponents, and pay men to go and fight for them, or in their stead! It is said: "It is to avoid the draft;" but by what means? Inducing other men to go in our stead! Any one can see that there is no consistency here. If it is wrong for me to go, it is wrong to pay another to go for me. One of two motives must induce men to engage in this course; either to place men in the army to fight, or else to avoid the inconvenience, or save money by getting the substitute cheaper

than the commutation fee. True reliance upon God (which every Christian should have), will cause us to adhere closely to His word or commandments, with a full assurance that He will make a way to escape, without violating the principles of His gospel. But in saying God will make a way to escape, I do not wish to be understood that He will make such a way that we will escape without personal inconvenience and suffering. God has suffered some of His most faithful children to be severely tried by personal affliction; but yet He sustained them in faith and love, so that they could overcome and bear what, to our natural sense, would seem impossible to endure. The work which God has wrought in the soul of the believer, is what He has promised to protect; and this is the believer's most precious treasure. He is willing to sacrifice every thing else, rather than lose this, or dishonor his God by transgressing His command or violating the principle of His gospel. God has brought the highest honor to His name, by the suffering of His children; and should we shrink from any thing that would bring honor to the name of our God? If we have not the confidence that God will support us in faith, and strengthen us so as to enable us to be faithful, we dishonor God by unbelief; and if we are not willing to endure the loss of all things for His sake, we cannot be true disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is urged that we pay the commutation fee and the war tax, and that these are used for war purposes, and that the case is parallel with that of paying to induce volunteering, or buy substitutes. The world does not profess to be willing to suffer loss and inconvenience, if it can be avoided by personal resistance or defense. When they take such measures as before alluded to, they act rationally and consistently. The government is founded on this principle, and cannot exist without the sword, and, whenever necessity requires it, must use the sword; and Paul says, for this purpose we also pay tribute. It is due to the government, and we shall pay to all their dues. The commutation fee, and what is called "war tax," is no more "war tax" than any other tax we pay to keep up the government; and I am no more violating my non-resistant principles, if I pay one, than I do if I pay the other.

I have said before, all the estate or property we own, we hold only by the tolerance and authority of the powers that be. The

powers have authority over all property, and have a right to demand so much of it as they have need of. This we acknowledge, and have no right to refuse giving it to them, or ask what use they intend making of it. If I buy property with a ground rent, or lien of any kind on it, that part or amount is not mine, any more than if I had not bought the property. I have no right to withhold the payment of that money, any more than I have a sum of money that I have borrowed, or other debt contracted. Thus it is with land, and all property. The government originally owned all the land. It sold it to settlers, under its patent; they hold it on condition of paying such rates and levies as the government may demand. Then, when we pay whatever tax is asked of us, we only give to it its due, as we would pay any other debt due; and for this reason Paul says we shall do it for conscience sake. Every honest man makes conscience of withholding anything which is due to another, and so every true Christian makes conscience of returning his property, fairly and faithfully, to the officers of government, and punctually paying what it requires of him, with as little right to ask or inquire what use they design making of it, as they have to ask what use the person proposes to make of the money he has lent to us. There is, therefore, a very great difference between what we pay voluntarily, or without sanction of law, and what we pay on demand of the powers. If a person comes to me, and solicits a donation to give as a bounty to induce men to volunteer in the army, or to equip men to go and fight, by giving it, I lay off a testimony that I have an interest in, and desire the cause to progress, when, at the same time, I do not know that I am not arming men to fight against what God designs to do. But if I owe a man a sum of money as a debt, and he comes and demands it, and tells me he intends it to arm and equip himself to go to war, I have no right to withhold payment. It is his own, and he has a right to do with it as he pleases.

I would make no difference between paying a man to go to war, or going myself. I would not consider that I would any more violate the spirit of the gospel in one case than the other; neither do I consider that I am any more violating the command of the Saviour if I serve as a general in the field, or a soldier in the ranks, than I do if I serve as sheriff of the county, or justice of the peace, or cast my vote for member of Congress, Governor,

or President of the United States; and would not make one iota more conscience to do one than the other. I say more; they that vote for officers in the government, and use its power and authority to protect their rights and property, or appeal to law for justice, and yet refuse to defend the government in the time of need, are neither faithful to the kingdom of Christ or that of this world.

There are great numbers of professed non-resistants in the land, who have never experienced the work in their souls upon which non-resistance is founded, and are, consequently, ignorant of its operation and power. They have, perhaps, read the gospel, and heard the subject argued or treated upon, and perceive that war and violence are forbidden, and so embrace the doctrine in a legal spirit, but do not discern the spirit or principle contained in the command, or never experienced the work upon which the command is based.

No observance of outward commandments, however strict, will make us children of God, or heirs of the promise. The religion of Jesus Christ consists of a living principle, begotten and born in the soul, the fruit of which is obedience to his commandments. The fruit must follow the birth, and where it does not exist, it is positive evidence that the principle does not exist; therefore the Saviour says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say?" Paul says: "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *faith that worketh by love.*" Love is the principle which dwells in the soul of the believer, and the fruits of obedience must flow from it, or it is evidence that the principle does not exist. All the commands of the gospel are to be considered fruits of the spirit—fruits of the work of conversion, or new birth. To take it in any other sense, would be to make a law out of the gospel.

The summary of the foregoing argument is, that God created man in the beginning, in such a state of purity and holiness, that he was fitted to enjoy communion or fellowship with God. The image in which he is said to have been created consisted in the Spirit, or Divine love which the soul possessed. In this state man needed no external law to govern him. The Spirit and love of God influenced him, and led him to do what was right and just.

From this state man fell by transgression. His soul was defiled by sin, and he thereby rendered unfit to stand or dwell in the presence of God. Here his relation was changed, from saint to sinner. He died to the image in which he was created, and, becoming the servant of sin, may be said to have received a new image. Instead of the influence of the love of God, he fell under the influence of self-love. This corrupted as well as defiled him, and violence and injustice followed as fruits. In consequence of these changed circumstances, government became necessary, and God, in mercy to man, instituted it. God promised man restoration, but the promise did not change his relation till the promise was fulfilled. In the meantime, God gave man a law suited and adapted to his circumstances, but promised him a better law in time. This law, with all the commandments, could not cleanse man from sin, or change his nature or relation to God, but only served to make him more sensible of his want. Those who believed had promise of future favor; but those who did not believe, were, and remained in the same condition as if no promise had ever been given.

Christ, the promised woman's seed, came in the fullness of time, and shed His blood for the sins of the whole world. Those who believed on Him were changed in their relation to God, by having their sins washed away. They were now no more sinners, but are called saints. They were made partakers of the merits and virtues of Christ, and in this changed relation were fitted to stand in the presence of God, and enjoy fellowship with Him. These were promised the gift of the Holy Ghost, by which their natures were changed by the shedding abroad of the love of God in their hearts.

These now were brought into the relation to God in which man was before the fall. Self-love (that work of the devil,) was destroyed, and the love of God shed abroad in the heart in its stead.

Now, as the law and commandments in the Old Testament were given to suit the circumstances, nature and relation of man at that time, it is quite reasonable that, when this was so completely changed as to lead the Saviour himself to call it a "new birth, renewed, converted or transformed" state, it is not at all strange or unreasonable that He should give him a different law,

and commandment, from what he was under before. The first was not suitable to his present circumstances, and God now gives him such as are suitable. God had given man no government before the fall. He needed none. Because he gave it to him after the fall is no-proof that God had changed. Man had changed, but God had not. No more is it any proof that He had changed, because He gave man a new law, in his new relation under the gospel. That which made government necessary was taken away, and a self-governing principle reinstated, and they needed no government more.

All men did not believe the gospel. These were not changed. They remained under the old law, and relation they were in before Christ came. To these, government was still necessary, and they remained under the old law and commandment, as they were before. Christ's commands are not given to these. This is the reason why the Saviour and the apostles still recognized government. But they mention nothing of government amongst themselves, and nothing of the conduct or duty of a believer in the government.

This is the reason why people lose themselves in the gospel. They look at the commands in the New Testament, as given to all men alike; and as government is recognized there, they cannot see how this can be conducted on non-resistant principles. But leave the government to the world, under the command which God gave them, and separate the kingdom of Christ and that of this world, and the solution is simple and easy.

Christ has chosen his disciples out of the world. They have no promise of temporal good or happiness, but the contrary. Their promise is in the world to come. The Spirit which they possess renders them happy and contented in any sphere of life. So long as the world tolerates them, they are contented; but if they will not let them dwell in peace, they flee to another city or place; and so they are true pilgrims and strangers on earth, having no certain abiding-place. Their hope and prospects are in the world to come. They are well contented that the dead may bury their dead, if they are only permitted to follow Christ.

PART SECOND.

NO CONCORD BETWEEN CHRIST AND BELIAL.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are revealing wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." *Matt. vii. 15, 16.*

"Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men: judge ye what I say." *1st Cor. x. 14, 15.*

As there is a principle underlying the command of non-resistance, so there is the same principle underlying every outward duty or command in the gospel. Obedience to these outward commands does not bring us acceptance with God, if we are not in possession of the principle that underlies it. This principle is the Spirit and love of God, which we come to possess by conversion; and for this reason the Saviour so earnestly urged the necessity of being born again. By the fall, man lost this principle, and fell under the power of the flesh, or carnal will; and, by conversion, this evil principle of the flesh is overcome or destroyed, and the Divine nature, or love of God, is again restored. So long as we are not converted, so long the flesh reigns supreme. We are carnal. But when we are converted, the Spirit gets the ascendancy, and the flesh is kept in subjection by the power of the Spirit. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other." If we are not in possession of this Spirit, we have no promise of eternal life. Paul says (*Rom. 8th*): "So then they that are in the flesh, *cannot please God.* But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. *Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of His.*" Paul further says, in the same chapter: "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. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Here the word of God makes a very clear distinction, or separation, between flesh and Spirit, or between the carnal and spiritual mind. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" and "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." The same principle is here set forth by the Apostle Paul, which Jesus Christ advanced to the woman of Samaria. He there says, John iv.: "The *true worshipers* shall worship the Father in *spirit and in truth*, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him *must* worship Him in spirit and in truth." It must be clear to every one, that no one can worship in spirit who does not possess the Spirit, and according to what Christ here teaches, they cannot then be true worshipers. Then they must be untrue, or false; and as all false worship is idolatry, then it follows that the worship of all carnal, unconverted, or spiritless persons must be idolatrous.

For this reason, truly converted persons, who are in possession of the Spirit and love of God, as the principle which underlies all the commands of the gospel, cannot unite to worship or commune with such as are carnal, and walk after the flesh. Those who are converted and possess the Spirit, are called believers; and Paul says (2d Cor. vi.): "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" Paul addressed these words to his brethren as fellow believers, and says: "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people." It is very plain that Paul makes out the believer to be righteous, to be in the light, and to be in Christ; whilst he makes out the unbeliever to be unrighteous, to be in darkness, to be in concord with Belial, and, as an infidel, to be in agreement with idols.

The principle of love, with which the believer is possessed, must then have the effect upon him, to induce him to bear the strongest testimony against his unbelieving friends that he has in his power; and for this reason the apostle tells him to "come

out from among them, and be separate, and not touch the unclean thing." Again he says: "Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." Now, if believers would join in worship with such unconverted idolators, would they obey the command of Paul here given? Would it be fleeing from idolatry? Or would it be coming out from among them? Paul says, we shall have "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."

Amongst the nations of old, God never countenanced any idolatrous worship, or approved any service of the Israelites, which was not in accordance with what he had instituted. They might be as zealous as they would in their exercises and sacrifices, yet God would not countenance any other than that which he had instituted. He called it abomination, and said they should away with it. Neither did his faithful prophets and priests join in their idolatrous worship. They separated themselves, and would take no part with the multitude. When Elijah thought he was alone left of those who were faithful, the Lord told him He had yet remaining seven thousand men, *who had not bowed their knees to Baal, or kissed his mouth.* Will our friends who charge us with being self-righteous, because we cannot unite with all other professed worshipers in their service, charge Elijah and these seven thousand men, with being self-righteous and uncharitable? There is no difference between the two. The unbelieving or spiritless worshiper has not a whit more promise in the Word of God than the worshiper of wood and stone. Pure and undefiled love, or charity, constrains its possessor to deal plainly with all men, without respect of person. The professor, as well as the non-professor, shall be reprov'd, rebuked and exhorted, with all long-suffering and doctrine; and if it would be encouraging an assembly of wicked and immoral men to go in amongst them and be silent spectators of their games or frolics, would it not also be encouraging an assembly of unconverted men, who would profess to be engaged in worshiping God, to go in amongst them and be silent spectators; much more if we would join with them in their exercises? Would it not be more consistent with love or charity to protest against their course and reprove them; so that, by the blessing of God, he might make them sensible of their error, and lead them to repentance and life? The Lord told the prophet of old, to "cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet,

and show my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins." Now, Israel and the house of Jacob professed the same doctrine and worship, as the prophet Isaiah did. Was it then uncharitable for the prophet thus to declare?

If, then, the position is made out, that it is consistent with love, and is the duty of a child of God, to reprove, in the most pointed manner, those who they *know* are destitute of the Spirit of God, and yet ignorantly or hypocritically pretending to worship God, it only remains to inquire whether we have any criterion whereby we *may know* that they are such.

God has withheld from man both the power and the right to judge. Nevertheless, Christ has told His disciples whereby all men should know that they are such; and He also gave them a rule whereby *they* should know whether those who profess to be, really are disciples. These rules must be infallible. Christ said to His disciples: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." It must be the will of God, that both these facts should be known—known to the world that the believer is a disciple, and known to the disciple, that the tree is not good, or that the wolf in sheep's clothing is a false prophet.

The world loves its own, also, and Christ said, the publicans and sinners love and do good to those who do the same to them. The love which the disciples bear to each other, must then be something different from what the world shows; otherwise it would not distinguish them from others. Love can only be known to exist in others, by their deeds and actions. Nothing can convince one man that I love another, but my conduct toward him. John says, we shall "not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth;" and, that we may not be deceived in regard to what constitutes true love, Christ and the apostles have given us such precepts, by which we can distinguish between true and feigned love. Christ knows that we are weak and erring creatures, and that it would occur that one brother would trespass against another, and that the enemy of all good would take advantage of this, to tempt and excite to breaches of love. Therefore he gave the plain directions that "if thy brother trespass against thee, tell him of 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 an heathen man and a publican." Paul says: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one, in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." John says: "*Hereby* perceive we the love of God, *because* He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." If brethren walk faithfully in this rule, they show a distinguished love, and man must close his eyes to the force of reason and truth, if he does not recognize a principle in them which the world does not possess. Paul's command here makes it the duty of one brother to labor to restore another, whether the fault was committed against himself, or whether it in any way concerned him personally, or not. The world does not usually concern itself to reform one that commits an error. They may talk about it, and spread the fault abroad, but they do not labor to recover the erring; and, if the fault is committed against themselves, they usually complain and speak to others about it, much rather than to the offender; and, if they speak to him at all, it is rarely in a meek and gentle spirit. The believer, who is in the true love of God, cannot pass by; and, however much it may go against his natural feelings, he is constrained by love to the soul of his brother, to address him in such manner and spirit as he deems most likely to win him, or work conviction on his mind. John says: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Therefore, when they do good and communicate, and suffer for their brother, even to the laying down of their life for him, they show the fruits of love, and men can comprehend it as such.

Now this spirit, faithfully and honestly obeyed and carried out, *must* work conviction in the heart; for it is said, by it *all men shall know* that we are his disciples. The world may reproach, defame, malign and persecute the children of God, as much as they will, they cannot help, and in their heart they do still bear witness to the power of truth; for Christ has said, *all men shall know*; therefore they *must know*.

Christ further told his disciples to "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye *shall know* them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit, *neither can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."

Christ must have intended that his disciples should know false prophets, or he would not have told them to beware of them. And to beware of them, they must also know them, or they could not do this. To know them, they must have an evidence by which to do so; and in so important a matter, this test must also be a certain one. Therefore the Saviour gave them an unerring rule: "Ye *shall know* them by their fruits; a good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit."

In saying to the disciples that they should beware of false prophets, Christ must have intended that they should make some distinction between them and the true prophets. The prophets taught the people what was the will of God, and if the disciples *knew* any to be false, and were told to beware of them, what would be more natural, than to withdraw themselves from hearing them? and especially as Christ further says: "Take heed that no man deceive you." The fruit which the Saviour here speaks of as being the test of its producer's quality, must evidently be the fruits of the Spirit. "Every tree (the Saviour says) *is known* by his own fruit." "A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil." By nature we are all evil, and all carnal, and walk according to the flesh, and bring forth its fruits or works, and are represented by a corrupt tree. By the transgression of our first parents, we fell from the Spirit, and under the flesh; and so long as we are in the flesh, so long the works of the flesh do manifest themselves by our words, deeds and actions. The evil treasure of the heart is our self-love, carnal affections and will; which has emanated from the devil, and forbids the carnal mind to be subject to the law of God. From this principle or spirit, the works of the flesh flow, or are brought forth, and are called its fruits. In those who are converted, this spirit or principle of evil is subdued; and the Spirit and love of God, which was lost in the fall, is restored,

and now controls the believer. This is the good treasure of the heart, and now, since the Holy Spirit has the control of the heart, and has power to overcome the evil treasure, the good fruits of the Spirit must be brought forth.

This is the infallible test which the Saviour has given to His disciples, by which they shall know the false prophets and every professor; for "*every tree* is known by his own fruit." The false prophets to whom the Saviour alludes cannot be of a lewd, vicious and immoral character. They "*come to you in sheep's clothing*;" that is, they appear in the garb of sanctity; they are decent, moral, upright in their dealings and intercourse with man; but still there is an infallible test in their fruits, by which the disciples "*shall know* them;" and yet they are forbidden to judge.

The purpose of the enemy of all good is to hinder the work of God from prospering, by every way he can; and he has no better way to affect this purpose, than by preventing obedience to the commands of the Saviour. Therefore he seeks to screen his false prophets from the light in which they may be known, by hiding them behind the command not to judge. What is the reason that there is so much holy horror expressed at the thought of judging, and never a warning given to beware of false prophets? The devil is the prince of darkness, and his object is to keep man in darkness, for there he can carry on his work to purpose; but as the light makes manifest, he shuns this, and tries to keep his emissaries from coming to the light, so that their deeds do not be reprov'd. Christ says: "Every one that *doeth* evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that *doeth* truth, cometh to the light, and that his *deeds* may be manifest, that they are wrought in God."

To "know a man by his fruits," cannot be judging him, for Christ commanded the one and forbade the other. There must, therefore, be a distinction. Paul says of Timothy: "He professed a good profession, before many witnesses;" and thus a man might make a good and sound gospel profession, that no one could object to; but, if we would know that he was immoral in his conduct, or led a life inconsistent with that profession, we would know, by these fruits, that he could not be what he professes; and by saying so, or telling him that, in the course of life he is leading, he cannot be saved, we would not be judging him.

By his fruits we would know him, as the Saviour has commanded. But if there was nothing in his walk and conversation inconsistent with this good profession, and we would yet undertake to condemn him, or say he is not a disciple of Jesus, then we would judge, and transgress the command of Christ. But if one comes to us, and is moral, and of good deportment, so that he might in his outward conduct resemble a disciple of Jesus, and would yet profess a doctrine that is not according to Godliness, or would not profess the doctrine of Christ, we *must* know that Christ has not sent him. The fruit of his lips would prove that he is a false prophet, and we would not be judging him by shunning him; for God's Word has already judged him, and we would only be obeying what Christ has commanded. A little reflection must convince every candid mind of the importance of rightly understanding the intention of the Saviour, in giving these two commands. If His disciples should undertake to make themselves judges of motives, or intentions, how much evil and injustice might not be done to innocent persons, and the door of his house be shut, or closed against some of Christ's little ones? Again, if they did not observe the precaution, to take heed to the doctrine and life of those who profess, what leaven would be introduced into the church! And the wolf in sheep's clothing would soon kill, destroy and scatter the lambs of Christ.

But it is objected, that we thus make ourselves judges of what Christ does teach, and reject the opinion of all other men, and say we are right and all others wrong. But what then does Christ mean when he says: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in *sheep's clothing*, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye *shall know* them?" Paul to the Romans, says: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the *doctrine* which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they are such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." The Lord Jesus Christ taught, prayed for and insisted on unity in the Church, and such a unity as could be comprehended by the world; for, in His prayer to His Father, Christ desired that His disciples should be one, as He and the Father are one, "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." John says, Christ "died to bring together in one the

children of God that are scattered abroad." Now, any doctrine that would cause division is contrary to Christ's doctrine, and therefore it is false, and Paul tells his brethren they shall avoid them. Why? Because such do not serve the Lord Jesus Christ! They are none of His. In our day the popular church is very much divided, and the teachers are very numerous who countenance it, and say, it may be so, and still be right. They tell people only to embrace religion, and unite themselves with any of these numerous "branches," as they are called. Now, is this not contrary to Christ's doctrine? and, according to Paul, they should be marked and avoided. Paul also charges Timothy to instruct the Ephesians to "teach no other doctrine," and he himself shall "take heed unto himself, and the doctrine;" and John says: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." Does not this agree with what Christ says, and show how John understood Christ? "Beware of false prophets, which come to you," says Christ. John says: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not," etc. This shows how John taught us to "beware," and what the consequences will be to such as greet them with God speed. In order to carry out these instructions of Christ and the apostles, we must have a sure rule or guide, so that we may certainly and surely know what the doctrine of Christ is.

The evil principle, which I have observed is the cause of the bringing forth of the fruit in the unbeliever, is self-love, which is the cause of our obeying the lusts and desires of the flesh and the mind. Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy the work of the devil, and this principle being one of the chief of his works, and antagonistic to the work of the Lord, he levels some of his chief denunciations against this principle. Christ did not deal much with special sins, but leveled His shafts against the principle which is the parent of sin. In denouncing the principle, he denounces every species of irregularity which arises from that source. Among the first of Christ's declarations, or at least prominent among them, is, "Deny thyself, take up thy cross." He that would save

his life shall lose it, but he that will lose it, for mine and the gospel's sake, shall find it." Not a single command did He give, but what is at variance with self-love ; not a single sentiment did he utter, which will in any way harmonize with this principle.

The good principle, which constitutes the good treasure of the heart, from which the good fruit flows, is the love of God shed abroad in the heart of those who are converted, by the Holy Spirit. Upon this principle, all the commands of Christ are based ; and, as Christ does not deal so much in special sins, so He does also not dwell so much on special virtues, but a great deal on the principle which commends the virtues to God. The same act may be sin and abomination to God in one person, and pleasing and acceptable to Him in another. One person may contribute to relieve the necessity of another, from a motive of vanity, to be seen of men, and have their esteem. This proceeds from the reprobated principle of self-love before alluded to, and it is displeasing to God. Another may contribute to relieve the same necessity from a motive of love to God, and its consequent fruit of good-will to men ; and the act is a sacrifice, with which God is well pleased. Those who possess this good treasure, or Divine principle, do by its influence detect every approach of Satan through their flesh, by which he would influence them with this evil spirit, and by the power of the Holy Spirit they are able to overcome the deeds of the body, and keep it in subjection, and take their thoughts captive under the obedience of Christ. Self-love is the cause of all strife, quarreling, contention, war and bloodshed. James says: "From whence come wars and fightings amongst you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" And Peter says: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." All extravagance in fashions, and fashionable diversions, are for the gratification of this principle, and proceed from the flesh. Let any one pause and reflect, what is the ground that causes people to adopt modes or fashions of dress, which serve no kind of useful purpose, but are often-times exceedingly inconvenient, and besides so expensive as to make their cost inconvenient also, and burdensome? Is it not the principle of self-love which the Saviour has said we must deny? This is certainly a command of the Saviour, and when we violate

it, we show an evil fruit ! Now, when we see men do those things which cannot be prompted by anything else than this evil principle, we cannot help but *know* them to be such, as the Saviour has commanded us to beware of. Those who, by painful experience, have learned to know this evil principle, cannot fail to know what its fruits are, for Christ has said they *shall know* them.

Now, as love is the evidence by which all men are to know the disciples of Christ, "All men shall know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another ;" and as I have said, this love must have something to distinguish it from carnal love, and *must and will* convince the world of the truth also, however much they may desire the contrary conviction ; then the contrary must convince, or prove the opposite. The want of this love must prove that they are not his disciples. When one brother can see another err, and not use the means of love which Christ has given, for the purpose of restoring him, he cannot love him ; and the disciples of Jesus may know, by this fruit, that he is not in possession of the Spirit of God. When Christ has commanded us to love our enemies, and do good to them, and we see men, contrary to this command, fighting and killing them, there can be no difficulty in determining that these are fruits which flow from the evil treasure of a man's heart.

The Apostle Paul, in his epistles, is more specific in naming the different acts which constitute violations of the principle which underlies the chief commands of the gospel. That which the Saviour terms the "evil treasure of the heart," the apostle usually calls the flesh ; and the "good treasure of the heart," he calls Spirit. In other places, they are distinguished by light and darkness. Paul says (Romans viii.) : "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But *ye* are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. *Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.* And, if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin ; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. Therefore, brethren, we are

debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 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. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For the Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God: And, if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

If we read this testimony of Paul, and believe it to be true, we can have no question in our minds that those who are destitute of the Spirit, or live after the flesh, cannot be disciples of Jesus Christ, nor can be true worshipers. There is no question but what the apostle intended we should know, and prove both ourselves and others, by the directions he here gives. For our conduct is to be entirely different toward the two classes. The one we are to have fellowship with, the other we are to avoid; because the flesh causes divisions and offenses. The one we are to comfort, encourage, build up and confirm; the other we are commanded to reprove, rebuke, exhort and warn. Now, how could we obey these commands, if we cannot distinguish? Or what purpose would they serve us, if we cannot know by them what our own and the relation of others is toward their God? Here is the fruit to which Christ has called our attention, and by which *all men shall know* the disciples, and by which the disciples shall also know the false prophet. But the Holy Spirit has left nothing to uncertainties. He has left the enemy no advantage over those who are seeking for truth, with a truly upright heart, and hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

Paul, in Galatians vi., says: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting;" and in chap. v., same epistle, he says: "This I say, then, walk in the Spirit; and ye *shall not* fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led by the spirit, ye *are not* under the law. Now, the works of the flesh are *manifest*, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness,

lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, *and such like*; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there *is no law*. And they that *are Christ's have crucified the flesh*, with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.

