

An Affectionate Appeal to Christendom

A Brief Introduction

By George Davis

Aside from the scriptures, *An Humble, Earnest, And Affectionate Address To The Clergy* of William Law is indisputably among the most spiritually influential of all literary compositions. Men like Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, William Wilberforce, Henry Venn, Thomas Scott, Andrew Murray, and Watchman Nee were a few of the untold thousands who were directly or indirectly influenced by it. That impact is still felt today.

Regarding Law's *Affectionate Address to the Clergy*, Andrew Murray said . . . "I do not know where to find anywhere else the same clear and powerful statement of the truth which the Church needs at the present day. I have tried to read or consult every book I knew of, that treats of the work of the Holy Spirit, and nowhere have I met with anything that brings the truth of our dependence on the continual leading of the Spirit, and the assurance that that leading can be enjoyed without interruption, so home to the heart as this teaching ...which I believe to be entirely scriptural, and to supply what many are looking for . . ."

The last few pages of Law's "Appeal" were finished not many days before his death. Therefore Law's appeal to the clergy may be considered his last appeal, and a man's last words should be weighed very heavily.

Of all William Law's writings, we consider his "Affectionate Appeal to the Clergy" to be the most important. It contains his final appeal to Christendom. In it he sets forth what he considered to be the most urgent need of the 18th century Church. And if you take the time to read it I am sure you will conclude, as we have, that this address yet speaks to our most pressing need.

We changed the title with this revision from *An Humble, Earnest, And Affectionate Address To The Clergy* to *An Affectionate Appeal To Christendom* because we believe that its message is not just for an elite priesthood but for the priesthood of all believers.

Introduction about Editing

By Michael Clark

William Law was born in England in 1686 and he died in 1761. The older he got the more he saw the fallacy in religious higher learning and criticism--seeking God by the power of the intellect as opposed to His divine person indwelling us as His temple and teaching us Himself by the power of Spirit revelation. It is this subject to which he devoted this writing and it is, in our opinion, one of the best that is available today.

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Norman Grubb says of the Appeal, "...I had no idea what I was getting into! As soon as I started, I found Law difficult to follow. His magnificent English was in the longer and more involved sentences of his generation; but that was a triviality compared to the tremendous inward insights I began to have. Here at last was a writer who took me to the ultimate foundations and a totality of understanding which I had long been seeking. I drank and have been drinking ever since." Because it was written in the style and verbiage of the old English, often making it hard to understand, we have gone through this book and tried to make it more readable by breaking up the long, compound sentences where possible and where necessary, deleting some minor redundancy for clarity. Some of the scriptures that Law intimated were added by us as they apply. Comments in the text by us are enclosed by the use of brackets "[...]". The writing by Law did not have sub-headings in the text and these have been added by us.

As to how William Law uses the word "religion," not all religion is good. As an example of this, he contrasts the difference between "good religion" and bad and their natures in the following statements:

This supernatural "something" in the scripture called the Word, the Spirit, or Inspiration of God is the only source of any good thought about God that man can have. This something is the only source of the power to have more heavenly desires in man's spirit than he has in his flesh.

A religion that is not wholly built on this supernatural ground but solely stands upon the power of reasoning and conclusions of the natural uninspired man has not so much as the shadow of true religion in it. It is nothing in the same sense as an idol is said to be nothing, because the idol has nothing in it that is pretended by it. The work of religion has no divine good in it, except that it brings forth and keeps up essential union of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. This essential union can only be made through love on both sides that works by the same essential nature of God.

Preface

By William Law

The reason of my humbly and affectionately addressing this discourse to the clergy is not because it treats of things not of common concern to all Christians, but chiefly to invite and induce them as far as I can to the serious perusal of it.

Whatever is essential to Christian salvation, whether it be neglected, overlooked or mistaken by them, is of the saddest consequence both to themselves and the churches in which they minister. I say "essential" to salvation for I would not turn my own thoughts or call the attention of Christians to anything but the one thing needful, the one thing essential, to our rising out of our fallen state and becoming as we were at our creation—a holy offspring of God and real partakers of the divine nature.

If it be asked, "What is this one thing?" It is the SPIRIT OF GOD brought again to His first power of life within us. Nothing else is needed by us and nothing else is intended for us neither by the Law, the prophets or the gospel. Nothing else is or can be effectual in the making of sinful man into a godly creature. Everything else, however glorious and divine in outward appearance, everything that angels, men, churches or reformations can do for us is dead and helpless, unless it is the immediate work of the Spirit of God breathing and living in it.

All scripture bears full witness to this truth. The end and design of everything that is written is only to call us back from the spirit of Satan, the flesh and the world into

the full dependence upon and obedience to the Spirit of God. Out of free love and thirst after our souls, the Spirit seeks to have His first power of life in us. When this is done, everything is done that the scripture can do for us. Read what chapter or doctrine of scripture you will and be ever so delighted with it; it will leave you as poor as empty and unreformed as it found you unless it be a delight that proceeds from and has turned you wholly and solely to the Spirit of God and strengthened your union with and dependence upon Him. For love and delight in matters of scriptures, while it is only a delight that is merely human, however specious and saint-like it may appear, is only the self-love of fallen Adam and can have no better a nature until it proceeds from the inspiration of God, quickening His own life and nature within us. That alone can have or give forth a godly love. If it be an immutable truth that "no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit," it must be a truth equally immutable that no one can have any Christ-like temper or power of goodness, except and in such degree as he is immediately led and governed by the Holy Spirit. The grounds and reasons of this are as follows.

Chapter 1: All Goodness Is Found in God

And a certain ruler [of the Jews] asked Him, saying, Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why call me good? none is good, except one, that is, God. (Luke 18:18-19 KJ2000)

All possible goodness that can be named or is nameless was in God from all eternity and must to all eternity be inseparable from Him; it can be nowhere but where God is. Therefore, before God created anything, it was certainly true that there was only One that was good. It is just the same truth that after God has created innumerable hosts of blessed, holy and heavenly beings there is only One that is good and that is God.

All that can be called goodness, holiness, divine tempers, heavenly affections etc. in the creatures are no more their own or the growth of their created powers than they were their own before they were created. But all that is called divine goodness

and virtue in the creature is nothing more than the one goodness of God manifesting a birth and discovery of itself in the creature as its created nature is fitted to receive. This is the unalterable state between God and the creature. Goodness for ever and ever can only belong to God as essential to Him and inseparable from Him as His own unity.

God could not make the creature to be great and glorious in itself. To do this would be to create beings that were independent of Him. "The heavens," said David, "declare the glory of God." No creature, any more than the heavens, can declare any other glory than that of God. One might as well say that the firmament shows forth its own handiwork, as the holy divine or heavenly creature shows forth its own natural power.

All that is divine, great, glorious and happy in the Spirit's tempers, operations and enjoyments within the creature is only the greatness, glory, majesty and blessedness of God dwelling in it. From here it gives forth various births of His own triune life, light and love in and through the manifold forms and capacities of the creature to receive them. It is here that we may infallibly see the true ground and nature of all true religion and when and how we may fulfill all our religious duty to God. The creature's true religion is its rendering to God all that is God's. This is its true, continual acknowledgment of all that it is, has and enjoys in and from God. This is the one true religion of all intelligent creatures, whether in heaven or on earth. Since they all have only one and the same relation to God, so in their several births, states or offices they all have only one and the same true religion or right behavior towards God.

Now the one relation that is the ground of all true religion is one and the same between God and all intelligent creatures. This relation is found in a total unalterable dependence upon God, an immediate continual receiving of every kind and degree of goodness, blessing and happiness that ever was or can be found in them from God alone. The highest angel has nothing of its own that it can offer unto God; no more light, love, purity, perfection and glorious hallelujahs that spring from itself or its own powers, than the poorest creature upon earth. Could the angel see a spark of wisdom goodness or excellence as coming from or belonging to itself, its

place in heaven would be lost as sure as Lucifer lost his. But they are ever abiding flames of pure love always ascending up to and uniting with God because the wisdom, the power, the glory, the majesty, the love and goodness of God alone is all that they see and feel and know, either within or without themselves. Songs of praise to their heavenly Father are their ravishing delight, because they see and know and feel that it is the breath and Spirit of their heavenly Father that sings and rejoices in them. Their adoration in Spirit and in truth never ceases because they never cease to acknowledge the ALL of God-the ALL of God in the whole creation. This is the one religion of heaven and nothing else is the truth of religion on earth.

The matter, therefore plainly, comes to this: nothing can do or be the good of religion to the intelligent creature, except the power and presence of God really and essentially living and working in it. This is the unchangeable nature of that goodness and blessedness that is to be had from our religion. Of all necessity the creature must have all its religious goodness wholly and solely from God's immediate operation, as it had its first goodness at its creation. It is as impossible for the creature to help itself to what is good and blessed in religion by any contrivance, reasoning or working as it is to create itself by its own natural powers. For after its creation, the creature can no more take anything to itself that belongs to God than it could take before it was created. And if truth forces us to hold that the natural powers of the creature could only come from the one power of God, the same truth should surely the more so force us to confess that what comforts, enlightens, blesses, gives peace, joy, goodness and rest to its natural powers can be had in no other way nor by any other thing but from God's immediate holy operation.

Now, the reason why no work of religion, except what is begun, continued and carried on by the living operation of God in the creature, can have any truth goodness or divine blessing in it, is because nothing can in truth seek God but what comes from God. Nothing can in truth find God as its good, except what has the nature of God living in it. Like can only rejoice in like. Therefore, no religious service of the creature can have any truth, goodness, or blessing in it, except what is done in the creature in, through and by a principle and power of the divine nature begotten and breathing forth in it all holy tempers, affections and adorations.

It is in vain to think that there is a middle way and that rational divines have found it out, as Dr. Warburton has done, who though denying immediate continual inspiration, allows that the Spirit's "ordinary influence occasionally assists the faithful." (Sermons vol. i.)

Now this "middle way" has neither scripture nor sense in it, for an occasional influence or concurrence is as absurd as an "occasional" God. For an occasional influence of the Spirit upon us supposes an occasional absence of the Spirit from us. There could be no such thing unless God was sometimes with us and sometimes not, sometimes doing us good as the inward God of our life and sometimes doing us no good at all by leaving us to be good from ourselves. Occasional influence necessarily implies all this blasphemous absurdity. Again this middle way of an occasional influence and assistance, necessarily supposes that there is something of man's own that is good. If this was the case, the Holy Spirit of God neither would nor could assist or cooperate with it. If there was anything good in man for God to assist and cooperate with besides the Seed of His own divine nature or His own Word of life striving to bruise the serpent's nature within us, it could not be true that there is only one that is good and that is God. And were there any goodness in creatures either in heaven or on earth except the one goodness of the divine nature living, working and manifesting itself in them, as its created instruments, then good creatures both in heaven and on earth would have something else to adore besides God. Goodness, be it where it will, is adorable for itself, because it is goodness.

If therefore any degree of goodness belonged to the creature it ought to have a share of that same adoration that is paid to the Creator [This is exactly the nature of why Satan fell. See Isaiah 14: 12-15]. Therefore, we believe that nothing godly can be alive in us, but what has all its life from the Spirit of God, living and breathing in us, if to look solely to it and depend wholly upon it, both for the beginning and growth of every thought and desire that can be holy and good in us. If this be proud, rank fanaticism then it must be the same fanaticism to own but one God. For he that owns more goodness than one, owns more gods than one. And he that believes he can have any good in himself, but the one goodness of God manifesting itself in him and through him, owns more goodness than that of the One. But if it be true that

God and goodness cannot be divided, then it must be a truth for ever and ever that so much of good so much of God must be in the creature.

And here lies the true unchangeable distinction between God and nature and the natural creature. Nature and creature are only for the outward manifestation of the inward, invisible, unapproachable powers of God. They can rise no higher nor be anything else in themselves, but temples, habitations or instruments in which the supernatural God can and does manifest Himself in various degrees. He brings forth creatures to be good with His own goodness, to love and adore Him with His own Spirit of love, forever singing praises to the divine nature as they partake of it. This is the religion of divine inspiration that being interpreted is Immanuel or God within us.

Everything short of this is short of that religion that worships God in spirit and in truth. And every religious trust or confidence in anything but the divine operation within us is, but a sort of image worship that, though it may deny the form, retains the power thereof in the heart. And he that places any religious safety in theological decisions, scholastic points in particular doctrines and opinions that must be held about the scripture words of "faith," "justification," "sanctification," "election," and "reprobation," departs from the true worship of the living God within him and sets up an idol of notions to be worshiped, if not instead of, along with Him.

I believe it may be taken for a certain truth that every society of Christians whose religion stands upon this ground, however ardent laborious and good their zeal may seem to be in such matters, in spite of all, sooner or later it will be found that nature is at the bottom and that a selfish, earthly, overbearing pride in their own definitions and doctrines of words will by degrees creep up to the same height and become that same fleshly wisdom doing those very same things which they exclaim against in popes, cardinals and Jesuits. Nor can it possibly be otherwise. For a letter-learned zeal has but one nature wherever it is, and it can only do for Christians what it did for the Jews. As it anciently brought forth scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites and crucifiers of Christ, it afterwards brought forth heresies, schisms, popes, papal decrees, images, anathemas, and transubstantiations. So in Protestant countries it will be doing the same thing only with other materials. Images of wood and clay will

only be given up for images of doctrines-grace, works, imputed sin, imputed righteousness, election and reprobation. These will have their Synods of Dort as truly evangelical as any Council of Trent.

This must be the case of all fallen Christendom. As was with popish, so it is with Protestant until single men and churches know, confess and firmly adhere to this one scripture truth which the blessed Boehme [Jakob Boehme, a German Christian mystic that lived from 1575 to 1624] prefixed as a motto to most of his epistles: "That our salvation is in the life of Jesus Christ in us." This alone was the divine perfection of man before he fell and will be his perfection when he is one with Christ in heavenly places. Everything besides this or that is not solely aiming at and essentially leading to it, is but mere Babel in all sects and divisions of Christians living to themselves and their own old man under a seeming holiness of Christian strife and contention about scripture works.

All men or churches not placing all in the life, light and guidance of the Holy Spirit of Christ, but pretending to act in the name and for the glory of God from opinions which their logic and learning have collected from scripture words or from what a Calvin, an Arminius, a Socinus or some smaller name has told them to be right or wrong, all such are but where the apostles were when it was said of them, "there was a strife among them who should be the greatest." And how much, so ever they may say and boast of their great zeal for truth and the only glory of God, their own open notorious behavior towards one another is proof enough that the great strife amongst them is which shall be the greatest sect or have the largest number of followers. This strife is from the same root and just as useful to Christianity as that of the carnal apostles who fought over who should be the greatest. It is not the numbers of men or kingdoms professing Christianity that is the glory of Christ's church, but numbers redeemed from the death of Adam into His marvelous life! In whatever nation Christianity is meant to be or sought after by the profession of the gospel (other than a new heavenly life through the mediatorial nature and Spirit of the eternal Son of God, born into the fallen soul), wherever this spirituality of the gospel-redemption is denied or overlooked, there the spirit of self, of Satanic and worldly subtlety will be in both church and priest and supreme power in all that is called religion.

Chapter 2: The Necessity of the Indwelling Spirit in the Believer

But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. (Romans 8:9 RSVA)

All true religion is or brings forth an essential union and communion of the Spirit of the creature with the Spirit of the Creator: God in it and it in God, one life, one light and one love. The Spirit of God first gives, or sows, the seed of divine union in the soul of every man and it is quickened, raised and brought forth to a fullness and growth of a life in God. Take a similitude of this as follows: The beginning or seed of animal breath must first be born in the creature from the spirit of this world ["that which is born of the flesh is flesh"]. In like manner divine faith, hope, love and resignation to God are in the religious life, its acts of respiration, which so long as they are true, unite God and the creature in the same living and essential manner ["That which is born of the Spirit is spirit"] as animal respiration unites the breath of the animal with the breath of this world.

No animal could begin to respire or unite with the breath of this world unless it has its beginning to breathe begotten in it from the air of this world. So it is equally certain that no creature angel or man could begin to be religious or breathe forth the divine affections of faith, love and desire towards God, unless a living seed of these divine affections was, by the Spirit of God, first begotten in it. And as a tree or plant can only grow and bear fruit by the same power that first gave birth to the seed, so faith and hope and love towards God can only grow and bear [the fruit of the Spirit] by the same power that begot the first seed of them in the soul. Therefore, divine, immediate inspiration and divine religion are inseparable in the nature of the thing.

Take away inspiration, or suppose it to cease, and no religious acts or affections can give forth anything that is godly or divine. For the creature can offer or return nothing to God but what it has first received from Him; therefore, if it is to offer and send up to God affections and aspirations that are divine and godly, it must of all necessity have the divine and godly nature living and breathing in it. [Jesus said,

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he sees the Father do: for whatsoever things he does, these also does the Son likewise"]. Can anything reflect light before it has received it? Or any other light than what it has received? Can any creature breathe forth earthly or diabolical affections before it is possessed of an earthly or diabolical nature [See Matthew 7:17-20]? This is as possible as for any creature to have divine affections rising up and dwelling in it either before or any further than it partakes of the divine nature dwelling and operating in it.

A religious faith that is uninspired, a hope or love that proceeds not from the immediate working of the divine nature within us can no more do any divine good to our souls, or unite them with the goodness of God, than hunger after earthly food can feed us with the immortal bread of heaven. All that the natural or uninspired man does or can do in the church has no more of the truth or power of divine worship in it than what he does in the field or shop through a desire of riches. And the reason is because all the acts of the natural man, whether relating to matters of religion or the world, must be equally selfish and there is no possibility of their being otherwise. For self-love, self-esteem, self-seeking and living wholly to self are as strictly the whole of all that is or possibly can be in the natural man as in the natural beast; the one can no more be better or act above this nature than the other. Neither can any creature be in a better or higher state than this until something supernatural is found in it. This supernatural "something" in the scripture called the Word, the Spirit, or Inspiration of God is the only source of any good thought about God that man can have. This something is the only source of the power to have more heavenly desires in man's spirit than he has in his flesh.

A religion that is not wholly built upon this supernatural ground but solely stands on the power of reasoning and conclusions of the natural uninspired man has not so much as the shadow of true religion in it. It is nothing in the same sense as an idol is said to be nothing, because the idol has nothing in it that is pretended by it. The work of religion has no divine good in it, except when it brings forth and keeps up essential union of the spirit of man with the Spirit of God. This essential union can only be made through love on both sides that works by the same essential nature of God [See Galatians 5:6].

No man therefore can reach God with his own love or have union with Him by it, but he who is inspired with that One, same Spirit of love with which God loved Himself from all eternity and before there was any creature. Infinite hosts of new created heavenly beings can begin no new kind of love of God, nor have the least power of beginning to love Him at all, but so far as His own Holy Spirit of love is brought to life in them. This love that was then in God alone, can be the only love in creatures that can draw them to God; they can have no power of cleaving to Him, of willing what He wills or adoring the divine nature, but by partaking of that eternal Spirit of love. Therefore the continual, immediate inspiration or operation of the Holy Spirit is the one, and only possible ground of our continually loving God. And of this inspired love (and no other) St. John says, "He that dwells in love dwells in God." Suppose it to be any other love brought forth by any other thing except the Spirit of God breathing His own love in us, and then it cannot be true that he who dwells in such love dwells in God.

Divine inspiration was essential to man's first created state. The Spirit of the triune God who breathed into him was what made him a holy creature in the image and likeness of God. To have no other mover to live under, no other guide or leader but the Spirit, was what constituted all the holiness that the first man could have from God. Had he not been thus at the first, God in him and he in God, brought into the world as a true offspring and real birth of the Holy Spirit, no dispensation of God to fallen man would have directed him to the Holy Spirit or ever have made mention of His inspiration in man. Fallen man could be directed to nothing as his good, except what he had and was his good before he fell. Had not the Holy Spirit been his first life in and by which he lived, no inspired prophets among the sons of fallen Adam had ever been heard of or any holy men speaking as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. For the thing would have been impossible; no fallen man could have been inspired by the Holy Spirit except the first life of man was true and born from above. Every fallen man had by the mercy and free grace of God a secret remains of his first life preserved in him, though hidden or rather swallowed up by flesh and blood. These "secret remains" signified and assured to Adam by the name of a "bruise of the serpent" and "seed of the woman," was his only capacity to be called and quickened again into his first life by new breathings of the Holy Spirit in him.

Hence, it plainly appears that the gospel state could not be God's last dispensation or the finishing of man's redemption unless its whole work was a work of the Spirit of God in the spirit of man. It brought the thing itself (or the substance of all former types and shadows) into real enjoyment so as to be possessed by man in spirit and in truth. Now, the thing itself-and for the sake of which all God's dispensations have been-is that first life of God that was essentially born in the soul of the first man, Adam, and to which he died. But now if the gospel dispensation brings the end of all types and shadows and brings forth again in man a true and full birth of that Holy Spirit [See John 3:5-7] that he had at first, then it must be plain that the work of this dispensation must be solely and immediately the work of the Holy Spirit. If it was impossible for man to have a holy nature and spirit at first except as an offspring of a holy God at his creation [See Luke 3:38], it is certain from the nature of the thing that fallen man, dead to his first holy nature, can have that same holy nature again only by the operation of that same Holy Spirit, the Spirit whose breath first gave him the holy nature and life in God [See Romans 5:15].

Therefore immediate inspiration is as necessary to make fallen man alive again unto God as it was to make man at first a living soul after the image and in the likeness of God. And continual inspiration is as necessary as man's continuance in his redeemed state. This is a certain truth that what alone begins or gives life must of all necessity be the only continuance or preservation of life. The second step can only be taken by what gave power to take the first. No life can continue in the goodness of its first created or redeemed state except by continuing under the influence of and working with and by that powerful root or Spirit who at first created or redeemed it [See Galatians 3:1-3]. Every branch of the tree, though ever so richly brought forth, must wither and die as soon as it ceases to have continual union with and virtue from the root it first sprang from. This truth is absolutely grounded in the nature of the thing. Our Lord appeals to it as proof and full illustration of the necessity of His immediate indwelling, breathing and operating in the redeemed soul of man. He said, "I am the vine you are the branches, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can you except you abide in me. He that abides in me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit. If a man abides not in me he is cast forth as a withered branch; for without me you can do nothing" (John xv).

Now from these words let this conclusion be here drawn, viz., that to turn to Christ as a light within us, to expect life from nothing but His holy birth raised within us, to give ourselves up wholly and solely to the immediate continual influx and operation of this Holy Spirit depending wholly upon it for every kind and degree of goodness and holiness that we want or can receive, is and can be nothing else but proud rank fanaticism. Now as infinitely absurd as this conclusion is, no one that condemns continual immediate inspiration as gross fanaticism can possibly do it with less absurdity or show himself a wiser man or better reasoner than he that concludes that without Christ we can do nothing. Therefore we ought to believe, expect to wait for and depend upon His continual immediate operation in everything that we do or would do well.

As to the "pride" charged upon this pretended fanaticism it is the same absurdity. Christ says, "without me you can do nothing," the same as if he had said, "As to yourselves and all that can be called your own, you are in helpless sin and misery and nothing that is good can come from you.. It must be done by the continual, immediate breathing and inspiration of another Spirit given by God. The same Spirit given to you to over-rule your own self-centered nature and to save and deliver you from all your own goodness, your own wisdom and learning that always were and always will be as corrupt, as impure, as earthly and sensual as your own flesh and blood. Now is there any selfishly, creaturely pride in fully believing this to be true and in acting in full conformity to it? If so, then he that confesses he neither has, nor ever can have, a single farthing but as it is freely given him from charity thereby declares himself to be a purse-proud vain boaster of his own wealth. Such is the spiritual pride of him who fully acknowledges that he neither has nor can have the least spark or breathing after goodness, but what is freely kindled or breathed into him by the Spirit of God. Again if it is spiritual pride to believe that nothing that we ever think or say or do, either in the church or our closets, can have any truth of goodness in it, except what is done solely and immediately by the Spirit of God in us, then it must also be said that to have religious humility we must never forget to take some share of our religious virtues to ourselves and not allow (as Christ has said) that without Him, we can do nothing that is good. It must also be said that St. Paul took too much upon himself when he said, "the life that I now live is not mine but Christ's that lives in me."

