

# LAW AND GOSPEL.

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By

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*“ In Thy Light shall we see light.”*

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## FOREWORD.

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The age in which we are living undoubtedly bears the stamp of materialism and rationalism. The great strides made by man in the field of science and the wonderful inventions in connection therewith have the tendency to render the human mind increasingly self-satisfied, glorying in its achievements, and spurning any attempts to draw it from the material temporal things to something nobler and higher. The carnal mind is thus more firmly enthroned than ever, and spiritual, eternal truths are not considered as worthy of acceptance, because they do not appeal to the pride of man.

This is not surprising to us, as we know from Holy Writ that natural man is unwilling and unable to receive the things of the Spirit of God. But what fills us with alarm and sadness is the fact that even the visible church is becoming more and more the home of rationalistic teachers, who subvert the everlasting truths and seek to establish human wisdom in its stead.

In this deplorable state of affairs it devolves upon the Church, and her true and faithful ministers, to reaffirm the old, but ever valid, message given by God Himself, to warn all her members against the pernicious errors of the day, and to offer them the only safeguard against the deadly poison-gas of heretical teaching that permeates the very atmosphere of the so-called Christian countries. And is it not also the sacred duty of the church of pure doctrine to lift up her voice and to

proclaim to the world at large the unalterable truth of God, the fundamentals of the Christian religion?

The book which is herewith sent out upon its mission has this twofold purpose: to confirm the Lutheran reader in his faith, the faith of our fathers, and to bear witness to any non-Lutheran readers of the unwavering attitude we take and ought to take over against all error, and of our earnest endeavour to keep pure and undefiled the fountain of truth that flows for us poor sinful mortals in the Word of the Lord.

The treatise on "Law and Gospel," contained in this publication, is offered as a clear testimony concerning the "one thing needful," as an unequivocal statement of the old scriptural truth, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" than the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

May the reading of this book prove a blessing to many, a source of comfort to such as are troubled concerning their eternal welfare, and a means whereby the only saving knowledge is secured or increased through the gracious working of the Holy Spirit. May it redound to the glory of Him "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification," even Jesus Christ our Lord.

Concordia Seminary,  
Adelaide, S. Australia,

C. F. GRAEBNER.

Passion Week, 1925.

## A WORD TO THE READER.

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The writer feels that he owes his readers some explanation as to how he came to write this book. At a Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia, held at Tweedvale (Lobethal), S.A., early in 1923, the writer's name was mentioned in connection with the preparation of "a pamphlet on 'Law and Gospel,' with special reference to the Christian training of our children." Synod also "expressed joy that a simple treatise on 'Law and Gospel' was to appear." (See Synodical Report of the Tweedvale Convention of 1923, p. 121). Soon after said Convention, the Secretary of General Synod, Pastor A. MacKenzie, in the name and on behalf of the Executive Council, requested the undersigned to write the pamphlet on "Law and Gospel," already referred to. Later, in the same year, the Pastoral Conference of the S.A. District of our Synod requested the writer to prepare a treatise on "Law and Gospel," to be read before the District Convention to be held at Gawler early in 1924. This was done. The Gawler Convention passed the resolution that the treatise was to be published in book form. Owing to lack of time, however, not half of it had been read. The writer was requested to prepare the whole of his material for the press as soon as possible, so that the book could be put upon the market at an early date. But owing to a very busy school year at the College and Seminary, and to the fact that a number of congregations were vacant, and

had to be supplied with preachers from the Seminary—the faculty being engaged in congregational work nearly every Sunday—the book could not be made ready for the press in 1924. It was then arranged that another instalment of the treatise was to be read before the District Convention to be held at Ambleside (Hahndorf), S.A., in 1925. This Convention was held last month (March). To the fathers and brethren assembled there, the writer read three chapters (4, 5, 6) of this book. (The first three chapters, which were read before the Gawler Convention, have since been revised and considerably enlarged. This explains how it was that extracts from Luther's preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans could be given, which extracts have been taken from the *Theological Monthly* of November, 1924). That part of the book which was not read before the two District Conventions named above, was read to a committee of three competent men—Director Graebner, Pastor Nichterlein (Acting General President), and Pastor Kuechle (Professor extraordinarius).

From all this it will appear that the book herewith offered to the Christian reader, is a work not undertaken and carried out on the writer's own initiative and responsibility. But it may fairly claim to be a testimony of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia. The writer is quite confident that what he has said in this book will be fully endorsed by all his brethren in the Ministry, though as to the manner of saying it, he is very willing to concede that not a few of them could have said many things much better than he has been able to do.

This applies also to the language used in expressing what the writer had to say. The language was to be "simple," so that the average lay reader could un-

derstand, without much difficulty, the meaning of what he read. It was to be a book, not for the learned, but for the reader of average intelligence; not for the Pastors so much as for their flocks—a book for the Christian home, and thus a silent helper of the minister. Now, to write on the greatest of subjects in simple, homely language, is not an easy task. Those who have written books for the people on similar subjects will understand this better than those who have not. The former will be the more lenient critics. They have the larger sympathy that comes with experience. The writer of this book has made an honest and earnest effort to write in simple language. He very well knows that he has not always succeeded in doing so. Besides, what would be “simple” English to a reader born and bred in an English home, is not “simple” English to most of those readers who have grown up in an environment (*Umgebung*) that was really neither English or German, as far as language is concerned. There are in this book not a few words which many of its readers will not understand. This is the reason why the writer has often given, in brackets, the German equivalent for a difficult or unfamiliar English word. He would gladly have done it still oftener; but he had also to consider the interest of those readers who understand no German, and who would, naturally, not like to be continually blocked in their reading by words that, from their standpoint, merely take up space.

As to the subject matter of this book, not much need be said. The “Table of Contents,” to which the kind reader is hereby referred, will give him or her all the information required as to what the book has to offer. The reader will find in it a fairly full treatment of the Law and the Gospel, drawn throughout from the only

infallible source of spiritual truth—the Bible. We Lutherans of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia belong, in religious matters, to the old-fashioned people. As we are quite satisfied with the old-fashioned sun, moon, and stars, with the land and sea and sky that God has made, so we are also quite content with the Book that He has given to men that they might from its pages learn the way to Him and heaven. We believe that the Bible is divinely inspired; that every word in it is infallibly true; that all its promises will be fulfilled, and all its threats will be carried out. We believe that whatever men may think or say or write against this position of ours, will always be wrong—and dangerous to themselves and others. We believe that true science and the Bible will never disagree, but always be found to harmonize most beautifully. We believe that the religion of the Bible is the only saving religion; that no other religion can lead man back to God and happiness. To us the Christian religion is no mere temporary shelter against the “storm of life,” to make way for some “better” religion of the future; but it is the abiding home of the sin-burdened soul of man, both during his earthly pilgrimage and beyond. We believe that the essence (Wesen) of the Christian religion consists in the Bible doctrine that Jesus Christ, true God and true man in one person, died on the cross as the great God-appointed Substitute for sinners, bearing their guilt and suffering the punishment due to their transgressions of the holy Law of God, who for His free grace, for Jesus’ sake, forgives to penitent sinners all their sins, they accepting such forgiveness by a living faith, created in their hearts by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel. We believe that the holy and unchangeable Law of God must be preached,

in order to lead men to a true knowledge of themselves, of their utterly sinful and lost condition in the sight of God. We believe that the only means of bringing rest and peace to the awakened and terrified conscience is the glad tidings of the crucified and risen Redeemer, of the free and full pardon in His atoning blood. We believe that this Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only means of changing men's hearts, turning them from darkness to light, from Satan unto God, from the service of sin to the pursuit of holiness, with the Law of God as their rule of life and the indwelling Holy Spirit as the power that creates, sustains, and increases such life. We believe that there is "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven." (1. Pet. 1, 4) for all those who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour from sin's guilt and curse and power, and who, by the grace of God, continue in such faith till they have passed through the valley of the shadow.

Thus we teach and preach and write, in the divine assurance—wrought (gewirkt) by the Holy Ghost through the living Word of God—that we are teaching and preaching and writing the truth, that truth which alone can save men's souls from eternal perdition. Those who despise such teaching, despise not us but God, and foolishly refuse to grasp the hand stretched out to save them. Such teaching, however, does not exclude the possibility of error on the part of those who teach. Neither do we expect from those who are taught a blind acceptance of all we have to say. On the contrary, we urge it upon them as a sacred duty that they "prove all things," measure all teaching by the unerring standard of the Word of God. It is by this standard that the writer of this book earnestly re-



quests his readers to judge his work.

The writer is well aware of the fact that in this book he has not treated of the Law and the Gospel in their application "to the Christian training of our children." In so far he has not complied with the request of the Executive Council of General Synod. The matter has not been forgotten or overlooked. It is a subject of the very first importance, and is ever present in the writer's mind. The reason why it is not dealt with in this book is this:—The number of pages the book was to have was determined when the contract was made with the printer. At that time the writer thought that the resurrection of our Saviour could be treated on a few pages, in a mere section of a chapter. But later he came to the conclusion that a subject of such vital importance in the Gospel message should have a whole chapter to itself. The writer was of the opinion—and he has not changed it—that in this particular book a fuller treatment of the Resurrection was of greater importance than a chapter on the application of the Gospel to the training of children. This latter subject can be treated separately, in a small pamphlet, or—as the writer intends to do—in our Lutheran Almanac of this year. If it should prove desirable to have it in a separate form, it can be printed as a pamphlet later on.

In conclusion, the writer desires to express here his thankful acknowledgment of the assistance rendered by the three brethren—Dir. C. F. Graebner, Pastor O. Nichterlein and Professor (pro temp.) G. Kuechle—who gave four evenings of their very valuable time, in order to hear the reading of that part of the manuscript which was not read before the two Conventions above referred to. They also made several valuable sugges-

tions, which were promptly incorporated in the book. The author's acknowledgments of help received in his work would, however, be very incomplete, if he omitted the name of his friend and colleague, Professor M. Winkler, without whose continued friendly encouragement this book, such as it is, would—humanly speaking—never have been written. Last, but by no means least, the writer desires to thank his friend, Pastor Wiebusch, of Gawler, President of the S.A. District of our Synod, for the very active interest he has shown in the progress of the writer's work, and for the efforts he has made to get the book printed and published.

May all those who read this little book derive from the reading of its pages as great a blessing as the author experienced in writing them. May our dear Lord Jesus, whose blessed name this book would help to glorify, abide with us in this eventide of the world and by the sweet Gospel of His dying love draw unto Himself yet many more sin-burdened and blood-bought souls.

Concordia Seminary,

G. C. KOCH.

Adelaide, April 20, 1925.

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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"We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the church with great diligence as an especial brilliant light by which, according to the admonition of St. Paul, 2. Tim. 2, 15, the Word of God is rightly divided." Thus we read in the Formula of Concord (Triglotta, p. 801, 1), which was written by fathers of our dear Lutheran Church about three hundred and fifty years ago, and which forms a very important part of the Confessions of said Church.

Our Lutheran fathers, living in that wonderful age of the Reformation, when the heavenly Gospel light, like a mighty flood, burst in upon a world of Popish darkness and superstition, our Lutheran fathers, we say, had, by the grace of God, a very clear perception of what, in matters of religion, was essential and therefore of abiding importance. The words which we have placed at the head of our treatise are as true and as applicable in our own day as they were three hundred and fifty years ago. There never can come a time when the admonition to maintain diligently the distinction between the Law and the Gospel will not be urgently needed by all those who are respon-

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sible for the teaching of the Word of God as well as by the far greater number of those who enjoy the great privilege of hearing and learning it.

Since the matter is of such vital importance, we feel justified in offering another pertinent quotation from the same source. The words read as follows:—As the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is a special brilliant light, which serves to the end that God's Word may be rightly divided, and the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles may be properly explained and understood, we must guard it with especial care, in order that these two doctrines may not be mingled with each other or a law be made out of the Gospel, whereby the merit of Christ is obscured and troubled consciences are robbed of their comfort, which they otherwise have in the holy Gospel, when it is preached genuinely and in its purity, and by which they can support themselves in their most grievous trials against the terrors of the Law. (Formula of Concord, Triglotta, p. 951, 1.).

The doctrine of Scripture concerning the Law and the Gospel, the proper distinction between them, and the practical application of each is the very essence of our most holy Christian religion, and therefore of the very highest importance, for time and eternity, to every son and daughter of our fallen human race.

We cannot properly distinguish between the Law and the Gospel, much less practically apply them in our daily life, unless we know what is the Law and what is the Gospel. Let us therefore first inquire as to that law which we are carefully to distinguish from the Gospel and what is its nature.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE LAW IN GENERAL.

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The law of which we are here treating is **not the** judicial or political law given by God through Moses to the people of Israel for the proper government of the Israelite State; nor is it the ceremonial law, given in the same manner and to the same people for the purpose of regulating their worship of God and keeping them as a people separate and distinct from the heathen nations round about them; but the law which we now have under discussion is the **MORAL LAW**, that law which God at the creation wrote in man's heart, later revealed through Moses on Mt. Sinai, and expanded and enlarged upon through all the prophets, apostles, and evangelists, in short, that divine law, of which the sum and substance is the twofold commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matth. 22, 37. 39.

We should always very carefully distinguish between the judicial and ceremonial law of Moses on the one hand and the moral Law on the other. When we treat of the proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel, we always have in view the **moral Law**, the law of Love, and not the judicial law, nor the ceremonial law.

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It is not our purpose to enter upon a full treatment of either the political or the ceremonial law of Moses. But a few words should, we think, be said concerning them, so that the ground may be clear for a better understanding of the moral Law and its relation to the Gospel.

Let us then, in the first place, hear a few words concerning the political law, also called the judicial or civil law of the people of Israel.

This law was given by God to his chosen people of Israel, and to no other people on earth. And even to Israel it was given only for a limited period of time, that is to say, from the days of Moses to the coming of the promised Messiah, even Jesus Christ, our Lord. By this law the covenant people of God were to be governed in their civil affairs. All the manifold activities and relations of everyday human life in the home, the garden, and the field, in the market place and in the courts of justice, were regulated by laws given by God himself. The people of Israel, for more than three centuries after the time of Moses, had no earthly king and no parliament or law-making assembly. God himself was their king, not only in a spiritual but also in a civil, temporal, earthly sense. The people of Israel formed what is called a theocratic State, that is, a State in which God himself had all civil power, being both king and lawgiver in reference to the civil and political affairs of the people. Thus he gave them laws concerning the possession, exchange, and transfer of property; detailed laws concerning marriage and divorce; laws dealing with the treatment and liberation of slaves and prisoners of war. He gave them laws regulating the building of houses, and laws protecting birds and quadrupeds against the cruelty of man. He gave them food laws and health laws and many other



laws too numerous to mention here. Anyone at all familiar with his Bible, especially the writings of Moses, will be able to multiply, almost indefinitely, examples of civil laws that God gave to Israel.

Now this political or civil or judicial law, with all its many and various ordinances, has come to an end long ago. It has served its purpose, that of ordering the life of Israel as a nation. Israel is no longer a nation, and God is not now Israel's temporal King and law-giver, as he was during the time of the Old Covenant. Of all the twelve tribes of Israel, only one is still distinguishable from men of other blood, the tribe of Judah, now about fourteen millions strong. But although the Jews are to this day, by God's special decree, a separate people, they are not a nation. On the contrary, they are scattered abroad over all the earth, subjects of many different kingdoms and commonwealths with widely diverging civil laws.

The subject of the Jews is always very interesting, and is at the present time exercising the minds of many Christian as well as Jewish thinkers, but for our present purpose it is sufficient to bear in mind that the Jewish nation is no more, nor ever again will be, and that therefore the civil law of Israel, though certainly divine, is no longer binding on any human being, not even on the Jews.

Those civil laws which God gave to Israel are in many respects very instructive even to our own present-day law-makers, and they often serve them as models of good legislation. To us Christians they are interesting also because they were the laws by which was governed the people from which, according to the flesh, our Saviour came.

But since through His own precious blood He established the New Covenant, of which by His grace we, too, are members, we are in no manner bound by the civil laws of the Old Covenant. We are not, in this New Testament age, bound even by the ceremonial law, which deals with the worship of God as demanded of Israel, and which therefore stands on a much higher plane than the civil law, which had to do alone with secular and civic affairs.

The ceremonial law is that law of God, by which He regulated all matters pertaining to divine worship among His chosen people. Like the judicial law, it was given to Israel alone, and to no other people. This law established a priesthood and the order thereof. It prescribed the kind of raiment the priests, on different occasions, were to wear; in what manner they were to sacrifice various kinds of beasts and for what different purposes. It enjoins upon the people of Israel the religious observance of certain days, such as the Sabbath, the new moons, and the three great annual festivals: The Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. It speaks of various kinds of offerings that the people are to bring before the Lord at stated times or on special occasions. It prescribes washings and all manner of "purifications," fasts, and tithes.

An hour's reading in Leviticus (the third book of Moses) will give those interested in the details of the ceremonial law a very clear idea of what it really was, and those who make a slight exertion of the mind and read Leviticus thoughtfully will soon begin to realize the fact that the ceremonial law was a very burdensome yoke upon the necks of the people, grievous to bear.

In the light of Leviticus we can well understand

and properly appreciate the words of St. Peter at the first Christian council or synod, which we read of in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. On this occasion, St. Peter, in opposition to those Christianized Jews who demanded that converts from among the Gentiles should be made to conform to the ceremonial law of the Jews, had this to say:—"Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples (i.e., believers from among the Gentiles) which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." Acts 15, 10.

These words of St. Peter are also a conclusive answer to the question whether the ceremonial law given by God to Israel is binding on us or not. It certainly is not binding on us. This law of **external** observances and ceremonies; of priesthoods and sacrifices; of tithes and fastings and purifications, has been done away with as completely, as irrevocably, as the civil or judicial law of Israel. And that for similar reasons: It was **not meant to be permanent**. It was given to Israel for the time of the Old Covenant, and not for the time of the New Covenant.

One purpose of God in giving His people the ceremonial law was to keep, by its means, the wayward, stiff-necked, and rebellious children of Israel bound to the worship of the one true God; to make and to keep them in all their religious observances and life distinctly separate from the heathen nations that surrounded them, and whose manner of worshipping their idols was utterly and abominably corrupt and corrupting to all who came into contact with it.

Another purpose of this law was to make the people of Israel realize the serious nature of sin and to cause them to long for deliverance from a yoke so bur-

densome and oppressive.

The chief purpose of the ceremonial law, however, was to shadow forth, to prophecy, by means of types and figures, the coming of a deliverer, who was to take away not only the burden of endlessly repeated observances and irksome ceremonies without number, but who was to deliver them also from the burden of sin itself, from its guilt and punishment and power.

Thus the Sabbath of the Jews was not an institution for all time. It was chiefly a prophetic shadow (Col. 2, 17) that was to create a longing for and point to the coming of One in whom not only the Jews but also the Gentiles should find a perfect and abiding Sabbath (i.e., rest) for their souls' weary labours under the burden and curse of sin (comp. Matth. 11, 29).

Thus also the priesthood and the various sacrifices were types and shadows directing the pious souls' attention and hope to Him who was to be both priest and sacrifice; who was to end the ceremonial law by fulfilling the prophecies therein contained; who was to be the body and very substance, making all types and shadows henceforth superfluous and useless.

For when the great High Priest, of whom all the Old Testament priests were but prophetic types, offered on Calvary that one great sacrifice, of which all sacrifices prescribed in the ceremonial law were mere shadows, then and there the whole ceremonial law, with all its burdensome ordinances, was for ever done away with. At the very moment, when our eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, entered with the perfect sacrifice of His own precious blood into the heavenly Holy of Holies, having thus completed the work of a true, final, and eternal atonement for all the sins of all the world—at that very

moment, in the temple not far away, the great curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the other parts of the temple, was rent in twain, from top to bottom— (Mark 15, 38). And the meaning of this remarkable coincidence? Ah, it was no mere coincidence. It was a miracle. It was a special act of God, by which He Himself unmistakably declared that the high-priestly office was now abolished and with it the whole ceremonial law, of which that office was both head and cornerstone.

But why must this act of God indicate that the ceremonial law was now abrogated? For this reason:— Once each year, namely on the great Day of Atonement, celebrated about the middle of our October, the High Priest according to ceremonial law, entered, **alone**, the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood of sacrifice before the presence of God as a sign and token that by the blood of the promised Lamb of God (Isa. 53) all transgressions of the holy law of God should be forever blotted out. But now the Lamb of God had come and offered himself as a sacrifice for the world's sin; **the** High Priest had entered the most holy place with his own blood "having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9, 12), and hence the Holy of Holies, the great veil that kept it from public view, the high priest, the whole priesthood with its various orders, the Levites with all their ceremonies and sacrifices, the whole ceremonial law with its innumerable ordinances and observances was a thing of the past, never any more to be a burdensome yoke on the necks of men.

(N.B. Before the kind reader leaves this subject he should study carefully the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.)

The ceremonial law is abolished, but there is a

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law that can never be abrogated or put away, a law that continues to be binding not only upon the Jews but also upon the Gentiles of all nations and of all times. That law is the **Moral Law**, the law which we have in view when we place the Law and the Gospel side by side, comparing and contrasting them. It is that law of which we sing in our divine services:

God's holy Law and Gospel  
Free gifts from God on high,  
Reveal His will and pleasure,  
Lest in our sins we die.  
But law and gospel differ  
In essence and in aim:  
The gospel tells God's mercy,  
The law our sin and shame.

Austr. Luth. Hymn Book, 265, I.

Before we enter upon the treatment of the **moral Law**, it seems desirable that we briefly dispose of an objection that has often been raised against the teaching of the Law on the part of the Christian Church. One testimony of our Lutheran Church concerning this matter has already been quoted in the words of hymn No. 265, I. This hymn contains a very comprehensive, edifying, and therefore profitable treatment of law and gospel. (It would certainly be a great blessing to many hearts and homes if, say in the confirmation class, this hymn were thoroughly explained to the catechumens and they were then requested to learn it by heart). For our present purpose, it will no doubt be sufficient to add several quotations from our Lutheran Confessions. The Apology says:—The two doctrines (Law and Gospel) belong together, and should be urged by the side of each other,

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but in a definite order and with a proper distinction. And the Antinomians or assailants of the Law are justly condemned, who abolish the Law from the Church and wish sins to be reprov'd and repentance and sorrow (for sin) to be taught, not from the Law, but from the Gospel.

The Smalcald Articles say:—The New Testament retains and urges the office of the Law, which reveals sins and God's wrath; but to this office it immediately adds the promise of grace through the Gospel. Lastly, the Formula of Concord has these impressive words:—We unanimously believe, teach, and confess that the Law is properly a divine doctrine, in which the righteous, immutable will of God is revealed, what is to be the quality of man in his nature, thoughts, words and works, in order that he may be pleasing and acceptable to God; and it threatens its transgressors with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishments. For as Luther writes against the law-stormers (Antinomians): Everything that reprov's sin is and belongs to the Law, whose peculiar office it is to reprove sin and to lead to the knowledge of sins. Rom. 3, 20; 7, 7. Triglotta 957, 14-17.

The Church of Christ certainly must teach and "urge" upon the attention of all that come under its influence not only the Gospel, but also the Law. Anyone not convinced of this twofold duty of the Church by the testimonies quoted above, may turn to Matthew, chapters five to seven, where he will find the Law most impressively taught and "urged" by the Saviour Himself.

Let us then, for the present, concentrate our attention on the moral Law.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MORAL LAW.

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The moral Law, as has already appeared from the quotations given above, is that law which prescribes rules and standards of moral right and wrong for the whole of man's conduct and life in all possible relations. It tells us how, in a moral sense, we are to be in our nature, in our very inmost heart and mind, where are to be found the springs of thought, word, and action, unseen, indeed, of men, but well known unto God. The moral Law is the standard by which we are to measure and judge, the rule by which we are to order and regulate, all our works and words, our thoughts and desires, in all our various and manifold relations towards God, towards our fellow-men, and towards ourselves.

This law was given to mankind in a twofold manner: by nature and by revelation. Hence we speak of natural moral Law and revealed moral Law. These two are not, however, opposed to each other. Both come from God, the supreme and holy law-giver. The reason why the moral Law was given by God in a twofold manner will appear as we proceed to consider, in the first place, the natural moral Law.