The apostle here makes a very clear distinction and separation between the flesh and the Spirit, self-love and the love of God; or the evil treasure of the heart, and the good treasure of the heart. He points out numbers of special acts, which he designates as proceeding from the flesh; and says, they "*are manifest*." Whatever is manifest, is and may be publicly known. So the works of the flesh may be known, and the apostle desires us to know that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. It is evidence that they do not possess the Spirit of God, for Paul says: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its lusts and desires." Then, when they do such things, it is evident that they have not "*crucified the flesh, with its lusts and desires*;" and, as a consequence, they cannot be Christ's; for they are not led by the Spirit, and "they that have not the Spirit of Christ, are none of his."

Now every one knows that numbers of the sects of Christendom, live in open violation of what Paul here teaches. I am not aware that any of the so-named churches openly avow that there is no harm in adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, murders and drunkenness; but it is well known that numbers of those of high standing in the church, are guilty at least of being drunken very frequently; and there is no notice taken of it by the church, or its minister. In regard to hatred, variance, wrath, strife, etc., the common occurrences are too well known to need more than merely to refer to them. How far are they from bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, temperance, etc. Paul says: "If we are in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Emulations and revelings are here named amongst

these works of the flesh, or fruits of the evil heart; that they which do them, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Emulation is defined as a desire to equal, or excel." It is, therefore, emulation which leads persons to follow the fashions of the world. If we look at the style of dress, mode of life, luxury and extravagance amongst the wealthy and fashionable churches, the style of their houses and furniture, and even of the churches and decorations, who can doubt that pride and vanity have not a large share in the motive which prompts them to such a course. If persons should even argue that they have no pride in their gay, fashionable and expensive dress and equipage, and deny the desire to excel, they must at least have the desire to *equal*, or they would not follow fashion when it is so often attended with great inconvenience. Paul says (Romans xii.): "Be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind." The carnal mind seeks conformity to the world, but the spiritual mind is transformed in its renewal. Besides this, the apostles have given us express commands, showing clearly their view of the spirit or principle which induced persons to pursue such a course of life.

Besides the manifest violation of the spirit of the gospel, which every one can see who has the least desire to ascertain the design of its expressions, Paul expressly says (1st Tim. ii.): "I will, therefore, in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety; *not in broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array*; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." The Apostle Peter also bears the same testimony, in nearly the same words, in chap. 3, of his first epistle.

The word reveling is defined to mean "feasting with noisy mirth." It is well known that many members of the popular churches attend parties and balls, dance and play, where there is usually eating and drinking to excess, and noisy mirth; and nothing but vain amusements, and frivolity. This is well known to the whole congregation, countenanced, or at least connived at, by their ministers, and is advocated by many as innocent or harmless.

The apostle, at the conclusion of this catalogue of vices, which he enumerates as proceeding from the flesh, intimates that these are not all the violations of the principles of the gospel that might

be named. After naming those as he did, he adds, "*and such like*," plainly indicating that all actions or deeds, prompted by the same principle which prompts those there named, are under the same reprobation. Paul also says, in Ephesians: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit," etc., and says: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Again he says: "Filthiness, *foolish talking and jesting* shall not once be named amongst them, as becometh saints." These are of the same "like," as those named in Galatians. And now let any candid mind, reflect upon what the apostles and Christ teach, in those Scriptures here quoted, and they *must* admit there is no comparison between the child of God as represented in the gospel, and these popular churches. Let every one ask himself, how can we obey those Scriptures, which command us to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, and not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, withdraw ourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, if we are not to *know* a corrupt tree from a good one? If it was not the intention of Christ and the apostles that the believers should *know* the true from false prophets, and a true believer from one who is only nominally so, why did they give such directions and commands?

I have mostly named only those corruptions which are defended and supported by these popular churches; but may we not well and truly say of them, as the apostles did of the Gentiles: "It is a shame even to speak of those things, which are done of them in secret." And here let me ask every one candidly to reflect upon what he himself knows of these things! Look at the great structure of popular religion; at the fighting, bickering, backbiting, slandering; how they call each other liars, traitors, scoundrels, and every evil name they can invent, and, when we say they cannot be Christians, they charge us with judging! Is not this amazingly inconsistent?

Christ says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and, "Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things which I command you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my

sayings." John says: "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments;" and, "He that sayeth, *I know* him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;" and, "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth."

Does not all this prove that those who live according to the flesh, and bring forth these evil fruits, are carnal, destitute of the Spirit and love of God, and are in darkness. It is our rebellious, stubborn heart which prevents us from obeying the commands of Christ, because they are at variance with our self-love. Samuel said to Saul: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as *iniquity and idolatry*." God never countenanced any worship of old which was not in accordance with His command. Whenever Israel departed from the command of God, He rejected their sacrifices, however rich or numerous they were. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord; I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. Your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them." All this was because they did not regard the Word of the Lord in His commandments. Saul was commanded to destroy Amalek. He should spare nothing, but utterly destroy "man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." But Saul spared the king, and kept the best of the oxen and sheep, and the chief of the things, to sacrifice to the Lord. But Samuel asked him: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" This act of Saul had a semblance of desire to honor God, but it was founded on a delusive idea. Whenever we depart from the Word of the Lord, our devices and imaginings are vain, and cause us to be rejected, as Saul was here rejected, for rejecting the Word of the Lord. God had given him a command, and he did not obey; and this was stubbornness, and the prophet says it is as idolatry. Saul had here set up an idol in his heart, in conceiving a sacrifice or offering contrary to God's Word. This was idolatry. Thus Paul says: "Covetousness is idolatry." This is because there is an object in the heart, which is prized or worshiped above God. Whatever we love more than God, is therefore our idol.

All worship, therefore, which is not dictated or instituted by God, is idolatry. Man's devices and commandments were ever declared to be abomination to God. True worship, under the law, was that which adhered closely to God's command, for without faith it is impossible to please God, and faith would bind its possessor to the Word of God. Under the gospel, the true worshippers worship God in spirit and in truth. Those who were destitute of faith of old, could not worship in faith, and those who are destitute of Spirit cannot worship in Spirit now. The true and faithful Israelites would not take any part in the idolatrous worship of their people. The Lord said to Elijah: "I have left me seven thousand in Israel, *all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal*, and *every mouth which hath not kissed him*." Every knee which had bowed unto Baal, and every mouth that had kissed him, were not the Lord's. If every transgression and disobedience under the law received a just reward, how shall we now escape, if we refuse to hear Him that speaketh from Heaven?

Paul tells the Corinthians: "Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God." The Gentiles were idolators, but they did not generally worship or sacrifice to devils professedly; yet the apostle classes them altogether, and says, the things which they sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils. But it does not matter what the object was of which they made images, or what it was which they sacrificed to, it was a devilish spirit which actuated them. There might be said to be but two spirits, one of God and one of the devil. John says, there are many spirits gone out into the world, but still there are only two sources from which they emanate, and are still in reality only two. The Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, would not prompt or lead any one to sacrifice to, or worship idols. All the idol, or false worship, or commandments of men, that have ever been instituted, are by the instigation of the devil; hence the apostle says: "What the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God."

Now, all false and erroneous worship is dictated by the same spirit as the sacrifices of the Gentiles were, and may in truth as well be said, to be a worshipping of devils, as the other is a sacrificing to devils. The Israelites, as a nation, never fell so deeply into idolatry as utterly to deny and forsake the worship of the God

of Israel, or to acknowledge the heathen deities, as being the only true Gods. They always valued themselves as being the children of Abraham, and God having brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and done them such signal favors. They made images and idols, and erected altars in groves and upon hills, contrary to the command of God; but they still had some of their own peculiar rites and ceremonies, of their distinctive service, attending it. Yet God complains more of their idolatry and abominations, than He does of the Gentiles. The same spirit which had led the Gentiles into their gross idolatry and abominations, had taken possession of Israel, and their service was of the same character in the sight of God.

The Apostle Paul says of the Gentiles: "When they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, etc. *Wherefore* God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." When the same spirit which led the Gentiles to become vain in their own imagination, took possession of the Jews, it led them into the same vain and sensual life, and even though they did not utterly deny the God of Israel, and still retained His name and a part of His rites, yet God complains of their idolatry, and says "it is abomination in His sight." And even when the Lord does not complain of their corrupting the ceremonial service, but it would seem as if they were very zealous in it, but yet, on account of their transgression of the moral law, God tells them He is weary of the multitude of their sacrifices, and says they shall away with their solemn feasts, etc., (Isaiah. i.) And when the Lord Jesus was in the flesh, He does not charge the Pharisees with open idolatry, but yet He says, they are of their father, the devil, and his lusts they will do. Their adherence to the name and form of the service, did not alter the character of the service, when the spirit which dictated the service was lost.

And now, let any one read the New Testament, and compare the instructions the Holy Spirit there gives, with the popular religion of the present day, and then ask his own heart, whether it is not as far from the Spirit of the gospel, as ever the Jews

departed from their commandment in the law, and even much further than the Pharisees were when the Saviour was on earth? And yet the one is called abominable idolatry, and the other children of the devil! Look at the war and bloodshed; look at the contention and strife, ambition, avarice, pride, hatred and variance; the vain ostentation in their churches; their luxury and extravagance; their amusements, plays, parties, theatres, circuses, fairs and social pastimes, and then inquire whether there is more of the spirit of the gospel in it, than there was of the law in Israel's service, at the time of their corruption.

Jesus Christ says we shall come to Him, and learn of Him; for He is "meek and lowly in heart." But where is the evidence of our modern popular worshipers having been with Jesus, or that they have learned these virtues of Him? I would ask, in what way do they differ from non-professors? Is there more difference between professors and non-professors, than there was between Jews and Gentiles? Do the professors, as a body, not show as much carnality, as much self-love, envy, vanity, irritability, and, in short, do they not live as much after the flesh as the mass of non-professors do? Can we then conclude that they are under any other spirit than that of the world? Jesus Christ and the apostles have given us the command to beware of false prophets; and not to be yoked together with unbelievers, and said: "By their fruits we *shall know* them." This, then, we hold, is not judging, but Jesus Christ has already judged, and given us His judgment.

The reason why we can take no part with these worshipers, or acknowledge them as brethren, is because we look upon it as being a spiritless exercise, and nothing less than idolatry. The same spirit which led men into idolatry of old, and the Jews to depart from the law of the Lord, has led to this carnal, irregular service; and we feel constrained, in obedience to the command of the Saviour and His apostles, to withdraw from their worship and reprove them, and bear a protest against all the unfruitful works of darkness, no matter under what guise or pretenses they are practiced.

We are accused of being selfish, uncharitable and self-righteous. The latter principle is highly offensive to God and man. No Christian can be self-righteous, for they cannot be a Christian till their own righteousness becomes as filthy rags to them, and

they, as humble beggars, come to cast all their virtues away, and accept of the merits and righteousness of another, and can continue to be Christians only so long as they continue to cast away their own and depend on the merits and righteousness of Christ. True charity is that which cries aloud, and spares not, regardless of person and profession. It reproveth, rebuketh, exhorteth and admonishes, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Self-love, or selfishness, seeks the favor and good will of man. We confess, that we feel this in the flesh as well as all other men do, and if we would let this influence us, it would lead us to such a practice as would secure us the good will of man. There is no practice in our profession which brings us so much reproach as this; and self-love, if it influenced us at all, would certainly not lead us to a course in which it has to suffer so much mortification. If we would even protest against the popular religion of our day as strongly in all respects as we do, yet would attend their worship and service occasionally, and only relax this one feature of our profession, it would secure us a very large degree of their friendship and favor, and also secure large accessions to our church. It would seem to me, therefore, that natural reasons would show that this cannot be the motive. But this we will admit, that if the motives attributed to us by our opponents, influence us, then our religion is vain. The destruction of this principle is the very object for which the religion of Jesus Christ was instituted, and it will effect this purpose; and where this purpose is not effected, there is also none of his religion, for they are antagonistic principles, and can no more exist together in the heart, than light and darkness can commune.

I have said in the foregoing part of this work, that the religion of Jesus Christ is reasonable and consistent. Now, every man who rises to preach the gospel, does by the act make a virtual profession that he is a converted man, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, who directs him what to teach. One teaches that it is our duty as Christians to take up arms and defend or fight for the country; another tells us the Holy Spirit teaches him that it is sin. This will suffice for my purpose. There might be many more such differences cited, but I will forbear. Now, can any reasonable person believe that these can both be instructed by this Spirit? This is neither reasonable nor consistent. Then it cannot

be the religion of Jesus Christ, or else it is not consistent. Paul says: "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us," etc. Now, if any two or more men would come to our President, professing to be ambassadors from any foreign power, and would represent the will of their sovereign very widely different, what would the head of our government do? He would evidently refuse to have anything to do with any one, until he would apply to the power to know who, or whether any of them, were his accredited agent. Thus every sincere and upright person must do—apply to Jesus and His Word, and there he will find an infallible guide.

Christ says (John x.): "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, is a thief and a robber; but he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." Christ is here evidently speaking of the visible Church. Into this, unconverted persons have climbed from the beginning of its institution. The invisible Church no unconverted person can enter. The visible Church is here compared to a fold of sheep, the shepherd or pastor of which must also have entered into the fold by true conversion, through Christ, the door. To such a shepherd, the porter (or Holy Spirit) openeth; he goeth before, and the sheep follow him, *for they know his voice, "and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers."*

Is not the Saviour's meaning here very plain? That He tells us as plainly as it is possible for language to do, that every unconverted person who enters the visible Church of Christ, is *a thief and a robber*; and especially such as assume to preach the gospel. Let the expression sound as offensive as it will, we must take it, as it is the *Word of Christ*. I and you, reader, or whoever we are, whatever we may think of ourselves, or whatever the world may think of us, if we have not been truly born again or converted, and thereby entered into the fold of Christ through Him, we are *a thief and a robber*. Turn it which way we will, we can make nothing else out of it; it sounds the same awful warnings in our ear.

All who enter into Christ are brethren of one family, and are here compared to sheep of one fold. The shepherd is the minister, or teacher, or spiritual guide of the external or visible

church or fold. It can be very easily comprehended, that it is important that he should himself have entered into Christ by true conversion; and that by a life of humility and self-denial, he also continue in him, so that Christ, by the Holy Spirit, may direct him what to teach: "To him the porter openeth." The Holy Spirit openeth the Word of eternal truth, to the true shepherd of Christ, so that he may lead and direct the sheep of Christ into the living pastures, and to the pure fountains of the living word of God. The sheep, or those who have entered the fold through Christ, or been truly converted, know his voice. They have themselves experienced the work of conversion, have felt what sin is, have also felt what the love of God is; and being thereby made partakers of the Divine nature, they know its influence, and they are also enabled, by this light, to distinguish what is truth and what is error. Therefore, when their shepherd speaks of these things, they do not sound strange to them; the voice is familiar; they have themselves experienced them. When the shepherd speaks to them of the mode by which Satan seeks to lead them away from the simplicity of Christ, and teaches them their duties, these all agree with the Spirit they have received, and they know the voice. Natural sheep know their shepherd, and they know his voice also; and they follow him wherever he leads them. Thus the true children of God will follow their teachers. "He goes before them," says the Saviour. He sets them a good example, and they follow after Him, as he does the shepherd and bishop of their souls, Jesus Christ.

The stranger is evidently intended to mean, one who has not entered the fold, or does not belong to the Church; but yet, assumes to be a shepherd or teacher. Christ says, the sheep know not his voice, *will not hear him*, but will *flee from him*. He can therefore not be in the Church, for faithful and obedient children of God would not tolerate such leaven in their body, as this stranger must be. The strange voice could not be tolerated there. He is evidently one of those false prophets which the Saviour told His disciples would come unto them in sheep's clothing of whom he said they should beware. John in his second epistle also says, they shall not receive those into their house, who come to them and do not bring the doctrine of Christ, neither shall they bid him God-speed. He is called a stranger, because he is

not a "fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God." He does not belong to the "household of faith," and is therefore a stranger. Whenever there is a family of children born of the same parents, any other one of different parentage is a stranger to them. He is of strange blood, and cannot be heir with, or enjoy the rights of a child. The children of God are born of the Spirit, and any one who is not converted, is not born of the Spirit, and is therefore a stranger; and when he speaks, his voice is strange. He speaks of, and teaches things which the children have not learned of Christ. When he teaches a doctrine differing from what Christ taught, it is strange to them. They "have not so learned Christ," and they *will not hear* it. They will *flee from* him, because they know not his voice.

I would here ask, is not every unconverted person a stranger (in this sense) to the children of God? Has not Christ here allusion to such as assume to be shepherds, or teachers? Does He not say the children or sheep *will not hear* them, but will *flee from* them? And does it not then follow, that those who hear and follow after such teachers, whose word and walk prove that they are not followers of Christ, *cannot be* sheep, or true children of God?

This stranger is also called a thief, and Christ says he comes not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. All teaching which differs from the doctrine of Christ, is dangerous and destructive. Every unconverted person is a stranger, and is at best blind. He may be deceived by Satan, and imagine himself called of God to preach, but such an one must be a blind guide, and will, together with those whom he leads, fall into the ditch, and perish. All such are strange and dangerous; and the Saviour says the *sheep will not hear them*; they will flee from them, because they know they steal, kill and destroy. They may not steal any earthly treasure, may not kill or destroy the body; but they steal the Heavenly treasure of the love of God, by infusing false doctrine into the mind, and instilling ideas and views which tend to the gratification of the flesh and the mind, thereby robbing the soul of the love of God, and poisoning it with false doctrine, by which the soul must die. Thus they steal, kill and destroy.

Now, if Christ has not given the sheep an evidence, whereby

they can surely know the stranger from the good shepherd, they could not know how to make the distinction which He here says they do. Christ says, they *will not hear a stranger*, but *will flee*. Then they *must* know him, or how could they do so? Then it is evident, also, that where there is a strange voice, those who do not flee from it, cannot be sheep; for Christ says *they will flee*.

The Saviour further calls this stranger, "a hireling," and says, "he careth not for the sheep." Christ gave his life for the sheep, and those who have been converted and entered into the fold through Christ the door, are made partakers of the Divine nature, and receive the mind of Christ, and have the love of God shed abroad in the heart through the Holy Ghost. These love the souls of their brethren, and would run any and every risk to secure the safety of the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. But the hireling has no further interest in the work he is engaged in than his wages, and when he sees these to be in danger, he will not work. The hireling has no interest in the sheep—he does not care for them—therefore, when he sees the wolf coming, he will flee. He sees his wages to be in danger, and these he will not risk. The devil is evidently the wolf here spoken of, or alluded to, and, it is said, he may be *seen* coming. "He *seeth* the wolf coming." The devil or wolf approaches the flock of Christ by working on the lusts and desires of the flesh and the mind, inclining them to light-mindedness and carnal enjoyments. This is first wrought in the minds and feelings of the individual, unperceived by any other; and if those whom he is approaching would be watchful, and flee to the great shepherd of their souls, the wolf could get no advantage, neither could the shepherd perceive his approach. But when he gets so much hold as to be perceptible in the walk and conversation, then the shepherd can see the wolf coming. This is by any of the fruits of the flesh manifesting themselves. Here they must labor as Christ and the apostles taught us, for the purpose of making the erring sensible of their decline. This is not done by declaiming in a general way against sin and the works of the flesh, but by laboring individually with those who are infected with leaven, as Christ taught. If the shepherd would see a wolf capturing a sheep, it would do no good to cry "wolf;" he would have to enter into combat with the wolf if he would rescue his sheep. When the lion and the bear took the

lamb out of the flock of which David was the shepherd, he "*went out after him*, and smote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by the beard, and smote him, and slew him." This was attended with danger to David, but he felt an interest in the sheep, and he did not flee at the approach of the wolf. It is not an uncommon thing, when a brother falls into error, or is captivated by the flesh, if the shepherd labors to make him sensible of his sin, the spirit or wolf will rise against *him*. This may bring him into danger and trouble, but the faithful shepherd is not deterred from doing his duty by any personal consideration. But the hireling who has no interest in the sheep, but the wool, who does not serve the Lord Jesus Christ, but his belly, fearing he may incur the displeasure of the offender, or his interests or reputation may suffer, passes by, and so the wolf catches and *scatters* the whole flock. How significant is this word, *scattereth*. The flock of Christ, or his fold, is a unit. "There are three-score queens, and four-score concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled, is *but one*, she is the *only one* of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her." (Songs of Solomon vi.) When the flock is scattered, it is evidence that the wolf has caught them. Take the church in its present popular sense, and it cannot be *scattered*. A thing to be scattered, must be in some kind of contact or proximity first; but the present nominal church is so *scattered* that no wolf could effect more, and is evidence that the wolf has long since been amongst them.

In Lev. xvii., the Lord says: "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." Christ and the apostles plainly instruct us how we shall labor with our brethren, so as not to suffer sin upon them; and if they will not reform, we shall hold them as a heathen man and publican. But who does not know that the most shameful irregularities occur in the great popular churches of the present day? Drunkenness, lying, cheating, backbiting, defaming and gossiping, are of frequent occurrence, and cannot help but come to the knowledge of the pastors; but we hear little of confessions, retractions or restitutions being made, or even a scriptural rebuke being administered—especially if the offender be a person of respectability in society, or of influence and good standing. I know there are many

persons of estimable moral character, amiability and virtue amongst them; but these also very well know, that what we assert is true, of numbers of their brethren. Thus the hireling flees, and the sheep are destroyed.

It is said Luther was so much disgusted, in his latter days, at the immorality of his people in Wittenberg, that he left the place in disgust, with the intention of spending the remainder of his days elsewhere. There is no doubt but Luther declaimed loudly and earnestly against these immoralities; but had he been a faithful shepherd, and taken none into the fold but such as gave evidence that they had entered into Christ, and then fed the flock with the pure living pastures of the Word of God, and faithfully defended them against the assault of the wolf, he would not have had to complain so bitterly of them.

John Wesley also reaped the bitter fruits of his remissness in his latter days. In his writings, he bears a strong testimony against the gaiety and fashions of his day. He says: "I exhort all those who desire me to watch over their souls, wear no gold, no pearls, or precious stones; use no curling of hair, or costly apparel, how grave soever. I advise those who are able to receive this saying, buy no velvet, no silks, no fine linen, no superfluities, no mere ornaments, though ever so much in fashion. Wear nothing, though you have it already, which is of a glaring color, or which is in any kind gay, glistening and showy; *nothing made in the very height of the fashion*; nothing apt to attract the eyes of the bystanders. I do not advise women to wear *rings, ear-rings, necklaces* (of whatever kind or color), or *ruffles*, which, by little and little, may shoot easily from one to twelve inches deep. Neither do I advise men to wear colored waist-coats, shining stockings, glittering or costly buckles or buttons, either on their coats or in their sleeves, any more than gay, fashionable and expensive perukes." He maintained that curling the hair, and wearing gold, precious stones and costly apparel, were expressly forbidden in Scripture, and that whoever says there is no harm in these things, might as well say there is no harm in stealing and adultery. In spite, however, of his exhortations, those of his own people who could afford it, "the very people that sat under the pulpit, or by the side of it," were as fashionably adorned as others of their own rank. "This," said Wesley,

“is a melancholy truth. I am ashamed of it; but I know not how to help it. I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that it is not my fault. The trumpet has not given an uncertain sound for near fifty years last past. I have borne a clear and faithful testimony. *In print, in preaching, in meeting the society, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I am, therefore, clear of the blood of those that will not hear; it lies upon their own heads. Let your dress be cheap, as well as plain, otherwise you do but trifle with God, and me, and your own souls.*”

This language shows, as plainly as language can show, that Wesley knew that such fruits were not of the kind to give the producer promise, else he would not have spoken of blood guiltiness. There is no doubt he did speak and write earnestly against them; but still, as a faithful shepherd, he had a further duty to perform. These people who thus violated his rule, were not truly humbled in heart, or they would not have required that he should have to direct them in these things. If it was vanity, or a desire to gratify the flesh, that induced them to act thus, the mere self-denial on account of Wesley's command, would not have made them better. His duty was to convince them of sin, and whence all sin comes from. If they could have been made sensible of the evil treasure of their hearts, which brought the desire for those things which are sinful, and from this sense been led to lay off their gaiety, and superfluity, he would not have cause to complain. There is no doubt Wesley took many a man into his congregation who had been a drunkard before conversion. But he did not receive him into his society on any confession, till he saw the fruits of his conversion in the reformation of life. If such a person had made ever so much profession of being converted and blessed, but would get drunk, steal, or commit adultery, Wesley would have said, he is either a hypocrite or grossly deceived, and unless he would repent of his sins, he could not be saved. Now, if, as he says, we might as well say there is no harm in adultery or stealing, as to say there is none in such extravagance of dress as he notices, and he took the one into his society, he might as well have taken the other in also. We are not informed whether these people did once lay off their vain dress, and afterward take it up again, or whether they never laid it off. But it does not matter; if he thought it was sin, and the word gave

him power, then, as a faithful sentinel on the watch-towers of Jerusalem, he should have refused such admittance into the house of God, until he had better evidence of a change of heart; and if they had given him that evidence before their admission, and he saw them inclining to a relapse to sin, his duty was, regardless of consequences to himself, to rescue the lamb from the grasp of the lion.

He says: "I might have been as firm (and I now see it would have been far better) as either the people called Quakers or the Moravian brethren. I might have said, this is our manner of dress, which we know is both scriptural and rational. If you join with us, you are to dress as we do; but you need not join us unless, you please. But alas! the time is now past." Wesley notices the inconsistency of the Quakers, in adopting so plain a dress, but being so fine and costly. Inconsistency will ever be the case where a rule, command or ordinance, is based on any command of man. If Wesley had adopted such a rule, his people would have run into some inconsistency, and whether or not, they would have been none the better for it. If the principle which underlies plainness in all our deeds and actions, is wanting, the adoption of rules, however "scriptural and rational," will not help us a whit! If the principle is begotten in the soul, the fruit will follow, as naturally as effect will follow cause, throughout all nature.

The late John Hersey, an itinerant preacher in the Methodist church, protested very loudly, both publicly and privately, against the extravagance and gaiety of the Methodists, in their churches, houses, and their dress. He was everywhere praised and held in esteem, as a very good and pious man; but few, if any, regarded his views in respect to the things he so earnestly protested against.