Chapter 3: The Work of the Spirit, Emanuel - God with Us

The necessity of a continual inspiration of the Spirit of God, both to begin and continue every step of a divine life in man, is a truth that every life in nature as well as all scripture bears full witness to.

A natural life, a bestial life, a diabolical life can subsist no longer than while they are immediately and continually under the working power of that root or source from which they sprang. So it is with the divine life in man. It can never be in him except as a growth of life in and from God. Resisting the Spirit, quenching the Spirit, and grieving the Spirit gives birth and growth to every evil that reigns in the world and leaves men and churches not only an easy, but a necessary prey to the devil, the world and the flesh. Nothing but obedience to the Spirit, trusting the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and praying with and for its continual inspiration can possibly keep either men or churches from being sinners or idolaters in all that they do. Everything in the life or religion of man that has not the Spirit of God for its mover, director and end, be it what it will, is but earthly, sensual or devilish. The truth and perfection of the gospel state could not show itself until it became solely a ministration of the Spirit or a kingdom where the Holy Spirit does all the works.

The apostles, while Christ was with them in the flesh, were instructed in heavenly truths from His mouth and were enabled to work miracles in His Name. They were not qualified to know and teach the mysteries of His kingdom. After His resurrection he conversed with them forty days, speaking to them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God. Though he breathed on them and said, "Receive you the Holy Spirit," etc., they were still unable to preach or bear witness to the truth as it is in Jesus. There was still a higher dispensation to come that opened the divine life in their hearts in a way that could not be affected from an outward instruction of Christ Himself. Though He had sufficiently told His disciples the necessity of being born again of the Spirit, He left them unborn of it until He came again in the power of the Spirit. When He breathed on them and said, "Receive you the Holy Spirit," what was said and done was not the thing itself, but only a type or outward signification of what they should receive when He, being glorified, should come again in the fullness and power of the Spirit. It was then that He broke open the deadness and

darkness of their hearts with light and life from heaven. That light alone could open and verify in their souls all that He had said and promised to them while He was with them in the flesh.

All this was expressly declared by Christ Himself saying unto them, "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away." Therefore, Christ taught them to believe, to want, and to joyfully expect the coming of a higher and more blessed state than that of His bodily presence with them. He adds, "If I go not away the comforter will not come." Therefore, His followers could not have the comfort and blessing of Christ until something more was done to them and they were brought into a higher state than they could experience by His verbal instruction with them. He continued saying, "But if I go away, I will send Him unto you and when the comforter the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth and He shall glorify me" (that is, He shall set up my kingdom in its glory in the power of the Spirit). "He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you: I said of mine, because all things that the Father has are mine." (John 16)

Christ had told them of the necessity of an higher state than they were in and the necessity of such a comforting illuminating guide as they could not have until His outward teaching in human language was changed into the inspiration and operation of His Spirit in their souls. He commanded them not to begin to bear witness of Him to the world in a human way from knowing of Him, His birth, His life, His doctrines, His death, sufferings and even His resurrection. But He commanded them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high, saying unto them, "You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you. And then shall you bear witness unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and unto the utmost part of the earth."

Here are two most important and fundamental truths fully demonstrated. First, that the truth and perfection of the gospel state could not take place until Christ was glorified and His kingdom among men made wholly and solely a continual, immediate ministration of the Spirit. Everything before this was but subservient for a time and preparatory to this last dispensation, which could not have been the last if it did not carried man above the types, figures and shadows into the real

possession and enjoyment of the spirit and truth of a divine life. For the end is not come until it has found the beginning. That is, the last dispensation of God to fallen man cannot come until the putting to an end of the "bondage of weak and beggarly elements" (Gal. 4:9), thus bringing man to that dwelling place in God and God in him which he had at the beginning.

Secondly, that as the apostles could not go forth without the Spirit, so no man from their time to the end of the world can have any true and real knowledge of the spiritual blessings of Christ's redemption without the Spirit. Nor can they have a divine call, capacity or fitness to preach and bear witness of them to the world, but solely by that same divine Spirit opening all the mysteries of a redeeming Christ in their inward parts, as it did in the apostles, evangelists and first ministers of the gospel.

Why could not the apostles, who had been witnesses to all the whole process of Christ, why could they not with their human apprehension declare and testify the truth of such things until they "were baptized with fire and born again of the Spirit"? It is because the truth of such things, the mysteries of Christ's process as knowable by man, are alone accomplished by this heavenly fire and Spirit of God in our souls. Therefore, to know the mysteries of Christ's redemption and to know the redeeming work of God in our own souls is the same thing; the one cannot be before or without the other. Every man, whoever he is and however able he is in all kinds of human literature, must be an entire stranger to all the mysteries of gospel redemption. He can only talk about them as of any other tale, until they are brought forth, verified, fulfilled and witnessed to by what is found, felt and enjoyed of the whole process of Christ in his soul. Since redemption is in its whole nature an inward spiritual work that works only in the altering, changing and regenerating the life of the soul, so it must be true that nothing but the inward state of the soul can bear true witness to the redeeming power of Christ. It wholly consists in altering what is the most radical in the soul, bringing forth a new spiritual death and a new spiritual life.

This being so, it must be true that no one can know or believe the mysteries of Christ's redeeming power by historically knowing or rationally consenting to what is said of Him in written or spoken words. The redeeming power and understanding of

God's mysteries can come only by an inward, experimental finding and feeling that operates in that new death and new life, both of which must be effected in the soul of man. Without these, Christ is not and cannot be found and known by the soul as its salvation. It must also be equally true that the redeemed state of the soul is nothing but the resurrection of a divine and holy life within it. This action from first to last is the sole work of the breathing, creating Spirit of God as the first holy created state of the soul was before Adam fell. The mysteries of Christ's redeeming power that work and bring forth the renewed state of the soul are not creaturely, finite, outward things that may be found and enjoyed by verbal descriptions or formed ideas of them. Rather, they are a birth and life and spiritual operation which solely belong to God alone as His creating power. Nothing can redeem but that same thing and power that created the soul. Nothing can bring forth a good thought concerning eternal salvation, but what brought forth the power of thinking--Himself. Every tendency towards goodness, be it ever so small, is confirmed in the words of Paul, "... not I but Christ that lives in me."

This truth of truths, fully possessed and firmly adhered to, brings God and man together and puts an end to every "Lo here" and "Lo there" because it turns the whole faith of man to a Christ that can nowhere be a Savior to him, except as He is essentially born in the inmost spirit of his soul. It is not possible to be taken there by any other means except the immediate inspiration and working power of the Holy Spirit within him. To this man alone all scripture gives daily edification; the words of Christ and His apostles fall like a fire into his innermost being. And what is it that they kindle there? Not notions, not itching ears, nor rambling desires after new teachings and new expounders of them, but a holy flame of love to be always with and always attending to that Christ and His Holy Spirit within him. This alone can make him become and do all that the words of Christ and His apostles have taught. For there is no possibility of being like-minded with Christ in anything that he taught or having the truth of one Christian virtue, but by the nature and Spirit of Christ essentially living in us.

Read all of our Savior's divine sermon from the mount, consent to the goodness of every part of it, but the time of practicing it will never come until you have a new nature from Christ and are as vitally in Him and He in you as the vine is found in the

branch and the branch in the vine. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," is a divine truth, but it will do us no divine good unless we receive it as saying, "Blessed are they that are born again of the Spirit for they alone can see God." No blessedness, either of truth or life, can be found in men or angels, but where the Spirit and life in God is essentially born within them.

Chapter 4: Scholasticism vs. Spirit Inspiration

We return now to the doctrine of continual inspiration. The natural or unregenerate man, educated in pagan learning and scholastic theology, sees the strength of his genius in the search after knowledge.

He can easily and learnedly talk, write, criticize and determine upon all scripture words and facts. He looks at all this as a full proof of his own religious wisdom, power and goodness, and calls immediate inspiration, fanaticism. He does not consider that all the woes denounced by Christ against scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites apply today. They still until in this day denounce against every outward appearance and show of religion that the natural man can practice.

It is well to be noted that everyone, however high in human literature, is only this very natural man and can only have the goodness of a carnal secular religion until he becomes as empty of all as a new born child. The Spirit of God must get a full birth in him and become the inspirer and doer of all that he wills, does, and aims at in his whole course of religion.

Our divine Master compares the religion of the learned Pharisees "to whitened sepulchers, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly full of rottenness, stench and dead men's bones." Now why was a religion so serious in its restraints, so beautiful in its outward form and practices, and commanding such reverence from all that beheld it, charged by Truth itself with having inwardly such an abominable nature? It was only for this one reason, because it was a religion of self. Therefore from the beginning to the end of the world it must be true that where self is kept alive, has power and keeps up its own interests, whether in speaking, writing, teaching, or defending the

most specious number of scripture doctrines and religious forms, there that very old Pharisee that Christ with so much severity of language constantly condemned is still alive. And the reason for such heavy condemnation is because self is the only root and the sum total of all sin; every sin that can be named is centered in it and the creature can sin no higher than to live to self. For self is the fullness of atheism and idolatry. It is nothing else but the creature broken off from God and Christ; it is the power of Satan living and working in us and the sad continuance of that first turning from God that was the whole fall and death from our first Father.

As sad and Satanical as this self is, what is so much cherished and nourished with our daily love, fears and cares about it? How much worldly wisdom, how much laborious learning, how many subtleties of contrivance and how many flattering applications and submissions are made to the world, that this apostate self may have its fullness both of inward joys and outward glory?

It must be added that a religion of self, of worldly glory and prosperity carried on under the gospel state, has more of a diabolical nature than that of the Jewish Pharisees. This is the highest and last working of the mystery of iniquity because it lives to self, Satan and the world in and by a daily profession of denying and dying to self, of being crucified with Christ, of being led by His Spirit, of being risen from the world and set with Him in heavenly places.

Let then the writers against continual immediate divine inspiration take this for a certain truth: that by so doing they do all they can to draw man from the very truth and perfection of the gospel state and are, and can be, no better than pitiable advocates for a religion of self more blamable and abominable now than what was condemned by Christ. For whatever is pretended to be done in gospel religion by any other spirit or power but that of the Holy Spirit bringing it forth, whether it be praying, preaching or practicing any duties, is only the religion of self and can be nothing else. For everything that is born of the flesh is flesh and nothing is spiritual except what has its whole birth from the Spirit. But man not ruled and governed by the Spirit has only the nature of corrupt flesh. It is under the full power and guidance of fallen nature and is that very natural man to whom the things of God are foolishness. But man, boldly rejecting and preaching against a continual

immediate divine inspiration, is an anti-apostle. He lays another foundation than what Christ has laid. He teaches that Christ needs not and must not be all in all in us and is a preacher of the folly of fearing to grieve, quench and resist the Holy Spirit. For when, where or how could everyone of us be in danger of grieving, quenching or resisting the Spirit unless His holy breathings and inspirations were always within us? Or how could the sin against the Holy Spirit have a more dreadful nature than that against the Father and the Son, but because the continual immediate guidance and operation of the Spirit is the last and highest manifestation of the Holy Trinity in the fallen soul of man? It is not because the Holy Spirit is more worthy or higher in nature than the Father and the Son, but because Father and Son come forth in their own highest power of redeeming love through the covenant of a continual immediate inspiration of the Spirit to be always dwelling and working in the soul.

Many weak things have been conjectured and published to the world about the sin against the Holy Spirit; whereas the whole nature of it lies in this: it is a sinning or standing out against the last and highest dispensation of God for the full redemption of man. Christ says, "If I had not come they had not had sin," that is, they had not had such a weight of guilt upon them. Therefore, the sinning against Christ come into the flesh was of a more unpardonable nature than sinning against the Father under the Law. Likewise sinning against the Holy Spirit is of a more unpardonable nature than sinning against the Father under the Law or against the Son as come in the flesh, because these two preceding dispensations were but preparatory to the coming or full ministration of the Spirit. When Father and Son were come in the power and manifestation of the Spirit then whoever refuses or resists this ministration of the Spirit, resists all that the Holy Trinity can do to restore and revive the first life of God in the soul. So it is in this that he commits the unpardonable sin. It is unpardonable because there remains no further or higher power to remove it out of the soul. No sin is unpardonable because of its own nature, or what is in itself, but because there is something to come that can remove it out of the soul. Sin becomes unpardonable when it has withstood or turned from the last and highest remedy for the removal of it.

Hence it is that grieving, quenching or resisting the Spirit is the sin of all sins that most of all stops the work of redemption and in the highest degree separates man from all union with God. There could be no such sin as long as the Holy Spirit is always breathing, willing and working within us. For what spirit can be grieved by us, but what has its will within us, as it is disobeyed? What spirit can be quenched by us, but what is and ever would be a holy fire of life within us? What spirit can be resisted by us, but what is and has its working within us? A spirit on the outside of us cannot be the Spirit of God nor could such a spirit be any more quenched or hindered by our spirit than a man by indignation at a storm could stop its rage. Now, as dreadful as the above mentioned sin is, I would ask all the writers against continual, immediate, divine inspiration, how they could more effectually lead men into a habitual state of sinning against the Holy Spirit than by such doctrine? For how can we possibly avoid the sin of grieving, quenching, etc., the Spirit, but by continually reverencing His holy presence within us by continually waiting for, trusting and solely attending to what the Spirit of God wills works and manifests within us? To turn men from this continual dependence upon the Holy Spirit is turning them from all true knowledge of God. For without this there is no possibility of any edifying, saving knowledge of God.

For though we have ever so many mathematical demonstrations of His being, we are without all real knowledge of Him until His own quickening Spirit within us manifests Him as a power of life, light, love and goodness essentially found, vitally felt and adored in our souls. This is the one knowledge of God that is eternal life because it is the life of God manifested in the soul. It is that knowledge of which Christ says, "No one knows the Father but the Son and he to whomsoever the Son reveals Him." Therefore this knowledge is only possible to be found in Him who is in Christ a new creature, because Christ reveals the Father. But if none belong to God except those who are led by the Spirit of God, we are reprobates unless the Spirit of Christ is living in us. We need be told that all that we have to trust to or depend upon as children of God and Christ is the continual immediate guidance, unction and teaching of this Holy Spirit within us. How can we more profanely sin against this Spirit and power of God within us or more expressly call men from the power of God to Satan than by ridiculing a faith and hope that looks wholly and solely to His

continual immediate breathings and operations for all that can be holy and good in us?

"When I am lifted up from the earth," says Christ, "I will draw all men to me."

Therefore the one great power of Christ in and over the souls of men is after he is in heaven; then begins the true full power of His drawing, because it is by His Spirit in man that he draws. But who can more resist this drawing or defeat its operation in us than he that preaches against and condemns the belief of a continual and immediate inspiration of the Spirit, when Christ's drawing can be in nothing else nor be powerful any other way?

Chapter 5: Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock!

Now, what we are taught here is the whole end of all scripture. Everything that is said, however learnedly, read or studied by Hebrew or Greek skills, fails in its purpose until it leads and brings us to an essential relationship with the God who dwells within us.

True spiritual teaching must feel and find everything that the scriptures speak of pertaining to God, of man, of life and death, of good and evil, and of heaven and hell as essentially verified in our own souls. For everything is found within man that can be either good or evil. God abiding in him is His divine life, His divine light and His divine love on the one hand; Satan within him animates his life of self, earthly wisdom, diabolical falseness, wrath, pride and vanity of every kind. There is no middle way between these two. He that is not under the power of the one is under the power of the other. Man was created in and under the power of the divine life; as far as he loses or turns from this life of God is as far as he falls under the power of self, Satan and worldly wisdom.

When St. Peter, full of a humanly good love towards Christ, advised Him to avoid His sufferings, Christ rejected him saying, "Get you behind me Satan," giving this reason for it, "for you desire not the things that be of God but the things that be of men." This is plain proof that whatever is not of and from the Holy Spirit of God in

us, however plausible it may outwardly seem to men to their wisdom and human goodness, is in itself nothing else but the power of Satan within us. And as St. Paul said truly of himself, "By the grace of God I am what I am." So every wise man, every scribe, every disputer of this world, everyone who trusts in the strength of his own rational learning, everyone that is under the power of his own fallen nature is never free from desires of honors and preferments of men, but is ever thirsting to be rewarded for his theological abilities. He is ever afraid of being abased and despised or always thankful to those who flatter him for his distinguished merit. Nothing else hinders any professor of Christ from being able truly to say with St. Paul "God forbid that I should glory in anything but the cross of Christ by which I am crucified to the world and the world to me." Nothing makes him incapable of finding what St. Paul found when he said, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me." Nothing hinders all this, but a man's disregard of Christ within him, by choosing to have a religion of self, of laborious learning and worldly greatness, rather than being such a gospel fool for Christ as to renounce everything He renounced, and to seek no more earthly honor and praise than He did, and to will nothing, know nothing, and seek nothing, but what the Spirit of God and Christ knows, wills and seeks in him.

Here and here alone lies the Christian's full and certain power of overcoming self, the devil and the world. But Christians seeking and turning to anything else, except to be led and inspired by the one Spirit of God and Christ, will bring forth a Christendom, that in the sight of God, will have no other name than a spiritual Babylon, a spiritual Egypt and Sodom, a scarlet whore, a devouring beast and red dragon. For all these names belong to all men, however learned, and to all churches, whether greater or less, in which the spirit of this world has any share of power. This was the fall of the whole church soon after the apostolic age. It also brought the demise of all human reformations begun by ecclesiastical learning and supported by civil power and will. These signify little or nothing, but often made things worse until all these churches, dying to all they own, seek for no reforming power but from that Spirit of God. The same power which in the beginning converted sinners, publicans, harlots, Jews and heathens into a holy apostolic church, that knew they were of God, that they belonged to God by the one Spirit that he had given them and that worked in them.

"You are not in the flesh," said the apostle, "but in the Spirit." Then he adds as the only ground of this, "if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you." Surely he means if you are moved, guided and governed by what the Spirit wills, works and inspires within you. And then to show the absolute necessity of this life of God in the soul he adds, "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." That this is the state to which God has appointed and called all Christians he thus declares, "God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Abba Father" (Gal. 4:6). In this he was most surely saying that nothing in you can cry or pray to God as its Father, but the Spirit of His Son Christ that has come to life within you. This is also as true of every tendency in the soul towards God for goodness, as there is of the seed of the woman striving to bring forth a full birth of Christ in the soul [See Revelation 12:4-5].

"Lo I am always with you," says the holy Jesus, "even to the end of the world." How is he with us? Not outwardly, every illiterate man knows, and not inwardly says many a learned doctor, because a Christ within us to them is a gross fanaticism or Quakerism. How then shall the faith of the common Christian find any comfort in these words of Christ's promise unless the Spirit brings him into a remembrance and belief that Christ is in him and with him as the vine is with and in the Branch. Christ says, "Without me you can do nothing." He also said, "If any man loves me, my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Now if without Him we can do nothing, then all the love that a man can possibly have for Christ must be from the power and life of Christ in him. It is from such a love that a man is born of the Father and the Son dwelling and making their abode in him. What higher proof or fuller certainty can there be that the whole work of redemption in the soul of man is and can be nothing else but the inward, continual, immediate operation of Father, Son and Holy Spirit raising up again their own first life in the soul to which our first father [Adam] died?

After His glorification in heaven Christ says, "Behold I Stand at the door and knock." He does not say, "Behold you have Me in the scriptures." Now what is that door at which Christ at the right-hand of God in heaven knocks? Surely it is the heart to which Christ is always present. He goes on, "If any man hears my voice..." How does he hear but by the spiritual hearing of the heart and what voice but that which

is the speaking and sounding forth from Christ within him? He then adds, "...and opens the door," that is, will become a living holy nature by the Spirit born within him, "...and I will sup with him and he with Me." Behold, the last finishing work of a redeeming Jesus enters into the heart that opens to Him, bringing forth the joy, the blessing and perfection of that first life of God that Adam lost in the soul that was lost by the fall. It is here that Father sets forth a supper or feast of the heavenly Jesus with the soul and the soul with Him.

Can anyone justly call it "fanaticism" to say that this supping of the soul with this glorified Christ within it, must mean something more heavenly transacted in the soul than that last supper that he celebrated with His disciples while he was with them in flesh? That supper of bread and wine was such as a Judas could partake of and could only be an outward type or sign of what was to come; an inward and blessed nourishment with which the believing soul should be feasting when the glorified Son of God should, as a creating Spirit, enter into us, quickening and raising up His own heavenly nature and life within us.

Now this continual knocking of Christ at the door of the heart sets forth the case or nature of a continual, immediate and divine inspiration within us. It is always with us, but there must be an opening of the heart to it. Though it is always there, it is only felt and found by those who are attentive to it, depend upon and humbly wait for it. Now let anyone tell me how he can believe anything of this voice of Christ, how he can listen to it, hear or obey it, but by such a faith as keeps him habitually turned to an immediate, constant, inspiration of the Spirit of Christ within him? Or how any heathenish profane person can do more, despite to this presence and power of Christ in his own soul, than that ecclesiastic who mocks the light of Christ within and openly blasphemes that faith and hope and trust that solely relies upon being moved by the Spirit as its only power for doing what is right, good and pious, either towards God or man. Let every man whom this concerns lay it to heart.

Time and the things of time will soon have an end. He that trusts to anything but the Spirit and power of God working in his heart will be ill fitted to enter into eternity. God must be all in all in the here and now or we cannot be His hereafter. Time works only for eternity and poverty eternal must as certainly follow him who dies

fully stuffed only with human learning, just as he who dies only full of worldly riches. The folly of thinking to have any divine learning, but what the Holy Spirit teaches, or to make ourselves rich in knowledge towards God by heaps of common place learning crowded into our minds, will leave us as dreadfully cheated as that rich builder of barns in the gospel to whom it was said, "Thou fool this night shall your soul be required of you. And then whose shall all these things be?" (Luke Ch. 12). So it is with every man that treasures up a religious learning that comes not wholly from the Spirit of God.

To this inward continual attention to the continual working of the Holy Spirit within us the apostle calls us in these words, "See that you refuse not Him that speaks; for if they escaped not who refused Him that spoke on earth much more shall not we escape if we turn from Him that speaks from heaven" (Heb. 12:25). Now what is this speaking from heaven which it is so dangerous to refuse or resist? Surely they are not outward voices from heaven. Or what could the apostle's advice signify to us, unless it is such a speaking from heaven as we may and must be always either obeying or refusing? St. James says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." What devil? Surely he is not an outward creature or spirit that tempts us by an outward power. What resistance can we make to the devil but that of inwardly falling away or turning from the workings of his evil nature and spirit within us?

They therefore who call us from waiting for, depending upon and attending to the continual, secret inspirations and breathings of the Holy Spirit within us, call us to resist God in the same manner as the apostle exhorts us to resist the devil! For since God means only our spiritual good and the devil our spiritual evil, neither the one nor the other can be resisted or not resisted by us, but so far as their spiritual operations within us are either turned from or obeyed. St. James has shown us that resisting the devil is the only way to make him flee from us, that is to lose his power in us. He immediately adds how we are to behave towards God that he may not flee from us or His holy work be stopped in us. "Draw near," says he, "to God and God will draw near to you." What is this drawing near? Surely it is not by any local motion either in God or us. But the same is meant as if he had said resist not God, that is, let His Holy Spirit will within you have its full work. Keep wholly, obediently attentive to what He is and has and does within you and then God will draw near to

you. He will more and more manifest the power of His holy presence in you and make you more and more partakers of the divine nature.

Further, what a blindness is it in the before mentioned writers to charge private persons with the fanaticism of holding the necessity and certainty of continual immediate inspiration and to attack them as enemies to the established church, when everybody's eyes see that the established liturgy, teaches and requires them to believe and pray for the continual inspiration of the Spirit as that alone by which they can have the least good thought or desire? Thus, "O God, forasmuch as without you we are not able to please you. Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts." Is it possible for words more strongly to express the necessity of a continual divine inspiration? Or can inspiration be higher or more immediate in prophets and apostles than what directs what rules our hearts, not now and then, but in all things? Or can the absolute necessity of this be more fully declared than by saying that if it is not in this degree, both of height and continuance in and over our hearts, nothing that is done by us can be pleasing to God, that is, can have any union with Him?