#### I.— THE NATURAL MORAL LAW.

The natural moral Law is known to all human



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beings, also to those who have never even so much as heard of the Bible or of Moses and the Law which God gave through him. This is clearly evident not only from the history of heathen peoples, but especially also from the Scriptures. For thus we read in Rom. 2, 14. 15: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law (the **written revealed law of Moses**) do **by nature** the things contained in the law (i.e., of Moses), these having not the (written) law, are a law unto themselves, which (i.e., the Gentiles) show the work of the law **written in their hearts**, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." From these words of Scripture it is sufficiently evident that man is by nature not only a physical and intelligent or rational, but also a moral being. Not that he always thinks, speaks, and acts morally, i.e., according to the moral Law written in his heart, but he is able to distinguish between right and wrong, and his conscience presses upon him the obligation to do what he knows to be right, warns him against doing what he knows to be wrong, accuses him when he has done wrong, and makes him feel responsible for his actions and conduct of life to a higher power, which will eventually judge him according to his works.

This natural moral Law, however, is in its present condition not by any means sufficient to give to men a clear and complete knowledge of right and wrong, of God's righteous and holy will concerning their nature and their whole life and conduct in desire and thought, in word and deed.

Through Adam's fall into sin and owing to the spiritual darkness and death following immediately upon that fall, the Law of God written in his heart was very

much obscured, its writing became blurred and more or less illegible.

This condition of things was transmitted by Adam to all his posterity, ourselves included. And, as time went on, the moral Law in mans heart became more and more obscured. Continued transgression of the Law made men more and more indifferent to its demands. **Their conscience, that great guardian of the Law, bearing witness, warning and threatening so often in vain, was gradually silenced concerning very many things that the Law in their hearts had at first clearly prescribed and enjoined upon them.** Compare in this connection Romans I, 18-32.

Hence it is that we find among men a very great variety of opinions as to what is right and what is wrong. And that not only among different heathen nations, but also among individuals of the same nation, even among members of the same family. We find this difference of opinion as to what is right and wrong also in Christian lands, and that not only among the unconverted, but also among those who are true Christians. We find it, alas, also among ourselves. This is due to the fact that much sinful ignorance and moral blindness still clings even to those who have been born again, in whom the lost image of God has been partly restored through faith in Christ Jesus.

Thus in our own church work it is no rare occurrence that when on certain occasions the written Law of God is preached and applied to our actions, words, thoughts, and desires, we feel resentful against him that tells us the unpleasant truth of God's holy Law. We do not like to acknowledge it as God's righteous will concerning those particular matters to which we have

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been long accustomed, and which are perhaps pleasant to the old Adam within us, or profitable in a worldly sense, or highly honoured on the part of unconverted men. We consider the preacher's application of the Law of God out of place, an extreme view he takes, a mere moral whim of his, an opinion which may be set aside in favor of the opinion of some other preacher whose views coincide more with our own and who is not so "extreme" in his demands upon our moral conduct, a dear, amiable gentleman who shrinks from causing his hearers the slightest uneasiness, who does not make us feel at all uncomfortable in our pews and in our well developed self-esteem, but whose preaching is very pleasant and comforting because he is too much of a "gentleman" ever to disturb us in our good old habits of thought and life.

Ah, yes, the generation of false prophets and hirelings who cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jer. 6, 14), has not yet disappeared from the earth; neither have those men and women who hearken to such prophets and hold them in high esteem. The natural moral Law, which would have been a guide and friend to such people, was silenced by the tumult of their sinful lusts and passions, and the revealed moral Law which should have been from without preached to them in tones of uncompromising divine authority was shorn of its majesty, deprived of its holiness, robbed of its thunder by the sweet mincing words of a—"gentleman"! Yes, a "gentleman," who with smiles and bows and pleasant words and eloquent and touching discourse is leading his deluded hearers with him to hell, because he prevents them from hearing not man's but God's opinion, God's holy truth concerning their conduct and life. For since

the natural moral Law, owing to the general moral corruption and depravity of Adam's children, has become so very much obscured, it is God's most holy will that men should hear and learn and take to heart the revealed moral Law.

## 2. THE REVEALED MORAL LAW.

In his goodness and wisdom the Lord our God has made known to men by special revelation His holy will, the moral Law, and caused it to be preserved in writing. His own watchful and mighty-providence has through the ages kept watch and guard over the book in which this law is to be found by all who read it. This book is, of course, the Bible.

Those who can neither read the Bible nor obtain any moral instruction from its pages, have nothing but the natural moral Law to guide them, and it is every Christian's sacred duty to bring to the ignorant the light of God's holy truth—Law as well as Gospel. But this is not the place to enter upon a discussion of this highly important subject.

However ignorant many human souls may be of the revealed moral Law of God, we at least, you who read these words and he who is writing them, we have no excuse for any ignorance of God's Law. We are privileged to know exactly what it is that the Lord God, our Creator and our heavenly Father, demands of us. From our earliest days we have been in touch with the Book of Books, the holy Scriptures, from which we have learnt not only the sweet story of Jesus and his love, but also the holy Law of our God and Lord.

Now, if at any time there arises in our minds a conflict between what we consider to be the voice of natural moral Law on the one hand, and the revealed and

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written moral Law of God on the other, then it is in every case the **revealed** and **written** Law, as we find it in the Bible, that must prevail, and to whose judgment we must readily yield up any opinions that we may have held in the firm conviction that we were in the right. For the written Word of God is, and will ever be, the only **infallible** guide not only in what we are to believe but also in what we are to do and not to do, the **only reliable** standard whereby our whole life and conduct in all possible relations and circumstances must be judged and measured. "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 thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2. Tim. 3, 16.

It will therefore not do to say: Pastor, my opinion on the dance, on the lodge, on gambling, on the use of time and money, my ideas about the training of children, about matrimony, about the differences between the various visible church bodies, etc., etc., are thus and thus, and I am going to abide by my opinions, hold fast my ideas, whatever you may have to say to the contrary. The more so, because I find that very many people, in fact, most people, think exactly as I do, and among them there are many ministers of the Gospel, men of learning and piety and of very high standing in the community. So, dear Pastor, you had better not trouble either yourself or me about those matters any more. With me those things are settled, and there is an end of it. Ah, my friend, but there is not an end of it, even if all the archbishops and bishops, all the popes and prelates of all the ages were on your side. The mere fact that other men, most other men, and among them men of very high moral

standing and prestige, agree with you, does not settle a question of right and wrong in the sight of God. Think of the time of Noah, when of all human beings, then living, only eight souls were in the right, and all the others, millions of them, were in the wrong. Think of the Jewish people who in the blindness of their hearts imagined that they were doing God a service, when they killed the Prince of Life and crucified the Lord of Glory! Here again the vast majority, led by their highest moral and religious authorities, with the high priest at their head, were so sadly in the wrong, and He who was rejected of men and ignominiously nailed to the accursed tree, He was, and always is, in the right. Think of Luther at Worms, who stood practically alone in opposition to a system of religion that had ruled men's hearts in the whole western world for a thousand years. The head of this system hurled against him the curses of the church, the emperor declared him an outlaw, and yet he was right and all the western world with all its vast learning and seeming piety, with its high religious authority and power, was wrong.

Therefore it will never do to consider anything settled or permissible or right, just because we think so or because the majority of our fellow-men think so and act accordingly. A thing is never really settled until it is settled **right**, and it is settled right, not merely because you or the great majority in their own mistaken opinion **think** it settled, but only if it is settled according to the revealed and written Law of God, which alone is in all circumstances a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Ps. 119, 105.

In this age of lawlessness, when men, as perhaps never before since the days of Noah, are impatient of con-

trol by the Word of God, it is of the utmost importance that we insist on the teaching of the Bible concerning the moral Law. There, in the Bible, the moral Law, as it came from the mind and heart of God, is fixed for all time in very clear and intelligible words, and this alone is the sufficient and final rule according to which every human being is required to order his life, both inward and outward; and to its moral judgment he must sacrifice any and all opinions of his own that are not in agreement therewith, however dear they may be to his heart, however reasonable to his mind, however much approved of and acted upon by the majority of his neighbors, relatives and friends.

It is perhaps not superfluous to inquire, in which chapter or in what part of the Bible the written moral Law may be found. There are some who imagine that it is to be found in the Old Testament only. They are wrong. For as in the Old Testament, from Moses right through to Malachi, we find also the Gospel, so likewise in the New Testament, from Matthew to Revelation, we find also the Law. Others again, when they hear of the divine Law, think only of the holy Ten Commandments. These, too, labour under a mistake. The Ten Commandments, given by God on Mt. Sinai, with awe-inspiring impressiveness (Exodus 19 and 20), are indeed a divine revelation of God's holy will. But in the first place, they are not the only revelation of divine moral Law, because we find such revelation of moral Law in very many other parts of the Bible; and in the second place, the Ten Commandments as given by God through Moses, contain some elements that are no part of the moral Law at all, but rather of the ceremonial and even of the judicial law. Thus the law concerning

the Sabbath day is part and parcel of the ceremonial or ecclesiastical law. For Lutherans, at least, this point is settled once for all by the clear words of the Augsburg Confession, where in the eighteenth article we read:—**Scripture has abrogated the Sabbath day; for it teaches that, since the Gospel has been revealed (i.e., in its fullness in the New Testament), all the ceremonies of Moses can be omitted.** Triglotta, 91, 57.

Furthermore, in the very first, considered by many to be the second, commandment, we read the words: “Thou shalt not make unto **thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything** that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.” Ex. 20, 4. Now, if the words are a precept of moral Law, then we all have so far grievously sinned, inasmuch as we certainly have either made, caused to be made, bought and treasured in our homes and even in our churches images and pictures, likenesses of many persons and things, especially of our blessed Redeemer. “But,” someone might ask, “are those words really a part of the Ten Commandments of God as given on Mt. Sinai to Israel through Moses? In our catechism they certainly are not given as part of the Ten Commandments.” That is true, but they are nevertheless part and parcel of the Ten Commandments as given by **God on Sinai.** They were written by the Almighty on the first table of stone, and they rested with the other commandments in the Ark of the Covenant. In our catechism those words are left out. They form no part of our teaching of the moral Law. Why not? What right has the Church or any section of it to leave out of its moral teaching a commandment of the Lord? Simply because those words concerning graven images and lik-



nesses of any kind are **not** precepts of moral Law. They are a part of the ceremonial or ecclesiastical law given to Israel alone, for the time of the Old Covenant. They were abrogated and abolished by God himself, when He rent the veil before the most holy place in the temple on the holy mount.

And as to elements of the judicial or civil law being contained in the Ten Commandments, one example should be sufficient to make that point clear. Thus the words, "**Thou shalt not kill,**" are a judicial or civil law as well as a moral precept or rather prohibition. The transgression of it was a **crime** as well as a sin. When considered as constituting a very grave breach of the civil law of the Israelite State, it was a **crime**, but when viewed as a violation of the eternal Law of love, it was a sin. The crime of murder was punishable, and was punished, with physical or temporal death, whereas the consequence of the sin of murder was and is God's wrath, spiritual and eternal death. The crime was punished, even when to the penitent and believing Israelite his sin was forgiven, for the sake of the Redeemer who was to come. Even so to-day a murderer is hanged for his **crime**, though by a living faith in Jesus' blood and righteousness his **sin** is blotted out from the record of God's avenging wrath, and his soul, set free by the hangman, goes, like that of the **Thief** to the cross, to his Saviour in Paradise.

To enter more fully into a discussion of this interesting topic would be going too far beyond the limits of our subject. Suffice it here to say that the Ten Commandments as given by God through Moses to Israel were a **summary** of the whole Covenant Law, consisting of the three elements: judicial or political, ceremonial or

ecclesiastical, and moral Law, the last-named predominating and permanent.

In this connection it is very interesting to note that the great commandment which contains the sum and substance of the divine moral Law is **not** a part of the Ten Commandments, though of course, implied in them. We all remember the occasion when a certain lawyer (i.e., a man learned in the law of Moses), tempting the Lord Jesus, asked him, saying: Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? And what did Jesus answer him? Did he say, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me"? This is no doubt the greatest commandment in the Decalogue. But no; for the Lord said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." On these two commandments (mark the word "two") hang all the Law and the prophets." Matth. 22, 35-40.

The first and great commandment of love is found for the first time in Deut. 6, 5 (the fifth book of Moses) and the second in Leviticus 19, 18 (the third book of Moses), and neither the one nor the other, we repeat it, is a part of the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments. Proof enough, surely, that the divine moral Law is not confined to the Ten Commandments and that they do not contain the great word **Love**, which is the sum and substance, the very heart and life, of the entire moral Law.

This twofold "**Thou shalt love**" was during the time of the old covenant dinned into the unwilling ears of a people that were in their own nature ever disobedient and wayward, backsliding and idolatrous, selfish and un-

loving. This great commandment of love toward God and fellow-man has since the coming of our Lord into the flesh received a fuller meaning and a renewed emphasis. It has never for one moment been repealed or withdrawn, it never will be or can be repealed. It still, with divine authority, lays upon every human being the solemn obligation to love God above all things, to love his neighbour as himself.

Is it necessary for us to state, in so many words, that here is a Law far superior to the political and the ceremonial law? We at once realize that in this Law of love we have something greater, something deeper, higher, and nobler, more enduring and more generally applicable than the numberless external ordinances of the political or judicial law on the one hand, or the ceremonial law on the other.

The law-giver is indeed in each case the same, namely, God Almighty, but of all the laws that He has given to men, the moral Law, **the Law of love**, is of such a nature and character that it towers in royal majesty far above all other laws in such manner that no law whatever, human or divine, can be said to have been complied with, unless it has been obeyed **from the heart, in the spirit of true love** both toward God and man. This is no doubt the reason why St. James (2, 8) writes of the **Law of love** as the "**royal law**."

And this divine and royal Law, the very sum and substance of which is the great commandment of love, let us now proceed to study more closely and in some detail. To avoid useless repetition, we shall henceforth designate this divinely revealed moral Law by the simple term—**the Law**.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE MORAL LAW IN DETAIL.

#### I.—THE LAW IS HOLY.

St. Paul, Rom. 7, 12, writes that “the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” In the 119th Psalm we read such words as these: Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments. The testimonies that Thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth. All Thy commandments are truth. My tongue shall speak of Thy word; for all Thy commandments are righteousness. Ps. 119, 137. 138. 142. 151. 172.

Among the various qualities here ascribed to the law the most important for our present purpose is the quality of holiness, which denotes moral purity and perfection in the highest possible degree, and which in the strict sense of the word **can be said only of God himself**. His holiness, i.e., moral and spiritual purity, is infinite and eternal and forever beyond our grasp. And if we are to get at least some knowledge of the meaning of the word “holy” as applied to the Law, we must, like Moses of old, take our shoes off our feet; for we are about to tread on holy ground (Ex. 3, 5). In other words, we must put away our own narrow, carnal,

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earthly, and impure ideas and opinions concerning the Law of God. We must stop measuring **God's holy Law** by the tape measure of our own unclean and selfish hearts and lives. We must not presume to think or say, God cannot possibly mean this or that, simply because we feel and realise that if God does mean exactly what He says, we are undone. Let us, then, do our Lord and God the honour that is His due; let us endeavour to get His meaning, so that **His holy will** may become known to us.

**The Law is holy.** It is morally pure in the highest degree. It is in complete harmony with God's own holy nature. It is so pure, so free from any moral flaw or stain that the infinitely holy God can find no fault in it. The Law is a shining mirror of God's own holiness; in it He reveals to our minds and hearts His divine moral and spiritual purity; it is an expression of voicing forth of His holy nature and character. That is the reason why St. Paul says that the Law is also just and good, and the Psalmist speaks of it as being righteous and upright and true. All these and some other qualities of the Law are merely different aspects of its holiness.

**The Law is just.** Is it not so? Can there be anything but perfect justice in the commandment, **Thou shalt love**, when He who issues it is in His very nature Love itself? (1. John 4, 8). Moreover, is He not the Creator and Preserver of those upon whom He calls for a return of that love with which from the beginning and through all the ages He has loved them. Besides, He, at the creation, put into their hearts a pure and holy love both towards Himself and towards one another. They were created in the image of God (Gen. 1, 27;

Eph. 4, 24) and is it not just on the part of the Creator, that they should have and exercise towards Himself and their fellowmen that love **wherewith** at the beginning He endowed them?

And can those who make this law of love their rule of life, by any possibility act unjustly, if with all their powers of heart and soul and mind they love **Him** to whom they owe their all, and if they love their fellowmen, **His** creatures, as they love themselves?

The Law is good. It is in the very nature of the Law to be good, and that in the very highest possible degree; for it is a law given by God, who is in Himself alone infinitely good from eternity, and who is the source and fountainhead of all goodness whatsoever. He is the giver of all good gifts, and no evil or morally inferior or impure gift can possibly come from Him. (James I, 17).

The Law is good also because what it requires man to do is something good. Or is it not good for man to love the Lord his God with all his heart and mind and soul? Will man ever, by loving God, become less virtuous, more wicked, more unhappy than he is without loving God? Is it not good for us poor creatures here in this world of unholy strife and conflict and war, of pride and prejudice, of selfishness and envy and greed—is it not good to love our neighbours as ourselves, to love even our enemies, to bless those who curse us, to pray for those who revile and persecute us? Would not this weary world, staggering under its tremendous burden of sin and its consequences, be a better place to live in, if this great and good thing that the holy God requires of man—love, true love, were more in evidence?

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The Law is righteous. The word righteous signifies that the Law is in perfect agreement with what is right and true. There is nothing wrong about the Law. It is altogether right even as God himself would have it to be, and also in full accord with the highest welfare of those to whom it is given. There is perfect harmony between the lawgiver and the Law on the one hand (Deut. 32, 4; Ps. 145, 17), and between the Law and man's best interests on the other (Rom. 7, 22). In short, the Law could not possibly have been any other than it is. Any other, different law would have been a wrong, an unrighteous law, not adapted to the peculiar natures of both God and man. God being holy, which implies His being righteous in all His ways, could not require anything less than He has done in His Law, namely, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, etc," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Neither could God require something else, instead of love. For **God is Love**. His very nature and being is love. It is impossible for Him to tolerate in His presence men, who, as responsible moral beings, immortal and rational spirits, do not love Him with all their hearts and their fellowmen as themselves.

Thus, for example, an orderly, methodical master cannot bear to have in his presence and in his service, day by day, a disorderly, unmethodical, slovenly servant. Either the servant will become orderly and methodical like his master, or the master will rid himself of so undesirable a servant.

In like manner, but in a very much higher degree, God's very nature, which is an infinitely holy love, is always in strong and energetic opposition to all forms

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of selfishness, to whatever is not in keeping with perfect love. The very atmosphere about God is love, perfect, holy, eternal, infinite love. And in this atmosphere only those created spirits can live and be happy who have genuine love towards their Creator and towards one another.

This is one reason, at least, why the unconverted are even here and now in death, in spiritual death, separate and far away from God (Eph. 2, 12). He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (spiritual d.). We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. (I. John 3, 14). He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love (I. John 4, 8). Yes, indeed, not to love is death; not to love is not to know God, is not to be in union and communion with the fountain of life and love. Man can never be truly alive or really happy until he loves God and his fellowmen, exercising his heart and mind and soul, his brain and tongue, his hands and feet in doing those things that are implied in the great twofold commandment of love.

Here on earth man will be truly happy only according to the measure of his love. God in His infinite wisdom and goodness has so made human nature that man's highest happiness is bound together with man's holiness. A selfish man is not really happy; a proud spirit is not happy; an impure heart is not happy, however much they may try to make themselves and us believe that they are.

Sons and daughters, who disobey their parents and say and do such things as grieve them, cannot be happy. They may seem so. To their companions in pleasure and mirth they may appear to be the very



embodiment of happiness. Their laughter may be very loud and their mirth most boisterous. But though they may be able to deceive others and for a time even themselves, yet it will not be possible for them to silence for all time the conscience within that tells them they have violated the sacred law of love, which is also the royal law of true happiness; for it is an everlasting righteous law, this holy law of love, and he who transgresses it cannot be right with himself, with his fellowman, and with his God. And this wrong attitude towards His God, his neighbor, and himself makes him restless, discontented, and unhappy, though he in his unconverted state sees at best but dimly the true cause of his misery.

The human soul was created by God for God, for fellowship and communion, for union with God, and it cannot find rest until it rests in God, and to rest in God means to love Him with all the powers of heart and mind and soul. That is precisely what He demands of us. Thus His law of love is in perfect agreement with our own need and our highest good, and that is one reason why His law is righteous. He says, "Love Me above all things, and you shall be truly happy." For to love is happiness; to love with all our power is greater happiness; to love with all our might Him who is Love itself, is the greatest possible happiness that human souls will ever experience not only here in time but hereafter in eternity.

Perfect happiness cannot, of course, ever be the lot of any human soul here below, simply because the perfect fulfilment of the law of God is here impossible, even to God's own children in Christ Jesus. The only thing that really mars the happiness of true Christians

is the sad knowledge that they are every day falling short of the righteous demands of their heavenly Father's holy Law of love. This falling short of the requirements of the Law of love also includes a lack of implicit trust in God's promises, weakness of faith in the atoning blood of their blest Redeemer, and a reluctance of their sinful hearts to yield at once, and in every case, a glad obedience to the promptings of the Holy Spirit unto a holy life. In short, sin, the transgression of the Law of love, is the real cause of all their inner unrest and feeling of God's displeasure, which, however, is each day removed by His pardoning grace through faith in Jesus Christ, who has loved them unto death.

But when at last the true believer's earthly course is run, and sin and sorrow have been left forever far behind, then he will love his heavenly Father as he ought, and be perfectly happy in such love. Then will be fulfilled that joy which the holy Psalmist had in view when he wrote and prayed, **I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness. In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.** (Ps. 17, 15; 16, 11). And, when thus the image of God, lost through Adam's sin, shall have been fully restored in the believer's soul, and its blissful, loving harmony with its Creator re-established forever, then it will be seen, as never before, that the Law of God is holy, just, and good, and that His commandments are righteous altogether.

**The Law is the truth.** (Ps. 119, 142, 151; John 17, 17). This is yet another aspect of its holiness. There is in the holy law of God no disagreement of any kind

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with truth as it is in God, whose very nature is truth. His holy law is to be taken as it stands. What in His law He clearly reveals to us as His holy will is, in very deed, His will. He really, and with holy earnestness, means what He says. We are in His holy law to take him at His word. We must not argue with Him in regard to its demands. There it is, grounded in truth and firmer than the mountains, a truthful revelation of His own true, divine will. We are not for a moment to listen to the suggestion of the arch-enemy of God and man, the father of lies, who in Paradise assailed the impregnable rock of truth, when into the ear of Eve he whispered the devilish words, "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" The woman, well remembering God's clear command, replied, "God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, lest ye die." And the serpent said unto the woman, "Ye shall not surely die." The commandment of God was true, and the threat of God was likewise true, i.e., He meant to carry it into effect, if they transgressed His commandment. And He did carry it into effect. In consequence of the transgression of the Law of God, death came upon Adam and Eve and upon all their offspring (Rom. 5, 12). God remained true to His word, true to Himself, in perfect keeping with His holy nature. The commandment and the threat attached to it in case of transgression stood true and firm as a rock, grounded and anchored in God's own deep and holy truth. Our first parents, in their sinful folly, ignored this truth of both Law and punishment and brought upon themselves and all their children unspeakable and immeasurable misery and woe.

And so to-day not only the commandment is true,

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a true expression of the holy will of God, which He really meant to be known to men as His very earnest, just, and righteous will, to which men should submit willingly and without question, but also the threat of God's high displeasure and wrath, of His curse and condemnation, issued against all transgressors of His Law, is equally true. When the holy and righteous God utters a threat, He means what He says; He is going to do with the sinner exactly what He threatens to do with him.

If the sinner allows Satan, through his powerful instruments of press or platform or even the pulpit of false prophets, to suggest to him and cause him to believe that God will not carry out His threat and, obeying the devilish suggestion, disregards the threat, so much the worse for the sinner. For God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent; hath He not said, and shall He not do it? or hath He not spoken and shall He not make it good? (Numb. 23, 19).

The people of Noah's day experienced to their cost the truth of these words, and so did also the people of Jerusalem in their hour of doom, when their city was utterly destroyed, and the blood of its citizens flowed ankle-deep down the temple stairs.

Many years ago, long before the Great War, an American minister of the Gospel, a man of God, who loved the Scriptures and stood in awe of God's holy word, wrote as follows: The wave of German scepticism (doubting the truth of God's Word) that is flowing over our land and invading our colleges and theological seminaries, is one of the darkest signs of the times, and bodes terrible disaster for ourselves and

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our children. "Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" Jer. 5, 29-31. Yes, what will ye do?

