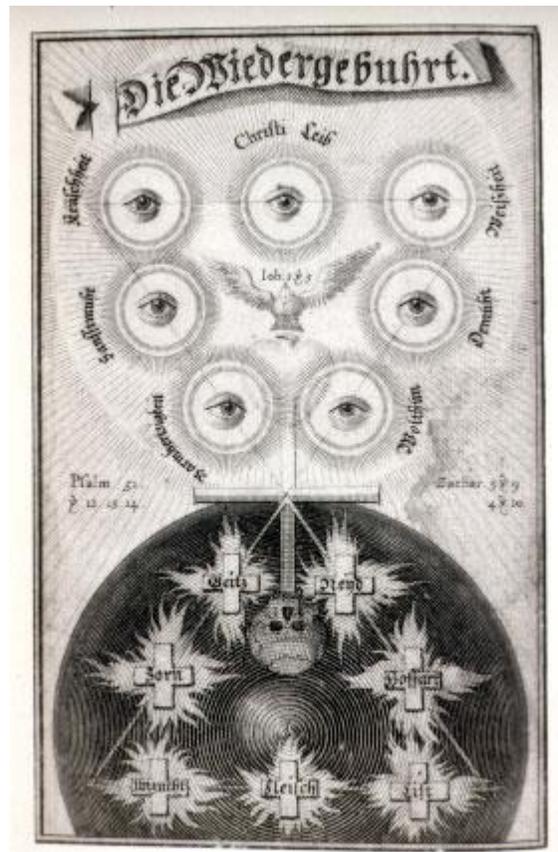


REGENERATION OR THE NEW BIRTH

Shewing how he that earnestly seeketh Salvation, must suffer himself to be brought out of the confused and contentious Babel, by the Spirit of CHRIST, that he may be born anew in the Spirit of CHRIST, and live to Him only.

Jacob Boehme
1622



Rev. xviii. 4: *Come out of Babylon, my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues; for her Sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembered her Iniquity.*

[Jacob Boehme Online](#)

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE READER

THOUGH I have in my other Writings, set down a clear description of Regeneration, or the New-Birth, from the Ground thereof; yet because everyone hath them not, neither hath everyone the Capacity to understand them; I have therefore, as a Service to the simple Children of Christ, here set down a short Sum concerning the New-Birth. But if any desire to search the deep Ground from whence all floweth, and have the Gift to understand it, let them read

I. The Three Principles of the Divine Essence.

II. The Threefold Life of Man.

III. The Forty Questions of the Original Essence, Substance, Nature, and Property of the Soul.

IV. The Incarnation and Birth of Jesus Christ the Son of God; also of his Suffering, Death, and Resurrection.

V. The Six Points treating of the Three Worlds how they are in one another as one; and yet make Three Principles, viz. Three Births or Centres.

VI. The Mysterium Magnum, which is an Interpretation upon Genesis.

And in them he shall find all that he can ask, and that as deep as the Mind of Man is able to reach. I have written this for the true Israelites, that is, for the Hungry and Thirsty Hearts that long after the Fountain of Christ, who are my Fellow Members in the Spirit of Christ: But not for the Ishmaelites and Scorners, for they have a Book within them, wherewith they vex, persecute, and suppress the Children of Christ that are under the Cross; and yet, though it be unwillingly and unwittingly to themselves, they must be Servants to such Children of Christ.

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OF REGENERATION.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Shewing how Man should consider himself.

1. CHRIST said, Except ye turn and become as Children, ye shall not see the kingdom of God. Again, he said to Nicodemus, Except a Man be born again, of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot

enter into the Kingdom of God; for that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.

2. Also the Scripture positively declareth, that the fleshly natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know or conceive them.

3. Now seeing that all of us have Flesh and Blood and are mortal, as we find by Experience, and yet the Scripture saith, that We are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us, and that the Kingdom of God is within us, and that Christ must be formed in us; also, that He will give us his Flesh for Food, and his Blood for Drink: And that, Whosoever shall not eat of the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood hath no Life in him. Therefore we should seriously consider, what Kind of Man in us it is, that is capable of being thus like the Deity.

4. For it cannot be said of the mortal Flesh that turneth to Earth again, and liveth in the Vanity of this World, and continually lusteth against God; that it is the Temple of the Holy Ghost; much less can it be said that the New-Birth cometh to pass in this earthly Flesh, which dyeth and putrieth, and is a continual House of Sin.

5. Yet seeing that it remaineth certain, that a true Christian is born of Christ, and that the New-Birth is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us, and that the New Man only, that is born of Christ, partaketh of the Flesh and Blood of Christ; it appeareth that it is not so easy a Matter to be a Christian.

6. And that Christianity doth not consist in the mere knowing of the History, and applying the Knowledge thereof to ourselves, saying that Christ died for us, and hath destroyed Death and turned it into Life in us, and that he hath paid the Ransom for us, so that we need do nothing but comfort ourselves therewith, and stedfastly believe that it is so.

7. For we find of ourselves that Sin is living, lusting, strong, and powerfully working in the Flesh, and therefore it must be somewhat else, which doth not co-operate with Sin in the Flesh, nor willeth it, that is the New-Birth in Christ.

8. For St. Paul saith, There is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. And further, Should we that are Christians be yet Sinners? God forbid, seeing we are dead to Sin in Christ.

9. Besides, the Man of Sin cannot be the Temple of the Holy Ghost; and yet, there is no Man that sinneth not, for God hath shut up all under Sin. As the Scripture saith, No one living is righteous in thy Sight, if thou imputest his Sins to him. The righteous Man falleth seven Times a Day; and yet it cannot be meant that the righteous falleth and sinneth, but his mortal and sinful Man. For the Righteousness of a Christian in Christ cannot sin.

10. Moreover, St. Paul saith, Our Conversation is in Heaven, from whence we expect our Saviour Jesus Christ. Now, if our Conversation be in Heaven, then Heaven must be in us; Christ dwelleth in Heaven; and then if we are his Temple, that Temple Heaven must be in us.

11. But for all this, seeing Sin tempteth us within us, whereby the Devil hath within us an Access to us, therefore Hell also must be in us too, for the Devil dwelleth in Hell; wheresoever he is, he is in Hell, and cannot come out of it. Yea, when he possesseth a Man, he dwelleth in Hell, viz. in the Anger of God in that Man.

12. Therefore we ought to consider well what Man is, and how he is a Man; and then we shall find that a true Christian is not a mere historical new Man, as if it were enough for us outwardly to confess Christ, and believe that he is the Son of God, and hath paid the Ransom for us. For Righteousness availeth nothing, imputed from without, that is, by believing only that it is so imputed. But it is an inherent Righteousness born in us, by which we become the Children of God, that availeth.

13. And as the earthly Flesh must die, so also the Life and Will must die from Sin, and be as a Child that knoweth nothing, but longeth only after the Mother which brought it forth. So likewise must the Will of a Christian enter again into its Mother, viz. into the Spirit of Christ, and become a Child in itself, in its own Will and Power, having its Will and Desire inclined and directed only towards its Mother. And a new Will and Obedience in Righteousness, which willetth Sin no more, must rise from Death out of the Spirit of Christ in him.

14. For that Will is not born anew, which desireth and admitteth Vanity into itself; and yet there remaineth a Will which longeth after Vanity, and sinneth, even in the new-born or regenerate Man. Therefore the Image or Nature of Man should be well understood, and how the New-birth cometh to pass; seeing it is not wrought in the mortal Flesh, and yet is wrought truly and really in us, in Flesh and Blood, in Water and Spirit, as the Scripture saith.

15. We should therefore rightly understand what Kind of Man it is in us, that is the Member of Christ, and Temple of God who dwelleth in Heaven. And then also what Kind of Man it is, that the Devil ruleth and driveth; for he cannot meddle with the Temple of Christ, nor doth he care much for the mortal Flesh; and yet there are not three Men in one another, for all make but one Man.

16. Now if we will understand this rightly, we must consider Time and Eternity, and how they are in one another; also Light and Darkness, Good and Evil; but especially the Original of Man. This may be thus apprehended.

