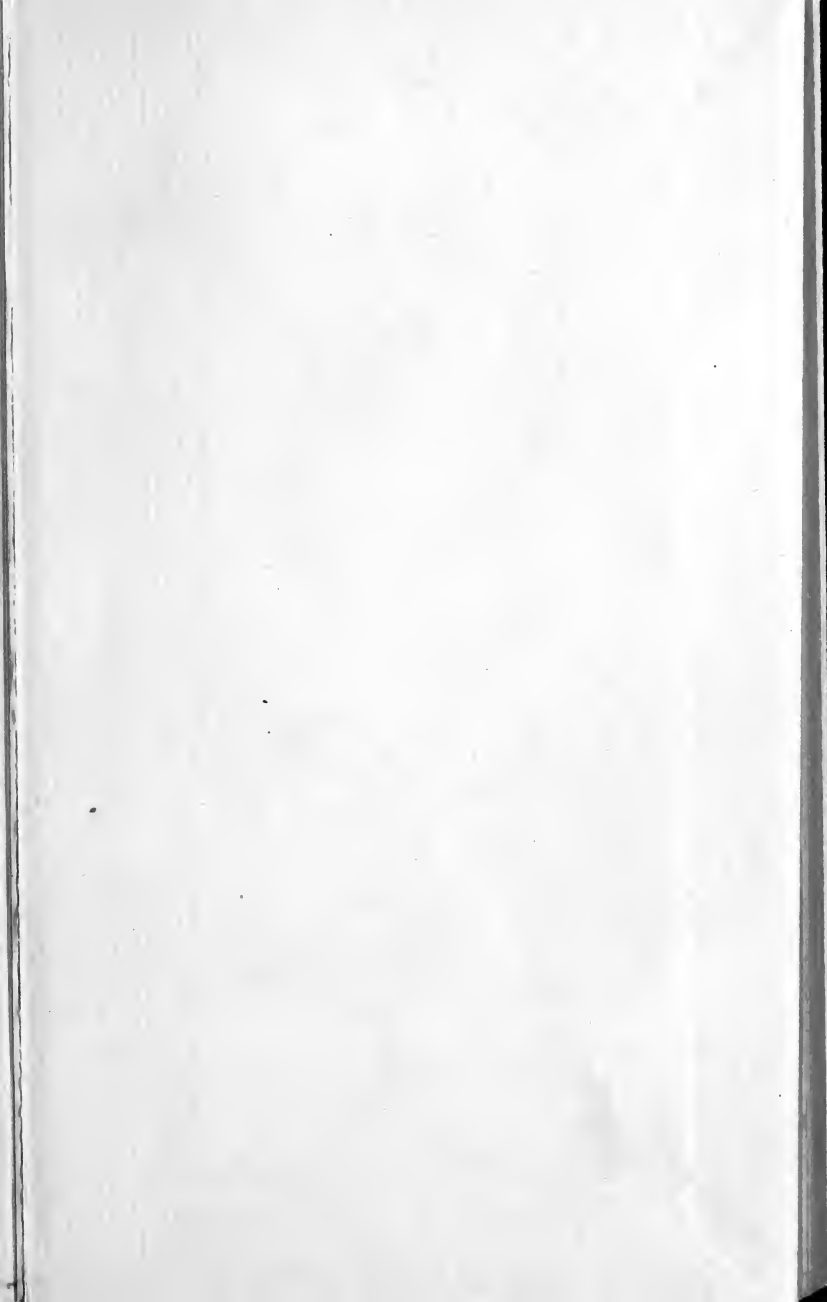


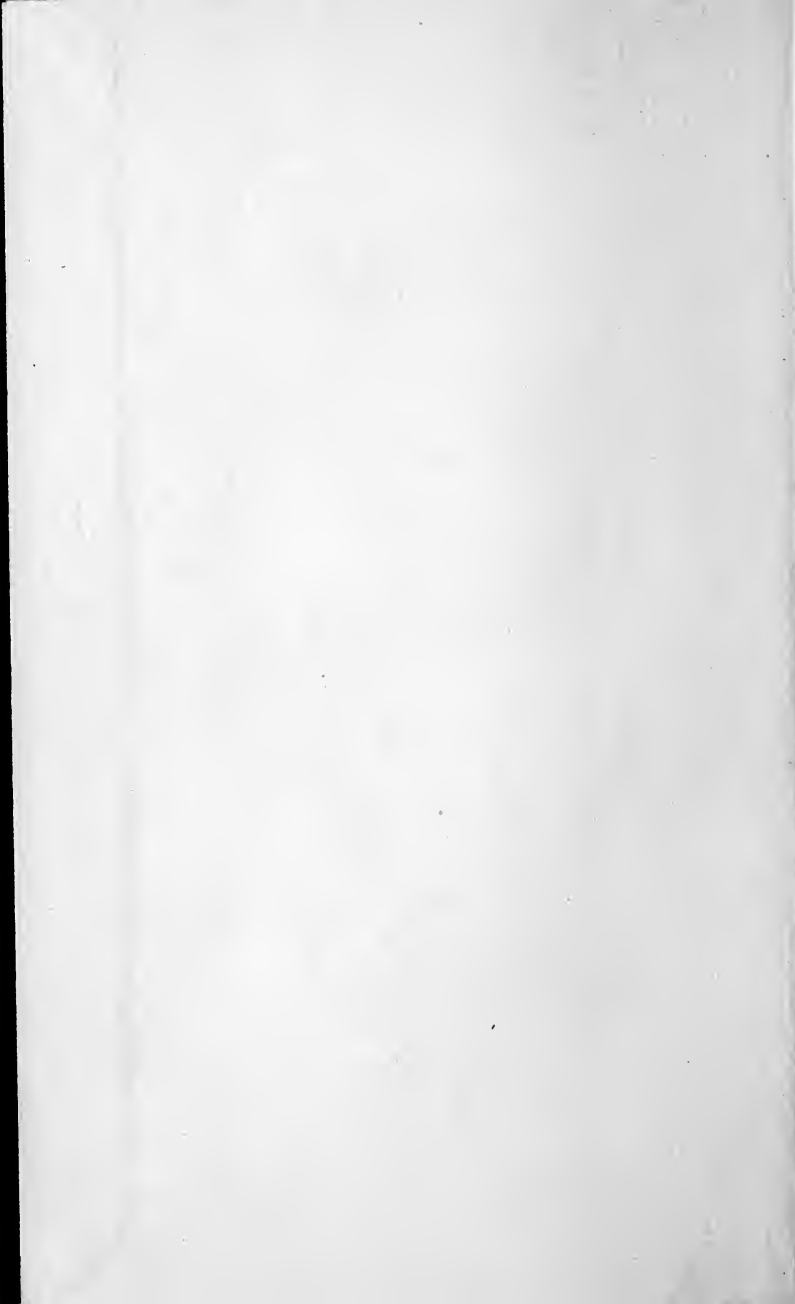
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A SHORT AND PLAIN VIEW
OF THE OUTWARD, YET SACRED
RIGHTS AND ORDINANCES
OF THE
HOUSE OF GOD,
AS COMMANDED TO BE OBSERVED BY THE TRUE
STEWARD,
JESUS CHRIST,
AND DEPOSITED IN HIS LAST WILL AND TES-
TAMENT, ARRANGED IN A CONVER-
SATION BETWEEN A
FATHER AND SON.

BY ALEXANDER MACK:

Translated into English by a friend to religion.

PHILADELPHIA:
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INTRODUCTION.

GOD is omnipotent ; yea, and to the disobedient, has at all times been a dreadful God, this was clearly evinced in the punishment of our first parents, in paradise, for their disobedience ; and afterwards by his marked displeasure, with his people Israel for disobeying his law : he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. A punctilious observance of the law was required, therefore he enjoins upon his people by his servant Moses. Deut. 4 chap. Now, therefore, hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes, and unto the judgments which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you. Nothing could be more positive than the

command, nothing more certain than that a scrupulous attention and obedience was required by those to whom it was communicated.... No less evident is it, that God requires obedience to all things that in these last times have been revealed and communicated to all the world by his son; to them that are called Christians, especially, that they might as children of the same family, be of one mind, of the same judgment, and cultivate a unity of sentiment, following the example of the good shepherd, keeping his commands, to which the promise of eternal life is annexed as a powerful incentive for us to obey in all things, both great and small, though it may admit of a doubt, whether any of the commands of Christ may be termed small as they originate from the highest authority, for this cause the baptism with water, that Jesus commanded to be performed in his name, as well as all other ordinances and commands recorded in his will, merit our attention and obedience, for as he is, who has ordained them under the new covenant, so are we to consider his commands, and the promises which he hath annexed thereto, namely, life everlasting in addition to all the gifts of his grace, and his holy spirit with which we are priviledged in this world; such therefore, who are rebellious and disobedient to his divine commands, have wrath and indignation to fear; as St. Paul says in his 2d epistle to the Thessalonians, that the son of God shall come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them

that know not God, and obey not the gospel. A similar denunciation we find in Rev. 22. 18, 19, if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy (by which the doctrines of Christ are intended) God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. Our object in publishing this book, is to endeavour to bring these things to mind, in order that he that reads may understand what the Lord requires of him, and be obedient in all things that he may go in and possess the land. That the abuses which have crept into the Christian Church, may be studiously avoided by a strict conformity in all things to the word of God.

PREFACE.

KIND and courteous reader, whoever thou art, into whose hand this book may come.

In order to profit by the perusal of a treatise, and to apprehend the designs thereof, we shall find that advantages will be derived, by laying aside all prejudice, and with an impartial and unbiassed mind, and with a love of truth, investigate the subjects, with the evidence therein adduced; and after having proved all things according to the standard of truth, hold fast that which is good: being guided and assisted therein, by the grace and mercy of our God, weighing all things in the balance of the sanctuary; namely, the testimony of our Lord, and the scriptures of the Apostles and Prophets.

The necessity of such a frame of mind, will appear to be indispensable, when we consider the danger arising from a bias of the mind, in the examination of the best performances, or in

suffering ourselves to be carried away by the current of popular prejudice, whereby our judgments become darkened, and the true spirit of examination dethroned; the consequences of which will be uncertainty and confusion; the native result of selfishness and pride; occasioning that state of mind compared to night, wherein if a man walk, he stumbleth to such a state of mind, even Christ himself, and his glorious gospel, is a subject of cavil, or a stone of stumbling; and a rock of offence. If there be any, who by criticism, or by a spirit of disputation, would wish to bring themselves into notice, by cavilling at this well meant performance; they are cautioned in a friendly manner, and in the spirit of love are reminded that from a regard to themselves, and with a view to avoid unnecessary trouble, lest they should be found to engage in a contest, that they would not be able to prosecute, although they meet with no one to oppose them, or to contend with them, the accusations of conscience as an impartial Judge, will plead for the truth; and is sufficiently powerful in the breast of every one, to command an audience, sooner or later, to him therefore who is an impartial reader, the following remarks, will serve as a satisfactory introduction to the work.

It pleased God, in the beginning of the last century to cause his saving grace to be experienced, and the voice of his mercy, to be heard by many, stirring them up to repentance, and

awakening them from the sleep and death of sin, to seek salvation and a permanent rest in Jesus, who viewing at the same time the general defection, and departure, from the genuine principles of christianity; and feeling their minds devoutly pressed, and inclined to bear a testimony to the truth; and for this purpose private meetings were established, for the edification; and building up of the newly awakened souls; this laudable undertaking, was however soon powerfully opposed, by the jealous and embittered ecclesiastics; influencing the earthly power, and commencing a series of persecution, in various places, namely: in Switzerland, in Wirtemberg, in the Palatinate and at Hesse Cassel; where they were cast out as exiles; but the Lord provided for them a place of rest, or security, in Witgenstein, under the protection of a prince, eminent for his moderation, where also, the awakening power of God, had previously found its way to the hearts of some honorable females of his court; there at a place called Schwartzenu, in the vicinity of Berlenberg, liberty of conscience, was graciously afforded them. Witgenstein, though a rough, and barren country, by becoming the place of refuge to the awakened, who now, very generally resorted to Schwartzenu, became in the course of few years, a place of considerable repute, though otherwise little thought of.

Of the number that collected here, there were those of different opinions, habits, and manners;

they were all denominated pietists, but they considered each other as brethren; here circumstances very soon occurred, which led to conclude, that the salutary counsel of our Lord, Matthew 18, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him, alone &c. is not acceptable, or practicable, where a fraternity is unorganized by obedience to the truths of the gospel; here also some turned back again to the religion, from whence they came out, being offended at the discipline of the Cross; others fostered a spirit of libertinism, more to be dreaded in its consequences, than their former depravity, there were some however, who, notwithstanding this state of perturbation, were sincerely desirous of finding the footsteps of the primitive Christians, and following and imitating the example of Jesus Christ; and apprehend and appreciate the testimony and commands of the head of the Church; being fully convinced, of the necessity of faith and obedience, in order to the obtaining salvation; their solicitude paved the way to the discovery of the ordinance of baptism, which they considered as the door to that union and organization, which they earnestly desired. The subject of Baptism, underwent various discussions among the pietists and spoken of, in such manner, as to grieve the hearts of the lovers of truth.

Till in the year 1708, 8 persons entered into a covenant with each other, by the help of God, to

endeavor to attain to the answer of a good conscience by rendering obedience to all the commands of the Lord Jesus and follow him as their good shepherd and leader through good and evil report. Those 8 persons, of whom five were Brethren, and three Sisters,* covenanted with each other, as brethren and sisters under the cross of our lord Jesus Christ; to dwell together in the unity of the faith, as a society; by consulting history, they found that the primitive christians, in the first and second centuries uniformly, were according to the command of Christ, planted into the likeness of his death, by baptism in water, by a three fold immersion; not resting their faith, however upon the authority of history, they searched the scriptures of the New Testament and finding explicit testimony, to that import, they became desirous of practising a mean, so strongly recommended by the example of our Lord, and emphatically enjoined by his written precept, believing that it became them thus to fulfill all Righteousness.

But who should now administer the ordinance to them, was a difficulty not soon got over; one of their number, who labored among them in the word, visited the societies in different parts

* The names of the Brethren were as follows: George Graby and Lucas Fetter of Hesse Castle, Alexander Mack, of Schreishheim, in the Palatinate, Andrew Bony, of Basle, in Switzerland and John Kipping, from Wirtemberg; and the names of the Sisters were Johanna Bony, Anna Margareta Mack and Johanna Kipping,

of Germany, to collect the opinion of the awakened generally, upon the subject of Baptism, the greater number acknowledged that immersion, was the mode practised by the Apostles and primitive Christians, but still endeavoring to satisfy themselves, that an handfull of water by pouring, would answer the same end, provided it was administered to proper subjects only.

The consciences of the beforementioned, could however find no satisfaction in these; they therefore, desired him, who was their minister, to baptise them by immersion; according to the example and practice of the first and best Christians, and all primitive believers; he felt a diffidence to comply with their request on account of his not being baptised himself, he desired therefore first to be baptized, before he could conscientiously baptize any of them; they betook themselves to fasting and prayer, in order to obtain help and direction in this case, from him who is the restorer of paths to dwell in, for they were all desirous to be baptized; in this dilemma a testimony of scripture revived in their minds, where two or three, are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst. Wherefore with an unshaken confidence, in the precious promise of God, they cast lots, which of the four Brethren should baptize him, who was so anxiously desirous of being baptized, they pledged their word at the same time, that it should remain a secret upon whom the lot fell, that no one might take occa-

sion to call the Society by the name of any man, as was the case with the Corinthian Church, which was sharply reprov'd by the apostle.

The crisis for the camp to move forward was now arriv'd; they were now made willing in the day of the Lord's power, accordingly they went out in the morning, to a stream called the Ader, and there, he upon whom the lot had fallen, baptized the brother who had discover'd so great anxiety to submit to that ordinance; this being done he was now acknowledg'd as duly qualified, he baptized him first by whom he had been baptized, and the remaining three brethren and three sisters; thus were these eight at an early hour in the morning, baptized in the water by a trine immersion; and after they came up out of the water, and had chang'd their clothes, they were fill'd with joy, and by the grace of God, these expressions were reviv'd in their minds with peculiar energy, "be ye fruitful and multiply;" this is recorded to have occur'd in the before mention'd year, without reference to month or day.

After this evidence of their love to God, by obeying his command, they were powerfully strengthen'd, and encourag'd to bear testimony for the truth in their public meetings, to which the Lord add'd his blessing, and believers were more and more obedient, so that in the short space of seven years their society became numerous; not only at Schwartzenau, but also in divers places in the Palatinate; a society was

likewise formed at Marienborn, to which the awakened from the Palatinate attached themselves, for in endeavouring to form a society for themselves, they were persecuted and banished. And even at Marienborn their external privileges were soon blasted, for as the light diffused itself the truth spread, and their numbers increased, it excited alarm and envy, persecution arose; they were driven out as exiles, and under the direction of Providence found an assylum at Crefeldt, under the jurisdiction of the king of Prussia.

Within this short space of time, it pleased God to awaken many laborers among them, and send them into his vineyard, for whose names and places of abode you are referred to the note,* the greater number of whom resorted to Crefeldt; some few, however, attached themselves to the society at Schwartzenaü. But as they found favor with God and men, so enemies of the truth were found, and persecutions because of the word were agitated in divers places; here then were those who took joyfully upon them the spoiling of their goods; others experienced bonds and imprisonments for years;

* Names of the brethren referred to from above, were John H. Kalkloser, from Frankenthal, Christian Libe and Abraham Dübois, from Ebstein, John Naas, and others, from the north, Peter Baker, from Dilsheim, John H. Traut, and his brethren, Henry Holtzappel and Stephen Koch; George B. Gantz, from Umstadt, and Michael Eckerling, from Strasburg.

some also for shorter periods ; one of their number† was confined on board of the galleys, and coupled at the galling oar with execrable miscreants ; from these distresses they in time were all conscientiously delivered, their lives being given unto them for a prey.

The persecutions which they suffered, the poverty, tribulation and imprisonment that they experienced, only made them the more joyful, and became prepared for new dispensations of trial ; their graces were tried by being arraigned before another tribunal, men of learning and abilities proved them with hard questions, with a view to sap their steadfastness, which questions to the number of 40, the reader will find proposed, with their solutions towards the sequel of this treatise.