The German people have been visited for these things, but the vast majority of the nation will not see that it is God that is smiting them for their sins against His holy Word. They (the majority) do not read the Bible; for if they did, they might find among many others also these words: Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that My fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. Jer. 2, 19.

The other nations should not, however, lift up their heads in Pharisaic pride, for the Lord is even now making ready to visit them likewise for their many sins, unless they repent before the storm of God's pent-up wrath breaks in fury upon them. The greatest and most deadly sin that is undermining the fabric of church and state and family in every nation under the sun, is the sin of unbelief concerning the divine truth of the holy Scriptures. Yea, hath God said? This is the slogan, the watchword and the war cry of hosts of men who are supposed to be fighting the battles of divine truth, but who are really traitors to her heavenly cause and servants of the father of lies, because they teach and preach neither the Law nor the Gospel as God has given them in the clear words of holy Writ, but they water down the truth of God in such a manner as to make it agree with the tastes and opinions

of natural man and thus try to make it acceptable to the multitude without insisting on true repentance and genuine conversion of heart and life. Pastors they call themselves, shepherds of souls, but to them apply the words of the prophet Jeremiah: "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray." Jer. 50, 6. "How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? Yes, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart; which think to cause My people to forget My name by their dreams. . . . The prophet that hath a dream let him tell a dream; and he that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully. What is the chaff (dreams of false prophets) to the wheat (God's Word)? saith the Lord. Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and, like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal My words every one from his neighbor. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues (or: smooth their tongues, speak glibly and plausibly) and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them and cause My people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." Jer. 23, 26-32.

The prophets and priests of our own day, the public teachers of religion in the visible Christian church, have, with comparatively few exceptions, profited only too well by the false teachings they have received from German apostles of unbelief, and are now leading their flocks farther and farther away from the green pastures of divine truth, and from the perennial fountain

of the waters of life. Nor will it do, in this post-war age of moral and religious confusion, to blame the German nation for everything that is bad and undesirable. Doubt and unbelief and lying prophets were in the world before there ever was a German nation, and they will continue to be a snare and a curse to untold millions of immortal souls quite apart from any German influence whatever. But over against this quite general tendency of the rebellious and corrupt human heart and mind to doubt the word of the Lord and to deny its truth, we must ever, both in season and out of season, take our stand on God's side and by His help uphold and maintain and insist on the divine character of the Law as well as of the Gospel, and, undoubtingly accept it for ourselves as God's truth.

In this connection a brief self-examination should not be considered out of place. How about ourselves, our own congregations and synod? Those of us whose responsible and high office it is to teach to others the Word of God, and, therefore, also His Law, do we always put before our people as clearly, as impressively, as earnestly, and as solemnly as we possibly can the fact that the Law of God is holy, that it is good and just and righteous and true; that God means what He commands and means what He threatens? Do we on every possible occasion defend the law against the foolish objections of the ignorant and the groundless slanders of the malicious? Do we preach on eternal future punishment with heartfelt conviction, with convincing firmness, and with solemn earnestness? Do we?

And those among us who by God's free and unmerited grace enjoy the high privilege of hearing and reading the Word of God, when we hear the Law

preached in all its holiness, in its divine justice, and righteousness and overpowering truth, do we always willingly, aye, gladly submit to its authority? When the Lord our God and Creator in His holy Law demands of us that we should love Him with all our heart and mind and soul and strength and our neighbors as ourselves, do we, in our inmost heart, cheerfully admit His claim upon us as holy, just and true? When we read or hear that God threatens to punish with an everlasting curse, an endless pain, all those who do not comply with the demands of His Law, do we in our most secret thoughts unquestioningly assent to His threat as being just and true, and do we fully agree with Him concerning the actual, the literal execution of His threats upon all transgressors of the Law, ourselves included? Do we?

But whatever we or others may feel or think or say to the contrary, the Law is holy, just, and good, righteous and true, and all God's judgments are done in righteousness and truth; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

And as the Law is, so it will remain unchanged forever.

## 2.—THE LAW IS UNCHANGEABLE AND ETERNAL.

The Law is unchangeable. Human laws are often changed or amended to suit altered conditions, or even the private interests of the law-givers, but not so the Law of God which is comprised in the double commandment of love. This Law is unchangeable, not as though God did not will to change it, but simply because it cannot be changed. God Himself cannot change it any



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more than He can commit sin; for it is grounded in His own immutable (unchangeable) nature. As long as He is a holy God, He will, aye, He cannot but say to men, Be ye holy, for I am holy. I. Pet. 1, 16. He cannot tolerate in His presence any man, woman, or child that is unholy. Heb. 12, 14; 2 Cor. 7, 1. That is the reason why even the true believers, God's own dear children, inasmuch as they, in their own hearts and lives are here on earth not yet perfected in holiness, cannot approach Him in prayer and adoration unless they appear before Him in the robe of their Saviour's perfect holiness and righteousness, which they have put on by faith in His atoning blood. They are pleasing to God, their prayers are heard, and their acts of worship are acceptable by Him, only because they come before Him wrapped up in and **completely covered** by the vicarious holiness and righteousness of their Redeemer. They live and walk before Him day by day, and may be glad of His protecting, guiding, loving presence, only because each day and hour and minute they by faith lay hold on the forgiveness of sins, which He bestows on them for Jesus sake and not their own. Apart from the Saviour's merits, away from the sheltering and covering power of the great High Priest's atoning and redeeming blood, the human soul is under God's curse, and His holiness is a consuming fire. Heb. 12, 29.

Furthermore, God is love. Love is His very nature. And this His divine nature God will never change. There is in Him no variableness. James 1, 17. I am the Lord, **I change not**, He says of himself. Mal. 3, 6. Now, as long as love is the very nature of the unchangeable God, He cannot bear to be in fellowship and union

with those who do not love with a perfect love like unto His own. **Be ye perfect**, says our Lord in connection with this very matter, even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect, namely, perfect in love. Matt. 5, 43-48.

As long, therefore, as God is God, He must say to each and every member of the human race, Thou shalt have no other gods before me; but thou shalt give Me all the powers of the heart and mind and soul in perfect reverence, love and trust; for I am the Lord thy God, thy Creator and Preserver I created you a loving creature and in demanding of you a perfect love I ask but for what is mine My claim on your love can never be relinquished; My hold on you can never be relaxed. And though you hide yourself in caverns of darkest night, I am still your God and Maker, and I have power to find you and claim your heart's allegiance to Me above all things. If you could take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, yet would I be near you, and My right hand should hold you, and I would still insist that you render unto your God His due. You may change your place of abode from year to year; but wherever you dwell, there this very Law of love lays upon your soul its unchanging claims. You may grow from boyhood into manhood and old age and change so much that even your mother would not know you, yet through all the changing years and vicissitudes of a long life, this Law of love remains unchanged, as unchangeable as I myself, the Lord, your God.

The Law being unchangeable there never can come a time when it would not be binding on men. However much we may outgrow certain forms and con-

ditions of human society with its varied customs and habits of life, we can never outgrow or grow away from the obligation imposed upon us by the Law of love towards God and our fellowmen.

Whatever changes in the forms of civil government may take place from time to time, in various lands, and in the world at large, with accompanying changes of laws, and the political and social status of citizens, or subjects; the Law of God, the Law of love, will ever stand unchanged and remain binding upon all, whether politically or socially they be enslaved or free; whether they be subjects of an autocrat and a despot, or free citizens in a democratic state.

Whatever progress may be made in scientific discovery and invention, the Law of love will ever be the same. However, great and wonderful may the power of man over the forces of nature, using them as slaves to do his bidding and harnessing them to his triumphal car, the world's material progress, yet there can never come a time when man shall have the power to change by one iota the divine Law of love, either improving it or putting something better in its place; for it will ever stand unchanged through all the changing scenes of earthly human life and endeavor—and beyond.

The forces of nature, the laws of nature, nature itself, are but creatures of God. They run their heaven-appointed course. They have their brief little earthly day, and then are no more. For there will come a time, when all nature, when the heavens above us and the earth below, shall pass away, together with all the proud works and achievements of prouder man; for all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. They wither and fade and are gone. But

even in the crash and wreck and ruin of this world, in the blasting and devouring fires of that great and terrible day of wrath and judgment, the Law of God, the twofold law of love, shall stand out unchanged and unmoved. It will shine forth in divine majesty and holiness and truth, and untold millions shall bow before it, in willing or unwilling submission, and shall confess, willingly or unwillingly, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth and that His Law is holy, just, and good, righteous and true, and that His judgment according to that Law is righteous and just altogether.

Our Lord himself has told us that though heaven and earth must pass away, yet His Word should not pass away. Matth. 24, 35. And by this "Word" of His we are to understand not only the Gospel, the tidings of God's gracious pardon for Jesus' sake, but also His Law, the Law of love, which He himself, while here on earth, both taught and by His own life and death exemplified. He that believeth not shall be condemned He tells us, Mark 16, 16. Condemned according to what law? The judicial law of Israel? No. The ceremonial law of the Jews? No. But condemned because they have all their lives broken the moral law, the Law of love. Because they have failed to comply with the requirements of this law, they cannot stand in the sight of God, but are by Him forever cast away into outer darkness. And because they have in their blindness rejected the help that alone could save them, namely, Jesus Christ and His perfect, loving obedience in doing and suffering; because they have not by faith taken refuge from God's holy wrath under the shelter of Christ's saving merits, therefore they are finally rejected by the holy heavenly judge. This appears very

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clearly also from the great judgment scene, Matth. 25, 31-46. Here again it is the unchangeable Law of love that is, in its various practical applications, used by the judge himself as the rule according to which he judges the souls before him: **I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.** Thus the second great commandment of love, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is remembered and applied on judgment day by the Son of man in His power and glory. And as to the first great commandment, that of love toward God, it is not overlooked: **For the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME.**

We do not, of course, in any way whatever wish to have this understood as though those on the King's right hand inherited the kingdom because of their love. The very word "inherit" excludes all merit on the part of the heirs of life. Nor can we at this place enter upon an exhaustive explanation of that great Bible passage. The point under consideration is that the Law is **unchangeable** and outlasts even this present world. Thus much should be quite clear from this text, even to the casual reader.

This will be still more apparent from the latter part of the passage under review: **Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and**

ye gave me no drink, I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison and ye visited me not. They have lived contrary to the Law of love; they have not, in this life, accepted by faith the saving merits of the Redeemer. Therefore, as people who cannot show that they have fulfilled the Law of love, either of themselves or through a substitute recognised by God (even Christ), they must depart from the presence of the Holy One and dwell forever with the devil and his angels, whose very nature is hatred against God and man.

Thus the Law is vindicated and established as unchangeable. Unimpaired it stands above the wreck of time. Holy and majestic, sweeter than any holy angel's smile, stronger than death and hell, it shall dwell about the great white throne forever, binding with blissful ties all God's own ransomed souls to Himself and to one another. For the Law is also **eternal**. It is unchangeable not only till the day of judgment, till the end of this present age; but it can never be changed or ever cease to be what it is. This aspect of the Law has been indeed implied in our discussion of its unchangeable nature, but it is well to have it distinctly stated and clearly understood. The fact that the Law of love will be the principle and rule of life even in yonder world, throughout the timeless reaches of eternity, should make its claims upon us all the more pressing and utterly confound those who presume to imagine that they are no longer bound by it, or who at least look forward to a time, when they would be emancipated from its jurisdiction.

**Love never faileth.** It can never be thrown down, turned out, or killed. Thus writes St. Paul, 1. Cor. 13, 8. Love is greater than faith and hope, for faith shall

## THE LAW SUPREME AND FINAL.

one blessed day be displaced by sight (we shall see Him as He is, 1. John, 3, 2), and hope will yield to glad fulfilment; but love will abide for ever. For **God is love**; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him, 1. John, 4, 16. Yes, **God is love**. Therefore **love is eternal** and those who shall dwell on high in the Father's mansions and near the Father's heart, shall dwell there according to the Law of love **eternally**.

"The Law is eternal and placed far above the sense and intellect of all creatures." Apology for the Augsburg Confession, Triglotta, p. 159-10.

Having heard thus much concerning the Law, we shall not be surprised to hear that it is also supreme and final in its authority, that is to say, it is the highest law that ever was or will be, a law from whose judgment there is no appeal to any higher authority; but the judgment according to this Law is conclusive in the high court of heaven. Let us consider this aspect of the Law somewhat more closely.

### 3.—THE LAW IS SUPREME AND FINAL IN ITS AUTHORITY.

It is the Law of God, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, the almighty, allwise, and righteous Lawgiver of all the world. It is the law of Him who has, in and of Himself, divine authority from everlasting to everlasting, and who is the source and fountain of all authority and law and order in the world. The revelation of the Law, as recorded in Exodus 19, begins with the words: "I am the Lord, thy God." And since there is no higher authority, no higher lawgiver or judge in heaven and earth and hell, there can be no valid appeal from this, the holy and eternal law of God, to a higher law or to a high-

er judge. This same divine lawgiver, indeed, gave to Israel the judicial and the ceremonial law; but He Himself, as we have seen, has abrogated them, declared them null and void, because it never was His intention that they should be binding for all time, much less for ever, or that they should be the supreme and final Law. Even during the time of the Old Covenant, when both the judicial and the ceremonial law were so much in evidence and were so heavy a yoke on the necks of His people, even during those times, we say, the Law of love was always supreme and final. Neither the keeping of the judicial law nor the minutest and most painstaking observance of the manifold ordinances of the ceremonial law had any moral or spiritual value in the sight of God, unless such was done with a glad spirit of loving obedience toward God and with a loving heart towards the neighbour. For every Bible reader this will be abundantly clear. But for the benefit of such as have no intimate acquaintance with their Bibles (alas, they are not few in number!), we shall quote some passages from the 5th chapter of the prophet Amos, where from the 21st to the 24th verse we read as follows: I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. **But let judgment (i.e. just judgments) run down as waters and righteousness as a mighty stream.** For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins (against the Law of love!): they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right (verse 12). They



hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. Forasmuch as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat; ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them (verses 10 and 11). Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live; and so the Lord, the God of hosts shall be with you (verse 14).

The Law of love is supreme and final. Our Lord Himself has for all time placed this truth beyond the realm of doubt and debate when in answer to that lawyer's question concerning the great commandment in the Law He said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart etc., and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **On these two commandments hangs all the law and the prophets.** Matth. 22, 35-40. This twofold commandment of love is the sum and substance of all moral law, natural and revealed. It is the foundation and cornerstone, the heart and life, the soul and spirit of all law. Without love, the grandest ceremonials and the most pompous rituals are but an empty show. Without love towards God and man the most honourable career, the most respectable and outwardly righteous life is but a hollow mockery. **Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.** 1. Cor. 13, 1.

Need we say more? Love is the supreme and final law. The last word has been spoken by the highest authority as to what, in a moral and spiritual sense, is required of human kind. God is not going to reveal to men another or a higher law, nor is He going to allow any appeal from this Law to any other law. Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all

thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, with all the very manifold practical applications therein implied—this twofold Law is supreme, is final and conclusive.

There is, then, no room here for a certain practice not seldom met with in family life, where naughty children run from a father's stern rule to a mother's loving tenderness, or from a mother's strictness to an indulgent and easy-going father's protection. There is no hope of getting the Law repealed, or in any way modified to suit the sinner's own weakness, his sinful habits of thought and life; his ignorance or his prejudice; his material interests or his carnal pleasure.

The Law is supreme and final, not only because the allwise heavenly Law-giver Himself has declared it to be so, but also because of its very nature. We have already seen that it is holy, just, and good; righteous and true; unchangeable and eternal. By virtue of these qualities alone the Law is quite naturally supreme and final. But there is yet one more quality of the Law which we have incidentally often referred to and in some cases even urged upon the reader's attention. It is that quality, by which the inmost nature and character of the Law may best be known, and its supreme authority brought home to the hearts and consciences of men. Which is that quality? The holy apostle Paul gives us the answer in the well-known words, Rom. 7, 14: The Law is spiritual.

#### 4.—THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL.

The Law demands something more than mere lip and hand-service; more than an external observance of ordinances, an outward conformity to its rules; a busy running hither and thither, doing this and doing that by,

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word or deed, and then folding the arms across the extended chest in the foolish conceit that one has been very, very good, certainly very much better than that bad man yonder or that wicked woman next door! So good, in fact, that one really deserves a special place in God's favour and that when at last the summons comes to step up higher, a very honourable place will certainly have been provided and reserved in heaven for one so very good! Well, we shall see.

**The Law is spiritual.** This is of the utmost importance. If this fact were more generally realized, there would be in the hearts of men a greater desire for deliverance from a condition of heart and mind and conscience that becomes more and more unbearable, as we proceed in the knowledge of what that really means: the Law is spiritual. Well, what does it mean?

Let us at the outset bear in mind that it is the holy apostle Paul through whom God tells us that the Law is spiritual. Besides giving voice to a divine truth, St. Paul also exemplifies the working, the effect of that truth in his own personal experience. **The Law is spiritual**, says the holy apostle. His meaning becomes quite clear from the context, that is, from what he writes before and after the words quoted. He is speaking of the conflict within his own soul between the Law, of which he says that it is spiritual, holy, just, and good, and his own sinful evil nature, concerning which he says, **I am carnal, sold under sin**, Rom. 7, 14. These two very great statements: "**The Law is spiritual**" and "**I am carnal, sold under sin**," are found side by side in the same 14th verse of the 7th chapter of Romans. In a similar manner both the spiritual Law and the carnal sinful nature of man find themselves side by side in the soul of every

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person that has begun to realize the spiritual nature of the Law. And wherever they do so find themselves side by side, there immediately begins a strenuous and fierce conflict. The Law, being spiritual, makes demands on the carnal sinful heart which the latter will not yield to. The Law, being spiritual and as such also holy, just, and good, desires to rule supreme in man's heart and conscience, but, says, St. Paul, I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth **no good thing**. v. 18. In the heart of man, as he is born of woman and before he is born again of the Spirit of God, **only evil and no good** is to be found. And even after conversion, sin still dwells in God's own dear children, even in His holy apostles. v. 17. Hence the conflict between the Law and sin in St. Paul's own experience.

This conflict, we repeat it, takes place within St. Paul's soul. In the secret places of his inner life, into which no human eye can look, no human mind, however keen, can penetrate, there is a battlefield, where two opposing forces are locked in deadly fight. There, deep within, unheard by any human ear, a fierce conflict rages between two enemies that can never come to terms. Between them there can never be even so much as a truce, no, not for the fraction of a moment. These two forces are on the one hand, the holy, **spiritual Law** of God and on the other hand, the law of sin, the **Old Adam**, with all his evil lusts and carnal desires, the total depravity and sinful corruption of the human heart, which is always opposed to the holy, just, and good Law of God.

Let us pause and consider very thoughtfully that it is St. Paul who is speaking of this conflict within his soul. He is an apostle of Jesus Christ, a chosen instru-

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ment of the Lord for the propagation of divine saving truth. He is the chief of all the apostles. He has laboured and suffered more than any of the others. He has for Jesus' sake forsaken all that was near and dear to him. And what that "all" implied, very few of us are at this distance of time able to realize. Unceasingly he labours, by day and by night, in the high service of his divine Master and of his fellowmen. He lives for Jesus' sake the life of a homeless wanderer. He suffers, for the sake of God's truth, untold inconveniences and physical pain from heat and cold, from hunger and thirst, from cruel scourgings and dangerous shipwrecks. Though naturally of a very highstrung nature and a sensitive temperament, he willingly, for Jesus' sake and for love of his fellowmen, suffers much public shame and dishonour at the hands of Jews and Gentiles. A most bitter and persistent persecution dogs his footsteps, wherever he may go. Years he spends in imprisonment and in chains. And at last his unexampled life of unselfish labours and of loving self-sacrifice is ended by the axe of the public executioner. And all, let us repeat it, for God's sake, in Jesus' name and cause, for the benefit, the lasting good, of untold millions of our sinned race.

Surely if any man ever **deserved** to go to heaven, St. Paul is that man. He certainly has done and suffered enough to make him acceptable to God, has he not? So all those who know and understand neither St. Paul nor his divine Master would naturally think and firmly believe. The great host of moralists, both without and within the visible Church, who take pains to live a clean and respectable life, believing that God will accept them on their own merits—all these will with one accord ex-

claim that so good and holy a man as St. Paul most certainly went to heaven, because he was so good and holy. For if he did not, how could they possibly expect to get there, who have not attained to so high a degree of saintliness as the said St. Paul. But they do expect to get there for their own goodness' sake, and so, they imagine the holy apostle certainly did.

But the holy apostle does not agree with these moralists, these modern Pharisees. He himself was once a Pharisee, and as such took more pains to lead a blameless life than most of our modern self-righteous hypocrites. Writing from Rome a few years before his death he says: "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; . . . touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness**, which is of the Law (and therefore imperfect at best, Is. 67, 6), but that which is through the faith of Christ (i.e. faith in Christ's atoning work and merits), **the righteousness which is of God by faith.** Phil. 3, 4-9.

Is it not indeed remarkable that St. Paul himself does nowhere in his many epistles ever throw out even so much as a hint that he hopes to get to heaven **on account** of his labours, his sufferings for Jesus' sake, and his own personal saintly life? Must it not strike our

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modern Pharisees speechless with amazement when the meaning of the apostle's words just quoted is borne in upon their reluctant minds? Here the great apostle practically at the end of his unexampled career of loving service and sacrifice, with the clanking chains of imprisonment for Jesus' sake literally upon his body, here he tells us and all the world to the end of time that he does not trust in his own righteousness (and he had, from the mere moralist's standpoint, so very much!), but in the righteousness which is of God by faith, that is, a righteousness which is not an offering to God on the part of man, but a righteousness which God Himself has prepared and which comes from God to man as a free and unmerited gift. Concerning this righteousness we shall have very much more to say. For the present we must return to the conflict in the holy apostle's soul between his inborn sinfulness and this holy spiritual Law. The Law is spiritual. This is the reason why not even the chief of the Lord's apostles could by his own labours and strivings make himself acceptable in the sight of the holy God. He, too, had occasion and need to say:

Not the labours of my hands  
Can fulfil thy Law's demands:  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;

because the Law is spiritual, extending its demands to the very heart and soul of man, calling upon him to be perfectly pure in his love towards God and his fellow-man and to do whatever he does in the outward performance of the precepts of the Law with an entirely willing mind and an unselfish cheerfulness of heart.

Luther says in this connection: "If the Law were an affair of the body, its demands could be met by works. But since it is spiritual, no one can satisfy its demands except by doing all that he does from the inmost heart." But no one can in this life so fulfil the Law, not even a St. Paul. Even he transgressed it times without number, not so much by external acts or words, though even in this respect he was not sinless, but rather in his spirit, in his hidden inner life, by the fact that he through his very birth was "carnal, sold under sin." "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth **no good thing.**" This is all he has to boast about before God: **no good thing!**

Indeed, as a child of God, as a new creature in Christ Jesus, as a dwellingplace and temple of God's holy Spirit, he does not approve of this sinful condition of his heart. On the contrary, he disapproves and hates and fights against the evil desires and lusts and rebellious thoughts within. But this active and energetic opposition in his soul against the evil that still lingers there is not of himself, of his own natural will or his own flesh and blood, but this is of God, a gift of the Spirit of God in Christ Jesus and is a **fruit of faith**, that faith, by which he from day to day accepts as his own the vicarious merits of Christ Jesus, his redeemer, that faith which again is not of his own contriving, but a **free gift of God** through the effective operation of the holy Ghost. As a reborn child of God, as a truly spiritual man he now loves the Law and says it is holy, just, and good, and he daily and hourly endeavours to comply, for God's sake, with the spiritual demands of this same holy, just, and good Law, but he continually finds within himself another law, which also makes demands, and very strongly urges its own claims upon him. This is, as be-



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fore stated, the law of sin which still clings to him and will not let him do full honour to God's holy Law, but is always violently opposed to it. And even though the holy apostle, in the power of the holy Spirit, refuses to comply with the sinful demands of the Old Man as far as outward words or acts are concerned, yet he cannot, try as he will, get rid of that sinful, evil presence within his own bosom. Though he close his eyes and stop his ears and have his hands and feet tied and his tongue gagged, so that it is impossible for him to do or say anything evil, yet the Old Adam within is ever active with evil suggestions and incitements to sin, with inner murmurings and rebellious thoughts against God, with pride and impurity, with envy and jealousy, with hatred and revenge, with selfishness and greed and all manner of evil attitudes of the secret heart towards God and man.