Now the matter is not at all about the different effects or works proceeding from inspiration as whether by it a man is made a saint in himself or sent by God with a prophetic message to others. This affects not the nature and necessity of inspiration, which is just as great and just as necessary in itself to all true goodness as to all true prophecy. All scripture is of divine inspiration. But how can this be? "Because holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Christ and His apostles oblige us in like manner to hold that all holiness is by divine inspiration and that therefore there could have been no holy men of old or in any latter times, but solely for this reason because "They lived as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Again the liturgy prays thus "O God from whom all good things do come, grant that by your holy inspiration we may think those things that be good and by your merciful guiding may perform the same." [Peter asserts, "If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man ministers, let him do it as of the ability which God gives: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen."(1 Peter 4:11 KJ2000)]

Chapter 6: Human Reason Cannot Apprehend God

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, has God said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Genesis 3:1 KJ2000)

Now if in any of my writings I have ever said anything higher or further of the nature and necessity of continual divine inspiration, I refuse no censure that shall be passed upon me. But if I have from all that we know of God, of nature, and of creature, shown the utter impossibility of any kind or degree of goodness to be in us, except from the divine nature living and breathing in us, or if I have shown that in all scripture, Christ and His apostles over and over say the same thing as well as our church liturgy is daily praying according to it, what kinder thing can I say of those churchmen who accuse me of "fanaticism" than what Christ said of His blind crucifiers, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

It is to no purpose to object to all this, that these kingdoms are over-run with fanatics of all kinds and that Moravians with their several divisions and Methodists of various kinds are everywhere acting in the wildest manner under the pretense of being called and led by the Spirit. Be it so or not, that is a matter I do not meddle with, nor is the doctrine I am speaking of in the least affected by it. For what an argument would this be that fanatics of the present and former ages have made a bad use of the doctrine of being led by the Spirit of God, ergo, "He is enthusiastic or helps forward fanaticism who preaches up the doctrine of being led by the Spirit of God"? Now as absurd as this is, were any of my accusers as high in genius or as bulky in learning as the colossus was in stature, he would be at a loss to bring a stronger argument than this to prove me an enthusiast or an abettor of them.

I do not begin to doubt about the necessity, truth and perfection of gospel religion when told that whole nations and churches have under a pretense of regard to it and for the sake of it, done all the bad things that can be charged upon this or that fanatic (whether you call those bad things schism, perjury, rebellion, worldly, craft and hypocrisy), so I do not give up the necessity, the truth, and the perfection of looking wholly to the Spirit of God and Christ within me as my promised inspirer and

only worker of all that can be good in me. I do not give this up, because some age or other spiritual pride and fleshly lusts have prospered by it, or because Satan has often led people to the heights of self-glory and self-seeking under a pretense of being inspired with gospel humility and gospel self-denial.

Another charge upon me equally false and more senseless, is that I am a declared enemy to the use of reason in religion. Why? Because in all my writings I teach that reason is to be denied. I agree that I have not only taught this, but have again and again proved the absolute necessity of it, and this because Christ has made it absolutely necessary by saying, "Whosoever will come after me let him deny himself..." How can a man deny himself without denying his reason unless reason is no part of himself? Or how can a rational creature whose chief distinction from brutes is his reason be called to deny himself, any other way than by denying what is peculiar to himself? Let the matter be thus expressed: man is not to deny his reason. Well how then? Why he is only to deny himself? Can there be a greater folly of words? Their wisdom of words shows the necessity of the denying of self to be good doctrine, but boggle and cry out at the denying of reason as being quite bad.

How can a man deny himself but by denying what is the life and spirit and power of self? What makes a man a sinner other than the power and working of his natural reason? Therefore, if our natural reason is not denied, we must keep up and follow what works every sin that ever was or can be in us. We can sin nowhere or in anything but where our natural reason or understanding has its power in us. What is meant in all scripture by the flesh and its works? Is it something distinct and different from the workings of our rational and intelligent nature? No, it is our whole intelligent, rational nature that constitutes the flesh or the carnal man, because his carnality has all its evil from his intelligent nature, reason being the life and power of it. Everything that our Lord says of self is said of our natural reason. All that the scripture says of the flesh and its evil nature is said of the evil state of our natural reason, which therefore must be denied in the same manner and degree as self and flesh must be denied.

I have elsewhere shown the gross darkness and ignorance that govern what is called metaphysics in the schools, "is so great that if you were to say that God first

creates a soul out of nothing and when that is done, takes an understanding faculty and puts it into it, after that adds a will and then a memory, all as independently made as when a tailor first makes the body of a coat and then adds sleeves and pockets to it, were you to say this the schools of Descartes, Malebranche or Locke could have nothing to say against it." (Spirit of Love First Part.)

Here truth obliges me to say that scholastic divinity is as ignorant about the most fundamental truths of the gospel, as I have again and again shown, in regard to the nature of the fall of man and all the scriptures concerning the new birth. These scholars are as ignorant of the doctrine of a man's denying himself, which modern learning supposes to be possible without denying his own natural reason, an absurdity of the greatest magnitude. What is self but what a man is and has in his natural capacity? Or what is the fullness of his natural capacity, but the strength and power of his reason? How then can any man deny himself but by denying what gives self its whole nature, name and power? If man was not a rational creature, he could not be called to deny himself. He could neither need nor receive the benefit and goodness of self-denial. No man, therefore, can obey the precept of denying himself or have any benefit or goodness from it, except as far as he denies or dies to his own natural reason, because the self of man and the natural reason of man are entirely the same thing.

Our blessed Lord prayed in His agony, "Not my will but Thine be done." And if this had not been the form of His whole life, He had not lived without sin. Thus to deny our own will that God's will may be done in us is the height of our calling. As far as we keep from our own natural will, we keep from sin. But now if our own natural will, as having all sin and evil in it, is always to be denied, whatever it costs us, I want to know how our natural reason can ever escape, or how we can deny our own will and not deny that rational or intelligent power that gives the will its whole existence and continual direction? Or how there can be always a badness of our own will that is not the badness of our own natural intellectual power? Therefore, it is a truth of the utmost certainty that as much as we are obliged to deny our own natural will that the will of God may be done in us, so much are we obliged to deny our own natural reason and understanding, that our own will may not be done or followed by us. Whoever lives to his own natural reason, necessarily lives to his own natural will.

For our natural will in whatever state it is found is nothing else but our natural reason, willing this or that.

Now, as hard as this may seem to the unregenerate nature, it is even harder for a nature that is highly exalted and big with the glory of all that wits, poets, orators, critics, sophists and historians have enriched it with. As true as the fall of man is, this full denial of our own natural will and our own natural reason is the only possible way for divine knowledge, divine light and divine goodness to have any place or power of birth in us. All other religious knowledge received any other way, let it be as great as it will, is only great in vanity, emptiness and delusion. For nothing except what comes immediately from God can have anything godly in it and all that comes from self and natural reason, however outwardly colored, can have no better a nature within than self-seeking, self-esteem and fleshly wisdom. This is the exact temptation of the devil in us that Christ came into the world to destroy. If the efforts of natural reason and self-abilities are great in religious knowledge from our own particular talents, they are as Satanical as anything we carry about us. These things in a religious garment are highly contrary to the state that our Lord affirms to be absolutely necessary:

["Except you be converted and become as little children you cannot enter into the kingdom of God."](#)

As sure as this is a spiritual necessity, it is sure that no one can be converted or come under the good influence of this childlike nature until natural reason, self, and will are all equally denied. All the evil and corruption of our fallen nature consists in this. It is an awakened life of reason and will, broken off from God and so fallen into the selfish workings of its own earthly nature.

Now where this self that is broken off from God, reasons, wills and contends about the difference of scripture, words and opinions, or reasons against them, it shows that the same evil state of fallen nature, the same loss of life, the same separation from God, the same evil tempers of flesh and blood will be equally strengthened and inflamed. Hence it is that both papists and Protestants are hating, fighting, and killing one another for the sake of their different opinions. The lusts of the flesh, the

lust of the eye, and the pride of life are in the highest union and communion with one another. If you expect a zealous Protestant to be a new born creature, alive unto God, or a zealous papist to be, therefore, dead to all divine goodness, you may be said to have lived in the world without either eyes or ears. The reason for this is because bad syllogisms for transubstantiation and better syllogisms against have nothing more to do with the casting out of Satan from our souls than a bad or better taste for painting. Hence, Christendom, full of the nicest decisions about faith, grace, works merits satisfactions, heresies, schisms, etc., is also full of all those evil tempers that prevailed in the heathen world when none of these things were ever thought of.

A scholar, who pities the blindness and folly of those who live to themselves in the cares and pleasures of this vain life, thinks himself divinely employed and to have escaped the pollutions of the world. Because he is day after day dividing dissecting and mending church opinions, fixing heresies here and schisms there, he forgets all the while that a carnal self and natural reason are doing so by this learned zeal and that these are as busy and active in him as in the reasoning of the infidel or worldling. Where self is wholly denied, nothing can be called heresy, schism or wickedness, except the lack of loving God with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves. Nor can anything be called truth, life or salvation, except the Spirit nature and power of Christ living and manifesting itself in us as it did in Him.

Where self or the natural man has become great in religious learning and scholarly prowess, the more firmly will he be fixed in his religion, "whose God is their belly." "I write not to reason," says the blessed Jakob Boehme. "O fanaticism!" says the mouth of learning, and Jacob said as sober a truth as if he had said, I write not to self and one's will, because natural reason, self and will always did and always must see through the same eyes and hear through the same ears. Now let it only be supposed that Boehme and myself, when we speak of natural reason, mean only the natural man (as is over and over declared by us). Boehme writes neither from his own reason nor to the natural reason of others; he is only saying the very same thing as St. Paul when he says, "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

To fully show the perverseness of my accusers in charging me with denying the use of reason in religion, see here a word or two I have said at large and in the plainest words more than twenty-four years ago, which doctrine I have maintained in all that I have since wrote. My words are these:

"You shall see reason possessed of all that belongs to it. I will grant it to have as great a share in the good things of religion as in the good things of this life; that it can assist the soul just as it can assist the body. It has the same power and virtue in the spiritual that it has in the natural world. It can communicate to us as much of the one as of the other and is of the same use and importance in the one as in the other. Can you ask more?"

All of which I thus expand on in the following manner.

"Man, who is considered as a member of this world and has his share of the good that is in it, is a sensible and a rational creature in that he has a certain number of senses--seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling--by which he perceives the outward world in which he is placed. These can do for him or communicate to him and are sensible of what kind and degree of happiness he can have from it. "Now besides these organs of sense he has a power or faculty of reasoning upon the ideas which he has received from them.

"How is it that the good things of this world are communicated to man? How is he put in possession of them? To what part of him are they proposed? Are his senses or his reason, the means of his having so much as he has or can have from this world? "Now, you must degrade reason just as much as it is degraded by religion [in the Biblical sense] and are obliged to set it as low with respect to the things of this world, as it is set with respect to the things of the spiritual world. It is no more the means of communicating the good things of the one than of the other. And as St. Paul says, "The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God." For this reason: because they are spiritually discerned. So you must of necessity say the rational man cannot receive the things of this world [as God created it to be] for this reason, because they are sensibly received, that is by the organs of sense. Reason, therefore, has no higher office or power in the things of this world than in the things of religion. And religion does no more violence to your reason or rejects it any more

than all the good things of this world reject it. It is not seeing, it is not hearing, tasting or feeling the things of this life. It can not take the place of any one of these senses.

"Now, reason is helpless and useless in true religion. It is neither seeing, nor hearing tasting, nor feeling spiritual things. Therefore in the things of religion and in the things of this world, it has one and the same insignificance. It is the sensibility of the soul that must receive what this world can communicate to it. It is the sensibility of the soul that must receive what God can communicate. Reason may follow afterward in either case and view through its own glass what is done, but it can do no more. Reason may be here of the same service to us as when we want any of the enjoyments of this life. It may direct us how and where they are to be had. It may take away a cover from our eyes or open our window shutters when we want the light, but it can do no more towards seeing than to make way for the light to act upon our eyes. This is all of its office and ability in the things of religion. It may remove what hinders the sensibility of the soul or prevents the divine light's acting upon it, but the activity of the mind upon its own ideas or images which the senses have caused it to form, has nothing of the nature of what it speculates upon by ideas. It does not become dark when it reasons upon the cause or nature of darkness, nor does it become light when it reasons about it. Neither does it apprehend anything of the nature of religion when it is wholly taken up in descriptions and definitions of religious doctrines and virtues.

"The good of religion is like the good of food and drink to the creature that wants it. But instead of giving such a one bread and wine, you teach him to seek for relief by attending to clear ideas of the nature of bread of different ways of making it, etc., he would be left to die in the want of sustenance, just as the religion of reasoning leaves the soul to perish in the want of the good that it sought to have from religion [Jesus said, "I am the bread of life"]. As a man you may have the benefit of food much assisted by the right use of his reason, but reason itself has not the good of food in it. Man may have the good of religion, much assisted and secured to him by the right use of his reason, but reason itself has not the good of religion in it. It would be great folly and perverseness to accuse a man of being an enemy to the true use of reasoning about food, because he declares that reason is not food nor can it take the place of it. It is equal folly to accuse a man as an enemy of the use

of reasoning in religion, because he declares that reasoning is not religion, nor can take the place of it. We have no want of religion, but because we want to have more of the divine nature in us, than our fallen nature.

"But if this is the truth of the matter (and who can deny it?), we are sure that nothing can be our good in religion but what communicates to us something of God or alters our state of existence in God and makes us partakers of the divine nature. What a folly it is to put any trust in a religion of rational notions and opinions, logically deduced from scripture words? Do we not see sinners of all sorts and men under the power of every corrupt passion, equally zealous for such a religion? This is proof enough that it does not have the good of religion in it, nor any effect against to the vices of the heart. It neither kills them nor is killed by them. For as pride, hypocrisy, envy or malice do not take away from the mind its geometrical or critical abilities, so a man may be most logical in his religion of reason, words, doctrines and opinions when he has nothing of the true good of religion in him.

"But as soon as it is known and confessed that all the happiness or misery of all creatures consists in the degree they are more or less possessed of God or partake of this divine nature, then it must be equally known that nothing but God can do or be any religious good to us. God cannot do or be any religious good to us, except by the communication of Himself or the manifestation of His own life within us."

Hence we can see the great blindness both of infidels and Christians--the one in trusting to their own reason, dwelling in its own logical conclusions, and the other in trusting their own reason, dwelling in learned opinions about scripture words, phrases and doctrines built on them. "It must be known and confessed [and practiced] that God is all in all; that in Him we live and move and have our being; that we can have nothing separately or out from Him. He can give us nothing as our good except Himself. To put a religious trust in our own reason, whether confined to itself or working in doctrines about scripture words, has the same nature of idolatry that puts a religious trust in the sun, a departed saint or a graven image."

(Demonstration of the Gross Errors in the Plain Account)

Chapter 7: The Seduction of Bibliolatry

[Bibliolatry in practice is the worship of intellect by its understanding of the Bible. It replaces the leading of the abiding Holy Spirit within, which Jesus promised all who believe, with the domineering power of the human mind.]

As image-worship has often boasted of its divine power because of the wonders of zeal and devotion that have been raised in thousands and ten thousands of its followers, so it is no marvel that opinion-worship should often have and boast of the same effects. But the truth of the whole matter lies here: as the Word manifested in the flesh and become man is the One Mediator or Restorer of union between God and man, so to, seeing eyes must see that nothing, except this one mediatorial nature of Christ, essentially brought to life in our souls, can be our salvation through Christ Jesus. What saved and exalted the humanity in which Christ dwelt, must be the salvation of every human creature in the world.

The poverty of divine knowledge that comes from great scholars and great readers may be sufficiently seen from the two following judicious quotations in a late Dissertation on Fanaticism; the one is taken from Dr. Warburton's sermons the other from a pastoral letter of Mr. Stinstra, a preacher among the Mennonists [Mennonites] of Friesland.

Quoting Dr. Warburton:

"By them (that is by the writings of the New Testament) the prophetic promise of our Savior that the comforter should abide forever was eminently fulfilled. For though His ordinary influence occasionally assists the faithful, His constant abode and supreme illumination is in the sacred scriptures." (*Dissertation*, page 10.)

Dr. Warburton's doctrine is that the inspired books of the New Testament are the comforter or spirit of truth and illuminator that is meant by Christ to be always with His church. Let us therefore put the doctor's doctrine into the letter of the text which will best show how true or false it is.

Dr. Warburton takes Jesus' words, "It is expedient for you that I go away or that comforter will not come," and interprets them to say, "It is expedient for you that I leave off teaching you in words that sound only into your outward ears that you may have the same words in writing for your outward eyes to look upon; for if I do not depart from this vocal way of teaching you the comforter will not come, and you will not have the comfort of my words written on paper. But if I go away I will send written books that shall lead you into such a truth of words as you could not have while they were only spoken from my mouth; but being written on paper they will be my spiritual heavenly constant abode with you and the most supreme illustration you can receive from me."

Christ says further: "I have many things to say unto you but you cannot bear them now: howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come He shall guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you." In this the fine doctor would have Him say, "You cannot be sufficiently instructed from my words at present, but when they shall hereafter come to you in written books, they will give you a knowledge of all truth for they shall not speak of themselves, but shall receive words from me and show them unto you." Again Christ says "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs; but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs but will show you plainly of the Father." Warbuton would have us believe Jesus to mean, "That hitherto you have only had spoken proverbs from me and therefore you have not plainly known the Father; but the time comes when these spoken proverbs shall be put into writing and then you shall plainly know the Father." Again Christ adds, "You now therefore have sorrow but I will see you again and your hearts shall rejoice and your joy no man taketh from you." This he would twist to say, "You are now troubled at my personal departure from you, but some written books shall be how I will come to you again and in that visit you shall have such joy as cannot be taken from you."

Jesus also says, "If any man loves me my Father will love him and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." According to the doctor's theology certain books of scripture will come to him and make their abode with him; for he expressly confines the constant abode and supreme illumination of God to the Holy Scriptures. Therefore (horrible to say) God's inward presence, His operating power

of life and light in our souls, His dwelling in us and we in Him is something of a lower nature that only may occasionally happen and has less of God in it than the dead letter of scripture that alone is His constant abode and supreme illumination. Oh the miserable fruits of a paradoxical genius!

Christ from heaven says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open unto me I will come into him and sup with him." This is His true eminent fulfilling of His prophetic promise of being a Comforter and Spirit of Truth to His church until the end of the world. But according to the doctor, we are to understand that not the heavenly Christ but the New Testament continually stands and knocks at the door wanting to enter into the heart and sup with it. This is no better than believing that when Christ calls Himself alpha and omega, He means not Himself but the New Testament. Again Jesus said, "I am the vine you are the branches; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine no more can you except you abide in me; for without me you can do nothing." Now, according to the doctor's comment, the truth of all these words of Christ was only temporary and could be no longer true after the books of the New Testament were written. Everything Christ has affirmed of Himself of the certainty and necessity of His life and power in those who believed, ended in Christ and passed over to the written words of the New Testament, and they are the true vine and we its branches, that without which we can do nothing.

Thus it must be if, as the doctor affirms, the writings of the New Testament are the constant abode and supreme illumination of God in man. Now, as absurd and even blasphemous as this interpretation of the foregoing text is, it must be evident to every reader that it is all the doctor's own; for the letter of scripture is made here to claim that divinity [of Christ] to itself that the doctor has openly affirmed to be true of it.

"Rabbi," says Nicodemus to Christ, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God." What was here truly said of Christ in the flesh is the very truth that must be said of the scripture teaching in ink and paper; it is a teacher come from God and therefore fully to be believed, highly revered, and strictly followed. But as Christ's teaching in the flesh was only preparatory to His future vital teaching by the

Spirit, so the teaching of scripture by words written with ink and paper is only preparatory or introductory to all that inward essential teaching of God by His Spirit that is truth within us. Every other opinion of the holy scripture, except that of an outward teacher and guide to God's inward teaching and illumination in our souls, is making an idol-god of it. I say an idol-god, for to those who rest in it as the constant abode and supreme illumination of God with them, it can be nothing else. Nothing of divine faith, love, hope or goodness can have the least birth or place in us, but by divine inspiration, and so they who think these virtues may be sufficiently raised in us by the letter of scripture make the letter of scripture their inspiring god.

The apostles preached and wrote to the people by divine inspiration. But what do they say of their inspired doctrine and teachings? What virtue and power was there in them? Do they say that their words and teachings were the very promised Comforter, the Spirit of Truth or the true abode and supreme illumination of God in the souls of men? Far from such a blasphemous thought, these inspired men affirm the opposite to be true and compare all their teachings and instructions to dead works of bare planting and watering; works which must continue to be dead until life comes into them from another and a much Higher Power. "I have planted," says St. Paul. "Apollos has watered, but God gave the increase." Then further, to show that this planting and watering that was the highest work that an inspired apostle could do and that it was in itself to be considered as a lifeless, powerless thing he adds, "So then neither is he that plants is anything, nor he that waters, but it is God that gives the increase."

If this must be said of everything the inspired apostles taught in outward words, that it was nothing in itself, was without power, without life and only a preparation towards life like planting and watering, must not the same be said of their inspired teachings when left behind them in written form? What else are the apostolic scriptures, but those very instructions and teachings put into writing that they affirmed to be nothing more than bare planting and watering, quite powerless in themselves until the living Spirit of God worked with them? Will anyone say that what Paul, Peter, John, etc. spoke by inspiration from their own mouths was indeed bare planting and watering in order to be capable of receiving life from God? How could it be that when these apostolic teachings and instructions were written on

paper, they were raised out of their first inability, got the nature of God Himself, became spirit and life and might be called the great quickening power of God? Or as the doctor equates them, to be the constant abode and supreme illumination of His Spirit with us?

It would be great folly and perverseness to charge me here with slighting or lessening the true value, use and importance of the inspired apostolic scriptures, for if the charge was just, it must lie against Paul and not against me. I say nothing of them except what he says and in his own express words, viz., that all their labor of preaching, and instructing and writing by divine inspiration had in themselves no other nature, use or power than that of planting and watering that could not bare fruit until a higher power than was in them gave life and growth to what they planted and watered.

I exceedingly love and highly reverence the divine authority of the sacred writings of the apostles and evangelists. I would gladly persuade everyone to be as deeply affected with them and pay as profound a regard to them as they would to an Elijah, a John Baptist or a Paul whom they knew to be immediately sent from heaven with God's message to them. I reverence them as a literal truth of and from God as much as the greatest heavenly blessing that can be outwardly bestowed upon us. I reverence them as doing, or fitted to do, all the good amongst Christians now that the apostles did in their day, and as of the same use and benefit to the church of every age as their planting and watering was to the first.

If this is not enough regard for the holy messengers of God, if anyone is so learnedly wise as to affirm that though Paul's epistles, while he was alive, were indeed only bare planting and watering, but the same epistles being published after his death got another nature and became full of divine and living power, such a one has no right to laugh (as the doctor does) at the silly Mohammedan who believes the Koran to be uncreated. For wherever there is divine efficacy there must be an uncreated power. If, as the doctor says, the scriptures of the New Testament are the only constant abode and supreme illumination of the Spirit of God with us, all that is said of the eternal Spirit of God, of the uncreated light and might, ought to be

said of them--that they are the Word that was God, was with God and they are our true Immanuel or God within us.

I shall now only add this friendly hint to the doctor that he has a remedy at hand. His own sermon tells how he may be delivered from grossly mistaking the spirit of the gospel as well as the Law of Moses. St. Paul (says the doctor) "had a quick and lively imagination and an extensive and intimate acquaintance with those masters in moral painting the classic writers, all which he proudly sacrificed to the glory of the everlasting gospel." (Sermons Vol i. page 229)

Now if the doctor did--though it was only from humility--what he says the apostle did proudly, such humility might be as great a good to him as that pride was to the apostle. Indeed one would have thought that as soon as the doctor discovered these writers to be only great masters in moral painting, it should have had the same effect upon him as if he had found them great masters in delusion. For where there is moral painting, there is moral delusion. And the spirit, the life, the purity and divine simplicity of gospel truth is more lost and destroyed by moral paintings, whether in books or pulpits, than by any material colorings put upon images of wood or clay to excite spiritual devotion in churches. Again, if the everlasting gospel is now as glorious a thing as it was in St. Paul's days, if the highest, most accomplished classic knowledge is so unsuitable to the light and Spirit of the gospel that it is fit for nothing but to be cast away, or as the doctor says, "to be all sacrificed to the glory of the gospel," how wonderful is it that this should never come into his head from the beginning to the end of his three long Legation-volumes? Perhaps he should come piping hot with fresh and fresh classic beauties found out by himself in a Shakespeare, a Pope etc. to preach from the pulpit the divine wisdom of a loss and dung that by so doing he might win Christ and be found in Him!