I suppose both he and Wesley continued to break the bread, and drink the cup, with the people they so severely censured; thereby showing before God and man, that they were one body with them. If they were shepherds, who entered in through the door into the fold of Christ, and set their flock a good example by going before them when they led them out, then a very large portion of their flock could not have been sheep. Christ says, "*the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.*" Then, if they did not follow, they could not have been sheep. If they were such shepherds, then

they had the binding key of God's word, and when they proclaimed the things they did, bound their disobedient members on earth, and they were bound in Heaven also. But how inconsistent was it in them thus to bind them with the word, and then to turn about and greet them as brothers, and break the bread with them; professing thereby, before God and the world, that they are of the same body and spirit. Paul says: "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? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." Paul does not pretend to say, that this bread and wine is either the body and blood of Christ, or that it is the communion of that body and blood. But it is the symbol, or represents that they are in communion with God, and His Son Jesus Christ, through the merits of this blood and broken body. And as we, being many, are all partakers of this one bread, so we, being many individuals, are one body, and all partakers of, and in fellowship with Christ, by his broken body. Why would these men have excluded a common drunkard, or fornicator, from their communion-table? Evidently, because they would have thought, by partaking with them, they would make themselves partakers of their sins, and would be guilty of hypocrisy, in testifying to the world what they do not in their hearts believe. But, if the Word of God gives them authority to denounce such practices as they did, and Wesley thought it brought them under blood-guiltiness, what more right had he to commune with the one than the other; or to make distinction, because one was a decent sin, and the other an indecent one? By administering the bread and wine to them, he bid them God-speed, as plainly as any act he could do; and John says: "He that biddeth them God-speed is partaker of their evil deeds." Wesley made a distinction between people of *rank and in office*, and others. These were allowed to put on gold, and wear costly and fashionable apparel. But does not the whole Word of God declare, that God is *no* respecter of persons? I can see no authority for any such distinction. Where do such things as the extravagance and vanity here spoken of come from? Is not the devil the author of it; and did not these men, by their protestations, admit that they believed it to be his work? Then they saw the wolf, but they fled! True, they cried out "wolf,

wolf," but still they fled, and did not stand by and deliver the sheep.

This shows how much people will bear, and even praise men for denouncing sin in a general way, if they only do not reprove it in the individual, or do still countenance their way, by going with them, or according to them what they profess. The scribes and Pharisees would have borne with Christ, and praised and commended Him, if He had condemned all the sins which He did, if He had not charged themselves with being guilty of them. If it had only been the publicans and sinners that He denounced, it would all have been well; but when He exposed their own hypocrisy, they could not endure Him.

The religion of Jesus Christ is based on the principle of love. God is love, and all His dealings with man are characterized by love. In conversion, the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. This influence so changes the heart and mind of its possessor, as to induce obedience to the commands of the gospel; not because it is commanded, but, being possessed of the principle, the effect must follow as a fruit. This is what forbids them to resist evil, and induces them to be just and moral, and to be humble and meek in their deportment. All these virtues together, or any number more of them, do not make true Christian religion. The most strict obedience to outward gospel commands, does not *make* a Christian. But true Christian religion begets these virtues in the believer, and brings forth obedience as a fruit; and where obedience to the gospel commands does not exist, there the love of God, and religion of Jesus Christ, cannot exist. The Saviour said: "Make the tree good and his fruit good." If the soul is truly converted to God, the good fruits of obedience to the gospel commands *must* follow as its effect; because "*a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.*"

War, strife, contention, pride, ostentation, emulation, revelings, etc., which we have adverted to in the foregoing pages, as existing amongst those who profess to be disciples of Jesus Christ, *is not gospel fruit.* How can any one, as a rational creature, endowed with only a natural understanding, conclude otherwise, than that these *cannot* be the good trees referred to by Christ? This *cannot* be judging, for this Christ has forbidden, but refers us to the fruits to *know* the tree by.

This point, then, rests altogether on the fact, whether Jesus Christ and the apostles taught non-resistance, and non-conformity to the world. If they did so teach, then certainly those who teach the contrary are anti-christian teachers. This position cannot be controverted. I may say with the apostle Paul, if Christ and the apostles do not teach non-resistance and non-conformity to the world, "then is our preaching vain, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified that Christ and the Holy Spirit teach it, which they do not teach, if so be, that it is either the duty or the privilege of God's children to fight, or walk in the manner referred to." (1st Cor. xv.) The same must be the case with our opponents, if Christ does teach what we uphold. They *must* be false witnesses of God, and their preaching, service and worship anti-christian and idolatrous. That there are many well-meaning, innocent and deluded souls amongst them, I do not deny; but this does not change the character of their service, any more than it changed the character of the services of the Gentiles, because there were well-meaning, innocent and deluded creatures amongst them. Let every candid and God-fearing reader exercise his own understanding in answering this question: What is it that influences the party which is in error? That party which is teaching and contending for that which Christ forbids, cannot be under the influence of the Spirit of God! They must, then, be under the influence of the evil spirit, the same as the Gentiles were; and their service must be the same idolatry as theirs was.

The religion of Jesus Christ is not a matter of opinion. The mind of man is so constituted that it cannot be satisfied without religion, and man has fallen into the error of looking upon, or acting as if religion were only designed to satisfy this want; and, whatever religion men embrace, if it brings contentment, then the end and object of religion was attained. But this is an error. The religion of Jesus Christ is a reality, and nothing short of our possessing that reality can serve the end for which this want was constituted. The great system of popular religion of the present day acts upon the delusive view referred to. They preach and proclaim their own as the true gospel ground, and contend against each other, expose their errors and inconsistencies of doctrine and practice, and even denounce each other as hypocrites and deceivers; and then turn about and give each other the right

hand of fellowship, worship together, and greet each other as fellow-servants of God, and joint heirs of Christ. This would make religion a mere matter of opinion. For *our* strict separation in religious fellowship, *we* are denounced by all as bigots, Pharisaical, self-righteous and uncharitable; yet these same persons will unite with *us* in worship, and accord to *us* the credit of what *we* profess to be—children of God. The Pharisees professed to be children of God, and teachers of righteousness; but Christ told them, they are blind guides, children of the devil, and make their proselytes two-fold more the children of hell, than they are themselves. If *we* possess a Pharisaical spirit, then *we* must be the same children as they were. If even *our* opponents were right in their views on those controverted points referred to in the foregoing pages, they would be very inconsistent in giving *us* the hand of fellowship, and thereby comforting *us*, and those deluded by *us*, in *our* erroneous views.

The prophets and holy men of old did not denounce the idolatry and superstition of the Gentiles, and then unite with them in their service and ceremonies, or once, by word, act or deed, countenance it as a Divine service at all. Daniel, and the men who were cast into the fiery furnace, would not, to save their lives, give the slightest countenance to the worship of idols.

For this reason, *we* feel ourselves constrained to withdraw from, protest against, and avoid the teaching, service and worship of those who teach and uphold those things which Christ and His apostles have so pointedly forbidden. Christ says: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." These are the unfruitful works of darkness, which Paul says we shall reprove, and have no fellowship with. They are unbelievers, with whom Paul says we shall not be unequally yoked together. They are strangers; therefore, as the lambs of Christ, *we* cannot hear or follow them, but will flee. They bring not the doctrine of Christ; therefore *we* cannot receive them into *our* house, or bid them God-speed, lest *we* become partakers of their evil deeds. But, out of love to the souls of men, and jealousy for the honor of God, His children must ever protest against all false doctrine, and beware of every one who comes as a wolf in sheep's clothing.

But there are also great numbers, who profess to be non-resistants,

protest that it is not right for Christians to fight; and who also hold that we must not be conformed to the world, in following their fashions and customs, but who are plain in their dress and manners.

The prophecies in the Old Testament, represent Christ's kingdom or Church, as being one of unity and love. All the figures and representations of it are of the same nature. They point to a visible unity. When Christ came, His teaching and commands were of the same import, and He prayed His heavenly Father that it should be so. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, and the time arrived which had been spoken of by the prophets, when He would establish this kingdom, it *was* such a visible unity. They were all by one spirit baptized into one body, and became of one heart and mind. The Church or kingdom of Christ here agreed with the prophecies and figures represented in the Old Testament. It accorded with the teaching, figures and prayers of the Saviour. "The Scriptures cannot be broken," and the Church could be nothing less or more than what God had declared it should be.

This unity was the work of the Holy Spirit, which, by converting the soul to God, makes believers to be of one heart and mind; and all those who suffer themselves to be led by this Spirit, must continue to be one. This cannot be otherwise, for there is but one truth, and the Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of truth;" and it is said, "it will lead us into all truth." Wherever opposite or conflicting doctrines are held by professors, one party must be in error, and these cannot be led by the Spirit of God.

I have observed that Christ prayed for this unity, and its continuance. The apostles, after the establishment of the Church, earnestly urged its preservation and continuance, and severely reprov'd and condemn'd those in whom the first symptoms of divisions, or ideas tending to that end, manifested themselves. Paul, writing to the Romans, says: "Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark* them which cause divisions and offenses, *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.* For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words, and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple." According to the declaration of the Saviour, we cannot be His disciples, or enter into the kingdom of Heaven, unless we observe

His commandments, keep His sayings, and abide in His Word. Now, the commands of Christ cannot be obeyed and observed in the Church, unless there is the visible unity existing amongst its members. Those who deny the necessity of a visible unity in the Church, admit that there must be a unity in the "essentials." Conversion, all professed Christians hold to be essential, and the idea that it is unnecessary would be rejected as heresy. But, if conversion is essential, are not its fruits equally essential? Conversion is the parent, or cause of unity, and throughout all nature, effect must follow cause. Where there is not unity, there the Holy Spirit's influence cannot exist. Therefore, unity amongst believers, must be as essential to salvation as conversion itself. To deny the visible unity of true believers, is therefore to deny the doctrine of Christ, and is contrary to what true believers have learned. Nothing can tend more to cause offenses and divisions amongst believers, than the denial of this principle of absolute visible unity amongst the children of God. Those, therefore, who deny and reject this doctrine, deny and reject the doctrine of Christ, and cause divisions, contrary to the doctrine which every believer has learned; and Paul says we shall *mark* such, and *avoid* them. It is a doctrine that is contrary to love, and the voice of those who advocate it is strange to the sheep of Christ, and they will not hear or follow those who utter it; for they know not the voice of strangers, but will flee from them.

There are large numbers of professors of the religion of Jesus Christ, divided amongst societies of different names, who call themselves defenseless Christians. Many of them also protest against the right of Christians to follow the fashions of the world in dress and style of life. Many of these are plain, unassuming, upright citizens; and their general deportment and character are unexceptionable.

It may be asked, why *we* refuse to worship with, or have Christian fellowship with these, seeing they are free from the extravagance and folly chargeable to so many others of the great sects of Christendom? We have already shown in the foregoing part of this work, that they are mostly inconsistent with their profession. They still take part in the kingdom of this world, and show thereby that their non-resistance is not founded on the true principle. There may, perhaps, be some who do not take

any part in elections, or hold any office in the worldly kingdom. Of this I am not certain ; but, so far as I have knowledge, they all deny the visible unity of the Church. They all reject the idea, that the children of God must be of one heart and one mind. Now, as I have said before, nothing can tend more to cause divisions than the doctrine these hold. If it is contended that everything which is in the way of union and harmony, is from the devil, it will cause those who have the fear of God before their eyes, to search diligently for every cause of disunion, and endeavor to remove it. But if it be held that divisions are allowable, such causes as lead to divisions will excite no alarm ; the devil will not be resisted, and thus divisions are encouraged or caused. Therefore Paul says : "*Mark and avoid them.*" The spirit of disunion is a grievous wolf, and the true and faithful shepherds of Christ will be exceedingly alarmed for the safety of the flock, where they see him make his appearance, and labor earnestly to preserve the flock from being scattered. But, if they are told this is no wolf, the sheep may be thrown off their guard, and thus fall a prey to the devourer.

The fruits of this denial of the unity of the Church, or children of God, is confusion and discord, with a great train of inconsistencies. Some of these "defenseless Christians" contend that there is no visible Church on earth ! Others contend that it consists of the upright in all the different churches ; and others, again, that all the different denominations are different branches of the true Church. Christ said to his disciples, that He is the vine and they are the branches. If then these are the branches of the vine, Jesus Christ, they must all bring the same fruit. If the fruit is not the same, they cannot be branches of the same vine. Those who hold that Christ and his apostles teach the doctrine of non-resistance, cannot possibly believe that those who teach that it is the duty of Christians to take up arms and defend themselves on the field of battle, can be called of God to preach. If non-resistance is true, then these must be false witnesses of God. Yet they will contend that they may be ambassadors of Christ ; that the Lord may bless their labors and work through them. They will worship with them, preach with them, and thus give them the right hand of fellowship, bidding them God-speed, and still contend that their doctrine is false ! Christ says, we cannot gather

grapes from thorns, or figs of thistles; yet these contend we may. Those who deny that the Church is visible at all, thereby condemn themselves. They break the bread, and drink the cup of the Lord, and still admit that they are not the Lord's body! If God's Church is not visible, then those bodies which profess to be Christ's Church, must be dead. Yet they will worship and preach with them. Do they not admit by this, themselves to be dead? Can a living member of Christ be attached to a dead body? If their own body is not the body of Christ, then they themselves, with all that are in it, must be defiled; for Paul says, a little leaven leaveneth the *whole lump*. No one can continue in a leavened body, without becoming leavened themselves; or else Paul's word, in 1st Cor. v. is not true.

Some of this class of professors acknowledge that they should not make a practice of attending the meetings and worship of those who are so directly opposed to them in principle. They say it would not be right to go to their meetings on purpose to hear them preach, or worship with them; but, on the occasion of a funeral, or if they accidentally come in contact with their assembly, it is not their duty to withdraw. These acknowledge to have some perception of the duty of a separation, but make it a partial one. If the worship is idolatrous, or its exercise is displeasing to God, and it is our duty to reprove, or lay off a testimony against them, can the occasion excuse us? Will the sheep hear the stranger's voice, if he chances to meet him in an opportune place? There is a great deal said in the Scriptures about spiritual fornication. Christ's Church is compared to a chaste bride. But, if the bride of Christ thus has intercourse with the world in their idolatrous exercises, does she not lose this comparison? Or would a bride be considered chaste and virtuous if she should receive the advances of a stranger, because it was a particular occasion, or she had not sought his society? This all comes of denying the doctrine of the unity of the church, and an indistinct perception of the principle which must govern the true believer, and on which all commands of the gospel hang and rest.

Christ does not say, his sheep will hear the voice of a stranger at a funeral! Neither does Paul tell his brethren they need not mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine, if they fall in their way by chance! Neither

does he say, we need not reprove or rebuke the unfruitful works of darkness at funerals. Nor Christ, that we need not beware of false prophets there.

The great cry about self-righteousness and uncharitableness, of those who separate themselves from the worship of those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, charging them with tacitly saying: "I am holier than thou," is all a device of Satan, to make God's people appear odious to the world, so that he may counteract the influence of their good example, and the reproof they administer to those who yield to the flesh and desires of the mind. Those who truly and faithfully walk in the Spirit, do not regard this, and could even rejoice in it; and would rather desire it than otherwise, if they did not know that, in their ignorance and blindness, their enemies are treasuring up against themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Neither would we think it worth our while to attempt to vindicate our cause, if it were not for the hope that the prejudice may thereby be removed from the minds of some, and the way opened for truth to reach the understanding.

The true non-resistants and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, whose hearts have been thoroughly changed by conversion, and who are led and influenced by the Holy Spirit, will keep the narrow way unflinchingly, regardless of all the opposition which Satan, the world, and their own flesh can make; regardless, also, of the number and size of the anti-christian sects which may spring up around them. Time and circumstances make no change in their minds or principles. Truth is true and unchangeable; and, however much science or popular opinion may change, truth is still the same.

The great Babylonian structure of the popular system of religion, commonly called "the Church," may be fitly compared to a chain, composed of an almost interminable number of links. The two ends of this chain might be very distant from each other, but still there would be a connection running through the whole; and unless a link was entirely severed from the rest, the extremities would be dragged together, whithersoever the body would be taken. Those societies, therefore, whose profession and general practices are ever so distant from the most extravagant, and those guilty of the most scandalous disorder, and have no intercourse with them, yet they still have with others of a less degree of

irregularity, and these again with others, till the chain is completed, and form one united body. Therefore, the Spirit, in Revelations, says: "Come out of Babylon, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and receive of her plagues."

The Apostle Paul says: "A covetous man is an idolator;" and "covetousness is idolatry." Again: "Be not deceived; neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Paul further says: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Now, if covetousness is idolatry, or maketh sinful and idolatrous all the worship or service such person can render or bring; and if such covetous person is a member of the church, and the pastor or congregation have knowledge of it, and do not purge out this leaven; they become leavened with him, are partaker of his sins, and become an idolatrous and impure body, and, as a consequence, their service or worship can be no other than idolatry!

Covetousness may dwell in the heart, and others not be aware of it. For others to know it, there must be fruit to reveal it. So long as our deeds and actions do not convict us of it, the church, or those associated with us in worship, do not become defiled. But when our business, or our acts and deeds, reveal the spirit which influences us, the leaven will speedily leaven the whole lump, if not purged out. A professed gambler, or one who makes any game of chance his business, or is in the habit of resorting to games of chance, *must* be easily known to be covetous, for the tree is known by his fruit. Certainly, then, any "church," or body, whose pastor or members knowingly retain a gambler in their congregation, or communion, must be a dead, idolatrous body; and all those who associate with him, in a spiritual capacity, are justly chargeable with his sins.

It is not a long while since nearly, if not quite, all the States in the Union tolerated or legalized money lotteries, and in some States they still exist. Numbers of the members of the popular churches, of good standing and influence in the church, made lottery brokerage a business, to say nothing of those who were in the habit of dealing in tickets, and seeking gain by the chances of the lottery wheel. Even churches, as a body, resorted to it to raise money to build houses of worship and raise funds for church purposes.

In our own and most other States, the law has interposed and

put a stop to the system; but up to the time the law made the proscription, church members were as actively engaged in the business as others. Now, if gambling is covetousness, and covetousness is idolatry, must not these popular churches have been a body of idolators? I suppose there were some clergymen who labored and exerted their influence to have lotteries abolished. In a moral point of view, this was right and good, and I rejoice exceedingly, and am thankful to God, that He put it into the heart of the powers to abolish so great a moral evil and fruitful source of misery and degradation. But what is the duty of the ambassador of Christ? Can he sit down and cry wolf only, whilst the wolf is tearing and devouring the lambs of Christ, till the law interposes and makes a deliverance? It is his duty as a porter in the house of God, to see that no covetous idolator enters the temple, and if he should creep in unawares, or if he should become leavened by the enemy after he had entered, to purge the Church speedily of all such leaven, and not suffer the whole body to become defiled.

Dr. Bellows, in his letter explanatory of the correspondence between the standing committee of the Sanitary Commission and the managers of the Metropolitan Fair, on the subject of raffling, speaks of a "rising tide of Christian sentiment." If the church, by the light of her example, exerts such an influence on the moral sentiment outside of the church, as to lead men to abandon immoral practices, and thus create a rising tide of moral sentiment (or, if you choose, Christian sentiment), it is highly commendable and an honor to God. But it may be questioned whether this is an expression which can be applied to the *Church* with propriety. Can there be a rising tide of Christian sentiment in the Church? There may be in the popular or nominal church, but can there be in the true Christian Church? Christian sentiment has never risen above that of the primitive Church, and it is doubtful whether it could ever sink much below it. That Spirit which makes us Christians and reigns in a true Christian Church, is the same which wrought so effectually in the Apostolic Church, and is a Spirit of truth, and will lead men into all truth. Covetousness and gambling is not truth, and the sentiment cannot sink so low as to tolerate it, and still remain a body of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit's influence which makes us Christians, and this

will bring us into remembrance of all that Christ has taught, and *lead us into all truth*. Where, then, is the room for this rising tide if we have the Spirit? And if we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his.

I have observed before, that popular religion changes with popular opinion or sentiment. For years—I might say centuries—this moral evil was tolerated by popular sentiment. Popular religion also tolerated it. No doubt numbers of the clergy saw and spoke against the evil; but so did non-professors, for the evil was so glaring that the light of nature could easily perceive it. But still the churches tolerated and took part in it. I suppose it was, as Dr. Bellows says of raffling: "The objections to it had not taken so clear a form as to give any body the impression *it could be abolished*." Must the Church then tolerate evil, till objections take such form in the public mind as to lead the community to abolish it? And when evils are abolished in this way by law, or even canon of the church, the Spirit still remains, and will exert its influence in some other form, if the root is not exterminated.

My attention was attracted a few days since, by an article in a public journal, on the subject of stock speculations. The editor remarks, that "much of the dealing in stock and gold, at the present day, is simply gambling; and only a change of name of the old vice of the lottery system, which was formerly patronized even by the churches themselves. But now, tabooed and proscribed by law, yet the same passion which then found gratification in the chances of the lottery wheel, now takes the wider range in the fluctuations of the stock and gold market."

The popular church, which to the last tolerated lotteries, and still later, rafflings, now tolerates the same spirit in another shape. There was no actual reform, or rising Christian sentiment. The evil only changes form. What is the difference between an open gambler with cards or dice, and a speculator in gold, stocks, produce, wares or merchandize? Neither of them render an equivalent for what they gain. They often cause distress and wide-spread ruin. They do not "work with their hands, the thing which is good." Nothing but covetousness can induce men to gamble and speculate. They produce nothing, render no service, and all they gain is taken from others. Conscientious people may raffle, patronize lotteries, and speculate with perfect

"*innocency of feeling*;" but does it follow that they *are innocent*? or that God will not hold them guilty of covetousness?

I have observed before, that the Waldenses, Albigenses and Mennonites were far in advance of the great and learned Reformers in their Christian sentiments. I venture to assert that no one ever heard of such a thing amongst them as a dealer in lottery tickets, raffer or speculator. In after years, when the church had degenerated, such things might have crept in; but they were then no more a true separate non-resistant church. Wherever such a true non-resistant church, wholly separated from all idolatrous worship, exists, such things as alluded to are utterly unknown! Now, in worldly wisdom, refinement and literary attainment, these churches are usually far behind the fashionable churches; yet how comes it, that they should have been so far in advance in these Christian sentiments? Evidently, because they are born of the Spirit, and the Spirit enlightened them, and leads them and guides them *into all truth*. I remember many years ago, seeing a poor, unassuming shoemaker come into the store of a merchant, who offered him a lot of cheap shoes. The shoemaker replied that he thought the shoes were cheap, and he expected he could make some money on them; but this was not his business, and he feared there might be danger of encouraging a spirit of avarice. The reply of this poor, illiterate man, made a more deep and lasting impression on my mind, than any learned and eloquent discourse could have done; and will remain as long as memory lasts. I venture to say that this man would not have had any fellowship with speculators or lottery gamblers. If he would have had any knowledge of a brother taking any part in such things, he would have addressed him personally, and, if he could not bring him to repentance, he would have told the heads of the church, and, if they had not discharged their duty, he would (to avoid being partaker of their sins, and being leavened), have withdrawn from them, and had no dealings with them.

I mention these things to show how pliable and accommodating a thing popular religion is, and how unchangeable true religion is. Popular sentiment may be what it will, the religion of Jesus Christ cannot change—it is always the same. True Christian sentiment is always the same; and with those who are possessed of this true sentiment, the objection to such evil practices as alluded to, always

has such form as to give the impression that it *can* and *must* be abolished.

Now, if covetousness is idolatry, and we are to flee from idolatry, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, how can we do otherwise than withdraw ourselves from and protest, as loudly as we can, against all such idolatry and anti-christian practice? There is no way for us to make ourselves free from the blood of all men, but by withdrawing ourselves from all who do not walk orderly, and after the tradition of the apostles.

With regard to those societies who do not take part in the extravagances noticed in these pages, profess non-resistance, and denounce conformity to the world, but, as I have observed, will not entirely separate themselves from this idolatry, but still, on particular occasions, unite and worship with them, and contend against and deny the visible unity of the Church of Christ and its separation from all idolatrous worship; what can we do otherwise than class them with the great Babylonian structure from whom they will not come out? We cannot serve two masters; and he that gathereth not together, scattereth abroad. There is amongst the different denominations a regular grade, which, as we have already observed, may be fitly compared to a chain. The two extremities may be far distant from each other, and their separate links not in contact with each other, yet by the intermediate links they are connected, and form one body. What would it profit *us* to be attached as an extreme link? And however remote we might be from the main body, if it would sink into perdition, what could prevent us from being drawn with it, into the abyss of destruction?

In conclusion: I wish the grace and blessing of God to every sincere and God-fearing reader, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

A COMPARISON

OF THE

PRESENT NOMINAL CHURCH

WITH THE

SCRIPTURE REPRESENTATIONS

OF THE

CHURCH OF CHRIST.

BY DANIEL MUSSER.

1860.

PREFACE.

THE object of the publication of this little tract, has been adverted to in the body of the work, and leaves little more to be said, than to disclaim all idea, or expectation, of obtaining an enviable notoriety thereby. I do not pretend to be insensible to aspiring emotions, but hope I have, by the grace of God, been made sensible of their sinfulness, and willing to resist every such prompting. I do not pretend to be acquainted with the rules of composition and grammar; nor aim at acquiring reputation. There may be violations of these rules, but I hope not so glaring as to destroy the sense, or, that those who are inquiring for the truth, may not understand our views of the subject treated on.

Being a firm believer in the truth of what is here written, and haping it may fall into the hands of some who might otherwise never become acquainted with the views and doctrine we uphold, I have ventured to give it to the public, crude and undigested as it is.

I hope the Lord may bless it, and so bring the truth home to the heart of those who read it, as to bring himself honor and glory.

With these feelings and hopes, I will commit the reader, with myself, to the Lord, and the rich Word of His grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

LAMPETER, Lancaster county, Pa., February 18, 1860.

THE PRESENT NOMINAL CHURCH COMPARED WITH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."—*John v. 39.*

"THIS second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you! in both which I stir up your pure mind; by way of remembrance: that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."
2 Peter iii. 1, 2.

It is said, that "the chief end of man is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever," and we have the assurance of God, in His Word, that it is His will man shall so glorify and enjoy Him, and has made a full provision that he may so do; and, besides, has given him knowledge how he may attain to that glory and enjoyment; and has likewise given him knowledge that a failure to attain it will involve him in such misery and distress, fear, tribulation and anguish, as is beyond the imagination of man to conceive—which doleful state shall endure without end; and has also declared, that it requires the utmost care and prudence to avoid the one, and most diligent striving to attain the other; and has besides declared, that withal the majority of mankind will fail of securing that blessed reward.

In addition to his declaration and instructions, he has given us a history of those who have gone before us; of the mode of success on the one part, and the causes which led to failure on the other; and encourages us to follow the example of the one and avoid the course of the other, warning us, lest we should fall after the same example. These things happened for our examples, and are written for our instruction, that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted, and fall after the same example of unbelief.