17. THE outward World with the Stars and four Elements, wherein Man and all Creatures live, neither is, nor is called God. Indeed God dwelleth in it, but the Substance of the outward World comprehendeth him not.

18. We see also that the Light shineth in Darkness, and the Darkness comprehendeth not the Light, and yet they both dwell in one another. The four Elements are also an Example of this; which in their Original are but one Element, which is neither hot nor cold, nor dry, nor moist; and yet by its stirring separateth itself into Four Properties, viz. into Fire, Air, Water, and Earth.

19. Who would believe that Fire produceth or generateth Water? And that the Original of Fire could be in Water, if we did not see it with our Eyes in Tempests of Thunder, Lightening, and Rain; and did not find also, that in living Creatures, the essential Fire of the Body dwelleth in the Blood, and that the Blood is the Mother of the Fire, and the Fire the Father of the Blood.

20. And as God dwelleth in the World, and filleth all Things, and yet possesseth nothing; and as the Fire dwelleth in Water, and yet possesseth it not: Also, as the Light dwelleth in Darkness, and yet possesseth not the Darkness; as the Day is in the Night, and the Night in the Day, Time in Eternity, and Eternity in Time; so is Man created according to the outward Humanity; he is the Time, and in the Time, and the Time is the outward World, and it is also the outward Man.

21. The inward Man is Eternity and the Spiritual Time and World, which also consisteth of Light and Darkness, viz. of the Love of God, as to the eternal Light, and of the Anger of God as to the eternal Darkness; whichsoever of these is manifest in him, his Spirit dwelleth in that, be it Darkness or Light.

22. For Light and Darkness are both in him, but each of them dwelleth in itself, and neither of them possesseth the other; but if one of them entereth into the other, and will possess it, then that other loseth its Right and Power.

23. The passive loseth its Power; for if the Light be made manifest in the Darkness, then the Darkness loseth its Darkness, and is not known or discerned. Also on the contrary, if the

Darkness arise in the Light and get the upper-hand, then the Light and the Power thereof are extinguished. This is to be observed also in Man.

24. The Eternal Darkness of the Soul is Hell, viz. an aching Source of Anguish, which is called the Anger of God; but the Eternal Light in the Soul is the Kingdom of Heaven, where the fiery Anguish of Darkness is changed into Joy.

25. For the same Nature of Anguish, which in the Darkness is a Cause of Sadness, is in the Light a Cause of the outward and stirring Joy. For the Source or Original in Light, and the Source in Darkness are but one Eternal Source, and one Nature, and yet they, viz. the Light and Darkness, have a mighty Difference in the Source; the one dwelleth in the other and begetteth the other, and yet is not the other. The Fire is painful and consuming, but the Light is yielding, friendly, powerful, and delightful, a sweet and amiable Joy.

26. This may be found also in Man; he is and liveth in three Worlds; the First is the Eternal dark World, viz. the Centre of the Eternal Nature, which produceth or generateth the Fire, viz. the Source or Property of Anguish.

27. The Second is the Eternal light World, which begetteth the Eternal Joy, which is the Divine Habitation wherein the Spirit of God dwelleth, and wherein the Spirit of Christ receiveth the human Substance, and subdueth the Darkness, so that it must be a Cause of Joy in the Spirit of Christ in the Light.

28. The Third is the outward visible World in the four Elements and the visible Stars; though indeed every Element hath its peculiar Constellation in itself, whence the Desire and Property arise, and is like a Mind.

29. Thus you may understand, that the Fire in the Light is a Fire of Love, a Desire of Meekness and Delightfulness; but the Fire in the Darkness is a Fire of Anguish, and is painful, irksome, inimicitious {hostile, unfriendly} and full of Contrariety in its Essence. The Fire of the Light hath a good Relish or Taste, but the Taste in the Essence of Darkness is unpleasant, loathsome and irksome. For all the Forms or Properties in the Eternal Nature, till they reach to Fire, are in great Anguish.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

How Man is created.

HERE we are to consider the Creation of Man. Moses saith, God created Man in his Image, in the Image of God created he him. This we understand to be both out of the eternal and temporal Birth; out of the inward and spiritual World, which he breathed into him, into the created Image; and then out of the Substance of the inward spiritual World, which is holy.

31. For as there is a Nature and Substance in the outward World; so also in the inward spiritual World there is a Nature and Substance which is spiritual; from which the outward World is breathed forth, and produced out of Light and Darkness, and created to have a Beginning and Time.

32. And out of the Substance of the inward and outward World Man was created; out of, and in the Likeness of the Birth of all Substances. The Body is a Limbus (an Extract or a kind of Seed, which containeth all that which the Thing from whence it is taken hath) of the Earth, and also a Limbus of the heavenly Substance; for the Earth is breathed forth, out-spoken, or created out of the dark and light World. In the Word Fiat (or creating Word) viz. in the eternal Desire, Man was taken out of the Earth, and so created an Image out of Time and Eternity.

33. This Image was in the inward and spiritual Element, from whence the four Elements proceed and are produced. In that one Element was Paradise; for the Properties of Nature from the Fire-dark-and-light-World were all in Harmony and Agreement in Number, Weight, and

Measure. One of them was not manifested more eminently than another, therefore was there no Frailty therein. For no one Property was predominant over another, neither was there any Strife or Contrariety among the Powers and Properties.

34. Into this created Image God breathed the Spirit and Breath of Understanding out of the three Worlds, as one only Soul which, as to its Original Principle or Essence, is, or consisteth in, the inward dark Fire-World of the eternal spiritual Nature; according to which God calleth himself a strong jealous God, and a consuming Fire.

35. And this now is the eternal creaturely great Soul, a magical Breath of Fire, in which Fire consisteth the Original of Life, from the great Power of Separation. God's Anger, or the eternal Darkness, is in this Property, so far as Fire reacheth without giving Light.

36. The second Property of the Breath of God is the Spirit of the Source of Light, proceeding from the great fiery Desire of Love, from the great Meekness; according to which God calleth himself a loving, merciful God; in which consisteth the true Spirit of Understanding, and of Life in Power.

37. For as Light shineth from Power, and as the Power of Understanding is discerned in the Light, so the Breath of the Light was joined to the Breath of the Fire of God, and breathed into the Image of Man.

38. The third Property of the Breath of God was the outward Air with its Constellation or Astrum, wherein the Life and Constellation of the outward Substance and Body did consist. This he breathed into his Nostrils; and as Time and Eternity hang together, and as Time is produced out of Eternity, so the inward Breath of God hung to the outward.

39. This three-fold Soul was at once breathed into Man; and each Substance of the Body received the Spirit according to its Property. The outward Flesh received the outward Air and its Constellations, for a rational and vegetative Life, to the Manifestation of the Wonders of God; and the Light Body or Heavenly Substance received the Breath of the Light of the great Divine Powers and Virtues; which Breath is called the Holy Ghost.

40. Thus the Light pierced through the Darkness, viz. through the dark Breath of Fire, and also through the Breath of the outward Air and its Constellation or Astrum, and so deprived all the Properties of their Power, that neither the Anguish of the Breath of Fire in the inward Property of the Soul, nor Heat nor Cold, nor any of all the Properties of the outward Constellation, might or could be manifested.

41. The Properties of all the three Worlds in Soul and Body were in equal Agreement, Temperature, and Weight. That which was inward and holy ruled through and over the outward, that is, the outward Parts of the outward Life, of the outward Stars and Constellations and the Four Elements; and that original and universal Power of the inward over the outward constituted the Holy Paradise.

42. And thus Man was both in Heaven and also in the outward World, and was Lord over all the Creatures of this World. Nothing could destroy him.

43. For such was the Earth also, until the Curse of God broke forth. The Holy Property of the Spiritual World sprung up through the Earth, and brought forth Holy Paradisical Fruits, which Man then could eat in a magical Paradisical Manner.

44. And had neither need of Teeth, nor Entrails in his Body. For as the Light swalloweth up Darkness, and as the Fire devoureth Water, and yet is not filled therewith, just such a Centre Man also had for his Mouth to eat withal, according to the Manner of Eternity.