About that time it was deemed expedient to issue this publication, for the instruction of the uninformed, in which every impartial and unprejudiced reader, will find sufficient matter connected with this preface, to justify the occasion of this production.

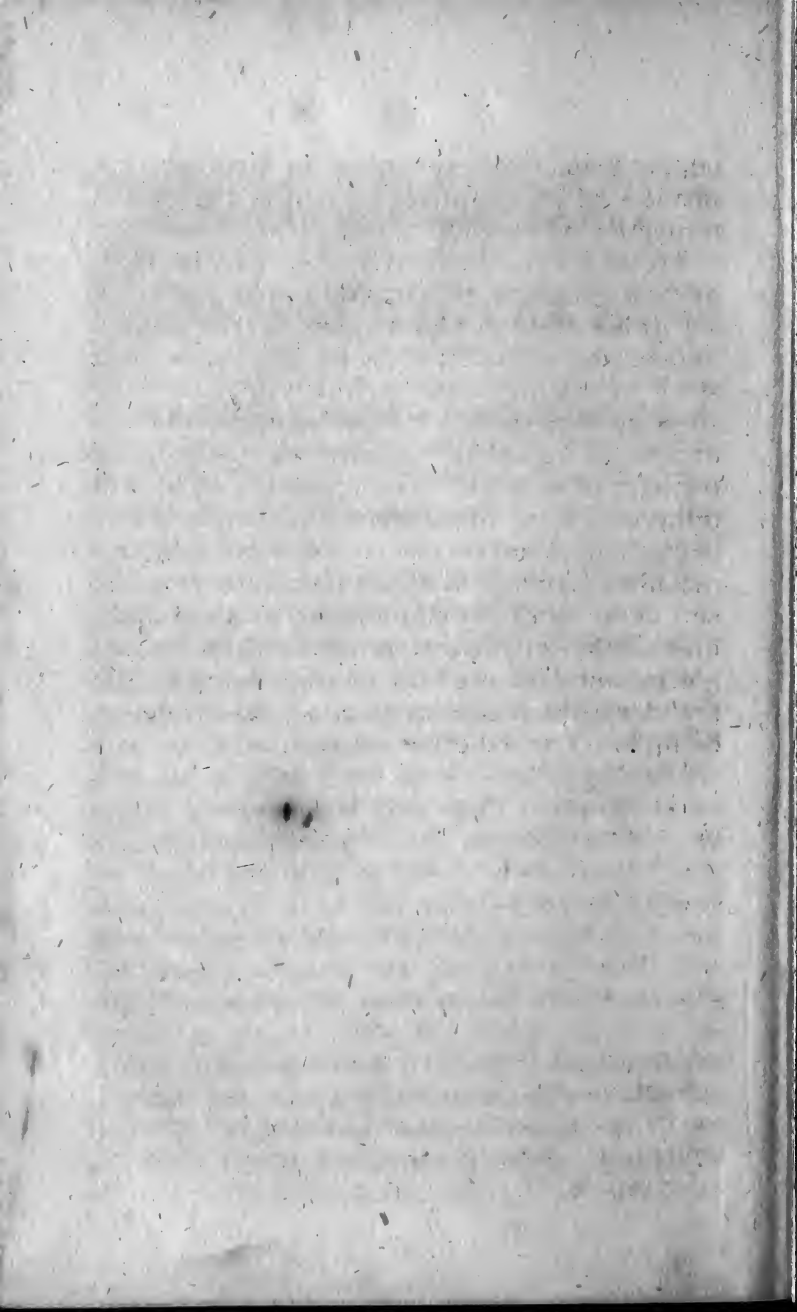
In the year 1729, a number of the society emigrated from different parts of Germany and Holland to North America, where persecuted virtue found an assylum under the government of William Penn. The emigrants settled first at Germantown, a small village about six miles north from Philadelphia, where they soon formed themselves into a society, which through

the kind providence of God continues unto this day, notwithstanding repeated removals into different parts of the continent, where societies have since been formed, namely, in the interior of this state, in New Jersey, in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and in the state of Ohio, where instead of the fathers are the children, who are risen up as their successors to bear witness to the truth of those principles, in which many of their predecessors lived joyfully and died triumphantly. In none of the churches is divine service as yet performed among them wholly in the English tongue, but in many of them partly in English and partly in the German; they believe that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him; and that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life; and that God sent his Son into the world, to seek and to save that which was lost, believing that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God through a crucified Redeemer, who tasted death for every man, and was manifested to destroy the works of the devil.

This book was re-printed in America in the German language, in the year 1774, by the desire of many for the benefit of the youth, in order that they might be established in the truth of those things, wherein they had been instruct-

ed, but primarily to the glory of God, who has manifested his guardian care, in the rescue and protection of his truth in these latter days.

To the feet of the merciful and all wise God, be this testimony prostrated, imploring in its behalf his Almighty protection, wishing also to the courteous reader, that frame of mind, and spirit of discernment, by which he may be assisted to receive and digest the instruction adduced, and be led by the spirit into the paths of truth; and to such as do not resist him he will bring into their mind all things, which Jesus began both to do and teach. Now unto the Immaculate Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, in communion with the Father, and the holy spirit, be ascribed, honor and glory, and blessing, by all the church of the first born which are written in heaven, and on earth, for ever and ever. Amen.



A CONVERSATION BETWEEN

A FATHER & SON,

IN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.



Son. BELOVED Father, as we are here quite alone, in a desert; I will relate to thee the treatment given me by a certain company since my absence: I was attacked on the subject of baptism: I was called an anabaptist, because we baptize such as even have been baptized in their infancy. Thus too I was severely attacked by those who in their riper years were baptized, that is only by sprinkling, and whom we baptize by immersion, should they wish to enter our congregation. This was connected with our mode of keeping the Lord's supper, excommunication; our close observance of feet-washing, and the use of unleavened bread at our communions. Thus I was opposed by divers ingenious discourses that I was not skilled enough always to give satisfactory answers. I shall therefore intreat thee beloved father, to

give me better instructions in all such cases which still lie in controversy, and that as near to the tenor of the holy scriptures and the primitive christians as possible, my wish is to become firm in my faith, and be able to give other persons a true account of divine knowledge, for which friendly act I shall always be indebted to thee?

Father. Dear child, I will comply with thy request, and give thee as plain and sufficient instruction as I can; I shall therefore intreat thee to hear me diligently, and enquire of me all the particulars of which thou still art ignorant, to which end we shall hold a plain and instructive discourse.

Son. Beloved father, it gives me pleasure to see thee thus inclined, for which purpose I should wish to know where baptism by water is confirmed in scripture.

Father. The Eternal and Almighty God is the proper author of baptism. As early as the days of Noah he began to manifest a figure of baptism by water in the new covenant; for when men became wicked, God sent a flood of water to drown the ungodly. Of this the apostle Peter has these words, 1 Peter iii. 20, 21. The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus observe further, when the Lord God intended to give a figure by his ser-

vant Moses in testimony of what afterwards should be manifested by his Son, Hebr. iii. Moses therefore had to be drawn out of the water by Pharaoh's daughter, therefore said she, he shall be called Moses, because I drew him out of the water, Exodus ii. 10. Thus when God by a mighty hand conducted Abraham's seed by this same Moses out of Egypt, it so happened that the children of Israel escaped from the Egyptians, which escape was made through the Red sea, and which act of course represented very strongly the baptism in the new covenant. Paul too calls it a baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 1 Cor. x. 2. Thus when the Lord God caused Moses to erect a tabernacle, it was intended as a figure on the church or congregation of the Lord Jesus..... With this intention God ordered Moses to make a laver before the tabernacle, wherein Aaron the priest and his sons were obliged to wash themselves before they were admitted into the tabernacle, Exodus xxx. 18, 19, 20, c. xl. 12.... This too proved to be a powerful figure of baptism which Jesus commanded : That none can enter or serve in the Lord's congregation without previously having been baptized in water upon the confession of their faith in Jesus. Thou mayest see further what God commanded in the law ; if a leper has been cured of his disease, he was obliged to wash his body in water, Lev. xiv. 8, 9. The women too, in order to their purification, were commanded to bathe in,

or wash their bodies with water. In a word, numbers of these ceremonies commanded to be performed in the old, all alluded to the baptism in the new testament. I will now endeavour to inform thee respecting the baptism in water, commanded in the new testament. Observe, when God the father was about manifesting his Beloved Son in the world, a forerunner by the name of John was to precede him, agreeably to God's commandment, by preaching to the people in the land of Judea, the baptism of repentance for the remission of their sins, that they may believe in him, who was to come after him, namely, in Jesus, the Son of God. He baptized at Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there.

Son. Did not this occasion great alarm among the people, that John did such an uncommon act, as to baptize them in water.

Father. A mere ablution by water in those days was not counted a very strange act from its lawful custom among the Jews for the purpose of cleanliness. All the surprize it occasioned proceeded from its connection with preaching repentance, announcing the appearance of the Son of God, and recommending faith in him.

Son. Did the scribes and the great men of the world suffer themselves to be baptized?

Father. Oh no! To them it was too contemptible a deed, they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and were not baptized, as thee may see in Luke vii. 30. But Jesus the

Son of God in this respect was obedient to his Father, because he knew that the baptism of John was from heaven, he therefore came a considerable distance from Galilee to Jordan in order to be baptized of John, Matth. iii. 13.

Son. It was a wonderful deed, and a great submission in the Lord Jesus, allowing his servant John to baptize him in water.

Father. Yes it was truly wonderful and submissive in the Son of God. It was left by him as a forcible example for all his disciples to follow him.

Son. Did Christ suffer himself to be baptized, merely because we should follow his footsteps in this particular?

Father. The son of God was so well acquainted with the will of his Father, that he said to John, "for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." As it was the intention of the Son of God, to order and institute a water bath for his church, to answer as an initiating seal, and an external mark, for all those who should believe in him, he in the first place fulfilled his Fathers will, because the baptism of John was commanded by God, and thus made a beginning of baptism. This was not necessary for repentance, but alone for such who had already repented and believed in Jesus the Son of God and upon this faith and confession, were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The moment the Lord Jesus was baptized and arose from the

water ; a voice was heard from Heaven, which said : this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ; and the Holy Ghost, like a dove alighted upon the Lord Jesus. Thus has the beginning of baptism by water in the New Testament a very powerful author, namely : God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. In whose three most exalted names Jesus commanded baptism to be administered.

Son. Did Jesus immediately after this recommend and perform baptism ?

Father. Yes, he immediately began to make disciples and to baptize ; as thee may read in John c. iii 26 c. 4 1. The disciples of John came to him and said, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, he must increase, but I must decrease, he that cometh from Heaven, is above all, and what he has seen and heard he testifieth ; and no man receiveth his testimony, but he that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal, that God is true. In confirmation of this, John says in his first epistle c. v, 6. That the son of God came with water, blood and the Holy Ghost ; and that these were the three, who bear witness upon earth.

Son. Do we find too, that Christ after his resurrection commanded baptism to be performed.

Father. Yes, this I will shew thee ; In the first place, therefore, when the Lord Jesus was about to send his disciples into the world to

preach his gospel, he gave them this strict charge : That they should teach and baptize, in his name, all such who should believe in him ; Matthew, xxviii, 19, 20. Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you. This case to thee further is exemplified in the acts, chapter ii, 37, 38. When the people asked Peter what they should do, he answered, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Son. Do we also read of others who administered baptism ?

Father. Yes, we do in the Acts, c. viii, v. 5, 12, That Philip preached Christ to the people at Samaria, and those who believed were baptized, both men and women.

Son. But Father, because it is written here that both men and women were baptized, were not children, also baptised.

Father. No, no ! In the New Testament, we do not find a single instance of the kind, for the apostles only baptized such, who by a true repentance confessed faith in Jesus, because he their master, did not command any other than baptizing such, who are capable of being taught both before and after baptism.

Son. True, but did not Christ command that the children should be baptized, and did not the apostles obey him ?

Father. Christ only commanded to baptize the faithful believers, and not children.

Son. But is it not written in Matthew xix, where Christ said suffer little Children, and forbid them not to come unto me ; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven ?

Father. Observe that Jesus laid his hands on them and blessed them ; but with respect to baptism of infants the scripture is silent.

Son. I was even informed, that the Apostles baptized, whole families among whom there were children ?

Father. Carnal reason only saith that there were children amongst them ; but the Holy Scripture on this head is entirely silent.

Son. Admitting then that baptism is of such importance as thou hast shewed me in the New Testament, how is it, if a child dies without baptism, does it not suffer injury as to its salvation, and numbers say that baptism is instituted instead of circumcision, and when a male child was not circumcised on the eighth day, it was to be expelled.

Father. Thy inquiries to me are agreeable. But be attentive to the sense and ways of God. Whenever he issued a commandment he wished it to be done accordingly. Circumcision in the Old Testament was ordered alone for male children, to be performed on the 8th day. Supposing then, that a child died before that time it would not have transgressed the commandments of God, much less would it have been rejected on that account. Female childred even were not circumcised, and they still belonged to

the blessed. Thus if a child dies without its having been baptized it can sustain no injury, because it did not live to the time when it could have repented and believed in the Lord Jesus upon the faith of whom it could have been baptized; which time doubtless is represented by the 8th day. Baptism of course is ordered alone for believers, adults and not children. Children are and will be saved by grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. Articles of faith of such importance are always connected with positive commands.

Son. Do we not find in history that the primitive christians baptized their children?

Father. We find in Godfrey Arnold's portrait of the first christians, that the infant baptism began to be practiced in the end of the second century after the birth of Christ. In the beginning this was done at pleasure by every one who was disposed to do so; it was afterwards performed only the Easter days; it was made into a law by a certain pope, that no child should be suffered to die without baptism, and by a long established custom it got into such reputation that many now believe it to have been commanded by Christ himself.

Son. Thou hast told me already a great deal about baptism and its import, now I should wish to ask, whether water contains any thing particular, because God commanded in the Old Testament so many ablutions by water, and in

the New, repeated a similar institution for his believers?

Father. Observe well that water is a fluid created by God, and is the source of every thing. The whole earth rests in water and is founded thereon. Man himself in the womb is formed in water: even the Spirit of God originally moved on the water, and of course it contains a divine mercy. Christ too by his baptism sanctified the water. To this effect he said, John iii. 5, that it is impossible for a man to enter the kingdom of God, unless he be born again of water and of the spirit. Nevertheless the believer puts no faith whatever in the power of water in baptism, but alone in the power of the word, which commanded it since Christ instituted a water bath for his community, and will purify it by the washing of the water in the word, as Paul says, Eph. v. 26, the faithful believe, that the obedience towards the commandment of baptism purifies and saves them from everlasting punishment, provided after this ablation they again dont wallow themselves in the mire, by transgressing and sinning against the word, for God looks upon obedience as binding the faithful to follow the word, by which alone they obtain everlasting life.

Son. Supposing a man denies himself in every thing, gives his goods to the poor, prays and fasts a great deal, but will not undergo baptism, because it is an external deed, can such a man not please God?

Father. Observe well, where a man to do this by a true faith and love towards God, it would be good and wholesome, and therefore he could certainly not refuse giving himself up to this commandment of baptism, for it belongs to the true love of God to keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous, 1 John v. 3. Further says Paul. 1 Cor. xiii. 3, that though I give my body to be burned, bestow all my goods to the poor and have no charity,* it profiteth me nothing. He describes the nature of charity that she believeth all what God commanded. Christ too said, John xiv. 23, 24, if a man love me he will keep my words, but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings. A man in his own conceit therefore, may do a great deal without possessing the love in Jesus as the chief head, like men who existed in Paul's time, as thee may see in the epistle to the Collosians, ii. 18, to be alike in the worshipping of angels. But Paul calls it a fleshly mind, v. 19, because they have not adhered to the head.

Son. Is it possible that a man cannot love God, if he be obedient in all respects, but in one?

Father. Art thou not yet capable of perceiving what James says, chap. ii. 10; for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. Only reflect thyself; if thou hadst been obedient to me for more than

* Synonymous with love.

ten years, and I were to command thee only as much as to pick up a straw, but thou wert not willing to do this, nor did do it, I would be compelled to look upon thee as a disobedient child, even though thou wouldst say a thousand times : Father I will do every thing, I will work hard, wherever thou sendest me I will go, but to pick up the straw, I take to be a very useless piece of business to thee as well as to me, it would be of no account, I would therefore call thee a disobedient child.

Son. Father, this may apply to thine own case, but is God, who is all love, inclined in the same way towards his children, and how will we prove it ?

Father. Yes, I will prove it to thee clearly from the Holy Scriptures that God is inclined in the same manner : only observe what Adam did in Paradise. God told him he should eat of every tree, but of one he should not eat. Behold the moment he ate of the forbidden fruit, he lost all his felicity, and for his disobedience was expelled from the garden. Look further what God has done and commanded in the Old Testament, Num. xv. 30, 31, where it is said, if a soul doeth *ought* presumptuously, and despises the word of the Lord, and breaks his commandment, it shall be cut off. Behold further, when the sons of Aaron brought strange fire before the Lord they died, Lev. x. 12. And king Saul was rejected by the Lord on account of his disobedience, 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. Thus Achan was forced to die with his

whole family, because he violated the commandment of God in taking of the accursed thing at the siege of Jericho, which God had forbidden to take, Joshua vii. 20. Thus many similar instances might be cited from the Holy Scriptures, but these will suffice. Thee may now see that God requires a strict obedience from all his creatures.

Son. I understand now, that man not only ought to respect commandments, but even the commander himself, and particularly the greatness of the commander; therefore all the commandments of the great God must be kept as great and holy.

Father. Yes, that was always the true faith and love of all the saints and faithful. They did what God commanded them, and subjected their understanding and will to the will of God. Neither can we hear of, nor observe in a single believer, that he refused obedience to God in any commandment.

Son. Should this and even all depend on the keeping of God's commandments, why did he always command man to do nothing but simple things as may be seen both in the Old and New Testament?