Seeing, then, that God has been so gracious to us, and done so much for us, and given us such important instruction and information, and such wholesome warning, how diligently should we inquire whether we are performing the purpose which God had

in view in our creation, and are in the way to obtain the end, or whether we are in the broad road to destruction. Particularly should this be the case with those, who have been so far moved by the grace of God, as to desire to seek reconciliation with him, and imagine they have attained to it.

I have observed above, that God had given man a complete knowledge of his will, so far as is requisite to the work of his salvation. All the knowledge man has of the will of God, has been given him by revelation, and this knowledge, whether little or much, was always sufficient for the purpose. All that God required of man, was obedience to what he commanded him; but we see that in different ages of the world, he revealed different degrees of knowledge, and of those who lived in the different ages, he required less or more according to the degree of light he imparted to them, or the perfection of the knowledge of his will which he made known to them.

Though God had made known to man from the beginning, all that was necessary for his eternal happiness, it yet required, after his fall, that something more be done for his salvation, than was yet done; and God gave him promise that he would do this; and all the duties which were enjoined on man, had respect to this promise. Holy men of old, looked forward and hoped for the time of the fulfilling of this promise, when God would again condescend to dwell with man, make known to him His perfect will, and restore him to the privileges which he enjoyed before the fall, by establishing a kingdom, on the throne of which he would sit, and rule it, from henceforth even forever.

These different ages of the world, have generally been divided into the first, or Antideluvian, being the time which extended from the creation of the world to the deluge; in which God had given man no written law or revelation of His will, further than the promise of the woman's seed, which should bruise the serpent's head; but had by his law written in their hearts, and his Spirit to convict them of right and wrong, besides the great book of nature, in which the invisible things of God are clearly seen, given them sufficient knowledge to lead them to reverence and adore him.

The second age, being that which extended from the deluge to the coming of Christ, in which God, in addition to the knowledge

which the Antideluvians possessed, gave to man a further revelation of his will, by giving him the Law and the Prophets. Under this dispensation, God enjoined many duties and services, which he did not require of the Antideluvians, inasmuch as he had given them so much more knowledge and light. But these ceremonies and services could not make the comers thereunto perfect; but all had respect and pointed to the time when the perfect will of God should be made known, and the perfect service rendered. Moses, by whom the law was given, pointed from himself to another, whom they should hear, when once the Lord their God would raise him up, from amongst their brethren. Moses, in the law, and all the prophets have spoken of and pointed to this time.

The third age, being the gospel era, in which our lot is cast, is that in which Jesus Christ has come, as the promised woman's seed, and the prophet whom Moses said we should hear, as he of whom he spake in the law, and of whom the prophets predicted, is called the "last time;" the time in which we may be enabled to know, and "prove, what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

This being now the age in which the perfect will of God is made known, and we having the advantage of the light and knowledge given to the two preceding ages, and in addition the true light has shone unto us, and the Holy Spirit of truth given us, much more is required of us, than of those in the preceding ages.

Now, in those ages of the world prior to our own, we find that there was an agency at work, a power operating, whose tendency was to defeat the purpose of God, and lead man to disregard what God had shown and taught him, and thus bring him to transgress his commandments. This agency or power, which emanated from the devil, as the enemy of God, was brought to bear upon our first parents in the Garden of Eden, in their blessed innocence, with such force, as to lead them into the transgression, and effect their fall; and after the fall it was so successful, and in process of time rendered man so depraved, that the Lord said: "The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

We have no account of the number of persons who existed on earth at the time of the deluge, but we have reason to believe it

was very great, in consideration of the great age to which they attained. But if they did not multiply faster than they do in our day, from the time that had elapsed since the creation, they must still have been very numerous. Of this great multitude, Noah, and his family (consisting of eight souls) alone "found grace in the eyes of the Lord," and was seen to be righteous.

In the second age of the world, with the terrible fate of the ungodly Antideluvians fresh in their memory, we see that man soon again began to yield to this evil influence, and follow the vain imaginations of his heart; and even after God had further revealed his will to man, by giving him his holy law, we find him yielding to this evil influence to such an extent, as to be continually departing from his commandments. Notwithstanding God gave them such frequent sensible evidence of his power, and visited them with such terrible judgments for their disobedience, and so plainly manifested his pleasure at their obedience, and so richly rewarded their faithfulness, yet, with all, they perverted their way so far, that when the Messiah (whose appearance they waited, and in whom they trusted, and the manner of whose birth, person, and passage through and out of the world was so plainly predicted, and set forth by the prophets, whom they owned as being inspired) came, the great majority of them did not receive Him. "He came unto His own, and His own received him not." And so perverted were they, and infatuated by this counter influence, that notwithstanding the Messiah gave them such sensible evidence of His Divine mission and authority, that they were convinced in their hearts that He was not an ordinary person, they suffered their malice and envy to carry them to such a pitch, that they could not rest till they had Him crucified and slain.

Is it not terrible to think of the extent to which man may be led by the influence of the devil? ("Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do,") and even think they are doing God service. The Israelites prided themselves much in their ancestry, and valued the privileges which they thought they possessed very highly; but they labored under a great delusion, and were so much infatuated that they could not understand the plain predictions of their own prophets, however plainly they were expounded to them.

Now, I fear that we in the present age of the world, in this age

of boasted light and knowledge, have as far departed from the light, and suffered ourselves to be led by that evil influence, into as great violation of the precepts of our great lawgiver, as ever either the Antideluvian, or those of the Mosaic age did from theirs; and that a more awful visitation awaits us than that experienced by them, inasmuch as our light and knowledge is so far in advance of theirs; and as Paul says: "If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven." (Heb. xiii.)

This consideration induced me to attempt this short dissertation, that I might perchance be instrumental, under God, in leading a soul to inquiry into the truths of the gospel; for I believe that many innocent ones are led astray by popular opinions, and such persons as pretend to be called by God to preach the gospel; and many verily believe they are so called to teach man the way of salvation, who are yet themselves in delusion, promising others liberty, whilst they are themselves the servants of corruption. Christ says: "The time will come that whosoever killeth you, will think he doeth God service." And Paul says of himself: "That he verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus," and imagined he was doing God service; and the scribes and Pharisees evidently thought they were called and appointed by God, to teach the way of life to others, whilst they were leading them ignorantly to perdition.

With this view, I will endeavor, by the help of God, to set forth the causes which, in all ages of the world, have led to the deplorable results which are recorded in Scripture, and my reason for the conclusion, that the present age is so far departed from what God designed we should be, and we ourselves imagine we are.

In the first place, then, I would say, that no sane person, being entirely free to make a choice between good and evil, will choose the latter, nor between life and death, will choose death. They may choose evil when two evils present themselves, one of which is inevitable; but they will always choose that which to them appears the least, as when life is rendered a burthen we may choose death as being the least of the two evils presented.

Our first parents were created in the image of God, and were supremely happy and contented, when God gave them the command or permission to eat of all the trees of the garden, save

of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, and declared to them that in the day they would eat of it they should surely die. They had the choice now between good and evil, viz.: between the good they enjoyed, and the evil of death; and had no difficulty which to choose, nor temptation to violate the command of their God and Creator. In vain would the tempter have urged them even to all eternity to disobey, so long as it was a direct choice between good and evil; and in vain would he have sought to impregnate them with lust, so long as the object he sought to have them lust after was evil. Therefore it was impossible in this state, or frame of mind, to bring them to trespass. They could not entertain such an idea, so long as this was the question; but when the question arose as to which was the good, then the idea of disobeying could be entertained; consequently, doubts of the truth of God's Word were first infused into the heart of man, and had to be entertained before the idea of disobedience could receive admission. It was now no longer a direct question with them between good and evil, but a question which was the good, and which the evil; or at least in a comparative sense, for they could not well feel as if their present state was evil, but rather which was the greatest good; they were happy, but might become yet more happy. Lust now could be conceived, and being also infused into the soul of man by the devil, aided his suggestions that the Word of God was not true, to such an extent, as to confirm him sufficiently in his unbelief, or make the decision which was the greatest good, which resulted in favor of disobedience. "Ye shall not surely die," was the first suggestion of Satan, and then followed: "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as God's, knowing good and evil." Unbelief, then, may be said to be the first begotten of the devil (at least on earth), and after this the way was open for a host of others to follow in his train, as pride, avarice, envy, hatred, malice, etc., from which a host of other vile passions arose in the flesh, all of which tend to the destruction of the soul.

Satan had the power to tempt man, but none to overcome him, as man had his will at his disposal, and this had to be yielded to effect his fall. This he yielded, making a voluntary choice, but from the conviction that it would be advantageous to him.

After the fall of man, with all the sinful lusts and desires with which he had become infected, he would seem still to have this faculty of the will preserved in him, and power either to resist sin or yield to its service. "Sin (John says), is the transgression of the law;" and Paul: "Where no law is there is no transgression." Now though there was no commandment given from Adam unto Moses, as Paul says, yet it would appear as if sin still existed, and man was conscious of it, and had the power to resist it. Or rather we should perhaps say, if man opposed his will to it, God would strengthen him and enable him to overcome. This knowledge he could have had in no other way, than by the law being written in his heart, as Paul says, and by the motions of the Spirit of God, which we gather from what God said to Noah. That man had the knowledge of sin, and power to resist it, I take from what God said to Cain: "Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at thy door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Or, as the German translation would seem to render it: "But yield thou not to his will, on the contrary rule thou over him," which seems more plain and comprehensible. Cain therefore must have had knowledge of sin, and power to rule over it.

Why, then, did Cain not obey the teaching of that law which was written in his heart, and the motions of God's Spirit which warned him, and resist sin? Evidently because he did not believe these inward monitors that this would be best, or afford him most gratification. The pride of his heart promised him a great good, or pleasure, in excelling his brother; and the evil passions, stimulated by the devil, desired the gratification of revenge, and these promises seemed to outweigh the other, and promise more good than opposing his will to sin and obeying the Spirit of God.

Again: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all which they chose." There was no command forbidding this, therefore, in itself, it could not have been sin. But this intermarriage became a fruitful source of sin; the wickedness of man became great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and the earth was filled with violence. This was brought about as all sin was, by the instigation of the devil, but he did not urge it

as *sin*, and a great evil, and the end of it would be their overthrow and ruin, but as affording them gratification and pleasure, and the forbearance and self-denial taught by the law and Spirit of God as being burthensome, and in the way of the enjoyment of those good things which they obtain by a contrary course. And with this they must have doubted whether the penalties of sin would be visited upon them; or whether it would be so grievous as the self-denial and constraint which obedience would entail upon them. Thus the devil deceived them, representing good evil and evil good, and thereby led them to yield their will to that which is evil; but it was always under the influence of unbelief, for God had always represented things truly to them, and had they believed it, they would have known what was really good and what evil, and could have made their choice, and would have made it accordingly.

After the flood, we observe the same condition of things, the Spirit of pride leading them to vain imaginations and foolish undertakings; the vast majority of them being thus deceived and led astray by their lusts, to such a degree, that God gave them over to all manner of abominations and wickedness.

But from the beginning we have examples of those who believed God, and whose works and obedience bore testimony to their faith. No question but sin also lay at their door, but they opposed their will to his rule over them. That faith which induced this obedience, justified them before God, and their resistance of sin witnessed the sincerity of their faith to man. The excellency of Abel's sacrifice consisted in the faith by which it was offered, and by it received witness that he was righteous. Of others, it is said in the Scriptures, that they "walked with God." No doubt but the same lusts and temptations were brought to bear against them as against others, but they made a wiser choice, because they believed God, that His Word was truth, and His commandments and representations the greatest good. In Noah and Abraham we have rare examples of faith; so much so, that Abraham is particularly held up to those in the Christian era, as an example worthy of their imitation. Neither of these seem to have in any way staggered at the declarations, threats or promises of the Almighty, and by their implicit obedience, testified their faith to man. But in many illustrious champions for the truth, we see more hesitation to receive the Word of God; as for

instance, when Moses was commanded to go to Egypt, and lead out the children of Israel from their bondage under Pharaoh, he hesitated; his carnal reason told him his brethren, nor the king, would not hearken to him, and he had no eloquence, etc. But God overruled all his objections, and gave him such evidence as to overcome all his unbelief, and give him full assurance. And the same we find of Gideon, Hezekiah and Zacharias. These were servants of the Lord, and instruments by whom he would execute certain purposes. Moses is testified to, as being a faithful servant in the house of the Lord, but yet he does not afford that example of faith and entire trust in his God, as Noah and Abraham do. It was quite reasonable that Moses should feel the fear and distrust which he did. But Noah and Abraham were called to perform services and execute trusts equally contrary to natural reason; but they had such a knowledge of the power of God, and faithfulness to His word, that it would seem they had no question of His fulfilling all that He had spoken. In these instances we have examples of perfect faith, and also of the conflict which faithful servants of God have with unbelief, and of the mercy and long suffering of God with His poor weak creatures, and how much patience He can have with His children, when their failings proceed from weakness, without dishonesty or perverseness.

There is this to be observed, however, in these servants of God, that their tardiness to engage in the work, did not proceed from a disregard to the will of God, but from a sense of their own weakness and unworthiness; and though it was not so honorable to God as a full confidence and free acceptance of the trust would have been, and though he was necessitated to express his disapprobation of their unbelief, he yet did not punish it, or manifest that displeasure to it, which he did in those instances where persons hesitated from an unwillingness to deny themselves, or from a desire for some selfish gratification, disobeyed the Divine command; or who from a desire for some sensual gratification, contend for that which God has forbidden, or defend and justify themselves in a transgression.

If we would follow the children of Israel, step by step, from Abraham to Christ, we will find a blessing infallibly attending faith and obedience, and likewise the same disastrous results attending the contrary.

The faithfulness of God to His Word is worthy of particular observation, not only in His promises, but also in His threatenings. No one doubts but that God will fulfill every promise of blessing which He makes; but do we as firmly believe that He will execute every threat? We are ever ready to excuse or palliate our offenses, as having mitigating circumstances attending them, and trust in the mercy of God; and because God does not immediately visit us with His judgments for our offenses, we grow careless and forgetful of them, as if God had forgiven and forgotten them. It is true, God is merciful, slow to wrath and ready to forgive. This is one of his attributes as declared in His Word; but justice is also one of His declared attributes, and He can as little pass by one offense against His law unpunished, as He can a promised blessing for obedience. He has provided means for our reconciliation when we commit offenses, and without these means it is impossible for us to escape the vengeance of the Almighty, when we transgress that holy law, of which it is said: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them, and all the people shall say amen." We must say amen to this sentence, and will assuredly say it, either in this world or in the world to come, for "all people shall say it." O how unbending is God's Word!

He said in the beginning to our first parents: "In the day ye eat, ye shall surely die;" and this declaration could not be changed, or the word that he spoke passed by, be the consequences ever so serious. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word that God has spoken shall not fail nor pass away. We might say, the innocence or want of experience, and the subtle manner of the approach of Satan, are mitigating circumstances; and even it might be said, what great hurt was the eating of this fruit? But God's Word was transgressed, the honor of faith in His Word was given to His enemy, and to convince man now and forever of the firmness of His word, the execution of the threatened punishment had to follow. The sin of Moses and other of the Israelites may appear to us to be trivial, and to have been committed under excusable circumstances; but God teaches us thereby the unchangeableness of His Word, and that no extenuating circumstances can free us from the consequences or guilt of sin, and that no sin is to be considered by the perpetrator as being small. All sin is of

the devil, and every inclination to commit sin proceeds from the devil, and to induce us to yield to those inclinations, he will seek to weaken our faith and reliance in God's Word, so as to lead us to disobey it.

God had promised the children of Israel to lead them safely to possess the land of Canaan; and all who believed this promise so firmly as to put their entire trust in the Lord, were brought into its possession. But all those who were contentious, and could not believe when they could not see, and when the Lord's ways ran counter to their carnal desires, murmured and departed from the commandment of God, fell in the wilderness. This Paul says was "because of unbelief." This is evident. Had they truly believed God, they would also have obeyed, but obedience was contrary to their carnal desires and lusts, and those desires led them to doubt the Word of God, and so to disobey it.

It is worthy of observation, however, that no fear or terror which could seize upon the heart, was punished by the Lord, which did not result in disobedience. These fears and motions of unbelief proceed from the devil; they are his suggestions, his temptations; but so long as we do not yield to them, but cry to the Lord for help and deliverance, he will not punish them. He may reprove them, as not so honorable to Him, but will not punish them as sin, till they result in disobedience.

The children of Israel, when they stood upon the banks of the Red Sea, might have bid defiance to Pharaoh's host, for they had the promise of deliverance from God; but their fears were great, and they cried to God. Their faith in the power of God was strong or perfect, or they would not have cried to him; but that in His Word was rather weak. God did not manifest his displeasure at their weakness; but if they had cast themselves upon the mercy of the Egyptians, and surrendered themselves into their hands, they would have disobeyed, and the Lord would likely have punished, and perhaps entirely overthrown and destroyed them.

God had promised them many and precious gifts and blessings, upon their entrance into and possession of the Land of Canaan. Faith in, and obedience to His Word, would have secured to them all these blessings; but the devil approached them with his influence, exciting their carnal desires, lusts and evil passions. He could not so easily persuade them that the Word of God was

entirely untrue, but would lead them so to construe it as to accord with their carnal desires. When we have a strong desire for anything, it is no hard matter to persuade ourselves it is lawful. Yielding little by little in this way, they became more and more darkened, and were at last brought almost entirely to reject the counsel of God, whilst they yet thought they were his people, and were very zealous for his law, ceremonies and ordinances. For their unbelief and disobedience, the Lord often chastised them, and visited them with many grievous afflictions and evidences of his displeasure; but if these were at all regarded, they were soon forgotten.

The more effectually to carry on his work, the devil would raise up and make use of such persons as were more wicked and perverted than the multitude, and would move them to assume the office of prophets, to pervert the Word of God, and encourage the people in their transgressions, and lead them further and further from the commandments of God, till He was necessitated, according to His declarations in the beginning, to disperse them and scatter them abroad in the earth, to become a prey to their enemies, and a proverb and reproach among all nations.

God, nevertheless, did not leave Himself without a witness amongst his people, but sent faithful messengers and prophets among them, who declared the Word and will of God to them. These faithful messengers of God were hateful to them. Their predictions and declarations were contrary to their desires and inclinations. The false prophets being more numerous and respectable than the true, and predicting and declaring such things as were agreeable to their carnal and sensual desires, had more influence with them, and obtained their credence. Of this we have a remarkable example in the case of Micaiah and Ahab. Ahab called the prophets together, four hundred in number, who with one mouth declared good unto the king. The messenger who had gone to call Micaiah besought him to "let his word be like the word of the others;" but the faithful Micaiah was one of those "Holy men of old, who spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost," (ad Pet. i.), and he replied: "As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me that will I speak." Ahab had no desire to hear Micaiah, for he said he hated him because he prophesied no good concerning him, but evil. And when Micaiah faithfully

declared the Word of God to the king, he had to be smitten in the face, imprisoned and fed with the bread and water of affliction. The true prophets and followers of God's Word being so few in number in comparison with the others, were without influence, and were despised by the multitude, and were persecuted and slain. The ungodly would not be reprov'd, repent and confess their sins and seek forgiveness, but would persevere in their wicked course of life, till God would make their folly manifest by their miserable and disgraceful end.

These things happened unto them, Paul says, for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. If these happened for examples to us, or for our example, then there must be a comparison between their state, services, and condition, and ours; and we may obtain benefit or advantage by comparing them, and profit by the lesson they teach us.

The departure of the Jews from what God had taught them by Moses, and their miserable end, which was the result of it, is what the apostle here alludes to; and admonishes us that we shall not depart from what Christ teaches us, so that we do not perish as they did. To inquire, then, whether we are yet faithfully engaged in doing the will of our Heavenly Father, as taught by Christ and His apostles, it becomes necessary first to inquire what they did teach, and then compare our life with it.

With regard to the time which God had appointed, when He would fulfill this promise of sending the "Woman's seed," it is said by Paul: "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son," etc. So, it would appear that God had a time appointed, when He would send Him, but had not specified that time to man.

But that he might know Him when He did come, and realize all the benefits of His mission, He had given to man promises, types, figures and predictions, showing His conception, birth, life, and death, with the work He would accomplish, so that man, by these representations, might assuredly know Him; and be enabled to realize all the benefits of the work of redemption, which God designed to bring about.

The work also, which God designed to accomplish by him, was declared. He should "bruise the serpent's head." That is, as

Paul afterward says: "Destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." By the blood of the covenant he shall send the prisoners out of the pit. (Zach. xi.) He shall proclaim liberty to the captive. (Is. lxi.) The captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered. (Is. xlix.) He should become a prince, also a king, and a Lord; and as he was to be a king, so he was to have a kingdom, which was also described and represented by types, figures and predictions, for the benefit of poor fallen man; so that he might have all the knowledge necessary for him to work out his soul's salvation, and also to guard him against those arts and wiles of Satan whereby he has ever beguiled mankind.

These promises, types, and predictions were contained in the writings of Moses and the prophets, which constitutes the Holy Scriptures, and these Christ says we shall "search," for they testify of him.

The Jews professed to believe Moses and the prophets, and revered these Scriptures very highly; and prided themselves in being Moses' disciples. But Christ declares they did not believe Moses, or else they would believe him likewise; for Moses wrote of him. Christ also says: "The Father himself which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me." The Saviour here evidently alludes to those promises, types and predictions which the Father hath given by Moses and the prophets in his Word, or Scriptures; for immediately following He says: "And ye have not His Word abiding in you, for whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not." Had they received God's Word, and the testimony he gave of Christ in that Word, they would also have known Him by that testimony, and received Him.

Christ must then, of necessity, be like, or compare with those types and figures, and agree with the prophecies and declarations in the Scriptures, or else we could not find the testimony of Him in our search, nor the witness which God bare of Him. This necessity must be very evident, for if it was not so, God's wisdom would not be infallible, His Word not true, and would only be calculated to confuse and deceive those who search and depend upon it. Therefore, when Christ came, He had to be like those representations, and could do nothing contrary to what had been spoken of Him; and all the powers of hell could not prevent the

accomplishing of what God, in His Word, had said of Him. *All things must* be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. These things had to be, or else He could not be the Christ.

As it is not my purpose to prove that Christ was this Messiah, or promised woman's seed, I will not go further in regard to the agreement of Christ with these types and predictions, my object being merely to impress the absolute necessity of an agreement of the type with the thing typified, and the likeness of the thing predicted with the prediction.

Presuming, then, that the reader believes that this Jesus is verily the Son of God, and His Word everlasting life, we will proceed, by the help of God, to examine what more immediately concerns us; namely, what that Word requires of us, and whether we are ourselves obeying it.

God in the beginning had created man pure and holy, in His own image, and placed him in the garden of Eden, where he enjoyed fellowship and communion with God. This was the kingdom of God.

This kingdom became extinct by the transgression of our first parents, and man, being defiled with sin, could no more approach to, or have communion with God, till this barrier of sin was removed, and he was reinstated in that innocent and holy state from which he had fallen. This was to be accomplished by Christ, and all those who were willing now to receive the favor offered to them by God, through Jesus Christ, had the opportunity of renouncing the service of sin, and entering into fellowship with God, and becoming His children again. Those who would not believe on Him, but would reject the offer of His grace, should not see life, but the wrath of God should abide upon them.

Those now who accepted this offer, constituted His kingdom, or Church, which, it was said, should be an everlasting kingdom, on the throne of which He should sit and rule it from henceforth even forever.

The goodness of God would have led all men to know Christ, and thus bring them all into favor with Himself, and into joy and happiness, from which they had fallen. This the devil knew, and sought to prevent by unbelief. He raised up impostors and false Christ's, whom he would lead the people to believe were the true

Christ, and would have all men to believe the true one was false, a devil, etc. Likewise with the Church. God would lead all men to enter into it for their safety, but the devil seeks to prevent it, and the more effectually to gain his purpose, has raised up all manner of sects and societies, which he calls churches, and would persuade those who desire to seek their safety to enter into these. But the true Church he ever represents as false, and unfit to dwell in.

On this account the Lord has given the types and representations in His Word, both of Christ and His Church, so that all who desire can search the Scriptures, and so find the testimony there recorded.

With regard to the Church, the love of God has induced him to take especial pains to give unmistakable signs and marks by which it may be known.

I shall endeavor to give a few of the figures and prophecies of the Church, so that we may be enabled to compare the body in which we stand in communion, with those representations in the Word of God.

The ark of Noah is not specially named in Scripture as a figure of the true or gospel Church; but its agreement with other Scriptural representations of it is so complete that it may at least be adverted to, and more especially as it does not conflict with Scripture or reason.

When the Antediluvians had become so ungodly as to induce the Lord to destroy them by a flood of waters, He commanded Noah, who alone found favor in his sight, to build an ark for the saving of his house or family, into which he was commanded to receive all manner of beasts and creeping things, to keep them alive and save them from the flood. This ark God gave Noah especial directions how to build. The structure, size and shape, length, breadth and fashion, and "according to all that God commanded Noah so did he." It is said that no seaman or ship-builder would believe that such a vessel or building could live at sea, even without the attack of storm. It must then be evident, that it was not the natural adaptation of the ark to the purposes of navigation which preserved it, but alone the power of God.

God gave a strict and special charge to Noah, and there was an absolute necessity for his strict adherence to that command. All the wisdom and skill of man, is but a faint reflection of the

wisdom of God, and we can therefore ascribe none of the apparent defects in the structure of the ark, to want of skill or inexperience. The wisdom of God had formed the design, and His power effected His purpose. His Word had declared that such an ark as He commanded Noah to build, should save its inmates, and it was impossible it could fail. Had Noah been acquainted with naval architecture, and attempted to improve what to his carnal reason might have appeared defective, there is no question but ruin and disaster would have been the result. Neither can we believe that any other person could have succeeded by any contrivance, however well it might have agreed with scientific principles. It is said, by faith Noah built the ark; and faith would not admit of any departure from the command of God.

This was a natural ark or building, which was to save the people of God from the deluge which should destroy the ungodly, and is a type of that spiritual ark which God designed to build in the latter day, for the saving of his people from that fiery deluge which shall destroy the wicked and ungodly in the end of time. There is a complete resemblance here—the one natural, the other spiritual. None could be saved from the watery deluge but those who entered into the natural ark; so, none can be saved from the fiery deluge in the end of time, but those who enter into the spiritual ark, which is the house of God, and home of His household.