But the Law is and remains spiritual. It demands that the Old Adam shall be killed within us; that the "law of sin" shall be utterly abolished; that we render to God a perfect obedience, the willing, cheerful, loving obedience of a sinless heart! Until St. Paul or any other man or woman or child can do that, they have not fulfilled the Law, but are transgressors and have come short of the glory of God. The Law being spiritual, it demands more than St. Paul in this life could ever give or perform. It demands a holier life than even he could ever live in this "body of death," with sin always clinging to his soul; always clogging his best efforts; always holding him back and pulling him down, while according to the New Man in Christ Jesus he ever pressed forward and upward to attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Eph. 4, 13.

And when at last he went from earth to heaven,

as no doubt he did, he was admitted in that abode of the blest, not because he had been so unselfish, so faithful and true to his dear Lord, even unto death; not because he had fulfilled the Law (for he had not fulfilled it), but because he had by the unmerited and wonderful grace of God washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. 7, 14.

**The Law is spiritual.** This matter is of such vital importance that it will be worth our while to dwell on this topic a little longer. The greatest teacher of this great truth is our Lord himself. All that St. Paul or any of the other apostles ever knew or taught about this subject was given them by the Lord, who during practically the whole duration of His earthly ministry laboured very hard to bring the Pharisees of his time to realize the truth that the Law is spiritual. From the beginning of His public life to the very end of it this was the centre around which His conflict with the leaders of his people raged. The bitterest enemies of our Lord were not the Sadducees, who were more or less indifferent to religion, but the Pharisees, who were proud and jealous of the Law and prouder of keeping it (as they imagined!). St. Paul at one time was one of them. They were extremely strict in all the external observances of the ceremonial law and they were no less careful to comply outwardly with the requirements of the moral law. They abhorred sacrilege, theft, murder, adultery, etc., and were publicly held in high esteem. They considered themselves to be the moral aristocracy of their people, the best examples of pious and God-fearing men that the Jewish people could boast of. They would not associate with "low" people or moral outcasts, and looked down upon those who did (as for instance, our Saviour. Matt. 9, 11).

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They had a very high opinion of themselves, thinking themselves ever so much better than many others, (Luke 18, 11), and expecting from men a certain homage as their due. The Lord's opinion of them was not quite so good as their own, He told them so, many and many a time. That is why these "good" people hated Him with a deadly hatred and rested not, until He was nailed to the cross. This hatred was directed not so much against His person as against the **truth** which He taught; and one very important element in His teaching in reference to the Pharisees was that the Law is spiritual, that they were not keeping the Law and that therefore they were not such good people as they imagined themselves to be.

In the fifth chapter of St. Matthew (vs. 21, 22) we have several examples of our Lord's teaching as directed chiefly against the Pharisees and their false exposition of the Law. The old Jewish teachers had falsely taught (and their teaching was rigidly adhered to by the Pharisees of Christ's time) that whoever did not in a physical sense actually kill or murder his fellow-man, had fully complied with that precept of the moral law which says: "Thou shalt not kill." But the Lord has this to say: "I say unto you, that whosoever is **angry** with his brother without a cause (a just cause, of course), shall be in danger of the judgment," namely, of the court that would try a case of murder and, the murderer having been convicted, order his execution. Here the Lord shows what is meant when we say: The Law is spiritual. He tells His hearers that the Law, "Thou shalt not kill," does not forbid the external bodily act of murder only, but also those inward lusts and passions of the heart, from which murders take their first beginnings.

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According to the Lord's own infallible interpretation of this commandment all those who are angry with a brother without cause, are in God's sight really murderers and worthy of death. Thus also St. John, the beloved disciple writes: He that hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (1. John 3, 14. 15.), that is, spiritual death, which after temporal death, becomes a permanent condition and is then known as eternal death. Yes, indeed, he that loveth not his brother, that is, his fellow-man, even though that "brother" be a personal enemy (Matth. 5, 44), he is on that account under sentence of eternal death, in other words, everlasting punishment.

The Lord God is not jesting when he says: Thou shalt **love** thy neighbour as **thyself**!

The law of the State (which has to do not with the souls of men but merely with their bodies and external things generally) requires evidence to be given of deeds actually performed, of words spoken or written, and such external threatening gestures of the body as could be plainly seen and recognised as such. To earthly judges apply the words: "Wir richten nicht die Herzen; wir richten nur die Tat" (we judge not the hearts but the deed alone). But the Law of God is spiritual; its jurisdiction extends over the whole realm of man's spirit, of his inner life, however hidden from the eyes and knowledge of other men. And God the Omniscient, the searcher and reader of hearts, He judges man according to His holy spiritual Law.

The Pharisee, blinded by his selfesteem and pride, does not see this. He stands well in the eyes of men; he complies with all the demands of human laws; he is

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in outward appearance morally superior to many of his fellow-men. His very "respectable" life, both private and public, is made much of, even by the public press. And as he walks or struts along the street, he is very conscious of the generally accepted fiction that he is somebody worth knowing and getting a nod of recognition from. But in reality he is merely a player on the stage of life wearing a beautiful mask to hide an ugly face, a grinning skull. For thus says the Lord, Matth. 23, 27: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are **within** full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. The Law, which is spiritual, is not satisfied with what men seem to be, but demands that they be perfect through and through.

This is brought out by our Lord also in reference to the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." In Matth. 5, 27, we read: Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her **hath committed adultery** with her already in his heart. The Pharisees foolishly imagined that they had fulfilled the Law in this respect, if they had also abstained from the bodily act of adultery (alas, there are many such Pharisees about, even within the visible Church!). But the Saviour teaches all men the crushing and damning lesson that the sixth commandment forbids unchaste desires and evil lust, and that it demands a spotless purity of heart. It is the heart that God will judge according to His spiritual Law, that heart, out of which, in the Lord's own words, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These

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are the things that defile a man. Matt. 15. 19. These thoughts, lusts, and desires, make a man unclean in the sight of God, so unclean morally and spiritually that men can never on their own account, and by their own efforts, be pleasing and acceptable to the holy God, whatever they may outwardly do or say, or however respectable and virtuous and saintly they may appear before the eyes of their fellowmen.

The Pharisees relied for their acceptance with God on these outward appearances. But our Lord had this to say to them: Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Matth. 15, 8.

The Law is Spiritual. It has issued forth from God, the eternal Spirit, a true expression of His holy nature, mind, and will. It speaks with divine authority to a created spirit encased in clay; to the spirit of man created by God sinless and immortal and destined to enjoy with his Creator a blissful, a glorious, an endless future life. The holy Law of God demands of that spirit to render unto God what is God's, that which God has given him at creation: a perfect righteousness and holiness, which implies a spotless love, an unwavering trust, an unbroken, faithful allegiance. The holy and spiritual law of God rightly claims undivided sovereignty over man's heart and mind and soul, and all their various powers, thoughts and affections. It claims the sovereign right of unlocking and entering the most secret chambers of his heart and life. It drags forth from them and holds up to the sinner's inward eye the vile and hideous things of the past and of the present, hidden there from the sight and knowledge of men and in many

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cases even of the sinner himself, who is by nature blind to the deep corruption of his heart and who is very much surprised, when for the first time he sees himself in the fierce revealing light of the Law in its true and spiritual meaning. Rom. 7, 7.

The Englishman says, "My house is my castle," and the German says, "Gedanken sind zollfrei" (that is, thoughts are exempt from duty). They may pass the customs barrier of human intercourse without being obstructed by any tax-gathering authority. No one can hold us responsible or punish us for any thoughts we may have in our minds. They may freely come and go, as they please, so long as we take care not to utter them and so give them outward currency among men. But God's holy Law respects neither the privacy of a man's house and home, nor the secrecy of his unuttered thoughts. It enters in with the authority and majesty of the Most High and says to the sinner, "Thou art the man!" Your fellowmen who of themselves and unenlightened by the Spirit of God have at best but a very superficial general knowledge of the human heart, your fellowmen may approve of, praise, honour and reward you; but I, the Spiritual Law of God, knowing you as you really are, have come to accuse, to convict, to condemn you. The oaken portals of your mansion or the pine door of your cottage may be locked and all the windows securely fastened against any and all human intruders upon your privacy and your secret doings, yet will I come in and find you there and tell you to your face what I think of you and how you stand in the sight of God! Your tongue may be very discreet and your lips firmly sealed; your real thoughts may be hidden far away even from your most intimate friends.

For years you may have been deceiving those who know you best and sunned yourself in their good opinion of your seeming virtues and enjoyed the crowning happiness of their affliction; but I, the Law of God, I know you for what you really are. You are a hypocrite, a cheat, and a deceiver. Your inner life, the life of your spirit is not right with God, with love and truth and holiness. The motives that lie behind your outward life; the reasons that move you to act and speak and appear before others as you do, these are not good, righteous and pure, unselfish and loving, as you would have people believe them to be. They are not acceptable to God, but rather an abomination and by Him accursed.

You have not loved your neighbor as yourself, have not really loved him at all. You have rather loved the help he could give in time of need, the pleasure he could furnish, the honors he could confer. It is for these and similar things that you have courted him and cultivated his friendship. You have kept in touch with him because he might some day be of use to you and stand by you in the hour of trouble. At best your motives were mixed motives. You may have loved him a little for himself alone, but chiefly on your own account, and for your own ultimate benefit. You have given that you might take more. You have, for instance, joined a Lodge, usually called in this country a Friendly Society, and you are with your "brethren" prating of Friendship, Love and Brotherhood, while your real motive was to get twenty shillings in return for nineteen or less, in other words, to benefit yourself. On the most charitable construction you wished to get from your "brethren" at least as much as you gave them. And yet you have the brazen face to call that friendship,



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love and brotherhood.

Thus the holy spiritual Law might go on and on speaking to the Old Adam within the soul of every man, woman and child. It could flash the separate light of each commandment and moral precept into the darkest corners of the corrupt heart and bring to view things that are hideous and revolting to look upon. Yet God sees all these things all the time, and His divine patience with us is past human understanding. For if men could know one another as God knows them, there would be no friendship, no married life, no family life, no human fellowship of any kind. Men could not bear to see one another from day to day in the light of God's spiritual Law and as they really are, men cannot bear to see themselves in this light of uncompromising truth, of purest love, of divine holiness. But the truth is the truth and sooner or later must be faced. There is no possibility of evading it, for this holy Law is in the hands of God, who in His own good time will compel the sinner to face it squarely, to look into it as into an exceedingly shining mirror and so behold himself as he is in the sight of God, in the light of holy truth.

But enough. The matter is or ought to be clear to every reader. The Law is spiritual. It probes human nature to the very bone and marrow, as it were. It is a light, but it is a lurid and terrifying light, that like a lightning flash suddenly reveals to our sight a condition of things that we had not dreamed of. We had thought ourselves tolerably good and fairly respectable people, but now comes this Law of God and pulls down the house of cards that our self-esteem and conceit had reared, and we know not where to turn

from the odious sight. We foolishly imagined that we were at least to some appreciable extent keeping the Golden rule: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matth. 7, 12. But we now find that we have grievously transgressed it every day of our lives, even in our best efforts to live up to it. We were so ignorant and blind as to think that this same Golden rule was the sum and substance of the whole duty of man, but now see that there is yet another commandment, which is first in order and by far the greater. That is the Law of Love with respect to God, which demands of us to love God with all the powers of heart and soul and mind. External exercises of divine worship are not sufficient; mere church-going, common prayer, and singing will not do. The outward acts of listening to a sermon or even of paying our full share towards the minister's salary, are acts that may be and often are performed with decorum and with promptitude by outspoken unbelievers or by hypocrites. God rightly demands more than all such and any similar merely external works. He demands of us pure hearts, from which doubt, mistrust, and unbelief concerning Himself and His word and works are completely absent. He calls for our heart's deepest and sincerest love and trust; for the soul's fullest and most ready response to His holy will, assenting to it as being just and righteous. He calls for a pure and holy delight in **doing** His will; a truly cheerful obedience towards **each** and every one of His holy commandments; a joyful submission to all His ways with man, in prosperity and in adversity, in times of plenty and in times of famine, in peace and war, and that without any frettings or murmurings, even within the most secret places of the soul.

In the Large Catechism Dr. Luther, explaining the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," has the following to say, as to its proper spiritual meaning: "It is the intent of this commandment to require true faith and trust of the heart which settles upon the only true God, and clings to him alone. That is as much as to say: 'See to it that you let Me alone be your God and never seek another, i.e., Whatever you lack of good things, expect it of Me, and look to Me for it, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, creep and cling to Me, and, I, yes, I will give you enough and help you out of every need, only let not your heart cleave to or rest in any other.'

"Many a one thinks that he has God and everything in abundance when he has money and possessions; he trusts in them and boasts of them with such firmness and assurance as to care for no one. Lo, such a man also has a god, Mammon by name, i.e., money and possessions, on which he sets all his heart, and which is also the best common idol on earth. He who has money and possessions feels secure, and is joyful and undismayed as though he were sitting in the midst of Paradise. On the other hand, he who has none doubts and is despondent as though he knew of no God. For very few are to be found who are of good cheer, and who neither mourn nor complain if they have not Mammon.

"So, too, whoever trusts and boasts that he possesses great skill, prudence, power, favor, friendship and honor has also a god, but not this true and only God. This appears again when you notice how presumptuous, secure and proud people are because of such possessions, and how despondent when they no longer exist, or are withdrawn. Therefore I repeat that the chief ex-

planation of this point is that to have a god is to have something in which the heart entirely trusts.

“Thus you can easily understand what and how much this commandment requires, namely, that man’s **entire heart and all his confidence be placed in God alone**, and in no one else. For to have God you can easily perceive is not to lay hold of Him with our hands. . . . But to apprehend Him means when the heart lays hold of Him and clings to Him. But to cling to Him with the heart is nothing else than to trust in Him entirely. For this reason He wishes to turn us away from everything else that exists outside of Him, and to draw us to Himself, namely, because He is the only eternal good. . . .

“Lo, here you have the meaning of the true honor and worship of God, which pleases God, and which he commands under **penalty of eternal wrath**, namely, that the heart know no other comfort or confidence than in Him, but, for Him, risk and disregard everything upon earth. On the other hand, you can see how the world practises **only false worship** and idolatry. For no people has ever been so reprobate as not to institute and observe some divine worship; every one has set up as his special god whatever he looked to for blessings, help, and comfort. . . . But their error is this that their trust is false and wrong; for it is not placed in the only God, besides whom there is truly no God in heaven or upon earth. . . .

“Let everyone, then, see to it that he esteem **this commandment great and high above all things**. Ask and examine your heart diligently, and you will find whether it cleaves to God or not.” Thus far Dr. Luther.

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Truly, the Law is spiritual. It demands that the inmost heart of man should cleave to God with holy affection and cheerful obedience; that all the powers of mind and soul should be unreservedly, and at all times and under all circumstances, consecrated to His service.

Such, then, is the Law. It is holy, just and good, righteous and true; it is unchangeable and eternal; supreme and final, and it is spiritual. It is also universal in its application. Its jurisdiction extends over all men of all times. It claims obedience from all the sons and daughters of Adam. This particular aspect of the Law has in the foregoing always been implied and sometimes directly stated, so that it does not seem necessary to enlarge on it at present, especially as reference will be made to it in various connections as we proceed.

Now, the Law being what it is and no man being able to fulfil it, there arises the question: "Since no man can satisfy the demands of the Law, for what purpose did God give it? What is the use of a law that no one under it can possibly live up to? This question will find its answer in the next chapter, which treats of the use of the Law.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE USE OF THE LAW.

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The use of God's holy Law is a threefold one. In the Formula of Concord our church, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, confesses in reference to this matter, as follows: "The Law of God is useful (1.) not only to the end that external discipline and decency are maintained by it against wild, disobedient men; (2.) likewise that through it men are brought to a knowledge of their sins; (3.) but also that when they have been born anew by the Spirit of God, converted to the Lord, and thus the veil of Moses has been lifted from them, they live and walk in the Law." Triglotta, 963, 1. In our catechism, under the question (91), "What purposes does the Law then serve?" We find the following answers: "First, it checks, in a measure, the coarse outbursts of sin, and thereby helps to maintain outward decency in the world. (A curb.) Secondly, and chiefly, it teaches man the due knowledge of his sin. (A mirror.) Thirdly, it leads the regenerate to know what are truly good works. (A rule)."

Of this threefold use of God's Law we have all heard from our very childhood, though instead of the words "curb," "mirror," "rule," many, if not most of us, learnt by heart the words, "Riegel," "Spiegel," "Regel." How far we have really understood these three uses of the Law, is a different matter; for to learn something by heart or by rote is one thing, and

to understand it, especially from experience, is quite another. Let us, then, briefly consider:

**I.—THE LAW AS A CURB.**

A curb (Zuegel) is a means of keeping a horse in check, restraining it from going too fast or keeping it from taking its own course either to the right or to the left. It compels the horse, through the agency of pain, to do the driver's or the rider's will. There is no virtue in such obedience. The horse would much rather go at its own pace or turn to the left or right to crop the grass by the roadside; but the pain caused by the pull or jerk at the bridle reins is more unpleasant than having its own way is agreeable, and so the horse has learnt, by painful experience, to obey, as a rule, the slightest touch of its master's controlling hand.

In a similar manner the Law is to many men a curb, a restraining influence, which checks, in a measure at least, the gross and violent outbreaks of sin. Strictly speaking, however, it is not the Law itself that acts as a curb to men's evil actions, but rather the fear of punishment. Thus many a man would without hesitation have done some great and flagrant wrong, if he had not been restrained by the voice of his conscience threatening him with severe punishment at the hands of God. Such a one may have very hazy ideas about God, yet he stands in slavish awe and fear of some higher power that takes note of what he does and is able to punish the evildoer. But even when men refuse to listen to the voice of conscience threatening future punishment by the heavenly powers, they will yet listen to the voice of fear that whispers to them of the temporal punishment that is visited upon evil-

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doers by the earthly powers that be. Thus very many of the so-called respectable and law-abiding class of men and women keep "within the law," not because they love the Law of God or man, but because they do not like to pay a fine or suffer imprisonment. If there were no fine or imprisonment attached to stealing, they would steal; if they could commit murder without being very severely and painfully punished for it, they would commit murder. What restrains them, is the fear of temporal punishment. This was very forcibly brought home to our minds by the happenings in connection with the recent Melbourne police strike.

The Melbourne police force, for reasons that do not here concern us, suddenly withdrew their services and thus left that populous and wealthy city without the controlling and restraining watchfulness of the law. And lo and behold! As soon as the news of the strike and the consequent absence of the police patrol became known about town, there ensued a boisterous scramble for the precious things that looked so invitingly through the gorgeous show windows. The rabble broke into the shops and people helped themselves to whatever they could lay hands on, without, of course, a thought of paying for what they took.

To some people it came as a great surprise that among the looters had been seen many men and women who were known to have been law-abiding and respectable citizens. As for us, we felt no surprise at all. For we know, from our Saviour's own infallible teaching, that the human heart is by nature **only evil continually**; that from "out of the heart proceed (or come forth) evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, etc." Matth. 15, 19. And again, "From



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within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts . . . thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, an evil eye, pride, foolishness." Mark 7, 21. 22.

No, the Law itself is not a curb, neither is it a bolt or bar (Riegel) against the coarse outbreaks of sin. Those people who are kept in check only by a curb or bar are not restrained from crime and sin by any law, considered simply as law, but always by the fear of punishment, so that the curb or restraining power is the penalty attached to the Law. But even the penalty, however severe and painful, will fail to restrain men from evil deeds and words, if that penalty is not imposed upon the evildoer, in other words, if the law is not in every case promptly and strictly enforced. A weak and indulgent father who has times without number threatened to punish his son's disobedience, but who has never actually punished him, must not feel surprised, when his boy ultimately grows indifferent to his threats and does as he pleases; for the boy has learnt that his father's threats are merely so much breath, and that mere words cause him no pain strong enough to curb him in his evil courses.

Thus also in the Melbourne police strike it was not the removal or repeal of any law that caused so sudden and so general an outbreak of looting and theft, but rather the removal, for the time being, of that body of men who were employed by the State and city for the purpose of enforcing the law, of bringing evildoers to justice. In short, the fear of detection and punishment being temporarily removed, those people did what their own thievish, greedy hearts prompted them to do. Blinded as they were by selfish desire, the fear of God and His sure punishment did not enter into their minds and if

in some cases it did, the prospect of present gain was to them more pleasant than the idea of some future punishment was painful. And so our catechism says truly that the Law in a measure, to a certain degree, checks the coarse outbreaks of sin, but not altogether.

Nevertheless, the Law, with its penalties kept before the mind through their prompt and strict enforcement, is of very great use as a curb or bar. Without this protection of the Law we should be in a very bad case indeed. We should not be able to enjoy in peace the rewards of our labours; we should not be safe in property and even life, either at home or abroad.

In America the Law is, generally speaking, not so promptly and not so strictly enforced as in other English-speaking countries. This is the chief reason why in America property and life, to mention only these two, are not so safe as they are, say in England, in Canada, or in Australia. It seems worth while to quote at some length the remarks of a prominent American judge on this matter. Judge Alfred J. Talley, of the Court of General Sessions in New York City, in inducting into office a new jurist, spoke as follows: "One of the things that you will come to learn is that you have come on the bench of the greatest criminal court in the world, and the oldest court of any kind in the United States, at a time when this country is suffering under an indictment which proclaims it to be the most lawless on earth. You will find that the United States must plead guilty to that indictment. Most of the desperate criminals are mere boys. You will be heart-broken at discovering that the vast majority of defendants are under nineteen or twenty years old. That is going to be your most distressing problem."

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The learned judge also points out who and what in his opinion is to blame for these conditions. He says: "The first is the apathetic attitude of the people towards the **strict enforcement** of the law and the **punishment** of the criminal, and the second is the unwillingness of the people themselves to respect and obey the law of the land and to train the children of the country to obedience and respect for lawful constituted authority. What we need here is justice that will be **prompt, adequate** and **final**. . . . One of the most curious and inexplicable manifestations in the criminal courts in recent years is the willingness of apparently respectable jurymen to flout the law and disregard the facts in the rendition of their verdicts. Every judge of every criminal court of the country can give innumerable instances of a wanton disregard of duty on the part of jurymen. It would seem that this is a reaction in the jury box of the general spirit of lawlessness that pervades the country, and unless it is stopped its swelling tide will billow into a wave which will inundate our nation and sweep it to destruction." (1).

Yes, indeed, the Law will act as a curb only in proportion as it is promptly and adequately enforced. And it will be so enforced, where judges, jurymen, and the people in general have realised that the Law which says, "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," "Honor thy father and thy mother," etc., is not an arbitrary law that men may make or unmake at will, that they may obey, if it suits their selfish interests, or ignore and transgress, if that suits them better and they are safe from temporal punishment; but that this Law is the eternal Law

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1.—"Theologische Quartalschrift," October, 1924, p. 251.

of God almighty, who has made earthly rulers and administrators of justice his ministers for the safety and welfare of mankind in temporal affairs. It is He himself, even the Lord God, who through St. Paul, Rom. 13, speaks to all men of all time in the following impressive words: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisted the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (that is, they shall be punished both by the civil government and by God himself). For rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power (on account of punishment)? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." It is the holy will of God that civil magistrates should enforce the Law and impose the full penalty, so that the gross outbreaks of sin may be curbed through fear, and the people dwell in peace and safety as to their possessions, honor, and life.

But this use of the Law as a curb is not by any means its chief use. This may do for the external discipline and order of communities and states, but a mere curb or check on evildoers through fear of punishment does not and cannot go to the root of the matter, and often fails, as we have seen, to satisfy even the most elementary requirements of outward public law and order, because those entrusted with the administration of the Law do not enforce it by imposing

## THE LAW AS A CURB.

the penalties it provides and hence do not "execute the wrath" upon the evildoer, as God would have them do.