45. And he could also generate his Like out of himself, without any dividing or opening of his Body and Spirit, in such a Manner as God generated the outward World; who did not divide

himself; but did in his Desire, viz. in the Word Fiat, manifest himself, and brought that same Desire into a Figure according to the Eternal Spiritual Birth. So also Man was created an Image and Likeness of God in that Respect, according to Time and Eternity, out of both Time and Eternity, yet in and for an immortal Life, which was without Enmity or Contrariety.

46. But the Devil having himself been a Prince and Hierarch in the Place of this World, and cast out for his Pride into the dark, anguishing, painful and hostile Property and Source, into the Wrath of God, envied Man the Glory of being created in and for the Spiritual World, the Place which he himself once possessed; and therefore brought his Imagination or Desire into the Image of Man, and made it so lusting, that the dark World, and also the outward World arose in Man, and departed from the equal Agreement and Temperature wherein they stood, and so one predominated over the other.

47. And then the Properties were each of them separately made manifest in itself, and each of them lusted after that which was like itself. That which was out of the Birth of the dark World, and also that which was out of the Birth of the light World, would each of them eat of the Limbus of the Earth, according to its Hunger; and so Evil and Good became manifest in Adam.

48. And when the Hunger of the Properties went into the Earth, from whence the Properties of the Body were extracted, then the Fiat drew such a Branch out of the Earth, as the Properties could eat of in their awakened Vanity; for this was possible.

49. For the Spirit of the strong and great magical Power of Time and Eternity was in Adam, from which the Earth with its Properties was breathed forth; and so the Fiat, viz. the strong Desire of the eternal Nature, attracted the Essence of the Earth. And thus God let the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil grow for Adam, according to his awakened Properties; for the great Power of the Soul and of the Body caused it.

50. And then Man must be tried, whether he would stand and subsist in his own Powers, before the Tempter the Devil, and before the Wrath of the Eternal Nature; and whether the Soul would continue in the equal Agreement of the Properties in true Resignation under God's Spirit, as an Instrument of God's Harmony, a tuned Instrument of divine Joyfulness for the Spirit of God to strike upon. This was tried by that Tree, and this severe Commandment was added, Thou shalt not eat thereof, for on that Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

51. But it being known to God that Man would not stand, and that he had already imagined and lusted after Good and Evil, God said, It is not good for Man to be alone, we will make him an Help-meet for him.

52. For God saw that Adam could not then generate magically, having entered with his Lust into Vanity. Now therefore Moses saith, God caused a deep Sleep to fall upon him, and he slept; that is, seeing Man would not continue in the Obedience of the Divine Harmony in the Properties, submitting himself to stand still as an Instrument of the Spirit of God; therefore God suffered him to fall from the Divine Harmony into an Harmony of his own, viz. into the awakened Properties of Evil and Good; the Spirit of his Soul went into these.

53. And there in this Sleep he died from the Angelical World, and fell under the Power of the outward Fiat, and thus bade farewell to the Eternal Image which was of God's begetting. Here his Angelical Form and Power fell into a Swoon and lay on the Ground.

54. And then by the Fiat God made the Woman out of him, out of the Matrix of Venus, viz. out of that Property wherein Adam had the Begettress in himself; and so out of one Body he made two, and divided the Properties of the Tinctures, viz. the watery and fiery Constellations in the Element; yet not wholly in Substance but in the Spirit, viz. the Properties of the watery and fiery Soul.

55. And yet it is but one Thing still, only the Property of the Tincture was divided; the Desire of Self-Love was taken out of Adam, and formed into a Woman according to his Likeness. And thence it is that Man now so eagerly desireth the Matrix of the Woman, and the Woman desireth the Limbus of the Man, viz. the Fire-Element, the Original of the true Soul, by which is meant the Tincture of Fire; for these two were one in Adam, and therein consisted the Magical Begetting.

56. And as soon as Eve was made out of Adam in his Sleep, both Adam and Eve were at that Instant set and constituted in the outward natural Life, having the Members given them for Propagation, after the Manner of the Brute Animals, and also the fleshly Carcase, into which they might put their gross Earthliness, and live like Beasts.

57. Of which the poor Soul that is captivated in Vanity is at this Day ashamed; and sorry that its Body hath gotten such a bestial monstrous Shape. Nothing can be clearer than this. For it is because Mankind are ashamed of their Members and Nakedness, that they borrow their Clothing from the earthly Creatures. For this they would not have done, had they not lost the Angelical Form, and assumed that of a Beast.

58. This borrowed Clothing, together with the awakened Earthliness, and Subjection to the Powers of Heat and Cold, is a plain and full Proof to Man, that he is not truly at Home in this World. For all earthly Appetites, Cares, and Fears, together with this false Clothing, must perish and be severed from the Soul again.

59. Now when Adam awoke from Sleep, he beheld his Wife, and knew that she came out of him; for he had not yet eaten of Vanity with his outward Mouth, but with the Imagination, Desire, and Lust only.

60. And it was the first Desire of Eve, that she might eat of the Tree of Vanity, of Evil and Good, to which the Devil in the Form of a Serpent persuaded her, saying, That her Eyes should be opened, and she should be as God himself; which was both a Lie and a Truth.

61. But he told her not that she should lose the Divine Light and Power thereby: he only said, her Eyes should be opened, that she might taste, prove, and know Evil and Good, as he had done. Neither did he tell her that Heat and Cold would awake in her, and that the Property of the outward Constellations would have great Power over the Flesh and over the Mind.

62. His only Aim was that the Angelical Image, viz. the Substance which came from the inward Spiritual World, might disappear in them. For then they would be constrained to live in Subjection to the gross Earthliness, and the Constellations or Stars; and then he knew well enough that when the outward World perished, the Soul would be with him in Darkness. For he saw that the Body must die, which he perceived by that which God had intimated; and so he expected still to be Lord to all Eternity in the Place of this World, in his false Shape which he had gotten; and therefore he seduced Man.

63. For when Adam and Eve were eating the Fruit, Evil, and Good, into the Body, then the Imagination of the Body received Vanity in the Fruit, and then Vanity awakened in the Flesh, and the dark World got the Upperhand and Dominion in the Vanity of the Earthliness; upon which the fair Image of Heaven, that proceeded out of the Heavenly Divine World, instantly disappeared.

64. Here Adam and Eve died to the Kingdom of Heaven, and awaked to the outward World, and then the fair Soul as it stood in the Love of God, disappeared as to the holy Power, Virtue, and Property; and instead thereof, the wrathful Anger, viz. the dark Fire World, awoke in it, and so the Soul became in one Part, viz. in the inward Nature, a half Devil, and in the outward Part as related to the outward World, a Beast.

65. Here are the Bounds of Death and the Gates of Hell, for which Cause God became Man, that he might destroy Death, defeat the Devil's Purpose, and change Hell into great Love again.

66. Let this be told you, Ye Children of Men; it is told you in the Sound of a Trumpet, that you should instantly go forth from the abominable Vanity, for the Fire thereof burneth.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Of the lamentable Fall of Man, and of the Means of his Deliverance.

NOW when Adam and Eve fell into this Vanity, then the Wrath of Nature awoke in each Property, and in or through the Desire impressed the Vanity of the Earthliness and Wrath of God into itself.

68. And then the Flesh became gross and rough, as the Flesh of a Beast, and the Soul was captivated in the Essence therewith, and saw that its Body was become a Beast, and had gotten the Bestial Members for Multiplication, and the filthy Carcase into which the Desire would stuff the Loathsomeness which it was ashamed of in the Presence of God; and therefore Adam and Eve hid themselves under the Trees of the Garden of Eden. Heat and Cold also seized on them.

69. And here the Heaven in Man trembled for Horror; as the Earth quaked in Wrath, when his Anger was destroyed on the Cross by the sweet Love of God; there the Anger trembled before the sweet Love of God.

70. And for this Vanity's Sake which was thus awakened in Man, God cursed the Earth; lest the holy Element should spring or shine forth any more through the outward Fruit, and bring forth Paradisical Fruit. For there was then no Creature that could have enjoyed it; neither was the earthly Man worthy of it any more.