Father. Observe well, that God is a plain and good being, and does not stand in need of any services from man, for he has many thousand angels and spirits, who serve him. The commandments given by God to man, always were for his sake, to make him humble; and plain

because by Adams fall, he became puffed up, and in his own conceit delighted in greatness, power and self love. To rescue man therefore from his depraved condition, plain commandments were given him by God, through his Son. If therefore he performs these and surrenders his reason in obedience, he will even by degrees become as plain and innocent as children, and by this very simplicity, will the soul arrive at rest, peace and safety. For this purpose Christ even says, *verily I say unto you, that unless ye become as children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven.*

Son. Now I can easily perceive, that all commandments alone, point to true obedience. The same is the case with that of baptism, which Christ commanded his Apostles to administer, and which they did. But was this commandment issued to all believers, that they should be baptized, and is it to continue in practise, until the end of the world?

Father. This is clearly and explicitly expressed, in Matth. xxviii, 19, 20, where our Saviour says: *teach all nations, and baptize them; and teach them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

Son. Were other men after the death of the Apostles permitted to baptize, although they were not sent like the Apostles?

Father. God's economy and discipline are remarkable, even under the law. When he

ordered Moses to build an house for the Priests to serve in, he selected from the tribe of Levi, Aaron and his sons to fill that office. As it often happened, that the Temple and all belonging to it, was destroyed, and the people again wished to have divine service, no other than those of the just mentioned tribe, were permitted to act as Priests; but the wicked king Jeroboam, made such Priests, not belonging to that tribe, who nevertheless administered false worship, 1 King xii, 31. But when they intended to elect priests from the tribe of Levi they took such, who were well skilled in the law of Moses, and their bodies were free from blemishes and infirmities, c. iii, 21. It is remarkable that the Son of God himself, first appointed Apostles and then other similar teachers to watch over his church. The Apostles too, appointed others for the house of God, in order to baptize, excommunicate &c. But they always selected such whose pedigree was from the Royal Priesthood; that is, such who had the spirit of Jesus, and by this alone could they with propriety baptize &c. The Apostles in their time noticed too such men, not possessing the spirit of Christ, who nevertheless pretended to be christians; of these Paul said to the elders of Ephesus, in the acts of the Apostles, c. xx, 29, 30. Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Thus at all times this was looked upon as a sign of the false spirit. For where a man is inclined

to bring himself into notice, he cannot be of the nature of Christ. Christ did not place himself in the office of the Priesthood, but his Father; that the first teachers and elders of the Church were appointed by the Holy Ghost, we may see in the Acts xx, 18 28. When the Apostle Paul called to him the elders and teachers of the church of Ephesus, he among others gave them this charge: take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers &c. But whenever men placed themselves in the service of the Church, urged on by their own spirit and honor, nothing could result but great abuse and corruption. Thus may thousand preachers at this day exist in the world, of whom by far the smallest number belong to the Royal Priesthood of the Holy People. 1 Peter ii, 9. The smallest number have the spirit of Christ. The smallest number were made overseers by the Holy Ghost. Therefore their object in preaching is nothing but honor, and emolument. But the Churches, after the death of the Apostles, who still remained pure, always appointed among them such men, who had the spirit of Jesus and denied themselves. As Christ appointed his Apostles, so did the church of the Lord, as the body of Christ, ever since appoint such as they thought fit; and thus have the commands of Jesus in their purity never ceased to be executed. They are in these words, namely, *teach them to observe all things whatsoever; I have*

commanded you. Matth. xxviii, 20. And these will remain in full force until Christ shall come again and reckon with his servants as well as his enemies.

Ciprianus and other pious men of the primitive church demanded of one who would baptize, and was appointed for that purpose by the church, the true and sound faith in Christ. The same was required by the council at Ilibris of one who wished to baptize; that he himself first should have baptism regularly and continue stedfast in the faith, and having never fell away, nor forfeited his grace. Gregory too, says that whoever shall be numbered among the godly must be considered as worthy, and also qualified to administer the ordinance of baptism.

Son. Now I understand very well that baptism is a commandment of Christ for his believers to keep until the end of the world. Now I should wish to understand with certainty the manner of baptism, whether we shall baptize in water: or can it be performed in a house with a handful of water, and thereby fulfil the commandment.

Father. Observe well, that even this I will point out to thee clearly in the Holy Scriptures. First. Christ as the true predecessor of his church was baptized of John in the river Jordan, Matth. iii. 13, 16. John baptized at a place near Salim, because there was much water there, John iii. 23. Thus from these two testimonies thou mayest be satisfied, that where it

allowed to perform the ordinance of baptism in a dry place, John would not have resorted to places where there was much water; for it would have been much more convenient and agreeable to perform this in the house than in the water, which is often cold and disagreeable to nature. To be more explicit I shall give the additional proofs of this subject. Baptism according to the Greek text is said to signify *immersion*, as translated by Jeremiah Felbinger. But since sprinkling became a custom, and the learned for the sake of delicacy were afraid of the effects of water, they allowed the Greek word also to signify sprinkling, pouring, or aspersion, &c. But still they must allow its true signification to be immersion. They may see further, that where Philip baptized the Eunuch, it is said they went down both into the water, and Philip baptized him, Acts viii. 38, 39. Of this we also find a great deal in the history of the primitive christians, that they baptized in streams, rivers, fountains, &c. We may see too in the bloody *Tonet* of the baptized, page 265, that many persons were baptized in the river *Euphrates*, in the year after Christ, 980. Again, page 207, it is written that in the year 1620, *Paulinian* baptized in the river *Trentho*, at the south side of the city of *Truvolsinga*, and that the antients called this baptism immersion or dipping into water, page 220; we also find that the English baptized in the rivers Swallow and Rhin, and that it could be done in no other

manner. People generally must be extremely blind and stubborn who do not understand the clear expressions of scripture, Rom. vi. 4. where baptism is called a burial of the body of sin. Paul too calls it a washing with water, Eph. v. 26. And Christ says, John iii. 5. that a man must be born of water and of the spirit. The primitive christians had these words of baptism, namely; the fleshly minded children of Adam steep into the water, and soon after arose therefrom, that is after they became the spiritual children of God. *Justinus* himself gave the account to the emperor, that those who were convinced of, and believe in our doctrines, at the same time promising to live in the grace of God up to its import, these we instruct how to pray, fast, and obtain from God forgiveness of sins. Afterwards they are led to the water and converted as we are; then they are washed therein in the name of God the Father and governor of all things, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost. He further adds that this was enjoined upon us from the Apostles. With respect to this, *Beda* says, Lib. ii. c. 14. that at the beginning of the first congregations, the English in several places were immersed in rivers of water. *Walfred Strabo* writes in his Lib. de Rebus Eccles. c. 26. that the faithful originally were baptized in *streams* and *fountains*, and our Saviour himself, in order to sanctify this bath for our use, was baptized in Jordan, as we may see: John baptized at Aenon

near Salim, because there was much water there. John iii. 23.

Son. I begin to be satisfied with the passages of thy choice, that Christ, John, the Apostles, and all the primitive christians baptized in water.

Father. These would be sufficient, but allow me to add a few more from the history of the primitive christians. *Hononus Aug.* writes in *Gemma Anima, Lib. iii. p. 106.* that the Apostles and their disciples formerly baptized in streams and fountains. *Tertullian* mentions in his *Lib de borona militis*, that the baptized, some time previous, avow before the congregation and preacher, to renounce the devil, his pomp and angels; after which they are plunged under water three times, and baptized. This custom prevailed until 801, when *Ludovicus* was made emperor, A. D. 815.

Son. Do tell me whether the Apostles immersed the whole body, or only a part; as the head or hand, or how it was actually done: for I heard some say, that to go into water is plainly commanded in Scripture; but how baptism is to be performed there, is not known?

Father. By this thee intimates thy deficiency of the internal light, as well as those not knowing how to baptize, intimate, that their instructor is a miserable one. Can Jesus be such a master as to command his people to do such an important act as baptism, and they remain ignorant in what manner it should be done?

They would therefore stand in need of asking information of their teacher, or delay its performance, rather than resort to it with uncertainty. Only for a moment reflect on such who, wishing to be the stewards in the house of God over its mysteries, dont know how to baptize in water ; where then have they got the information or commandment from, to sprinkle or wet the head with an handful of water ; as for instance, in a dry place, a room, or meeting-house, since not a single passage in Scripture is in its favor, but quite the contrary, being perceptible in Jesus and his Apostles ? Thy questions directed to me on this subject, shall be further briefly answered. Thou hast heard of Christ, his Apostles, and of many testimonies of the primitive christians, that they baptized in streams, rivers, and fountains ; and baptizing agreeably to the word and commandment, signifies nothing else than immersing in water ; for Christ said to his Apostles, Matt. xxviii. 19. Teach all nations, (mankind) and baptize them ; (immerse them) and not wetting their hair as is done among the papists. Jesus did not say, Baptize in man the head, or another separate part of his body, nor even, moisten him a little in my name. No such commandment was given by Jesus, except that of immersing the whole body in water. I shewed thee sufficiently that the true intent of baptism refers to the new man.

Son. Can a water bath or a burial of sin not

be represented by an handfull of water, or something resembling it?

Father. That's impossible; for something that is to be represented in its true light, exactly must correspond with its nature.

Son. But what harm would attend a small disproportion?

Father. Observe well, that were a great man to tell his painter to draw him a good likeness, so that he might be known at a distance immediately from the picture, and the servant at doing this, was rather inattentive, his mind engaged in something else, his respect to his master rather indifferent, still at times intending to comply with his masters direction, and in his drawing left out an eye, a foot, or an hand, so as entirely to spoil it, so that it bore no resemblance to the body itself: what would this man say to the painter, would he not discharge him from his services as a worthless fellow? Thus many such artists exist in the world especially in their portraits of baptism and other commandments of Christ. The reason is plain, their minds are full of the world, self-love &c. They are regardless or unacquainted with the example of Jesus, or his doctrine, because they were deficient in the love of Jesus the crucified and self denial. Every one of course paints agreeable to the whims of his own folly or according to custom without wholly looking upon his Lord and Master. Some sprinkle with a little water the heads of small children. Others

thinking themselves to be more enlightened sprinkle the heads of grown people with an handful of water, some take three handfuls and all say I baptize thee. And is this to signify a water-bath or a burial of sin?

Son. Now I can easily perceive the doctrines of Jesus to be grossly misrepresented, and their true forms scarcely discoverable.

Father. Yes at this time, a great darkness covers all nations upon earth, but will soon be removed as predicted in Zach. xiv, 7. Revel. xviii, 1.

Of the Lord's Supper.

Son. I thank thee beloved father for all this thy information and can tell thee, that I am astonished at the great abuse of baptism in our times: a great darkness its true, must have covered the nations. But further I must enquire of thee respecting the Lord's supper, how Christ instituted it, how it should be kept, and whether it is in the same state as baptism.

Father. Yes thee may easily think, that if a person be guilty of errors in one point, he may be expected to be so in all, as thee may be convinced, if thee compares the present general practise with the institutions of Christ. It is called the Lord's supper, because his disciples for whose remembrance it was instituted, shall thereby announce his death, break the bread of the Communion, drink of the cup, unite in love as the members of Jesus, to be always faithful

to their Master in the true obedience of faith, and continue firm under the cross, to be fully capable in the end of the world of keeping with the Son of God, this supper in its fullest extent.

Son. Are no others to be admitted to the Lord's supper but such, who are the true followers of Jesus, who keep his commandments and bear his cross?

Father. The true steward Jesus Christ only gave this commandment to such who were his servants, who entered his Kingdom by true repentance, faith and baptism, and who kept all his ordinances in the obedience of faith. Something similar to this God himself commanded in the law; that whoever would eat the passover of the Lord, must previously be circumcised. *Exod. xii. 48.* therefore whoever wishes worthily to partake of the Lord's Supper, must also be cut off from the body of Satan, the world, of all unrighteousness and all false sects; he must adhere to Jesus the head as a true member in faith and love, and if required according to the will of God in an evangelical sense, must be ready to yield up his life for the sake of Jesus and his doctrine. But he that lives in sin and disobedience towards God, and will not follow Christ consistent with the instructions of Jesus, in the denial of his own self, and every thing belonging to this world: *Luke xiv. 26, 27. Is still unworthy, and eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord from the body of sin. 1 Cor. xi. 29.*

Son. But, father, why is it called the Lord's Supper, and commonly is taken in the morning or at noon, and not in the evening ?

Father. That great errors attend the administration of baptism, I told thee before : the same applies to the Lord's supper. Some solemnize it in the morning, others at noon, and nowhere can it be admitted as a supper, because where a supper is prepared, or even a dinner, there must be something to eat ! But people generally go to their supposed Lord's supper, and return hungry and dry ; some not even get a bit of bread, and others not a drop of wine ; others again, it's true, receive a bit of bread, and a little wine, but as is the case with the greatest number of all denominations at their Lord's table to be stocked in the extremes of extravagance with sensuality, conceit, &c.

Son. Is it absolutely necessary to keep it in the evening, and at the same time to be a full supper ; or as other meals, may it not be taken in the morning or at noon ?

Father. Observe well how the true believers and lovers of Jesus always have their eye singly directed to their Lord and Master ; they wish to obey all his commands and imitate his example ; then they can only be said to be sensible of the simplicity and will of their master in every particular ; as it is called in the scriptures the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. which the faithful christians kept at that time in the manner Paul instructed them, as it is said in v.

1. And he delivered to the Corinthians that which he received of the Lord. v. 23. Thus they then truly kept the Lord's supper, and according to plain reason alone, it was a supper, and not a dinner. Even as early as the days of Paul, people supped together, but he said they did not eat the Lord's supper. 1 Cor. xi. 20. But when believers met with one accord to eat the supper, they were not inattentive to the injunction of the Lord in washing their feet, agreeably to the example which he set them. John xiii. 14, 15. So likewise, when they were breaking the bread of the communion, and drinking the cup, they spake of the sufferings of Christ, praised his great love towards them, and exhorted each other to be firm in their sufferings, to follow and be faithful to their Lord and Master in all his commandments; strongly to resist all sin, fervently to love each other, and live together in peace and unity; and this alone can be called the Lord's supper: in this manner they can properly enjoy and comfort themselves in the sufferings of Christ. By this they give to understand, that they are members of Jesus, and in the end of the world, will keep with him the Lord's supper, in the enjoyment of eternal felicity. Of this supper, says Paul, For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. But where people eat a breakfast, or dinner, without true repentance, faith in the commandments of the Lord, and being bap-

tized in true repentance and faith, and still love wickedness, as the lusts of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life, and live in envy, hatred, debauchery, &c. it cannot be called the Lord's supper, but a substitute, which the wicked spirit dictated and confirmed by the false doctrine of the learned, and long continued custom of the unguarded. Every one who imagines he thus truly keeps the Lord's supper, is greatly mistaken.

Son. Are therefore public sinners to be excluded from the Lord's supper?

Of Excommunication.

Father. Such sinners, guilty of even one work of the flesh, (as Paul writes: Gal. v, 3.) and of refusing repentance after suitable conviction, not only are to be excluded from the Lord's supper, but even from the kingdom of God, and consequently from the church of the Lord! for as they are excluded from the kingdom of God by their sins, they cannot expect any longer to belong to the church of God.

Son. But father, I thought that a man always had to give an account of himself: what harm therefore would it be to me, if any one of my fellow members were guilty of a sin, and I being a pious person, were to tell him candidly to alter his course of life, but upon his refusing it, might I not still remain in love his associate, and suffer him to settle that in his account?

Father. Hear and observe well, that an imagination like this might bear a very fine appearance of love, were it not of a varnished nature, and did but correspond with the love of God ! Divine love, we must consider, cannot be otherwise minded than God himself; and cannot love and believe in any other manner than God, the eternal love commanded and ordered : and dare not dictate any thing to the Spirit of God, in sense, wisdom, and counsel ; but looks upon God as her origin ; and the man in whom love really exists, looks upon God and learns of him his attributes and nature. To apply this to the above, the children of God have learned of their heavenly Father, to distinguish and put a separation between the clean and unclean, light and darkness, his people and the heathens : as may be seen in the creation : when God made heaven and earth ; light, darkness, earth and water having all been mixed together, he divided the light from darkness, and called the former day, and the latter night. After the planting of Paradise, which contained every thing pleasant, God also created man after his image, and suffered him to live in the garden, to eat of the fruit of all the trees, which God commanded him to eat. But as soon as man proved to be disobedient towards God, he became unclean, and as such, could no longer remain in Paradise, but was expelled therefrom, and until he be purified by Christ the second Adam, can not be again admitted to return. Many hundred years elaps-

ed untill this return was effected by Christ, the promised seed of the woman ; and with Adam, many saints were conducted by him, into his kingdom ; as may be seen in Matt. xxvii. 52. Thus we may judge how sin and disobedience separates us from God and his kingdom. At the time of Abraham, God manifested to him, as the father of all believers, a distinction and ex-communication with respect to circumcision, that his offspring should be a separate nation from that of the heathen, which he conducted by a mighty hand from Egypt, and promised to give them an holy land. To this nation, in the wilderness, the Lord God, upon mount Sinai, gave a peculiar law, with the intention, that they should not only be a separate people from all unclean heathens, but even from all unclean beasts, fishes, and birds : therefore, God said to them, Lev. xx. 24, 25, 26. I am the Lord your God who have separated you from other people; you shall, therefore, put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean : and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto me : for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine. Observe how God, even in this, manifested his will in the separation of the clean from the unclean, the Lord's people from the heathens, who it is true,

were equally the creatures of God, but were not to have any share and communion with his people.

Son. Yes beloved father, of thee I understood clearly that a separation was commanded to the people of God in the Old Testament or ceremonial law : but since Christ the eternal High Priest fulfilled the law, and promised no visible Canaan, but an everlasting kingdom of a spiritual nature, as his laws are : how can we, therefore, apply a separation to the New Testament, or is one absolutely necessary ? Of this I should wish to have a more particular information.