Let it be supposed that our Lord was to come again for a while in the flesh and that His coming was for this end--to do for the Christian world, cumbered with much learning, what He did to poor Martha, who was cumbered with too much serving, and thereby neglected that good part that Mary had chosen. Must we suppose that the doctor would hasten to meet Him with his sacred alliances, his bundles of pagan

trash and hieroglyphic profundities, as his full proof that Mary's good part, that shall never be taken from her, had been chosen for himself and all his readers? One might think that the pope would come richly laden with his blessed images, his heavenly decrees and his divine bulls as infallible proofs of his being born again from above and solely devoted to the one thing needful.

Let the doctor figure for himself the gaudy pageantry of a divine high mass in a Rome-ish cathedral. Let him wonder at that flagrant daring contrariness that it has to that first gospel-church of Christ, viz., "where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." Would he not be still more full of wonder if he should hear the pope declaring that all this heathenish show of invented fopperies was his projected defense of that first church of Christ? But if the doctor would see a Protestant wonder, as full and as great, he need only look at his own theatrical parading show of heathen mysteries and heathenish learning set forth in highest pomp. To what end? To bring forth what he calls (as the pope above) his projected defense of Christianity.

O vainest of all vain projects! For what is Christianity but what Christ was while on earth? What can it be but what it is and has from Him? He is a king who has all power in heaven and on earth and His kingdom, like Himself, is not of this world. Away then with the projects of popish pomp and pagan literature to support them. They are as wise contrivances as the high tower of Babel to defend it against the gates of hell. I come now to the quotation from the pastoral letter of Mr. Stinstra. "A judicious writer," says the Dissertation, "observes that sound understanding and reason are, that on which and by which, God principally operates when he finds it proper to assist our weakness by His Spirit." (Dissertation page 73)

I cannot more illustrate the sense or extol the judgment both of the author and quoter of this striking passage than by the following words, "A judicious naturalist observes that sound and strong lungs are that on which, and by which, the air or spirit of this world principally operates when he finds it proper to assist the weakness of our lungs by his breathing into them." Now if any right minded man should happen to find his heart edified or his understanding enlightened by the above passage on divine inspiration, he will be much pleased at my assuring him

that the pastoral letter of Mr. Stinstra and the Dissertation on Fanaticism by Mr. Green are from the beginning to the end, full of proof as to the truth I bring forth.

These two instances are proof enough that as soon as any man trusts to natural abilities, skill in languages and commonplace learning as the true means of entering into the kingdom of God, a kingdom that is nothing else but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, he gives himself up to certain delusion and can escape no error that is popular or that suits his state and situation in the learned religious world. He has sold his birth-right in the gospel state of divine illumination to make a figure and noise with the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals of the natural man.

Chapter 8: The Wisdom of This World

From where is it that we see genius and natural abilities to be equally pleased with and equally contending for as the errors and absurdities of every system of religion under which they are educated? It is because genius and natural abilities are just the same things and must have the same nature now as they had in the ancient schools of the peripatetic, academic, stoic and atheistic philosophers.

"The temptation of honor which the academic exercise of wit," as Dr. W. says, "was supposed to bring to its professor," (Divine Legation of Moses Book I. page 33), it still has its power among church disputants. Nor can it possibly ever be otherwise until parts and genius etc., do as the blind, the deaf, the dumb and lepers formerly did--go to be healed of their natural disorders by the inspiration of that oracle who said, "I am the light of the world he that follows me walks not in darkness." "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Well, therefore, might St. Paul say, "I have determined to know nothing among you but Christ and Him crucified." Had it not been for this determination, he would never have known what he then knew when he said, "The life that I now live is not mine but Christ's that lives in me." Did the apostle here overstretch the matter? Was it a spirit of fanaticism and not of Christ living in him that made this declaration? Was

he making way for ignorance and darkness to extinguish the Light that came down from heaven that was the Light of the world? Did he here undermine the true ground and rock on which the church of Christ was to stand and prevail against the gates of hell? Did he by setting up this knowledge as the best and only knowledge that an apostle need to have, break down the fences of Christ's vineyard, rob the church of all its strong holds, leave it defenseless without a pale and a ready prey to infidels? Who can say this except the "spirit of anti-Christ that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?"

For Christ's intending nothing, knowing nothing and willing nothing except purely and solely the whole course of His crucifying process was the whole truth of His being come in the flesh. His was doing the whole will of Him that sent Him and He was overcoming the world, death and hell. So he that embraces this process as Christ embraces it, who is wholly given up to it as Christ was, has the will of Christ and the mind of Christ and therefore may well desire to know nothing else. To this man alone are the world, death and hell overcome in him as they were in Christ. To him alone is Christ become the resurrection and the life; and he that knows this, knows with St. Paul that all other knowledge may and will be cast away as dung. Now if St. Paul, having rejected all other knowledge but that of a crucified Savior, which to the Jew was a stumbling-block and to the Greek foolishness, had afterwards wrote three such Legation-volumes as the doctor has done for the nourishment of Christ's sheep (who can have no life in them but by eating the true bread that came down from heaven), must they not have been called Paul's full recantation of all that he had taught about a Christ crucified?

The other instance of delusion from book learning relates to Mr. Green, who wanting to write on divine inspiration, runs from book to book from country to country to pick up reports, wherever he could find them, concerning divine inspiration from this and that judicious author that so he might be sure of compiling a judicious dissertation on the subject. All which he might have known to be mere delusion and lost labor had he but remembered or regarded any one single saying either of Christ or His apostles concerning the Holy Spirit and His operations. The fact that not a word is said by them, fully shows that all knowledge or perception of

the Spirit is nothing else but the enjoyment of the Spirit. No man can know more of Him than what the Spirit Himself is and does and manifests of His power in man.

"The things of God," says St. Paul, "knows no man but the Spirit of God." Is not this decisive upon the matter? Is not this proof enough that nothing in man but the Spirit of God in him can know what the Spirit's work in man is and does? The fruits of the Spirit so often mentioned in scripture are not things different or separate from the Spirit; and if the Spirit is not always working in us, His fruits must be as absent from us as he is. St. John says, "Hereby we know that he abides in us by the Spirit which he has given us," a demonstration that the Spirit can make Himself known to us no other way than by His dwelling and working in us. St. James says, "Every good and perfect gift cometh from above," but now does not he in reality deny he who seeks for the highest gift of knowledge from below, from the poor contrivance of a commonplace book?

Again "if any man lacks wisdom let him ask it of God." St. James does not say let him go ask Peter or Paul or John because he knew that divine wisdom was nothing else but divine inspiration. But Mr. Green has got together his ingenious, eminent writers, his excellent learned, judicious authors, his cool, rational- morality doctors (a set of men whose glorious names we read no more of in the gospel than of the profound Aristotle or the divine Cicero) and these are to do for him what the whole college of apostles could do for nobody. Now this doctrine that nothing but the Spirit can know the things that be of God, and that the enjoyment of the Spirit is all the knowledge that we can have of Him is a truth taught us not only by all scripture but by the whole nature of things.

Everything that can be seen, known, heard felt, etc., must be manifested by itself and not by another. It is not possible for anything but light to manifest light nor for anything but darkness to make darkness known. This is more possible than for anything, but divine inspiration must make divine inspiration to be known. Hence, there is a degree of delusion still higher to be noted in such writers as Mr. Green, for his collection of ingenious, eminent, rational authors of whom he asks counsel concerning the necessity or certainty of the immediate inspiration of the Spirit, are such as deny it and write against it.

Therefore, the proceeding is just as wise as if a man was to consult some ingenious and eminent atheists about the truth and certainty of God's immediate continual providence, or to ask a few selected Deists how or what he was to believe of the nature and power of gospel faith. Now, there are the Holy Spirit's own operations and there are reports about them. The only true reports are those that are made by inspired persons and if there were no such persons, there could be no true reports of the matter. Therefore, to consult uninspired persons and such as deny and reproach the pretense to inspiration to be rightly instructed about the truth of immediate continual divine inspiration, is a degree of blindness greater than can be charged upon the old Jewish scribes and Pharisees.

Chapter 9: We Must be Born of and Live by the Spirit of God

The reports that are to be acknowledged as true concerning the Holy Spirit and His operations are those that are recorded in scripture.

The scriptures are an infallible history or relation of what the Holy Spirit is and does and works in true believers. They are also an infallible direction as to how we are to seek, wait and trust in His good power over us. But then the scriptures themselves, though thus true and infallible in these reports and instructions about the Holy Spirit, can go no further than to be a true history. They cannot give to the reader the possession, the sensibility and enjoyment of what they relate. This is plain not only from the nature of a written history or instruction, but from the express words of our Lord saying, "Except a man be born again of the Spirit he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God." Therefore, the new birth from above or of the Spirit is alone what gives true knowledge and perception of the kingdom of God. History may relate truths enough about it, but the kingdom of God, being nothing else but the power and presence of God dwelling and ruling in our souls, can only manifest itself in man in nothing but to the new birth. Everything else in man is deaf, dumb and blind to the kingdom of God. But when what died in Adam is made alive again by the quickening Spirit from above, this is the birth that came at first from God and

made man a partaker of the divine nature, knowing and enjoying the kingdom of God.

"I am the way the truth and the life," says Christ. This record of scripture is true, but what a delusion for a man to think that he knows and finds this to be true and that Christ is all this benefit and blessing to him, because he assents, consents and contends for the truth of those words. This is impossible. The new birth is here again the only power of entrance. Everything else knocks at the door in vain. "I know you not," says Christ to everything but the new birth. "I am the way the truth and the life." This tells us neither more nor less than if Christ had said, "I am the kingdom of God into which nothing can enter but what is born of the Spirit."

Here again we see in the highest degree of certainty the absolute necessity of immediate divine inspiration through every part of the Christian life. For if a birth of the Spirit alone that can enter into or receive the kingdom of God come amongst men, that birth alone can find Christ to be the way, the truth and the life, then a continual life or breathing of the Spirit in us must be as necessary as the first birth of the Spirit. For a birth of the Spirit is only to make a beginning of a life of the Spirit. Birth only happens to bring forth life. If therefore the life of the Spirit continues not, the birth is lost and the cessation of its breathing in us is nothing else but death again to the kingdom of God, that is, to everything that is or can be godly. Therefore, the immediate, continual inspiration of the Spirit as the only possible power and preservation of a godly life, stands upon the same ground and is as absolutely necessary to salvation as the new birth.

Take away this power and working life of the Spirit from being the one life of all that is done in the church and then, though it be ever so outwardly glorious in its extent or ever so full of learned members, it can be nothing else in the sight of God, but the wise Greeks and the carnal Jews becoming a body of water-baptized Christians. For no one can be in a better state than this. The wisdom of the Greek and the carnality of the Jew must have the whole government of him until he is born of and led by the Spirit of God. This Spirit life alone is the kingdom of God and everything else is the kingdom of this world in which Satan is declared to be the prince. Poor miserable man that strives with all the sophistry of human wit to be delivered from

the immediate, continual operation and governance of the Spirit of God, not considering that where God is not, there is the devil and where the Spirit rules not, all that remains is the work of the flesh, even if nothing be talked about but spiritual and Christian matters. I say talked about, for the best ability of the natural man can go no further than talk and notions and opinions about scripture words and facts. In these he may be a great critic, an acute logician, a powerful orator and know everything of scripture, except the Spirit and the truth.

It is impossible to be denied that all scripture assures us that the things of the Spirit of God are and must to the end of the world be foolishness to the natural man. It is to be lamented that from one end of learned Christendom to the other, nothing is thought of as the true and proper means of attaining divine knowledge except what every natural, selfish, proud, envious, false vain-glorious, worldly man can do. Where is that divinity student who thinks, or was ever taught to think, of partaking of the light of the gospel by any other way than by doing with the scriptures what he does with pagan writers, whether poets, orators or comedians, viz., exercise his logic, rhetoric and critical skill in descanting upon them? This done, he is thought by himself and often by others to have a sufficiency of divine apostolic knowledge. What wonder therefore if it should sometimes happen that the very same vain, corrupt, puffing literature that raises one man to be a poet-laureate should set another in a divinity chair?

How is it that the logical, critical, learned Deist comes by his infidelity? By the same help of the same good powers of the natural man as many a learned Christian comes to know embrace and contend for the faith of the gospel? Drop the power and reality of divine inspiration, and then all is dropped that can set the believer above or give him any godly difference from the infidel. The Christian's faith has no goodness in it, but that it comes from above, born of the Spirit. Likewise, the Deist's infidelity has no badness in it, except that it comes from below, is born of the will of the flesh and the will of men, and rejects the necessity of being born again out of the corruption of fallen nature. The Christian therefore that rejects, reproaches and writes against the necessity of immediate divine inspiration, pleads the whole cause of infidelity. He confirms the ground on which it stands and has nothing to prove the

goodness of his own Christianity, but what equally proves to the Deist the goodness of his infidelity.

Without the new birth and immediate continual divine inspiration, the difference between the Christian and the infidel is quite lost. Whether the uninspired unregenerate son of Adam is in the church or out of the church, he is still that child of this world, a fallen Adam and a mere natural man to whom the things of the Spirit of God are and must be foolishness. A full proof of this no more need be seen, than what you cannot help seeing. The same shining virtues and the same glaring vices are common to them both. For if the Christian is not made such by the Spirit of God, continually inspiring and working in him, then he has only a Christianity of his own making. He can only have such appearances of virtues and will and reality of vices as his natural self wants to have. Even if he renounces what is called natural religion as much as he will, unless he is a new born and divinely inspired Christian, he must live and die in all his natural corruption.

Through all scripture nothing else is aimed at or intended for man as his Christianity, but the divine life, nor anything hinted at as having the least power to raise or beget it, but the holy, life-giving Spirit of God. How gross therefore is that blindness, that someone reading the gospel and the history of gospel Christians cannot see these two fundamental truths; (1) "That nothing is divine knowledge in man but the divine life" and (2) "That the divine life is nothing else but a birth of the divine nature within him."

If this truth is lost or given up, vain learning and a worldly spirit are in possession of the gospel-book, setting up kingdoms of strife and division. For what end? Why? That the unity of the church may not be lost. Multiply systems of empty notions and opinions for what? Why is it that words and forms may do for the church today, which to the first church of Christ's own forming could only be done by being born of the Spirit?

Hence the scripture-scholar is looked upon as having divine knowledge of its matters when he is as ready at chapter and verse as the critic is at every page of Cicero. And nothing is looked upon as defective in divinity knowledge, but such

supposed mistakes of the genius of the Hebrew or Greek letter, just as the sublime students of the immortal words of a Milton or a Shakespeare charge as blunders upon one another.

Now to call such scripture skill divine knowledge is just as solid and judicious as if a man was said or thought to know what St. John knew, because he could say his whole gospel and epistles by heart without missing a word of them. A literal knowledge of scripture is like having all scripture in the memory and is so far from being a divine perception of the things spoken, that the most vicious, wicked scholar in the world may attain to the highest perfection in it. Divine knowledge and wickedness of life are so inconsistent that they are mutual death and destruction to one another. Where the one is alive, the other must be dead. Judas Iscariot knew Jesus Christ and all that he said and did up to His crucifixion. He knew what it was to be at the Lord's table and to partake of His supper of bread and wine. It may be said with much more truth that he knew nothing of all this and had no better knowledge of it than Pontius Pilate had.

Now, all knowledge of Christ except what is from divine inspiration or the new birth is as poor and profitless as Judas' knowledge was. It may say to Christ as he did, "Hail master" [and betray Him with a kiss], but no one can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit. This empty letter-learned knowledge, which the natural man can as easily have of the sacred scripture and religious matters as of any other books or human affairs, being taken for divine knowledge, has spread such darkness and delusion all over Christendom as may be reckoned as no less than a general apostasy from the gospel state of divine illumination. For the gospel state is in its whole nature nothing, but one light and that is the Lamb of God. It has only one life and that is by the Spirit of God. Whatever is not of and from this Light and governed by this Spirit, call it by what high name you will, is no more a part of the gospel state, nor will have a better end than what enters into the mouth and corrupts in the belly.

That one Light and Spirit that was only One from all eternity, before angels or any heavenly beings were created, must to all eternity be that one and only Light and Spirit by which angels or men can ever have any union or communion with God.

Every other light is the same light that gives beasts their sense and subtlety. Every other spirit is what gives to flesh and blood all its lusts and appetites. Nothing else but the loss of the one Light and Spirit of God turned an order of angels into devils. Nothing but the loss of that same Light and Spirit took from the divine Adam his first crown of paradisiacal glory, stripped him more naked than the beasts and left him a prey to devils and in the jaws of eternal death.

What therefore can have the least share of power towards man's redemption, but the light and Spirit of God, making again a birth of themselves in him as they did in his first glorious creation? Or what can possibly begin or bring forth this return of his first lost birth, but solely what is done by this eternal Light and Spirit. Hence, the gospel state is affirmed by our Lord to be a kingdom of heaven at hand or come among men, because it has the nature of no worldly thing or creaturely power. It serves no worldly ends, can be helped by no worldly power, receives nothing from man but man's full denial of himself, stands upon nothing that is finite or transitory, has no existence except the working power of God that created and upholds heaven and earth, and is a kingdom of God become man and a kingdom of men united to God, through a continual immediate divine illumination. What scripture of the New Testament can you read that does not prove this to be the gospel state, a kingdom of God into which none can enter but by being born of the Spirit? None can continue to be alive in it except by being led by the Spirit in which not a thought or desire or action can be allowed to have any part in it, but as it is a fruit of the Spirit?

"Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What is God's kingdom in heaven, but the manifestation of what God is and what he does in His heavenly creatures? How is His will done there, but by His Holy Spirit which is the life, the power and mover of all that live in it? We daily read this prayer, we extol it under the name of the Lord's Prayer, and then (for the sake of orthodoxy) preach and write against all that is prayed for in it. Nothing but a continual, essential, immediate, divine illumination can do what we pray may be done. For where can God's kingdom be come, but where every other power except His is at an end and driven out of it? How can only His will be done, but where the Spirit that wills in God, wills in the creature as well?

Chapter 10: The Salvation of Atheist Christendom

What part do literature and the natural abilities of man have in the resurrection of the dead? All that is to be done here is nothing because that purpose must be done by resurrection life.

Therefore, what gave eyes to the blind, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils and raised the dead, that alone can and must do all that is to be done in this gospel kingdom of God. For every smallest work or fruit of grace must be as solely done by God as was the greatest miracle in nature, because every work of grace is the same overcoming of nature as when the dead are raised to life. Vain man may be thought to be something and have great power and ability in this kingdom of grace, because he has happened to be made a scholar, has run through all languages and histories, has been long exercised in conjectures and criticisms and has his head as full of all theological notions, as poetical and philosophical as a dictionary full of all sorts of words.

Let this simple question decide the whole matter here: has this great scholar any more power of saying to this mountain, "Be thou removed hence and cast into the sea," than the illiterate Christian has? If not, he is just as weak as powerless and little in the kingdom of God. But if the illiterate man's faith should happen to be nearer to the size of a grain of mustard seed than that of the prodigious scholar, the illiterate Christian stands much above him in the kingdom of God.

Look, now, at the present state of Christendom, glorying in the light of Greek and Roman learning (which an age or two ago broke forth) as a light that has helped the gospel to shine with a luster that it scarce ever had before. Look at this and you will see the fall of the present day church from its first gospel state, much like the fall of the first divine man from the glory of paradisiacal innocence and heavenly purity into an earthly state and bestial life of worldly craft and serpentine subtlety.

In the first gospel church, heathen light had no other name than heathen darkness and the wisdom of words was no more sought after than friendship of the world that is enmity with God. In that new-born church the tree of life, which grew in the midst

of paradise, took root and grew up again. In the present church the tree of life is hissed at as the visionary food of deluded fanatics and the tree of death, called the tree of knowledge of good and evil, has the eyes and hearts of priest and people. It is thought to do as much good to Christians as it did evil to the first inhabitants of paradise. This tree, that brought death and corruption into human nature at first, is now called a "tree of light" and is well watered day and night with every corrupt stream, however distant or muddy with earth, that can be drawn to it.

Indeed, the simplicity of both the gospel letter and doctrine has the shine and polish of classic literature laid thick upon it. Cicero is in the pulpit, Aristotle writes Christian ethics and Euclid demonstrates infidelity and absurdity to be the same thing. Greece had but one Longinus and Rome had but one Quintilian, but in our present church they are as common as patriots in the state.

But now what follows from this new risen light? Aristotle's atheism, Cicero's height of pride and depth of dissimulation, and every refined or gross species of Greek and Roman vices are as glaring in this new enlightened Christian church as ever they were in old pagan Greece or Rome. Would you try to find a gospel-Christian in all this midday glory of learning, you may light a candle as the philosopher did in the midday sun to find an honest man.

And indeed, if we consider the nature of our salvation, either with respect to what alone can save us or from what we are to be saved, it will be plain that the wit and elegance of classic literature brought into a Christian church to make the doctrines of the cross have a better salvation-effect upon fallen man, is like calling in balls and masquerades to make the lent-penitence go deeper into the heart and more effectually drive all levity and impurity out of it. How poorly was the gospel at first preached if the wisdom of words, the gifts of natural wit and imagination had been its genuine helps [See 1 Corinthians 2:1-8]? But alas, the wisdom, gifts, wit and imaginations of man and the inspiration and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit stand in the same contrariness to one another as self-gratification and self-denial. To know the truth of gospel salvation is to know that man's natural wisdom is to be equally sacrificed with his natural folly, for they are one and the same thing, only called sometimes by one name and sometimes by the other.

His intellectual faculties are by the fall in a much worse state than his natural animal appetites and are in need of a much greater self-denial. And when one's own will, own understanding and own imagination have their natural strength indulged and gratified and are made seemingly rich and honorable with the treasures acquired from a study of the Belles Lettres, they will help poor fallen man to be like-minded with Christ just as much as the art of cookery, well and daily studied, will help a professor of the gospel to the spirit and practice of Christian abstinence. All these things being true, then only these two things need to be known: (1) that our salvation consists wholly in being saved from ourselves or what we are by nature, and (2) that in the whole nature of things nothing could be this salvation or Savior to us except such an humility of God manifested in human nature that is beyond all expression.

Thus, the first unalterable term of this Savior to fallen man is this "Except a man denies himself, forsakes all that he has and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." And to show that this is but the beginning ground of man's salvation, the Savior adds, "Learn of me for I am meek and lowly of heart." What a Light is here for those that can bear or love the Light! Self is the whole evil of fallen nature. Self-denial is our capacity of being saved and humility is our savior. This is every man's short lesson of life and he that has well learned it is scholar enough and has all the benefit of a most finished education. When old Adam with all his ignorance is cast out of him and Christ's humility is learned, then he has the very mind of Christ and what brings him forth as a son of God.

Who then can wonder at that bulk of libraries that have taken the place of this short lesson of the gospel or at that number of champion disputants who from age to age have been all in arms to support and defend a set of opinions, doctrines and practices that may be most cordially embraced without the least degree of self-denial and most firmly held fast without getting the least degree of humility by it?

What a grossness of ignorance, both of man and his Savior--to run to Greek and Roman schools to learn how to put off Adam and to put on Christ, or to drink at the fountains of pagan poets and orators in order to drink of the cup that Christ drank of? What can come of all this, except what is already too much come of a

Ciceronian- gospeller instead of a gospel- penitent? Instead of the depth the truth and spirit of the humble publican seeking to regain paradise, only by a broken heart, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," we have the high-bred classic will, alive in daily transports at the enormous sublime of a Milton flying born up on the un-feathered wings of high sounding words (See Milton's *Enormous Bliss*).