71. God would not cast the precious Pearls before Beasts; an ungodly Man in his Body being but a mere gross bestial Creature; and though it be of a noble Essence, yet it is wholly poisoned and loathsome in the Sight of God.

72. Now when God saw that his fair Image was spoiled, he manifested himself to fallen Adam and Eve, and had Pity on them, and promised himself to them for an everlasting Possession, and that with his great Love in the received Humanity he would destroy the Power of the Serpentine Property, viz. of the Vanity in the Wrath of God awakened in them. And this was the breaking of the Head of the Serpent, which he would perform, viz. he would destroy the dark Death, and subdue the Anger with his great Love.

73. And this Covenant of his Incarnation which was to come, he put into the Light of Life; to which Covenant the Jewish Sacrifices pointed as to a Mark or Limit, to which God had promised himself with his Love; for the Faith of the Jews entered into the Sacrifices and Offerings, and God's Imagination entered into the Covenant.

74. And the Offering was a Figure of the Restitution of that which Adam had lost, and so God did expiate his Anger in the human Property, through the Offering in the Limit of the Covenant.

75. In which Covenant the most holy sweet Name JESUS, proceeding out of the holy Name and great Power of JEHOVAH, had incorporated itself; so that he would again move and manifest himself in the Substance of the heavenly World which disappeared in Adam, and kindle the holy divine Life therein again.

76. This Mark or Limit of the Covenant was propagated from Adam and his Children, from Man to Man, and did go through from one upon all, as Sin also and the awakened Vanity did go through from one upon all.

77. And it stood in the Promise of the Covenant at the End, in the Root of David in the Virgin Mary, who was, in the inward Kingdom of the hidden Humanity, (viz. of the Essentiality that disappeared as to the Kingdom of God) the Daughter of God's Covenant, but in the outward according to the natural Humanity, she was begotten by her true bodily Father Joachim and her true Mother Anna, out of the Essences and Substance of their Souls and Bodies, like all other Children of Adam; a true Daughter of Eve.

78. In this Mary from the Virgin (viz. the Wisdom of God) in the promised Limit of the Covenant, of which all the Prophets have prophesied, — the eternal Speaking Word, which created all Things, did in the Fullness of Time move itself in the Name JESUS, according to its highest and deepest Love and Humility, and bring again living, divine, and heavenly Substantiality into the Humanity of the heavenly Part, which disappeared in Adam, and from which he died in Paradise, into the Seed of Mary, into the Tincture of Love, into that Property wherein Adam should have propagated himself in a magical and heavenly Manner, into the true Seed of the Woman, of heavenly Substantiality, which disappeared in Paradise.

79. And when the Divine Light in the Heavenly Essence was extinguished, the Word of God, viz. the Divine Power of the Understanding, did bring in Heavenly and living Substantiality, and awakened the disappeared Substantiality in the Seed of Mary, and brought it to Life.

80. And so now God's Substance, wherein he dwelleth and worketh, and the disappeared Substance of Man, are become one Person; for the Holy Divine Substantiality did anoint the disappeared; therefore that Person is called CHRISTUS, the Anointed of God.

81. And this is the dry Rod of Aaron, which blossomed and bare Almonds, and the true High Priest; and it is that Humanity of which Christ spake, saying, that He was come from Heaven and was in Heaven; and that no Man could ascend into Heaven but the Son of Man which is come from Heaven, and is in Heaven.

82. Now when he saith, He is come from Heaven, it is meant of the Heavenly Substance, the Heavenly Corporeality; for the Power and Virtue of God needeth no coming any whither, for it is everywhere altogether immeasurable and undivided. But Substance needeth coming; the Power or Virtue needeth to move itself, and manifest itself in Substance.

83. And that Substance entered into the human Substance, and received it; not that Part only of Heavenly Substantiality, which disappeared in Adam, but the whole human Essence in Soul and Flesh, according to all the three Worlds.

84. But he hath not received, or taken upon himself, the awakened or impressed Vanity, which the Devil, by his Imagination, brought into the Flesh, by which the Flesh did commit Sin; though he hath indeed taken upon him the awakened Forms of Life, as they were gone forth from their equal Agreement, each of them into its own Desire.

85. For therein lay our Infirmity, and the Death, which he was to drown with his Heavenly holy Blood. Herein he took upon himself all our Sins and Infirmities, also Death and Hell in the Wrath of God, and destroyed their Power in the human Properties.

86. The Wrath of God was the Hell into which the Spirit of Christ went, when he had shed that Heavenly Blood into our outward human Blood, and tintured it with the Love; thereby changing that Hell of the human Property into Heaven, and reducing the human Properties into equal Agreement, into the Heavenly Harmony.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

How we are born a-new; and how we may fall into God's Anger again.

NOW here we may rightly understand what our New-Birth, or Regeneration, is; and how we may become, and continue to be, the Temple of God; though in this Life's Time, according to the outward Humanity, we are sinful mortal Men.

88. Christ in the human Essence hath broken up and opened the Gate of our inward Heavenly Humanity, which was shut up in Adam; so that nothing is now wanting, but that the Soul draw its Will out of the Vanity of the corrupted Flesh, and bring it into this open Gate in the Spirit of Christ.

89. Great and strong Earnestness is required here; and not only a learning and knowing, but a real Hunger and Thirst after the Spirit of Christ. For to know only, is not Faith; but an Hunger and Thirst after that which I want, so that I draw it in thereby to myself, and lay hold on it with the Desire and Imagination, and, make it my own; this is the Truth and Essence of a Christian's Faith.

90. The Will must go forth from the Vanity of the Flesh, and willingly yield itself up to the Suffering and Death of Christ, and to all the Reproach of Vanity, which derideth it, because it goeth forth from its own House wherein it was born, and regardeth Vanity no more, but merely desireth the Love of God in Christ Jesus.

91. In such a Hunger and Desire the Will receiveth and impresseth into itself the Spirit of Christ with his Heavenly Corporality; that is, the Soul in its great Hunger and Desire taketh hold of, and draweth the Body of Christ, viz. the Heavenly Substantiality, into its disappeared Image, within which the Word of the Power of God is the Working.

92. The Hunger of the Soul bringeth its Desire quite through the bruised Property of its Humanity in the Heavenly Part, which disappeared in Adam; which Humanity, the sweet Fire of Love in the Death of Christ did bruise, when the Death of that Heavenly Humanity was destroyed.

93. And so the Hunger of the Soul received into it, into its disappeared Corporality, through the Desire, the holy Heavenly Substance, viz. Christ's Heavenly Corporality, which filleth the Father all over, and is nigh unto all, and through all Things; and through that the disappeared Heavenly Body riseth in the Power of God, in the sweet Name JESU.

94. And this raised Heavenly Spiritual Body is the Member of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Ghost, a true Mansion of the Holy Trinity, according to Christ's Promise, saying, We will come to you, and make our Abode in you.

95. The Essence of that Life eateth the Flesh of Christ, and drinketh his Blood. For the Spirit of Christ, viz. the Word, which made itself visible with the Humanity of Christ out of, and in our disappeared Humanity, through the outward Man of the Substance of this World, swalloweth its holy Substance into its fiery; for every Spirit eateth of its own Body.

96. Now if the Soul eat of this sweet, holy, and Heavenly Food, then it kindleth itself with the great Love in the Name and Power of JESUS; whence its Fire of Anguish becometh a great Triumph of Joy and Glory, and the true Sun ariseth to it, wherein it is born to another Will.

97. And here cometh to pass the Wedding of the Lamb, which we heartily wish that the titular and Lip-Christians might once find by Experience in themselves, and so pass from the History into the Substance.

98. But the Soul obtaineth not this Pearl of the Divine Wisdom and Virtue for its own Property during the Time of this Life; because it hath the outward Bestial Flesh sticking to its outward Man.

99. The Power of which Pearl of Divine Wisdom espouseth itself in this Wedding of the Lamb, and sinketh itself down into the Heavenly Image, viz. into the Substance of the Heavenly Man, who is the Temple of Christ; and not into the Fire-Breath of the Soul, which is yet, during this whole Life's Time, fast bound to the outward Kingdom, to the Bond of Vanity, with the Breath of the Air, and is in great Danger.