Father. If thou be well attentive to the discourses of Jesus and his Apostles, thou mayest easily discover a separation in the new covenant to be extremely necessary between the believer and unbeliever. Jesus says, Matt. xiii. 24. that the present world may be compared to a field containing seeds, both good and bad : the good are sowed by Jesus, through his gospel, and these are the children of his kingdom, born from above by the word of truth. James i. 18. But the tares are the bad, sowed by the devil, and, agreeably to human ingenuity, are planted by his false and sophistical word. Now, the harvest of these is the end of the world. There the Lord thereof will gather the good seed into his barn, but the tares he will burn with unquenchable fire. Now, attend to the above relation of excommunication in the Old Testament, as commanded by Moses, as a testimony for the Son

and his house. Heb. iii. 5, 6. For as there was no uncircumcised, no leprous nor unclean person admitted into the temple, such an house or community was instituted by Jesus, the Son of God, by his death, and by the Holy Ghost; which temple, in the New Testament, is called the body of Christ. Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 27. Eph. i. 22, 23. iv. 12. v. 40. Col. i. 18. Into this body, temple, or community, all the members of Jesus are embodied and baptized. 1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. This body is sanctified and cleansed by Christ, with the washing of water, by the word. Eph. v. 26. It is separated from the world, sin, every error: in a word, from the whole house of old Adam: understand, according to the inward part, by faith. This community in the Scriptures, is called the chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation, &c. 1 Pet. ii. 9. As this body, agreeably to Rom. vi. 2, 4. is dead to sin, buried by baptism into death, and raised again to the newness of life in Christ Jesus, and in whom it continues and grows like a fruitful branch in the obscurity of this evil world, it so happens by divine permission, that Satan may entice every member to sin, error, and evil acts of all kinds, for the trial of its faith and love. Jesus and his Apostles, therefore call upon the faithful to watch and pray; to wrestle and be vigilant. Nevertheless, it is an easy matter for such a member, who once renounced sin, and put on Jesus, as the new life, unless very con-

stant in prayers and vigilance, again to transgress against his fellow member, or even against the ways and rights of the Lord. Thus, says the Lord, as the head of his body, Matt. xviii. 15. If thy brother shall transgress against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and publican. Thus thee may see who is the institutor of excommunication in the New Testament : namely, Jesus Christ, the true steward. It was ordered for the purpose of such sinners, whose sins may be forgiven without its being executed, provided they will listen to good admonition : on the contrary, however, are banished from the church, not for the sake of their sins, but for their pride and obstinacy ; because they reject the counsel of God's Spirit, despise and grieve a whole congregation, when it would have been their duty rather to die for their fellow members, than vex them, or despise their good counsel. Such characters are taken notice of under the law, Num. xix. 13. Whosoever toucheth the dead body of a man, (which is a trifling act,) and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord ; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel, &c. The water of separa-

tion, which was used in the law for the purpose of cleansing the unclean, refers in the new covenant to brotherly admonition. If, for instance, a member transgresses, is guilty of sin, and despises counsel, becomes hardened by the delusion of sin. Paul exhorts the faithful: Heb. iii. 13. Take heed, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end: that is, we become the partakers of the newness of life, in Christ Jesus. Let us but remain firm in it, until the end, and not recede from the true life in Christ, and the living God, by the old way of sinful living.

Sen. If a person may be excluded from the Lord's body and congregation, or even the everlasting kingdom of God, for a trifling sin, (which upon repentance, might easily have been forgiven,) what will be the consequence, if a member sins, lies, and even wars, with premeditation, against the ordinances of the Lord.

Father. Attend in all cases, to the sense of the Spirit of God. He is the best counsellor, who foresaw every thing, and therefore subjected his house to very wise regulations. As early as the law of Moses, Num. xv. 27, 30. God commanded, that if any soul, or the whole congregation sin, through ignorance, against any one commandment, then he shall bring unto the Lord a sin-offering, and it shall be forgiven. But the soul that doth ought presumptuously, the

same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people, Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off: his iniquity shall be upon him. Thus, should a whole congregation, or city, sin in this manner, and serve other gods: that is, commit such things, which are forbidden by the Lord, it shall be utterly destroyed. Deut. xiii. 12. Now observe, how this must in a spiritual manner, be attended to by the church of God, in the New Testament, so that it may not be subdued by the gates of hell; that is, by sinful actions. Thus, every soul of the Lord's body knows very well that he is buried with him by baptism into death. Rom. vi. 4. and that it shall walk in the newness of life. He is even called upon at his baptism, to renounce totally, all sin, the devil, and his own corrupt will, and to follow the Lord Jesus, firmly until death; and under all adversities, in every one of his commandments. The works of the flesh, which are manifest according to Gal. v. 19. are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, discord, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: to all such the kingdom of God is utterly denied by the Holy Ghost; that is, in case any one of these evil practices rule or reign over them. Thus, if in the Lord's body a member be guilty of such, and the church have knowledge of it, he must be excommuni-

cated, according to 1 Cor. v. 13. until he shall be purified by true repentance, that the whole body thereby neither may become leavened nor unclean. How corrupted must such a member be, if in the works of the flesh, he wishes still to be justified.

Son. To me the sense of God in this, appears plain; but the act of discord I dont understand well, therefore wish to have some information upon that subject.

Of Variance.

Father. This spirit meets such people, who are not sufficiently instructed in the ways of the Lord, similar to the serpent who spoke to Eve in Paradise: Ye shall not surely die, for your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil, in case ye eat of the forbidden fruit; which in part so happened: for as soon as they had eaten thereof, their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. Therefore, Paul calls upon the Corinthians: but I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 2 Cor. xi. 3. As long therefore, as a faithful member of Jesus continues in this conflict, bringing into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Christ, and casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, 2

Cor. x. 5. so long can the fleshly spirit of discord, not bring the soul into captivity. Such is his living with his fellow members, that in simplicity, obedience of faith, peace and unity, he continues with them ; leaving willingly, peaceably and simply to them what he does not understand, he lets rest, and submitting himself to them, according to the advice of Peter. 1 Pet. v. 5. But the moment this spirit of discord predominates, they gradually separate themselves from the peace and love of their fellow members. They take offence at trifling occurrences, until, by degrees, they lose the true grace of faith ! To them, even the religious meetings of their fellow-members become burdensome, in which they should have been edified. To them, idle and profane conversation seems more delightful than an affectionate address of their fellow-members, respecting their conduct. If, therefore, they refuse to listen to the affectionate address of their brethren ; and attend to the deceitful spirit, who, like Lucifer, transformed into an angel of light, persuades them to have a close eye upon the defects of their fellow-members, to be offended at, and find fault with them, to disturb them, to undermine their regulations, and finally to become their own masters ; in which they frequently succeed, and thereby bring about a separate party. Such proceeding is called by the Spirit of God, seditions, and heresies. It is a manifest work of the flesh, not belonging to the kingdom of God, neither to the

house of the Lord, but to the kingdom and house of old Adam, which is all division, and therefore cannot stand, but must fall. Divisions have always been the beginning of evil, and where it exists, there no earthly, much less a divine family can prosper. True believers, therefore, must avoid such souls, who in this or any other manner may give rise to an offence or division according to the instructions of Paul. Rom. xvi. 17. They are works of the flesh, originating in a fleshly mind, even though the fleshly person committing them, disguises himself under colors of angelical humility. Colos. ii. 18. Paul too calls them heretics, who are to be rejected. Tit. iii. 10.

Quere. What kind of men are fit to conduct the office of excommunication ?

Son. What was said of the spirit of discord, and of those who are to be rejected, I could easily understand ! But I entreat thee, beloved father, to tell me, what kind of men they must be, who are to conduct the office of excommunication, since we are all liable to faults, and deficient in reputation ; and James says, If any man offend not in word. the same is a perfect man. As, therefore, we are all defective, who must they be that ought to avoid their companions for their sins ?

Father. It is very well that thee inquires of me every thing, for ignorance is dangerous to

the soul. Therefore be attentive to my instruction. Salvation never was intended for any other than the faithful. Whosoever believes in the Son of God, shall have eternal life; but they that believe not, the wrath of God abideth on them. Observe then the nature and quality of faith as pronounced by Jesus the Son of God. Mark xvi. 17. And these signs shall follow them that believe in my name, (that is, by his doctrine, word and commandments) shall they cast out devils; first out of themselves, and then out of those who believe in him, and by their word are converted. They shall speak with new tongues, and take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. To such believers eternal life is promised, and they are commanded by Christ to expel from their congregations such sinful, offensive and vain souls; and what they bind upon earth, most certainly will be bound in heaven; and what they loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven. Such believers carry into effect the laws and regulations of the house of their King; and under many afflictions, act with great cheerfulness of faith, according to the rules of their Lord and Master, although rejected for such conduct by the wicked. Such faithful members of Jesus, should they even err and transgress inconsiderately, they never do it designedly, but always are very sorry for the act. They are such who mourn for their frailty; and if reminded

by their fellow brethren, they greatly delight in hearing them, and take correction wherever they err. They are such of whom John says, *My little children, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.* 1 John ii. 1. They stand by faith in a continual combat against sin, and constantly mortify the sinful members existing upon earth; they would even rather be excluded from the congregation of the Lord than transgress, and not desist, when reprehended. Such believers then, can assist with a good conscience, in excommunicating and withdrawing from, their most beloved brethren, for transgression, and not attending to their affectionate corrections, because they have already banished from themselves this mind and spirit. Such believers can say with John, and certainty of faith. 1 John iv. 6. We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. Thus, with a very good conscience can they reject from their society, a member insensible to their affectionate corrections and instructions. For if a member transgresses and refuses all correction, it is a sin unto death, for which we are not commanded to pray; as John says, 1 John v. 16. Thus thee may be convinced of the great difference in sinning: for if two persons commit the same sin, one of them may be lost and the other saved, as has been the case with the two criminals,

crucified with Jesus, the one entered into Paradise with Jesus, because he acknowledged his sins, and believed in him. The same may be the case in a congregation where two members sin alike; the one hears, repents, and obtains forgiveness; the other, not able to bear correction, becomes hardened in pride and self-love, and will be lost. There is a great difference in committing sins, for which purpose David said, Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. Ps. xxxii. 2. These are the pious souls who, after erring inconsiderately, easily repent when reproved by their fellow members. Of these James speaks; for in many things we offend all. James iii. 2. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. viii. 1. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God. 1 John iii. 9. These are the blessed seed of the woman, who are in daily warfare against sin as the seed of the devil, and between them and the seed of the serpent, there is a continual enmity, who still must feel its bruises in their heels, although its head, that is, its dominion, being bruised and destroyed. Therefore, the faithful as long as they live in the state of humility, are called the contending church; but they shall overcome by the blood of the Lamb. Rev. xii. 11.

Son. I am now a little acquainted with the difference in sinning and forbearing with its causes; but some when in a state of bondage, told me that they were very happy and could not feel its effects. Others too, said that it had no power, because they who were in that state were insensible of its influence, and were in good spirits.

Father. If thee will attend to Gods design in this respect, thee will easily perceive how such poor souls who have no knowledge of God, are deceived by the subtlety of the serpent. For when originally they repent and believe in the gospel of Jesus, they enter the church, and receive divine ordinances by faith, assist for a while in conducting its œconomy, and believe, what will bind the Lords community upon earth, will bind it also in heaven. But such poor souls do not contend for the faith according to the advice of the Apostle, Jude v. 3. but depart from it, and in their minds give heed to seducing spirits, which they view as angels, as Paul clearly writes, 1 Tim. iv, 1, and they hearken to them because they promise them liberty &c. as Peter wrote to the faithful 2 Peter ii, 18, 19. Thus the conscience of these miserable souls, upon their departure from faith becomes seared, and may continue insensible of their exile condition until the day of judgment; they can even speak to the congregation of the Lord in a haughty tone; you may exclude us as you please, God still will receive us into his grace, but they, who have

been excommunicated for their sins, and still adhere to faith are sensible of their state and again return by faith and repentance. But how great is the blindness of those, who still find fault with a congregation, for avoiding them that depart from faith, are insensibly of the effects of excommunication, and even contend against the church of the Lord. For God himself subjects the greatest part of mankind to a state of excommunication; as is the case with all unconverted, who unless truly repenting and being born again by faith in Jesus, to live according to the will of God, still are the children of his wrath, which waits on them with everlasting punishment. Were we to attend but for a moment, to these persons, we will perceive, that they are lively and in good spirits, possessing even through the medium of the false doctrine a hope for salvation. They are such of whom Jesus says, Matth. xxiv, 38, 39. For as in the days, that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking &c. in a word they were merry until the flood came and took them all away. They cared nothing for Noah's preaching and his building the Ark, neither did they believe; but in its stead greatly mocked at him. Even so will all unconverted be in the days of the coming of the son of man. They will not believe their condition to be so bad, because they possess no sensation of the divine excommunication, to which they are subjected, for infidelity has hardened their hearts, similar to

Lots wife, who became as a pillar of salt. The same will be the case with such poor souls who look back on their departure from sinful Sodom, have no faith in the gospel. Peter says, for it had been better for them, not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known to turn from the holy commandment, delivered unto them, 2 Peter ii, 21. Therefore Jesus calls upon his followers, with a powerful voice, remember Lots wife. Luke xvii, 32, even the angels who have sinned, we are informed were rejected by God, and cast down to hell in chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, 2 Peter ii, 4. Now observe what these rejected angels do! why they contend against the good, as may be seen in the epistle of Jude v. ix and Rev. xvii, 7. A combat likewise took place between Satan and Christ, Matth. iv. With the same propriety might these poor deluded people, say to God, that his excommunication had no effect. Dont be surprized, that as long as the rejected angels are permitted by God to contend against the good angels, that they who depart from faith, adhere to these unruly spirits contend against faith and give themselves trouble, which tends only to augment their damnation and to the proving of the faithful for confirming their salvation. Therefore concern thyself little about other people's conversation, for commonly it is of a profane nature, and against the mind of God and although their testimony be received by some, the testimony of God is greater,

John v. 9. For God has borne witness of his son, and whosoever believes in the son, has the witness in himself, which is more certain, than the testimony of men, be it of what appearance it may. This I trust now is sufficient information for thee, of the cause of excommunication, and of the nature of those who oppose the people of God.

Son. But would the powers that be, suffer the church to establish such tribunal for the judging and excommunicating their members.

Father. Such ordinance, thou shouldest observe, cannot be against the will and intention of earthly rulers, but on the contrary is exceedingly beneficial to their state. Instructions of this kind, Paul has given to the faithful. Rom. xii. 1, 7. that every soul shall be subject for the Lord's sake, to human regulations, made by their rulers; and render them tribute, custom, fear and honor: for all magistrates are ordained by God to punish evil-doers and defend the good, in such a manner as to correspond with the will of God. In such of their subjects, therefore, they should take great delight, especially if they walk in the fear of God, suffer among themselves no public transgressors, and give their rulers their dues, as well as the Lord: for the Lord hath promised a time when kings shall be the nursing fathers of his people, and queens their nursing mothers. Is. lx. 16.

Of taking Oaths.

Son. Will magistrates be satisfied with our bare affirmation according to the doctrine of Christ?

Father. If, agreeable to such doctrine, the faithful affirm with yea, what is so, and with nay, what is nay, is much preferable to making many oaths and not keeping them. More peace and safety exists in a government where the subjects in the fear of God, tell the truth with yea and nay, and adhere to it, than the oaths of those in whom no confidence can be placed.

Of the examining ourselves, and proving others.

Son. I thank thee beloved father, for all thy instruction, and perceive clearly, that perfect instruction of divine things comes from God, and by faith are we required to continue in his word by which he manifested himself, and only then will the heart obtain a firmness through grace. But I have something more to ask, of which I heard thee say, and which I wish to know with certainty; namely, Why do we not put people to a trial before we baptize and receive them into the church, when, on the other hand, we first baptize, and afterwards, disown them for their improper conduct; by which we give reason to suspect that the spirit of examination is not in us, which is undoubtedly necessary?