This will be more or less the case with all the salvation- doctrines of Christ while under classical acquisition and administration of scholars. Those divine truths that are no further good and redeeming, except as they are spirit and life in us, that can have no entrance or birth, except in the death of self in a broken and contrite heart, will serve only to help classic painters lavish out their colors on their own paper monuments of lifeless virtues.

Chapter 11: The Pride of Babel vs. Life

How did the heathens come by their pride and vanity and their inability to come under the humility of the cross? It was because the natural man shined in the false glory of his own cultivated abilities.

Has wit, intellect and an elegant taste any more good or redeeming virtue in Christians than they had in heathens? Some say that self-will and a bit of pride are good and have a redeeming virtue in a Christian, but are bad and destructive in a heathen. I say, "a redeeming virtue in it," because nothing is or can be a religious good to fallen man, but what has a redeeming virtue in it or is, so far as it goes, a true renewal of the divine life in the soul. Therefore, said our only redeemer, "Without me you can do nothing." Anything that is not His immediate work in us is at best a mere nothing with respect to the good of our redemption. A tower of Babel may to its builders' eyes seem to hide its head in the clouds, but as to its reaching of heaven it is no nearer to that than the earth it stands on. It is thus with all the buildings of man's wisdom and natural abilities in the things of salvation. He may take the logic of Aristotle, add to that the rhetoric of Tully and then ascend as high as he can on the ladder of poetic imagination, but no more is done to the reviving the lost life of God in his soul than by a tower of brick and mortar to reach heaven.

Self is the root, the tree and the branches of all the evils of our fallen state. We are without God because we are in the life of self. Self-love, self-esteem and self-seeking are the very essence and life of pride and the devil, the first father of pride, is never absent from them nor without power in them. To die to these essential properties of self is to make the devil depart from us. But as soon as we have self-abilities or have a share in our good works, the satanic spirit of pride is in union with us and we are working for the maintenance of self-love, self-esteem and self-seeking.

All the vices of fallen angels and men have their birth and power in the pride of self or, I may better say, in the atheism and idolatry of self, for self is both atheist and idolater. It is atheist because it has rejected God. It is an idolater because it is its own idol. On the other hand, all the virtues of the heavenly life are the virtues of humility. There is not a praise, a joy, or a glory in heaven without the presence of humility. It is humility alone that bridges the impassable gulf between heaven and hell. There are no angels without heavenly humility, nor devils in hell without the fire of pride, for it is their whole fire of life.

What is then, or in what lies, the great struggle for eternal life? It all lies in the strife between pride and humility. All other things, be they what they will, are only under workmen to them. Pride and humility are the two master powers and the two kingdoms of strife for the eternal possession of man.

And here it is to be observed that every son of Adam is in the service of pride and self, be he doing what he will, until a humility that comes solely from heaven has been his redeemer. Until then, all that he wills is only done by the right hand, so that the left hand may know it. And he that thinks it possible for the natural man to get a better humility than this from his own right reason (as it is often miscalled), refined by education, shows himself quite ignorant of this one, most plain and capital truth of the gospel, namely that there never was, nor ever will be, but one humility in the whole world and that is the one humility of Christ, which never any man since the fall of Adam had the least degree of, except from Christ. Humility is one in the same sense and truth as Christ is one, the mediator is one and redemption is one. There are not two Lambs of God that take away the sins of the

world. But if there was any humility besides that of Christ, there would be something else besides Him that could take away the sins of the world.

"All that came before me," says Christ, "were thieves and robbers." We are used to confining this statement to persons, but the same is as true of every virtue, whether it has the name of humility, charity, piety or anything else. If it comes before Christ, however good it may pretend to be, it is but a cheat, a thief and a robber under the name of godly virtue. Pride and self have the all of man until man has his all from Christ. He therefore only fights the good fight that the self-idolatrous nature which he has from Adam may be brought to death by the supernatural humility of Christ brought to life in him.

The Anti-Christ Spirit

Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be plain that they all are not of us. (1 John 2:18-19 RSVA)

The enemies to man's rising out of the fall of Adam through the Spirit and power of Christ are many. But the one great dragon- enemy called anti-Christ is self-exaltation. This is his birth, his pomp, his power and his throne [See Isaiah 14:11-15]. When self-exaltation ceases, the last enemy is destroyed and all that came from the pride and death of Adam is swallowed up in victory.

There has been much sharp looking out to see where and what anti-Christ is or by what marks he may be known. Some say he has been in the Christian world almost ever since the gospel times, that he was even then beginning to appear and show himself. Others say he came in with this or that pope, others that he is not come, but near at hand. Others will have it that he has been here and there but driven from one place to another by several new risen Protestant sects.

But to know with certainty where and what anti-Christ is, who is with him and who against him, you need only read this short description which Christ gives of Himself:

- 1) "I can do nothing of myself."
- 2) "I came not to do my own will."
- 3) "I seek not my own glory."
- 4) "I am meek and lowly of heart."

Now, if this is Christ, then self-ability or self-exaltation, being the highest and fullest contrariety to all this, must be alone the one great anti-Christ that opposes and withstands the whole nature and Spirit of Christ. What, therefore, has everyone so much to fear to renounce and abhor as every inward sensibility of self-exaltation and every outward work that proceeds from it? But now, what things shall a man look at to see that working of self that raises pride to its strongest life and most of all hinders the birth of the humble Jesus in his soul? Shall he call the pomps and vanities of the world the highest works of self-adoration? Shall he look at the fops and beaux and painted ladies to see the pride that has the most of anti-Christ in it? No, by no means. These are indeed marks, shameful enough of the vain foolish heart of man, but comparatively speaking they are but the skin-deep follies of the pride that the fall of man has begotten and brought forth in him.

If you are to see the deepest root and iron-strength of pride and self-adoration you must enter into the dark chamber of man's fiery soul, where the light of God (which alone gives humility and meek submission to all created spirits) is extinguished by the death that Adam died. Satan, or what is the same thing, self-exaltation, became the strong man that kept possession of the house until a stronger than he should come upon him. In this secret source of an eternal, fiery soul, glorying in the astral light of this world, a swelling kingdom of pomps and vanities is set up in the heart of man of which all outward pomps and vanities are but childish transitory playthings. The inward strong man of pride, the diabolical self, has his higher works within. He dwells in the strength of the heart and has every power and faculty of the soul, offering continual incense to him. His memory, his will, his understanding and his imagination are always at work for him and for no one else. His memory is the faithful repository of all the fine things that self has ever done. And lest anything of them should be lost or forgotten she is continually setting them before his eyes. His will, though it has all the world before it, goes after nothing except as self sends it. His understanding is ever upon the stretch for new projects to enlarge the

dominions of self, and if this fails, imagination comes in as the last and truest support of self. She makes him a king and mighty lord of castles in the air.

This is that full-born natural self that must be pulled out of the heart and totally denied or there can be no disciple of Christ. The apostate self-idolatrous nature of the old man must be put off or there can be no new creature in Christ.

Now what is it in the human soul that most of all hinders the death of this old man? What is it that above all other things strengthens and exalts the life of self and makes it the master and governor of all the powers of the heart and soul? It is the fancied riches of having a worldly part, the glitter of genius, the flights of imagination, the glory of learning and the self-conceited strength of natural reason. These are the strongholds of fallen nature-- the master-builders of pride's temple in the heart of man that act as so many priests, keeping up the daily worship of the idol-self. And here, let it be well understood, all these magnified talents of the natural man are started up through his miserable fall from the life of God in his soul. Wit, genius, learning and natural reason would never have had any more of a name among men than blindness, ignorance and sickness, had man continued as at first, a holy image of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Everything that dwelt in him then or came from him would have only spoken of God and nothing of himself and would have manifested nothing to him but the heavenly powers of the triune life of God dwelling in him. He would have no more sense or consciousness of his own wit or natural reason or any power of goodness in all that he was and did, than of his own creating power when beholding the created heavens and earth. It is his dreadful fall from the life of God in his soul that has furnished him with the substantial riches of his bestial appetites and lusts.

And when the lusts of the flesh have spent out their life, when the dark thick body of earthly flesh and blood shall be forced to let the soul go loose, all these bright talents will end with that system of fleshly lusts in which they began and what remains of man will have nothing of its own, nothing that can say I do this or I do that. All that it has or does will be either the glory of God manifested in it or the power of hell in full possession of it. The time of man's playing with parts, wit and abilities and of fancying himself to be something great and considerable in the

intellectual world, may be much shorter, but can be no longer, than he can eat and drink with the animals of this world. The time comes when fine buildings, rich settlements, acquired honors and men calling "Rabbi, Rabbi," must take their leave of him. All the stately structures that genius learning and flights of imagination have painted inwardly on his brain and outwardly on paper must bear full witness to Solomon's vanity of vanities.

Let then the high accomplished scholar reflect that he comes by his wit and parts and acute abilities just as the serpent came by his subtlety. Let him reflect that he might as well dream of acquiring angelic purity to his animal nature by multiplying new invented delights for his earthly passions and tempers as of raising his soul into divine knowledge through the well exercised powers of his natural reason and imagination. The finest intellectual power and what has the best help in it towards bringing man again into the region of divine light is that poor despised thing called simplicity. This is what stops the workings of the fallen life of nature and leaves room for God to work again in the soul according to the good pleasure of His holy will. It stands in such a waiting posture before God and in such readiness for the divine birth as the plants of the earth wait for the inflowing riches of the light and air. But the self-assuming workings of man's natural powers shut him up in himself, closely barred up against the inflowing riches of the light and Spirit of God.

Chapter 12: Wolves in Teacher's Clothing

I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:29-30 RSVA)

So it is in this fallen state of the gospel church that with these proud endowments of fallen nature, the classic scholar full fraught with pagan light and skill, comes forth to play the critic and orator with the simplicity of salvation mysteries--mysteries that mean nothing else but the inward work of the triune God in the soul of man, nor any other work there but the raising up of a dead Adam into a living Christ of God.

However, to make way for parts, criticism and language-learning, to have the full management of salvation doctrines, the well-read scholar gives out that the ancient way of knowing the things of God, taught and practiced by fishermen-apostles, is obsolete. Teaching that these humble men indeed wanted to have divine knowledge from the immediate continual operation of the Holy Spirit, but this state was only for a time until genius and learning entered into the pale of the church. In this way of thinking we behold, "the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place!" For as soon as the doctrine is set up and so far as it is received that man's natural parts and acquired learning have full right and power to sit in the divinity chair and to guide men into that truth that was once the only office and power of the Holy Spirit, it may with the greatest truth be said that the kingdom of God is entirely shut up and only a kingdom of scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites can come instead of it.

For by this doctrine the whole nature and power of gospel religion is much more denied than by setting up the infallibility of the pope. Though his claim to infallibility is false, even though he claims it from and under the Holy Spirit, but the Protestant scholar has his divinity knowledge and his power in the kingdom of truth from himself, his own logic and learned reason. Christ has nowhere instituted an infallible pope and it is fully certain that He has nowhere spoken one single word or given the least power to logic learning or the natural powers of man in His kingdom. He has never said to these men, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven," and never said to them, "go you and teach all nations," no more than He has ever said to wolves, "go you and feed my sheep."

The Kingdom of Heaven Is at Hand

Christ indeed said of Himself that according to the flesh, it is expedient for you that I go away. But where has he said of Himself according to the spirit, "It is also expedient for you that I go away, that your own natural abilities and learned reason may guide you into all truth?" This is nowhere said unless logic can prove it from these words "Without me you can do nothing," and "Lo, I am with you to the end of the world."

The first and main doctrine of Christ and His apostles was to tell the Jews, "that the kingdom of God was at hand," or was come to them. Proof enough surely that the church of the Jews was not the kingdom of God even though it was established by God's appointment and under laws of His own commanding. But why not, when it was thus set up by God? It was because it had human and worldly things in it,, consisted of carnal ordinances, and had only types, figures and shadows of a kingdom of God that was to come. Of this kingdom Christ says, "My kingdom is not of this world," and as a proof of it he adds, "if it was of this world then would my servants fight for me." He was saying that His kingdom was so different in kind and so superior in nature to this world that no sort of worldly power could either help or hinder it. But of this world into which the kingdom of God was come, the holy one of God says, "In the world you shall have tribulation, but be of good comfort. I have overcome the world." Now, how was it that Christ's victory was their victory? It was because He was in them and they in Him. "Because I live, you shall live also; in that day you shall know that I am in the Father and you in Me and I in you."

This was the kingdom of God come to them, the same kingdom of God that Adam was born into. Adam began his first glorious life when the image and likeness of the Holy Trinity had an outward glory like what broke through the body of Christ when on "Mount Tabor [where] His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light." Its almighty king says to the children of this kingdom, "When they bring you before magistrates and powers, take no thought how or what you shall answer or what you shall say unto them, for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that same hour what you ought to say. For it is not you that speaks, but the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you."

No higher or other thing is said here than in these other words, "Take no thought what you shall eat or drink or wherewithal you shall be clothed, but seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." This is the truth of the kingdom of God come unto men and this is the birthright privilege of all that are living members of it--to be delivered from their own natural spirit that they had from Adam, from the spirit and wisdom of this world and through the whole course of their lives only to say and do and be what the Spirit of their Father works in them.

If this kingdom is gone away from us [as these scholars assert], are we not left comfortless if instead of this Spirit of our Father speaking doing and working everything in us and for us, we are left again to our own natural powers, to run to every "Lo here" and "Lo there." Rather, aren't we to find a share in that kingdom of God that once was and never can be anything else, but God, the wisdom and power of God, manifested in our flesh? Had it not been as well, no, even better for us to have been still under types and figures, sacrificing bulls and goats by divine appointment, than to be brought under a religion that must be spirit and life, but then left to the jarring interests of the wisdom of the Greek and the carnality of the Jew? For where the Spirit of God is not the continual immediate governor of spiritual things, nothing better can come of it. For the truth and full proof of this, no more need be appealed to than all the libraries and churches of Christendom from many ages to this very day.

The Whore, the Dragon and the Beast

What is the difference between man's own righteousness and man's own light in religion? They are strictly the same thing,. They do one and the same work, namely keep up and strengthen every evil vanity and corruption of our fallen nature. Nothing saves a man from his own righteousness, except what saves and delivers him from his own light. The Jew that was most of all set against the gospel and unable to receive it was the one that trusted in his own righteousness. This was the rich man who found it harder to enter into the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The Christian that trusts in his own light is the very Jew that trusted in his own righteousness and all that he gets by the gospel is what the Pharisee got by the Law, namely, to be further from entering into the kingdom of God than publicans and harlots.

How is it that a beast, a scarlet whore, a horned dragon and other most horrible descriptions of diabolical power have been by the Spirit of God made descriptions of the Christian church? How is it that the Spirit describes the gospel-church as driven into a wilderness and the two faithful witnesses, Moses and Jesus, as prophesying so many ages in sackcloth and slain in the streets of spiritual Sodom and Egypt? It is because man's own natural light, man's own conceited

righteousness, his serpentine subtlety, his self-love, his sensual spirit and worldly power have seized the mysteries of salvation that came down from heaven and built them up into a kingdom of envious strife and contention for learned glory, spiritual merchandise, and worldly power. This is the beast, the whore and dragon that has governed and will govern in every private Christian and public church, until dead to all that is self, they turn to God--not to a God that they have only heard of with their ears and their fathers have told them about, but to a God of life, light and power found living and working within them as the essential life, light and power of their own lives. For God is only our God by a birth of His own divine nature within us.

This is our whole relation and our only fellowship with Him, our whole knowledge of Him, our whole power of having any part in the mysteries of gospel-salvation. Nothing can seek the kingdom of God or hunger and thirst after His righteousness, nothing can cry "Abba Father," nothing can pray, "Your kingdom come," nothing can say of Christ, "My Lord and my God," but what is born of God and is the divine nature itself become creaturely in us. Nothing but God in man can be a godly life in man. Thus the apostles says, "The letter kills but the spirit gives life." But you will say, "Can this be true of the spiritual divine letter of the gospel? Can it kill or give death?" It kills when it is rested in as everything, when it is taken for divine power and supposed to have goodness in itself. It is here that it kills the Spirit of God in man, quenches His holy fire within us, and is set up instead of it. It gives death when it is built into systems of strife and contention about words notions and opinions and makes the kingdom of God consist not in power but in words. When it is thus used, then of necessity it kills because it keeps us from what alone is life and can give life.

This then is the whole of the matter; all the literal truths and variety of doctrines and expressions of the written word have but one nature, one end and one errand--they all say nothing else to man, except on the one thing that Christ said in these words, "Come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will refresh you." As Paul said, "Jesus Christ who is of God, made unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification." This is the only rest from Christ that we must enter. Paul continues, "But you are washed, but you are cleansed in the Name of our Lord Jesus." This is the same as when Jesus said, "Except you abide in me and I in you, you have no

life in you." Again, "By grace you are saved by faith," says neither more nor less than this, "He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life," or this, "Without me you can do nothing." It is the same as when the apostle said, "Not I, but Christ that lives in me, and "Christ in us the hope of glory; if Christ be not in you, you are reprobates."

Therefore, to come to Christ, to have our heavy laden, fallen nature refreshed by Him, to be born spirit of His Spirit, to have His heavenly flesh and heavenly blood made living in us, before we put off the bestial body and blood of death that we have from Adam, is the one thing taught and meant by all that is so variously said in the scriptures of the merits and benefits of Christ to us. It is the Spirit, the Body and the Blood of Christ within us that is our whole peace with God, our whole adoption, our whole redemption, our whole justification, and our whole glorification. This is the one thing said and meant by that new birth of which Christ says, "Except a man be born again from above, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now the reason why all that is said of Christ in such a variety of expressions has only one meaning and points only to one and the same thing: because the whole state and nature of fallen man lacks only one thing, and that one thing is a real birth of the divine nature made living again in him as at the first. Once accomplished by the power of God in him, all is done that can be done by all the mysteries of the birth and whole process of Christ for our salvation.

All the Law, the prophets and the gospel are fulfilled when there is in Christ a new creature, having life in and from Him, as really as the branch has its life in and from the vine. When all scripture is thus understood and all that either Christ says of Himself or His apostles say of Him, are all heard or read only as one and the same call; to come to Christ in hunger and thirst, to be filled and blessed with His divine nature, made living within us. Then and then only, the letter kills not, but as a sure guide leads directly to life. But grammar, logic and criticism know nothing of scripture, except words, and bring forth nothing but their own wisdom of words and a religion of wrangle, hatred, and contention about the meaning of them.

Chapter 13: The Necessity of Divine Revelation - Life Within

As lamentable as this is, the letter of scripture has been so long the usurped province of schooled-critics and learned reasoners making their markets of it, that the difference between literal, notional and living, divine knowledge is all but lost in the Christian world.

If any awakened souls are found among Christians who think that more must be known of God, of Christ and the powers of the world to come, than every scholar can know by reading the letter of scripture, immediately the cry of "fanaticism," whether they be priests or people, is spoken against them. Their own excess could only be excused if these critics could first prove that the apostle's text should be read, "The spirit kills but the letter gives life."

The true nature and full distinction between literal and divine knowledge is set forth in the highest degree of clearness in these words of our savior, "The kingdom of God is like a treasure in a field." The true use and benefit and utmost power of the letter can tell us of a treasure that we want, a treasure that belongs to us, and how and where it is to be found. But when it is added that a "man goes and sells all that he has and buys that field," then begins the divine knowledge that is nothing else but the treasure possessed and enjoyed. What Jesus said here is similar to, "Except a man denies himself and forsakes all that he has he cannot be my disciple," that is, he cannot partake of my mind, my Spirit and my nature and therefore cannot know me. He is only a hearer of a treasure without entering into the possession and enjoyment of it. Thus it is with all scripture. The letter can only direct to the doing of what it cannot do and give notice of something that it cannot give.

As clear and evident as this distinction is between a mere literal direction to a thing and a real participation with it, which alone is a true perception of it, most Christians seem quite insensible of any other religious perception or knowledge of divine things except such ideas or notions of them as a man can form from scripture words. Good and evil, the only objects of religious knowledge, are an inward state and growth of our life. They are in us and are a part of us in the same manner as seeing and hearing are in us. We can have no real knowledge of them any other

way than as we have of our own seeing and hearing. As no man can get or lose his seeing or hearing or have less or more of them by any ideas or notions that he forms about them, just so it is with the power of good and the power of evil in us. Notions and ideas have no effect on it. No other knowledge is thought of, sought after or esteemed of any value but what is notional and the work of the brain.

Thus as soon as a man of speculation can demonstrate what he calls the being and attributes of God, he thinks and others think that he truly knows God. But what excuse can be made for such an imagination, when plain scripture has told him that to know God is eternal life--to know God is to have the power, the life and the Spirit of God manifested in him and therefore eternal life. "No man knows the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son reveals Him." Because the revelation of the Son is the birth of the Son in the soul, this new creature in Christ alone has knowledge of God, what he is, does and works in the creature.

Another person, forming an opinion of faith from the letter of scripture, straightway imagines that he knows what faith is and that he is in that faith. What a sad delusion! To know what faith is, or that we are in the faith, is to know that Christ is in us of a truth. It is to know the power of His life, His sufferings, His death, His resurrection and ascension, having been made good in our souls. To be in the faith is to be done with all notions and opinions about it, because it is found and felt by its living power and fruits within us, which are righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. These three powers are peculiar to Jesus Christ! He alone is our righteousness, our peace, and our joy in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, faith is not in us by reason of this or that opinion, assent or consent, but it is Christ and His divine nature in us, or its operations could not be righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Paul's words, "By faith you are saved," have no other meaning than by Christ you are saved. If faith in its whole nature, in its root and growth was anything else but Christ or a birth of the divine nature within us, it could do us no good and no power could be ascribed to it. It could not be our victory; it could not overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. Every other faith that is not Christ in us is but a dead faith.

Faith Works through Love, not Scholasticism

How trifling, therefore (to say no worse of it), is the learning that sets up a difference between faith and its works, between a justification by faith and justification by its works. Is there any difference between Christ as a redeemer and His redeeming works? Can they be set above one another in their redeeming efficacy? If not, then faith and its works, which are nothing else but Christ in us, can have no separation from or excellency above one another, but are as strictly one as Christ is one. They are no more two things than our Savior and our salvation are two different things in us. Everything that is said of faith from Adam to this day is only said of the power and life of a redeeming Christ working within us. To divide faith from its works is as absurd as to divide a thing from its self, a circle from its roundness.

No salvation would have ever been ascribed to faith, but that it is in the strictest sense Christ Himself, the power of God living and working in us. It never would have been said of faith that every power of the world, the flesh and the devil, must yield to it, except that it is truly Christ within us without whom we can do nothing. But if without Christ we can do nothing and all things are possible to our faith, can there be a fuller demonstration that our faith is nothing else, but Christ born and living within us? Whatever, therefore, there is of power within us that tends to salvation, call it by what name you will, either faith or hope or prayer or hunger after the kingdom of God and His righteousness, it is all but one power and that one power is Christ within us. If, therefore, faith and its good works are but one and the same, Christ living in us, the distinction between a good faith and its good works and all the contentious volumes that have been written about it, are as mere ignorant jargon as a distinction made and contended for between life and its living operations. When the holy church of Christ, the kingdom of God, came among men and was first set up, it was the apostle's boast that all other wisdom or learning was sunk into nothing. "Where," says he, "is the wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world? Has not God made them foolishness?" But now it is the boast of all churches that they are full of the wise, the scribes and the disputers of this world who sit with learned pomp in the apostle's chair and have the mysteries of the kingdom of God committed to them. Thus a religion of heavenly love, built upon the redeeming life

and doctrine of a Son of God, dying to save the whole world, is now in division. Bitterness, envy, pride, strife, hatred and persecution; every outrage of war and bloodshed, breathes and breaks forth with more strength in learned Christendom than ever they did from a religion of pagan idolatry set up by Satan.

It may be said by some here, "Must there then be no learning or scholarship, no recondite erudition in the Christian church? Must there be nothing thought of or got by the gospel but mere salvation? Must its ministers know nothing, teach nothing, but the full denial of self, poverty of spirit, meekness, humility and unwearied patience, a never ceasing love, an absolute renunciation of the pomps and vanities of the world, a full dependence upon our heavenly Father, no joy or rejoicing except in the Holy Spirit, no wisdom except what God gives, no walking except as Christ walked, no reward or glory for their labors of love except that of being found in Christ, flesh of His flesh, bone of His bones, spirit of His Spirit and clothed with the wedding-garment when the bridegroom comes, that "when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first"?"