In spite of this fact, however, that the Law as a curb has to do only with **external** order and even in this respect is only "**in a measure**" successful, there are not a few people, even within the fold of the visible church, including our own, who foolishly imagine that the minister's chief duty is to keep young and old externally in good order and discipline by preaching the Law to them in such a manner that they will refrain from doing evil from fear of punishment, and so do outwardly what is right. In the view of such people, the minister of the Gospel is a kind of moral policeman who must swing his big stick of eternal punishment over the heads of his flock to keep them on the right path. But those who by fear of God's wrath and punishment are kept from any gross external violation of his Law are not children but slaves. Their hearts are not with God; they hate His law; they would abolish it if they could; they hate him who preaches the Law. In their hearts they rebel against the Most High and His holy Law, and continually transgress it. In their spiritual blindness they are so foolish as to suppose that God will be satisfied with an external show of obedience, and so they imagine that all is well with them, as long as the Law is not held up to them as a **mirror**, in which they may see themselves as they really are in the sight of God. And this use of the Law as a mirror is its chief use. Let us proceed to consider it.

### 2.—THE LAW AS A MIRROR.

The Law is very properly likened to a mirror. A mirror shows to the person looking into it his (or her)

outward appearance. It is used very much; for man is a vain creature. A mirror never flatters. It shows people exactly as they outwardly appear. But it must be conceded that the person looking into it very often does not see what the mirror so faithfully puts before his eyes; for self-love, vanity and pride blind the observer. It is even so with the holy Law of God. This is, indeed, like a mirror, inasmuch as he who looks into it, may see himself as he appears **inwardly**. Comparing his life, the life that he really leads, not only before the eyes of his friends or under the observation of his fellowmen in general, but also his most private life, including the activities of his mind; his unuttered thoughts, his secret wishes, his hidden desires, his inclinations and tendencies—comparing all these with the holy, spiritual and heart-searching Law of God, seeing himself reflected without flattery in this heavenly mirror, and not wilfully shutting his eyes to its truthful message, he may come to a correct knowledge of himself. He will see himself not as he **seems** in the sight of men, but as he **is** in the sight of God. And how is he in the sight of God? What particular knowledge concerning himself will the Law convey to his mind? The Bible tells us in very plain and simple words, when it says: **“By the Law is the knowledge of sin.”** Rom. 3, 20.

This knowledge of sin is very necessary; for without it men cannot possibly appreciate what Jesus Christ has done for them nor desire to be saved through his merit alone. Without an adequate knowledge of sin, men cannot understand why Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father (John 14, 6), and why salvation is in no other name than in His. Acts 4, 12.

## THE LAW AS A MIRROR.

In this connection some quotations from Luther's great preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans (1) will no doubt be read with interest. Luther writes: "It behooves a preacher of the Gospel, first of all, by means of the revelation of the Law concerning sins, to reprove and denounce as sin everything in a person's life that does not proceed from the Spirit and from faith in Christ, in order that men may be enabled to know themselves and their misery, become humble and crave help. Therefore St. Paul, following this rule, starts in the first chapter to rebuke gross sins and unbelief which are manifest, such as the sins of the Gentiles were, and as are still in those who live without the grace of God. Although they know and perceive every day, that there is a God, still their nature, outside of grace, is in itself

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1.—Luther's preface (Vorrede) to the epistle of St. Paul to the Romans is a great factor in the history of Methodism. John Wesley, its founder—born 1703, died 1791—in his Journal (Tagebuch), relates the following occurrence, which must ever be of very great interest to Lutheran readers:—"In the evening (May 24, 1738) I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he (Luther) was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitely used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart." ("John Wesley's Journal," abridged by Percy Livingstone Parker, p. 43).

This, according to a writer in Chamber's Encyclopaedia, was "the ever memorable 24th May, 1738, when Methodism as history knows it was born. The decisive moment is described in his (Wesley's) Journal.

What a pity that John Wesley did not continue to study Luther's writings. He would then have been an even greater blessing to his country and to the world than he actually was.

so evil that they neither thank Him nor honor Him, but inflict blindness on themselves and without ceasing fall into worse evils, until, after practising idolatry, they commit, without shame, most abominable sins and every vice, and, moreover, do not rebuke them in others.

“In the second chapter this punishment is still further extended, so as to embrace those who are outwardly pious or sin in secret. Of this class were the Jews, and are all hypocrites to-day, who lead a good and honest life **without real love for it**, because at heart they are enemies of God's Law. Yet they are ready to pass judgment on other people, as is the manner of all hypocrites, so as to esteem themselves pure, while they are full of avarice, hatred, pride and all vileness. Matth. 23, 25. These are the very people who despise the goodness of God and heap up wrath for themselves because of their hardness. Thus Paul, as a true expounder of the Law, **does not suffer any one to pass for a sinless person**, but denounces the wrath of God upon all who would lead a good life by their natural strength or free will. He does not suffer them to pass for anything better than **manifest sinners**; yea, he tells them that they are hard-hearted and impenitent.

“In the third chapter the apostle casts them all on the same scrap heap, saying that one is no better than the other, and all of them are sinners in the sight of God. The only difference is that the Jews have had the Word of God, though many of them did not believe it. . . . Incidentally, the apostle introduces the passage from Ps. 51, 4, which declares that God is righteous whenever He judges. This point he takes up again in what follows and proves by Scripture that **all are sinners**, and **no one is justified by the deeds of the Law**,



but that the Law has been given only that man might know sin.

“As regards ‘sin,’ by this term Scripture denominates not only the external work of the body, but every movement and incitement to some external work that takes place in the inmost heart and all its powers. . . . Scripture takes particular notice of the heart and of the root and main source of all sins, which is unbelief in the inmost heart.” (1.)

That is precisely what the Law does and what God meant it to do. It lays bare the roots of sin; it traces all sin to its source, which is hidden deep down in the heart of man, and which in its real nature is unbelief. This unbelief, however, is not merely a certain indifference concerning God and His Word, but it is an energetic opposition, an active enmity, against God. This opposition and this enmity are increased by the proper preaching of the Law, which has the power to bring to man’s consciousness his actual inward condition of heart and mind. Man hates to be found out, to be humbled, to be made to appear a miserable pauper in his own eyes. He hates to be reminded of a debt towards God that he knows he cannot pay; that he does not desire to pay. He hates to be shown up in his own conscience as a selfish, proud, greedy, vile sinner, especially if he is particularly careful in leading an outwardly very respectable life. He hates the Law of God, because it disturbs his self-complacency, takes away his self-esteem. Face to face with the mirror

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(1.) Luther’s Complete Writings, St. Louis Edition, vol. 14, columns 94-109, translated by Prof. W. H. T. Dau, D.D., in the “Theological Monthly,” vol. iv., pp. 321—336. The **Black Type** is the author’s.

of the Law, he feels inclined to smash the mirror that tells him the truth concerning himself, and to do battle with that God who knows his thoughts afar off, and who pays no attention to any of his outward merits and deserts or his good standing among his fellowmen; who is no respecter of persons, and is not deceived by appearances. And the more a man's anger rises against that Law, which will not let him rest, the more that same Law continues to make its unchangeable and holy demands. The more bitter his enmity and the more violent his opposition against God, the more immovable, stern, and threatening stands the Law of God, saying, "Thou shalt be holy, as I am holy." And thus man is so far from becoming better through the Law, that he actually grows worse; the sin in his nature grows more powerful through active opposition to God. The real condition of his soul, namely, his hidden enmity against God, is brought out into the sinner's consciousness and only too often finds vent in words directed in the first instance against the preacher of the Law.

Referring to the seventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Luther, in the Preface above referred to, has these words: "The Apostle expands his teaching concerning sins and the Law, and shows how sin begins to become quite active and grow powerful through the Law. For the old man becomes more incensed against the Law, because he cannot pay what the Law demands. For sin is his nature, and of himself he cannot but sin. Therefore the Law is his instrument of death and inflicts on him all manner of torment. Not that the Law is evil, but the person's evil nature cannot tolerate what is good, and that good is required of him, just as a sick person cannot bear that people

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ask him to run and leap like a hale person."

"St. Paul, then, in this Epistle, draws the conclusion that the Law, when correctly understood and fully comprehended, accomplishes no more than this, that it brings our sins to our remembrance, and makes us subject to the wrath everlasting." "By the law is the knowledge of sin." That is the chief use of the Law. And it is of the utmost importance that this fact be brought home to the minds and hearts of men, and that not only outside of the visible church, but within it. There can be no manner of reasonable doubt that within the visible church there are thousands upon thousands, both in the pulpit and in the pew, who have no adequate knowledge of the chief use of the Law. They imagine that the Law was given for the purpose of teaching them how to become good, whereas it teaches men how bad they are, and makes them worse and worse, that is, it brings out more and more the evil that is really in them and leaves them absolutely helpless, battered and torn, like a vessel tossed by an angry sea on to a rock-bound coast.

In our own circles one not seldom meets with people who seem to have no idea of this second and chief use of the Law. They want their minister to preach more Law, in order to improve conditions within his congregation. As though the preaching of the Law could in any way raise the standard of Christian life! You might, with equal wisdom, keep on telling a sick person how very sick he is, and how his malady appears to be quite incurable, and expect by such means to cure that person. Man is sick, very sick, sick even unto death. As far as any human help is concerned, his sickness is incurable. The sickness of sin has

corrupted and poisoned his whole being. He is conceived and born in sin. Left to himself he lives in sin all his days. He is by nature sold under sin, is a slave of sin, with the chains of slavery rivetted so fast that no power on earth can break them. That is what the Law tells him. It says to him, "You are incurably sick," but it makes no attempt to cure him. It cannot. The Law tells the sinner, "You are a slave to sin and the wages she pays you is death," but it makes no effort to set him free from that slavery. It cannot. A mirror shows a man the dirt spots on his face, but it cannot wash him clean; it shows him his ugliness, but it cannot make him handsome or beautiful; it reveals to him his wrinkles and grey hairs, but it cannot smoothe out the wrinkles, or give back to the hair the color of youth. No, the Law cannot make man or woman or child more acceptable to God than it finds them. On the contrary, the more they become conscious of their true condition as revealed to them by the Law, the more marked and emphatic will become their enmity against both the Law and Him that gave it. "This," says Dr. Luther, "is well learned by the experience of our conscience when it has been fully smitten by the Law, and we find out that we must have something else, something better than the Law, to make us godly, and to save us. But those who do not understand the Law correctly are blind. They strut about in their conceit and imagine that they can satisfy the Law by their works. For they do not know how much the Law demands, namely, a willing, cheerful heart. They do not look Moses straight in the eye; the veil is before them, and the meaning of the Law

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is hidden from them." (1).

Alas, that so many among those who bear the name of Christ should fail to "look Moses straight in the eye"; that so many look into the mirror of the Law under the veil of their self-righteousness, so that what they see is not their true condition before God but their own miserable respectability. They argue something like this: "The Law says, 'Thou shalt not steal.' Very well, I have not stolen anything; I am no thief; I dare anyone to call me a thief. I have a name for honesty and trustworthiness in all matters of money and business. I thank thee, Lord, that I am no thief, and I am sure Thou wilt remember this fact in my favor on the day of final reckoning." And so with each demand of the Law. Instead of seeing what the Law would show them: their own shortcomings, their selfish hearts, their shame and vileness in the eyes of the holy God, they find in every commandment a cause for self-congratulation and new food for their foolish pride, because they find that outwardly they are so much better than many others of their acquaintance.

They are like the rich young man who came to our Saviour and said unto Him, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life." The Lord's answer was: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." He said unto him, Which? Jesus said: Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, **All these things have I kept**

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(1.) Luther's Preface to Romans. See above.

from my youth up. What lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. Matth. 19, 16-22. This poor blind Pharisee actually believed and boldly and with pride told the Lord to His face that from his youth up he had kept the commandments, that he had loved his neighbour as himself. But the Saviour soon punctured that pride by applying a very simple test according to the spiritual meaning of the Law. "If you really love your neighbour as yourself," says the Lord in effect, "then sell all you have and give the proceeds to the poor. Show that you love your poor fellow-men more than your material possessions. Do unto the poor what you would desire the rich to do to you, if you were poor. Prove your love by cheerfully sacrificing for your poor neighbour's benefit that which you hold dear, your worldly possessions." And lo and behold! at once his inner man stood revealed; his selfish, unloving heart was laid bare; his hypocrisy brought to light. "He went away sorrowful." He would not part with his possessions. He loved these more than the poor who were so much in need of them. And so this young man disappears from the sacred history, a dark figure, a hypocrite unmasked, an example and a warning for all those among us who refuse to "look Moses straight in the eye" and who use the Law of God as a means for their own glorification rather than as a mirror in which they may see their sinfulness. God's holy Law being unchangeable, He cannot lower its standard to suit the sinner's convenience; He cannot change its demands so as to

make them acceptable to those who are by nature His enemies. Rom. 5, 10. On the contrary, man's attitude towards the Law must be changed. He must learn to "look Moses straight in the eye;" must learn to acknowledge that God is in the right and that he himself is in the wrong; must learn to confess with David; "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight that thou mightest be justified, when thou speakest and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Ps. 51, 3-6.

This second use of the Law, namely that of a mirror revealing to man his inner sinful condition and utter inability to please God, is very forcefully illustrated in the early life of our dear Dr. Martin Luther. He renounced the world, its pleasures, profits, and honours, and became a monk, in the mistaken belief, that he could by so doing please God and be at rest. But the Law demanded more than such outward acts of self-chosen service and would not let him rest. He practised monkish obedience to the full satisfaction of his superiors; but he soon found that he could not thereby satisfy the spiritual demands of God's holy Law. He fasted oftener and longer than the rules of his order required, so that he fainted and was nigh unto death; but he could not by such means drive sin out of his heart. He tormented himself by self-inflicted bodily pain, in order to keep in subjection the lusts and passions of his sinful nature; but however exemplary and saintly his life might appear to the other members of his order and to

the world beyond the cloister walls; however earnestly and sincerely and persistently he might strive to fulfil the Law and so find peace with God: it was all in vain. The Law would still point out to him that he remained a sinner; because he had not **fully** complied with its holy and searching demands; because he had not loved God with **all** his heart and mind and soul, and his neighbour **as himself**; because there still remained in his heart evil desires and tendencies, secret murmurings against God and hidden stirrings of pride and selfishness and many other sins. His experience with the Law brought him to a position which is summed up in his own words as follows: "It is a great hill and you must get over it," says the Law; "I will get over the hill," says presumption; "You cannot," says conscience; "Then I will leave it alone," answers despair.

That is what the Law, when correctly used as a mirror, does for every sinner that unflinchingly looks into it with open eyes—it drives him to despair. It is like a physician who carefully diagnoses a patient's disease, finds that it is incurable, tells him so, and departs. It reveals the disease, but it provides no cure. It declares man a debtor, but furnishes not a penny with which he may even so much as begin to pay his debt. It shows man the deep and wide gulf that yawns between him and his God, but it builds no bridge by which that gulf may be crossed. It continues to make its just demands, but it gives no power to fulfil them. It demands perfect love, but it cannot put love into the heart.

All this and much more is contained in the words of St. Paul, Romans 3, 19-20, where we read: "Now we know that what things even the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law: that **every mouth** may be



stopped (i.e. from self-righteous boasting) and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." After the Fall all men are guilty before God and cannot by any possible means free themselves from this guilt. But at best they do not realize the extent of their guilt, unless they are told again and again what it is that God demands of them, if they are to be acceptable in his sight. From the Law\*they all are to learn that there is no room whatever for boasting of their own righteousness. "There is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3, 22, 23. "Both Jews and Gentiles, they are all under sin." Rom. 3, 9. The Pharisee as well as the Publican; the most respectable and virtuous and the most criminal and profligate; the holy martyrs who suffered bitter pain and shed their life-blood in the cause of Jesus Christ, and the enemies of God and His saving truth, who tortured them to death—all are guilty before God, when judged by the standard of His Holy Law. From that fatal hour, when Adam fell into sin, to the very last day of this present world's sin-cursed history, there never was nor is nor will be any one single human being that could by his own efforts satisfy the demands of God's Law and thus stand in His holy presence by virtue of his own righteousness. They are all guilty, that is, they are all under condemnation, deserving of and liable to punishment at the hands of Him whose Law they have broken and whose sovereign majesty they have offended.

And that is the last word the Law has to say to the sinner. It leaves him with the threat of divine retribution upon his soul. It tells him, you are a child

of wrath. Eph. 2, 3. It says to him, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them." Gal. 3, 10. It makes him tremble and shudder at the awful words: "The wages of sin is death:" temporal death, spiritual death, eternal death. Rom. 6, 23. Thus the Law leaves no loop-hole for the sinner's escape from eternal justice; it leaves no hope of any deliverance from his desperate condition. Those sinners who through looking straight into the mirror of the Law have come to realize this condition of their souls, either give way to despair or become recklessly defiant of God and dare Him to do His worst. They have no hope in this world and no hope concerning the next. Their life's little day will soon be done, and eternal night and despair and pain will close in upon them, if they are left to their own devices and no helping hand is stretched out from heaven itself to snatch them from their doom.

But thanks and praise, and adoration be to God, who has found a way to preserve inviolate His holiness, justice, and righteousness, and yet, at the same time, to save the sinner from his well-merited punishment. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5, 21. But this is a Gospel message, and before we enter upon the treatment of the Gospel, we must first say a few words concerning the third use of the Law.

### 3.—THE LAW AS A RULE OF LIFE.

Concerning this use of the Law, which pertains only to believers in Christ, our Confessions have the following pertinent and clear words: "Although the truly believing are verily moved by God's holy Spirit,

and thus, according to the inner man, do God's will from a free spirit, yet it is just the Holy Ghost who uses the written law for instruction with them, by which the truly believing also learn to serve God, not according to their own thoughts, but according to His written Law and Word, which is a sure rule and standard of a godly life and walk, how to order it in accordance with the external and immutable will of God. . . . We unanimously believe, teach, and confess that although the truly believing and truly converted to God and justified Christians are liberated from the curse of the Law, yet they should daily exercise themselves in the Law of the Lord, as it is written, Ps. 1, 2.: **Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law doth he meditate day and night.** For the Law is a mirror in which the will of God, and what pleases Him, are exactly portrayed, and which should be constantly held up to the believers and be diligently urged upon them without ceasing." Triglotta, 963, 3. 4. The word "mirror" is used here inasmuch as the Law not only brings us to a knowledge of our sins, but also shows us the will of our heavenly Father concerning a truly Christian life. The true believer is not emancipated from the jurisdiction of the Law. He does not say, "I am now no longer in duty bound to obey the Law, but live as I like and do as I please," as a child of God he is liberated, through faith in Christ, from the constraint, coercion, and curse of the Law, but by virtue of the very fact that he is no longer a slave under the Law as cruel taskmaster, but a child of his heavenly Father, by virtue of this blessed fact, we say, he is now willing and eager to know his Father's will and to walk by the rule that He has once for all laid down in His unchangeable and eternal Law. This Law

itself is not changed and much less abolished; but the reconciled sinner's attitude towards it is changed in such a degree that whereas before his conversion to God he hated the holy Law, with its spiritual, searching demands, he now loves it and delights himself in it. It is now the one great desire of his life according to the Spirit, to succeed more and more in fulfilling the Law; to approach nearer and nearer to that standard of a righteous life which is to be found in God's Law. The true Christian says with David: "Blessed art thou, O Lord; teach me thy statutes. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes. I will not forget thy Word. I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Give me understanding, and I shall keep the Law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved. And I will walk at liberty; for I seek thy precepts." Ps. 119, 1—48. Yes, to "walk at liberty," to be truly free, is possible only inasmuch as we shape and order our whole life according to the rule of God's holy Law. The liberty of the children of God consists not in license, but in willing and cheerful obedience to the precepts of their heavenly Father. To this liberty, however, no one can attain except by means of the Gospel. Therefore before we further describe the Christian life, in which God's Law is the rule and standard of conduct, we must first give our full and undivided attention to the Gospel. To this let us now direct our minds.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE GOSPEL IN GENERAL.

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It is necessary that at the outset we bear in mind that the term Gospel is not always employed and understood in one and the same sense, but in two ways, in the Holy Scriptures, as also by ancient and modern church-teachers. For sometimes it is employed so that there is understood by it the entire doctrine of Christ, our Lord, which He proclaimed in his ministry upon earth, and commanded to be proclaimed in the New Testament, and hence comprised in it the explanation of the Law and the proclamation of the favor and grace of God, His heavenly Father, as it is written, Mark 1, 1: **The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.** And shortly afterwards the chief heads are stated: **Repentance and forgiveness of sins.** Thus when Christ after His resurrection commands the apostles to **preach the Gospel in all the world,** Mark 16, 15, He compressed the sum of the doctrine into a few words, when He said, Luke 24, 46. 47: **Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations.** So Paul, too, calls his entire doctrine the Gospel, Acts 20, 21; but he embraces the sum of this doctrine under the two heads: **Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus** And in this sense . . . . the description of the word Gospel, when employed in a wide sense and without the

proper distinction between the Law and the Gospel, is correct, when it is said that the Gospel is preaching of repentance and the remission of sins. For John, Christ, and the apostles began their preaching with repentance, and explained and urged not only the gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins, but also the Law of God. Furthermore the term **Gospel** is employed in another, namely in its proper sense, by which it comprises not the preaching of repentance, but **only** the preaching of the grace of God, as follows directly afterwards, Mark 1, 15; where Christ says: "**Repent, and believe the Gospel.**" Triglotta, p. 953. (1).

To prevent all possible misunderstanding, let it be borne in mind that in the following chapters, in which we treat of the Gospel, we intend to employ that much abused word in its strict and proper sense, in that sense in which, for instance, it is used by the angel of the Lord, who announced to the bewildered and terror-stricken shepherds the Saviour's birth in those well-known and beautiful words: Behold, I bring you **good tidings of great joy**, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a **Saviour**, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2, 10. 11. Good tidings, good news, a joyful message of a great deliverance and a glorious hope, that is the Gospel in the proper sense of the term. "**It is the glad tidings of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.**" It is the earnest offer of a full and free pardon that the Judge of heaven and earth Himself makes to lost and condemned sinners. It is the **announcement of God's reconciliation** to a sinful and rebellious race, a reconciliation brought about by the loving sacrifice of His only-begotten Son. It is a **divine proclamation of peace**

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1.—The heavier letters are our own.—G.C.K.

between God and man, a peace that has been purchased by the bitter suffering and ignominious death of the Lord's Anointed. It is a word of heavenly consolation to the weary and heavy-laden, who by faith have learnt to lay their heads on Jesus' bosom and there have found their rest. It is the heavenly Father's sure promise of eternal bliss and glory, and they who trust in it shall never more be put to shame.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is the most valuable treasure that the sons and daughters of Adam can ever have in this world. Nothing on earth can even so much as compare with it in its vital importance for human welfare, both for time and for eternity. A somewhat detailed study of the Gospel will, therefore, well repay our efforts. All time spent with the Gospel is temporal and eternal gain.

What we desire to say concerning the Gospel in general may be dealt with under three heads, of which the first is as follows:

1.—THE GOSPEL IS NOT A NATURAL  
ENDOWMENT OF MAN.

Of the Gospel we know nothing by nature. In this respect the Gospel differs in a very marked manner from the Law, which, though much obscured by sin, is by nature known to all men. The unconverted, though they are "strangers from the covenants of promise and without Christ, having no hope and being without God in the world" (Eph. 2, 12), nevertheless do by nature the things contained in the Law and show the Law written in their hearts. Rom. 2, 14. 15. And when the written Law of God, given through Moses, is preached to them, they recognise familiar traits, and their conscience assents, more or less readily to the claims of

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that Law. This does not imply that man by nature knows all the demands of God's holy Law or understands its deep spiritual meaning; but he does know something of it and fairly well understands that by that Law written in his heart he is called upon to do something that he has often neglected to do, and to abstain from doing what he has often done, and is very prone to continue doing in the future. But of the Gospel man can by nature know nothing whatever. It is not written in his heart. It is no natural endowment, no gift or talent that he brings with him into this world. From his earliest childhood to his ripe old age, his own heart and conscience never tell him anything whatever of the sweet and comforting Gospel message. And it matters not in the least whether a person be ignorant or learned; foolish or wise; a mere savage or a highly cultured man: the knowledge of salvation, through the atoning blood of God's own Son, does not come to him from within, does not rise to his consciousness from the dark deep of his own soul. By nature in man there is not the slightest indication of the faintest glimmer of Gospel light; not the minutest possible germ from which any Gospel knowledge might develop. For "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." I. Cor. 2, 9. The Gospel is "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations." Col. 1, 26. It was hidden, not in the hearts of men, lying sleeping there until some great seer should come to wake it, and make men see the treasure they all the time had within themselves; no indeed, but it was "hid" in God's own mind and heart, and no human soul could know anything about it, unless it was the



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pleasure of God to make it known. But could not at least some few choice spirits, some deep and keen thinkers get near enough to the "mystery" to see some faint ray of Gospel light? Have all the efforts of the best and wisest of men to get at the heart of God been quite in vain? Yes, quite and hopelessly in vain! For

### 2.—THE GOSPEL IS NOT AN INVENTION OF HUMAN THOUGHT.

The great and wonderful truth that we poor sinners have been reconciled to God by the death of His only-begotten Son, has never come to any man from any efforts of human thought. No amount of human thinking, however deep and keen and honest, could ever bring to light one grain of Gospel truth. If all the highest thinking powers of all the strongest and keenest and noblest minds of all the ages were focussed on this one question: "How can a troubled conscience find peace with God and face His judgment without fear?" they would not be able to produce an answer that could bear the test in the hour of death. In other words: Their answer would contain no Gospel comfort and no Gospel hope.