Father. Dear son, if thou wilt listen to me, thou wilt observe the great ignorance of people in the mind and will of God, and they judge according to human wisdom, and reject things because they do not understand them. But allow me to set thee to rights again, and thee will agree, that I am not out of the way : for in the first place, are the faithful not allowed to be any otherwise minded in the house of God than as he has manifested himself therein ; neither dare they pretend to be wiser, and although they be taken by men for fools, they must act nevertheless agreeable to the model of divine wisdom. For, says Paul, If any among you seemeth to be wise in this world let him become a fool, that he may be wise ; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19. Now as the faithful in all things, wholly must look upon God, they are justified in so doing, in the trial of their brethren. Nothing else therefore, can we learn of God, but in this manner : namely, when he wished to prove a person or a nation, gave them his laws and commandments, and by these alone were they fully proved. That such always has been the manner of divine wisdom, and still is so, we may read in Sirach iv. 19. vi. 22. Even Adam must be tried after he was placed in Paradise, and not before ; and there his trial under the will of God, was for the purpose of knowing whether or not he would eat of the forbidden fruit. Noah, after him, was to be tried in his faith in building and

entering the ark. Even Abraham the father of all believers had to undergo the severest trial. He had to leave his mother country, go through the ceremony of circumcision; and what was still greater, was commanded to sacrifice his only son Isaac. Gen. xii. 1. xxii. 1. we observe too, that God fully tried the seed of Abraham in Egypt, and after having been led into the wilderness by a mighty hand, God began to humble and prove them, even after they had the promise of the holy land, to know what was in their hearts, whether or not they were willing to keep his commandments; as is to be seen Deut. viii. 2. In this trying wilderness most of them were overthrown for their unbelief, and with whom God was not pleased, although having been baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and having eaten all of the same meat, even as it is called in the book of wisdom, the food of angels. c. xvi. 20. They all drank of the same spiritual drink of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. These, therefore, did not hold out in their trial, for God required of them for his goodness, obedience to his commandments and laws. Now observe God's intention in the new covenant. In the first place, we read of no trial and temptation having occurred to the Son of God before his baptism: but as soon as this was performed by John in Jordan, and the voice from heaven heard, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,

Matt. iii. 16, 17. temptation began ; then was he tempted of the devil, scribes and Pharisees ; then was he to learn obedience, Heb. v. 8. and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Philip. ii. 8. In the same manner as God the Father tempted his Son, so does the Son lead his followers. Then may the kingdom of heaven truly be compared to a net, that gathered of every kind of fish, but where the bad are cast away. Matt. xiii. 47, 48. For Jesus makes many disciples in faith and baptism. John iv. 1. But they cannot be proven and chosen, unless by their cross and his doctrine. Never did Jesus, prove man without his gospel, but all that came to him, and believed on him, he received as disciples, but told them at the same time : If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John viii. 31, 32. Again said he to his Apostles ; If ye abide in me, as the branch does in the vine, ye will bring forth much fruit, but if ye will not abide in me, ye will be cast forth as a branch and be withered. John xv. 4, 6. No other mind must govern the church of Christ, but if a man will repent, publicly renounce the devil, world, and all sins, and acknowledge the doctrines of Jesus, it is their duty to admit him, although there be no certainty that he would continue firm in his profession : but while nothing bad is known of him, he cannot be rejected by the congregation. By his following Jesus, it will be manifest whether or not he will reject his gos-

pel as the only true test; as wisdom shews in Sirach. vi. 22. Divine wisdom invites every body to come to her, even the simple, or such wanting understanding. Prov. ix. 1, 4. And excludes no man who follows the invitation of forsaking the road of foolishness, and going the way of understanding; then will man be fully tried in the house of God, whether he suffer his feet to be put in fetters, and his neck into the yoke. Sirach. vi. 25. If then he does not hold out faithful, the whole blame lays upon him: for it is God's design to prove men in his commandments, not before, but after they entered into covenant with him. Otherwise we might accuse God often in the Old Testament, for not proving the inconstant, previous to his adopting them and vouchsafing to them his promises. As well might Jesus be blamed for choosing disciples who proved unfaithful: Why did he not select all such as he knew would continue stedfast? for it is written, that many of his disciples went back and walked with him no more. John vi. 66. Thus too, we might accuse all the Apostles for making disciples by the preaching of the gospel, of whom many became apostates in different ways. The following comparison will add more light: namely, if two persons loved each other, and concluded to enter into matrimony, when can they try each other best, either before or after that state? Before, they are all free from the burden of house-keeping, the woman is not under the necessity of obeying the man, and

is free from the cares and infirmities of the women, when they know of nothing but of love. But as soon as they make a public matrimonial contract with each other, and commence house-keeping, then may it be said that their time of trial begins ; then is the wife not to be allowed to have intercourse with any other except with her husband whom she must obey ; then will he discover her weaknesses ; then will the extremes of conjugal affection subside, and if they wish to enjoy peace, a divine love will be requisite in its place, one whose fire must be kept up through life in prosperity and adversity, until death parts them. This then in the state of matrimony among the faithful, representing Christ and his church, Ephes. v. 32.

Worldly minded men whenever they wish to get married, sometimes adhere to one, and sometimes to another, and commonly are very unstable ; they likewise find fault with the conduct of married people, and believe that they can far exceed them in leading a good life ; however, upon their entering that state, they must too often learn how to conduct a family, then they sometimes become adulterers, and have not love and patience enough to hold out in the trial. Now examine the case in the spiritual way ; how many souls have been excited to abandon the great whore, have come out of Babylon, and now court in many ways the doctrine of Christ. One takes a passage out of the Testament here, and another there, which they

embrace, and even pretend great love toward each other; call each other brethren and sisters, walking thus together, without being bound or baptized by one spirit into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. Therefore they avail themselves of the liberty to adhere to what they please, one to one, and another to another opinion, one to this and the other to another spirit, thus solacing themselves with this species of love, so that the saying will apply very well to them that love covers all and gives no chastisement. The unrestrained love in courtship, its true, covers all, for where it exists no sacred ties take place between Christ and his church, to walk according to his ordinances, but a love connected with these ties is not false, it moreover hates all evil, wicked and sinful acts, Rom xiii. 9. Behold then, these amorous souls undertake to reflect upon them that entered into these ties, in their edifying and admonishing each other, for should it happen that one of the latter turns out to be different from what he should be that it adheres to another spirit, they themselves viewing him as an adulterer, and if he hears not. exclude him from the congregation. One thus excluded, in his turn will again unite himself with these courtiers, where with all false spirits he will exercise his unbridled love out of the house and church of the Lord as he pleases. Such indeed must be a great freedom of mind, but where, why out of the house of God, his church, and kingdom; for in his kingdom no such dis-

order or false liberty exists, but it is all order and unity ; even the angels in heaven regulate their will agreeably to the will of God, for were this not the case, they could not exist in his kingdom ; for the moment they deviate in this respect, they were cast down to Hell and delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Behold this is the nature of the true love of God. For such according to the doctrine and comparison of their master must be the intention of all believers, that if one of the members of thy body offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, Matth. xviii. This commandment Jesus particularly gave to his church, being his body, that it should cut off all sinful and offensive members, to prevent the destruction of the whole body..... A love of this nature also has been commanded by God in the law, that if thy friend, who is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly to serve other gods not commanded by God, thou shalt not hearken unto him ; neither shall thine eye pity him, Deut. xiii. 6. Behold of this love every courtier is ignorant, and is so as long as he refuses to enter into the sacred ties with Christ or in his doctrine and ordinances. Still he looks upon himself as possessing an impartial love, and is respected by inexperienced souls, as a person walking in great godly love and sound faith. But it will be known to have been but a false love, well varnished by bright and ingenious discourses, by which many in-

nocent souls are deceived. Therefore says the scripture, let love be without dissimulation, Rom. xii. 9. Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. From which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling, 1 Tim. i. 5, 6. Thus thee may see that a feigned faith and love can exist.

Of Love.

Son. But by what do we prove true love and sound faith, or false love and varnished faith?

Father. True faith and that which hath the promise of everlasting life, must be conformable to scripture, it must be as Jesus said; he that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his body shall flow rivers of living water, John vii. 38. A scriptural faith will also produce a scriptural love. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, 1 John v. 3. If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and if a man love me, he will keep my words, John xiv. 15, 21, 23. By which scriptural love all men are to know his disciples, John xiii. 34, 35. For as Christ was born, crucified, and raised according to the scriptures, 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. So he taught his believers a scriptural faith, and according to the scriptures,

promised them an everlasting life. But a feigned love and faith is not authorized by scripture, but is built upon the wisdom of men ; thus one will believe as he was taught by his learned predecessor, the other will be regulated by some book, and the third by his own opinion and will, whereas the scripture expressly says, that there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, Eph. iv. 5. Should ten persons be influenced by a varnished faith, and they were all examined according to the scripture, it would appear, that each one would be governed by a peculiar faith, and not one would correspond with the scripture, for there is only one true and unfeigned faith according to the scriptures, and all they possess this faith are of one mind.

Of Faith.

Son. But I have been informed that all religious sects appeal to Scripture, and therefore we cannot be allowed to maintain our faith agreeably to that authority.

Father. Whoever says, because all sects appeal to Scripture, that therefore no such liberty is to be given to the true believer, necessarily must be a miserable and an ignorant person. That all sects allow the divine origin of the Scripture, and appeal to it, although not believing in it, gives great support to the faith of the believer. That there is still a great difference between appealing to, and believing in, the

Holy Scriptures, thee may perceive from the conversation between Jesus and the Jews. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me ; for he wrote of me. John v. 46. The Jews, its true, all appealed to Moses, but in his writings they did not believe. Thus all sects appeal to Scripture, and even to Jesus himself. In the same manner, therefore, as they believe in Jesus, so they believe in the Scriptures : can a true believer of course be so stupid, as to think or say, because all sects appeal to a crucified Saviour, therefore I cannot have the same privilege ; this therefore, would answer the devil's purpose extremely well. But no ! true believers have been taught otherwise by their Master : for as the devil in his temptation of Jesus, appealed to the Scriptures, an appeal was made to the Scriptures by Jesus also, in his answer. See Matt. iv. 6, 7. Admitting that the devil and all false spirits appeal to Scripture, it is certain, that they do not believe in it. Thee will also discover, that the same persons, endeavouring to mislead a believer, by saying that all sects appeal to Scripture, always will appeal to that authority themselves. The faithful children of God therefore, always look upon their heavenly Father, believe, and follow him in his manifested word, because they are certain that God and his revealed word exactly correspond with each other, otherwise a believer would be under the necessity of omitting a great deal, by not doing what the wicked and infidels do in their unbelief.

He would not be allowed to pray, sing, labour, eat, sleep, &c. which to the wicked is all sin, and to God an abomination. For unto the pure, all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. Tit. i. 15. For observe well in all things the true meaning according to the Scripture, that thee may not be confused, as is the case with many at present, where the ungodly perform divine service, as praying, singing, holding meetings, baptizing, going to sacrament and such like. Blind reason here may tell thee, that if such be the practice of these people, it will be no harm for thee entirely to neglect it. Such indifferent persons indeed, may be confounded in various ways, that finally they will be utterly at a loss what to think or believe. Then will they be compelled to point out their own course, of which perhaps not the smallest trace exists in Scripture. In pursuing this, they will imagine to have exceeded the Apostles, and thus totally reject every counsel, either from the Scriptures or Apostles. Even in my time have I known and been informed of people, whose course I discovered to end in great depravity. Their ruined condition was such, that finally they believed in nothing at all, and fully walked on the broad road to destruction. May God in his grace, through Christ, preserve every simple believer against such a condition, that they may not aspire to rise too high, but on the contrary, be satisfied in a humble sphere. Rom. xii. 16. And Paul says to his

son Timothy; because thou hast known the Holy Scriptures from a child, they are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Tim. iii. 15, 17.

Son. Are we in all respects to believe the evidence of the Holy Scriptures, and is a believer bound to believe and obey the same, or does the Spirit of God not rather at times lead us in ways, different from what the Scripture literally tells us?

Father. 'Tis not necessary to tell a believer that he is absolutely bound to believe and obey the Scripture, for no person can be faithful without the Holy Ghost, who must work out faith. The Scripture therefore, only is an external evidence of things formerly taught and commanded by the Holy Ghost, containing the promises and threats pronounced by him. If therefore, a person obtain of God the Father of all spirits, through his grace, the Holy Ghost, by true repentance, it will be the same spirit of faith, who worked in Peter, Paul, and John, many hundred years ago. He is the same in all the faithful, although working in greater capacity in the Apostles, for the spread of the gospel, and what they wrote and commanded, all believers agree to, while they continued sound in the

faith. As long therefore, as there is but one God and one Spirit, the object of this one Holy Spirit can be no other than sanctification, which was the same many hundred years ago: what therefore the Holy Ghost has ordered the faithful to observe, is externally recorded, corresponding with the approbation of all the faithful, for he gives the same doctrine internally, what the Scripture gives externally. But whenever persons examine the Scripture with their own wisdom and fleshly minds, they read it without the spirit of faith, and cannot believe its external evidence, nor be obedient thereto. They are not bound to obey its commandments, because they do not consider it directed to them. Thus, were a king to give laws, and record them for the use of his subjects, connected with great promises and threats, in case of obedience or disobedience, others not his subjects would read them perhaps with a great noise, but with little or no concern for obeying them. The same holds good with the Holy Scriptures; for instance, with the New Testament. Whoever reads it, may see what Jesus the King of kings has promised to all men, who truly repent, believe in, and faithfully follow him in all his commandments. They can likewise see and read of his threats to all hardened sinners, not repenting and believing in his gospel, or even refusing the government of his Spirit in the obedience of his commandments as recorded in Scripture. 'Tis true, a man may read the bare scriptural word,

speak and write of it, but if he has not the spirit of faith in him, will concern himself little or nothing about its commandments, nor be much terrified at its threats. The reason is plain, their ears are not opened. Thus Jesus said to the people who heard him preach; he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Matt. xi. 15. xiii. 43. And in the revelation of St. John, the Spirit of God calls upon the seven churches: he that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Rev. ii. 7. Thus, a believer whose internal ears are opened, if he reads the Holy Scriptures, hears what Jesus enjoins in his doctrine, what the apostles require in their writings, and by this internal hearing be excited to true obedience externally, he reads the scriptures in faith, and hears the internal word of life, which gives him power and vigour to follow Jesus. But where faith is wanting, it is an easy matter for a man to hear and read the bare word, and say it is a dead letter which I cannot obey, because I am not internally convinced of what is externally written; but he is ignorant of his want of sound faith, and the true love of God. John xiv. 15.

Of External and Internal Word.

Son. But numbers tell me that christians being bound by the new covenant, and the law of God, written in their hearts, are not compelled to obey implicitly the external scripture.

Father. I am glad that thou hast started this question. By a serious attention thou wilt understand the design of God, and perceive that such assertions contain in part, truths, and in part lies. For as the Lord God by Moses, formerly manifested his law to his people, he wrote the commandments on two tables of stone, and gave them to Moses, to put into the ark of the covenant; Deut. x. 1, 5. Heb. ix. 4. Of which they were to take a copy, and write them upon the posts of their houses. Deut. vi. 6. 9. It is written, that the words of the commandments should be in their hearts, of which they should talk to their children, bind them for a sign upon their hands, and write them upon the posts of their houses and gates. The external copy of course, was a faithful transcript of the writing of God when the tables of stone, laid up in the holy place, within the ark of the covenant, so that the external and internal law were of the same import. The Holy of Holies, in the ark of the covenant, containing the commandments, may represent the heart of each believer in the new covenant, containing doubtless, also the tables of the commandments of his God; written not by the hand of man, but by the Holy Ghost. This therefore, stands in close connexion with the external writings in the New Testament, which flowed from the interior, and is the very image of the inward living word of God. But where a person says out of mere pride, that the laws of God are in his

heart, and still wars against the commandments, rights, and laws, commanded by the Son of God and his Apostles, of which the Scriptures testify, thee may safely believe him to be of a carnal mind, not possessing any other laws in his heart, than such as have been written by the spirit of error and falsehood. Again, where the law of God is written in the heart, it is an evidence that they are all of one faith, one baptism, and one spirit, according to Christ Jesus. It was the design of the true Law-giver that his disciples all should be one, even as the Father and Son. John xvii. 11. On the contrary, where a spurious gospel is received and written in the heart by the spirit of error, it is in the first place, quite ignorant in divine things. Ps. v. 10. In the second, it separates men from the commandments and ordinances of God, and causes among them many religious professions and opinions. This have I experienced in many, who said they were a free people, under no compulsion to obey the letter of the New Testament, because the law of God was already written in their hearts. But equally have I seen such whereof not two, even in the beginning of their christian life, were, according to the Scripture, of one mind. For as many as there existed of this high disposition, so many different opinions had they among them. To me indeed, this often appeared to be a very curious spirit, writing so many different laws in the different hearts of men. Even in the days of the prophet

Jeremiah, God complained that the Israelites were corrupted by false prophets, forsook his laws and altars, and in their false liberty, as they thought proper, made for themselves in their room, other gods and altars. Jer. xi. 13. The same is the case with people in our times, who boast of great liberty, without obeying, agreeably to the Scripture, the divine counsels and commandments. The saying here is perfectly true: As many people, as many spirits, and as many laws. But however great their spiritual pretensions may be, it still continues to be Babylon, confusion and discord. As builders, they refuse to desist, although the Lord confused their language. Seeing that many learned and wise have built, been disgraced, and turned fools, being destitute of the knowledge of Jesus; still they begin again to build this confused edifice. The consequence will be an additional confusion and abomination, and if no cessation takes place, their minds will be corrupted to such a degree as totally to be unfit for believing. Yet their folly shall be manifest unto all men as is written 2 Tim. iii. 9. Now I trust thee to be convinced, that both true and false laws may be written in the hearts of men; the false by the spirit of error, in the hearts of the unbelieving; and the true by the Holy Spirit of truth, in the children of the new covenant or the true believers, perfectly corresponding with what Christ and the Apostles commanded and recorded in the Scriptures.

Son. The instructions which thou hast given me are satisfactory, they are no less useful than they were necessary, for by them I am led to discover that a great discernment is requisite in these times to know the difference between truth and falsehood. But I must add another question, whether the following passage from the Acts, is still to be observed, namely, the Apostles at Jerusalem have forbidden the believers from the heathen nation to eat blood, and from things strangled, c. xv. 29.

Of things strangled and of blood.

Father. Blood in the Old Testament having been considered as necessary for atonement, God said to Noah when permitting him and his sons to eat flesh, that the flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, they should not eat, Gen. ix. 4. Again God commanded his people by Moses to eat no manner of blood, whether of fowl, or of beast, and said that whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people, Lev. vii. 26, 27. God expressed the same still more clearly, when he said, whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people, for the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it

to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul, therefore I said unto you, no soul of you shall eat blood, Lev. xvii. 10, 12. Thus thee may see, why God in the Old Testament has forbidden his people to eat blood. In the time of the Apostles the Holy Ghost was pleased to command to abstain from eating blood as well as from acts of fornication, as a necessary observance for the faithful, both from among the Jews and gentiles, Acts xv. 29. The reason of not eating blood by the christians, is that the blood of the Son of God is an atonement for them, and is forbidden both in the Old and New Testament. The language of the first christians to the heathens was thus, namely, we are not as brutal and desirous as the beasts to eat their flesh with the blood; they even inflicted a state of bondage on a man who proved to be guilty of this act, as may be seen in Godfrey Arnold's Portrait of the Primitive Christians.

Son. But do we not read that nothing entering man from without can defile him, as Jesus said, Mark vii. 15. And the Apostle said, whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, 1 Cor. x. 25.

Father. People who say this, have no understanding of the unity of the spirit: they think that the scriptures and the Spirit of God are as discordant as they are themselves: for where any thing is prohibited in one place, they have

an idea that it may be allowed in another. Had Christ alluded to forbidden things, we might safely commit the sin of drinking to excess, and had Paul's sentiments been without distinction, non eatables would likewise come under the same order. Paul's allusions only respecting natural food, blood therefore cannot be considered as an article of that description. Thus it is a settled point, that the eating of blood and things strangled, as well as acts of fornication are forbidden by the Holy Ghost and Apostles.

Of Matrimony.

Son. Do tell me also, how the case stands with respect to matrimony under the new covenant, whether the faithful are permitted to marry, or how that state is to be conducted?