To this the first answer is Happy, thrice happy, are they who through all their ministry seek nothing for themselves or others but to be taught of God, that hunger after nothing but the bread of life that came down from heaven, who own no master but Christ, no teacher but His Holy Spirit. They are as unable to join with the diggers in pagan pits of learning as with those that "labor for the wind and give their money for what is not bread."

Secondly, with regard to the demand of learned knowledge in the Christian church, it may be answered that all that has been said above is only for the increase and promotion of it and that all ignorance and darkness may be driven quite out of it. The church of Christ is the seat or school of all the highest knowledge that the human nature is capable of in this life. Ignorance is everywhere but in the church of Christ. The Law the prophets and the gospel are the only treasures of all that can be called the knowledge, either of God or man; He in whom the Law the prophets and the gospel are fulfilled is the only well-educated man and one of the first-rate scholars in the world. But who is he that has this wisdom from these rich treasures?

Who is he in whom all that they teach is known and fulfilled ? The lip of truth has told us that it is he and he alone "who loves God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength, and his neighbor as himself." This is the man that is all wisdom, all light and in full possession of everything that is meant by all the mysteries contained in the Law, the prophets and the gospel.

Where this divine love is wanting and a diabolical self sits in its place, there may be great wits, shining critics, orators, poets etc., as easily as there may be a profound Machiavel, a learned Hobbs, or an atheistic Virtuoso. But if you were to divinely know the mysteries of nature, the ground and reason of good and evil in this world, the relation and connection between the visible and invisible world, how the things of time proceed from, are influenced by and depend upon the things and powers of eternity, there is only one key of entrance. Nothing can open the vision except seeing with the eyes of the same love that began and carries on all that is and works in visible and invisible nature.

If you were to divinely know the mysteries of grace and salvation and go forth as a faithful witness of gospel truths, then stay until this fire of divine love has had its perfect work in you. For until your heart is an altar on which this heavenly fire never goes out, you are dead in yourself and can only be a speaker of dead words about things that never had any life within you. Without a real birth of this divine love in the essence of your soul, be as learned and polite as you will, your heart is but the dark heart of fallen Adam and your knowledge of the kingdom of God will be only like what murdering Cain had. Everything is murder, but what love does. If love is not the breath of your life, the spirit that forms and governs everything that proceeds from you, everything that has your labor, your allowance and consent, you are broken off from the works of God. You have felt His creation, but you are without God and your name, nature and works can have no other name or nature but pride, wrath, envy, hypocrisy, hatred, revenge and self-exaltation under the power of Satan in his kingdom of darkness. Nothing can possibly save you from being the certain prey of all these evil spirits through the whole course of your life, but a birth of the love that is God Himself, His light and Spirit within you.

There is no knowledge in heaven but what proceeds from this birth of love, nor is there any difference between the highest light of an angel and the horrid darkness of a devil except what love has made. Since divine love can have no beginning except a birth of the divine nature in us. Therefore St. John says, we love Him because he first loved us. This is the same as saying, we desire God because he first desired us--because we could not desire God until he first desired us. We could not turn to God until he first turned to us. And so it is that we could not love God until he first loved us, because by our creation He first brought forth and by our redemption continued and kept up that same birth of His own Spirit of love in us. As His Holy Spirit must first be a gift to us, born in us, then we have what can worship God in spirit. So His love must of all necessity be a gift to us, born in us, and then we have God in us that alone can love Him with His own love. Truth is absolutely asserted in these words, "Love is of God and he that loves is born of God."

Let this be my excuse to the learned world for owning no school of wisdom, but where the one, only lesson is divine love and the one only Teacher-the Spirit of God. Let no one call this wild or extravagant. It is no wilder a step, no more injurious to man, or to truth and goodness than the owning no God but one. To be called from everything except divine love and the Spirit of God is only being called from everything that has the curse of fallen nature in it. And no man can come out from under this curse until he is born again of divine love and the Spirit of God. To be born is as much the one sole happiness, joy and glory of men, both now and forever, as it is the sole joy and glory of angels eternally in the heavens. Believe me then, great scholar, that all that you have attained to of wisdom or learning, day after day in any other school but this, will stand you in as much stead and fill you with as high heavenly comfort at the hour of death, as all the long dreams that you ever had night after night in your sleep. And until a man knows this with as much fullness of conviction as he knows the vanity of a dream, he has full proof that he is not in the light of truth, not taught of God nor is he like-minded with Christ.

One of Christ's followers said, "Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father." The answer was, "Let the dead bury their dead, follow me." Another said to Him, "Let me first go bid them farewell that are at home in my house." Jesus answered, "No man having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." Let

it be supposed that a third had said, "Lord I have left several deep-learned books at home, written by the greatest masters of grammar, logic and eloquence. Allow me first to go back for them, lest losing the light that I had from them, I might mistake the depth and truth of your heavenly doctrines or be less able to prove and teach them powerfully to others." Does not such a request as this have as much folly and absurdity in it as the two other requests that Christ rejected? What can scholastic, classic and critical divinity say for itself, except the very same thing that was requested here?

The holy Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that follows me walks not in darkness." Here spiritual light and darkness are as immutably fixed and separated from one another as the light and darkness of this world were divided on the first day of the creation. Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the one and only light, both of men and angels. Fallen nature, the selfish will, proud tempers, the highest abilities, the natural sagacity, cunning arts and subtleties that are or can be in fallen men and angels, are nothing but the fullness of spiritual darkness from which nothing but works of darkness can come forth. In a word, darkness is the whole of natural man, whereas, light is the new born man from above. Therefore, says the Christ of God, "I am the light of the world," because he alone is the birth of heaven in the fallen souls of men. But who can more reject this divine light or more plainly choose darkness instead of it, than he who seeks to have his mind enriched and the faculties of his fallen soul cultivated by the literature of poets, orators, philosophers, sophists, skeptics and critics-born and bred up in the worship and praises of idol gods and goddesses? What is this but going to the serpent to be taught about the innocent spirit of the dove, or to the elegant lusts of Anacreon and Ovid to learn purity of heart and kindle the flame of heavenly love in our souls?

Look where you will, this is the wisdom of those who look to pagans for skill to work in Christ's vineyard, who from long labors in restoring the grammar and finding out hidden beauties of some old vicious book, sets up for qualified artists to polish the gospel pearl of great price. Surely this is no better a proof of their savoring the things that are of God than Peter gave when His master said to him, "Get behind me Satan." A grave ecclesiastic, bringing forth skillful meditations on the commentaries of Homer or the astonishing beauties of a modern Dunciad out of his closet, has as

much reason to think that he is walking in the light of Christ and is led by the Spirit of God as they have who are eating, drinking and rising up to play.

Chapter 14: Baptized in the Spirit-Cleansed by Fire

To see the exceeding folly of expecting ability in divine knowledge from anything that is the wit, wisdom or spirit of the natural man, you need only read these words of the holy messenger of God, the Elias that was to come, "I indeed," says he, "baptize you with water, but He that cometh after me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose, He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

Now, if this, which the Baptist said of Christ, is not our faith, if we do not receive it as the truth in which we are to firmly stand, then, be as learned as we will, we have no better a faith or higher wisdom than those blind rabbis who received not the testimony of John. A fire and Spirit from above were the news that he published to the world. This, and nothing else, was his kingdom of God that was at hand. If this fire and Spirit from above have not baptized us into a birth of the life of God in our souls, we have not found Christ or the kingdom of God John bore witness to. But if (what is still worse) we are so bewitched through the sorcery of learning as to turn writers and preachers against this inward and only redeeming heavenly fire and Spirit, we are baptized with the spirit of those to whom our Lord said, "Woe unto you scribes Pharisees hypocrites for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves neither suffer you them that are entering to go in."

For what is or can be the fall of a divine Adam under the power of sin, Satan, and hell but the extinction of that heavenly fire and Spirit that was his first union with God and all heavenly beings. Say now that he had not this heavenly fire and Spirit at the first, that nothing lived or breathed in him except that astral fire and spirit that is the life and spirit of all earthly animals. If this was so, then you have a religion as divine as that of the old Sadducees who allowed no resurrection, angel or spirit. If you deny the truth and fullness of a divine life in the first man, then his fall and

redemption are equally empty sounds about nothing, for what can he be fallen from or redeemed to if he has now all that fire and spirit of life that he ever had or ought to have? Tell me why that "burning and shining light" that was in this man who was more than a prophet [John the Baptist] should come with his water and the Son of God. God would not have come with His fire-baptism if man neither wanted nor could receive a higher water and fire of life than what he has in common with the beasts of the field? Why is there this stir about religions, expiations, and atonements? Why all these priestly ordinations, consecrations, churches, sacraments and prayers? If the fire and spirit of this world are the one and highest life both of man and beasts, we have it innately and on the same terms as the beasts have it and can only lose it as they do when they lose their existence.

But if fire and Spirit from heaven can alone make heavenly creatures and children of a heavenly Father; if the Son of God took our fallen nature upon Him that the first heavenly fire and Spirit might again come to life in us; if divine life, divine light and divine goodness can only come from them and only in such degree as they are kindled in our souls, what a poverty of sense is it in those who are called to a resurrection of the first divine life, where a new creature is taught by that same unction from above where all the angels and principalities of heaven have their light and glory. What a poverty of sense in those who sit themselves down at the feet of a Master Tully and a Master Aristotle, who only differ from the lowest of all other corrupt men as the teaching serpent differed from his fellow animals by being more subtle than all the beasts of the field.

Behold then your state, you ministers that wait at Christian altars, who will have neither faith nor hope nor desire of heavenly fire kindled in your souls. You have a priesthood and an altar not fit to be named with what had a holy fire from God descending upon it in Jewish days; the same fire that made priest and sacrifice acceptable to God, though only type, and only spoke of in type of that inward celestial fire that Christ from above would kindle into a never ceasing burning in the living temples of His newborn children.

Don't complain anymore about the atheists, infidels and such open enemies to the gospel kingdom of God while you call heavenly fire and Spirit (kindled into the same

essential life in us as there is in holy angels), downright frenzy and mystic madness. You do all that same infidel work within the church that they do on the outside of it. If through a learned fear of having what was done to Enoch when God took him done to your earthly reason, you will own no higher a regeneration, no more birth of God in your souls than can be had by a few cold drops of water sprinkled on the face. Any of the heathen gods of wood and stone are good enough for such an elementary priesthood. Let this be told you as a truth from God, that until the heavenly fire and Spirit have a fullness of a birth within you, you can rise no higher by your highest learning or elegant orations about scripture words.

Our Lord has said, "The kingdom of God is within you.," that is, the heavenly fire and Spirit that are the true kingdom and manifestation of God are within you. And indeed where else can it be? What learned pains are taken to remove the literal meaning from these words as too visionary a thing for learned ears? It is a truth obvious to common sense that even this outward world of stars and elements, neither does nor can belong to us or we to it but so far as it is literally speaking of a kingdom within us. For the outward kingdom or powers of this world, signify nothing to a worldly man, because he is dead and blind to what they can teach him about the eternal.

Say now out of reverence to sound literature and abhorrence of fanaticism that the kingdom of God is not really and virtually within--that its heavenly fire light and Spirit are not and ought not to be born in a sober right-minded follower of Christ? If this was true, then you would have a good disciple of Christ that is as absolutely dead to the kingdom of heaven as the corpse that has not the fire spirit and light of this world in it and is dead to all the outward world round about it.

Chapter 15: Without the Spirit, Jews and Christians Are the Same

What a sobriety of faith and sound doctrine is it to preach, on the one hand, about the necessity of being living members of the kingdom of heaven and on the other, preach that a heavenly birth is not, nor ought to be, within us!

If God's kingdom ought to be within us then, it could not be a brain-sick folly to believe that the literal words of Christ had no deceit, falsity or delusion in them when he said, "Except a man be born again from above he cannot see or enter into the kingdom of God." He cannot possibly have any godlike or divine goodness and cannot be a child of a heavenly Father with the nature and Spirit of His heavenly Father, without the nature and Spirit of His heavenly Father brought to a real birth of life in him. Without this divine birth, all that we have in us is only fallen Adam; a birth of sin, the flesh and the devil. Logic, learning, and criticism are almost everywhere set in high places to pronounce and prove that being born of the Spirit is mere fanaticism and spiritual frenzy. What wonder is it then, if folly of doctrine, wickedness of life, lusts of the flesh, profaneness of spirit, wantonness of wit, contempt of goodness and profession of Christianity should all seem to have their full establishment among us?

What wonder is it that sacraments, church-prayers and preachings leave high and low, learned and unlearned, men and women, priests and people, as unaltered in all their aged vices as they leave children unchanged in their childish follies? For where men forsake the one and only Fountain of life and goodness, where the seed of the divine birth is not alive and going forward in their spiritual birth, all the difference between man and man is as nothing with respect to the kingdom of God. It matters not what name is given to the old earthly man of Adam's bestial flesh and blood, whether he be called a zealous churchman, a stiff-necked Jew, a polite civilized heathen or a grave infidel--under all these names the unregenerate old man has only one nature regardless of time, place, education, complexion, hypocrisy and worldly wisdom. By such a one, whether he is papist or Protestant, the gospel is only kept as a book and all that is within it is only so much condemnation to the keeper, just as the old Jew has kept the book of the Law and the prophets, only to be more fully condemned by them.

The fact that the Jewish and Christian church stand at this day in the same kind of apostasy and fallen state must be manifest to everyone that does not shut his eyes against it. Why are the Jews in a fallen state? It is because they have refused Him who in His whole process was the truth, the substance, the life and fulfilling of everything that was outwardly taught and prescribed in their Law and prophets. Is it

not as easy to see that the whole Christian church is in a fallen state for the same reason, because they are fallen or turned away from that Holy Spirit, who was promised and given to be the only power, life and fulfilling of everything that was taught and prescribed by the gospel? The coming of the Holy Spirit was the same all and fulfilling of the whole gospel as Christ's coming was to the fulfilling of the Law. The Jew with his Old Testament, not owning Christ in all His process to be the Truth and Life and Fulfiller of their Law, is in that same apostasy as the Christian with his New Testament, not owning the Holy Spirit to be his only light guide and governor. All types and figures in the Law were only empty shadows without Christ being the life and power of them. So it is that everything that is written in the gospel is only a dead letter, unless the Holy Spirit in man is the living Reader, the living Rememberer and the living Doer of them in the one who claims to be in Christ. Therefore, where the Holy Spirit is not thus owned and received as the whole power and life of the gospel state, it is no marvel that Christians have no more of the gospel virtues than the Jews have of patriarchal holiness. The same lusts and vices that prospered among the Jews are now found to be breaking forth with as much strength in fallen Christendom. The New Testament, not ending in the coming of the Holy Spirit with fullness of power over sin hell and the devil, is only the same and no better a help to heaven than the Old Testament without the coming of a Messiah.

Need I now say any more to demonstrate the truth of what I first said was the one thing absolutely essential and only available to man's salvation, namely the Spirit of God brought again to His first power of life in us? This was the glory of man's creation and this alone can be the glory of his redemption. Everything besides this that passes for a time between God and man, shows only our fall and distance from God, and in its best state has only the nature of a good road, which is only good because what we want is at the end of it. While God calls us by various outward dispensations, by creaturely things, figurative institutions etc., it is a full proof that we are not in our true state or in that union with God that is intended by our redemption.

God said to Moses, "Put off your shoes for the place where you are standing is holy ground." Now, what God said to Moses is only that very same thing that circumcision, the Law, sacrifices and sacraments say to man. They are in

themselves nothing else, just outward significations of inward impurity and lost holiness, and they can do no more in themselves except intimate, point and direct to an inward life and new birth from above that must be sought after.

Here lies the great mistake, or rather, the idolatrous abuse of all God's outward dispensations. These are taken for the thing itself, for the truth and essence of religion. What the learned Jews did with the outward letter of their Law, learned Christians do the same with the outward letter of their gospel. Why did the Jewish church so furiously and obstinately cry out against Christ, "Let Him be crucified"? It was because their letter-learned ears, their worldly spirit, and their temple-orthodoxy would not bear to hear of an inward Savior and not bear to hear of being born again of His Spirit, of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, of His dwelling in them and they in Him. To have their Law of ordinances and their temple-pomp sunk into such a fulfilling Savior as this was such fanatical jargon to their ears that it forced their sober, rational theology to call Christ Beelzebub, His doctrine blasphemy, all for the sake of Moses and rabbinic orthodoxy.

Need it now be asked whether the true Christ of the gospel is less blasphemed or less crucified by a Christian theology that rejects an inward Christ, a Savior living and working in the soul as its inward light and life, generating His own nature and Spirit in it as its only redemption? How could it be that what rejects all this as "mystic madness," could not be that very same old Jewish wisdom, sprung up in Christian theology that said of Christ as He taught these very things, "He is mad! Why listen to Him?" In a parable, our blessed Lord sets forth the blind Jews as saying of Himself, "We will not have this man to reign over us." The sober-minded Christian scholar has none of this Jewish blindness. He only says of Christ, "We will not have this man to reign in us!" So he keeps clear of such mystic absurdity as St. Paul fell into when he enthusiastically said, "... not I, but Christ who lives in me."

Christian doctors reproach the old learned rabbis for their vain faith and carnal desire for a glorious, temporal, outward Christ who should set up their temple-worship all over the world. Vanity indeed and learned blindness infect all the learned who have not been born of the Father. But nevertheless in these condemners of rabbinic blindness, St. Paul's words are remarkably verified, viz.,

"Wherein you judge another you condemn yourself for you that judges do the same thing." If you take away everything from Christ that Christian doctors call "fanaticism," and claim Him not to be an inward birth, a new life and Spirit within us, but only an outward, separate, distant, heavenly prince who is no more a reality in us than our high cathedrals are in the third heavens, but only by an invisible hand from His throne on high, some way or other, raising and helping great scholars or great temporal powers to make a rock in every nation for His church to stand upon- if all this, the very marrow of modern divinity be true, then you have that very outward Christ and that very outward kingdom which the carnal Jew dreamed of. For the sake of this the spiritual Christ was then nailed to the cross and is still crucified by the new risen Jew in the Christian church.

From where and what comes all this spiritual blindness that mistakes and defeats from age to age all the gracious designs of God towards fallen mankind? Look at the origin of the first sin and you see it all. Had Eve desired no knowledge but what came from God, paradise had been the habitation of her and all her offspring. If after paradise, lost Jews and Christians had desired no knowledge but what came from God, the Law and prophets had kept the Jew close to the first tree of life and the Christian church would have been a kingdom of God and communion of saints to this day.

But now corruption, sin, death and every evil of the world has entered into the church, the spouse of Christ, just as they entered into Eve, the spouse of Adam in paradise, in the same way and from the same cause, viz., a desire of more or other knowledge than what comes from God alone. This desire is the serpent's voice within every man, that does all that to him and in him, that the serpent at the tree did to Eve. It carries on the first deceit; it shows and recommends to him that same beautiful tree of self-will, one's own wit and one's own wisdom, springing up within him, that Eve saw in the garden. So blind is this love of wisdom, as not to see that his eating of it is, in the strictest truth, his eating of the same forbidden fruits as Eve did and keeping up in himself all the death and separation from God that the first hunger for knowledge brought forth.

Let then the eager searcher into words for wisdom, the book-devourer, the opinion-broker, the exalter of human reason and every projecting builder of religious systems be told this: the thirst and pride of being learnedly-wise in the things of God is keeping up the grossest ignorance of them and is nothing else but Eve's old serpent and Eve's evil birth within them. It does no better work in the church of Christ than her thirst after wisdom did in the paradise of God. "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears," is the only way any man ever did or ever can attain divine knowledge and divine goodness. To knock at any other door but this is like asking life of something dead or praying for bread to him who has nothing but stones to give.

Now strange as all this may seem to the labor-learned possessor of far-fetched book-riches, it is saying no more than what Christ said in these words, "Except you be converted and become as little children you cannot enter into the kingdom of God." If classic gossellers, linguists, critics, scripture-logicians, salvation orators, able dealers in the grammatical powers of Hebrew, Greek and Roman phrases, idioms, tropes, figures, etc., can show that by raising themselves high in these attainments, they are the very men that are sunk down from themselves into Christ's little children of the kingdom of God, then it may be also said that he who is laboring, scheming and fighting for all the riches he can get from both the Indies is the very man that has left all to follow Christ, the very man that "labors not for the meat that perishes."

Show me a man whose heart has no desire or prayer in it, but to love God with his whole soul and spirit and his neighbor as himself, then you have shown me the man who knows Christ and is known of Him. Such is the best and wisest man in the world in whom the first paradisiacal wisdom and goodness are come to life. Not a single precept in the gospel is but the precept of his own heart and the joy of the newborn heavenly love that is the life and light of his soul. In this man, everything that came from the old serpent is trod under his feet. Not a spark of self, of pride, of wrath, of envy, of covetousness, or worldly wisdom can have the least abode in him, because the love that fulfills the whole Law and the prophets, that love that is God and Christ, both in angels and men, is the love that gives birth and life and growth to everything that is either thought or word or action in him. If he has no share or

part with foolish errors and cannot be tossed about with every wind of doctrine, it is because to be always governed by this love is the same thing as to be always taught of God.

On the other hand, show me a scholar as full of learning as the Vatican is of books, and he will be just as likely to give all that he has for the gospel-pearl as he would be if he was as rich as Croesus. Let no one here imagine that I am writing against all human literature, arts and sciences, or that I wish the world to be without them. I am no more an enemy to them than to the common useful labors of life. It is literal learning, verbal contention, and critical strife about the things of God that I charge with folly and mischief to religion. In this I have all learned Christendom, both popish and Protestant on my side, for they both agree in charging each other with a bad and false gospel-state because of what their learning, logic and criticism do for them. Say not then that it is only the illiterate enthusiast that condemns human learning in the gospel kingdom of God. For when he condemns the blindness and mischief of popish logic and criticism, he has the entire learned Protestant world with him. And when a man lays the same charge to Protestant learning, he has a much larger kingdom of popish great scholars, logically and learnedly, affirming the same thing. The private person charging human learning with so much mischief to the church is so far from being led by fanaticism that he is led by all the church-learning that is in the world.

All learned Christendom is guilty of the same charge against the temporal power in the church, as hurtful to the very being and progress of a salvation-kingdom that is not of this world, by supporting doctrines that human learning has brought into it. And true it is and must be, that human power can only support and help forward human things. The Protestant brings proof from a thousand years' learning and doctrines that the pope is an unjust usurper of temporal power in the church, which is Christ's spiritual spouse. The papist brings the learning of as many ages to show that a temporal head of the church is an anti-Christian usurpation. Yet, he who holds Christ to be the one and only Head, Heart and Life of the church, and that no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit, passes with the learned of both these people for a brain-sick enthusiast. Is it not then high time to look out for some better ground to stand upon than such learning as this?

Now look where you will through all the whole nature of things, no divine wisdom, knowledge, goodness and deliverance from sin are anywhere to be found for fallen man but in these two points: (1) a total entire entrance into the whole process of Christ and, (2) a total resignation to and sole dependence upon the continual operation of the Holy Spirit, Christ come again in the Spirit, to be our never-ceasing Light, Teacher and Guide into all those ways of virtue in which He Himself walked in the flesh. Everything else, call it by what name you will, is but dead works, a vain labor of the old man to newly create himself. And here, let it be well observed that, in these two points consists the whole of that mystic divinity to which a Jewish orthodoxy at this day is so great an enemy. For nothing else is meant or taught by it but a total dying to self (called the process or cross of Christ), that a new creature (called Christ in us or Christ come in the Spirit) may be begotten in the purity and perfection of the first man's union with God.

Chapter 16: You Cannot Serve Both God and Mammon

Let the Christian world forget or depart from this one, mystic way of salvation, let anything else be thought of or trusted in but the cross of Christ and the Spirit of Christ, and then, though churches and preachers and prayers and sacraments are everywhere in plenty, nothing better can come of it than a Christian kingdom of pagan vices along with a mouth-belief of a holy catholic church and communion of saints.