100. It darteth its Beams of Love indeed very often into the Soul, whereby the Soul receiveth Light; but the Spirit of Christ yieldeth not itself up to the Fire-Breath in this Life's Time, but to the Breath of Light only which was extinguished in Adam, in which the Temple of Christ is, for that is the true and holy Heaven.

101. Understand aright now, what the New-Birth or Regeneration is, and how it cometh to pass, as followeth. The outward earthly Man is not born a new in this Life's Time; that is, neither the outward Flesh, nor the outward Part of the Soul. They continue both of them in the Vanity of their Wills which awoke in Adam. They love their Mother, in whose Body they live, viz. the Dominion of this outward World; and therein the Birth of Sin is manifest.

102. The outward Man in Soul and Flesh, (we mean the outward part of the Soul) hath no Divine Will, neither doth he understand any Thing of God, as the Scripture saith, The natural Man perceiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God. &c.

103. But the Fire-Breath of the inward World, if it be once enlightened, understandeth it; it hath a great Longing, Sighing, Hunger, and Thirst after the sweet Fountain of Christ; it refresheth itself by hungering and desiring, (which is the true Faith in) the sweet Fountain of Christ from his new Body, from the Heavenly Substantiality, as a hungry Branch in the Vine Christ.

104. And the Reason why the fiery Soul cannot attain to Perfection during this Life's Time, is because it is fast bound with the outward Bond of Vanity, through which the Devil continually casteth his venomous Rays of Influence upon it, and so sifteth it, that it often biteth at his Bait, and poisoneth itself. From whence Misery and Anguish arise, so that the noble Sophia hideth herself in the Fountain of Christ, in the Heavenly Humanity; for she cannot draw near to Vanity.

105. For she knew how it went with her in Adam, when she lost her Pearl, which is of Grace freely bestowed again upon the inward Humanity; therefore she is called Sophia, viz. the Bride of Christ.

106. Here she faithfully calleth to her Bridegroom the fiery Soul, and exhorteth him to Repentance, and to the unburthening of himself, or going forth from the Abomination of Vanity.

107. And now War assaulteth the whole Man. The outward fleshly Man fighteth against the inward spiritual Man, and the spiritual against the fleshly; and so Man is in continual Warfare and Strife, full of Trouble, Misery, Anguish, and Care.

108. The inward Spirit saith to the fiery Soul: O my Soul! O my love! Turn I beseech thee and go forth from Vanity, or else thou lovest my Love and the noble Pearl.

109. Then saith the outward Reason, viz., the Bestial Soul; Thou art foolish; wilt thou be a Laughing-stock, and the Scorn of the World? Thou needest the outward World to maintain this Life. Beauty, Power, and Glory are thy proper Happiness; wherein only thou canst rejoice and take Delight. Why wilt thou cast thyself into Anguish, Misery, and Reproach? Take thy Pleasure, which will do both thy Flesh and thy Mind good.

110. With such Filth the true Man is often defiled; that is, the outward Man defileth himself, as a Sow in the Mire, and obscureth his noble Pearl. For the more vain the outward Man groweth, the more dark the inward Man cometh to be, until at length it disappeareth altogether.

111. And then the fair Paradisical Tree is gone, and it will be very hard to recover it again. For when the outward Light, viz. the outward Soul is once enlightened, so that the outward Light of Reason is kindled by the inward Light; then the outward Soul commonly useth to turn Hypocrite, and esteem itself Divine, even though the Pearl be gone; which lamentable Error sticketh hard to many a Man.

112. And thus it comes to pass that the Tree of Pearl in the Garden of Christ is often spoiled; concerning which the Scripture maketh a hard Knot or Conclusion, viz. That those who have once tasted the Sweetness of the World to come, and fall away from it again, shall hardly see the Kingdom of God.

113. And though it cannot be denied, but that the Gates of Grace still stand open, yet the false and dazzling Light of the outward Reason of the Soul so deceiveth and hindereth such Men, that they suppose they have the Pearl, while they yet live to the Vanity of this World, and dance with the Devil after his Pipe.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

How a Man may call himself a Christian, and how not.

HERE therefore a Christian should consider why he calleth himself a Christian, and examine truly whether he be one or not. For surely my learning to know and confess that I am a Sinner, and that Christ hath destroyed my Sins on the Cross, and shed his Blood for me, doth not make me a Christian.

115. The Inheritance belongeth only to the Children. A Maid-Servant in a House knoweth well enough what the Mistress would have to be done, and yet that maketh her not the Heiress of her Mistress's Goods. The very Devils know that there is a God, yet that doth not change them into Angels again. But if the Maid-Servant in the House shall be married to the Son of her Mistress, then she may come to inherit her Mistress's Goods. And so it is to be understood also in the Matter of being a Christian.

116. The Children of the History are not the Heirs of the Goods of Christ, but the legitimate Children regenerated by the Spirit of Christ are the only true Heirs. For God said to Abraham, Cast out the Son of the Bondwoman, he shall not inherit with the Son of the Free. For he was a Scorned, and but an Historical Son of the Faith and Spirit of Abraham; and so long as he continued such a one, he was not a true Inheritor of the Faith of Abraham, and therefore God commanded he should be cast out from inheriting his Goods.

117. This was a Type of the future Christendom. For the Promise of Christendom was made to Abraham: Therefore the Type was then also set forth by two Brethren, Isaac and Ishmael; foreshewing by them the diverse State and Manners of Christendom; how that two Sorts of Men would be in it, viz. True Christians and Lip-Christians. Which latter, under the Title or outward Profession of Christianity, would be but Mockers, as Ishmael was and Esau, who also was a Type of the outward Adam, as Jacob was a Type of Christ, and his true Christendom.

118. Thus every one who will call himself a Christian, must cast out from himself the Son of the Bond-Woman, that is, the earthly Will, and be ever-more killing and destroying it, and not settle it in the Inheritance.

119. Neither give the Pearl to the Bestial Man, for him to please and amuse himself with in the outward Light, in the Lust of the Flesh. But we must, with our Father Abraham bring the Son of the right Will to Mount Moriah, and be ready in Obedience to God to offer it up, ever in Will dying from Sin in the Death of Christ, giving no place to the Beast of Vanity in the Kingdom of Christ, nor letting it grow wanton, proud, covetous, envious, and malicious. For all these are the Properties of Ishmael the Son of the Bond-Woman whom Adam begat in his Vanity on that wanton Whore the false Bond-Woman, by the Devil's Imagination, out of the earthly Property in Flesh and Blood.

120. This Mocker and titular Christian is the Son of the false Bond-Woman, and must be cast out; for he shall not possess the Inheritance of Christ in the Kingdom of God. He is not fit, he is but Babel, a Confusion of that one Language into many. He is but a Talker and a Wrangler about the Inheritance; he thinks to get it to himself by Talking and Wrangling, by the Hypocrisy of his Lips and seeming Holiness; although in his Heart he is no better than a blood-thirsty Murderer of his brother Abel, who is the right Heir.

121. Therefore we say what we know, that he that will call himself a true Christian must try himself, and find what Kind of Properties drive and rule him, whether the Spirit of Christ moveth him to Truth and Righteousness, and to the Love of his Neighbour, so that he would willingly do what is right if he knew but how.

122. Now if he find that he hath a real Hunger after such Virtue, then he may justly think that he is drawn. And then he must begin to practise accordingly, and not be content with a Will only, without Doing. The drawing of the Father to Christ consisteth in the Will, but the true Life consisteth in the Doing; for the right Spirit doeth that which is right.

123. But if there be the Will to do, and yet the Doing followeth not, then the true Man is still shut up in vain Lust, which suppresseth the Doing. And therefore such a one is but an Hypocrite and an Ishmaelite; he speaketh one Thing and doth another, and witnesseth thereby that his Mouth is a Lyar; for he himself doth not that which he teacheth, and consequently only serveth the Bestial Man in Vanity.