God had designed that certain animals of every kind and species should be preserved alive, and the ark was appointed as the means of their preservation.

These animals we know are very different in their disposition; some are wild, others are tame, some are ravenous and destructive, others gentle and harmless, and some are natural enemies to each other.

These animals could never have been brought together, and dwell with each other, without some special influence and power operating upon them, which brought them thus to harmonize and dwell together in the same small building. What a beautiful likeness there is here to that harmony where Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, were all by one Spirit baptized into one body, and were all made to drink into one Spirit.

Noah was not commanded to build a fleet of vessels, so that either people or creatures could make a choice according to their

dispositions; but he built one ark, and all their dispositions had to be changed so that they could harmonize in it.

So Christ, the spiritual Noah, did not establish different churches or kingdoms, so that men could choose to dwell in that which best suited their taste, but he built one Church, into which all must enter or perish.

Again, the children of Israel, whom God had chosen to be a peculiar people unto himself, who are called "Israel after the flesh," who constitute a separate nation from all others upon the earth, are a figure of the true spiritual Israel or Church of Christ, who shall wrestle with God and prevail.

God had given the people of Israel a special promise, which he gave to no other people on earth; and though all mankind had the law written in their hearts, and Paul says: "If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision;" yet however righteously they may have lived, no person could receive or be partaker of the special promises and blessings or favors of Israel, unless they were circumcised. Their promise was a temporal blessing in a favored land flowing with milk and honey, where peace and plenty were to crown their labors. They should not vex the stranger, and one law was to be to the stranger and him that was born in the land; but the privileges of an Israelite he could not enjoy until he was legally inducted into the figurative fold of God.

This is a complete figure of the true spiritual Israel, who should be born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, begotten by His Word, and circumcised, not with the circumcision made with hands, but with that of the heart, in the Spirit and not in the letter. Of this circumcision, that of the literal Israel was a type, and the soul is by it inducted into Christ, as the literal Israel were by their outward rite into their commonwealth.

But as no one was to be partaker of the promises of Israel (however just and upright they were), but those who stood under the covenant, so no one has any promise, or can become partaker of the blessings of the spiritual Israel, who does not stand in *their* covenant, and under their covenant head, which is Christ, however moral and righteous a life he may lead, or whatever good works he may have done.

God did not form a number of kingdoms or communities

where there was a promise. The privilege was free to all, but all had to come and unite with this one people, and submit to their one law.

The people, in order to enjoy these blessings, had to submit to and obey the laws which God had given them. For those sins and transgressions which grew out of ignorance or weakness, they had to bring their appointed offerings and sacrifices to the priests, who offered them for the expiation of the guilt of their sins, and in so doing they had the promise of forgiveness. But voluntary and presumptuous sinners, or those who justified themselves in such transgressions as grow out of weakness or sudden temptation; and refused to bring the oblations which were appointed by the Lord to make reconciliation for their offenses, were excluded from the privileges, promises and blessings of Israel. So those of the spiritual Israel (who likewise inhabit a weak and sinful flesh), are liable to, and do commit frequent trespasses against the law of Christ, but have the High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of their infirmities, to plead in their behalf, and offer to God those offerings of an humble spirit and a contrite heart, which God has appointed as the sacrifices with which he is well pleased, and in Him they have the assurance of forgiveness. But those who follow the dictates of their carnal reason, and the motions of their sinful flesh, presuming upon the merits of Christ, or those who are contentious and obstinate, and will not humble themselves and repent of their sins of infirmity, and bring those offerings appointed for the expiation of the guilt of their sin, shall also be excluded from the promises, privileges and blessings of the spiritual Israel. We might draw many comparisons here, but will forbear for the present, and only call the attention of the reader to the unity presented by this figure.

In the wilderness, the Lord commanded Moses to build the tabernacle of the congregation, which was the place where He promised to meet His people, and where they were commanded to bring their sacrifices and offerings. For the erection of this tabernacle, Moses received a strict command as to form, in all its particulars, and a pattern showed him in the Mount. "And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them, according to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

(Exod. xxv.) And again, at the conclusion of the chapter, the Lord says: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the Mount." And when the work was done, and the tabernacle finished, reared and brought to Moses, it is said (Exodus xxxix.): "According to all that the Lord commanded did Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work, and Moses did look upon all the work, and behold they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it, and Moses blessed them." And when all was finished according to the commandment of the Lord, the "cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle."

The strict charge of the Lord here given to Moses, with regard to form and pattern, material and color, as detailed in all their minutiae, and the strict observance of this charge in all particulars, is certainly not written in vain, and may teach us the necessity of closely observing whatsoever the Lord teaches us.

We cannot believe that God would have condescended to dwell amongst Israel, and his glory to fill the tabernacle, if they had not honored him by showing their faith and obedience, in making all things according to his commands.

This tabernacle, Paul says, was a figure for the time then present, of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man; and then goes on to show, or draw a comparison between the services of the priests and that of Christ, which was typified by the former. As the Lord promised to be with Israel in the tabernacle, so Jesus Christ has promised also to be with His disciples, or dwell with His Church (which was typified by the tabernacle), as He saith in 2d Cor. vi.: "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters."

Here again, as there is but one God, so there was but one high priest, and but one tabernacle, where God had promised to, and did dwell, and where all Israel had to bring their offerings.

When this people of the Lord had entered into the promised land, and had dwelt there a season, and been prosperous, the Lord commanded them to build Him an house, where He would dwell or meet them as He had done in the tabernacle. Here they should bring their sacrifices and offerings, and when brought to this place, and offered according to the command of God, He would accept them.

This house David, His servant, designed to build, but God told him he should "not build a house for His name, but Solomon thy son, he shall build My house and My courts." But the fashion of the house, God made David to understand, and this he gave to his son Solomon, whom he told: "The Lord made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, even all the work of this pattern."

The stone and wood of which this house, or temple, was constructed, was, in its natural state, nothing different from other stone in the quarry, or trees in the forest; but were so hewn, dressed and fitted, that when they were brought together to be erected into a house, they fitted together so nicely, that the noise of hammer or iron was not heard, in making them join and fit. Josephus says, they joined so nicely, as if they had naturally united themselves together.

The Apostle Paul, in different places in his epistles, compares this temple with the Church, saying: "Ye are the temple of the living God," etc., to which I suppose the Apostle Peter also alludes, when he says: "Ye as lively stones are built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God," etc.

The likeness here between the literal temple, where the literal Israel were to worship, and the Church of Christ, or spiritual temple, where the spiritual Israel should worship in spirit and in truth, is very exact, as is also the comparison between the material of which they are built. The material of which the literal temple was built has already been adverted to. That of the spiritual, consisting of converted souls, who were by nature nothing different from all others in the world, but by conversion they were so changed in the spirit of their minds, as to form a complete unity. Formerly they were carnal, but now spiritual, and are by the Spirit of God so joined together in one, as to become one heart and soul, which was fitly prefigured by the joining of the stones in the literal temple.

There was here but one temple, and one worship, all pointing to that unity in the Spirit, wherein the true worshipers stand.

The Lord, also, by His Holy prophets, whom he had anointed with His spirit, and who spake as they were moved by the Spirit of God, foretold and spoke of the conception, birth, life and death, of this Messiah: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a

sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel ;” and again it is said : “ He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground ;” and of his person : “ He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that one should desire him.” Further, he was said to be despised and rejected, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was despised and we esteemed him not,” etc., as we see abundantly set forth, in Isaiah lii.

Of the kingdom which He was to establish, the prophets have also spoken. It was said it should be an everlasting kingdom. “Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever.” Further it is said, when speaking of this kingdom : “ Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, but this shall be with burning, and fuel for fire.” (Isaiah ix.) And in Isaiah ii. : “ And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks ; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” When this “rod shall come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and the branch grow out of his roots,” and shall begin to judge the earth with righteousness and equity, then “the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together ; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together ; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child put his hand on the cockatrice’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy on all my holy mountain ; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah xi.) Of this way it is said : “No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there ; but the redeemed shall walk there.” (Isaiah xxxv.)

Moses and Solomon received the instructions from the Lord, how they should build the tabernacle and temple, but they did not do the work themselves, but gave directions to the workmen how they should do it ; and so Christ, though he is the head of

His Church, did not build it himself in person, but gave full directions in every particular to his apostles, who after His departure received power and authority from on high to complete the work.

Christ being a king, and the Church His kingdom, He, as the true Lawgiver, of whom Moses spake when he said, the Lord their God would raise up another prophet from among their brethren, whom they should hear, gives his instructions and laws, saying: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but I say unto you swear not at all," etc., "but let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil. Ye have heard that it hath been said an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that you resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matt. v.)

Thus, in the very commencement of his mission, teaching and inculcating that doctrine which would lead his disciples to come into conformity with the type of the creatures in the ark, and the prophecy of Isaiah regarding the harmony of the gentle and ravenous beasts quoted before. All his walk, conduct and conversation whilst on earth, and every precept and principle he inculcated, was consistent, and harmonized with the above teaching in his Sermon on the Mount.

Peter was told to put his sword in the sheath, the disciples to be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves; and when they were persecuted in one city, they should flee to another.

The Lord, besides giving Moses strict charges with regard to

all the particulars of size and structure of the tabernacle, showed him a pattern also, and David also was shown a pattern of the temple which Solomon should build. Now we know that if we give an artist ever so plain a description of a piece of work which we wish him to execute; if we give him the size, shape and form, and describe it ever so exactly, if we then show him a pattern of the object, it will greatly assist his conceptions of it. So the Lord also showed these a pattern of the work which they were to construct.

So Christ likewise, besides giving his apostles full and complete instructions and commandments how they should live and walk on earth, and what they should teach mankind, gave them patterns likewise, so that they might be assisted in their conceptions of their duty, and more correctly understand his design.

We all know that there are such rules in architecture, whereby stones and timbers may be squared, and wrought to a particular rule, so that when they are brought together and joined, every piece will fit to the particular place for which it was designed. If the rule by which they have been wrought is good, they must join and fit. If they do not thus join, then the rule must either be faulty, or the workman not have adhered to it. In the preparation of the material for the literal temple, it seems the rule by which they wrought was particularly good, and the workmen adhered particularly close to it, and the result was a particularly nice adaptation of all the different pieces to the places for which they were designed. The house, it is said, "was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building." Had any one or more of these workmen disregarded their directions, or thought it not necessary to be so very exact, it must be evident to every one, such a result could never have been attained.

Thus the Saviour has also given the rule in his Sermon on the Mount, to which the lively stones of which his spiritual house shall be built, must be wrought, so that they will fit and join together, without any noise, confusion or constraint, for want of adaptation.

In order to assist our weak conceptions, the Lord Jesus frequently makes comparisons of spiritual things with natural ones; and these

natural objects become patterns for us, by which we may be enabled to know whether the spiritual object agrees with the instructions of the Lord. In this sense he has given us the pattern of sheep and lambs, in addition to his rule in the Sermon on the Mount, so that, besides having the rule, we may have the pattern also, to which we must be wrought, for the building of this spiritual temple or Church.

We might then ask the question, how, or in what manner we must resemble sheep? Evidently not in our person, or outward appearance, neither in regard to rational faculties; but, as I conceive, in their gentle, unassuming and inoffensive disposition. There must be something in which the disciples of Jesus compare with sheep, for the Saviour frequently calls them sheep, and compares them to sheep. Long before the advent of the Saviour, the Word of God had said, He should be "led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearer is dumb, so opened He not his mouth." This prophesy being so plainly fulfilled in Christ, and His disciples being commanded to walk in His footsteps, it is plain that this is the allusion.

The Saviour likewise set a little child in the midst of his disciples, as a pattern, and told them: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Paul explains the meaning of the Saviour in this pattern, or in what way we shall be like little children, by telling us we shall be children in malice, but in understanding men. But the expression of the Saviour seems to indicate that we must be converted before we can become like little children, in this sense.

We know that no timbers or stone are of such a shape by nature, that they would join to form a building, without being subjected to violence; especially such a building as the temple of Solomon was.

Just so it is with us. By nature we are not fitted, and in this state never could be brought together to form such a community as Christ's Church, or spiritual temple, or kingdom. But by conversion, and becoming as Christ has taught in His Sermon on the Mount, and wrought to the pattern of innocence, as little children, and harmless, inoffensive and indelusive as sheep and lambs, we may be thus bound together by the strong cords of love; so that every one will esteem others better than themselves, and no one seek his own, but every one another's wealth.

The work of grace in the soul, by which man is wrought to the pattern here given, is a mystery which is invisible to the natural eye, and cannot be comprehended by the carnal mind; wherefore Christ has said: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." A carnal person may hear the groanings, lamentations and sighs of one who is smarting under a sense of guilt, and laden with the burden of their sins; feeling in their souls what Paul says, that "the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;" and they may also hear his exclamations of joy, when he comes to be relieved of this burden by coming to Christ, and tasting the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come; but he knows no more of it than he does of whence the wind comes, or whither it goes. His words and actions, however, bring with them an evidence that there is a change; but this change they cannot comprehend, and "think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot," as they did before. Such a person thus wrought upon by the grace and Spirit of God, and one who is a stranger to it, can no more understand each other and walk together, than a stone or piece of timber which has been wrought to such a rule as mentioned before, can fit or join with one which is rough and unhewn. But if they meet another who has undergone the same operation, and is under the influence of the same Spirit, they are drawn together by that Spirit, and there is a perfect understanding and harmony between them.

In preparing the material for the literal temple, the artizan had the object of their uniting together in view, but the stones and timbers themselves knew nothing of it. And so the great artizan has here, also, the object of bringing together into one, the children of God who are scattered abroad; but the souls thus operated upon think of nothing of the kind till they meet their fellow, and then are filled with wonder and admiration at the love and power of God.

The literal was a dead temple, composed of dead material, and consequently no action or life was expected. The material was prepared, brought together and united, and then was finished, and there it stood. But Christ's temple was to be a living one, built

up of living stones, made alive by the Spirit, which is a life-giving principle, and was to act by offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

Though the means by which man has been wrought to this state, and the work itself, is incomprehensible to the carnal mind, the result of it is not so. The sweet fruits of the Spirit are manifest to them, and as these are so different from what they themselves can bring forth, are to work conviction in his heart of their Divine origin. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This condition they could not perform, without they would receive power from him; because it was a Divine principle, and without a Divine influence it could not be produced in them. Therefore Christ said: "Without Me ye can no nothing;" showing and teaching us the absolute necessity of looking to and depending upon him for the power to keep and fulfill his commandments.

Thus it is manifest that, though the carnal mind cannot comprehend this work, it can yet know the fruits, for Christ says all men shall know by the fruit of love that we are his disciples.

That the disciples might better understand our Saviour, with regard to the necessity of depending on him for the ability to discharge those duties which he enjoined upon them, and bring forth those sweet and delightful fruits of the Spirit, he has set forth the relation of the Church to Himself, under the similitude of the vine, saying: "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman;" and again: "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."

We will for the present pass by this simile, only calling the attention of the reader to its agreement with the types and prophecies adverted to in the Old Testament, all pointing to peace and harmony, and representing a perfect unity.

Christ also prayed his Heavenly Father that his disciples should be one, and said He prayed not for these alone, but for those also who should believe on Him through their word, that they also should be one, and the world thereby know that He had sent him. This alone should satisfy every one, that the Church of God *must*

be a unit. The disciples of Jesus Christ, and those who believe on Him through their word, constitute the Church of God, and they must either be one, or the prayer of Christ was not heard.

Again, Caiaphas, the high priest, in his priestly capacity, prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and the evangelist adds: "And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad."

Now, here the evangelist asserts that Christ *died* for this purpose: "That he should gather together in one, the children of God;" and they *must* be thus gathered into one, or else the object of Christ's death was not accomplished.

Having now briefly set forth some of the types and figures in the Old Testament, which we conceive refer to the gospel Church, as well as the prophecies and predictions of holy men under the Mosaic dispensation, and then came down to the time of Christ, and referred to what he has said and commanded, as well as to the figures he gave and representations he made, let us now inquire whether there ever was such a church or kingdom established on earth, as agreed in every particular with these figures and prophecies of the Old Testament, and the commands, representations and symbols in the new.

It was said that the Messiah should be a king; He would establish a kingdom; that it should be glorious, and would endure forever. When He was born, it was asked by the wise men: "Where is He that is born king of the Jews?" Mark, in his gospel, says: "Now, after that John was put into prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying: The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye and believe in the gospel." When he sent forth his twelve apostles to preach, He told them to declare "the kingdom of Heaven as at hand;" and when he sent out the seventy disciples he told them to say: "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." He did not Himself say anywhere, that the kingdom of God was come, nor did He instruct His disciples so to say. But He told His disciples that some of them should not "taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." This plainly shows that the kingdom was not yet come, but was not far off.

With all these prophecies and declarations, it is not strange that those who believed on Him should expect Him to erect a kingdom; hence the constant inquiries of His disciples and others respecting this kingdom; and so long as He was on earth, even to the time He led His disciples out to the Mount of Olives, where He took His final personal departure from them, we hear inquiries relative to this kingdom, and all betray in those who made them, an utter ignorance of its nature. Though Christ did not personally establish this kingdom, or set it up on earth, he did in person give all the directions and commands respecting its establishment, propagation and government, and that to the very persons who manifested such ignorance of its nature, whilst he was giving them the instructions and commands under which they should act. Christ did not send them forth in this ignorance to preach the gospel, because they were not qualified; but He told them to repair to Jerusalem, and there tarry till they were endued with power from on high. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

This shows the utter impossibility of any one being qualified by study or human teaching to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, or by any means short of the Holy Spirit. These apostles, though they "compared with Christ all the time He went in and out amongst them, beginning from the baptism of John (which was His entrance into the ministry), until the day He was taken up into heaven," and heard Him who "spake as never man spake," and saw and heard so much more than any person now can see or hear (as many other things which Jesus did are not written), but all could not give them a just conception of the work, until it was impressed upon them by a power from on high.

Christ told his disciples, the kingdom of heaven is within you; and this they had not yet received as a little child, as he says, and consequently they could not preach it. But with the enduing from on high, they were qualified both with knowledge and language, to accomplish the purpose of God.

I suppose no one will gainsay that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, on the day of Pentecost, was the origin or the establishment of the Church of Christ, or kingdom of God on earth, where the whole work or purpose of God in the incarnation of His Son, and His mission on earth, was accomplished, in those

souls who believed, and were thus, to the amount of three thousand, inducted into the fold of Christ.

Now, if Jesus Himself had to agree with those types and figures which were given of Him, and all things which were written of Him by Moses in the law, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, had to be fulfilled, must not His Church also agree with the types, and all the prophecies in the Old Testament, and especially with the declarations and figures of Christ Himself in the New?

When the Holy Ghost came upon the disciples, Peter immediately began to show this agreement. He now wanted the people to embrace the gospel. To do this, he had to convince them that this was now what had been foretold of it, and called their attention to the agreement of the work with what was spoken by the prophet Joel. That which was spoken by Moses and the prophets, was the only ground of proof they had; and if there had been no agreement here, they could not have wrought any conviction. Therefore, we find Paul very frequently referring to these; and near the conclusion of the Acts of the Apostles, it is said: "That on a certain day, when many people had come to him into his lodging, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of *Moses* and out of the *Prophets*, from morning till evening."

If we then compare this Church as established here on the day of Pentecost, with the ark of Noah, what a complete agreement do we find. There were here three thousand souls added to the church in one day, and very shortly after it had increased to five thousand. There were here, it is said, devout men out of every nation under heaven; and though it is not expressly said that of all these different nations some embraced the gospel, yet the language seems to imply it. At any rate, there are here persons of some twelve or fifteen different languages, who were confounded and amazed, because they every one heard the disciples speak in the language wherein they were born, and in their amazement "said, one to another, what meaneth this!" And when Peter had declared it, *they* were pricked in *their* hearts, and said, "men and brethren, what shall we do?"

May we not believe that there was here every shade of natural disposition and temperament; from the mild and amiable, to the excitable, violent and blood thirsty? But here they are all by

one Spirit baptized into one body, and "the multitude that believed were one heart and one soul;" and here, as in the ark, they all entered the same fold, and harmonized together. The type prefigured a unit, and the antitype presents it completely formed.

The unity here of these souls who have been circumcised, not with that circumcision made with hands, but that of the heart, and their free submission to the doctrine of the apostles, is fitly prefigured by the literal Israel, who were all subject to the one law, and had all the same offerings and sacrifices to bring to the one tabernacle.

The unity prefigured by the temple, which was composed of stones and timbers, (as already adverted to), which differed nothing from all other stones or timbers, but were so wrought upon as to unite without any noise or forcing, is here completely fulfilled in this spiritual temple, composed of persons in no way differing from others in the world, but wrought upon by a power from on high, are so prepared and fitted for unity, that they are brought together and became one heart and soul, without any previous consultation about terms, or any formal agreement or outward bond of any kind, but by one spirit they have been united into one body.

Having already made some comparison between the temple and Church, we will not here enlarge, only to urge the absolute necessity of their agreement.

With regard to the prophecies, we have a most complete fulfillment of the predictions respecting this kingdom. All war and violence here ceased, and we do not find a single instance of any of the members of this kingdom offering any violence, threatening any revenge, or resisting any evil or injury. No matter how ravenous and destructive they were before, after conversion and uniting with the Church, they were harmless and indelusive as doves and lambs, and there was nothing to hurt or destroy, on all the Lord's holy mountain. Saul, though breathing threatening and slaughter before conversion, now consorts with the lambs of Christ, and fitly represents the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and being the joy and delight of the children of God, especially the new born babes, who he fed with the sincere milk of the gospel, by which they grew and increased in strength and vigor; and

when they had grown to such a stature, that the breast of Christ was, as it were, withdrawn from them, and they had to be nourished by meat not so delicate or delicious to the taste, represented by weaning, he solaced and comforted them by the promises of the gospel, so that he was particularly agreeable to, and delighted them. The child now played at the hole of the asp, and the weaned child no more feared to put his hand on the cockatrice's den. That subtle poison and deadly hate, had all been neutralized and converted by the power of God's Spirit, into that meekness and Divine love, which delighteth every child of God.

Here was, indeed, fulfilled what the prophet Isaiah says in chapter xxxv.: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there."

I have already observed what Christ says, that all things had to be fulfilled which were written of Him; and I suppose all will agree that whatever was given as typical or predictive of His Church, *must* also be fulfilled. This must of necessity be so, otherwise God's purpose would fail, and His wisdom not be infinite.

Perhaps there might be some difference of opinion amongst the professors of religion with regard to the application of these types and prophecies to the Church of Christ; but with regard to His own declarations and commands, as well as His figures and comparisons, there can be no two opinions amongst those who own Him as the Messiah.

The Evangelist John says, as many as received Jesus, He gave power to become the sons of God, "even to them that believe in His name;" and the Saviour says: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" and again: "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." So there are many passages declaring and showing this truth, and that it is by faith in Christ, and this alone, that we can be justified and saved.

The utter impossibility of being saved without believing in

Christ, I suppose no professed Christian doubts. But, it is said many believed on Him, but they did not confess Him for fear of the Jews, and because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Though these believed on Him, it must be very plain that they are not included in the promises to believers before quoted, for they were ashamed to confess him; and of such he said, He will also be ashamed, when He appears with the holy angels.

But Jesus says also, that many will come in that day and say, Lord, Lord, open unto us, whom He will declare He never knew; who would appear to have believed in Him, and confessed Him likewise, and, as they thought, had done many wonderful works in His name. He says, also: "Not every one who saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven." It is evident that these had faith, but not of the kind which Christ alludes to, which gives everlasting life.

This language then qualifies the first expression, so as to leave it plain, that the faith which saves must be of a particular kind, and have the effect of bringing its possessor into obedience to His commands, which are the will of His Heavenly Father. This I suppose most people will concede also.

The knowledge of the commandments of Christ, must then be a matter of vital importance to us, since we must keep them to be saved; and we know we cannot keep them if we do not know what they are. But with regard to these commands and declarations of Christ, there seems to be a great diversity of opinion amongst professors of religion.

It seems to me evident from the language of Christ, that a person may suppose he is faithfully discharging his duty to God and man, and die in this confidence, and still be cast off.

Strictly speaking, there are but two classes of people in the world—believers and unbelievers. There are but the narrow and the broad way, and the children of God, and the children of the world; but still there are two classes of what are called believers, who have no promise in the Word of God. The hypocrite professes to believe, but has sentence of condemnation passed upon himself everywhere in the Word of God, and if he believes the Word to be truth, knows that he is under the sentence of

God's condemnation. But those who will come in that day and say, have we not eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets; and those who will say, have we not prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils, and done many wonderful works, cannot be hypocrites. No hypocrite can thus appear on that day. They will keep as far from the Judge, and desire to hear as little from Him as possible. But those who have an ignorant zeal for God, and are laboring under deception, will come boldly and seek to enter in, and shall not be able; and the Saviour says they shall be many.

Has that God, then, whose highest attribute is love, whose Word is the eternal truth, and who has declared "as I live I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live," and whose love for sinful man is so great, that he sent his only begotten Son to suffer so much that we might only live—I say, has that God used such ambiguous language in making His will known to man, that he could not readily comprehend His meaning? Or if he even desired to obey, he would be more likely to fail than succeed? God forbid we should think so, or else how could every mouth be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God?

On the contrary, the language, especially of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, is simple, plain, and easily comprehended; and in the conclusion He says, those who hear these sayings and do them, He will liken unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock, etc.

Our Saviour, in His Sermon on the Mount, says: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill;" and again: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery;" and then goes on and declares to us, how we may violate these commands before God, in a spiritual sense, or be guilty before him of transgressing them, without actually committing the deed.

The Saviour in saying: "It was said by them of old time," evidently alludes to the law. The law was given by Moses; but in this law He pointed to another; and particularly when He was about to take His departure from His brethren, He told them plainly that the Lord their God would raise up another prophet from amongst their brethren, like unto him; and Him they should

hear. This prophet was Christ, who now tells us in this sermon, so and so Moses said in old time ; but I now, as the prophet whom he told you should arise, say unto you do thus.

Thus the Saviour says: "*Again* ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you swear not at all," etc., "but let your communications be, yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Could any language be more simple and plain than this? Yet there has been a great deal of controversy amongst those who profess to believe in Jesus Christ, about what he means by it. Many contend that the Saviour here only intended to forbid profane and useless swearing, and did not allude to a true and lawful oath, taken before a magistrate or public person authorized by law to take or administer oaths. They assert that the swearing of oaths had become very common amongst the Jews, and that every trivial affair was confirmed with an oath; besides, profane swearing was also quite common or customary with them, and this is what the Saviour intended to forbid.