Father. The Lord God himself instituted that state in Paradise, as Jesus said to the Pharisees: Have ye not read, that he who made them in the beginning, made them male and female, and that they should be no more twain, but one flesh. That this state is for the purpose of two persons who in the fear and faith of God are to be one, and was instituted and blessed by himself, may be seen in the cases of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the saints of the Old Testament. That it is to be conducted in unity and purity; likewise has been expressed in the law. Thus God has forbidden the children of Israel to marry any other than out of

the seed of Abraham, Deut. vii. 3. And when he was about to give his commandments to the Israelites, he told them by Moses, to be prepared against the third day, and not to come at their wives, Exod. xix. 15. Again, that if a woman bear a maid child, she shall continue in the blood of her purifying three score and six days, Lev. xii. 5. And during her regular sickness, abstinence was strictly commanded, Lev. xx. 18. From all these commandments it is clear that the state of matrimony is a regulation of decency and not in concupiscence as among the heathens, who are ignorant of God and his will, that it is to be conducted in that manner. (The same in the New Testament is to be respected as an ordinance still more holy.) And to the unmarried the apostle Paul says, that it would be good for them if they abide even as he. For if the single state be conducted in the purity of the spirit, and flesh, in the true faith of Jesus, and kept in true humility, it may be considered as an higher grade of perfection, and a nearer resemblance of the image of Jesus. But if a single person marries he commits no sin, provided it be done in the fear of the Lord; that is in the true faith of Christ, and in unity according to his doctrine and commandments, or in other words, to be one flesh even as Christ and his church, Eph. v. 30. For in no other manner can a man be one flesh with Christ or of his bones, than by following in obedience and faith the word, which is Jesus, and which he has

taught. Such flesh and bones cannot signify the perishable flesh of the faithful, for the flesh of Christ is imperishable. In like manner must the true state of matrimony which has been instituted by God, be conducted, that not only they be one flesh according to the outward flesh and perishable part, but much more according to the inward part in the will of their God must they have one flesh and one faith in Christ Jesus. In no other manner than as mentioned in scripture has the state of matrimony been instituted and consecrated. But where people marry on account of pleasures and riches, and not look upon the unity of faith in Christ; such a state lies under the curse, and justly is to be rejected by the faithful, and is improper in the house and church of the Lord, and always has been punished by God. As may be seen, that when the sons of God turned away from him, and became fleshly minded, saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took to them wives of all which they chose, a flood necessarily came and destroyed them all. The scripture called those from the tribe of Seth, the children of God, because he having been Adam's son, begotten after his image, Gen. v. 3. But the children of men were from the tribe of Cain, whom the Lord cursed for murdering his brother.... God did not permit these two tribes to mix with each other, but they disobeyed and mixed, and they all perished from the face of the earth, with the exception of a seed from the tribe of

Seth, consisting of Noah and his sons. The devil, however, soon brought one of his sons, named Ham, under the curse of his father, Gen. ix. 25. God therefore made no selections from Ham's, but from Shem's tribe, his brother, of whom Abraham for instance was born the father of all faithful. Abraham upon marrying his son Isaac, from his acquaintance with the will of God, said to his eldest servant that he should not take a wife unto his son of the daughters of the Canaanites, namely, from the tribe of Ham; but go to Abraham's country and kindred, and take a wife to his son Isaac. The same disposition governed Isaac when blessing and commanding his son Jacob not to take a wife of the daughters of Canaan, but to go to his mother's father's house and take a wife of his daughters. But Esau, likewise Isaac's son, a wild man and hated by God, not regarding the will of God, but courting at pleasure and convenience, took two wives, not of his kindred, but of the Hittites, which was a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebecca. The wise king Solomon, when conquered by the love and courteousness of strange women, and marrying contrary to the law, even fell under the displeasure of God, so that his whole kingdom was rent out of his hand. The Jews too, when rebuilding the temple at the time of Nehemiah, repented and separated themselves from all strange women which they had taken, of whom some even had children,

as thee may see in the tenth chapter in the book of Ezra.

Son. But if people marry without the possession of faith, and the one part in the mean time should be converted and become faithful, may it still live with the unbelieving?

Father. This no doubt frequently was the case among the first christians, that one of the two only became faithful. Paul therefore recommends to the faithful to continue with the unbelieving as long as the latter be pleased to dwell with the former, but if it made proposals for parting, the faithful no longer will be bound in such cases, 1 Cor. vii. 12. 15. It ought therefore well to be observed what Paul says of the married of the faithful in the foregoing verses, where the Lord says, let not the wife depart from her husband; but if she depart, let her remain unmarried. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord. If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and if she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. By this we are to understand, that the unbelieving is not to be a brute like some people, who like Lions and other wild beasts continually grumble, and destroy every good by force; or should it shew itself in every base and adulterous act, so that the believing part only is to serve as its cloak to cover its shame, in that case it cannot be bound to dwell with such an inconsistent being.

Of Adultery.

Son. But should among married people one be seduced by the devil to commit adultery, shall they be permitted still to live with each other.

Father. In the first place it is commanded in the law of Moses to kill adulterers, and not to suffer any one of them in the house of the Lord. But if a man has set his wife at liberty by a letter of divorcement, she was no more to be considered as an adulteress, although married with another, yet if the latter husband dies, her former would not have been allowed to take her again to be his wife, for then she would have been and considered as an abomination before the Lord, Deut. xxiv. 3. 4. How great then must the crime of adultery be, and how much it operates against a believer to marry an adulterous whorish body, is evident from its great corruption it produces in the sight and congregation of the Lord, and therefore as such an abomination cannot be permitted. No other remedy against such an offence than actual separation could be prescribed unless in cases of serious repentance.

Of Excommunication.

Son. But if either party of husband or wife sins so as to be excommunicated by the church,

is the other party to have no communication with it?

Father. God commanded in the Old Testament, that if thy brother, son, or daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, who is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, let us serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou shalt not consent, nor shall thine eye pity or spare him, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thine hand first shall be upon him, to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people, Deut. xiii. 6. 8. 9. Thus thee may see of what little consequence the closet connections were to him who was to be put to death under the law. This itself represented the state of excommunication in the church of God in the new covenant. There Jesus said, if thy brother transgress against thee, (alluding to husband and wife, children and parents if belonging to the congregation of the Lord) and if he shall neglect to hear thee and the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican, Matth. xviii. 17. This forbearance for the purpose of escaping corruption both in spiritual as well as bodily communication is to be observed even among the nearest connections. In Deut. xvii. 7. it is strongly marked out, namely, if one has transgressed, so that he must suffer death, the hands of the witnesses first shall be upon the perpetrator, and then the hands of all the people. And when Israel had transgressed through the medium of the Golden Calf, the

Levites were commanded by God to slay from gate to gate throughout the camp every man his brother, companion and neighbour, and then a blessing was bestowed upon them by Moses..... Thus in Christendom it is exceedingly necessary to renounce all for the Lord's sake. The doctrine of Jesus in self denial purports the same thing. It is an easy matter, however, for the unenlightened in many cases to assist in excommunicating as long as they are not under the necessity of denying themselves, their companions and children, but the moment this takes place, their natural affections alas often prove to be stronger than their love for divine things, which doubtless will end in destruction. It's therefore a settled point what Jesus says, that whosoever loveth any thing more than me is not worthy of me.

Of outward Worship.

Son. Thee told me however of a number of things, which in the opinion of many were needless to be observed by the faithful. They were no more under the necessity of dwelling upon them, from their having been transferred to a heavenly condition, and conversant in nothing else but religious affairs.

Father. True, such people I have seen enough myself, but they who hold up doctrines in its favor err greatly. The reason is plain, they are in want of that humble mind so sub-

missive to divine councils and ordinances, and faithfull in little, consequently will be elevated over the great. There is a time for humiliation, and a time for exaltation.

Jesus first appeared in this world in a low and humble station, in a humble and voluntary submission to the will of his father. In future he will appear as an exalted Christ, in great glory. Therefore, every soul wishing to share in his exaltation previously must follow him in a state of humility, and not be ashamed to confess him before men in all his commandments, so that at first he be little in little and finally exalted, in no other manner can success be ensured. Thus has the church of the Lord always been little and despised in the eyes of the world; it has continually been rejected as the sweepings of the dust. Such men of course greatly err in their thoughts, who pretend that it is needless for the faithful to be baptized with elementary water, and drink the earthly wine of communion, for announcing the death of Jesus, but in its room drinking spiritual water, and what other like high pretensions they may have against the clear evidence of the Holy Scripture. It is therefore very necessary for us to look wholly to the testimony of Jesus and his complete example, and to avoid being misled by these high toned people, we must simply follow his example in the obedience of faith, and bring every thought into captivity under that obedience.

Of the excuses of Unbelievers.

Son. But I have heard many appeal to saints such as Taulerus, Thomas A. Kempis, and others, who have written fine spiritual books, without mentioning any thing respecting the practice of the outward doctrines of Jesus.

Father. Men who appeal to mens evidences, infer, that they are destitute of the evidence of Jesus; therefore says St. John, if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he has testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son, 1 John v. 9. 10. Such testimony is essential to salvation and peculiar to saints. But it is very dangerous to appeal to men who are still under the influence of Babylon, and even not agree with them under such circumstances, for who might agree with those who are under the influence of Popish institutions, who perhaps have avoided out of fear what otherwise they might have confessed. But an appeal to saints is as absurd, as though the world were to appeal to Christ and his Apostles, and yet not harmonize with their doctrine and conduct. Such poor souls therefore are to be pitied, who wish to ground their faith upon such a slender foundation, which in time of affliction will afford no consolation. But the Son of God has taught

that whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock, Matth. vii. 24. Our Saviour further says, verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, John v. 24. Again, whosoever believeth in me will never die. These are true testimonies to him who believeth, but how wretched is it to appeal to the testimonies and practices of men as patterns in divine things, and passing by the examples of Christ and his Apostles, rather let us remember what Paul says, but though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, Gal. i. 8. Behold this then to be the only gospel to which we shall listen, to which Moses and the prophets have pointed, and was revealed by Christ and his Apostles; neither can it be altered nor defamed either by the holiness of angels, men, or even by the power and dominion of the whole world. To add any thing to, or take away from it, would bring upon us the displeasure of God, for it is as firm as his mountain, and by Christ compared to a stone, namely, whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder, Matth, xxi. 44.

Of the Reward of the Faithful..

Son. Thou hast told me a great deal of the doctrine of our Saviour, that it was necessary for us to deny ourselves, follow him, and continue firm under crosses and afflictions, untill our dissolution, what may our expectations be, and what our reward?

Father. The riches and glories to be obtained through Christ, are of such magnitude as to be inexpressible by any human tongue; nor can any one describe what God has prepared for those who love him. For this purpose I shall repeat to thee the Spirit of God's expression relating to it in the Scriptures. The Son of God himself testified that *whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life.* John iii. 15. This itself even, is a great expression of eternal glory. It cannot be like the life of the kings and great of this world, for this scarcely is similar to the breadth of an hand, and at the same time full of deficiency, disease, fear, inquietude, danger of dissolution, &c. and at last will be utterly extinguished. But it is such a fulness of joy, which is no more liable to any cessation, and will continue for ever. 'Tis a state destitute of either pain, fear, want, inconvenience, or even complaint; for as the life will be everlasting, so will be its joy: as God said through the prophet; Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Is. xxxv. 10. Here even, will proceed out of the throne of God and the Lamb,

a pure river of water of life, and on either side thereof will be there the tree of life, bearing the most precious fruits. Rev. xxii. 1, 2. It is here where the city of God will be manifested amidst this happy state of existence. Rev. xxi. whose streets will be of pure gold and precious stones; and where the faithful will sing the glorious hallelujah. Job xiii. 22. They will be clothed with white robes and palms in their hands. Rev. vii. 9. They will even sing and rejoice. There the Lamb will lead them unto living fountains of water, and feed them with fruit of immortality. It will heighten their joy still more, when they shall behold Jesus in his great glory and majesty, with millions of his saints and angels surrounding his throne, and with a loud voice in holiness and joy, sing everlasting hallelujah, that the creatures which were liberated shall be induced to bring unto the Lamb that was slain, blessing, honor, glory and power, for ever and ever. Rev. v. 12, 13. Nay, their pleasure must become still greater, when they behold Jesus in his glorified humanity. They will even be astonished at so few having loved and followed him, who alone was so powerful and glorious. Yes, the faithful will evince their astonishment at their having been less willing in this world than what they should have been to sacrifice their lives and all what they had, for the sake of this heavenly King and his holy doctrine. They will equally be convinced that Jesus forsook these glories, came into the world, and died on their

account in order that they might obtain salvation, which will still more increase their praise and gratitude to all eternity. Then, what a life of jubilation will be there, where thousands already have their existence before the throne of God, surrounded in every direction by the rays of his glory, and where the seraphims join in the majestic song, Holy, holy, holy is God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Of Everlasting Torment.

Son. But if the true believers shall enjoy such great and inexpressible blessings, what will be the fate of the unbelievers who were disobedient to the commandments of Jesus, despised him and his kingdom ; on the other hand, paid all their respect to the world and its glories, and finally died in their sins ?

Father. In the same manner as the glory of the faithful shall be inexpressible, so will be the misery of the unbelievers. For the Scripture expressly says, that the Son of God shall come with clouds ; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so : Amen. Rev. i. 7. And out of great fear shall say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Rev. vi. 16. But all this will now profit them nothing ; for Christ will

tell them, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matt. xxv. 41. For they that worship the beast and his image shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb, and the smoke of their torment will ascend up for ever and ever : and they will have no rest day nor night. Rev. xiv. 10, 11. For whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire, where the worm dieth not, neither will the fire be quenched. Rev. xx. 15. Jer. lxvi. 24. Yes, they will be an abhorring to all flesh ; and their punishment, amidst all this torment will be still more aggravated, when they recollect that they have with such levity, forfeited a life thus glorious, a life which they will behold in the children of God, for the means of obtaining which they had so little respect, and in its room only yielded to sinful deeds. Moreover, when the righteous shall be seen with great cheerfulness, by those who have given them such anxiety and rejected their doctrine and faith in Jesus ; then will the damned fall into a terrible dismay respecting such blessings, in sorrow will they converse with each other, and sigh with an anxiety of spirit : that it is him whom we fools respected as an outcast and his conduct as insane. How is he counted now among the children of God, and his inheritance is among the saints. Therefore have we missed the ways of righteousness. What pro-

fit do we now reap from our pomp, of what avail now are our riches and pride? When they will now seriously reflect upon all their sinful deeds committed in this world, without the least fear of God as the greatest good, which they should have regarded highly, and at the same time, consider their forfeiture of such invaluable enjoyments, a torment and misery will ensue in them, which will be inexpressible. For they are banished from the presence of the Lord and all saints.

Son. These are terrible things to listen to. But tell me, will these torments be eternal, and never come to an end?

Father. According to the testimony of scripture, it appears that the smoke of their torment will ascend up for ever and ever. Rev. xiv. 11. But that it is to be entirely without any termination it saith not. Such enquiry however, to us will be of very little consequence. For they have once forfeited the glorious state of salvation, so that were even a final termination of punishment to take place after the long eternities, it cannot be expected that the wicked ever will enjoy that, what the faithful have acquired in time of grace, by the obedience of Jesus. 'Tis a great folly therefore in many, to trust to a restitution of all things, to take place merely from hear-say, which prevents them from paying proper attention to their perilous condition, and to a necessary self-denial. A confidence of this nature will vanish like a vapour, at the com-

mencement of eternal punishment, especially when they will see no end to their miserable existence. To exercise ourselves in this plain calling, that in time of grace we may be counted worthy to escape the wrath of God and infernal punishment, consequently is far better than to consider long how to return again from that miserable state. A thief, if apprehended, would receive very poor comforts from the information that his punishment would be subject to a termination. The instructions contained in the gospel, how to escape the wrath of God; consequently, are far superior to those which tell you that everlasting torment shall come to an end; which, though a truth, is not designed to be preached to the ungodly. That men have been so far misled by their enthusiasm as at this day to teach and write books respecting the restitution of all things as they do, is much to be regretted. Few such faithful and wise stewards now exist, whom Jesus has made rulers of his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season. Luke xii. 42. Milk to the children, more nourishing food to the youth; and to the perfect, meat. But on the other hand, there are so many faithless stewards, whom the Lord himself has not placed over his household, who influenced by human wisdom, follow their own depraved minds, wishing to appear as wise men, only pervert the Lord's design and word, whom they should give milk, they serve them with meat. There the Apos-

tle Paul said to the Corinthians, I have fed you with milk and not with meat, because ye are still babes in Christ and carnal. 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2. The same case holds good in the spiritual life, as it does in the natural. Should, for instance, any one rob a babe of its milk, and in its room place before it, a fine piece of roasted meat, as its sole nourishment, what would be the consequence but its death, however excellent the quality of meat otherwise might be. The same at these confused times unfortunately is the case with many, among whom even are small children, who at the beginning of their conversion, are served with meat, unfit for their capacities, which alas, brings on nothing but injury, confusion, and death, where on the other hand, they should be fed with milk, or the beginning of a christian life, as their proper food; to grow thereby as the new-born babes, as Peter recommends. 1 Pet. ii. Then, whenever these teachers and stewards have imposed upon their poor parishioners long enough by their fine, yet insignificant tone, they again leave them without the instructions necessary to resist the devil and his host. Such men, by saint Paul very justly have been compared to sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal, 1 Cor. xiii. 1. Because they were without the love and doctrine of God, necessary to keep his ordinances and commandments. John xiv. 15, and 1 John v. 3.

Son. Beloved father, I thank thee again for thy kind instructions, yet as our journey soon

will come to an end, I will ask thee the following question, namely, Understanding well, and believing that the way to life is extremely narrow and small, and the temptation of the world great, which swarms with false spirits, teachers, and prophets; how, under all these circumstances, shall I conduct myself, in order to avoid being seduced, and to obtain eternal salvation?

A Parental Advice.