124. For he that will say, I have a Will, and would willingly do Good, but the earthly Flesh which I carry about me, keepeth me back, so that I cannot; yet I shall be saved by Grace, for the Merits of Christ. I comfort myself with his Merit and Sufferings; who will receive me of mere Grace, without any Merits of my own, and forgive me my Sins. Such a one, I say, is like a Man that knoweth what Food is good for his Health, yet will not eat of it, but eateth Poison instead thereof, from whence Sickness and Death, will certainly follow.

125. For what good doth it to the Soul to know the Way to God, if it will not walk therein, but go on in a contrary Path? What good will it do the Soul to comfort itself with the Filiation of Christ, with his Passion and Death, and so flatter itself with the Hopes of getting the Patrimony thereby, if it will not enter into the Filial Birth, that it may be a true Child, born out of the Spirit of Christ, out of his Suffering, Death and Resurrection? Surely, the tickling and flattering itself with Christ's Merits, without the true innate Childship, is Falsehood and a Lie, whosoever he be that teacheth it.

126. This Comfort belongeth only to the penitent Sinner, who striveth against Sin and the Anger of God. When Temptations come, and the Devil assaulteth such a poor repentant Soul, then it must wholly wrap itself up in the Merits and Death of Christ, as its sole Armour of Defence.

127. Christ alone indeed hath merited Redemption for us; but not in such a Way as that for his own proper Merit's Sake, he will freely grant us his Childship by an outward Adoption only, and so receive us for Children, when we are none. No, he himself is the Merit; he is the open Gate

that leadeth through Death; and through that Gate we must enter. He receiveth no Beast into his Merit, but those only that turn, and become as Children. Those Children that thus come to him are his Reward, which he hath merited.

128. For thus he said, Father, the Men were thine and thou hast given them to me (as my Reward) and I will give them eternal Life. But the Life of Christ will be given to none, unless they come to him in his Spirit, into his Humanity, Sufferings, and Merit, and therein be born true Children of the Merit.

129. We must be born of his Merit, and put on the Merit of Christ in his Passion and Death; not outwardly with verbal Flattery only, and bare comforting of ourselves therewith, while we still remain Aliens and strange Children, of a strange Essence or Nature. No; the strange Essence inheriteth not the Childship, but the innate Essence inheriteth it.

130. This innate Essence is not of this World, but in Heaven, of which St. Paul speaketh saying, Our Conversation is in Heaven. The filial Essence walketh in Heaven, and Heaven is in Man.

131. But if Heaven in Man be not open, and the Man stand without Heaven flattering himself, and say, I am still without, but Christ will take me in through his Grace; is not his Merit mine? Such a one is in Vanity and Sin with the outward Man, and with the Soul in Hell, viz. in the Anger of God.

132. Therefore learn to understand rightly what Christ hath taught us, and done for us. He is our Heaven; he must get a Form in us, or else we shall not be in Heaven. Thus then the Soul's inward Man, with the holy Body of Christ, viz. in the New Birth, is in Heaven, and the outward mortal Man is in the World, of which Christ spake saying, My Sheep are in my Hand, and none shall pluck them away; the Father which gave them to me is greater than all.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Of the right and of the wrong going to Church, receiving the Sacraments, and Absolution.

BELOVED Brethren, we will teach you faithfully, not with flattering Lips to please the Antichrist, but from our Pearl, the Virtue, Power, and Spirit of Christ in us, from a Christian Essence and Knowledge; not from the Husk and History, but from a new-born Spirit, from Christ's Knowledge, as a Branch growing on the Vine Christ; from the Measure of that Knowledge which is opened in us, according to the Will and Counsel of God.

134. Men tie us in these Days to the History, and to the material Churches of Stone; which Churches are indeed good in their Kind, if Men did also bring the Temple of Christ into them. They teach moreover, that their Absolution is a Forgiving of Sins, and that the Supper of the Lord taketh away Sin: Also that the Spirit of God cometh into Men through their Ministry. All which hath a proper Meaning, if it was rightly understood; and if Men did not cleave merely to the Husk.

135. Many a Man goeth to Church twenty or thirty Years, heareth Sermons, receiveth the Sacraments, and heareth Absolution read or declared, and yet is as much a Beast of the Devil and Vanity at the last as at the first. A Beast goeth into the Church, and to the Supper, and a Beast cometh out from thence again.

136. How will he eat that hath no Mouth? Can any Man eat that Food which is so shut up that he cannot get it? How will he drink that can come at no Water? Or how will he hear that hath no Hearing?

137. What good End doth it answer, for me to go to the material Churches of Stone, and there fill my Ears with empty Breath? or to go to the Supper, and feed nothing but the earthly Mouth,

which is mortal and corruptible? Cannot I feed and satisfy that with a Piece of Bread at Home? What good doth it to the Soul, which is an immortal Life, to have the Bestial Man observe the Form, and venerate the Shell of Christ's Institution, if it cannot obtain the Kernel thereof? For St. Paul saith of the Supper, — You receive it to Condemnation, because ye discern not the Lord's Body.

138. The Covenant stands firm, and is stirred in the Use of the Institution. Christ proffereth his Spirit to us in his Word (viz. in his preached Word) and his Body and Blood in the Sacrament, and his Absolution in a brotherly Reconciliation one to another.

139. But what good doth it to a Beast to stand and listen, who hath no Hearing to receive the inward living Word, nor any Ground wherein to lay the Word, that it may bring forth Fruit? Of such Christ saith, The Devil plucketh the Word out of their Hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But how can he do so? Because the Word findeth no Place in the hearing Mind to take Root in.

140. And thus it is with Absolution also: What Benefit is it to me for one to say, I pronounce or declare to thee the Forgiveness of thy Sins, when my Soul is wholly shut up in Sin? Whosoever saith thus to a Sinner so shut up, erreth; and he that receiveth it without the Voice of God within himself confirming the same, deceiveth himself. None can forgive Sins but God only.

141. The Preacher hath not Forgiveness of Sins in his own Power; but it is the Spirit of Christ in the Voice of the Priest that hath the Power, provided the Priest himself is a Christian.

142. What good did it to those that heard Christ himself teaching on Earth, when he said, Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you Rest? What good did this blessed Promise to those that heard it, if they laboured not, nor were heavy laden? What became of the Refreshment or Rest then? Seeing they had dead Ears, and heard only the outward Christ, and not the Word of the Divine Power; certainly they were not refreshed. Just so much good the Bestial Man hath of his Absolution and Sacraments.

143. The Covenant is open in the Sacraments; and in the Office or Ministry of teaching also the Covenant is stirred; the Soul doth receive it, but in that Property only of which the Mouth of the Soul is.

144. That is, the outward Beast receiveth Bread and Wine, which it may have as well at Home. And the fiery Soul receiveth the Testament according to its Property, viz. in the Anger of God it receiveth the Substance of the eternal World, but according to the Property of the dark World; it receiveth therefore, as the Scripture saith, to its own Judgement or Condemnation. For as the Mouth is, so is the Food which is taken in by the Mouth. And after this Manner also it is that the Wicked shall behold Christ at the last Judgement as a severe Judge; but the Saints shall behold him as a loving Immanuel.

145. God's Anger standeth open in his Testaments towards the Wicked; but towards the Saints the heavenly loving Kindness, and in it the Power of Christ in the holy Name JESUS, standeth open. What good then doth the holy Thing do to the Wicked, who cannot enjoy it? Or what is there, that can take away his Sins, when his Sin is only stirred and made manifest thereby?

146. The Sacraments do not take away Sin; neither are Sins forgiven thereby. But it is thus: When Christ ariseth, then Adam dyeth in the Essence of the Serpent; as when the Sun riseth, the Night is swallowed up in the Day, and the Night is no more: Just so are Sins forgiven.

147. The Spirit of Christ eateth of his Holy Substance, the inward Man is the Receiver of the Holy Substance; he receiveth what the Spirit of Christ bringeth into him viz. the Temple of God, Christ's Flesh and Blood. But what doth this concern a Beast? Or what doth it concern the

Devils? Or the Soul that is in the Anger of God? These eat of the Heavenly Blood, that is in the Heaven wherein they dwell, which is the Abyss, or bottomless Pit.