To this melancholy truth all Christendom, both at home and abroad, bears full witness. Who needs to be told that there is not a corruption or depravity of human nature; no kinds of pride, wrath, envy, malice and self-love; no sorts of hypocrisy, falseness, cursing, swearing, perjury and cheating; no wantonness of lust in every kind of debauchery that are not common all over Christendom in towns and villages? But to pass these by, I will show in two or three particulars that, though little observed and less condemned, fully show that the beast, the whore and the fiery dragon are in possession of Protestant as well as popish churches.

First can it be said that Mammon is less served by Christians than by Jews and infidels? Or can there be a fuller proof that Christians, Jews and infidels are equally fallen from God and all divine worship, since Truth itself has told us that we cannot serve God and Mammon? Is not this as unalterable a truth as if it had been said, You cannot serve God and Baal? Or can it with any truth or sense be affirmed that the Mammonist has more of Christ in him than the Baalist or is more or less an idolator, because he is called a Christian, a Jew or an infidel? Look now at all those particulars that Christ charged upon the Jewish priests, scribes and Pharisees and you will see them all present again in the fallen state of Christendom. If God's prophets were again in the world, they would have just the same complaints against the fallen Christian church as they had against the old carnal, stiff-necked Jews, namely, "that of their silver and gold they had made themselves idols" (Hosea 8:4).

Though golden figures of idol-gods are not now worshipped either by Jews or Christians, silver and gold and what belongs to them is the Mammon god that sits and reigns in their hearts. How else could there be that universal strife through all Christendom over who should stand in the richest and highest place to preach about the humility of Christ and offer spiritual sacrifices unto God? What god but Mammon could put into the hearts of Christ's ambassador a desire to make a gain of the gospel, that from the beginning to the end, means nothing else but death to self and separation from every view, temper and affection that has any connection with the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life? Our blessed Lord spoke something to the Jews that might well have made their ears tingle when he told them that they "had made His Father's house a den of thieves," because sheep and oxen were sold there with the money-changers sitting in the outer court of the temple. If you will say that Mammon has brought forth no profanation like this in our Christian church, your best proof must be this, because our church-sale is not oxen and sheep, but holy things, cures of souls, parsonages, vicarages, etc., and our money-changers, our buyers and sellers are chiefly consecrated persons. Look at both the things that are spiritual and things temporal and you will see the same arts, the same passions and worldly wisdom visibly active in the one as in the other. If Christ as He was leaving the world had said to His disciples, "Labor to be rich; Make full provision for the flesh; Be conformed to the world; Court the favor and interest of great men; Clothe yourselves with all the worldly honors, distinctions and

powers you can get"; could these commands have been more fully followed by either Roman or Protestant churches as a proof of their loyalty to their real master? What is all this in truth and reality except the same whore riding upon the same beast, not here or there, but through all fallen Christendom where God has always had His seven thousand that have refused to bow their knee to Mammon?

The Evil of "Holy Wars"

In the darkest ages of Rome-ish superstition a martial spirit of zeal and glory for the gospel broke forth in kings, cardinals, bishops, monks and friars to lead the sheep of Christ, saints, pilgrims, penitents and sinners of all kinds, to proceed in battle array to kill, devour and drive the Turks from the land of Palestine and the old earthly Jerusalem. These bloodthirsty expeditions were called a holy war because it was fighting for the holy land; they were also called a "crusade," because crosses and crucifixes made the greatest glitter among the sharpened instruments of human murder. Thus under the banner of the cross, an army of church wolves went forth to destroy the lives of those whom the Lamb of God died on the cross to save.

The light that broke out at the reformation abhorred the bloody superstitious zeal of these catholic heroes. But what followed from this new risen reforming light that came forth instead of these holy crusades? Wars followed that were even more diabolical. Christian kingdoms with bloodthirsty piety started destroying, devouring and burning one another for the sake of what was called popery and what was called Protestantism.

Who can help but see that Satan, the prince of the powers of darkness, had found a much greater triumph over Christendom than in all the holy wars and crusades that went before? Everything that was once done by such high-spirited fighters for old Jerusalem's earth could not have done as much damage against the gospel-light, because not one in a thousand of those holy warriors were allowed to see what was in the gospel. But now with the gospel opened in everyone's hands, papists and Protestants make open war against every divine virtue that belongs to Christ or that can unite them with that Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world. I say against every divine redeeming virtue of the Lamb of God, because these are the

targets that "Christian" warfare seeks to conquer. There is not a virtue of gospel-goodness that has not known a death-blow in this new war. No virtue has any gospel-goodness in it, any further than it has its birth and growth in and from the Spirit of Christ. When His nature and Spirit are not there, nothing but the heathen can be found. This is the same truth as when the apostle said that "he who has not or is not led by the Spirit of Christ is none of His."

Imagine Christ, the Lamb of God, after His divine sermon on the mount, putting Himself at the head of a blood- thirsty army, or St. Paul going forth with a squadron of fire and brimstone to make more havoc in human lives than a devouring earthquake. But if this be too blasphemous an absurdity to be supposed, one must conclude that the Christian who acts in the destroying fury of war, acts in full contrariety to the whole nature and Spirit of Christ and can no more be said to be led by His Spirit or be one with Him, than those Christ's enemies who came forth, "with swords and staves to take Him."

Blinded Protestants think they have the glory of slaughtering blind papists; and the victorious papist claims the merit of having conquered the troops of heretics. But alas! The conquest is equally great on both sides, both are entitled to the same victory, and the glorious victory on both sides is only that of having the good of the gospel ground down by both of their feet.

When a Most Christian Majesty with his catholic church sings a Te Deum at the high altar for the rivers of Protestant blood poured out, or an evangelic church sings praise and glory to the Lamb of God for helping them from His holy throne in heaven to make popish towns like Sodom and Gomorrah, they blaspheme God as much as Cain would have done, had he offered a sacrifice of praise to God for helping him to murder his brother Let such worshippers of God be told this, that the field of blood gives all its glory to Satan, who was a murderer from the beginning and will to the end of his reign be the only receiver of all the glory that can come from it. A glorious Alexander in the heathen world is a shame and reproach to the human nature and does more mischief to mankind in a few years than all the wild beasts in every wilderness upon the earth have ever done from the beginning of the world to this day. But the same hero, making the same ravage from country to

country with Christian soldiers, has more thanks from the devil than twenty pagan Alexanders would ever have had. To make men kill other men is meat and drink to that roaring adversary of mankind who goes about seeking whom he may devour. To make Christians kill Christians for the sake of Christ's church is his highest triumph over the highest mark that Christ has set upon those whom he has purchased by His blood. "This commandment," says he, "I give unto you, that you love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another as I have loved you."

Can the duelist who had rather sheathe his sword in the bowels of his brother than abide what he calls an affront, be said to have this mark of belonging to Christ? And may not he that is called his "second," more justly be said to be second to none in the love of human murder? Now what difference is there between the haughty duelist with his provided second, meeting his adversary with sword and pistol behind a hedge or a house, than two kingdoms with their high-spirited regiments, slaughtering one another in the field of battle? It is only the difference that is between the murder of one man as opposed to the murder of an hundred thousand.

Now imagine the duelist fasting and confessing his sins to God today because he is engaged to fight his brother tomorrow. Or fancy again the conqueror who went into his closet and on bended knees lifts up hands and heart to God for blessing his weapons with the death of his brother. Now you have a picture of the great piety that begins and ends the wars all over heavenly Christendom. How could there be any greater blindness than to think that a Christian kingdom, as such, can have any other goodness or union with Christ other than the same goodness which makes the private Christian to be one with Him and a partaker of the divine nature? Or that pride, wrath, ambition, envy, covetousness, rapine, resentment, revenge, hatred, mischief and murder are only the works of the devil, while they are committed by individuals, but when carried on by all the strength and authority, all the hearts, hands, and voices of a whole nation--that the devil is then quite driven out of them, loses all his right and power in them and they become a holy matter given for church thanksgivings and the sacred oratory of pulpits.

Look at what the individual Christian must do to his neighbor or his enemy and you will see the very thing that one Christian kingdom is to do to another. Look at what proves a man is not led by the Spirit of Christ and you will see what proves a kingdom is under the dominion and power of Satan. Wherever pride is, there the devil is riding in his finest fiery chariot. And wherever wrath is, there he has his finest murdering sword at work. What is it that fallen man wants to be redeemed from except pride and wrath envy and covetousness? He can have no higher separation or apostasy from God, no fuller union with Satan and his angels, than he has by the spirit of these tempers. They constitute that evil, whether you call it self or Satan in him, the meaning is the same. If man had not fallen into this self or Satan, then there could be no more war or fighting in him than there was in the Word made man in our flesh. Or suppose him redeemed from his fallen nature by a new birth of the Lamb of God, born in his soul, and then he can no more be hired to kill men gloriously in the field, than to carry a dark lantern by night to a powder house.

Love, goodness and communication of good is the immutable glory and perfection of the divine nature and nothing can have union with God, except what partakes of this goodness. The love that brought forth the existence of all things, does not change through the fall of its creatures, but is continually at work to bring back every fallen nature and creature to their first state of goodness. Everything that passes for a time between God and His fallen creature is the same thing working for the same end. Though this is called wrath that called for punishment, curse and death, it is all from the beginning to the end, nothing but the work of the first creating love. It means nothing else and does nothing else but those works of purifying fire that must and alone can burn away all the dark evil that separates the creature from its first created union with God. God's providence from the fall to the restitution of all things is doing the same thing as when he said to the dark chaos of fallen nature, "Let there be light." He still says and will continue saying the same thing until there is no evil of darkness left in all that is nature and creature. God creating, God illuminating, God sanctifying, God threatening and punishing, and God forgiving and redeeming is only one and the same essential, immutable, never ceasing, working of the divine nature. What in God illuminates and glorifies saints

and angels in heaven is that very same working of the divine nature that wounds, pains, punishes, and purifies sinners upon earth.

If long, long ages of fiery pain and tormenting darkness fall upon many or most of God's apostate creatures, they will last no longer than until the great fire of God has melted all arrogance into humility and everything that is self has died in the long agonies and bloody sweat of a lost God, that is that all-saving cross of Christ that will never give up its redeeming power until sin and sinners have no more a name among the creatures of God. If long ages hereafter can only do that for a soul departing this life under a load of sins that days and nights might have done for a most hardened pharaoh or a most wicked Nero while in the body, it is because while the soul is in the body it has only the nature and state of fallen Adam, but when flesh and blood are taken from it, the strong apostate nature of fallen angels is found in it that must have its state and place in that blackness of darkness of a fiery wrath that burns in them and their kingdom.

O poor sinner, whoever you are, repent and turn to God while you have Adam's flesh upon you, for as long as that lasts, the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. But if you die without Adam's repentance, black lakes, bottomless pits, ages of a gnawing worm and fire that never ceases to burn will stand between you and a kingdom of heaven afar off. To prevent all this and make you a child of the first resurrection, Jesus Christ, God and man, the only begotten Son of this infinite love came into the world in the name and under the character of infinite pity, boundless compassion, inexpressible meekness, bleeding love, nameless humility, never ending patience, long suffering and bowels of redeeming mercy, also called the Lamb of God, who with all these supernatural virtues takes away the sins of the world.

Now from this view of God's infinite love and mercy in Christ Jesus, willing nothing, seeking nothing, through all the regions of His providence, except that sinners of all kinds, the boldest rebels against all His goodness, may have their proper remedy and their necessary means of being fully delivered from all that hurt, mischief and destruction, that in full opposition to their God and creator they had brought upon themselves. God and Christ using every miracle of love and wisdom to give recovery of life, health and salvation to all that have rebelled against them, look at

the murdering monster called war. And what can its name or nature be but a fiery great dragon, a full figure of Satan, broke loose and fighting against every redeeming virtue of the Lamb of God?

The temporal miseries and wrongs that war carries along with it, wherever it goes, are neither to be numbered or expressed. What thievery bears any proportion to what, with the boldness of drum and trumpet, plunders the innocent of everything that they have? And if themselves are left alive with all their limbs or their daughters unravished, they in many cases have only the ashes of their consumed houses to lie down upon. What honor has war not gotten from its tens and tens of hundreds or thousands of men, slaughtered on heaps with as little regret or concern as for loads of rubbish thrown into a pit? Who but the fiery dragon, would put wreaths of laurel on such heroes' heads? Who but he could say unto them, "Well done good and faithful servants"?

But there is still an evil of war, much greater, though less regarded, which reflects how many hundreds of thousands, no millions of young men born into this world for no other end but that they may be born again of Christ from sons of Adam's misery, become sons of God and fellow heirs with Christ in everlasting glory--what nameless numbers of these are robbed of God's precious gift of life to them before they have known the one sole benefit of living. They are not allowed to stay in this world until age and experience have done their best for them, have helped them to know the inward voice and operation of God's Spirit, helped them to find and feel that evil curse and sting of sin and death that must be taken from within them before they can die the death of the righteous. Instead of all this, they have been either violently forced or tempted in the fire of hell and full strength of sinful lusts to forget God's eternity and their own souls and rush into a kill or be killed situation with as much furious haste and goodness of spirit as tiger kills a tiger for the sake of his prey. God's providence over His fallen creatures is nothing else but a providence of love and salvation turning through ways of infinite wisdom. Sooner or later, He turns all kinds of evil into a new good, making what was lost to be found, what was dead to be alive again; not willing that one single sinner should lack what can save him from eternal death. This is a truth as certain as that God's Name is I AM that I AM.

Among unfallen creatures in heaven, God's Name and nature is Love, Light and Glory. To the fallen sons of Adam what was love light and glory in heaven becomes infinite pity and compassion on earth in a God clothed with the nature of His fallen creature, bearing all its infirmities, entering into all its troubles and in the meek innocence of a Lamb of God, living a life and dying a death of all the sufferings due to sin. Hence it was that when this Divine Pity suffered its own life-giving blood to be poured on the ground, all outward nature made full declaration of its atoning and redeeming power. The strength of the earth did quake, the hardness of rocks was forced to split and long-covered graves to give up their dead. By this all that came by the curse into nature and creature must give up its power, that all kinds of hellish wrath, hardened malice, fiery pride, selfish wills, tormenting envy, and earthly passions that kept men under the power of Satan must receive their fullness of death and fullness of a new life from that all-powerful, all-purifying blood of the Lamb. It will never cease washing red into white, until the earth is washed into the crystal purity of that glassy sea that is before the throne of God and all the sons of Adam are clothed in such white as fits them for their several mansions in their heavenly Father's house.

Sing, O you heavens, and shout all you lower parts of the earth. This is our God that varies not, whose first creating love knows no change from a redeeming pity towards all His fallen creatures.

Look now at warring Christendom. What smallest drop of pity towards sinners is to be found in it? How could a hellish spirit more fully contrive and hasten their destruction? It stirs up and kindles every passion of the fallen nature that is contrary to the all-humble, all-meek, all-loving, all-forgiving and all-saving Spirit of Christ. It unites, it drives and compels nameless numbers of unconverted sinners to fall, murdering and murdered, among flashes of fire, with the wrath and swiftness of lightning into a fire infinitely worse than that in which they died. What a sad subject for thanksgiving days whether in popish or Protestant churches! For if there is a joy of all the angels in heaven for one sinner that repents, what a joy must there be in hell over such multitudes of sinners not suffered to repent? And if they who have "converted many to righteousness shall shine as the stars in the firmament for ever," what Chorazin's woe may they not justly fear whose proud wrath and vain

glory have robbed such numberless troops of poor wretches, over all times and places, of knowing what righteousness they needed for the salvation of their immortal souls.

Here my pen trembles in my hand; but when, O when, will one single Christian church, people or language tremble at the share they have in this death of sinners!

"For the glory of his majesty's arms," said once a most Christian king. Now if at that time his catholic church had called a solemn assembly to unite hearts and voices in this pious prayer, "O blessed Jesus, dear redeeming Lamb of God who came down from heaven to save men's lives and not destroy them, go along, we humbly pray, with our bomb-vessels and fire-ships, suffer not our thundering cannon to roar in vain, but let your tender hand of love and mercy direct their balls to more heads and hearts of your own redeemed creatures, than the poor skill of man is able of itself to do." Have not such prayers had more of the man of the earth and more of the son of perdition in them than the Most Christian king's glorying in his arms?

Again we see the fall of the universal church from being led by the Spirit of Christ to be guided by the inspiration of the great fiery dragon. Look at all European Christendom sailing around the globe with fire and sword and every murdering art of war, to seize the possessions and kill the inhabitants of both the Indies. What natural right of man, what supernatural virtue which Christ brought down from heaven, was not here trodden under foot? All that you ever read or heard of heathen barbarity was here outdone by Christian conquerors. And to this day what wars of Christians against Christians blended with scalping heathens, still keep staining the earth and the seas with human blood for a miserable share in the spoils of a plundered heathen world! A world that should have heard or seen or felt nothing from the followers of Christ but a divine love that had forced them, from distant lands and through the perils of long seas, to visit strangers with those glad tidings of peace and salvation to all the world, the same love which angels from heaven and shepherds on earth proclaimed at the birth of Christ.

Let the wisdom of this world be as wise as ever it will from its learned throne condemn all this as "fanaticism." It should not be troubling to anyone to be

condemned by that "wisdom" that God Himself has condemned as foolishness with Him. For the wisdom of this world has all that is contrary to salvation-wisdom, that the flesh has to the Spirit, earth to heaven or damnation to salvation. It is a wisdom whose spirit and breath keeps alive all the evil that is in fallen man and, which in its highest excellence, has only the full grown nature of the carnal mind that is enmity against God. It is a wisdom that is sensual and devilish, that hinders man from knowing about, yet dying all those deaths without which there can be no new life. It is a wisdom that turns all salvation-truths into empty, learned tales that, instead of helping the sinner to confess his sins and feel the misery that is hid under them, helps him to an art of hiding, even defending them. What the lusts and passions do against the wisdom that is from above is considered to be "right reason" by this wisdom from below. Its greatest skill is shown in keeping all the powers and passions of the natural man in peace and prosperity, and so the poor blinded sinner lives and dies in a total ignorance of that light, blessing and salvation that could only be had by a broken and contrite heart.

With respect to conscience this is the chief office of worldly wisdom;--to keep all things quiet in the old man that, whether busied in things spiritual or temporal, he may keep up the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. That they may remain without any disturbance from religious phantoms and dreams of mystic idiots, who for want of sober sense and sound learning, think that Christ really meant what he said in these words, "Except a man be born again of the Spirit or from above he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This fallen wisdom in its highest perfection is a classic, moral painter that, though it cannot alter the nature, can change the colors of everything. It can give to the most heavenly virtue such an outward form and color as will force the stoutest of aged and learned men to run away from it. To a vice of the greatest deformity it can pencil such charming features as will make every child of this world wish to live and die with it. Its next perfection is that of a flattering orator who has praise and dispraise at his own free disposal, for as they are all of his own making, so he can dispose them on whom and on what he will, not only as outward, interesting occasions call for them, but also as the inward whims of his own ups and downs desire them. Self, however willing to always be strong, has its weak hours and would always be tottering unless this elbow-orator kept him every day (though perhaps not every night), free from the

disturbing whispers of a seed of God in his soul. Now join (if you please) learning and religion to act in fellowship with this worldly wisdom to make their best of it, and then you will have a depravity of craft and subtlety as high as flesh and blood can carry it, that will bring forth a glittering Pharisee with a hardness of heart greater than that of the sinner and publican.

"Demas," says St. Paul, "has forsaken me, having loved this present world." Here you see all the good and blessing that is inseparable from the wisdom of this world-it always does the same thing and has the same effect wherever it is. It will do the same to high and low, learned or unlearned, clergy or laity that same unavoidability that it did to Demas. It will make them forsake Christ and turn their backs on every grace and virtue of His Holy Spirit as certainly as the love of the world made Demas to forsake Paul.

This wisdom has asked me how it is possible for Christian kingdoms in the neighborhood of one another to preserve themselves. This wisdom sees the strength and weapons of war as everyone's defense against such invasions, encroachments and robberies as would otherwise be the fate of Christian kingdoms from one another. This question is so far from needing to be answered by me, that it is wholly on my side. It confesses all and proves all that I have said of the fallen state of Christendom, to be strictly true. For if it is the governing spirit of Christian kingdoms that no one of them can subsist in safety from its neighboring Christian kingdoms but by its weapons of war, are not all Christian kingdoms equally in the same unchristian state as two neighboring bloody knaves who cannot be safe from one another but as each other's murdering arms preserve and protect them? This plea therefore for Christendom's wars, proves nothing else but the want of Christianity all over the Christian world. They stand upon no better a foundation of righteousness and goodness than when one murdering knave kills another that would have killed him.

But to know whether Christianity wants or joins in a war, Christianity is to be considered as in its right state. Now the true state of the world turned Christian is thus described by the great gospel-prophet who showed what a change it was to make in the fallen state of the world saying, "It shall come to pass in the last days

(that is, in the days of Christendom) that the mountain of the Lord's house (His Christian kingdom) shall be established in the top of the mountains and all nations shall flow into it and many people shall say, 'Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord's house and he will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths'" (Isaiah 2:2).

What follows from this going up of the nations to the mountain of the Lord's house from His teaching them of His ways and their walking in His paths? The holy prophet expressly tells you in his following words, "They shall beat their swords into plow-shares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up its sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This is the prophet's true Christendom with one and the same essential divine mark set upon it as when the Lamb of God said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another as I have loved you." Christ's kingdom of God has come nowhere but where the works of the devil are destroyed and men are turned from the power of Satan unto God. God is only another name for the highest and only good, and the highest and only good means nothing else but love with all its resulting works. Satan is only another name for the whole of evil and the whole of evil is nothing else but what is contrary to love. The sum total of all contrariety to love is contained in pride, wrath, strife, self, envy, hatred, revenge, mischief and murder. Look at these with all the fruits that belong to them and then you will see all the princely power that Satan is and has in this fallen world.

To see when and where the kingdoms of this fallen world are become a kingdom of God, the gospel prophet tells us that it is when and where that all enmity ceases. "The wolf," says he, "shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid. The calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed and their young ones shall lie down together and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The suckling child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den." For "they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain (that is through all holy Christendom)" (Isaiah 11:6).

See here the kingdom of God on the earth. It is nothing else but a kingdom of mere love where all hurt and destruction is done away with and every work of enmity

changed into one united power of heavenly love. But observe again and again when and where this comes to pass, that God's kingdom on earth is and can be nothing else but the power of reigning love. The prophet tells you it is, because in the day of His kingdom, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Therefore, O Christendom, your wars are certain proofs that you are as full of an ignorance of God as the waters cover the sea.

Chapter 17: What of the Reformations?

As to the present fallen state of universal Christendom working under the spirit and power of the great fiery dragon, no part of it can subsist or preserve itself from being devoured by every other part except with its own dragon weapons. But the Christendom born from above neither wants nor allows war, and is only where Christ is king and His Holy Spirit is the only governor of the wills, affections and designs of all that belong to it.

It is my complaint against, and charge upon, all the nations of Christendom that this necessity of murdering arms is the dragon's monster that is equally brought forth by all and every part of fallen Christendom. Therefore, all and every part, whether popish or Protestant, is equally as far from the Spirit of their Lord and Savior, the Lamb of God and therefore all are lacking the same entire reformation.

In these last ages of fallen Christendom many reformations have taken place. But alas! Truth be told, they have resulted in all their variety, little better than so many run-away births of one and the same mother, so many lesser Babels come out of Babylon the Great. Among all the reformers, the one and only true reformation has never been thought of. A change of place, of governors and of opinions, together with new-formed, outward models is all the reformation that has transpired to date!

The wisdom of this world with its worldly spirit was the only thing that had overcome the church and had carried it into captivity. For it is in captivity as soon as it is turned into a kingdom of this world. A kingdom of this world it certainly is, as soon as worldly wisdom has its power in it. Not a false doctrine, not a bad discipline, not

a usurped power or corrupt practice, ever has prevailed or does prevail in the church, but that has had its whole birth and growth from worldly wisdom. This wisdom was the great evil root the reforming ax should have been laid to and must be laid before the church can ever be again that virgin spouse of Christ that it was at the beginning. "If any man," says St. Paul, "will be wise, let him become a fool in this world." This admits of no exception. It is a maxim and is as universal and unalterable as what says, "If any man will follow Christ let him deny himself." For no man has any more to deny and repent of than what the wisdom and spirit of this world are and do in him. For all that is in this world, the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, are the very things in which, alone, the wisdom of this world lives and moves and has its being. It can be no other, can rise no higher nor be any better than the things that they are and do. As heavenly wisdom is the whole of all heavenly goodness, so earthly wisdom has the whole evil of all the earthly nature.