This seems to me to be putting a forced construction upon the words of our Saviour. He evidently alludes to the law, when he says, "it was said of old time." In this law it was said: "Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; yeshall not swear by my name *falsely*, or take my name in vain;" so he is evidently alluding in all these passages to the law, and intends to forbid something, which was allowed there. This seems so plain and evident, that it is impossible it could be understood otherwise, especially by persons anxious to know the will of God, and fearful lest they might come short in it. Whatever it is which the Saviour forbids here, it must be something which was allowed of old, not by unfaithful and wicked priests and scribes, but by the Lord Himself; for immediately before he says: "It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. But I say unto you that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery."

Here there is plainly and manifestly something forbidden by Christ under the gospel, which the Lord Himself allowed under the law. This all Christian nations agree with. The Saviour, in

another place, explains the reason of this, by saying: "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." Christ came "to restore all things," and he did also restore this institution to its primitive order, in his new creation.

The very next sentence after, He says: "*Again* ye have heard," etc. By adding this word "*again*" here, it is evident that He alludes to the same place where the other was said, and to forbid something which was also there allowed. Profane and useless swearing was forbidden under the law, and had it only been this which He intended to impress, He would not have included it amongst other things which He forbids, that were there allowed, without making any difference in His language, but would have adverted to the law for authority to enforce His commands, as He frequently does appeal to Moses. But Christ says: "Of old it was said, ye shall not forswear yourselves, but shall perform to the Lord your oaths," showing what was forbidden, and what allowed "of old." But he now cuts off both together, and that it shall be impossible for us to misunderstand his meaning, he says: "But let your communications be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Is not this so plain that fools may not err in it?

The Apostle James (it seems to me), also gives his testimony in favor of this construction of the Saviour's meaning, in very unequivocal language; saying: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." Now, if this is intended only to forbid profane and unnecessary oaths, then the language is calculated to confuse and mislead. But I think it shows, conclusively, that he understood the Saviour to forbid all swearing. He does not say swear none but legal oaths, but He says, "above all things, my brethren, swear *not by any oath.*"

Many things were commanded and permitted under the law, which were changed and forbidden under the gospel; and this instance, with regard to oaths, seems as plain a case of the kind as any one mentioned in the New Testament. It is, I believe, a rule in theology, that Scripture must be so construed as not to conflict, and it must evidently be so, that the weaker passages yield

to the stronger. Where such plain declarations are made as those referred to, there must be the strongest, and most unquestionable evidence, not from reason, but from Scripture, that there was another meaning attached to the words, by expressions, or acts, or by both.

I do not wish to be considered as making any arrogant assertions, but must say, I cannot see a single example in the Acts of the Apostles, nor expression in any of their epistles, which is sufficiently conclusive to controvert this position.

The language of Paul, in Hebrews vi., is often adverted to by the advocates of legal swearing, to sustain it.

An oath to confirm the truth was admitted to Israel, and was commanded to be taken in cases where there were controversies, and there was not sufficient evidence to confirm the truth, and, when so taken, had to be received as evidence, and so conclude the controversy. Those who were appointed to decide the case, had to believe it; that is, they had to receive it as truth, and an oath was considered so sacred, that no one dare question it; and thus an oath, for confirmation, was to them an end of all strife."

Man, in his weak and depraved nature, was ever inclined to disregard and question the truth of Divine revelation, and especially if there was anything in it which stood in the way of some sensual gratification. Satan ever takes advantage of every infirmity which may be used to defeat the purposes of God, and thus operates on this weakness to prevent man from receiving the promises of God by faith. In consideration of this weakness in man, and the respect he was accustomed to pay to an oath, God was willing to condescend to confirm His promise by an oath, so that we might have a strong consolation, and the devil have less power to rob us of it by unbelief.

In the preceding part of the chapter, the apostle is speaking of himself and the brethren, and says we and ye; but when he speaks of the oath, he does not say we swear by the greater, and an oath is to us an end of all strife; but he says *men swear*, alluding to the world, and what is customary in the world, or under the law, and the deference paid to an oath by man as the reason of God for swearing, and does in no wise thereby sanction its use by his brethren. This passage, it seems to me, is very weak testimony to be received against such plain and conclusive language as that of Christ, and the Apostle James.

Paul, to the Rom., i. 9, says: "God is my witness," etc.; and in 1st Cor. xv. 31: "I protest by your rejoicing," etc.; in 2d Cor. i. 23: "I call God for a record upon my soul," and in Gal. i. 20: "Before God I lie not." These expressions have been claimed as evidence in favor of swearing. I have heard one of its advocates declaring very positively, in a public speech, that the expression of Paul, in 2d Cor., was the strongest kind of an oath, and he would desire no stronger one of any person; and exulted very loudly over his supposed incontrovertible evidence. He had, however, just before admitted that *profane swearing* and *extra-judicial oaths were forbidden* by Christ. But if these expressions of Paul, or any one of them, was an oath, then he must have violated the Saviour's command in either case. If this was an oath, it certainly was an extra-judicial one; and according to his own exposition of the Sermon on the Mount, he would make Paul a transgressor. A pretty grave charge for a minister of the gospel to make, and one which involves him in a dilemma, from which he cannot easily extricate himself; and he must either say the Saviour meant nothing at all, or else Paul is a transgressor.

The Saviour sometimes confirmed His assertions with "verily," and sometimes to make a stronger impression He would add a second "verily," saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you;" and the best, and most consistent construction I can put on the words of the apostle, is that he used some such impressive language in order to impress his feelings more deeply and effectively into the hearts of his brethren.

Again, the Saviour says: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also; and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

Here the Saviour presents us with the state of feeling to which his children must be wrought, in order to form such a community

as He describes his Church to be, or as it was set forth by the types and predictions in the Old Testament. It also forms the chief ground on which we found our doctrine, of entire defenselessness of the members of the Church of God.

Here, also, a very large proportion of those who profess to be disciples of Jesus Christ, differ with us, and mostly contend for the right of Christians to defend themselves against unjust aggressions, and we may find among them every shade of doctrine, from the entirely defenseless, to the most ultra defenders of war.

I have never heard of any one attempting to prove the right to defend by any assertion that Christ has made, or by His Sermon on the Mount, but mostly found their argument on reason and necessity, and attempt to support it by some equivocal act or expression of some of the apostles. It is often urged, if all men would do so, what would become of the nation or country? This is a very useless supposition, for certainly all men never will (according to Scripture) do so, and if they did, no violence would then be needed, but we would have a paradise on earth. Again, they suppose situations in which it might be extremely difficult to carry out this principle, and the consequences might be very serious if we did. But this is no argument against a command of God. Abraham is held up to us as a pattern of faith worthy of our imitation. If he had given place to such reasonings when he was commanded to offer up his son Isaac, it is not likely he would have obeyed, but if any such thoughts presented themselves, he took them captive under the obedience of God. God has invited his children to cast all their cares upon him, and promised to care for them. The hairs of their heads are all numbered, and not a sparrow falls without the will of the Father.

Paul says: "God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," and directs us also, to take every thought captive under the obedience of Christ."

But the words of our Saviour are simple and plain, and I see no way to put two constructions on them. He certainly intended to teach us something, and what else could it be? Of old, under the law, when man was in that carnal state which rendered it impossible for him to comprehend the things of the Spirit, he was permitted to exercise those desires of the flesh, which call for

justice and revenge, but, under the new dispensation, when man is brought under the influence of the Spirit of God, he is to evince a Divine disposition. This Christ expresses very clearly, for He says: "That ye may be the children of your Father in heaven, who makes His sun to rise on the good and on the evil, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust; for if ye do good to, and love only those who love and do good to you, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans the same?"

It is sometimes urged, that it is only lawless violence and resistance which the Saviour forbids; but why did He not refer them to the law for His authority? But it is evident, as in the case of the oath, that He forbids that which was allowed under the law, and uses such language, the meaning of which cannot be mistaken. He says: "But I say unto you, that you *resist not evil.*" Now, any one who does us injustice, either in person or property, does us an evil; and if we defend ourselves, either by legal or illegal means, by civil process, or by force of arms, we resist this evil, and so transgress the Saviour's command. Paul, also, plainly gives his understanding of the Saviour's meaning in Romans xii., where he says: "Recompense no man evil for evil;" and, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."

It is sometimes urged, that we may love a person and still compel him by force or law to do us justice. If one would steal our goods, and we would prosecute him, it would do him good, and so be the greatest love we could show him; and if one owes us, and unjustly withholds payment, we might compel it by law, and still not feel any enmity to him, but love him, and by the act do him good. But how would we convince any one by our action that the motive was love, when we would be doing exactly the thing which revenge would do?

Our Saviour says: "Let your light so shine, that men may see your good works." But how could men see any light in an action, which the most darkened person in the world would do under similar circumstances? Christ says, by their fruits ye shall know

them, and if our fruits differ nothing from an unconverted person, how can any one know us from them by these fruits ?

The weakest attempt I have ever heard made to reconcile the right of a Christian to defend his rights by law, with the words of our Saviour, was, that the Saviour only meant to urge his disciples to pay their just debts ; that we must owe a man before he can sue us, and if so, and he sues us, we shall not defend ourselves ! "Pay your debts," he exultingly exclaimed, "and then no one will sue you at the law." Every sane person knows that suits are often instituted without the shadow of a claim in justice. It was not necessary that Jesus Christ should come to teach such precepts as these, for every tittle of the law impressed and enforced justice. Nor does the language in any way favor such a construction. I do not notice this idea to refute it, but only to show to what weak and desperate means man will resort to defend his position, and with what weak grounds he will satisfy himself, when it agrees with his carnal desires.

When we reflect upon the disposition of the carnal mind, we need not be surprised that these things are so hard to understand. The times of man's ignorance God winked at, and the times of his hardness of heart and darkness of mind, God allowed the flesh a certain degree of liberty ; but now, when the true light has come, he commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and be converted, and walk in the spirit and newness of life. With all the teaching of the Saviour, the disciples could not fully understand this doctrine till they were enlightened by the Holy Ghost. That they did understand the Saviour so far as that he forbid them to defend themselves is evident, but fully they did not, nor could not, for the reason which I have already observed. The carnal mind cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit ; they must be spiritually discerned.

But that the Jews, at the time when our Saviour was on earth, did understand him to teach a defenseless doctrine, and forbid his disciples to use any violence, or make defense by resisting their enemies forcibly, is evident from their expressions in the council gathered by the chief priests and Pharisees. "What do we," they said, "for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." The motive for

the argument here used, is the safety of the nation from their enemies, the Romans. If the doctrine of Christ did not forbid war and violence under every circumstance, why would the Jews conclude that the Romans could any easier take away their place and nation, than if they did not believe on Him? In physical strength they were not weakened, and if the *doctrine* did not forbid it, there was nothing to weaken their defense, but rather strengthen it; for they would become more moral and virtuous, and in every way better qualified to defend the place and nation. We know that the Christian nations are the greatest warriors in the world. None of the heathen nations can at all cope with them at arms. Is not the plain and evident understanding of the text, that they understood his doctrine as forbidding all war and violence, and inculcating patient submission to wrong and injury?

The comparison which our Saviour makes of the disciples to sheep and lambs, also shows the intent of His teaching. Christ has made this comparison, and it must hold good. The sheep is a pattern, to which we must be wrought. Infinite wisdom could make no mistake in drawing comparisons, nor did it draw them for nothing, but that we shall be instructed thereby. In what respect, then, are we to be like sheep? The inquiry is a matter of great importance to us, for unless we are brought to the resemblance intended, we never can enter into life. It is certainly not in our outward person that we are to be like them; for this God has made, and it is good. It must evidently, then, be in the disposition we manifest by our actions. Christ, it is said, "was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearer is dumb, so opened he not his mouth;" and Christ told His disciples that he "sends them like *sheep in the midst of wolves*," and likewise, when they were persecuted in one city, they should flee to another. Now, what do sheep do amongst wolves? Do they not flee when the wolf makes the least demonstration toward them; as Christ says: "Flee to another?" And if we now examine the conduct of the disciples, we will find them exactly to agree with this view.

I might ask: In what way do those Christians who advocate and justify war and defend themselves, compare with sheep? I confess I can see no comparison, and the conclusion forces itself upon the mind, that they cannot be wrought to the pattern which Christ

has given. Would it not be a very strange sight to see a flock of sheep chase a flock of wolves, of at least double, or even treble their own numbers, as we often see professed Christians do the unbelieving heathen? It would be no strange sight to see one wolf chase a flock of a thousand sheep.

The sheep is gentle and harmless; is not by nature prepared with weapons of defense; never resists or murmurs at injustice, but flees when its enemy pursues it, and when apprehended, yields to its fate. If man takes it and binds it, it is passive. They take its fleece, and when left loose it runs away, and shows no spiteful or revengeful disposition toward those who treated it so unjustly. There is, certainly, a strong likeness between the teaching of Christ and the disposition of a sheep; and we might inquire why Christ did not compare His disciples to some other animal? There are animals which certainly show much more sagacity and intelligence than a sheep. There is something in man, by nature, which admires bravery and courage. No man is so much admired as the great hero of the battle-field, who has braved great dangers, and overcame the enemy at great odds and disadvantage. If these qualities are so much admired, why did the Saviour not select some animal which is notorious for its strength and courage, to represent His valiant soldiers of the cross? The selection was evidently made with design, to enforce and impress the doctrine taught throughout the gospel. When Peter drew the sword, and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Christ told him to "put up his sword in his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Christ evidently did not intend to say that every man who uses the sword in war, will also perish by it. This we know history and truth would not confirm. But, as I conceive, He means His kingdom is not to be established by the sword. The kingdoms of the earth are usually established by the sword, and in their turn, are again put down by the sword; and the Saviour would say, if His kingdom should be established by this, it would again be put down by the same. But, as His kingdom is to be an *everlasting* one, it must be established on a different principle. He told Peter: "Put up thy sword again in his place," and He nowhere directs him to unsheath it again; so the Christian's sword must evidently still be in the sheath, except the spiritual one, which the Lord will always have him to be girt

about with, and wield it valiantly. By suffering, the Captain of our salvation was made perfect, and by death, He overcame him that held the power of death; and His children are called upon to walk in His footsteps, and bear the cross.

There is no better or stronger evidence in the Bible, of the Divine favor, than the victories which the children of Israel gained over their enemies. Their enemies were compelled to say: "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them;" and if the Lord had designed that His Spiritual Israel should thus defend themselves, could He not have proven the truth of the gospel very speedily by it? If the apostles had taken up the sword against those who assailed them, would the Lord not have been able to give them the victory? And if he is with the just in their cause, was there ever a more righteous one than theirs? Yet, we do not find that one lifted his hand against an enemy; nor a single instance in the whole New Testament where an apostle or disciple offered any resistance to their captors, or those who despoiled them of their goods. There were no doubt cases occurred where they might have overcome their enemies; but this would not have been showing love. We do not find them do as Moses, look this way and that, whether any one could see them, and then slay their enemy; but the love they bore to their enemies was such as all men could comprehend, whether carnal or spiritual.

Paul's appeal to Cæsar has been urged in justification of self-defense, but I cannot perceive that this case is strong enough to negative, or overturn all the declarations of Christ, and the teaching of the apostles.

I have heard it claimed as an appeal to the highest authority, as if one would appeal to the supreme court for justice, or for the support of rights which he could not obtain from an inferior court or tribunal. An appeal which is in the nature of a defense, is where a magistrate or public person invested with authority to make decisions in cases of controversy, has given judgment, or made a decision which is not satisfactory to the party to whom it is adverse. He may here appeal from this decision to a higher court or power, until it reaches the supreme court, whose decision is final. This would constitute a legal defense.

Christ told his disciples, when they were brought before magistrates and rulers, that they should take no thought what they

would say, for it would be given them in the same hour, what they ought to say. It is therefore plain, that it was not forbidden the disciples to answer personally before these magistrates and rulers, when permitted to do so ; and they had the promise from God of wisdom, which all their adversaries would not be able to gainsay. We all know that what a person says himself in favor of his own cause, is no evidence before a court, and that evidence given in legal form, even though it is untrue, must be admitted, unless *proven* untrue by disinterested witnesses. The mere denial by the person under trial has no weight with it.

Now, Paul was captured and cast into prison, and was repeatedly brought before the chief captain and governor, to confront his accusers, who appeared with witnesses and orators to prove and enforce their accusations. But we do not find that Paul ever appeared with witnesses, to rebut the testimony of his false and bitter accusers, or that he employed any counsel to defend him. He seems to have very strictly obeyed his master's command, and never concerned himself about what they would attempt to prove against him ; but when requested to do so, made answer to their charges, and God endowed him with such wisdom, as that his enemies were not able to gainsay, or his judges to condemn him. So that he never could have made any legal appeal, for his judges had never made any decision ; but when asked by Festus, whether he was willing to go up to Jerusalem to be judged, he merely availed himself of the privilege given him of making his choice where he would rather be tried. It is said, "Festus was willing to show the Jews a favor," and this was the reason for his asking Paul, whether he was willing to go up to Jerusalem to be judged by him there. Paul knew his duplicity, and reprov'd it, and told him what he himself knew to be his duty.

Feeling that he would rather go to Rome, and answer before Cæsar (especially as the Lord had declared to him that he should testify of him there), than go before those who he knew only desired his life, whether right or wrong, lawfully or unlawfully, and a judge who he knew was willing to do his enemies "a favor," he appealed to Cæsar, where he ought to be judged.

I must again refer to the impossibility that Christ could be, or do anything different from what was written of Him ; and the like impossibility of His children or Church, being different from

what He represented them. He gave those directions to them, so that they might know what to do, and the descriptions of them, so that unbelievers might know them. "By this shall all men know, that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." "Beware of false prophets; by their fruits ye shall know them."

Unbelievers, which are called the world, etc., are in the carnal mind, and evidence which shall convince them, must be such as can be comprehended by the carnal mind. If a man does me an injury in any way, and I submit to it patiently, and return him good instead, it is the fruit which love would dictate, and could be comprehended by every one. If my goods are taken away, and I ask them not again, nor prosecute the thief, but take the "spoiling joyfully," showing thereby that I have not my heart bound to them, but have a better and enduring substance laid up in heaven, it is a fruit that every one can know. . . But if I resist, and defend my person and rights, who is convinced thereby? Or how is my conduct a fruit by which I may be known as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and a child of God? How does any one know that I love them, and am not bound in heart to my possessions? The Apostle John says: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth."

Many of the different denominations of Christendom, send out missionaries to the heathen nations, to convert them to the Christian religion. If these unbelieving heathens would take up the New Testament, and examine it, and find there that Christ has commanded His disciples to love their enemies, and do good to those that despitefully use them, and not to resist evil, etc., and particularly that they should love one another, and given this last as a sign by which all men should know them, would they not naturally look for the evidence? But if they would see that these disciples of Jesus (as they profess to be), are very much divided—that there is a great deal of strife and contention amongst them, that very bitter quarrels exist between them, and that they are often arrayed, not only against their unbelieving enemies, but even their believing brethren, in hostile strife on the battle-field, destroying each others' lives and property, and creating incalculable misery and distress—would not the most reasonable conclusion be, that if this Jesus was what he pretended to be, these cannot be his disciples; and would it not be the most natural

thing in the world for them to ask for the proof, which Jesus offers, viz., their love? I am at a loss to know what proof such missionaries could offer.

Now the commandments here referred to, concerning oaths, self-defense, to love one another, and the comparison of his disciples to little children, to sheep and doves, and of his Church to the vine, and the prayer to His Father, by Christ, that they should be one, and the testimony of the Evangelist John, that Christ died that he might gather together in one, the children of God that are scattered abroad, I consider were all fulfilled and incontestibly presented in the Church of Christ, as established on the day of Pentecost; and every violation and departure scripturally reprov'd, so long as the apostles had the oversight of the Church.

Not an instance can be shown, where they violated the views here taken, of those contested points of Christ's Sermon on the Mount; not an instance where they violated the law of love to one another. Every where their conduct compares with little children in malice and in a firm reliance in their Heavenly Parent. Every where their conduct compares with lambs and sheep, in following and obeying the voice of their shepherd, and in the harmless and defenseless disposition they manifest. When they were persecuted in one city, they fled to another; and when apprehended, they patiently submitted to whatever their enemies chose to inflict upon them; and when let go, went away rejoicing, not reproaching or threatening their persecutors for the injustice done them; and when in the greatest agonies, prayed for their enemies who were stoning them to death. The unity represented by the comparison to the vine, is fully presented. The same peaceable fruits of the Spirit were brought forth by all. The unity prayed for to His Heavenly Father, was here fully responded to, by their being baptized by one Spirit into one body, and that which John says he died for accomplished in those Jews and proselytes from every nation under Heaven, being brought to be of one heart and mind on the day of Pentecost.

If this position is now made out, that Christ did so teach, and that the Church was thus constituted when first established, the question may arise, whether it was ever to remain so, or have we any authority to say, that it need not, or must not now be so?

Under the law, there was a promise that another prophet should

arise, and under the old covenant that a new one should be made which should be established upon better promises. But of the gospel it was said, in the *last days*, which Peter said were those when the Spirit was poured out; and John says this is the *last time*; and Paul to Heb.: "God has in these *last days* spoken to us by His Son." If this, then, was the last revelation, man is unquestionably bound to its requirements still, and the Church must be what it was when first established.

But now, to come to the principal object of this little work, and that which most seriously concerns us, namely: To inquire whether we are now such members, as Christ has set forth we must be, of such a Church or kingdom as was there established on the day of Pentecost.

I have observed, that the devil, the great adversary of man and enemy of all good, ever sought to defeat the purposes of God; and so we behold him using every means and device, to bring the Captain of our salvation under his own power and dominion, by inducing him to sin against God's holy law. But, failing in this, and God fully accomplishing all his purposes, and having re-established that kingdom which the devil had succeeded in extinguishing in the garden of Eden, he now immediately applies himself with all diligence, to obliterate the new creation, and, as represented in Revelations, by a flood of the bitter waters of persecution, sought to destroy the Church. But the Lord protected and preserved His little flock, and so overruled the devices of Satan, that the means by which he sought to destroy the Church tended to spread and increase it. The disciples when persecuted in the Jewish cities, fled to the heathen countries, and wherever they went preached the gospel, so that it spread more rapidly than it would otherwise have done.

Man, as he came from the hands of the Creator, was good. There were none of those evil passions and affections which now dwell in the flesh, in it then; but by yielding himself to the service of sin, the heart became filled with all manner of wicked abominations.

This was all the work of the devil, and John says, Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Self-love being the root from whence most of these vile affections flow, we find the first efforts of our Saviour directed against this fountain, saying:

“Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow me.” If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut them off, were His directions. The words of the Saviour were spirit, light and life; the works of the devil, carnal, fleshly and dark. These rebelled and strove lustily against the Spirit, which would destroy them. By stimulating these fleshly desires, and inducing carnal reasonings, and weakening the faith of believers in the Word of God, he succeeded in bringing about divisions, and sowing discord, and working confusion amongst them, and filling their hearts with fear and distrust. This we see is entirely opposite to the influence of the Spirit, which infused love into their hearts, and inspired confidence, and brought them together, and united them in one, and made them one heart and soul.

These divisions the apostles labored earnestly to prevent; and when the first symptoms of it manifested itself, we see the Apostle Paul protest most strongly against it. In 1st Cor. i., he says: “I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: But that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.” We see here how the apostle understood the teaching of Christ, and how earnestly he plead for a unit of the Church. By the name and authority of Jesus Christ he urged it; and he certainly could not have urged it in His name, if he had not understood Christ to teach it.

I have observed in the early part of this work, that I feared we were as far departed from the teaching of Christ and His apostles, as the Jews were from the teachings of their great lawgiver, Moses; and though they were proud of him, and called themselves Moses’ disciples and children of Abraham, the Saviour declared to them that they were not His children, or they would do His works; and there was one who would accuse them, even Moses, in whom they trust. The devil had, through his influence, so far blinded the minds of the Jews, that, with all the advantages they possessed, they still did not understand their own law and prophets.

It availed these nothing that they called themselves children of Abraham, because they did not do the works of Abraham; and what does it avail us, that we call ourselves children of God, if the Divine disposition does not manifest itself in us? And what does it avail us, that we call ourselves Christ’s disciples,

and call Him Lord, Lord, and do not the things which He commands us?

A comparison of the doctrines and actions of the Jews in the time of Christ, with that of the time of Moses and Joshua, shows very plainly how far they had departed from what they were commanded by their law-giver; and will the present state of the professing Christians bear comparison any better with the teaching and practice of the primitive Church and its founders? I think if we are candid, we must say the advantage would be in favor of the Jews.

Christ instructed His disciples to unity and love, and gave them a pattern in the comparison of the vine, to show them how they should be united, and whence the power and influence should emanate which was to make them one. I must then again say, if this was a pattern and figure of the Church, we must certainly be like it. It is impossible we can be otherwise. Christ said: "I am the vine, ye are the branches." He here shows that we can no more bring the fruits of the Spirit without remaining in Him, than a branch can bring its fruit without it remains in the vine. We know also that all the branches of a vine produce the same kind of fruit; and if the comparison with the Church is good, then the members in Christ must also bring the same kind of fruit. If they do not, the comparison is not good.

The Saviour also prayed to His Heavenly Father, that His disciples should be one, as He and the Father are one; and He prayed not for those alone who were at that time His disciples, but for those also, who through their word would believe in Him, that *they all may be one*, and that they be made *perfect in one*. Now, is not the Saviour's will and intention here manifest, and the reason he gives, also, "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me?"

The inquiry might arise: Why, or how this unity was to convince the world of the Divine origin or mission of Christ? Evidently, because it was something strange. Nicodemus says: "We know thou art a teacher sent from God, for no man can do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." When the man who was sick of the palsy arose, took up his bed and went forth at the bidding of Christ, the people were all amazed, and said: "We never

saw it on this fashion ;” and when he that was born blind was made to see, he was convinced that Jesus must be of God, for “since the world began was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.” It took strange things, things that were never known before, to work conviction of Divine operations. Things that men could do would not have this effect ; therefore, the Lord, by His Almighty power, wrought a work in the hearts of His believing children that was new and strange to the world, so that “they may believe.” This had never been known, that a community of men had been formed who were one. The life of self which exists in the heart of every unconverted person prevented this and made it impossible. To effect such a unity, this life of self (which is the work of the devil) must be destroyed, and this nothing short of the Holy Spirit can do ; and this Spirit man cannot receive but by faith in Jesus Christ. Because, therefore, they had never seen anything “on this fashion” before, they were convinced that this must be of God.