Man is by nature a religious being, it is true. He has some natural knowledge of God. St. Paul distinctly tells us that the Gentiles knew God, that is, from creation or the book of nature. Rom. I, 21. Besides this, the natural moral Law, written in man's heart, and his conscience accusing him of having transgressed that Law, give him some idea, however vague and distorted, of One who has put that Law into his heart and endowed him with a conscience, and who has both the will and the power to punish those who have transgressed that Law. On this natural knowledge

of God all non-Christian religions are built up. But all this has nothing to do with the Gospel.

Many wise and great men have labored hard and long, to give to the world what they considered the truth concerning God and man. They tried to solve the deep problems of life and death; of the origin and the nature of evil and of good; of wrongdoing and its punishment; of virtue and her rewards; of the immortality of the soul, its endless misery or its abiding happiness. But in their deepest meditations, in their highest and noblest thoughts, they never once came near to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus; not even a passing gleam of Gospel light ever lit up for a single moment the black darkness of their spiritual night. With all their keenest searchings they found not Him, "who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." I. Cor. 1-31. The "master-builders" of all the ages have never found that cornerstone of whom we read in Holy Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded." I. Pet. 1, 6. Many different ways to heaven and rest did as many different religious thinkers or dreamers point out to their fellow-travellers here below, each fondly imagining and boldly teaching that his way was the best way, the only way. But they always missed **The Way**, who with divine authority has said to us and is still saying to all who will hear Him: "**I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.**" John 14, 6. From age to age men have erected ladders, by means of which they attempted to scale the heights of heaven, where God dwells shrouded in mystery; to storm, as it were, the

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fortress of heaven and to wrest from the very mind and heart of God those secrets that lay hidden there. But one by one those ladders have come crashing back again to earth; for they had no contact with the heights above, and the ground upon which they stood was shifting sand. They were ladders poised in the air, reaching nowhere and resting on nothing but vain thoughts and idle fancies.

Page upon page might be filled with quotations from the writings of both ancient and modern times to prove the sad truth of these statements, but it is not necessary. We Christians have conclusive proof in Holy Writ. St. Paul sums it all up when he says: "The world by wisdom knew not God." 1. Cor. 1, 21. That is, the world knew not God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the God of pardoning grace and tender mercy in His own dear Son. When the risen Lord gives to the great apostle His divine commission to go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, he does not tell him to go and improve their religion, to give them a clearer conception of divine saving truth than they already had, or to increase the brightness of the light already shining in their hearts and lives. No, he is sent by His Lord "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus Christ." Acts 26, 18.

The great force of these words will be better realised, if we bear in mind that St. Paul labored chiefly among the Greeks, who were no ignorant, boorish barbarians, but a very highly civilised people. J. Murray Mitchell, M.A., L.L.D., has this to say concerning the intel-

lectual status of the Greeks: "We must not forget that many of the highest attainments of the human mind were made long ago. Thus Egypt and the East handed over the sculpture, architecture and other arts to Greece, and there they rapidly attained an excellence which has not been equalled in the lapse of two thousand years. Again, the poetry of Homer, the oratory of Demosthenes, the speculative power of Aristotle and Plato; are not these still unequalled, or at all events unsurpassed? In intellect, imagination, taste, the Greeks, we venture to say, have excelled all other races. They were inventive, too; but their originality was controlled by an exquisite sense of fitness, proportion, harmony.

The continuous progress of art and science, then is purely imaginary. Knowledge has increased; intellect has not. It was of yore that genius plumed her pinions for her highest flight; and succeeding generations have gazed enviously upward as they have seen her

Sailing with supreme dominion,  
Through the azure deep of air.

In other words, Almighty God was pleased to impart to the ancient Greeks more of inventive and reasoning power, and a more accurate perception of the beautiful, than to any other race. Nor does it appear probable that any future generation will surpass, or even equal them in the higher intellectual endowments." (1).

It is into this bright and intelligent world of ancient Greek civilisation that the Lord sends His apostle with His Gospel of a crucified Redeemer. Of this people, no less than of the most ignorant and uncouth barbarians and savages, the Lord says that the

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(1.) "Christianity and Ancient Paganism," in "Present Day Tracts (Non-Christian Religions)," pp. 13 and 14.

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apostle is by the preaching of the Gospel "to open their eyes." He is to **open** their eyes because they are closed to the great and vital truth of forgiveness of sins; because they are ignorant of a sinner's way to a happy life, a peaceful death and eternal joy, honor, and glory beyond. This highly-gifted people, who lived mostly under sunny skies, their beautiful marble temples gleaming white in the dry, transparent air; statues of their many gods and goddesses meeting their gaze at every turn, in garden, grove, and market place—this people the apostle is commanded, by his Lord to **turn**, by his Gospel preaching "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

And if someone should here raise the objection that the Greeks of St. Paul's time were a degenerate people, and that when the apostle came upon the scene with his Gospel of Christ crucified, the glory of Greece had long since vanished, we answer: Very true. But this same degenerate people was still the most intellectual people of St. Paul's day. The proud Romans had conquered Greece by the power of arms, but the Greeks had in turn conquered Rome by their superior power of intellect. In St. Paul's day, Greece was the teacher of the Roman Empire, of the world. And if of original Greek thinkers there were comparatively few, yet the rich heritage of a glorious past was at their disposal. Homer and Demosthenes, Aristotle and Plato and many others were not forgotten, but zealously studied by the leading minds of the age. But it was a restless and sceptical age. Men had not found satisfaction in even the highest products of the Greek mind. The most serious men and women of the time could find no peace of mind, no rest for an accusing conscience,

no true comfort in bereavement, and no living hope in the hour of death, simply because there was no Gospel truth in all the writings of the greatest Greek teachers. They all left a painful void, which nothing but the peace of God can fill, and "the peace of God which passeth understanding," is offered to men in the Gospel of Christ crucified alone, in that Gospel, which is not an invention of human thought, even though that thought be positively the very highest that earth will ever know.

Passing through the precincts of Columbia University of New York City some four years ago, our attention was arrested and our interest aroused by a Latin inscription over the chief entrance to the chapel of the university. The words that met our gaze, and are indelibly impressed on our mind were these: *In Lumine Tuo Videbimus Lumen*, that is, "In Thy light shall we see light." Ps. 36, 9. They are the words that the reader will find on the front cover of this book. The "Light" referred to by the Psalmist is none other than God's blessed Gospel light, which comes into the mind neither by the study of the old Greek writers nor by the pursuit of modern literature, science or art, but which comes from God in His Gospel message and in no other way. Of the many thousands of ardent young minds, who in that great American university are pursuing their studies, how few, after all, will stop to ponder over those words above the chapel door! And of those who do meditate upon that brief but very great sentence, how many will understand and rejoice at its meaning? Not very many, we fear. The inscription that seems to us the most appropriate for being placed in large and flaming letters over the portals of most modern halls of learning, is that well-known line

from the great Italian poet Dante:

"All hope abandon ye who enter here."

For as far as the majority of our much vaunted modern schools of higher learning are concerned, they impart no light of life, and hope, no Gospel light to those who enter them with high hopes and great expectations. On the contrary, very many young people, in a comparatively short time, there lost whatever Gospel light they had in their hearts, when they entered those halls of "enlightenment." The human mind does not take kindly to the Gospel, which is so far from being an invention of human thought that when placed in all its wondrous truth and beauty before the human mind, it receives a very cold welcome. That is quite natural, and those who believe in the Gospel and also know something of the limitations and the pride of the human mind are not at all surprised, when people of very high intellectual power and attainments receive the Gospel message with a superior smile of ill-concealed contempt. The Gospel is something quite alien to them. It does not fit into their scheme of things. It claims to have solved the riddles that the proud unregenerate thinker is grappling with. If the Gospel is true, which he does not admit, then he appears very foolish in trying to solve problems of which even a Christian child by simple faith in the Gospel holds the infallibly correct solution; for the child simply believes Him who knows perfectly and from eternity what in the Bible He tells the child, whereas the wise man of this world ignores Scripture, acts as though there were no Calvary, no open grave, no Ascension and no Pentecost.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is no invention of

human thought. This truth is borne in upon our minds from day to day, as we come into contact with men and women and children, or as we read what great non-Christian thinkers and other writers have to say concerning the Gospel. There is in the mind of natural man absolutely no favorable response to the Gospel message. Men show by their attitude towards it that it is a foreign article, a message that sounds more strange to them than any unknown foreign language, a doctrine towards which they at once entertain and often show a feeling of antagonism. And it seems necessary to repeat what in other words we have said before, that no secular education, however thorough and advanced, no merely intellectual culture, however deep and genuine, can in any way prepare a sinner for the acceptance of the Gospel. To the Greeks of old the gospel was "foolishness," and it is "foolishness to the 'Greeks'" of to-day, that is, to those very people who pride themselves on their education and culture and worldly wisdom and social standing, and who condescendingly look upon the preaching of the Gospel as perhaps useful for the unthinking and uncultured masses, to give them some support and comfort in living and dying. But they themselves, the educated, the worldly wise, need no such help. They are above the use of such "crutches." They can very well stand on their own feet. They are very proud, these people. It cannot, of course, be otherwise; for they are in Satan's power, who has blinded them that they cannot see the light of the glorious Gospel, even when it is shining in noon-day brightness right before their very eyes. They make much of reason, **their** reason. By their own reasoning powers, which at best are very



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limited, and in every case weakened and corrupted by sin, with these their own puny, debased and perverted reasoning powers, they dare to measure and weigh and judge the eternal Gospel of God's redeeming Love. Deeming themselves wise, they are such great and absurd fools as to pit their own folly against the infinite wisdom of Almighty God, who has found and prepared the best way, the only way, the Gospel way, to save sinful men from sin and death and Satan's power, and to raise them from their grievous fall and hopeless condition to heavenly bliss and eternal glory.

In St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, second chapter, fourteenth verse, we read the following remarkable words: "The natural man," that is man as he is by nature, in his unconverted state, before he has become a truly believing Christian, "**natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither indeed can he know them,**" that is, of himself and by his own intellectual powers. And which are these things of the Spirit of God that natural man does not receive or accept, and that are to him foolishness. They are the Gospel of Christ, the preaching of the Cross, and all that is implied in such preachings. These things the natural man does not accept and cannot know or understand in their true and spiritual meaning, even when they are put before him in the simplest possible words, and in a language that is wellknown to him. This word of the holy apostle concerning the natural man and his attitude towards the Gospel is another of the many infallible proofs that the Gospel is not, cannot be, an invention of human thought.

This wisdom of the Most High, the Gospel of

Christ, which by the way of the "cross on which the Lord of glory died," can and does lead the vilest of sinners to an eternal crown; this truly heavenly and adorable wisdom of a gracious and loving God, the natural man considers foolishness! So it was in the day of St. Paul, and so it is to-day. Natural man will never, no, if he lived a million years, make any progress towards the appreciation and acceptance of the Gospel. On the contrary, he will always, in all lands and under all circumstances, look upon it as "foolishness." As far as the Gospel is concerned, natural man will at all times and in all places be a member of the "opposition," and this "opposition" will, contrary to parliamentary usage, always have a very considerable majority. No, this fallen race of sinners, who are by nature, one and all, Jews as well as Gentiles, in spiritual darkness and death, bondslaves of Satan and enemies of God, this fallen race of sinners is not the ground from which the Gospel sprang.

Jews as well as Gentiles did we say? Yes, for the Jews were by nature not any nearer to God and His eternal counsel, of salvation than any other people. They did not choose God, but God, of His own free grace, chose them to be His peculiar people and made them the depositaries and guardians of His Word, both Law and Gospel; for there is in the Old Testament very much precious Gospel as well as Law. No, the Gospel was not a natural endowment of the Jewish mind, nor was it an invention of Jewish thought. The talk that we sometimes hear about the religious genius of the Jewish people, is idle talk and vain imagination of men who will not see the simple truth, though it stare them in the face.

When did the Jewish people manifest their so-called superior religious genius and prove themselves fit

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to be considered the inventors and founders of the true religion, in which the Gospel is the essential feature? Was it when they, with ungrateful heart, forsook the service of the one true God, who had, of his own sovereign grace, chosen them from among the nations of the earth, and led them forth out of Egypt with a mighty arm—when they forsook Him, we say, and worshipped the golden calf, the man-made image of a four-footed brute? Or was it, when in defiance of their God, who had so often pardoned their grievous sins, they placed heathen idols in the very temple of Jehovah on the Holy Mount and down below, in the valley of Hirmon, just beyond the city wall, they let their own sons and daughters pass through the fire to Moloch, sacrificing them to a horrible heathen god in a manner most cruel and inhuman?

To anyone who is at all familiar with the history of Israel and Judah, as we have it in the Old Testament and to some extent in the New Testament it must be clearly evident that by nature they were ever a disobedient, stiffnecked, rebellious, blacksliding people, whose natural leanings were always from the one true God towards the gods of the heathen nations, near whose borders they dwelt. Thus when Moses had run his course and was about to be “gathered to his fathers,” the Lord said to him: “This people will rise up, and go a-whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break My covenant which I have made with them. When I shall have brought them unto the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey, and they shall have eaten and filled themselves and waxen fat; then they will turn unto other gods, and serve them,

and provoke Me, and break My covenant. I know their imagination, which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear," Deut. 31, 16. 20. 21.

All the subsequent history of Israel is a sad fulfilment of these words of the Lord. About seven hundred years after the time of Moses, the Lord, through the prophet Isaiah, gives voice to the following very touching complaint concerning His people: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One to anger, they are gone away backward." Is. 1, 2-4. And more than a hundred years later, the Lord, through the prophet Jeremiah, breaks out in a similar strain, saying: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, said the Lord. For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." Jer. 2, 12. 13. By the broken cisterns are meant the lifeless idols of the heathen nations. These dumb idols the people of Israel had chosen to be their gods, saying to a stock, Thou art my father, and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth. Jer. 2, 27. "But," continues the prophet, "where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? Let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble, for according to the number of

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thy cities are thy gods, O Judah. . . . Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number." Jer. 2, 28, 32.

No indeed, from the backsliding, idolatrous hearts of this people could never have come the knowledge of the one true God, and much less the knowledge of the Gospel, in which God reveals His inmost heart, His great love for sinners, and His plan of saving them. Concerning this point Dr. Mitchell, whom we quoted (p. 110) in reference to the Greeks, makes the following very pertinent remarks: "We have no right to suppose that in original temperament or character, the Hebrews differed radically from their brethren (the "seven nations of Canaan mentioned in the Pentateuch as all alike sunk in the depths of moral corruption.") By what conceivable process, then of natural evolution could their religion arise."

We answer confidently and with great assurance: By no "process of natural evolution" did the religion of Israel arise; from no qualities of heart or powers of mind that this people ever possessed, did the Gospel of God's saving grace take even so much as a shadow of a beginning. But, on the contrary, when at last, in the fulness of time, God sent the promised One into their midst, they recognised Him not. He came into His own, and His own received Him not. John 1, 11. They delivered Him up and denied Him in the presence of Pilate, when he (the heathen judge) was determined to let Him go. They denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer (Barabbas) to be granted unto them, and they killed the Prince of Life. Acts 3, 13-15. They stoned His faithful witness, Stephen, and persecuted, with deadly hatred, the greatest

banner-bearer of the Gospel—St. Paul. For nearly two thousand years they have persistently rejected the crucified Redeemer and heaped curses on the blessed name of Jesus. They are still looking forward to the appearing of a Messiah according to the desire of their own carnal hearts, a Messiah who will never come. But the true Messiah, David's son and David's Lord, the Saviour of the world, will come again in great power and glory as the Judge of the world. And then the whole Jewish race will at last have to bend the knee before the name of Jesus, and confess, though unwillingly, that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2, 11.

“Salvation is of the Jews.” This word of our Lord, spoken to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, is most certainly true, but not in the naturalistic sense, as though the Gospel of salvation were a natural outcome of the Jewish heart and mind. Salvation is of the Jews, because God in His wisdom and grace gave them the Gospel message by supernatural revelation. This is the point we shall now consider.

### 3.—THE GOSPEL IS A SUPERNATURAL REVELATION OF GOD TO MAN.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, the “Lamb of God for sinners slain,” the glad tidings of forgiveness of sins in His atoning blood, was a deep mystery, a profound secret hid in the heart of God Himself, long before the foundation of the world. Eph. 1, 4; I. Pet. 1, 20. Adam before the fall knew nothing of it, and Adam after the fall had no inkling of any such thing. He knew that he had sinned and cowered in slavish fear under the wrath of his Creator. Immediately upon his fall into sin, the threat of God had taken

effect, and death, spiritual death, separation from God, had possessed his soul and held him in its grip. He knew of no way of ever coming back into the sweet communion with God which sin had destroyed. And so it was with all his descendants, as we have seen in the previous section of this chapter. It was God Himself who in His Love and Mercy lifted the veil from the mystery; it was He who of His own free and gracious will revealed the great secret of salvation to our fallen race. And He revealed it in His own way, a way that has often been found fault with on the part of His sinful and foolish children, but to which, as to all ways of God, will ever apply the great word that He spoke through Isaiah long ago: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Is. 55, 9. Thus the foolish question has often been asked, why God did not give us all at once a full revelation of the Gospel. But He in His higher wisdom and deeper knowledge has thought best to reveal it gradually, by progressive stages, through the course of many centuries. And we may rest assured that this way was the best way. Others, again, have wondered why God waited so long, before He had the Gospel message brought to the Gentile world, but kept the knowledge of His saving truth confined to His chosen, but so sadly ungrateful, people of Israel. To this question we know no better answer than the one given by our Lord to Peter on that last night before his crucifixion: "What I do thou knowest not now; -but -thou shalt know hereafter." John 13, 7. It is a remarkable thing, is it not? that so many people busy themselves about what the Lord their God did not reveal, instead of giving their

full and prayerful attention to what He did actually in His goodness think wise to reveal to them. Let us cease questioning as to our God's secret doings and hidden counsels, and thankfully come to His Word, where a wondrously rich table is spread to satisfy abundantly all our needs.

The first Gospel message that ever fell on human ears was delivered by God Himself soon after Adam's fall. It consists in the well-known words: "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent, Satan) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (the woman's seed, even Christ) shall bruise thy head (Satan's power), and thou shalt bruise His heel." Gen. 3, 15. But even of his first Gospel promise we should not have had any certain and absolutely reliable record, had not God, by supernatural inspiration, given it to Moses to be put down in writing. And so Moses was the first in that long line of holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost and who put into writing, and so fixed for future ages, the words that came from the mind and heart of God. These writings, or Scriptures, were written, in the Old Testament age, by Hebrew prophets, in the Hebrew language, and committed to the Hebrew people for safe keeping. To the Jews were committed the oracles of God, so St. Paul tells us. Rom. 3, 2. We should mark well the words "the oracles of God," that is, the words that God had spoken through His prophets. The apostle does not say, the oracles of the Hebrews, or the Jews, or the Jewish prophets, as though those "oracles" or words had been a natural product of the Hebrew mind and heart. But those writings of the prophets to which St. Paul refers, and which form the Old Testament



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Scripture, as we still have it, are in very truth the Words of God addressed to sinful men. The prophets were but instruments in the hands of God. Through them He revealed, first to Israel and through Israel to the whole world, His eternal plan of salvation. For whatever some may think or say to the contrary, the Scriptures that God committed to the Jews had and have no other purpose than to reveal to a sin-cursed world of men the victory over Satan through the "woman's seed," the blessing for all nations through "the seed of Abraham"; to bring to those sitting in darkness and shadow of death the "Light of the Gentiles"; to show to all the bond-slaves of Satan the way of deliverance by One whose name is called and who truly is "Wonderful, Counsellor . . . the Prince of Peace"; the Virgin's son, Immanuel (God with us), the Lamb of God going to the slaughter an offering for sin, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, pouring out His soul unto death that sinners might live forever.

These are mere glimpses of Old Testament Gospel revelation. From beginning to end it is throbbing with Gospel truth, and it is a somewhat puzzling fact that so many Bible readers seem to find so little of it in the Old Testament. They are like those two disciples who on the day of the Lord's resurrection were walking sadly and with troubled minds from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and to whom the risen Saviour administers the well-deserved rebuke: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Luke 24, 25-27.

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These same Scriptures St. Paul has in view when he writes to Timothy: "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." II. Tim. 3, 15.

Thus, according to the clear teaching of the risen Lord and of His great apostle, it is He, even Jesus Christ, the Saviour, and His blessed work of salvation and redemption, that is taught in the Old Testament from Moses to Malachi. And so it is abundantly evident to every unprejudiced reader that it was God Himself who, by supernatural revelation, made known to Moses and all the other prophets the things concerning Christ: His sufferings for the sins of men, His victory over the powers of darkness, and His entering into glory. For neither Moses nor any of the other holy men of God of the Old Testament could possibly have known those things concerning the Saviour, who was to come in the dim and distant future, unless God had revealed it to them by His Spirit. Thus, for instance, it was natural that Moses, under the royal care and protection of Pharaoh's own daughter, should become "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." Acts 7, 22. This is all the more natural, when we consider that he remained at the court of Pharaoh till "he was full forty years old." Acts 7, 23. But it is decidedly contrary to the course of nature, even for a man with such educational advantages as Moses had, that he should write things concerning Christ, who appeared in the flesh about fifteen centuries later! The last prophet of the Old Testament was Malachi. He lived and labored about four hundred years before Christ. And it is from him that we hear the sweet Gospel promise,

made to those who were looking forward with longing hearts to the coming of Him who was to deliver them from the curse of sin. "Behold," he writes, "I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in; behold He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts." Mal. 3, 1. He, Christ Himself, is speaking through His prophet concerning John the Baptist, who is to prepare the way before Him, and at the same time announcing His own coming, giving Himself the name of the Messenger of the Covenant. He is the Messenger, the Angel of the New Covenant, who is to bring about between God and men a covenant of grace, of pardon, and of peace, for all those who had broken the Old Covenant of the Law. In the next chapter, the very last in the Old Testament, this same Messenger of the Covenant, even Christ our Lord, is called the "Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings." Mal. 4, 2.

The Gospel was given to the world by supernatural revelation; and that so exclusive of every vestige of human wisdom, sagacity, or shrewdness that not even the prophets themselves, the very instruments of God's revelation to men, ever got a full view of those things concerning which they wrote by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The Gospel was something alien to their minds, as well as to the minds of men in general. It did not by nature or by close thinking come to them any more than to other men. So little did the prophecies concerning Christ and the salvation in His name take their beginning in their own minds and hearts, that they actually "enquired and searched diligently what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them

did signify, when it (1) testified beforehand sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." 1. Pet. 10, 11.

And as the Spirit of Christ had in the prophets testified of His sufferings and of his glory, for the salvation of sinners, so, when the God-appointed time had come, He Himself appears, even the Sun of Righteousness, revealing more fully, and with ever increasing brightness of Gospel light, the glad tidings of forgiveness and peace, of life and joy: that great mystery, the eternal divine counsel of redemption, of which He Himself ever was, is, and will be, the living centre, the very heart and soul.