148. And thus it is also in the Office or Ministry of Preaching: The ungodly Man heareth what the outward Soul of the outward World preacheth; that he receiveth, viz. the History; and if there be Straw or Stubble in that which is taught, he sucketh the Vanity out of that. Yea, if the Preaching be mere Calumny, Railing, and uncharitable Abuse, as is sometimes the Case, then his Soul sucketh the venomous Poison, and the murdering {murdering} Cruelty of the Devil from it, wherewith it tickleth itself, and is pleased with learning how to judge and condemn others.

149. Thus if the Preacher be one that is dead, and hath no true Life in him, but soweth only Venom and Reproach proceeding out of his evil Affections, then it is the Devil that teacheth, and the Devil that heareth. Such teaching is received into a wicked Heart, and bringeth forth wicked Fruits; by which Means the World is become a mere Den of murdering Devils. So that if you look among the Herd of such Teachers and Hearers, there is little to be found but Revilings, Slandering, and Reproachings; together with Contention about Words, and Wrangling about the Husk.

150. But the Holy Ghost teacheth in the holy Teachers, and the Spirit of Christ heareth through the Soul, which is the Divine House of the Divine Sound or Voice in the holy Hearer.

151. The holy Man hath his Church in himself, wherein he heareth and teacheth. But Babel hath a Heap of Stones, into which she goeth with her seeming Holiness and real Hypocrisy. There she loveth to be seen in fine Clothes, and maketh a very devout and godly Shew; the Church of Stone is her God, in which she putteth her Confidence.

152. But the holy Man hath his Church about him every where, even in himself; for he always standeth and walketh, sitteth and lyeth down in his Church. He liveth in the true Christian Church; yea, in the Temple of Christ. The Holy Ghost preacheth to him out of every Creature. Whatsoever he looketh upon, he seeth a Preacher of God therein.

153. Here now the Scoffer will say that I despise the Church Of Stone, where the Congregation meeteth; but I say that I do not. For I do but discover the hypocritical Whore of Babylon, which committeth Whoredom with the Church of Stone, and termeth herself a Christian, but is indeed a Strumpet.

154. A true Christian brings his holy Church with him into the Congregation. For the Heart is the true Church, where a Man must practise the Service of God. If I should go a thousand Times to Church, and to the Sacrament every Week, and hear Absolution declared to me every Day, and have not Christ in me, all would be false, an unprofitable Fiction and graven Image in Babel, and no forgiving of Sins.

155. A holy Man doth holy Works from the holy Strength of his Mind. The Work is not the Atonement or Reconciliation, but it is the Building which the true Spirit buildeth in his Substance; it is his Habitation. But the Fiction and Fancy is the Habitation of the false Christian, into which his Soul entereth with Dissimulation. The outward Hearing reacheth but to the outward, and worketh in the outward only; but the inward Hearing goeth into the inward, and worketh in the inward.

156. Dissemble, roar, cry, sing, preach, and teach as much as thou wilt; yet if thine inward Teacher and Hearer be not open, all is nothing but a Babel, a Fiction, and a graven Image, whereby the Spirit of the outward World doth model and make to itself a graven Image in Resemblance of the inward; and maketh a Holy Shew therewith, as if he performed some divine or holy Service to God; whereas many Times in such Service and Worship, the Devil worketh mightily in the Imagination, and very much tickleth the Heart with those Things wherein the

Flesh delighteth. Which indeed not seldom happeneth to the Children of God, as to their outward Man, if they do not take great Heed to themselves; so busily doth the Devil beset and sift them.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Of unprofitable Opinions, and Strife about the Letter.

A true Christian, who is born a-new of the Spirit of Christ, is in the Simplicity of Christ, and hath no Strife or Contention with any Man about Religion. He hath Strife enough in himself, with his own Bestial evil Flesh and Blood. He continually thinketh himself a great Sinner, and is in the fear of God: But the Love of Christ by degrees pierceth through, and expelleth that Fear, as the Day swalloweth up the Night.

159. But the Sins of the impenitent Man rest in the Sleep of Death, bud forth in the Pit, and produce their Fruit in Hell.

160. The Christiandom that is in Babel, striving about the Manner how Men ought to serve God, and glorify him; also how they are to know him, and what he is in his Essence and Will. And they preach positively, that whosoever is not one and the same with them in every Particular of Knowledge and Opinion, is no Christian, but a Heretick.

161. Now I would fain see how all their Sects can be brought to agree in that one which might be called a true Christian Church; when all of them are Scorners, every Party of them reviling the rest, and proclaiming them to be false.

162. But a Christian is of no Sect: he can dwell in the Midst of Sects, and appear in their Services, without being attached or bound to any. He hath but one Knowledge, and that is, Christ in him. He seeketh but one Way, which is the Desire always to do and teach that which is right; and he putteth all his knowing and willing into the Life of Christ.

163. He sigheth and wisheth continually that the Will of God might be done in him, and that his Kingdom might be manifested in him. He daily and hourly killeth Sin in the Flesh; for the Seed of the Woman, viz. the inward Man in Christ, continually breaketh the Head of the Serpent, that is, the Power of the Devil, which is in Vanity.

164. His Faith is a Desire after God and Goodness; which he wrappeth up in a sure Hope, trusting to the Words of the Promise, and liveth and dieth therein; though as to the true Man, he never dieth.

165. For Christ saith, Whosoever believeth in me, shall never die, but hath pierced through from Death to Life; and Rivers of living Water shall flow from him, viz. good Doctrine and Works.

166. Therefore I say, that whatsoever fighteth and contendeth about the Letter, is all Babel. The Letters of the Word proceed from, and stand all in, one Root, which is the Spirit of God; as the various Flowers stand all in the Earth and grow about one another. They fight not with each other about their Difference of Colour, Smell, and Taste, but suffer the Earth, the Sun, the Rain, the Wind, the Heat and Cold, to do with them as they please; and yet every one of them groweth in its own peculiar Essence and Property.

167. Even so it is with the Children of God; they have various Gifts and Degrees of Knowledge, yet all from one Spirit. They all rejoice at the great Wonders of God, and give Thanks to the most High in his Wisdom. Why then should they contend about him in whom they live and have their Being, and of whose Substance they themselves are?

168. It is the greatest Folly that is in Babel for People to strive about Religion, as the Devil hath made the World to do; so that they contend vehemently about Opinions of their own forging, viz. about the Letter; when the Kingdom of God consisteth in no Opinion, but in Power and Love.

169. As Christ said to his Disciples, and left it with them at the last, saying, Love one another, as I have loved you; for thereby Men shall know, that ye are my Disciples. If Men would as fervently seek after Love and Righteousness as they do after Opinions, there would be no Strife on Earth, and we should be as Children of One Father, and should need no Law, or Ordinance.

170. For God is not served by any Law, but only by Obedience. Laws are for the Wicked, who will not embrace Love and Righteousness; they are, and must be, compelled and forced by Laws.

171. We all have but one only Order, Law, or Ordinance, which is to stand still to the Lord of all Beings, and resign our Wills up to him, and suffer his Spirit to play what Musick he will. And thus we give to him again as his own Fruits, that which he worketh and manifesteth in us.

172. Now if we did not contend about our different Fruits, Gifts, Kinds and Degrees of Knowledge, but did acknowledge them in one another, like Children of the Spirit of God, what could condemn us? For the Kingdom of God consisteth not in our knowing and supposing, but in Power.

173. If we did not know half so much, and were more like Children, and had but a brotherly Mind and good Will, towards one another, and lived like Children of one Mother, and as Branches of one Tree, taking our Sap all from one Root, we should be far more holy than we are.

174. Knowledge serves only to this End, viz. to know that we have lost the Divine Power in Adam, and are become now inclined to Sin; that we have evil Properties in us, and that doing Evil pleaseth not God; so that with our Knowledge we might learn to do right. Now if we have the Power of God in us, and desire with all our Hearts to act and to live aright, then our Knowledge is but our Sport, or Matter of Pleasure, wherein we rejoice.

175. For true Knowledge is the Manifestation of the Spirit of God through the Eternal Wisdom. He knoweth what he will in his Children; he sheweth his Wisdom and Wonders by his Children, as the Earth putteth forth its various Flowers.