Now, if we examine our present nominal Christendom, what likeness does it present to the vine, which Christ has compared the true Church to? Or how does it agree with what the Saviour prayed His Heavenly Father should be? Or how does it compare with the Church when organized, and under the direction of its founders? Where, I ask, is the unity here represented? And where is there a word of countenance in the whole New Testament to the divisions, strife and contention which exists amongst them?

We know that there are a great number of societies in the world which call themselves Churches of Christ, and often many in the same town or neighborhood. Each one has its separate organization, and its distinction of doctrine. Some are very strict and precise in regard to one particular mode of administering ordinances ; another is equally precise in some other mode. Some are indifferent as to mode ; some are indifferent as to one ordinance, and some to another ; and some are indifferent to any ordinance ; and some reject all outward ordinances altogether.

In their views in regard to essentials in doctrine and life, they are equally divided. There is here every shade of doctrine which the ingenuity of the devil could devise. I say the devil, for I believe no one pretends to believe that God is the author of divisions and discord, and all profess to deplore it.

The evidence of the Divine authority of Moses and the prophets was so convincing, that the devil could never have effected much by leading Israel to reject them altogether; therefore, he left them profess, and even be very zealous for their law. But by leading them as far as possible from the spirit of their teaching, he had effected almost the total destruction of the nation. Thus with Christianity. The devil never could effect so much by totally denying Christ; but by leading them as far from the spirit which he taught, whilst he left them zealous for forms and professions, he had almost entirely destroyed the Church, as every one knows who is acquainted with the history of the times preceding the last reformation; and since then divisions have so greatly multiplied as nearly to destroy the benefit of that work.

The doctrine of the unity of the Church is so apparent, that it must be admitted. Almost every one will acknowledge this; and in order to reconcile the mind, a unity has been devised to agree with the church, rather than the church made to agree with the unit. To this end, the idea has been originated, that all these different societies, or so-called Churches, are one in spirit, and agree in the essentials; and that each of them is a branch of this united church, and that they together form it. This idea seems so charitable, and withal so reasonable, and being the only way to reconcile the matter, has obtained almost universal admittance.

If a person would take a piece of work to an artist, and engage him to make another like it, and upon its completion to receive a certain reward, on condition that it was like the pattern, I presume he would be often comparing his work with the pattern, as it would progress. But how inconsistent would it be, if he made the work according to his own ideas, regardless of his instructions or pattern, and then begin to search for points of resemblance, so that he could persuade himself, and perchance his patron, that he had fulfilled the stipulated contract. But if he had observed due caution, and strictly followed the direction of his employer, and well observed his pattern, so that his work resembles it when finished, he can, with full confidence, await the return of his patron, and claim his promised reward. Thus it will be with those who labor for the internal inheritance, promised to those who obey the Lord Jesus. Those who use all earnest diligence, are much engaged in the work of self-examination, and

compare themselves well with the commands and figures in the Word of God, may confidently await the coming of their Lord. But those who are careless, and walk according to their own ideas and imaginations, will certainly, according to the declaration of the Saviour, come too late and find the door shut.

Now, let us compare this supposed united church with the pattern which Jesus Christ has given us, and if they agree, then this doctrine must be good ; but if not, the whole structure must fall, and all the labor of the builders be lost.

Christ has said, by their fruits ye shall know them ; and now if this structure is the Church, and one in spirit, then its fruits must be the same. We know that all the branches of a vine bring the same kind of fruit. The vine is of a trailing nature, and its branches will spread and grow over a great surface ; but all spring from the same parent vine, and where there is fruit, the produce of every branch has the same taste. One branch may have more and larger clusters than another, and one may have a little larger berries than another, and one may be more sweet than another, in proportion as one branch may have a little more vigor, or draw a little more nourishment from the parent stem, and so bring its fruit to a higher state of perfection ; but there will be a similarity in the taste, which is perceptible. But we know there are many different varieties of vines, and some are so sour and bitter, as not to be esculent. Moses speaks of the vine of Sodom, of the field of Gomorrah, and says : "Their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitter ; their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps." Now, as the vine is of this trailing nature spoken of, and will in its growth form a great cluster of branches, and where two or more vines are in close proximity, they will cluster together so that one cannot tell the branches of one from that of another, we might mistake them by their leaves and general appearance to be but one vine. But if there was fruit on them, and we would come to taste it, and find one cluster sweet, and another bitter, we would at once know that there must be different vines here, and no one could persuade us that they proceeded from the same root or stock.

The words and actions are the fruits of professors of religion. There must, then, be such a perceptible similarity in the doctrine, words and actions of these professors of religion, as will compare in this respect with the fruit of the same vine.

It would be an almost interminable work to compare the fruits of the different branches of this church, taking it in this popular sense; but in a few words it may be shown whether it is so or not; and if two of them differ entirely, the comparison is lost. We know that there are some of these so-called branches which hold the doctrine that in our dress, manners and customs, we must be wholly diverse from what the world are, who indulge in great extravagance in their apparel, as well as all their state and equipage. Other "branches" are under no restraint in this respect, but indulge in whatever the flesh may lust after, in costly array, and putting on of gold and expensive jewelry, and living in great style and splendor, seeking the admiration of the world.

Here are fruits as dissimilar as we could well conceive. I would here ask: Can any one believe that the Spirit of God would teach these opposite extremes, as the will of God? But to proceed with this comparison: One professes that we must be harmless and defenseless, and dare not resist evil. If we are unjustly sued at the law, and our goods taken from us, we dare not defend them; and if taken away by stealth, we may not even ask them again. The other, advocates not only the right to defend himself by law against an unjust claim, and if his goods are taken by stealth, to bring the offender to justice and punishment, but that it is a duty as a Christian to do so; and advocates the right and duty of self-defense, even to the taking away of the life of an adversary, and taking up arms at his country's call, and going to the field of battle. Here are fruits so dissimilar, that we can scarcely institute a comparison. Again, some insist that we must observe the ordinance of baptism, the Lord's Supper, washing of feet, etc., and others leave it to the choice of their members; others reject some, and others again reject them all. It must be clear that this imaginary spiritual vine will bear no comparison with the pattern Jesus Christ has given us. Is this idea of unity not palpably inconsistent, to say nothing of the dissimilarity existing in many instances between different members of the same "branch," as every intelligent reader knows to be true?

I would here entreat every one seriously to reflect upon these things, for, depend upon it, we must be conformed to the Word of God, or else we have no promise in it.

If this doctrine of unity is not tenable, then what must we

conclude? Either that this is not the Church of Christ, or else His prayer was not heard. Which of the two is most likely? The reason that the Saviour desired this unity, was that the world should be thereby convinced that He was sent by the Father; that is, that He was Christ, the Son of God.

This unity, in order to work conviction in the world, must evidently be such an one as can be perceived by the world. Faith is not a visible substance, any further than it is so through the works which it brings forth. I would ask: How can this "church" work any such conviction in the mind of a skeptic? Would it not, in truth, more likely be the contrary? And do they not openly refer to this very thing as confirming their views? Any intelligent heathen might confound those missionaries going amongst them, by asking them for the sign which Christ has said should convince them. They could not show him a spiritual substance, for spirit has no substance; and to show a spiritual operation or influence, they must show spiritual fruit.

I have hitherto chiefly confined myself to the teaching of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the gospels, and insisted on obedience to his Word, which all will agree must be our rule of action; but then they say we understand it differently. But, now, is his language not plain? Can any one believe that so many different views can be taken out of a work which was written by unerring wisdom, with a design to promote the salvation of the whole world, unless there was a deceptive agency at work blinding the minds of mankind?

The holy apostles have also given us their views of this matter, by recording their acts and proceedings in the Church, and also directions written where the enemy had made some inroads, and gained some advantages in their communities. So we have here a double testimony—first, that of the Saviour, and afterward that of the apostles—bearing witness to the proper understanding of the Word of Truth.

With regard to the unity of the Church, I have already shown how forcibly the Apostle Paul urges its necessity upon his fellow believers of Corinth, and how severely he reproves them for what only had an appearance of disunion.

He tells them: "God is faithful by whom they were called into the fellowship of his Son." But now he has heard that there are

contentions among them ; and in the third chapter says : " They are carnal ; for whereas one saith I am of Paul, I of Apollos, Cephass and Christ ; are ye not carnal and walk as men ? " I have said this was only an appearance of disunion ; for it is usual for those who start a society, and call themselves by the name of some notable person, to adhere to the doctrine of that person. Now, as Paul, Apollos, Cephass and Christ, all held and taught the same doctrine, if the parties followed their respective leaders, they must all have followed the same doctrine. But their conduct countenanced division, and the unerring wisdom of the Holy Spirit, seeing the great danger of this tendency, reprovèd it in severe terms. " For ye are carnal," he says, " for whereas there is among you envyings, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal ? " The carnal mind, he says, is enmity against God. So the apostle very severely reprovès even this small beginning of division, and gives the alarm for all time to come.

In the conclusion of the Epistle to the Romans, Paul says : " Now, I beseech you, brethren, *mark* them which cause divisions and offenses *contrary to the doctrine* which ye have learned ; and avoid them," etc. Paul here says such a thing is contrary to the doctrine he taught.

To enforce this argument, and explain his meaning, Paul also gives us a figure with which every one is familiar, viz. : our own body. In 1st Cor., xii. he sets this unity forth so plainly, that it is impossible to misunderstand his meaning. In the 12th verse he says : For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body being many, *are one body : so, also, is Christ.* For by one spirit we are all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free ; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit." In Romans xii. he also says : " For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office : so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." The apostle also makes the comparison in Cor. xii., that as the individual members of our natural bodies have care for, and are disposed to one another, so shall the members of Christ's body be for one another ; and that we may not mistake his meaning, he says : " Now, ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Our body, we know, is so constructed that our members are not only disposed to serve one another, but they are also able to, and do, serve one another. Thus the members of the body of Christ must not only be disposed to serve one another, but they must also be able, otherwise their disposition would profit them nothing.

I must frequently urge the infallibility of these comparisons. The Church must be like what it is compared to, or else the wisdom of God is not infallible. If that which we conceive to be the Church of Christ is not like this pattern, then it cannot be His Church; and if it is not His Church, pray, then, what is it? Must it not verily be the church of the Anti-christ?

I would also ask, in what way can the members of this great Babylonian structure serve each other, as the members of our natural bodies do? Christ has given us directions how we shall serve one another in love, saying: "If thy brother trespass against thee, tell him of his fault," etc. Here is a complete example of the service which the members of Christ's body can render one another, as the members of our natural bodies do. This is one of Christ's commandments, which we *must do* if we love Him, and expect to inherit everlasting life with Him. Christ says they that do the will of the Father shall enter into the kingdom. Now, I would ask, how can we observe this command under this idea of the Church of God? If all these different societies constitute the Church, then all their individual members are brothers; and if any one of them trespass against me, it is my duty to proceed according to the command of the Saviour. This I might do in the first degree; but suppose he will not hear me the first nor the second time, and I am now commanded to bring him before the Church? How am I to do this? The Church consists of all these different persuasions, and how can I get them together to arraign my obstinately offending brother before them? If I should bring him before that "branch" only of which I or he is a member, he may object, and say: "This is not the Church; Christ says, bring him before the Church." Now, here is an insurmountable difficulty. I cannot keep the commandment of Christ, and he says, those only who do so shall inherit the kingdom. Has Christ given a commandment which cannot be kept? By no means.

It may be said, the "branch" to which he belongs is competent to act. Suppose it does, and he refuses to hear, and they do

separate him according to the Saviour's command; he will turn about and apply to some other "branch" and be received, and be a brother still. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, says Paul, and now, how can we here purge out the leaven? One "branch" will purge itself of leaven, and the other will take it right in, and according to this doctrine it becomes a part of the lump again. We all know that this is of frequent occurrence, and that multitudes leave one "branch" and declare it is corrupt, and say all manner of evil things against its members, and then join in with some other "branch," and according to this doctrine, take up the corrupt parties again as brethren. As well do the members of the different "branches" continually contend and complain of one another, and say all manner of evil things against one another, whilst yet they are brethren according to this view. What evidence is this to "all men" that we love one another, and are willing to lay down our life for our brethren?

But, says some one, there are good and bad amongst all denominations, and the good only form or constitute the Church. This makes the difficulty none the less, for how am I to get the good of all these different denominations together, to bring my offending brother before them? The bad members are not my brothers (if I am one of the good), and do not belong to the Church. So, if I would even bring him before the "branch" to which I or he belong, perhaps the majority are not of those "good," for the Saviour says they are few; and how can I proceed to observe my Saviour's sayings, so that I may have the right to call him Lord? There is no such difficulty in the way of the members of our natural bodies serving one another.

Might the Saviour not well say of us, as he did of the Jews, that our heart is waxed gross, and our ears dull of hearing, and our eyes we have closed, lest we should see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and should understand with our hearts, and should be converted and he would heal us. These things, it seems to me, are so plain, that unless we voluntarily close our eyes, we must see.

Paul says: "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." This is the office or calling of every minister of the gospel, and every one who assumes the calling, virtually professes that he is such an ambassador, and is endowed by the

Lord with his Spirit, to instruct him on what terms to offer reconciliation to sinful man.

Now if, we remember that the Lord our God is one Lord ; that He is the Lord, and changeth not (Mal. iii.); that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever; that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one, then we must look for the influence of His Spirit to be the same. The Lord did not teach one scribe, or priest, one law, and another a different one; but all had the same unchangeable law. So the apostles had the same doctrine; all were actuated by the same motive, and supplied by the same fountain. There was no flowing of bitter and sweet water from the same fountain. But now these assumed ambassadors teach doctrines as opposite as day is to night. They represent the will of their Sovereign as differently as if He were a reed shaken or moved by the wind: No government would receive or treat with men professing to be ambassadors from a foreign power, who would represent the will of their sovereign so differently. They would say: You cannot all be representatives of your sovereign, when there is so great a difference between you. All men would at once conclude they are a set of imposters, or insane; and the man who would desire to treat with any of them, would look well to their credentials before he would venture to receive any. But in the matter of religion, where the soul's eternal welfare is at stake, all are acknowledged as ambassadors who make the pretence. It is a true saying, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light; or, at least, man acts with more wisdom in all other matters than in this all-important one.

Christ says to His disciples: "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you; and Paul tells us not to be "conformed to the world." Christ does not mean here that He has called His disciples off the earth, but by "world," He means those people who are led by the god of this world, or who seek alone for the enjoyment which this world can give, and who are eagerly in pursuit of carnal or fleshly delights and pleasures. These are called the children of this world in contradistinction to the saints, or children of God, who were also of the world; but God chose them out of it, and has transformed them into the kingdom of His dear Son. And these being now thus transformed, and chosen from the others, they are henceforth not to seek the things

of the earth, but those of heaven, where Jesus is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high; and, consequently, they must no more engage in those pursuits in which the world engage. So long as they are in the world, or in this life, they must labor for their subsistence, and in outward appearance are as other men; but in their affections they differ, or pursue those objects which are lawful in a different spirit, using the world as not abusing it. The saints, in all they do, have respect to the honor of God, as Paul says: "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the honor of God." But the world have respect to their personal enjoyment. In seeking this enjoyment, they conform to all the manners and customs of the world, seeking its friendship and esteem, which Christ says is enmity to God and abomination in His sight. Paul therefore will not have the disciples to be thus conformed, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds, so that they may learn to prove what is His good and acceptable will.

Paul says we have a natural body, and have also a spiritual body, and these lust against each other—the flesh against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh. Every unconverted person is living after the flesh, of the works of which Paul to the Galatians mentions a number, saying, they "are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murder, drunkenness, revelings and *such like*." By the expression "*such like*," I conceive the apostle means any works done in a spirit of self-love, or for the gratification of the carnal mind. At least, he signifies that he has not enumerated all, and to the Ephesians he has covetousness, foolish talking and jesting enumerated amongst them. Very few persons, or I may perhaps say no one, is living in all these sins; but in something of this kind every unconverted person is living. They are carnal, and consequently must have some carnal life.

Such sins as adultery, fornication, murders, drunkenness, etc., were punishable under the law, and are so manifestly wicked, that every person who lives in them, knows they cannot inherit the kingdom of God; and but few denominations of professing Christians will tolerate those in their community who are openly addicted to them. But envyings, revelings, wrath, and hatred,

are also enumerated amongst them; and how many of such as are living in these things are members of some Christian profession, to say nothing of variance, emulations and strife. Who does not know of variance and strife amongst professors in his neighborhood? And where is the minister who does not know of its existence in some, or, I might say, many of his flock, whom he yet comforts with the bread and wine in commemoration of the broken body of Christ, and His blood shed upon the tree of the cross for the sins of the world, whilst the holy Apostle Paul says of such: "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Every one who is engaged in variance and strife, will justify themselves with the cause they think they have, but the apostle says they proceed from the flesh, and no cause can justify it. If we have the disposition of sheep and lambs, there will be no variance and strife. But when we come to emulations, what do we find in the world? I will leave every one who understands the meaning of the word, to reflect upon what he sees himself, and well knows to exist amongst professors who stand high in "the church," and contrast it with what Paul says, we shall each esteem other better than himself, and provoke one another to love and good works.

It is not, however, these things here mentioned, which are alone works of the flesh, and condemned under this sentence. A person may be very humble in his garb, and separate himself from all outward pomp and parade in the world, but may be very sensitive to the least imaginary slight or insult, giving way to and entertaining angry and revengeful feelings; or, he may be mild and tractable, and his heart still filled with covetousness, seeking the things of this world, and loving them inordinately. Covetousness, the apostle says, is idolatry. And it matters not what it is that we love more than God, it becomes our idol. We may think we love God above all things, and that we would rather give up all things in the world, and even our own life, than give up God and our hopes of heaven, and think this is proof that we love God above all things. This feeling we may have, and would in truth submit to it, and we might still be living after the flesh. The apostle says, if we live after the flesh we shall die, but if we

through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live. This life of the Spirit, cannot be seen or known by others than the persons themselves, except its fruits, which must also manifest themselves to a certain extent where it exists. But it cannot exist where the works of the flesh manifest themselves; for its effects are to mortify, and subdue the flesh. But to live after the flesh we may, whilst its outward or apparent works are not visible; but, on the contrary, many good works and deeds might show themselves, and still the flesh have the supremacy within. Paul says, if he could speak with the tongue of men and angels, had faith that he could remove mountains, and had not charity, he would be nothing; and if he would give all his substance to feed the poor, and his body to be burned, and had not charity (or as the German translation says, love), he would be nothing; showing conclusively, that we might do as I have said, and still be living after the flesh. We all do either live after the flesh, or the Spirit; if the spirit then we live, but if the flesh we die. The natural or unenlightened understanding might teach us, that we would better give up our natural life, than lose our soul; and we would make our choice accordingly, even though in this life our treasure was so far from being laid up in heaven, that our hearts and affections have been engaged chiefly or altogether in the things on the earth. If we are fleshly or carnally minded, the mind will be engaged and have its enjoyment in earthly things, and it will be troublesome and irksome to engage in thoughts or conversation of heavenly things. If we are spiritual, we will enjoy pleasure and delight in thinking and conversing of heavenly and spiritual things; and though we do still bear with us this natural body and flesh, which is continually inclining us to the world and carnal pleasures and lusts, the Spirit which is in us, which will bring to mind all things which Christ has taught, will reprove us. And if our will is subdued and given up under the will of Christ, the Spirit will enable us to bring the flesh into subjection, and mortify the deeds of the body. This is the true Christian warfare, which every child of God must lead; and, as Paul says: "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, (for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds) casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of

God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." This expresses, and shows very plainly, how the flesh will reason, and thoughts arise in the heart, trying to reconcile the desires of the flesh and the mind, with the commands of Christ; but these thoughts must be taken captive, as a natural warrior will take every traitor and enemy to his cause.

This is the warfare represented by that which Joshua, David, and all valiant Israelites of old, led against their enemies. Their's was a literal or natural rest and reward and their enemies were natural enemies, and they had to contend against them by natural means; but they prefigure to us a spiritual rest, and reward. Our enemies are spiritual enemies, and must be overcome and subdued by spiritual means. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places; to which end we need the whole armor of God. These are the enemies which Christ shall break with a rod of iron, and dash to pieces like a potter's vessel. (Psalms. ii.)

Now, as I have before said, we have a natural body, and we have also a spiritual body. As the natural body must have its proper aliment for its subsistence and growth, so must the spiritual also have its means of nourishment and growth, as Christ says to Peter; and Paul and Peter also allude to it in their epistles. When we grow up to years of understanding, the carnal mind leads our natural senses abroad into the world to seek enjoyment, where is the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. By this gratification the carnal or fleshly desires are increased and strengthened, and the relish for spiritual things proportionably lessened. In conversion, this desire becomes subdued, and brought into subjection; and a desire for spiritual gratifications and enjoyments is begotten in the soul. For a time they loathe those carnal delights which were so desirable in their unconverted state, and they desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby. This subdued desire in the flesh is not destroyed, but only suppressed and brought into subjection. These two spirits are now in opposition to each other, and cannot harmonize together. God, by his grace and spirit, supports and encourages the spiritual life, and the devil operates through the flesh to stimulate carnal desires, and in proportion as either gains ascendancy, the other languishes, and must finally be overcome and die. To this end the Lord has given His Church and children His Word

and promises, and has appointed his ministering servants, and endowed them with spiritual understanding in His Word, to feed his flock; and has appointed them to come together, and edify one another by this Word and spiritual conversation, and to exhort and admonish one another, so that this new creation or spiritual body, may grow and increase, until they all come to the full stature of manhood in Christ, and are not easily tossed to and fro, by every wind of doctrine, and cunning craftiness of man, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Without spiritual food, the soul can no more subsist in the love of God, than the natural body can without its appointed food, or nourishment.

Every faithful soul which has been converted to God, and seeks to walk in newness of life, is sensible of this. It feels the disposition and propensity of the flesh, and the enemy operating through it to weaken the Spirit, and draw the mind and affections away from God and the things of eternity, and the necessity of striving against these carnal desires, and using every means which God has appointed to bring their affections to things above, where Jesus is as the source of all joy, comfort and consolation.

The danger, then, of indulging in anything which has a tendency to strengthen and encourage the lusts, or any fleshly and carnal desires, must be apparent to every one who has the least spiritual experience. This is the reason why Paul tells us, to "crucify the flesh with its lusts and desires," and to "mortify our members which are on the earth; and Peter says: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, *abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.*"

All this accords with what Christ says, that we must deny ourselves, take up His cross and follow Him, and must forsake father, mother, brother, sister, wife and children, houses and lands, and even our own life, or we cannot be His disciples. Now, Christ does not mean that we must voluntarily forsake, or separate our person from all or any of these things; but rather leave all, than depart from Christ and His doctrine. But in one sense we must absolutely leave them; that is, those carnal delights, in which we formerly gratified ourselves, we must forsake. Our life which we had in them, we must lose; for if we would preserve this, we shall lose the everlasting life; but if we lose this for Christ and the gospel's sake, we will find life everlasting.

But if we now take a view of this popular church, we will see

many of its members as vain in their manners and pursuits as it is possible for the world to be. If we behold them in their churches, in the presence of their teachers and spiritual guides, we will see many of them adorned in the finest array attainable to them, with costly jewels and putting on of gold and ornaments, which cannot serve any useful purpose, but rather annoy and often pain the wearer, and can be put on for no other purpose than to gratify the flesh, and gain admiration and esteem of man; which, the Saviour says, is abomination with God, and in total disregard of the teaching of the Apostles Paul and Peter.

If we look into the upper classes of society, what pomp, splendor and extravagance do we behold? It is but a few years since every paper in our country published accounts of the marriage of the daughter of the Queen of England, and gave lengthy accounts of the extravagant display there made. I would now ask every candid reader whether this proceeded from the flesh or the Spirit? Or how the honor of God was promoted thereby? It will not do to plead their station. God is no respecter of persons. The King of kings and Lord of lords, made His bed in a manger, and His whole example was condescension and lowliness. Yet these people are at the head of the church, and all England give them credit of being disciples of Jesus. It may be said, this is going far from home; but I would only call the attention of the reader to the doings amongst the "branches" of this vine, and where this doctrine will lead him. If all denominations are "branches" of the Church, then the "Church of England" must be one likewise, (and, by the way, a pretty large one, which even extends into our own country, and our own neighborhood); and if we do come nearer home, and view the doings of certain classes on similar occasions, we will see those who esteem themselves members of the body of Christ, and who on such occasions when the death of the Lord is commemorated, bow their knees at the altar, and receive the bread and wine in token of their being partakers of the broken body and blood of Christ, and have received water baptism, in evidence of having received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Yet here they are, arrayed in all the style and splendor attainable to them, engaged in revelry, dancing; playing, jesting, and every vain amusement which can be imagined. Every intelligent person knows that these things are quite common amongst church members, of certain

classes: attending balls and parties, and every kind of entertainment designed to gratify the carnal mind.

Even ministers of the gospel countenance and encourage these doings by their presence, and if not openly advocate them in their sermons, many at least defend it in private conversation, as being innocent amusement, and tending to promote social intercourse and good feeling. And if they do not countenance and encourage them by word, they do at least by connivance, knowing their members to engage in them, and do not *scripturally reprove them*. I know that many of these people are estimable citizens, are dutiful, kind and affectionate, and in all the relations of life, as neighbors and friends, are unblamable; but this, though a good fruit, is not all the fruit that is required. Others also might not approve of them to such extent as here observed, and even protest and complain of them, but think they cannot remedy the evil, and they will endeavor to serve the Lord within themselves, and are oftentimes very patterns of kindness and charity, and highly praised for their virtues, by all the neighborhood; but still continue associated as church members, in fellowship with such members as before observed, forgetting what Paul says: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what communion hath light with darkness," etc.; and again: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;" and again: "Come out from among them and be ye separate, and I will receive you, and be to you a Father, and ye shall be my sons and daughters," etc.

Our Saviour has said the way is narrow which leads to life. I would now ask the advocates or defenders of such a course of life, how the way is narrow to such people? If we can defend our property and rights at law; our person and estates by violence; take up the sword in defense of our country; can join in political strife and contention, and seek popularity and promotion to authority and office; can array ourselves in all the extravagant fashions of the day, and engage in every species of amusement and recreation, I would ask, what is it that makes the way narrow to us? And I would ask those ministers to describe and point out this narrow way, for many are at a great loss to know in what way it is narrow to them; and I am afraid many of their own members have heard little of it.