It is not merely a great religious teacher that in Him appears upon the scene of earthly life, but it is the eternal Son of the Father, come to reveal what He alone could know. For "no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him." John 1, 18. He has declared Him, has made Him known to men as men never before had known Him; He has revealed Him as the God and Father of mercies; as the heavenly Father who is longing for the return to His heart of all the wayward, stubborn, rebellious, children of men; as the God of Love, who to save sinners and at the same time to satisfy His justice, spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for all. The Son of the living God, equal from eternity in power and majesty, in wisdom and glory with the Father, He appears in the flesh on this sin-cursed, blood-stained earth as the love of God incarnate, as the greatest possible revelation of the heart and mind of God towards fallen mankind. It is, however, not so much in the Saviour's appear-

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(1) N.B.—Not the spirit or mind of the prophets, but the Spirit of Christ, which was in them.

ing in the flesh, that the love of God for sinners reveals itself to the uttermost, but rather in His shameful death as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world by shedding His own precious blood. What a flood of Gospel light bursts upon a sinful and lost world from those heavenly words of God's own Son: "God so loved the world that He gave (gave into death) His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3, 16. That is the sum and substance of the Gospel. Our Saviour's wonderful life here on earth, from the manger to the cross, and from the cross through death and hell to life and glory at God's right hand, is but an enlargement upon that blessed theme: "God so loved the world!"

No, indeed, sinful men could never have thought of such a way of escape from sin and death, of such a means to regain Paradise and to live in blissful communion with their reconciled heavenly Father world without end. The Gospel of Christ crucified is deeper, by immeasurable depths, than natural man's profoundest thoughts; higher than the highest flight of human imagination; what it promises, offers, and imparts to us is far beyond the fondest hopes that any human soul has ever of its own accord dared to entertain.

The Gospel of God's saving love through the death of His dear Son is that "wisdom of God," which the Greeks, in their intellectual pride, rejected as "foolishness" and the Jews in their Pharisaic blindness considered a stumbling block; but it nevertheless is and will always remain the highest, deepest, and most glorious wisdom of which on this earth men can ever read or hear or learn. It is this "wisdom of God" that the holy

apostle Paul makes so prominent a feature in the first two chapters of his first epistle to the Corinthians. This wisdom, he very plainly and emphatically tells us, is not derived from human thought and experience, but given exclusively by supernatural revelation from God. "We speak," he writes in the second chapter, "not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But **God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.** . . . For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." 1. Cor. 2, 6-13.

Clear and strong and firm, then, stands this truth: The Gospel is neither a natural endowment of the human mind, nor is it an invention of human thought, but it is a supernatural revelation of God to man.

Let us now try to get a nearer view of God's wonderful Gospel and look into its inner heart and life. This is very necessary, if we are to enjoy to the full the great and many blessings which the Gospel has in store for us.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE ATONING DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD—THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL.

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The true meaning and the vital importance of the death of Jesus Christ is hidden not only to the great mass of unchurched men and women in all lands, but also to very many of those who bear His name, and are members of good standing within the visible Church of Christ on earth. It is a matter of public knowledge, brought home to us in various ways from day to day, that an alarmingly large percentage even of those men who by their people and by the world at large are supposed to be preachers of the Gospel, have no idea of the paramount importance of the death of Christ in the Gospel message, and who, therefore, preach "gospel" without life and power, a "gospel" without a heart.

These preachers make much of Jesus, the great Teacher of moral excellence. They cannot praise too highly His own wonderful example of moral purity and an unstained life. They present Him to their hearers or their readers as the best and noblest and holiest of men that ever trod this earth. He was so good that He will ever rank first among earth's purest and best; He was so faultless that He is rightly called a son of

God. So these false prophets teach. And they teach further that whosoever in sincerity of heart, with purity of motive, follows "the Master," endeavoring to become more and more like Him, will by so doing also become a son of God and some day enter into his well-earned reward. We do not think it necessary to burden our pages with evidence to prove the statements just made. The evidence lies on the surface of present-day church life. Those who have eyes to see, will see it. Moralism, mere moral teaching, with Jesus Christ as chief teacher and highest example, has in only too many churches taken the place of true Gospel preaching. Many church papers and the daily press, together with the conversation of so-called Christian preachers and laymen one often overhears or takes part in, make this point very clear. To all such moralists the essence of the teachings of Jesus and the very heart of the Gospel is the "Sermon on the Mount." Matth. 5-7. This "Sermon on the Mount" is, of course, our Lord's own divine teaching. But it is, in the main at least, not Gospel at all. It is an infallible exposition and solemn re-affirmation of the spiritual nature of the Law.

Now, let us not be misunderstood. We certainly have no quarrel with those who say that Jesus was the greatest religious teacher the world has ever had; for so He was—and more! Neither have we any difference with those who teach that He gave to the world the highest possible example of a holy life; for so He undoubtedly did—and more! What we must very earnestly and solemnly object to is the teaching that lays practically all the stress on our Saviour's life here on earth and does not know what to do with His death. This is to such teachers merely the termination of our



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Lord's great and useful life, the end of His labors. The only lesson they draw from the cross of Christ is that He was faithful unto death; that He was true to His convictions, and to His public teaching of them, even in the face of very bitter and powerful opposition on the part of those who hated His teaching, because it was true and humbled their pride. In other words, they praise the Saviour's moral courage that would not flinch, even in the presence of the cross. To them He is the noblest of martyrs for the truth, as He saw it. And thus also in His death He has given to men, and especially to all those who fight the battles of right against wrong, a glorious example of true martyrdom, of witnessing to the truth of His teaching by the agonies of a shameful death. As in His life He had placed before the eyes of men an unsurpassable pattern of holy living, so in His death He left behind him, as a precious legacy, a truly sublime example of holy dying. All this is, of course, very true, and we do well to consider the death of our Lord also in the light of a great example. But what we must take strong exception to, and what we do with all the moral power at our disposal and with all possible emphasis repel as utterly false, and fatal teaching is that the death of Christ was no more than a very noble example of martyrdom; that our Lord at last fell a helpless victim to the fury and the power of His human enemies.

We do not for a moment deny that by His death our Saviour bore witness to His teachings, on the contrary, we thankfully affirm it. What we do deny is that Jesus was but one, though the first in rank, of a long line of martyrs to truth or to conviction. What we most strongly object to is the placing of our blessed Saviour,

in His suffering and death, side by side, with such men as, for instance, the heathen philosopher, Socrates, or even the "heroes" of the Great War, who laid down their lives for their country

No, the death of Christ is **unique** in the history of mankind. That is, there never was nor will be such another death among the children of men. It stands alone and supreme, and that not merely in degree but in kind. The death of Christ is like that of other men only in this that by it His truly human soul was separated from His truly human body, so that what His friends laid into Joseph's tomb was a lifeless corpse. In all other respects it is essentially different, and even His lifeless corpse was something infinitely more than that of other men, because it was that human body which, together with the Lord's human soul, was "conceived by the Holy Ghost," and personally and inseparably united to the eternal Son of God, so that while the human soul of Jesus was in Paradise, the divine nature of our Lord remained united with the body in the tomb as well as with the soul in Paradise. We must not, however, permit ourselves to digress into any further details concerning the wonderful person of our Redeemer, a subject well worthy of very special treatment. For the present we are intent upon the study of the death of Christ in its relation to the Gospel. The atoning death of Christ, the Son of God, is the very heart of the Gospel. Let us now see why this is so. We purpose to deal with this matter under several heads, of which the first is as follows:—

#### I.—THE DEATH OF CHRIST WAS THE DEATH OF A SINLESS MAN.

Jesus Christ was a true man, with a real human

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body and a real human soul. Now, we have in previous chapters brought abundant proof that all men are sinners; that even St. Paul had to confess that he was not perfect, but that evil was always present with him in his heart. Rom. 7. But the Man who died on Calvary's cross was a sinless man. Not only was He faultless in the eyes of His Roman judge, who repeatedly said to His accusers: "I find no fault in Him." John 18, 38; 19, 4. 6. Not only did His enemies fail to find in His whole ministry and life any just grounds for their accusations. But our Saviour was sinless in His inmost heart. Out of His heart there proceeded no "murders, adulteries, etc.," as in the case of all other men. He "knew no sin." II. Cor. 5, 21. That is, into His own personal life, both public and private, into His heart and mind and soul sin never came nor cast so much as a shadow. In the deepest depths of His soul He was absolutely free from any taint of sin. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (7, 26) we read: "Such a high priest became us, who is **holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and higher than the heavens.**" The Man who died on Calvary's hill was not, like David, conceived and born in sin. Ps. 51, 5. But He was conceived of the Holy Ghost. Matth. 1, 20. That is why the angel of the Lord said to Mary: "That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1, 35.

We, who are, one and all, so deeply tainted and corrupted by sin can at best but dimly see and imperfectly appreciate the purity and the beauty and the glory of a sinless soul. But God can. This one sinless Man had the holy God's full and uninterrupted approval. Matt. 3, 17 b. In all His earthly life the heavenly Fa-

ther's all-seeing eye never saw the slightest flaw, or spot, or stain. He lived in unbroken sweet communion with His God. John II, 42; 10, 30; 17, 11. Twice a voice from heaven is heard to say: "This is My beloved Son." Matth. 3, 17a; Mark 9, 7. Why, then, did He die. Is not death the wages of **sin**? If Adam had not sinned, could he have died? No, certainly not. Neither spiritual death (separation from God) nor bodily death (separation of body and soul) would ever have come near him. Why, then, we ask once more, did Jesus die? He who was without sin, and with whom the Father was well pleased? The answer will be given in due time. For the present, let us once more briefly fix our attention on the incontrovertible facts that Jesus Christ was a **sinless** being and that, nevertheless, He **died**. And in this fact that a sinless Man has died lies a deeper and a greater meaning than that of a mere example of noble martyrdom. For all the martyrs adown the ages were **sinners** before God, and, therefore, without exception, subject to bodily death as a consequence of sin. They all would, in due time, have died a "natural" death. Not so, however, this Man, Jesus Christ. So far as His own person, His character and life were concerned, He was not subject to death in any form. He could never have died, not even under the tortures of the Cross. God would not have permitted Him to die. But God did permit Him to die. And for the reason we have not far to seek. "Christ died for our sins." I. Cor. 15, 3. "Christ died for the ungodly," Rom. 5, 6. His death was a **vicarious** death. He died on behalf and for the benefit of others in such a manner that they are thereby freed from the guilt and curse of sin, from the fear of **death** and eternal wrath.

## CHRIST'S DEATH A VICARIOUS DEATH.

This is the second point in our meditation on our Saviour's death.

### 2.—THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS A VICARIOUS DEATH.

“I lay my sins on Jesus,  
The spotless Lamb of God:  
He bears them all and frees us  
From the accursed load.  
I bring my guilt to Jesus,  
To wash my crimson stains  
White in His blood most precious,  
Till not a spot remains.”

These beautiful and true lines aptly express what we mean when we say that the death of our Saviour was a vicarious death. Being Himself without sin, He could become the Substitute for sinners, taking their place and bearing their burden of sin and guilt in the sight of God. God “hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin.” 2. Cor. 3, 21. God laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Is. 53, 6. He was made a curse for us. Gal. 3, 13. God debited Him with our sins. He placed on Christ's side of the ledger all our transgressions. The mountain of our debt was placed on His shoulders. He assumed all the responsibility of our misspent lives, of all our evil thoughts and words and deeds. Also the natural depravity of our hearts, the inborn enmity against God, in short, all that is meant by the word sin in all its bearings in respect to God, to our fellowmen, and to ourselves: it was all placed on Christ's account. And since the wages of sin is death, He suffered death as a Substitute for those who had deserved to die. He suffered death under the

wrath and curse of the just and holy God. He tasted the bitterness of death to its fullest possible extent. He felt the sting of death as only the damned can feel it. God poured out upon Him the vials of His holy wrath against the world's sin, and He drank the cup to the very dregs. Not only was His innocent body racked with unspeakable pain and torture, but His sinless soul was in such utter agony that He cried out in those well-known words which none of His ransomed ones will ever fully understand, words which indicate to us such a depth of misery and anguish, so dark a mystery of suffering that we stand amazed and confounded whenever in spirit we stand beneath His cross and hear that awful cry: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" That cry is the cry of our Substitute. It is the world's sin, our sin, that causes Him, the holy Son of God, such anguish as even these words can but faintly express. He suffered thus and He died for our sins. Let us not lose sight of that fact. It is not a mere martyr that here dies for truth and justice; but it is the woman's seed whose heel is being bruised; it is the Lamb of God that is being slaughtered and sacrificed; it is the great High Priest who is entering into the most holy place with the sacrifice of His own life, His own precious blood, so that sinners might be reconciled to God, and live in His presence forever. And thus it becomes increasingly evident that the death of Christ stands in vital relation to the Gospel, is in fact the very heart of the Gospel, which is the glad tidings of God's pardon for those who had deserved eternal punishment. But this pardon would never have been proclaimed to sinners, doomed to eternal death, unless a fit Substitute had died on their behalf

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and in their stead. The power and comfort of the Gospel, the sweet assurance of sins forgiven and a heavenly Father reconciled to us, rests on the fact that **another**, even He, our Saviour, has died for our sins and that God has accepted as sufficient the sacrifice of His own dear Son. And the sacrifice was sufficient, and God did accept it as a finished work for the world's redemption. For it was a perfect sacrifice; perfect not only in this sense, that He who offered himself to God was in His own person without sin, and therefore able to bear the sins of others; but perfect also in this sense, that He was **willing** so to suffer and to die; that in all His bitter suffering and shame, and in the untold agony of the cross, He at all times made the Father's will His own. He did not go passively to the slaughter, simply because He was unable to help Himself against the power of His enemies, or against the will of His heavenly Father. Though His innocent body and sinless soul shrank in horror from the terrible ordeal through which He knew He had to pass, if His work were to be accomplished, yet He **willingly** yielded Himself to the task set before Him. "O, My Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." Matth. 26, 42. Thus He prays in dark Gethsemane, and He rises from the ground and in willing obedience is prepared to drink the cup. "Rise," He calls to His three sleepy companions, "Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray me." Matth. 26, 46. He does not hide Himself; He does not flee from His enemies who seek His life. He knows that ere another sun shall set, He will be crucified, dead and buried. But, nevertheless, He goes to meet the band of miserable sinners who have come to

bind the Holy One and lead Him captive to the slaughter. It is very important for us to know that the sacrifice our Saviour brought for sin was a willing sacrifice; that His vicarious death was a voluntary death. More depends on this than is usually recognised. It will be worth while, therefore, to look yet more closely into this matter.

### 3.—THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS A VOLUNTARY DEATH.

The very core and heart of sin is disobedience against the expressed will of God. Before Adam acted contrary to God's command, he was disobedient in spirit; dissatisfied with the manner in which his Creator had ordered things; chafing at the restraints He had imposed upon his liberty, and inclined to throw off the yoke and be his own master. This disobedience of our first parent is the cause of all the misery and unhappiness both in this world and in the next. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5, 12. By his disobedience against the very Fountain of authority and the source of life and happiness, Adam cut both himself and all his children off from God. That is the death, the spiritual death, which according to God's threat immediately engulfed him. And if the sin-cursed and death-bound race of Adam was ever to become free from the power of death, which in its full meaning is nothing less than everlasting separation from God, in utter darkness and unspeakable misery of body and soul; if, we say, Adam and all his offspring were ever to become free from this just judgment of God upon sin, then some substi-



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tute would have to be found, who would in the sinners' stead render unto God a perfect obedience not only in fulfilling the Law which the sinners had transgressed, but also in suffering the penalty which God had placed upon sin. And it is this obedience in suffering the penalty of death with which we are here concerned. It is the willingness with which our great Substitute brought Himself before His heavenly Father as a sacrifice for our sin that now claims our attention.

Need it be stated that an unwilling obedience is no true obedience at all? Yes, we think it does require to be said again and again; because men are by nature so shallow and superficial in these things that they are as a rule quite content if they render to those in authority a merely outward obedience. They do what they are told to do and do it well, let us assume. They also refrain from doing what they have been forbidden to do, and so they imagine that they have done their duty, even though they have done it with an unwilling mind and a rebellious heart. Men to whom obedience is due must perforce be satisfied with this kind of obedience, for they cannot see what is in the mind and heart of those who do their bidding. But not so, of course, with God. In His sight all such merely outward show of obedience lacks the very heart and marrow of all true obedience. That is a **willing mind** and a heart that is in loving fellowship with him who issues the command. As a matter of fact, since Adam's fall there has never occurred one case of perfect obedience, no, not even in the lives of the most saintly of men. This has been sufficiently brought out in Chapters II. and III. What we are

chiefly concerned with here is obedience in suffering, especially in suffering punishment for sins committed. It is a matter of common experience that men suffer punishment unwillingly; that they bear the penalty imposed on them under the strong pressure of compulsion; that they suffer because they cannot help themselves. They do not give their heart's full consent to the justice of their punishment. They find for themselves all manner of excuses and place on others most of the blame. Like Adam, they blame the woman, and, like the woman, they blame the devil, and all together they blame the God that made them, and they will not admit that theirs is the sin and the guilt and that God's is the holiness and the justice. For this reason the whole human race, without exception, is doomed to abide in death forever. God demands a perfect obedience in the inmost spirit of man, also in reference to the manner in which man bears his punishment. As long as the sinner does not in his heart of hearts willingly agree to all that God in His infinite justice deems fit to do unto him, he is not right with God, but remains in a state of rebellion and continually increases the amount of his sin and the burden of his punishment. Of themselves men will never, from their inmost hearts, and without any reserve, confess that their sin has deserved such punishment, and that God in all His dealings with them is perfectly just and right. Of themselves they will never bear their punishment without murmuring against the Lord God Almighty. They will always hate the hand that justly smites them instead of hating their sin and kissing the rod.

If, therefore, the sons and daughters of Adam are to be delivered from eternal death, it is not sufficient

that a Substitute be found who bears their guilt and dies for them. The vicarious death of Jesus Christ for the sins of men would have been quite useless to effect the redemption of sinners, if it had not been also a voluntary death, a willing sacrifice, a sacrifice offered up to God in perfect obedience not only to God's Law but also to His way of enforcing the Law and vindicating its majesty by exacting the full penalty. The Substitute, even our blessed Saviour, in dying for the sins of men, gave from the depths of His sinless soul His unqualified and willing consent to the justice of the agony He was suffering, and with all His heart agreed that His Father should in such manner join death to sin. He truly, did hate the sin with which He as our substitute was burdened, and He lovingly kissed the rod that smote Him. Not merely did He go to His sufferings with a willing mind; but in that hell of anguish, of mockery and shame, He continued in that obedience to His Father's justice and never once turned back upon His task. His fellowship with the Father remained unbroken, even while He suffered the Father's fiery wrath and curse because of the sin He was bearing. He remained a perfectly obedient Son, in heart and mind and soul lovingly bound to the Father, even while His Father was punishing in Him, to the utmost, the sins of all the world. And although in a surpassingly dark moment of unutterable agony, He gave vent to His suffering in the startling cry: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" this cry revealed no murmuring heart, no rebellious spirit, but it was the cry of a soul that loved the Father and all His ways even then and would not let Him go. And so when the fore-appointed time and hour had come,

He voluntarily gave up His Ghost, His human soul into the hands of His heavenly Father. Of His own free will He laid down His precious life, as He had foretold. (John 10, 18; Matth. 20, 28). and so with the sacrifice of His innocent sufferings and death, with the offering of a perfect obedience in dying as in living the second Adam, our own great High Priest, entered into the most holy place on high bearing in his hands, as it were, the blood of the New Covenant, His own precious blood, which He had shed for the redemption of the world.

The atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ was a voluntary death. Let us not overlook the point at issue. It is so easily done. For the matter lies some distance off the beaten track of our common human experience, and our own usual way of thinking. When a few lines above, we said that our Saviour voluntarily gave up His Ghost and of His own free will laid down His precious life, we said in those words something more than many a casual reader might see in them. What those words desire to convey to the reader's mind is this important fact: The Lord did not die because His bodily strength was exhausted, or because His human nature collapsed under the tortures of the cross.

His death was not a natural termination of His life under existing circumstances. He could have lived longer, had He so desired. This explains what we read (Mark 15, 44), concerning the impression which the comparatively early death of Jesus made on the mind of Pilate, who from the experience he had had with many crucified criminals, knew that death by crucifixion was a slow death, the poor condemned felons often lingering for days on the accursed instrument of torture.

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"Pilate marvelled," we read, "if He were already dead, and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether He had been any while dead." When Pilate said these words, Jesus had been dead for about two hours. He died about three o'clock in the afternoon. (Matth. 46-50). And, Joseph of Arimathea went in to Pilate "to crave the body of Jesus," "when the even was come." (Mark 15, 42). That could not have been much earlier than five o'clock. Pilate would have marvelled still more, if he had known the exact time of our Lord's death. But his wonder would have known no bounds, if he had been acquainted with the full truth concerning this altogether wonderful death. The Lord Himself leaves us in no manner of doubt as to what is meant by the word "voluntary" as applied to His death. In John 10, 17, 18, He speaks in this wise: "Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." Yes, in full agreement with His Father's will, He obediently lays down His life. Not under any compulsion of exhausted nature; not on account of the cruelty of His enemies, but in willing and loving obedience to His Father, He lays down His life, gives it as a free offering, a spotless sacrifice, into the hands of His God. And thus "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Phil. 2, 8.

This is Gospel indeed; this is glad tidings to all poor sinners sitting in the shadow of death all their lives and doomed on account of sin to fall a prey to eternal death, from which there is no escape. **This**

voluntary death of our sinless Substitute has a world of meaning, a heaven of consolation and hope for us all. For He died for **our** sins. I. Cor. 15, 3. His willing obedience even unto death, and **in the very act of dying**, was a vicarious obedience. So we are distinctly told by St. Paul, Rom. 5. 19: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." He being our Substitute, His obedience is accounted by God as our obedience; His death as our death. 2 Cor. 5, 14. He **having died for our sins**, we who identify ourselves with Him by faith are looked upon by God as having died that same death; as having suffered that punishment, and paid to the last farthing our debt to God's holy Law, and satisfied perfectly His divine justice. The wages of sin being death, and Jesus Christ, as the **world's** Substitute, having died and thus received in full the wages that Sin could possibly pay her servants, we have now no longer to expect or to fear that payment on the part of Sin. **Her purse is empty.** She can no longer deal out death to those who are by faith **one with Christ** and partakers of His death as of His life. The part that faith plays in God's plan of salvation will be considered in due time. For the present, let us fix our attention on the great and glorious Gospel fact that our sinless Substitute has by His willing obedience, by His voluntary death, atoned for our sins, removed the barrier that would for ever have kept us from God and light and life and happiness; that He has reconciled us to the Father and made us sons and daughters of God and heirs of eternal glory.

Thus we have seen once more that the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the

very heart of the Gospel; that without this death as an accomplished fact there can be no forgiveness of sins; for "without shedding of blood there is no remission," we are plainly told in Hebrews 9, 22. Without the finished work of a substitute and the offering of a sacrifice acceptable to God, there could never have been any hope for sinners. All the comforts and blessings of the Gospel message; all the unsearchable riches of Christ for the life and joy and hope of our souls have their source in the death of Christ and rest on it as on a firm foundation. This is what we mean when we sing:—

"On Christ, the solid rock I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand."

"Jesus, my heart's best treasure,  
Jesus has died for me.  
Firm on the Rock of ages  
Ever my trust shall be.  
Here let me wait in patience;  
Wait till the night is o'er;  
Wait till I see the morning  
Break on the golden shore."