St. Paul speaks of a natural man that cannot know the things of God, but to whom they are mere foolishness. This natural man is only another name for the wisdom of this world. Though the natural man cannot know the things that are of God, he can know their names and learn to speak what the saints of God have spoken about them. He can make profession of them, be eloquent in their praise and set them forth in such a desirable view as to make them quite agreeable to the children of worldly wisdom. This is the natural man, who having got into the church and church power, has turned the things of God into things of this world. Its fallen state is nothing else but its fall into the hands of the natural man of this world. And when this is the state of the church, the wisdom of this world (that always loves its own) will be in love with its will and spare no cost to maintain its place. It will make laws, fight battles in defense of it, and condemn every man as heretical who dares speak a word against this glorious image of a church that the wisdom of this world has set up. This is the great anti-Christ that is neither better, nor worse, nor anything else but the spirit of Satan working against Christ in the strength and subtlety of earthly wisdom.

If, therefore, you take anything to be church-reformation other than a full departure from the wisdom of this world, or anything else to be your entrance into a salvation-

church but the nature, Spirit and works of Christ living in you, then papist or Protestant reformation or no reformation all, will be just as much good to you as when a Sadducee turns publican or a publican becomes a Pharisee. For the church of Christ, as the door of salvation, is nothing else but Christ Himself. Whether it is Christ in us or we in His church [His body], it is the same thing. When what wills and works in you is what was alive in Christ, then you are in His church, for what he was must be the same life in those who are His. Without this it matters not what pale you are in. To everyone without the new creature born from above, Christ says, "I know you not." And to every virtue that worldly wisdom puts on He says, "Get you behind me Satan for thou desire not the things that be of God."

The reason why worldly wisdom, though under a religious form, is and can be nothing else but what is called Satan or anti-Christ, is because all that we are and have from this world is that very enmity against God, that whole evil that separates us from Him and constitutes all the death and damnation that belongs to our fallen state. As sure as the life of this world is our separation from God, so is it that a total departure from every subtlety and prosperity of worldly wisdom is absolutely necessary to change an evil son of Adam into a holy son of God. And the church of Christ is solely for this end--to make us holy as he is holy. Only what is all powerful can change a sinner into a saint. And he who has not found that power in the church may be assured that he is not a true son of that church. For the true church brings forth no other births but holy children of God. It has no other end, no other nature or work but that of changing a sinner into a saint.

But this can only be done just as the change of night into day is done or as the darkness is quite lost in the light. Something is required that is as contrary to the whole nature of sin as light is to darkness and it must be as powerful over it as the light is. Power over darkness can alone do this. Creeds, canons, articles of religion, stately churches, learned priests, singing, preaching and praying in the best contrived form of words, can no more raise a dead sinner into a living saint than a fine system of light and colors can change the night into day. What cannot help you into all goodness cannot help you to any goodness nor can it take away any sin unless it can take away all sin.

On this ground the apostle said, "Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing [but a new creation]." On the same ground it must be said that popery is nothing and Protestantism is nothing, because all is nothing regarding salvation except a sinner changed into a saint and a new creature. Call nothing, therefore, your holy salvation-church but what takes away all your sins [Jesus Christ]. This is the only way not to be deceived with the cry about churches, reformations and divisions. If it be asked, "What is meant by taking away all our sins?" The whole is fully told us in these words, "To as many as believed, to them he gave power to become sons of God." This is the true taking away or forgiveness of sins, not a strong imagination or brain-fancy that on such an hour, or on such a day or in such a place, you felt and knew assuredly that all your sins were forgiven you. The need for forgiveness of sins that made you a sinner is not enough, because you will everyday thereafter have the same necessity of confessing yourself a miserable sinner as you had the day you first believed.

True forgiveness of sins and freedom from sinning only happens then when the thing that sinned in us is done away with or become powerless in us. Nothing can do this but that power by which we become sons of God. A blind man is only delivered from his blindness when he is put in full possession of seeing eyes. This is the only way his darkness is done away with. In this same way our sins are forgiven us or done away with when the power by which we become sons of God or the new creature is so given to us and so possessed by us, as seeing eyes are given to and possessed by the man who once lived in darkness. Only then can our old man be said to be truly put off when the new man in Christ is raised to life in his place. Our sins are only then truly blotted out or done away with when the sinless nature or a birth of God that sins not is come to be the ruling life in us.

The learned have given us many marks of the true church, but be that as it may, no man, whether learned or unlearned, can have any mark or proof of his own true church-membership [members of Christ's body], except his being dead unto all sin and alive unto all righteousness. This cannot be more plainly told us than in these words of our Lord, "He that commits sin is the servant of sin." Surely he that is a servant of sin cannot at the same time be a living member of Christ's body or that new creature who dwells in Christ and Christ in him. To suppose a man born again

from above under a necessity of continuing to sin is as absurd as to suppose that the true Christian is only to have so much of the nature of Christ born in him as is consistent with a real power of Satan still dwelling in him. "If the son," says Christ, "shall make you free, then you shall be free indeed." What is this but the same as saying if Christ be come to life in you, then a true freedom from all necessity of sinning is given to you.

Now if this is hindered and cannot come to pass in the faithful follower of Christ, it must be because both the willing and working of Christ in man is too weak to overcome what the devil wills and works in him. All this absurdity and even blasphemy is necessarily implied in that common doctrine of books and pulpits which teaches that the Christian can never be done with sinning as long as he lives. If this is the case, may Christendom sleep as securely as it does under the power of sin without any thought, hope or desire of doing God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, and live without any concern of being as pure as he who has called them is pure or walking as he walked.

The scripture knows no Christians or saints who act as saints ought to in all things, but iff scripture did not mean that a man flee all evil and be holy in all his conversation, saint and sinner would have only such difference as one carnal man has from another. Preachers and writers comfort the half-Christians with telling them that God requires not a perfect sinless obedience, but accepts the sincerity of our weak endeavors in place of it. Here, if ever there was, is a case of the blind leading the blind. For St. Paul, comparing the way of salvation to a race says, "In a race all run but one obtains the prize: so run that you may obtain it." Now if Paul had seeing eyes, must not they be blind who teach that God accepts all that run in the religious race and requires not that any should obtain the prize?

How easy was it to see that the sincerity of our weak endeavors is quite a different thing from what alone can and does require perfection of our lives. God accepts sincerity and bears with it. But why or how? Not because he seeks or requires no more, but he bears with them, because, though, they are a great distance from the prize that is set before them-- that perfection or new creature that he absolutely

requires-they press on that they might reach their high calling in Christ. These are the ones who "obtain the prize."

The same thing Paul says is said by Christ. In other words, "Strive," says he, "to enter in at the strait gate." Here, our best endeavors are called for and therefore accepted by God. At the same time he adds, "that many shall strive to enter in but shall not be able." Why is this so? It is because Christ Himself is the one door into life. Here the strivers mentioned by Christ and those that St. Paul calls runners in a race are the very same persons. Christ who calls Himself the one door of entrance is the same thing that Paul calls the prize. The one that alone obtains the prize or that enters through the right door is that new creature in whom Christ is truly born. For whether you consider things natural or supernatural nothing but Christ in us can be our hope of glory.

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-15)

The pleader for imperfection further supports himself by saying, "No man in the world, Christ excepted, was ever without sin." And so say I with the apostle, "That if we say we have not sinned we make Him a liar." But then it is as true to say that we make Him a liar if we deny the possibility of our ever being freed from a necessity of sinning. For the same Word of God says, "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

But surely he that is left under a necessity of sinning as long as he lives can no more be said to be cleansed from all unrighteousness than a man who must be a cripple to his dying day can be said to be cured of all his lameness. What weaker conclusion can well be made than to infer that because Christ was the only man that was born and lived free from sin, no man on earth can be raised to a freedom from sinning. This is no better than concluding that because the old man is everyone's birth from Adam, there can be no such thing as a new man created unto righteousness through Christ Jesus living in him as his All in all. This is no better

sense or logic than saying that because our Redeemer found us as sinners, therefore he must of all necessity leave us as sinners.

Of Christ it only can be said that he is in Himself the true vine. But of every branch that is His and grows in Him, it must be as truly said that the life and spirit of the true vine is the life and spirit of its branches and what flows through the vine also flows through the branches. And here let it be well noted that if the branch has not the life and goodness of the vine in it, it can only be because it is broken off from the vine and therefore a withered branch fit for the fire. But if the branches abide in the vine, then Christ says this glorious thing of them, "You shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). This is the very same glorious thing that he had before said of Himself, "Father I thank you that you have heard me" and "I knew that you hear me always" (John 11:41).

With all this being true, how could this new creature who is in such union, communion and power with God because Christ is in him and he in Christ, as really as the vine is in the branches and the branches in the vine, how must such a newly created creature be a servant of sin as long as he lives in this world? This is as absurd as saying that because of this union that Christ must now stoop to live by the power of our old corruption.

The sober divine who abhors the pride of fanatics for the sake of humility says of himself and all men, "We are poor, blind and imperfect creatures and all our natural faculties are perverted, corrupted and out of their right state. Therefore nothing that is perfect can come from us or be done by us." Truth enough! This is the very same truth as when the apostle says, "The natural man knows not the things that be of God; he cannot know them for they are foolishness to him." This is the man that we all are by nature. But what scripture ever spoke of or required any perfect works from this man any more than it requires the Ethiopian to change his skin? What a learned divine must he be who considers this old natural man as the Christian and therefore rejects Christian perfection because this old man cannot attain to it? What greater blindness than to appeal to our fallen state as a proof of a weakness and corruption which we must have when we are redeemed from it? Is this any wiser

than saying that sin and corruption must be where Christ is because it is everywhere he is not?

Our Lord has said this absolute truth, that unless we are born again from above there is no possible entrance into the kingdom of God. What this new birth is in us and what we get by it is as expressly told us by His beloved apostle saying, "What is born of God sins not." This is as true and unalterable as to say what is born of the devil can do nothing else but add sin to sin. To what end do we pray, "this day we may not fall into no sin," if no such day can be had? But if sinning can be made to cease in us for one day, what can do this for us but what can do it tomorrow as well? What benefit in praying that "God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven," if the earth as long as it lasts must have as many sinners as it has men upon it? How vainly does the church pray for the baptized person, "that he may have power and strength to have victory and to triumph against the devil, the world and the flesh," if this victorious triumph can never be obtained? What good is this baptism and prayer if he must continue committing sin and be a servant of sin as long as he lives? What sense can there be in making a communion of saints to be an article of our creed if at that same time we are to believe that Christians as long as they live must in some degree or other follow and be led by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life?

From where and why do all these foolish doctrines come? It is because the church is no longer that spiritual house of God in which nothing is intended and sought after but His spiritual power and life. It has become a mere human institution made up of worldly power, worldly learning and worldly prosperity in gospel matters. As a result, all the frailties, follies and imperfections of human nature must have as much life in the church as in any other human society. The best sons of such a church are forced to plead such imperfections in all its members, as must be where the old fallen human nature is still alive. And alive it must be and its life defended where the being continually moved and led by the Spirit of God is rejected as gross fanaticism. For nothing but a full birth and continual breathing and inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the new born creature can be a deliverance from all that is earthly, sensual and devilish in our fallen nature. This new creature, born again in Christ of that Eternal Word that created all things in heaven and on earth, is both the rock

and church of which Christ says, "The gates of hell shall never prevail against it." For prevail they will and must against everything but the new creature. And every fallen man, be he where he will or who he will, is in his fallen state and his whole life is a mere Egyptian bondage and Babylonian captivity until the heavenly church or the new birth from above has taken him out of it.

See how St. Paul sets forth the salvation-church as being nothing else and doing nothing else but merely as the mother of this new birth. "Know you not," says he, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Here we have the one true church infallibly described and no other church but the new creature. He goes on, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." Therefore to be in Christ, or in His church, belongs to no one unless the old man is put off and the new creature risen in Christ is put on. The same thing is said again in these words, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth, we should not serve sin." Therefore the true church is nowhere to be found but in the new creature that henceforth sins not nor is any longer a servant to sin.

Away then with all the tedious volumes of church unity, church power and church salvation. Ask neither a Council of Trent, nor a Synod of Dort, nor an assembly of divines for a definition of the church. The apostle has given you not just a definition but the unchangeable nature of it in these words. But now, "being made free from sin and become servants of God, have your fruits unto holiness and the end everlasting life." Therefore to be in the true salvation-church and to be in Christ, that new creature that sins not is strictly the same thing. What now is become of this true church or where must the man go who would desire to be a living member of it? He need go nowhere, because wherever he is, what is to save him and what he is to be saved from is always with him. Self is all the evil that he has and God is all the goodness that he ever can have, but self is always with him and God is always with him. Death to self is his only entrance into the church of life and nothing but God can give death to self. Self is an inward life and God is an inward

Spirit of life. Therefore, nothing kills what must be killed in us or quickens what must come to life in us except the inward work of God in the soul and the inward work of the soul in God.

This is that mystic religion that, though it has nothing in it but that same Spirit, that same truth and that same life that always was and always must be the religion of all God's holy angels and saints in heaven, is accounted to be madness by the wisdom of this world. As wisely done as to reckon him mad, who says that the vanity of things temporal cannot be or give life to the things that are eternal, or that the circumcision of the flesh is but as poor a thing as the whetting of the knife in comparison of that inward mystic circumcision of the heart which can only be done by, "that Word of God which is sharper than any two edged sword and pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit" (Heb. iv.1). Now fancy to yourself a rabbi-doctor laughing at this circumcision of the two edged sword of God as gospel madness, and then you see that very same Christian orthodoxy that in this day condemns the inward working life of God in the soul as mystic madness.

Look at all that is outward. All that you see has no more of salvation in it than the stars and elements. Look at all the good works you can think of. They have no goodness for you except when the good Spirit of God is the doer of them in you. For all the outward works of religion may be done by the natural man,. He can observe all church-duties, stick close to doctrines and put on the semblance of every outward virtue, but this is as high he can go. No Christian can go any higher than this feigned outward formality put on by his natural man until led and governed by the Spirit of God. To this he can add nothing but his own natural fleshly zeal in the defense of it. All zeal must be of this kind until it is the zeal that is born of God and calls every creature to that same new birth from above.

"My little children," says St. Paul, "of whom I travail again in birth until Christ be formed in you." This is the whole labor of an apostle to the end of the world. He has nothing to preach to sinners, but the absolute necessity, the true way and the certain means of being born again from above. But if dropping this one necessary thing, he becomes a disputing reformer about words and opinions and helps Christians to be zealously separated from one another for the sake of being saved

by different notions of faith, works, justification, election, etc. He has forgot his calling and has become a blind leader of all who are blind enough to follow him. All that is called faith, works, justification, sanctification or election are only so many different expressions of what the restored, divine life is and does in us. They have no existence anywhere or in anything but the new creature. Everything that is or can be good in us is nothing else but this divine birth from above, because the divine nature dead in Adam was his entire loss of every divine virtue. It was his whole fall under the power of this world, the flesh and the devil. Therefore, the divine nature brought again to life in man is his faith, his hope, his prayer, his works, his justification, sanctification, election and salvation. And the election that systematical doctors have taken out of its place and built it into an absolute irreversible decree of God, has no other nature, no other effect or power of salvation, but what equally belongs to our faith, hope, prayer, love of God and love of our neighbor. Only as far as these divine virtues are in us are we the elect of God and this means nothing else but the beloved of God. Nothing makes us the beloved of God but His own first image and likeness rising up again in us.

If you would plainly know what is meant by being elected of God, the same is meant as when the scripture says, "God hears only those who call upon Him," or that he can only be "found by those who seek Him." So he only elects those who elect Him. Again, "He that honors me, him will I honor," says God. "He that loves me," says Christ, "shall be beloved of me and my Father." This is the mystery of election as it relates to salvation. At diverse times and in sundry manners God may have, and has had, His chosen vessels for particular offices, messages and appointments. As to salvation from our fallen state, every son of Adam is His chosen vessel and this is as certain as that every son of Adam has the seed of the woman, the incorruptible seed of the Word born along with him and this is God's unchangeable universal election that chooses or wills the salvation of all men. For the ground of all union, communion or love between God and the creature lies wholly in the divine nature. What is divine in man tends towards God and elects God. And God only and solely elects His own birth nature and likeness in man. But seeing His own birth, a seed of His own divine nature is in every man. To suppose God by an arbitrary power is willing and decreeing eternal happiness in some and willing and decreeing eternal misery in others is a blasphemous absurdity and supposes a greater

injustice in God than the wickedest creatures can possibly commit against one another.

But truth, to the eternal praise and glory of God, will eternally say that His love is as universal and unchangeable as His being and that His mercy, over all His works, can no more cease than His omnipotence can begin to grow weak. God's mark of a universal salvation set upon all mankind was first given in these words, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Therefore wherever the serpent is, there his head is to be bruised. This was God's infallible assurance or omnipresent promise that all that died in Adam should have its first birth of glory again.

The eternal Son of God came into the world only for the sake of this new birth, to give God the glory of restoring it to all the dead sons of fallen Adam. All the mysteries of this incarnate, suffering, dying Son of God, all the price that he paid for our redemption, all the washings that we have from His all-cleansing blood poured out for us, all the life that we receive from eating His flesh and drinking His blood have their infinite value, their high glory and amazing greatness in this, because nothing less than these supernatural mysteries of a God-man could raise that new creature out of Adam's death into a living temple and deified habitation of the Spirit of God.

That this new birth of the Spirit or the divine life in man was the truth, the substance and sole end of His miraculous mysteries, is plainly told us by Christ Himself, who at the end of all His process on earth tells His disciples what was to be the blessed and full effect of it, namely that the Holy Spirit, the Comforter (being now fully purchased for them), should after His ascension come in the stead of Christ in the flesh. "If I go not away," says he, "the comforter will not come. But if I go away I will send Him unto you and He shall guide you into all truth." Therefore all that Christ was, did, suffered, dying in the flesh and ascending into heaven, was for this sole end--to purchase for all His followers a new birth, new life, and new light in and by the Spirit of God, restored to them and living in them as their support, comforter and guide into all truth. And this is what was meant by His words, "LO I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD."

Appendix: Swearing Oaths

[The following section about the evil of a Christian swearing oaths may not seem a prevalent problem in modern American society, but it did profoundly affect Law's life. As a Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Law was required to swear an oath of allegiance to the Hanoverian dynasty (that had replaced the Stuart dynasty) as the lawful rulers of the United Kingdom. Since he was forbidden by scripture to swear, he was ineligible to serve as a university teacher or parish minister. He found employment as a family tutor, serving ten years with the family of the historian Edward Gibbon. Forbidden the use of the pulpit and the lecture-hall, he preached through his books. -MDC]

Our Lord said, "You have heard that it has been said by them of old time, You shall not perjure yourself, but shall perform unto the Lord your oaths." The Jews practiced promissory oaths and thought all was well when there was a performance of them. But this with numbers of other Jewish practices was not to be allowed in this kingdom of God that was come into the world. Christ totally rejects and absolutely forbids it saying, "I say unto you, swear not at all." In place of this He appoints, and absolutely demands, a most perfect simplicity of language to support and adorn the mutual communication of those whom he had created again unto righteousness and given power to become sons of God by saying, "Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil." What more could have been done by Christ to prevent the use or hinder the entrance of an oath into His church? What then shall we say of the present universal Christendom? For if Christ had commanded the direct contrary, had he said, "Behold I give you this new commandment, let not a simple 'Yes' and 'No' be of any avail in all your communication, but let oaths be required of all that bear my name as a proof that they belong to me and act in all their dealings as become saints; for whatsoever is less than this cometh of evil." Had this been Christ's new commandment, all the churches of Christendom, popish and Protestant, and these reformed kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, might have much to boast of their obedience to it. For through town and country, in all ignorant villages, in all learned colleges, in all courts, spiritual and temporal, what with law-oaths, simony-oaths, bribery-oaths, election-oaths, etc., there is more swearing and forswearing than all that history

reports of any idol-worshipping nations. It was said of old, "Because of swearing the land mourns." It is every bit as true to say now, "Because of swearing the land rejoices in iniquity, is full of profaneness and without any fear or awe of the divine majesty, daily swallowing down all manner of oaths in the same good state of mind and with as much serious reflection, as drinking buddies swallow down their liquor."

"He that despises, me," says Christ, "despises, not me but Him that sent me." Can the church that absolutely requires what Christ has absolutely forbidden be free from the most open and public despising of Christ, while in full contrariety to His express word, refuses the sufficiency of that "yes" and "no" that he has commanded to be sufficient? What's worse is, they go on to compel all orders of Christians to swear by the very book that says to all, whether high or low, prince, priest or people, to "swear not at all"!

If the swearing law was to order that, instead of kissing the gospel-book, the swearer should say, "In remembrance of and in regard to the words of Christ forbidding me to swear I make this oath," who would not see the open contempt for Christ and His gospel? But the contempt of both is as truly there when the gospel-book is kissed by the swearer, for the book has nothing relating to oaths but those words of Christ which absolutely forbid the use of them. Instead, therefore, of saying, "So help me God and His holy gospel, it might have been much better if every swearing law through all Christendom had obliged every swearer to finish his oath with these words, "Let God and His holy gospel pardon me in this one thing."

If it here be asked whether I would have all private Christians to beggar themselves and lose all their right and title to house and land which by the laws of Christendom cannot be preserved without certain promissory oaths, I say not so. But my answer is that as the Jews were of old carried captive into Babylon, as real and as great a captivity must happen to all private Christians born and living under a fallen state of governing Christendom. For whether it be a pope or a Nebuchadnezzar, popish or Protestant church, governors that make the goods and properties of private Christians only possible to be possessed by obedience to their swearing laws, the captivity is the same. And as God bore with the want of a Jerusalem worship in those Jews whose captivity suffered them not to perform it, so it may well be hoped

and believed that he will bear with that lack of gospel purity in the "yes" and "no" of private Christians that their captivity under a fallen state of Christian government does not suffer them to adhere to. Also, that the piety of private Christians, loving and longing after gospel-purity of communication under the church-captivity, will be as acceptable to God as the piety of captive Jews was, who, though living under heathen laws and forced to say their prayers in Babylon, always turned their eyes toward, and their hearts longing after, Jerusalem and its holy worship.

What I write is not to show that Christendom's oaths and the manner of them are not to be submitted to by any private good Christian, but to show in the plainest manner that the laws of Christendom that make them necessary are a full proof that the spirit that governs all Christendom is fallen away from the Spirit of Christ. And also to show that if gross impiety runs through all the Christian world, if much and much the greatest part of swearing Christians have lost all pious fear of oaths and swearing, it is because the necessity of swearing meets every man in almost everything at the peril of losing all that he has or can have unless he will swear. When the matter of an oath is a manifest lie or an engagement to do some wicked thing, all is to be suffered rather than take it. But where there is nothing false or bad affirmed or promised, nor any blame chargeable but that of going further than our Lord's "yes" and "no," it is plain from Christ's words that the evil is only in from where the oath comes. When a person swears of his own accord or wantonly, then the oath comes of or from the evil of his own heart. But when a Christian in whose heart the simplicity and purity of gospel-language is written and loved, submits to use more than a "yes" or a "no," compelled by that authority which makes the refusal to be the loss of goods and bodily imprisonment, then such departure from gospel-language comes of and from the evil in that power that required it, whether it be a pope, a kirk, a church, an assembly of divines, or a Nebuchadnezzar. All this, I say, is plain from Christ's own words, "Let your yes be yes and your no, no." But is this? It is because whatsoever is more than this comes of evil and is caused by evil. Therefore, the evil in the use of an imposed oath is, by the words of Christ, charged upon and confined to what causes or forces it to be done, for what the oath comes from is what our Savior calls the evil.

In a word, what calls for and requires oaths among Christians, requires what Christ forbids; but governing Christendom everywhere establishes requires and even compels Christians to swear. Therefore, governing Christendom is fallen from Christ and acts by and through that spirit that, being contrary to Christ, is and must be called anti-Christ.

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