Father. I will endeavor out of a parental love towards thee, to give thee a good and certain advice, of which thee will always think thy life-time; let it never escape thy mind, and be it thy principal care, wherever thee may come to, that all thy sighs and wishes may tend towards the love of God, who created thee, and Jesus Christ, who redeemed thee with his precious blood; and that it may be the case above all things in the world, whether beauty or riches, or whatever may come in thy sight or hearing, a love occupying thy whole heart, soul, and mind. And in this love, fear God with a filial obedience, meditate day and night upon his commandments; keep them with a pure heart, let them be thy counsellors, and continually implore the Holy Ghost to guide thee in truth, in all the commandments of God. Let it always be resounding in thy ears, what David said; Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his

way ? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. Ps. cxix. 9. Again : the words of the Lord are pure words ; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Ps. xii. 6. Again ; The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandments of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey, and the honey comb. Ps. xix. 7, 8, 10. Moreover, let the words of Jesus always echo in thy mind : If a man love me, he will keep my words, but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings. John xiv. 23, 24. Again : My sheep hear my voice and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life. John x. 27, 28. And at the same time, think of what Jesus spake of his commandments, when he said, I have not spoken of myself, for I speak even as the Father said unto me, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting. John xii. 49, 50. And continually keep in mind the important advice given by Jesus to his disciples, when he said, Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly they are raving wolves. Matt. vii. 15. Again ; Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and shall deceive many. Matt. xxiv. 4, 5. Always keep safe thy soul in thine own hands, as the best of thy treasures, and at all times walk in

holy fear. Like David, speak to God with a pure heart: Concerning the works of men, by the words of thy lips, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. Ps. xvii. 4. And should thee fall into the company of men appearing to thee much more holy than John, a great deal more ardent than Elias, abundantly more miraculous than Moses, and much more mild, meek and godly than even Christ himself, and his Apostles, and they do not observe the precepts of Jesus, as laid down in the New Testament, and wish to mislead thee in these plain commandments given by Jesus himself, be persuaded in thy mind that they are false Apostles, and deceitful workmen, pay no attention to their gospel: be as wise as a serpent, stop thine ears to the charmer, and cry after Jesus as a sheep does after its shepherd.

Son. It seems uncharitable and rather hard to me, to view men as false, who discover great holiness and powers, although they do not live agreeably to the doctrine of Jesus, but discard the ordinances literally written in the New Testament.

Father. From the long conversation we had, I thought that thee had a good idea of the word of God, but still I shall repeat, for thy sake, several passages in Scripture, both in the Old, as well as in the New Testament. When God revealed his law, through Moses, to the children of Israel, every one was to be put to death who disrespected and transgressed against it. Num.

xv. 30, 31. Heb. x. 28. And the soul that doth *ought* presumptuously, and breaketh the Lord's commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off: his iniquity shall be upon him. Thus firm was the word of the Lord given by Moses; and every prophet who diminished *ought*, or added any thing to it, consequently was considered as false. But the true prophets all conducted themselves according to the law, as made known by Moses. The false acted after their own minds, and said to the people, that it accorded with the will of the Lord. But it was all grounded upon falsehood. Now observe how important must be the doctrine, right, and commandments, introduced into the world by the Son of God himself; and well confirmed, by signs, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Heb. ii. 4. By the Son of God, by whom the Father has spoken unto us in these last days. Heb. i. 1, 2. By whom also he made the worlds. He is the living Word, which was made flesh; John i. to whom the Father has given all power in heaven and in earth. Matt. xxviii. 18. Which law is far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, not only in this world; but even also in that which is to come. Eph. i. 21. It is the Son of God, who is gone into heaven, and angels, authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him. 1 Pet. iii. 22. Now consider how much better, more determined, and invariably must the word of the Son of God be kept by all who believe in his doctrine, commandments, good

advice and laws. From this thee may easily perceive how wicked, haughty, and blind people must be, who despise only a single commandment of Jesus. And how much more so must be the preachers and prophets who, with their own despise the wisdom of Jesus, and pursue a path different from what he commanded—who endeavor to mislead such who wish to follow Jesus in his commandments, by their smooth and ingenuous discourses, disguised under sheep's clothing; and others again threaten with confinement and other prosecutions, attempting to hinder them from following the good advice of Jesus. What dost thou think? are these not deceivers, false prophets, nay thieves, and robbers, who always climb up some other way, and refuse to enter the door, which is Jesus himself. John x. There is nothing more abominable and wicked in the sight of the Lord, than a mortal not believing in his God, his commandments, and prohibitions. The will of God is the only healing of the soul, and always will continue to be so. No other sanctity is discoverable both in the Old and New Testament. The only way therefore, to God for every soul, is to act agreeably to his will. But to refuse his will with contempt, and say this and the other is not necessary to observe, although the commandments of God, would be acting as his enemy; and as St. John said, Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. 2 John v. 9. But he that abideth in the doc-

trine of Christ, he hath both the Father and Son. Consequently I shall conclude by advising thee to look wholly unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Heb. xii. 2. Whenever therefore, thou hast received sufficient instructions in his doctrine, as literally commanded in the New Testament, all that thou hast to do, is to continue firm in it, and to resolve thyself, much rather to lose thy life, property, and connexions, or whatever thee may possess in the whole world, than deviate from the doctrine of Jesus. Thou must accustom thyself to bear his cross continually, and deny thyself, or else thee cannot be his disciple, much less an heir to his kingdom. Luke xiv. 27. Now may the Lord bless thy soul, increase thy faith, and strengthen thy resolution, that it may bear fruit to eternity, where we will glorify and give praise to our God, for ever. Amen.



Jesus the Exterminator of Sin.

A pard'ning Lord I am,
 In love I will be found;
 The Son of God and man,
 To heal the sinful wound.
 All is now gain'd,
 My death has bought,
 And pardon wrought,
 That thee be spar'd.

EBERHARD LUDWIG GRUBER'S
ENQUIRIES

PROPOSED IN THE FORM OF
QUESTIONS TO THE CONGREGATION
OF THE
NEW BAPTISTS,
PARTICULARLY TO THAT OF WITGENSTEIN
WITH PLAIN ANSWERS,
ADAPTED TO THEIR IMPORT, BY ONE OF
THEIR MEMBERS.

BELOVED FRIENDS,

1 *Question*. IS it not probable that a thousand years ago the practice of true baptism was entirely neglected, and consequently no true church existed in the world?

Answer. We believe that God always supported his church in the performance of true baptism and ordinances, but that they generally were concealed to unbelievers, and practised

often only by few members. At no time however, could the gates of hell overcome the church of God; and it is evident from history, that God repeatedly revealed his word to unbelievers, as a witness against them.

Question 2. But is it not possible for the divine church to exist for a certain time, even with only a few members, without the outward practise of baptism, similar to the church of Israel, without the performance of circumcision in the wilderness. Josh, v. 5.

Answer. The church of Christ is not ordained in any other manner by the great architect Jesus Christ, but to observe his baptism and ordinances, which was confirmed by signs and miracles. It is therefore absurd to believe in its existence without its having been connected with the performance of baptism, and such ordinances as commanded by the true Author of christianity. We do not deny the existence of such who have been drawn privately to the church of Christ, but will not determine whether on the one part, they obeyed and announced Christ publicly, or on the other, valued the glory of the world more than the glory of God. With respect to the church of Israel, we clearly see that the children were under the necessity of bearing the reproach of Egypt and the transgression of their fathers! But the moment they were about to enter the land of promise, and before the surrender of Jericho, they were all to be circumcised. God said therefore to Jo-

shua, v. This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you : and then they were permitted to keep the passover. That it were not permitted before, was intended as a figure upon us. For as long as we walked in the wilderness, great disorder and uncertainty, although removed from Egypt, and saved from the practice of the more coarse sin by the mighty hand of God, we could not enter the house of God, and break the bread in the communion of Jesus and his members. God however, requires that we should be baptized, and will do so, although in private, if we will but regard the internal view, and follow it with a proper self-denial.

Question 3. But do tell us whether the church of God entirely has ceased to exist during the time when the first institution of baptism ceased to be observed ?

Answer. Had this first institution of baptism ceased to exist, the same would have been the case with the church of Christ. 'Tis true, we cannot call it a church where devout persons in such times are distributed here and there upon the face of the earth ; but we do believe, and think it may be shewn from ancient history, that primitive baptism as instituted by Christ, never has ceased to exist, consequently the same was the case with the church although the number was but few.

Question 4. How do you compare this with the promise of Christ, Matt. 1. 18, that even

the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church, and xxviii. 20, that he will be with his disciples always, even unto the end of the world?

Answer. This of itself is proof enough, and we believe that the gates of hell never have prevailed against the church of Christ; but it has continued, and will continue even unto the end of the world.

Question 5. What do you think of the undeniable messengers of truth who have from the time of several centuries been remarkable for their exemplary piety; are they to be excluded as members of Christ and his united congregation, or true church in the existence of the Spirit, merely because they have not been baptized agreeably to the first institution?

Answer. Christ says, Matt. vii. by the fruits ye shall know the tree; we do not believe that the publishing of fine books and prophesying alone, constitute the fruits of a good christian, whereby we shall know him, and therefore cannot respect them as constituting the church of Christ for these good acts alone, unless they actually observed the doctrine of Christ in baptism, and other ordinances, as he commanded. As, however, we were unacquainted with these people we will not judge them, but leave them to God, as for what they have written or spoken, will not make us suspect the gospel of Christ.

Question 6. Are you not of opinion that the ceremony of baptism, having been so long upon

the decline again are to be resumed in these latter times and for what reason? or rather, that the all wise God permitted the decline of this ceremony as not essential to christianity, similar to the entire repeal of circumcision under the former covenant as insufficient to perfection, and in its room to establish for his children a new economy purely spiritual as corresponding with all prophetic promises?

Answer. We are of opinion, and believe as the apostle says, Heb. vii. 12, that as long as the priesthood be not changed, there is no necessity for changing the law; for as long as the Jewish priesthood continued in force, so long no body was permitted to abolish the law of circumcision without incurring the punishment and displeasure of God: but the moment Christ came he established as the eternal High Priest and Son of God a spiritual law, annulled the first as incompetent of making perfect, brought about an eternal salvation, pointed out the way to the Holy of Holies, and confirmed his will or testament with his blood, so that we believe and acknowledge, that though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, he is to be accursed agreeable to the evidence of Gal. i. 8. We therefore believe with St. Paul, 2 Thess. i. 7. 8. that the practice of the doctrine of Jesus the crucified, is strictly to be observed until he shall be revealed from heaven, and take vengeance in flaming fire on them, that have not obeyed his

gospel. Unbelievers, however, are excluded from any of these commandments.

Question 7. Do you not equally perceive and acknowledge that in case of the re-establishment of baptism, as well as in its first institution, an immediate divine calling becomes requisite, similar to what has happened all times in such great church reformations as we may learn from history and general confessions?

Answer. We deny by no means the necessity of an immediate divine calling and instigation for executing the doctrine of Jesus; but whether it is always to be confirmed and manifested to men with signs and miracles we will not determine, but leave it to that all-wise God, of whom alone it was derived, however contrary it may be to belief of man.

Question 8. Can any one of you venture to declare upon his death bed, or the day of judgment, that he received of God such an immediate calling as to re-establish an institution of baptism so long neglected, and hereupon earth wholly a new church of Christ, similar to which none existed ever since the time of the apostles and the first christians?

Answer. As the Pharisees sent out messengers from Jerusalem to John, to know whether he were Christ or that prophet because he baptized? He answered, I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but one mightier than I cometh, who shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. In the same plain man-

ner do we baptize with water upon the faith in Christ, who in these days causes his voice to be heard of men. O! that we might follow and know him perfectly, he then alone would govern us, and build up, sanctify and cleanse his church with the washing of water by the word, Eph. v. 26. consequently no humble man will boldly declare that he received a message from God to establish a sect; such an honor he will return to him, and although God employs some as particular instruments, we are nevertheless called upon to examine their authority, as John said, chap. iii. 34. for he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.

Question 9. In what consists this his immediate calling, and how will he apply it, to the hearts and consciences of either those still belonging to particular sects, or those that left them for their external or internal conviction.

Answer. It consists in the certainty instilled into man by the spirit of God, that he is possessed of its powerful influence and is not discouraged about others not believing it— as Christ said himself, John vi. 43, 44. murmur not among yourselves; no man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. The same is the case still, for no man can truly receive the doctrine of Christ unless he proves obedient to the drawing of the Father, and in that case will easily know the called and the chosen.

Question 10. Are we not justified in the supposition, that, if this work proceeded from God, and you received for that purpose such an immediate divine calling, thousands continually would have accepted it, like what happened on the first pentecost in the New Testament, subject to that evidence of the Spirit and power of Jesus Christ in and upon the Apostles of the Lord?

Answer. Christ said, Matth. xxiv. to his disciples, alluding principally to the present time to take heed that no man deceive them; he says by no means that in these troublesome times, (in which we are sorry to say we exist, where love has grown cold) many thousands will follow his doctrine, not even the faithful themselves are so very apt to follow Jesus truly, where they must deny every thing for his sake; Christ on the contrary rather commanded to flee to the mountains, whenever in these times the abomination of desolation shall be manifested, to the doctrine of Jesus Christ the crucified, which is elevated and esteemed with all the faithful, and is the city of the living God and mount Sion, of which is written in Heb. xii. whereto at all times the faithful have taken refuge, and many cannot convey, even carry with them their wives and children, as was the case with Lot, although called upon by an angel to flee from destruction, his friends ridiculed him for that act, yes even was forced to leave behind his wife; for which purpose Christ very em-

phatically says to his disciples, Luke xvii. Remember Lot's wife.

Question 11. Is baptism by water so absolutely requisite for the salvation of every person, that he cannot do without it, however great his faith may be and unexceptionable his conduct?

Answer. We acknowledge and believe in a promise made in the New Testament to the faithful for their exclusive enjoyment of blessing and salvation; and how they always were inclined we see in Abraham the father of all faithful, proving obedient to God in every commandment. For this purpose he obtained the promise on account of his living faith, which produced acts of obedience. According to our idea, if a man lives in a pious and unexceptionable manner, and this life be imprinted by true faith in Christ, acts of baptism as originating from obedience of faith cannot but be easier than sacrificing his son proved to Abraham. But if a man still disputes with his God, and says, of what benefit can the water be to me, his piety will amount to nothing else than a self righteousness, which like the Jews he wishes to establish, of which Paul mentions, Rom. x. and for such a self piety no promise of salvation exists; but whosoever believes in Christ the end of all laws is justified, and faith in him creates obedience towards all his commandments.

Question 12. Is not rather the contrary evident from the principal passage in Mark, xvi.

16. where Christ so emphatically declares, he that believeth not and be not baptized shall be damned ?

Answer. According to our belief and confession no promise of eternal life is the result of baptism only but of faith, John iii. Why then should a faithful person refuse to act agreeably to the command of him in whom he believes. Christ enjoins upon the faithful to be baptized, and out of love towards him he conforms with his precepts. If so be the case and believes as Christ wishes him to do, he is saved although from necessity he could not be baptized. The same was the case with Abraham, who obtained the blessing for his faith, although he did not sacrifice his son Isaac, whom he was commanded to sacrifice, yet proved to be obedient as far as he was permitted. Therefore if a believer wishes to be baptized and from necessity be unable to obtain it, still he is saved, similar to the thief on the cross. But if a person can obtain it, and refuses, he, will be classed with the unfaithful and disobedient, not on account of baptism, but of his infidelity and disobedience. With much propriety therefore, Christ said he that believeth : if on the other hand he had connected salvation with water, people should be much more willing to be baptized, and retain old Adam, as is the case with the anti-christian who places salvation in water, however ill a person's conduct may accord with his profession.

Question 13. If baptism by water be thus absolutely necessary, why has Christ been so silent on this head in his sermons of blessings in the mount, Matth. v. and in the description of his last judgment, Matth. xxv. especially when he gave such a particular account of the faithful and unfaithful and their rewards?

Answer. It is astonishing how little we understand the real design of God; 'tis true Christ speaks of many blessings, Matth. v. but with equal propriety might we enquire of whom these blessings are obtained; Christ says, blessed are the meek, now attend how he calls upon the faithful, Matth. xi. Come unto me and learn of me. We therefore acknowledge Christ to be the only Saviour, and whoever wishes to become as blessed, as he preaches, Matth. v. necessarily must become his disciple in true faith, and as passive as clay in the hand of the potter, for it is he who will make all things new, to whom all the prophets have given directions; even the Father himself recommended his Son. Thus Christ the Saviour and real physician, thinking baptism to be essential to the faithful, obedience towards this commandment for the purpose of salvation becomes requisite, however blessed he pronounces these, Matth. xxv. who fed and clothed him, without mentioning any thing of the new man or regeneration of which he spoke, John iii. that none can enter the kingdom of God with regeneration, where he was silent of visiting him in his confinement

or feeding his members. Who therefore can take them to be unregenerated or unfaithful, whom he blesses for their external deeds, we expect none; who then would take them to be despisers of baptism by water; we believe none of them will be found to exist among them, though numbers will be there who were not baptized, not out of contempt but of necessity.

Question 14. How will you prove John the Baptist to have been baptized, even though he said to Christ, Matth. iii. 14. I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? or whether he had been saved by a particular exception without baptism by water?

Answer. In the same manner we might enquire where Peter and John had been baptized or where such and such a saint in the Old Testament had been circumcised, and more questions might be started than were essential to godly edification as Paul mentioned, 1 Tim. i. that men existed who gave heed to fables and endless genealogies. Patience however shall be the guide in our replies. John for instance greatly sought for baptism being performed on himself by Christ, which faith agreeably to scripture, paves the way to salvation and not external baptism. Although we have no literal expression in the scripture of his having been baptized, yet will not discover him to have been a despiser of that institution. He will not be found among those who say, of what consequence can the water be, but has proved his faith in Christ

like Abraham did towards God in the offering of his son; the son was not made an offering, but obedience was fulfilled.

Question 15. Are they all lost and to be damned who died in the time of the first Christians without their baptism, however well they might have observed the other christian precepts, and in part shed their blood on that account, and either from ignorance or even for want of an higher impulse remained satisfied with the mere christening in their infancy?