176. Now if we dwell one with another, like humble Children, in the Spirit of Christ, one rejoicing at the Gift and Knowledge of another, who would judge or condemn us? Who judgeth or condemneth the Birds in the Woods, that praise the Lord of all Beings with various Voices, every one in its own Essence? Doth the Spirit of God reprove them for not bringing their Voices into one Harmony? Doth not the Melody of them all proceed from his Power, and do they not sport before him.

177. Those Men therefore that strive and wrangle about the Knowledge and Will of God, and despise one another on that Account, are more foolish than the Birds in the Woods, and the wild Beasts that have no true Understanding. They are more unprofitable in the Sight of the holy God than the Flowers of the Field, which stand still in quiet Submission to the Spirit of God, and suffer him to manifest the Divine Wisdom and Power through them. Yea, such Men are worse than Thistles and Thorns that grow among fair Flowers, for they at least stand still and are quiet, whereas those Wranglers are like the ravenous Beasts and Birds of Prey, which fright the other Birds from singing and praising God.

178. In short; they are the Issue, Branches or Sprouts of the Devil in the Anger of God, who, notwithstanding must by their very tormenting be made to serve the Lord; for by their plaguing and persecuting, they press out the Sap through the Essence of the Children of God, so that they move and stir themselves in the Spirit of God, with praying and continual sighing, in which Exercise of their Powers the Spirit of God moveth himself in them.

179. For thereby the Desire is exerted, and so the Children of God grow green, flourish, and bring forth Fruit; for the Children of God are manifested in Tribulation; as the Scripture saith, When thou chastisest them, they cry fervently to thee.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Wherein Christian Religion consisteth; and how Men should serve God and their Brethren.

ALL Christian Religion wholly consisteth in this, to learn to know ourselves; whence we are come, and what we are; how we are gone forth from the Unity into Dissension, Wickedness, and Unrighteousness; how we have awakened and stirred up these Evils in us; and how we may be delivered from them again, and recover our original Blessedness.

181. First, How we were in the Unity, when we were the Children of God in Adam before he fell. Secondly, How we are now in Dissension and Disunion, in Strife and Contrariety. Thirdly, Whither we go when we pass out of this corruptible Condition; whither with the immortal, and whither with the mortal Part.

182. And Lastly, How we may come forth from Dis-union and Vanity, and enter again into that one Tree, Christ in us, out of which we all sprung in Adam. In these four Points all the necessary Knowledge of a Christian consisteth.

183. So that we need not strive about any Thing; we have no Cause of Contention with each other. Let every one only exercise himself in learning how he may enter again into the Love of God and his Brother.

184. The Testaments of Christ are nothing else but a loving Bond or brotherly Covenant, wherewith God in Christ bindeth himself to us and us to him. All teaching, willing, living, and doing, must imply, aim at, and refer to that. All teaching and doing otherwise, whatsoever it be, is Babel and a Fiction; a mere graven Image of Pride in unprofitable Judgings, a disturbing of the World, and an Hypocrisy of the Devil, wherewith he blindeth Simplicity.

185. Every Preacher void of the Spirit of God, who without Divine Knowledge, setteth himself up for a Teacher of Divine Things, pretending to serve God thereby, is false, and doth but serve the Belly, his Idol, and his own proud insolent Mind, in desiring to be honoured on that Account, and esteemed Holy, or a Divine in Holy Orders. He beareth an Office, to which he is set apart and chosen by the Children of Men, who do but flatter him, and for Favour have ordained him thereunto.

186. Christ said, Whosoever entereth not by the Door, that is, through his Spirit, into the Sheepfold, but climbeth up some other Way, the same is a Thief and a Murtherer, and the Sheep follow him not, for they know not his Voice.

187. He hath not the Voice of the Spirit of God, but the Voice of his own Art and Learning only; the Man teacheth, and not the Spirit of God. But Christ saith, Every Plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be plucked up by the Roots.

188. How then will he that is ungodly plant Heavenly Plants, when he hath no Seed alive in its Power in himself? Christ saith expressly, The Sheep hear not his Voice, they follow him not.

189. The written Word is but an Instrument whereby the Spirit leadeth us to itself within us. That Word which will teach, must be living in the literal Word. The Spirit of God must be in the literal Sound, or else none is a Teacher of God, but a mere Teacher of the Letter, a Knower of the History, and not of the Spirit of God in Christ.

190. All that Men will serve God with, must be done in Faith, viz. in the Spirit. It is the Spirit that maketh the Work perfect, and acceptable in the Sight of God. All that a Man undertaketh and doeth in Faith, he doth in the Spirit of God, which Spirit of God doth cooperate in the Work, and then it is acceptable to God. For he hath done it himself, and his Power and Virtue is in it: It is holy.

191. But whatsoever is done in Self, without Faith, is but a Figure and Shell, or Husk of a true Christian Work.

192. If thou servest thy brother, and doest it but in Hypocrisy, and givest him unwillingly, then thou servest not God. For thy Faith proceedeth not from Love, nor entereth into Hope, in thy Gift. Indeed thou servest thy Brother, and he for his Part thanketh God and blesseth thee, but thou blessest not him. For thou givest him thy Gift with a grudging Spirit, which entereth not into the Spirit of God, into the Hope of Faith; therefore thy Gift is but half given, and thou hast but Half thy Reward for it.

193. The same is true of receiving a Gift. If any giveth in Faith, in Divine Hope, he blesseth his Gift by his Faith: But whoso receiveth it unthankfully, and murmureth in his Spirit, he curseth it in the Use or Enjoyment of it. Thus it is, that every one shall have his own; Whatsoever he soweth, that shall he also reap.

194. So likewise it is in the Office of teaching; Whatsoever a Man soweth, that also he reapeth. For if any Man sow good Seed from the Spirit of Christ, it sticketh in the good Heart, and bringeth forth good Fruit; but in the Wicked, who are not capable of receiving the good Seed, the Anger of God is stirred.

195. If any sow Contentions, Reproaches, and Misconstructions, all ungodly People receive that unto them; which sticketh in them also, and bringeth forth Fruit accordingly. So that they learn thereby to despise, revile, slander, and misrepresent one another. Out of which Root the great Babel is sprung and grown; wherein Men, from mere Pride and Strife, contend about the History, and the Justification of a poor Sinner in the Sight of God; thereby causing the simple to err and blaspheme, insomuch that one Brother revileth and curseth the other, and excommunicateth, or casteth him to the Devil, for the Sake of the History and Letter.

196. Such Railers and Revilers fear not God, but raise the great Building of Dissension. And seeing corrupt Lust lieth in all Men, in the earthly Flesh still, therefore they raise and awaken Abominations even in the simple Children of God, and make the People of God, as well as the Children of Iniquity, to blaspheme. And thus they become Master-Builders of the great Babel of the World, and are as useful in the Church, as a fifth Wheel in a Waggon; yea, what is worse than that, they erect the hellish Building too.

197. Therefore it is highly necessary for the Children of God to pray earnestly, that they may learn to know this false Building, and go forth from it with their Minds, and not help to build it up, and persecute their Fellow-Children of God. For by that Means they keep themselves back from the Heavenly Kingdom, and turn aside from the right Way.

198. According to the saying of Christ to the Pharisees, Woe unto you Pharisees; for you compass Sea and Land to make one Proselyte, and when he is one, you make him two-fold more the Child of Hell than yourselves. Which is truly too much the Case with the modern Factions and Sects among these Cryers and Teachers of Strife.

199. I desire therefore, out of my Gifts, which are revealed to me from God, that all the Children of God, who desire to be the true Members of Christ, be faithfully warned to depart from such abominable Contentions and bloody Firebrands, and to go forth from all Strife with their Brethren, and strive only after Love and Righteousness towards all Men.

200. For he that is a good Tree must bring forth good Fruits, and must sometimes suffer Swine to devour his Fruits, and yet must continue a good Tree still, and be always willing to work with God, and not suffer any Evil to overcome him. And then he standeth and groweth in the Field of God, and bringeth forth Fruit to be set upon God's Table, which he shall enjoy forever. Amen, All that hath Breath, praise the Name of the Lord. Hallelujah.