I know, also, that there are many professors of religion who do not only not approve of it, or take part in these extravagant demonstrations of the works of the flesh, and do also not belong to a community which tolerates it in their members. But as there is every shade and grade of profession and doctrine between the two extremes, so there is here also every shade and grade of parties, from the masquerade and ball, down to the pic-nic, sociable and tea-party, and even the social visit between neighbor and neighbor, where every grade of recreation and amusements are practiced also—from plays and songs, with noisy merriment down to jesting and gossip—all of which are only different grades and shades of the works of the flesh, and alike fall under condemnation.

We are commanded to set our affections on things that are above, and not on things that are on the earth, and to let our walk and conversation be in Heaven, where Jesus is; to seek those things which are above, etc., and Christ says we shall lay up our treasures in Heaven, and where our treasure is there will our heart be also. This is a work, as I have said before, against which the flesh strives lustily, and which every true believer grieves that they cannot perform to more perfection. Nothing causes them so much heaviness as their short-coming in this. The necessary duties of life, and the intercourse with the world, has a tendency to draw the mind and affections away, and weaken the believer in the performance of those commands above alluded to. This the believer is sensible of, and leads him when he rises from his couch in the morning, and at all times, to implore the Divine assistance in the discharge of those duties, that he may not be led astray in his feelings and affections, or dishonor his God, by word or action; and herein he can with confidence pray to God for assistance and grace, so long as he does not depart from necessary duties and intercourse with the world. When the day is past, he is again grieved at the imperfection he beholds in his performances, and feels abased within himself, and constrained to pray for mercy and forgiveness. But how can any one who is sensible of his danger, cast himself voluntarily into the way of such danger as we have before set forth? Or how can they pray the Lord to keep them from temptation, or preserve them in it, when they cast themselves voluntarily and unnecessarily into it? Is it possible that they can have any sense

of their danger? Or that a person working out his soul's salvation, with fear and trembling, can run into such extravagance? Are they nourishing and encouraging the spiritual, or the carnal body or life? Even foolish talking and *jesting* are not convenient, and are ranked amongst the things which the Apostle Paul says: "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the *children of disobedience*." How also, can one pray the Lord to pardon them for sins committed under such circumstances? Every true believer is acquainted with the conflict he has with unbelief, when he approaches the throne of grace to ask for forgiveness. When he feels that he has not been so faithful as he should have been, how the devil will cast his dereliction in his face, and reproach him for it. But presuming that such an one were a true believer, what a power would he here give into the hands of his enemy.

One would think it could not be possible that we could lie down to rest at night upon our comfortable bed, without thinking of our God and Saviour, who lay in the hard and cold manger, and in the garden lay on the ground, in such agony as to press the sweat from Him as great drops of blood, and crying: "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." But how can a disciple of His, in the giddy throng of the ball-room, in their glee and merriment, with their heads, hands and arms decked with jewels and ornaments, think of Jesus extended on the cross, His head crowned with thorns, His hands and feet pierced with nails, and in the agony of His soul exclaiming: "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Jesus Christ has said, He dwells in the hearts of believers, and sups with them. Can any one believe that in such a place as this He could be dwelling in the heart, or He and they supping with each other? Can any one believe that *ever* a disciple of Jesus appeared as a participator in such a scene? I may unhesitatingly reply, never.

But, it may be said, these are necessary as relaxations from the more exciting and toilsome duties of life, and are innocent amusements and recreations. But where is there a more rational place for the child of God to resort for relaxation and recreation, than to the Father? Oh, what inconsistency and blind reasoning! These things may be necessary for the children of the world, but for a child of God to forsake the sweet and comforting

communion with Him for a little base gratification of the flesh, argues little love to its Father.

Paul says: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him; but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit." Should not this afford sufficient relaxation for the children of God? When the trees went forth to anoint a king over them, the olive and fig trees, and the vine, would not leave their fatness, their sweetness, or their wine, for the favor of being promoted over the trees; but the bramble, who knew nothing of this fatness, sweetness and exhilarating wine, thought this promotion a great favor.

Now, if we reflect, that all the figures and prophecies in the Old Testament pointed to a peaceable, defenseless, and united Church; that Christ taught and commanded, and prayed for the same, and represented it by figures; that, when the Church was established, it was such a peaceable, defenseless and united Church as had been set forth of old, and represented and prayed for by Christ; and that all the teaching of the apostles, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, were directed to and tended to preserve this Church in this state, must we not believe that it must still be thus united, harmless and defenseless, and that God will recognize nothing short of this as His Church, bride and spouse?

I would therefore urge every reader of these pages, whosoever they be, as they love their souls, and desire their eternal salvation, to reflect seriously upon these things. I would ask every candid mind whether, in view of the things set forth in these pages, we have not reason for the fears expressed in the outset, that Christendom is as far, or, I might say, farther, departed from the teaching of Christ and his apostles, than what the Jews were when Christ came, from what Moses and the prophets taught?

We are now, as they were then, waiting for his coming. They acknowledged Moses and the prophets as being inspired men, and professed to believe them, and gloried in being children of Abraham and disciples of Moses; but they were brought so far under the influence of the enemy of all good, and their minds blinded to such an extent, that when their Messiah came they did not know him; and with all their professions of reverence for Moses, the Saviour said they did not believe him. We now profess to

believe Christ and his apostles, and reverence and esteem them very highly; and when He comes we shall surely know *Him*; but we have reason to fear He will not know *us*, and will say, why did you call me Lord, Lord, and did not do what I commanded you.

Oh, what reason have we not got to fear that this evil influence has been brought so effectually to bear upon us, as to lead us to disregard the Word of God, till our hearts and minds have become fatally blinded.

My remarks having been extended to a considerably greater length than I intended in the beginning, I will now conclude, only noticing the constitution of the Church, as represented by Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians.

The Saviour in His commission to His apostles, charges them to preach the gospel to all nations, and he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. This gives the charge, and makes it the duty to receive those who believe; and though it does not forbid to receive unbelievers, it is very plain and evident that the design was they should not be received. The practice of the apostles on the day of Pentecost, was to receive those who believed. "Those who believed were added to the Church." When the Ethiopian desired to be baptized, Philip said, if thou believest it may be so. When Cornelius and those with him received the Holy Ghost, Peter said: "Can any man forbid water that these may not be baptized," which is evidence that they were, or felt themselves forbidden to receive unbelievers or unconverted persons.

Paul says of the Church, that "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."

Whatever the apostle here designs to teach or declare, must be true. Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, so that it might be as here described and declared.

As the term "Church" is not always used in the same sense in the different texts of Scripture, the inquiry might arise, in what sense the apostle here used it? The declaration evidently applies to the Church Militant. This He has yet to present to Himself as the judge of the whole world, and must at His appearing be found

thus sanctified and clean ; otherwise it cannot be acceptable to a holy and pure God. This then applies, as I understand it, to the Church on earth at all times. Those who are sanctified and clean on earth, constitute the Church, whether they are organized as a visible body, or as separate individuals in the world, dwelling amongst unbelievers.

Those of the children of Israel who were carried captive into Babylon, and there were faithful to the Lord, as far as they had opportunity, refused to bow their knees to idols, or in any way take part with idolatrous worship, but their desires were to Jerusalem, where the temple was, and whither they turned their faces in prayer to their God, were nothing the less Israelites, though they were in Babylon. But their disposition is particularly to be observed. They knew they were in favor with God in their present situation ; but they were not contented with it. They longed and desired with all their hearts to be at Jerusalem, where the temple was, and where God had commanded them to bring their offerings, and here they desired to bring their service, and worship God according to the law.

Thus, such souls as are truly converted to Christ, in regions where there is no organized church established on the grounds of Christ and the apostles, if they adhere to Christ and his gospel in their walk and conversation, keep themselves separate from all idolatrous worship, and adhere to the doctrine of Christ as far as they have opportunity, are nothing the less members of Christ and His Church, though they are not visibly united to an organized body. But though they are thus brought into favor with God through faith in Christ, and receive comfort and consolation through His Spirit, and the Spirit of God bears witness with their spirit that they are His children, they cannot feel entirely contented and satisfied, but their longing always is for association with their brethren ; to be at Jerusalem, where the true temple worship is observed, and where they have opportunity of observing all things that the Lord has commanded them.

Now in either case, whether as individuals thus situated, or as individual members of an organized church, or as the collective body thus organized, I conceive the words alike apply.

It is necessary, also, properly to understand, in what sense the apostle here means, that Christ sanctified and cleansed the Church,

The word "sanctify" is differently applied in Scripture; but in whatever sense it is used, I conceive, represents that which is said to be sanctified as complete. God sanctified the seventh day, and it was completely sanctified; and when the Jews strictly observed the law in respect to the Sabbath, they did not violate its sanctity. The tabernacle and temple are said to have been sanctified; and they were entirely fitted and qualified for the purpose which God had designed them for. Israel were commanded to sanctify themselves; that is, make themselves entirely clean. Their uncleanness was an external, or personal uncleanness, rendered so by certain acts, which the Lord had declared as unclean, and only to be removed by certain outward ablutions, or services, which the Lord had appointed for the purification of such uncleanness. If those things which they were commanded to abstain from as unclean, were abstained from, then they were clean, or in a state of sanctification; but if committed, then they had to observe these rites, in order to their sanctification. But in either case it was complete. But nothing else—no other rite, no other ablution or ordinance, even though it should involve never so much labor, pains or cost—could ever sanctify the unclean. Nothing but that which God had appointed for that purpose would do it, and this could not fail.

But as this outward or personal defilement or uncleanness, represented our inward impurity or defilement before God, so those means which were then in use, and commanded for their sanctification, were a figure or representation for the time then present, of the means of inward or spiritual sanctification, which should be observed by the spiritual Israel, in order to their sanctification before God.

The text, if not well observed, would seem to imply, that Christ gave himself for the Church, for this purpose, viz., its sanctifying and cleansing, by means of the washing of water by the Word; that is, that the washing of water by the Word, is the means by which the Church is both sanctified and cleansed; and this means was procured by Christ's giving himself for it

But, it seems to me, the apostle here has reference to two different effects, to be obtained by two different means. Christ gave Himself for the sanctification of the Church before God; or that it should be sanctified and holy, when presented to Himself at His

coming in His second advent. And the washing of water by the Word, has reference to its outward purity, in its works and actions before man. The German translation would seem to favor this construction, and would read something like this: "Christ gave Himself for the Church, so that He might sanctify it, and hath cleansed it through the washing of water by the Word."

Christ, whilst on earth, was entirely without sin and perfectly holy, and was thus in a state of personal and spiritual sanctification and purity. This whole personal and spiritual sanctification, or complete and entire purity, becomes that of the saint by imputation, through faith; so that by it they are wholly sanctified and pure before God, and will thus be presented before Himself at His coming. Christ, in His prayer, (John xvii.) says: "And for their sakes (the disciples) I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth;" namely, through Himself, for he says he is the "*truth*."

Paul also says (1st Cor. i. 30): "Christ Jesus is made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

Now, I conceive that it matters not how wicked and ungodly or impure our life may have been before conversion, whenever we lay hold in faith of the merits of Jesus Christ, we become thus sanctified, and for this purpose Christ gave himself for us. This imputation we do not receive on account of any good works we have done, or because we have forsaken our former wicked and impure life, and now pray, attend church, and observe the commands which Christ has given; but because we receive that by faith which was made of God to us for this purpose. Faith in Jesus Christ is the means of our sanctification, which God has appointed for this purpose, and nothing else under heaven can procure it for us.

That faith which thus justifies and sanctifies us, as its infallible fruit, brings a free confession of Jesus Christ and his glorious gospel, and a hearty obedience to whatever He has commanded in His Word; and this Word commands us to abstain from all the unfruitful works of darkness, all works of the flesh, to die to sin, and live unto righteousness; and will also be obedient in regard to all commands as to gospel ordinances, and fellowship in the Church—if they have opportunity, and there is such a body for

them to associate and commune with, of which they have knowledge—and will observe all the duties in this relation, according to the command of Christ and his apostles. Such person, standing in this faith, will freely and heartily now renounce and condemn his former course of life, and conform in all things to the will of God, as commanded in His Word. These fruits are visible to all men, and since his life is now consistent with the Word of God, he has thereby made himself free from the charges which justly attached to him before. He may be said now to be washed by the Word.

Water is an element which is universally used for washing or cleansing anything which is defiled; and because the obedience or observance of what the *Word* teaches, absolves us from all charges on account of our former conduct, it is here by the apostle compared to water. And the freeing of ourselves from these charges, is called by the apostle the washing of water by the Word.

Now, so long as such person continues in such state of obedience, he is without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, and is holy and blameless.

So with all associations of such persons, organized into a visible body, for their mutual comfort and edification. They will individually and collectively observe all things commanded, and thus, though they were the worst people in the world before, and are still the poorest and most despised, so long as they continue in this Word, they are a glorious Church, and have neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but are holy and blameless before God and man.

But when we insist on this holy and blameless state of the Church, the objection is raised, and the question asked: "Where is there such a church, or where was there ever such an one on earth, as here described?" And then the apostles are referred to, that one of them, even in Christ's time, was a devil, and in the apostolic churches irregularities and evil, fleshly works manifested themselves; and so it is contended, no person or church can be thus pure, and it is not requisite.

We have here a positive assertion, that Christ gave Himself, and His Word for this purpose, so that He might present it to Himself in this holy and blameless state. But there is no assertion in the whole New Testament, that it need not be so. Therefore, those

passages which might be construed into such a meaning, must be construed so as to harmonize with positive assertions.

Christ said to his apostles: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." He did not intend to say, that all who heard His Word were clean, for multitudes heard His Word, who were and continued to live in all manner of uncleanness. But the apostles, who obeyed His Word, were blameless; for His Word taught perfect uprightness in all things, and they obeying it, were clean through it. He did not say they were sanctified, for Judas was amongst them; but Judas, though not sanctified by faith in Christ, was yet clean by obeying His Word.

According to this view, we may be clean, and yet not sanctified; but we cannot be sanctified, and not be clean; for the sanctification brings with it obedience as a fruit, and this obedience to the Word is a washing, which will cleanse us from all the unfruitful works of darkness; as Paul says, in 1st Cor., vi., where he speaks of these unfruitful works: "Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified," etc.

Where Christ uses the word *clean*, in John xvii., the expression has reference to the souls of the apostles being cleansed from the pollution or guilt of sin. Those who are washed by the blood of Christ, are free from sin, and may be said to be sanctified, because Christ sanctified Himself; so that all those who embraced Him by faith, are made partakers of what He possesses, and are pure in God's sight as He is pure. It is evident that this is the allusion of the Word in this text, because it has reference to Christ's washing; and Judas, not having embraced the merits of Christ by faith, was not washed, and in this sense not clean, had to be excepted in this declaration. But in John xv., Christ, in speaking of the operation of the Word, does not except Judas. He says *ye*, thus including all the apostles. Judas had not yet betrayed his true character by selling the Lord. He had hitherto obeyed the Saviour as well as the other apostles, and the Word as well absolved him from blame, as it did them; therefore he said: "*Ye are clean through the Word.*"

But to come to the point of this sanctification and cleansing of the Church, so that it is without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and blameless, we must consider that God knew that we were poor, weak and sinful creatures by nature, and

that we would be so far wrought upon by the devil and the world, through this sinful flesh, as frequently to give way and fall into dark and unfruitful works; and he therefore gave his children and Church whom he had sanctified, his Word, by which they could wash and cleanse themselves, and so remain unspotted, holy and blameless.

In this cleansing Word, the Lord has given His Church the mode of procedure very plainly, by which they may cleanse themselves from the different grades of sin and uncleanness, each of which have their special directions. The trespass of one brother against another, the sin through weakness, and the sin unto death, have each their special directions, by which the Church is cleansed and preserved, and prove themselves clear in the matter.

Christ says, if thy brother trespass against thee, tell him of his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, forgive him; but if he will not hear thee, take one or two with thee, that in the mouth of two witnesses every word may be established; and if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and publican.

Now, as Christ says: "If he hear thee thou hast gained thy brother." Here, now, the Church is clean; for though he had committed a fault, he has received the reproof, and reconciled the brother, and so there is no power to blame. This shows how we, as members of the same body, and one of another, are to serve one another, and labor by the washing Word to keep the Church pure and unspotted. But if the brother refuse to hear till the last extremity, and then has to be separated and held as an heathen man and publican, as Christ has commanded, he was in this time not sanctified and clean, seeing he did not obey the Word; but the Church is nevertheless unblamable, for there is no power to blame her with, she having been the while faithfully laboring with the Word of God for the purity of the Church.

So, also, with a sin which has its origin in weakness, or from sudden temptation. If it becomes known to a brother, his duty is to go to him, and endeavor to make him sensible of his fault, as Paul says: "If any man be overtaken in a fault, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness," etc. If such a brother becomes sensible of his fault, it will cause sorrow and penitence, the fruit

of which will be that he humbles himself, and freely acknowledges it, and will also be willing to make all the amends in his power for the wrong he has done. By so doing, the Church is cleansed, and the transgressor also again sanctified. Not that the outward confession made and done will justify him before God, but the sincere penitence hath brought him to the feet of Jesus, by whom he is reconciled with the Father; for "this man, because he continueth ever, has an unchangable priesthood; wherefore, he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Here there is no power to blame the Church; she is washed by the Word, and is without spot.

But if such a brother would obstinately refuse to humble himself, and remain impenitent, then, the apostle says, we shall withdraw from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us; and if he obey not his word, by this epistle, note him, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Here, again, there is no ground of charge against the Church. She has been faithful to God's Word, and through it has cleansed herself, and is without spot, and blameless. And if a brother should fall into some vile and scandalous or criminal act, as classed among the sins which are unto death, Paul's precedent, in 1st Cor. v., points out the course to be pursued. He says: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath 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."

There is here no delay on account of exhortations, or labors to make them sensible of their error. These sins are of such a nature that the apostle says they that do them shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The commission of such acts is evidence that they are not led by the Spirit of Christ, and can, consequently, be none of His. Therefore the Holy Ghost has ordered the speedy cleansing of itself of such members, so that the name of Christ may not be reproached, and His Church not defiled by their presence. Therefore, in such cases the Church ever remains clear, seeing it

adheres to the Word of God, and there is no power here to blame. The apostle testifies that their zeal in obeying His Word proves them clear in the matter of wrong committed amongst them, and says he was greatly comforted by hearing it.

It is, however, to be observed, that all the members of such a blameless and spotless Church may not always be sanctified souls, since Paul says: "They are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

So there may unsanctified souls be united to the Church as members, being led to it by different motives, who may lead an unblamable life, and in outward appearance be unspotted; and there may also be such as have once been sanctified, and have again been too much drawn off in their minds and affections, and thus lost their fellowship with Christ in spirit, whilst in their outward conduct they are still unblamable; or if their conduct is blamable, no brother is cognizant of it. In all these cases the Church is still blameless and spotless as a body.

But if they begin to give way in their love, and neglect their duties when a brother transgresses, the others, from weakness or feigned love, or fear of offending, overlook their error, and disregard the washing by the Word, they become spotted and blamable, the leaven will spread and increase, and the body become unfit to present to Himself by Christ.

With regard to a single individual who has been converted, and is thus sanctified and cleansed, but has not the opportunity, as observed, to unite himself with an organized church, the case is the same. Through the weakness of the flesh he may be led too much away from Christ, or may inadvertently, or under sudden temptation, commit a sin. The grace of God and His faithful Spirit will soon reprove him for it; and if it is an act which is known to others, there is no way to cleanse himself of it, but to humble himself and acknowledge his fault, and then the way is ever open, for Christ has opened and no man can shut. But to the impenitent, and such as are unwilling to humble themselves, and confess their sins, Christ has shut the way, and no man can open.

I would once more, in conclusion, call upon every one who hopes, or has a desire to secure his soul's salvation, to take the matter seriously to heart, and not suffer himself to be deluded in so serious and all important a matter. There must evidently be great cause to fear that we might come short, or our Saviour and his apostles would not have dwelt so much on the subject, setting it forth in such a variety of ways, if they had not designed to excite in us apprehensions for our safety.

No matter how pure and spotless the community is to which we have united ourselves—if it even is the Church of Christ—unless we have the spirit of Christ, and are in communion with Him in light, it will avail us nothing. The Hebrews, to whom Paul wrote his epistle, were brethren and members of the true Church, yet he admonishes them to take heed, lest they come short of entering into rest, and tells them the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. By this Word we will have to be judged, as Christ says it will judge us in the last day. If we believe that we will be judged by that Word, and either acquitted or condemned, according as we will be found to have been obedient to it, oh, how diligently should we examine it, and prove ourselves by it; for it is said if we judge ourselves, we would not be judged. And when, in our diligent search, we find the Word to lead us into a course of life which will bring us under reproach and shame before the world, how willingly should we bear it, seeing our blessed Saviour had to bear the same, and He has called us to suffering with Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; but if we deny Him, He will also deny us.

But to this course of life we will find great opposition. The devil, the world, and our own flesh, will stand in the way. Every argument which ingenuity can devise will be brought to bear against us, not the least of which will be so many of those whom we have been accustomed to look up to as teachers and guides, and whom all the world esteem as good and holy men, possessed of great understanding and gifts, will be arrayed against us; and the argument made use of, that so many great and wise men have gone this way, our near and dear friends, perhaps our father or mother, our brother or our sister, and can we think they are lost? Can we think all this great multitude, which we now behold, are wrong? Shall these all have to perish? These are ideas too

monstrous to be entertained; and in this way we may become involved in difficulties. But let us remember, that in the days of Noah, with all the multitude of mankind on earth, but eight souls were found worthy, and that in Sodom and Gomorrah not five were found righteous; and that in both cases those who would redeem their souls had to leave kindred and friends, neighbors and acquaintances, behind them, and obey the Word of God, regardless of what others thought or said.

If we see that those with whom we are associated in church worship, whom we have held as brothers and sisters, do not walk orderly, and according to the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, and we begin to labor according to the Word for their reformation, but find we can accomplish nothing, the current is so strong, its tide can no more be stemmed. We are now told, if they will not obey, the loss will be theirs; we may not answer for them, nor they for us—the father cannot answer for the son, nor the son for the father—the soul that sins, it shall die—and if we are only faithful within ourselves, we are not answerable for others, etc. All this has a show of reason, but is it scriptural? If not, it cannot stand. Paul says: “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, but come out from amongst them, and be ye separate,” etc. (2d Cor. vi.)

The Lord Himself has declared of this great Babylon, that it has “become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird,” and calls upon his people to come out of her, that they do not be “partaker of her sins, and receive of her plagues.” If our protestations against sin and iniquity are not heard, I know of no way to remain free from contamination, but to separate ourselves, and thereby lay off a standing testimony against all unrighteousness. Let him that nameth the name of Jesus, depart from all iniquity.

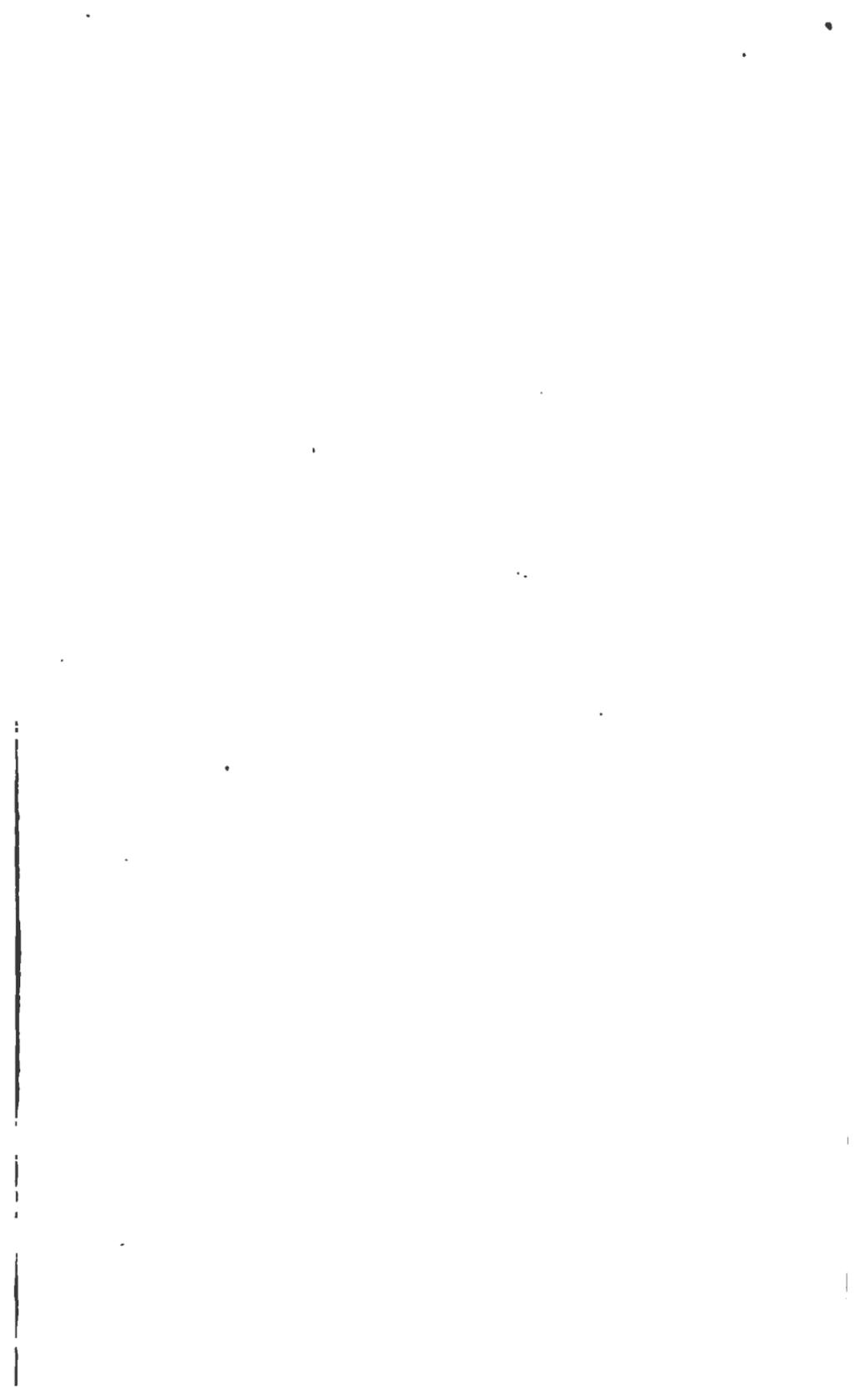
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