Answer. If their case were similar to Abraham's, in offering up his son Isaac, namely, were they possessed of that faith in Christ, the only foundation of the christian religion, certainly they are in a happy condition, however in the time of persecution or for other reasons, they might have been prevented from receiving baptism. But if on the other hand, they were prejudiced in favor of that baptism received during their infancy, it shews that they still were ignorant in the elements of christian religion, of course did not live up to their profession, and scarcely obtained that new man, who alone is acceptable in the sight of God.... However we will not pretend to judge those who have lived many years ago, but leave that business to their God; but to people at present refusing baptism, and pleading ignorance, will be of no account at the great day.

Question 16. Is not the commandment of baptism as closely connected with children as

that of circumcision was in the Old Testament. Therefore are they not, as long as they have not been baptized. in danger of losing their salvation and incurring damnation after their death ?

Answer. As little as circumcision was necessary to children before the eighth day, which before that time would have been an absolute transgression of the commandment as little is baptism ordained for believers, essential to children, unable to acknowledge their faith, to which the eighth day of circumcison bears reference.

Question 17. Were children under the old covenant lost for want of circumcision ? and how are the words of comfort by David, 2 Sam. xii. 23. to be regarded with respect to his child, begotten of Bathsheba, who died on the seventh day ?

Answer. Male children who have died before the eighth day, have transgressed the law of circumcision as little as girls who were not at all circumcised preventing them in no degree of obtaining salvation.

Enoch led a godly life, lived to be many hundred years old, and was not circumcised, for he received no commandment for that purpose, yet proved to be obedient to God ; thus in divine commandments, where no law exist, there is no offence, and where no offence is committed there is no punishment.

Question 18. When is the proper time to baptize children ; and have we not to use every

exertion to promote their baptism as early as possible although prevented in their infancy?

Answer. Children are to be offered up to Jesus, by prayer; but as to their baptism, we are to wait, till they can believe with the heart, and confess with their mouth, which may be called their eighth day or their first day of the new man at any earlier period, that is in their state of ignorance would correspond, to circumcision, if performed by the Jews before the eighth day, which would have been a presumption, rather than an obedience.

Question 19. Are not children susceptible of faith, agreeable to Luke 1. 41, 44. Matt. xviii. 3. 6. Luke xviii. 16. 17. 1 Cor. 7. 14. &c. and consequently of baptism, however incapable they might be of confessing it by words, similar to what is the case with adults. Although agreeable to Mark xvi. 16. Faith is more essential than a mere confession by words, even if connected with baptism?

Answer. In scripture we have about John, this only instance that he was moved in the womb by the Holy Ghost, because he was to be a child of the promise, and a harbinger to the Lord, yet in that condition, circumcision would have been impracticable; but after he was born, they still deferred circumcision, until the eighth day, of course the motion of St. John, would not repeal the law of God, with respect to circumcision; for like other children he was to be circumcised on the eighth day. The same is the

case with baptism, that where the children of believers moved in the womb, a postponement of baptism naturally would take place until their birth, even then it could not be permitted until they are moved by the Holy Ghost, to desire performance. This privilege then corresponds with the testimony of Christ as may be seen in Matt. iii. which is to spring from true faith in him, otherwise baptism in a child could be of no consequence, for salvation is not connected with simple water, but with faith which is to be announced by love and obedience.

Question. 20. Does it not militate against the evangelical cast of the new covenant, to respect as absolutely necessary to salvation, an external ceremony of this kind; and would it not be similar to the doctrine of the old law sticklers, against whom Paul has written with such emphasis in his epistles to the Galatians and Colossians.

Answer. We view external baptism in no other light, than as commanded by Scripture; according to which, believers being alone, are entitled to baptism, we respect it as disobedient in them to oppose any of the commandments of God, and a disobedience, towards the least, even of baptism is punishable. Viewing however, without disrespect, the power of the commander; we are not allowed to estimate any of his commandments, as small or trifling notwithstanding Paul's account to the Galatians,

and Collossians, respecting the laws of Moses, as insufficient for salvation &c. which the Galatians observed for the purpose of escaping the cross of Christ and viewing his doctrine as of secondary moment. Paul however lays great stress upon the practice of baptism, when he says ; as many of you as have been baptized, have put on Christ. Gal. iii. 27. which shews that Paul has not been against, but in favor of baptism.

Question. 21. Do you not institute a new species of popery, by enforcing baptism as absolutely necessary to salvation, and thereby lay a greater stress upon works, than upon faith ?

Answer. It has been sufficiently proved, that we do not expect to obtain salvation by mere deeds, but alone by the faith in Jesus, which if true must effect acts of obedience. Where however no such faith of obedience exists, (not after the popish doctrine, and commandments, but after that) of Jesus the crucified, upon whom we depend for salvation, and not upon any thing we can do.

Question. 22. Is the state of external discipline, essential to the church of Christ, since he himself did enforce it upon wicked Judas who betrayed him ?

Answer. External discipline is indispensibly necessary in the church of Christ, as long as it exists in this miserable world, amidst the combat of wolves and bad spirits. No congregation of the Lord therefore, can exist without a scriptural discipline, otherwise the devil, with

his leaven, would soon destroy all good; true believers never could refuse such salutary preservatives, and has always been viewed by them as the grace, and cure of providence, and used it as a strong fortification, to secure the congregation of the Lord. With respect to Judas, we are persuaded that Christ has gone the full length of excommunication of consigning him to Satan in such a manner, that he hanged himself; that he was not excommunicated previous to the outward act, is not against, but much in its favor. This perfectly corresponds with the word of God; Adam for instance, upon his intercourse with Satan, was not expelled from Paradise, until eating the forbidden fruit, long before had Judas been pregnant with thoughts of betraying Jesus. But Jesus in his meekness, bore with, and exciting him to repentance, until the will predominated and ended in his destruction.

Question 23. Has not the binding and loosening, been a peculiar privilege of the Apostles, exclusively, and not the province of any of the present day?

Answer. That such a privilege, was the prerogative of the Apostles is true, but in the same manner, had Moses a privilege of manifesting the law, to the house of Israel. It did not however die away with Moses, so as to exclude his posterity, who were faithful to God, from subjecting themselves, in obedience to similar acts. In the same manner has Christ, the true Stew-

and himself instituted a congregation and house, and given his Apostles as the pre-elected witnesses the privilege to keep order in that house, and confirmed it by signs and miracles, that posterity may not from either prejudice or pride, create other institutions; but willingly subject themselves to such ordinances as commanded to the Apostles, or true Stewards, over the mysteries of God's house. The privilege of excommunication as commanded by Christ originally belonged to the Apostles. Believers therefore are equally commanded to observe it without any respect of person.

Question 24. Did not Christ institute a general law for the church of the New Testament, in the words of Matt. xviii. 17, or rather spoke of the state of the Jewish church, and gave his disciples in other respects in the following 21st and 22d verses, quite a different lesson?

Answer. That Christ instituted a general law for his church, agreeably to Matt. xviii. 17, has been shewn above. The following 21st and 22d verses contain no repeal, but rather a confirmation of that law. The 4th verse of Luke xvii, therefore perfectly sanctions our position, when Christ gave this charge, that if thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him. Without a confession therefore, no remission of sin is granted, not even by God. It follows then that believers must be governed by the same readi-

ness of forgiving the sinner for the confession of his sin, but on the contrary, must observe excommunication in conformity with what Christ says, Matt. xxviii. Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, Lo, I am with you alway unto the end of the world.

Question 25. Did ever the Apostles prohibit to render to the excommunicated the necessary means of subsistence, both bodily and spiritual ?

Answer. Never have they refused such means : on the contrary, are we commanded to preach to the exiled repentance, and our release from this, only can be warranted by their unwillingness to hear or accept of it. In like manner, should we possess an overflow of natural goods, and the exiled stands in need, then shall we contribute to his necessities.

Question 26. Like the banishment made use of by the Apostles, was ever the method of the new baptists attended by the same godly effect ?

Answer. We firmly believe that all those we excommunicate agreeably to God's word, in some measure are sensible of its impression, as to their interior, in this world, and, unless repentance interceding, will be still more so, as to their exterior, on the great day of judgment. But that every one, like Ananias, immediately after fall dead to the ground, has not happened ; and only this instance is recorded among the Apostles, however frequently afterwards they

had recourse with many, to similar means; which doubtless produced in them effects in other instances sufficiently powerful.

Question 27. Is true regeneration inseparably connected with baptism by simple water?

Answer. Actual regeneration is nothing else than true obedience towards God in all his commandments, and a regenerate readily will say with Christ, Matt. iii. for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. With assurance therefore, can we reply that the will or obedience towards baptism by water is inseparable from true regeneration, although from necessity, and not contempt or disobedience, baptism were to be omitted; in that case, only regeneration would not be injurious.

Question 28. Are all those whom you baptize born of the truth in God?

Answer. A fine thing indeed it would be, if they all were regenerate whom we baptize, which was not the case even with Christ and his Apostles, that all their disciples turned out to be of a good cast. But where true faith exists, and the word be accepted in faith, a true sanctification or cleansing ensues with the washing of water, by the word, as represented in Eph. v. 26.

Question 29. Can none actually be regenerated before he be baptized: for baptism by water itself, you know, cannot impart true regeneration?

Answer. Adam was created in Paradise after God's image; when he proved disobedient, he lost all his beauties, and incurred nothing but malediction and death. Thus a person may be regenerated to a considerable extent previous to baptism, but unless he advances in acts of obedience, he may easily lose again what he once obtained. This we think proves the necessity of obedience towards Jesus, in the nourishment and growth of the new man. Should he refuse this meat actually necessary for him, John iv. 34, and eat the food of the serpent, which is disobedience and every species of craftiness against the word, his fate will be the same as that of Adam in Paradise. Since therefore the commandment of baptism originates with Christ, the regenerated man must submit to it in obedience, and fulfil this righteousness.

Question 30. Does not the true brotherhood of the christians ground itself upon regeneration rather than upon baptism by water?

Answer. The brotherhood of the christian's resulting always from true faith and obedience towards Jesus and his gospel, therefore brothers in Christ never can deny the propriety of external baptism. They saw it in their first born brother, who commanded them so to do, and declared them only his brothers who do the will of God his Father. Matt. xii. 50.

Question 31. Are not such to be truly estimated as brothers who in fact bare the fruits of

regeneration before God and man, although not baptized of anew. See Matt. xii. 24, 50.

Answer. We view them only as brothers who before God and man actually bare fruits of regeneration, and these doubtless are not averse to baptism by water; on the contrary, suffer themselves to be baptized according to their faith and internal evidence. Christ only acknowledged them as his brothers that were his disciples, and were baptized, which you will discover in Matt. xii. 49, 50.

Question 32. Can you declare before Jesus Christ as the all-wise Judge of the living and the dead, that you are all of one mind and accord?

Answer. God requires none to be of this character and none to be perfect. We may and shall be perfect in will, but in practice it will be impossible. May our efforts therefore all be directed to that pursuit until we all come to the unity of faith and fulness of Christ, as written in Eph. iv. 13. No person can say that the congregation at Jerusalem were all of one accord unto perfection. We know that in the beginning they were all willing to follow Christ in renouncing their earthly all, but how they afterwards differed in point of knowledge, we may clearly perceive in the Acts xv. Some there were who disagreed considerably with the Apostles in point of circumcision, and the Apostles had great work to effect a proper unity. Upon the

whole, it is astonishing to look for such complete unity in these days of darkness and obscurity; when many, boasting of internal spiritual baptism, still disagree and evince such uncertainty and discord, respecting the clear commandments of baptism, and other principal articles of faith.

Question 33. Do you not regard your congregation as superior to other baptists, either in the present or former ages; and if so, in what respect, and why?

Answer. The reason why we regard our congregation as superior to the baptists in general, of the present day is, that as far as we know, they evidently differ far from the doctrine and deeds of former baptists; and although we had no general acquaintance of their life, we can nevertheless vouch for their doctrine to be perfectly similar to ours, and not contrary to the gospel.

Question 34. How does your new established congregation correspond with the Apostolic in point of baptism, excommunication, &c. principally since yours is dissimilar in divine calling, gift, and effect?

Answer. With respect to the power of performing miracles, we regard ourselves still as very inferior, and far from that of the Apostles, and we must implore God to make us similar to the doctrine and will of his Son Jesus, and his Apostles.

Question 35. Can your teachers and officers acknowledge before God and the testimony of their conscience that the Holy Ghost instituted them to be bishops in your congregations, to feed them as the flocks of God; and whether they possess the divine gifts requisite for a godly life, as will appear in 2 Cor. vi. &c ?

Answer. True shepherds must bring to God an account of this nature. But they must not be disheartened at the infidelity of men; on the contrary, they must rejoice when their names are cast out as evil. Luke vi. 22.

Question 36. Were many of you not far more kind, mild, humble, &c. before baptism than after that ceremony ?

Answer. To this our reply is, No; unless you allude to those who, like the dry branches were separated, and affected by outward love, where bread and favors were the objects of their hypocrisy, where they threw off the restraint of sin and error, and where their request is announced to leave them undisturbed in their own will, opinion, and action, for which they will return the same love and brotherhood. Should this be alluded to, we readily acknowledge it to have been the case as long as we were among the pietists. But now we have learned and still must learn the exercise of such a love, which hates corruption and punishes evil.

Question 37. Have you not begun, and to this day continued your new method of bap-

sing with a great deal of uncertainty and inconstancy, and sometimes rejected the use of marriage, and at others sanctioned it; sometimes desisted from seeking a livelihood, and afterwards again changed this intention?

Answer. We began the baptism of the Lord with a great deal of faithful certainty, and to this day, among so many difficulties has God preserved us in such a noble undertaking; he rendered us firm by his grace that those who believed according to our adopted rule, may be baptized. That however we still stood in need of consulting ourselves in points of marrying and working is true, although not so much than was asserted, for we were counted before our baptism, while among the Pietists as learned, from such who were esteemed as great saints; of course had great work to reject the error we once received.

Question 38. By what sign may we know the undoubted godliness of your new congregation before any other in the world?

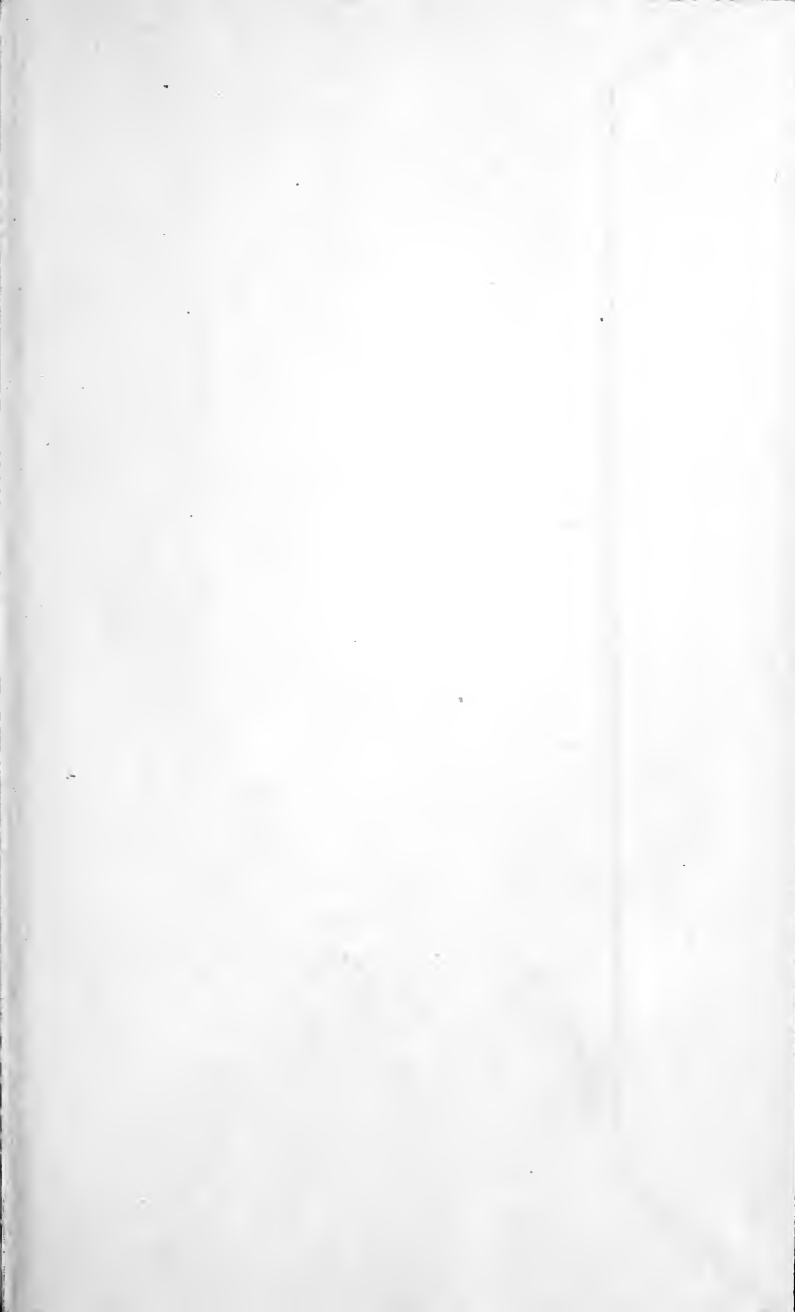
Answer. We have no new congregation nor laws; our only wish is to remain in the old, in faith and simplicity, as instituted by Christ, through his blood; and follow the commandment which was in the beginning. We are not anxious of appearing in that undoubted godliness, but rather wish that it may be perceived first in Christ himself, and afterwards in the congregation at Jerusalem. Should their god-

liness, doctrine, words, and commandments be discovered to be of that cast, we may then search for a similar among other congregations. This being the case, we think it is sufficient to give such the preference to any other in the world, principally if like a faithful wife, that congregation be obedient to Christ her husband in all his commandments, and exert herself to become more so. But whoever does not know Christ in the divinity of his commandments, undoubtedly will be insensible of his congregation, even if it be headed by the twelve Apostles as Bishops and ministers.

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