This is most certainly true. All those who by the grace of God have learnt to place their heart's deep trust on the Rock of ages shall assuredly see the morning break on the golden shore. For He who died for their sins is indeed the Rock of ages. The sinless Substitute, who so willingly laid down His life as a ransom for many, is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13, 8. All the sacrifices that have ever been offered for sin, from that of Abel to the last

lamb slaughtered on the day that our Saviour died, they all had their cleansing and atoning power from the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 1. John, 1, 7. All the sacrificial worship of the Old Covenant "was symbolical and typical, till He should come to whom it all pointed, and who had all along given reality to it; He whose priesthood was perfect, and who on a perfect altar (His own body!) brought a perfect sacrifice, once for all—a perfect Substitute and a perfect Mediator." Heb. 10, 1-24 (1). And He was a perfect Substitute and Mediator, not only because He was a sinless man, who willingly died for others, but also and chiefly because He was in very truth the Son of God, who had glory with the Father before the world was. John 17, 5. This divinely great fact has been often touched upon in passing; but it will be highly profitable for us to consider in some detail and with reverent attention that

#### 4.—THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS THE DEATH OF THE SON OF GOD.

In 2 Cor. 5, 18, St. Paul tells us that "God . . . hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ," and Rom. 5, 10, that "we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Of this same Jesus Christ, the Son of God, St. John writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." John 1, 1-3, 14. "He is before all things,



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and by Him all things consist." Col. 1, 17. It is this "dear Son" of God, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Col. 1, 14. To even a casual reader of the New Testament it must be clearly evident that in the person of Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God died on the cross (1). It will not do to say, as so many enemies of the cross have done, that a son of God died on Calvary; a very good man done to death by his enemies even as many other "good" men have died for what they held to be the truth, men who were also sons of God. No, He who gave up His life that memorable Friday afternoon beyond the walls of Jerusalem, was the Son of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father, who was with the Father before the world was, and who took an active part, exerted almighty power, in the creation of the world. There never was, there is not now, there never in all eternity will be, such another. He stands absolutely alone as the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father in might and majesty, very God of very God. All this is, of course, well known to us. We have in our very childhood learnt to say: "I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won (delivered) me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death, in order that I may be His own." O yes, we have learnt it by heart and have glibly repeated the words in school or Sunday school or at home. And yet, in later years, as we grew

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(1) "The Temple," by Dr. Edersheim, p. 108.

up in stature and in sin; as the world, with its labor and varied interests, its pleasures and innumerable distractions, more and more absorbed our time and strength and attention, how little have we grown in the understanding of that stupendous fact, so closely connected with our soul's highest interests and our heart's abiding rest, **the fact that the eternal Son of God died for us on Calvary.** The fact that God's very own dear Son died for our sins is indeed the heart and life, the foundation and the cornerstone of the Gospel. Such a sacrifice was necessary, if our sins were to be removed from the sight of God. Such a price had to be paid if men were to be ransomed from the power of eternal death. On such a death rests our reconciliation with the offended majesty of a holy God. From such a death flows our forgiveness and our peace and our eternal life. For God is not only infinite in His love but also infinite in His justice. This justice, so grossly and continually offended by sinful men, had to be satisfied by a sacrifice that was infinitely precious in His sight. Nothing less would do. Heb. 7, 26. "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Rom 5, 10. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5, 19. "God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." Rom. 8, 32. The Son of God has died for our sins, for the sins of the world. This is a glorious Gospel truth. But at the same time this divine fact, this comforting truth, throws a very strong light on the true nature and character of sin.

Sin is so great an abomination in God's holy sight; sin, all sin, is so grievous and so foul an offence against the majesty of the Lord of heaven and earth; God's holy nature is so utterly and unalterably opposed to

it in all its forms, that no merely human substitute, however holy (if such could have been found!) could ever have brought about a reconciliation between God and the sinner. The fact that the **Son of God** died for our sins teaches us the utter sinfulness of men, the dark, unholy, satanic character of sin. The deep corruption, the utter depravity, the bitter enmity against God that is in the heart of every son and daughter of Adam from birth, an inheritance altogether evil: it is brought to our consciousness with terrible emphasis when seen in the awful light of Calvary and its cross, on which the Lord of Glory died, and the very Prince of Life shed His blood for sin. Yes, so utterly evil a thing is sin that on its account the Holy One from heaven, the spotless Lamb of God, the true and only Son of the world's Creator, dies the most shameful death that heathen hands could inflict. The wages of sin is death, and it was Sin that paid out these wages to the Son of God. It was Sin that bound His holy hands; it was Sin that crowned His glorious head with thorns; it was Sin that pierced His hands and feet with cruel nails; it was Sin that racked and tortured Him upon the accursed tree; it was Sin that filled His innocent soul with the agony of the damned; it was Sin that caused the Lord of life to taste the full bitterness of death. It was the sin of Adam and of Moses, of Abraham and of David; it was the sin of Pilate and Caiaphas, of Barabbas and the thief on the cross; it was the sin of Judas and of Peter; of Stephen, the first martyr, and of St. Paul, the chief apostle; it was the sin of all men, both of saints so-called, and of those whom even the world calls sinners; it was the sin of every one that hears or reads

## LAW AND GOSPEL.

these words; it was your sin, and the sin of him that speaks to you, dear reader.

“Ye who think of sin but lightly,  
Nor suppose the evil great,  
Here may view its nature rightly,  
Here its guilt may estimate.  
Mark the sacrifice appointed!  
See who bears the awful load;  
'Tis the Word, the Lord's anointed  
Son of Man, and Son of God.”

Standing in spirit on Calvary's hill and looking up at the bleeding form that hangs there on the cross; looking up at that bowed head with the pallor of death on its brow and marks of deep anguish in every line of that noble face; looking up at those eyes that are breaking in death, eyes from which had shone forth nothing but holy truth and undying love for sinners; looking up and bearing in mind that what we are witnessing is the death of the Son of God for our own sins, our daily sins, our evil deeds and words and thoughts and desires: shall we not go away with a deeper impression of the meaning of sin? Shall we not in the power of that death cast off our indifference to the evil, the deadly evil in all sin, especially in our own? Shall we not hate sin, all forms of sin, in ourselves no less than in others, and condemn it and fight it and conquer it in the power of that love which died for our sins on Calvary?

But we must return to our present subject. This matter of our attitude towards our Redeemer and towards sin will be dealt with in its proper place.

The death of Jesus Christ was the death of the Son of God. In this indubitable fact we poor sinners

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have a never failing source of heavenly consolation. The Son of God gave Himself for me! The Lord of heaven has borne my sins. The perfect sacrifice has been slain for me. The Lamb of God has given Himself into death that I might live. I am reconciled to God by the death of His Son. I am by virtue of that death a child of my heavenly Father. I am an heir, a co-heir with Christ, of all the treasures of my Father's heavenly kingdom, to hold and to enjoy in honour and in glory throughout the timeless reaches of eternity. Verily, the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the heart of the Gospel. Deny that the **Son of God** died for sinners and you deny the Gospel, you leave nothing but empty words, a lifeless corpse. The arch-enemy of God and man very well knows this. That is the reason why he has all through the ages been trying to keep men from believing that Jesus Christ is true God. When the devil causes men to ridicule the Virgin birth of our Saviour, you may be quite sure that he has an eye on the cross of Christ. The devil is a most cunning creature. He begins his attack far away from his real object, so that men shall not notice his ultimate aim. Now, the Virgin birth of Jesus stands in vital relation to the death of the Son of God. If Jesus is not the son of the Virgin, but the son of a man, a human father, as well as of Mary, then He who died on Calvary was **not** the Son of God, then the world of sinners is **not** redeemed; then there is **no Gospel** for the lost children of Adam; then we might as well close our churches, burn our Bibles and—despair. If the man Jesus came into this world like other men, the offspring of the union of a man and a woman, then He was a sinner and could have saved no one from sin, not even

himself. But we need not fear. The Virgin birth is a divinely attested fact. "That which is conceived in her" (Mary), says the angel of the Lord to Joseph, "is of the Holy Ghost." Matth. 1, 20. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins. Now, all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us.**" Matth. I, 21-23.

From the Virgin Mary, the eternal Son of God, who had glory with the Father before the world was, John 17, 5, assumed a true human nature, both body and soul. This personal union of the Son of God with the true human nature assumed from the Virgin is permanent, that is, it will never in all eternity be dissolved. "The **Word** was made **flesh** and **dwelt** among us." "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman." (according to His human nature.) Gal. 4, 4. In Jesus Christ the divine nature and the human nature are inseparably joined together. He who is true God from eternity, is also true man born of the Virgin. The Jesus Christ of history, who walked among the Judean and Galilean hills, who had his early home in Nazareth, and died on Calvary, is God and Man in one person. This is not the place to enter into an exhaustive treatment of the wonderful person of our Lord. All we desire to do here is to answer the objection, raised by unbelief and doubt, that since God cannot die, Jesus Christ, who did die, could not have been true God. Our answer is as follows:—I. Our Lord died according to His **human nature**. That is why He assumed it from the

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Virgin. If he had not become a true man, He could not have been men's Substitute and could certainly not have died. 2. There were not two Jesus Christs, but only one. When the Jews made Him a prisoner, they had in their power not only Jesus of Nazareth, as they fancied, but also the eternal Son of God. When the soldiers crowned Him with thorns, they imagined that they were mocking a poor Jew, whom His own people had rejected, but this "poor and rejected Jew" was at the same time the King of kings. When they nailed Him to the cross, the instrument of public shame and dishonor, they at the same time nailed to the cross the Lord of glory. When Mary's son bowed His head in death, it was the Prince of life that died. So we are distinctly told in Holy Writ, and so it was. "They crucified the Lord of glory"; they "killed the Prince of life." "We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son." There is here, certainly, a mystery that we with our poor limited reason cannot fathom. But a fact does not cease to be a fact because we cannot fathom it. Thus we do not know what life is, but we know that life is, for we have it; we live. We do not know what electricity is, but we know that it is and use it for our benefit and convenience. We do not know how the soul within us, being spirit, can act upon the body, which is matter, but we know that they do act upon each other in a very marked degree. Tell a sad and shocking story at the table and it will interfere with the digestion. Why this should be so, men cannot explain. Smite a man on the face, and it will cause pain to his inmost soul. His anger will rise and in turn influence the action of the heart. Let him who can explain the real and deepest reason for these things stand forth. Can your

hand, which is material and visible, touch, actually touch the invisible soul, the spirit within your neighbor? No, but a warm pressure of your hand in friendship and in sympathy gladdens his soul, whereas a blow from your fist will sorely grieve it and rouse its wrath. Even so, when they smote the sacred face of Jesus Christ, those impious hands of theirs could not touch His human soul, neither could they, by direct material contact, dishonor His divine nature. But is anyone going to stand up and say that the Lord's human soul did not feel the shame of that action, or that His divine nature was not thereby dishonored? Did not, then, those soldiers who smote Jesus Christ in the face, at the same time, though unknown to themselves, smite the Son of God? And did not He who knew Himself to be indeed the Son of God, did not He bear that shame for your sake and for mine? In like manner all the indignities and mockery and scorn that were heaped upon this visible Jesus Christ, who was before the eyes of the people crucified between two criminals, did not merely affect His human soul, but it was also shared in by His divine nature which together with the human nature, formed **one and the same person**. And when at last He yielded up His spirit, His human soul, into the hands of His Father, it was His divine nature that consented to this crowning shame of becoming apparently an unwilling prey to death and sinking helpless into the tomb. The "crowning shame," we say advisedly. For His enemies had mockingly dared Him to prove that He was the Son of God by descending from the cross and breaking the bonds of death that were, as far as they could see, closing in upon His life. Thus we read, Matth. 27. 39-43. "They that passed by reviled Him,



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wagging their heads, and saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God.' But He who had power to lay down His life and power to take it again, John 10, did not yield to this temptation of the devil to forsake in the last moment His task of the world's redemption. The Son of God bore with adorable meekness and patience these bitter and provoking taunts of His miserable creatures and in the power of His divine nature gave up His human soul to God and His human body to the grave. And His divine nature shared in the ignominy of His apparent defeat. He, even the Son of God, made Himself of no reputation and humbled Himself and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Phil. 2.

We are well aware that the confirmed unbeliever and scoffer will not rest content with our answer to his objections concerning the death of the Son of God. Sneeringly he will lay his finger on the word "human" and say to us, with triumphant voice: "Now we have caught you in your own net! You have yourself admitted that it was not God that died on Calvary, but man, the human nature of Jesus Christ, who according to your very own words 'gave up His human soul to God and His human body to the 'grave.' So far from having convinced us that the death of Jesus Christ was the death of the Son of God, you have actually

strengthened us in our position and encouraged us to continue in our unbelief." Have we? We shall see. In the first place we did not say that it was God who died on Calvary. God cannot die. To make the naked statement that God died on the cross and leave it standing there, without explanation or qualification, is a very dangerous thing and comes near to being blasphemy. We have said nothing of a death of God, as God; but we have said and do say with "the holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," we do say with St. Paul that "they crucified the Lord of glory," and with St. Peter, that they "killed the Prince of life," and with St. John, that "the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son (God's Son), cleanseth us from all sin." We do believe with divine assurance and confess triumphantly before a world of unbelievers and scoffers, before the most ignorant, and before the most learned, that "we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." And we also know this, that it is not in the least unreasonable that the Son of God died on the cross. Above and beyond our puny reasoning powers it may be, but against reason, contrary to right reason, never!

Our common human experience can furnish many examples that may well serve to illustrate, at least to some extent, that unique death on Calvary. Thus, for instance, we have often read, too often in fact, that soldiers in battle died for their country; that they brought the "supreme sacrifice" and gave up their young lives in the interests of what they held dearer than life. Without inquiring into the true motives that induced them to go to the war and to enter into battle with 'the enemy,' we know for a fact that they died

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for others. They left our shores and they will never return. They lie buried in many lands. They are dead. But are they? How about their better, nobler part, their souls? Have these ceased to exist? Have they evaporated into the air as their bodies have gradually been dissolved back into earth? Have they lost their identity, their individuality, their separate being as so many different personalities? Most certainly not. Wherever those souls may now be and under whatever conditions of misery or happiness, they exist, they live and keep their separate and distinct personalities. Even after death, Lazarus is Lazarus, and Dives is Dives, and Abraham is Abraham. The Thief on the cross enters after death with Jesus into Paradise, while his body, horribly mangled is thrown, like so much foul carrion, into the burning rubbish heap in Hinnom Valley.

They died, the soldiers died; Abraham and Lazarus and Dives died; the thief on the cross died, and yet their souls, considered apart as spirits that God has made immortal, these did not die, did not, we mean to say, lose their existence or give up their identity and their conscious being. And even so the Son of God died. Of that sinless person known as Jesus Christ in history, and to the Jews of the time merely as Jessu of Nazareth, of that person who hung on the cross, the Son of God, the divine nature, was the better, nobler part. This divine nature, considered apart from Jesus of Nazareth, could certainly not die; but since the Son of God was one and the same person with Jesus of Nazareth, it is quite reasonable and natural to say, the Son of God died. There was no other only-begotten Son of God than even this Jesus Christ,

the God-Man; and when they crucified Him, the Son of God was crucified.

But let us not overlook the fact that this same Jesus Christ had also a truly human soul. This human soul did certainly not die. It went with that of the Thief on the cross to "Paradise." And are we, on that account, going to say that the **Man** Jesus Christ did not see death and that His human soul had no share in it? Most certainly not. For the Man Christ Jesus did die, and His soul had its full share in His death. Are we, then, going to admit that because Christ's divine nature did not die, it had no share in His death? Shall we not rather say and affirm and confess that the divine nature of our Lord had an infinitely greater share in His death than the souls of men have in the hour of bodily death, when they very much against their will and under irresistible compulsion leave their tenement of clay? For the Lord's divine nature, the eternal Son of God, who was and is by far the chief part of the person of Jesus Christ, He gave His full and most willing consent to the awful death on Calvary. He put aside the use and the influence of His own infinite worth and dignity and honor and glory and power and permitted His enemies to do with Him as they pleased. The full weight and value of the honor and the majesty, the power and the glory of the only-begotten Son of the Father were in that wonderful death placed in the scales over against the world's sin, and they outweighed it. Sin, the guilt and curse of sin are put away, and its power is broken. "We" are "reconciled to God by the death of His Son," Rom. 5, 10; even by Him of whom it is written: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof;

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for **Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood**, out of every kindred, and tongue and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests. . . . And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne. . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, **Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.** And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, **Blessing and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."**  
Rev. 7.

Yes, verily, the death of the Lamb of God, that voluntary death of our sinless and divine Substitute is the heart of the Gospel, the rock of our salvation, the cornerstone and the broad and deep foundation of all our peace and joy and hope here below. By virtue of that death we too shall gather about the great heavenly throne, singing praise and honor and glory unto the Lamb that was slain also for us.

In the face of this great and wonderful fact, the sacrificial death of God's only-begotten Son, how miserably absurd appears the attitude of all those who in spite of hearing the story of the cross, still imagine that they need no Saviour; that they can help themselves! How careless and dangerous to ignore; how foolish and impious to reject; how truly devilish to heap mockery and scorn upon that Substitute and rely on the filthy rags of their own so-called righteousness! How base and ungrateful such an attitude is towards Him

who in untold shame and agony poured out His precious blood to save them from eternal death! How deeply evil, how dark and devilish a thing is sin, that men can still resist, with mockery and scorn, the love of God and Christ, as manifested in that death on Calvary! To this love of God, as from the cross of Christ it shines forth into a proud and selfish world, let us now direct our prayerful attention.

### 5.—THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST REVEALS TO US THE LOVE OF GOD FOR SINNERS.

“O the height of Jesus’ love!

Higher than the heavens above,

Deeper than the depths of sea,

Lasting as eternity;

Love that found me—wondrous thought!—

Found me when I sought Him not.”

“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved US, and sent His Son to be a propitiation (sacrifice, Suehnopfer) for our sins.” 1. John 9, 10. God commendeth His love toward us in that, “WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, Christ died for us.” Rom. 5, 8. “Christ died for the UNGODLY.” V. 6. “When we were ENEMIES, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.” V. 10.

All these just quoted words of Holy Scripture say as plainly and distinctly, as human language can say anything, that in the death of Jesus Christ is revealed to us the love of God for sinners. To be quite exact,

however, it is not that death on Calvary, viewed by itself alone, that leads us to the knowledge of God's great love for sinful man. But it is that death as explained and interpreted by God Himself. It is from such words as those quoted at the beginning of this chapter, that we learn the real meaning of the death of Christ, and are given a glimpse of the wonderful love of God, who for our sakes gave His Son into such a death. The cross of Christ, his bitter suffering and His shameful death, must never be viewed apart from the Word of God that explains and interprets it to our minds and hearts, which are by nature always inclined to a wrong understanding of the things concerning Jesus Christ and our soul's salvation through His name. 1. Cor. 2, 4. To use the words of St. Paul, it is "the preaching of the cross." 1. Cor. 1, 18, from which we learn to know about our Saviour's dying love and of the Father, who sent Him and delivered Him up for us all. Rom. 8, 32. The mere fact that Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross, without any words to explain that fact and reveal its true significance, could never have brought anyone to see in it a manifestation of God's love for sinners. On the contrary, it would rather have caused men to accuse God of injustice and cruelty in permitting what even Pilate knew to be judicial murder, the putting to death of an innocent man, and that in a most painful and dishonorable manner.

How little of God's love for sinners the unconverted man sees in the death of Christ, as symbolised by the cross, was brought home to us very recently by a quotation we met with in our reading. "The cross," so says this modern writer, "compares poorly with the crescent of Mohammed. The slender arc of the new moon

has in it the element of hope; it will wax into a great and glowing orb. But the cross can only suggest torture and death. There is no cross or blood in the teaching of Confucius or Buddha, and a religion featuring an instrument of torture for its superiority makes slow progress in heathen minds. A real Reformation would restore the living Christ (a 'good' man, by following whose lofty teaching and bright example men could save themselves!—G.C.K.), banish the cruel cross, and take for its guidance the shining star. Did not the Wise Men say, 'We have seen His star in the East and are come to worship Him?' (1.).

Our answer to such foolish and blasphemous talk are the words of the holy apostle Paul, who writes: "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2. Cor. 4, 3. 4. It is this same apostle who writes in his first epistle to the Corinthians: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," 1. Cor. 2, 2, and who to his Galatians makes the confession: "Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me and given Himself (into death!) for me." Gal. 2, 20. And so St. Paul in unmistakable words tells us that the death of the Son of God, who was crucified on Calvary, is a manifestation of His love. "**He has LOVED me and given Himself for me!**" "He has died for me on the cruel, accursed cross, because He loved me! His bitter death is His own most powerful and most winning



## THE LOVE OF GOD FOR SINNERS.

proof of His great love for me." That is the language of every true believer. And that faith which finds voice in such words, would never have been found on earth, neither in St. Paul nor in any other sinner, had it not been for the fact that in the death of Jesus Christ, truthfully interpreted, God did reveal His love for the bond slaves of sin and death. And so the Christian, so far from being ashamed of the cross and abhorring it as a mere "instrument of torture," sings from a thankful and adoring heart:

"In the cross of Christ I glory,  
    Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
    Gathers round its head sublime."

It is because of the love of God, as revealed on Calvary, that we believe and sing:

"Thy great love for this hath striven,  
    That we may from sin be free,  
    And rejoice eternally;  
Yea, Thy Son Himself hath given,  
    And extends an earnest call  
    To His supper unto all." 349,2.

From what we have so far said, and especially from the clear words of Holy Scripture, it should be sufficiently evident that the death of our Saviour was indeed a revelation of God's love for sinners. But in spiritual things, even with so wonderfully sweet a subject as that of God's love for us, we are not so open-eyed, not so quick at seeing all there is actually con-

tained in the words we read, as we are when our own temporal interests, pleasures, and honors are concerned. It will not be superfluous, therefore, if we dwell a little longer on this subject and meditate on several aspects of this love of God as revealed by the death of His Son. To get as near as possible to a right conception of the magnitude of this love, we should, first of all, consider the greatness of Him who in the death of Christ commends to us His love. Rom. 5. When a poor, squalid beggar of vicious habits, an outcast from society, shows that he loves us, our old Adam feels somewhat pleased and flattered, but we get rid of the beggar as soon as we can, and feel inclined to hide from our more respectable friends any knowledge of our intercourse with him. Such is the way of the world, and our own natural heart is no better. When, however, a very great and honored man shows us special attention, singles us out for his particular friendship, and gives us unmistakable tokens of his love, ah, that is a quite different matter! Our pride is flattered; our self-esteem is heightened; we poor fools lift up our heads and are eager to let everyone know that Mr. So and So, or Sir This and That, or Lord Somebody is our friend. In our conversation we drag him in by the hair, as it were. Everybody we talk with must be made acquainted with the wonderful story that one who is something in the eyes of the world has thought us worthy of his friendship and his love. O yes, it does make a difference, whether he who shows that he loves us is great or small; a man that is honored or a man that is despised. Even true believers are not free from the weakness of making the most, before others, of their friendships among the honorable of this world,

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who are mere sinful men and usually honored far beyond their true deserts. The wonder of it all is this, that Christians should not make much more of the incomparably greater fact that **God** loves them; that they should, on the contrary, feel inclined to hide **this** love from their friends, as though God were a vile beggar to be ashamed of. How this only too frequent attitude of God's own children must appear in the sight of Him who gave His glorious Son to die for them on the cross! For it was God's very own Son that died for us, was it not? It is God Himself who by that death shows His love for us. Let us face this fact. Let us fix our mind's best and closest attention on this stupendous fact. Let this fact sink into our very souls and let our hearts grasp it and hold it and cherish it as the most wonderful thing that has ever come to us; as the most precious and glorious possession that a human soul can ever have in time and in eternity.

Yes, it is **God** that loves us. It is God, the almighty Creator of earth and sun and moon and stars. It is He who is infinitely greater than this great and wonderful universe, which by the power of His will and by the greatness of His wisdom He has made out of nothing! He whose love for sinners was revealed on Calvary is the almighty Preserver of all things, who carries the earth in the hollow of His hand; who prescribed and who maintains the course and order in which the mighty heavenly bodies shall run, and without whose sovereign will they would vanish and be no more. It is He of whose power the loudest peals of thunder and the deepest roar of a storm-tossed sea are but faint echoes; and whose might and majesty are but dimly mirrored in the grandest mountains that

rise in awful silence above the clouds, towering heavenward, and by their very grandeur and sublimity compelling puny man to bend his knee and worship their Creator.

The God whose love for sinners stands revealed by that death on Calvary is He of whom Moses, the man of God, wrote the grand words: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or even Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God." Ps. 90, 2.

That God who has so wonderfully manifested His love for men is He of whom the Psalmist says: "O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether." Verily, if we did not know that this God loveth us in Christ Jesus, and if we did not by true faith take shelter under such love, we should not know where to turn before His all-seeing eyes, especially when we consider that He is also a holy God and a just, who according to His holiness hates all sin, and according to His justice cannot but punish all transgressors. But it is the **holy God** who has in the death of Jesus Christ revealed His love for sinners, while He in that same death gave evidence to all the world of His hatred for sin by letting His own Son feel the curse that rests upon it. It is the **just God** who on Golgotha manifests His infinite love for the ungodly, for it was His **justice that punished** with terrible severity the sin of the world, after His **love** had taken it, its guilt and responsibility, from the sin-

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ners and placed it upon His own dear Son. 2 Cor. 2, 19-21.

The God who gave on Calvary the highest manifestation of His love for sinners is Love itself. God is love. Love is His very nature. But He is God, and God is infinite. And so His love is infinite. It knows no bounds or limitations. Like a full and mighty tide it flows forever toward the objects of its holy desire. It is inexhaustible. It can never fail. It can never change. For God is love. It is sweet and pure, holy as God is holy; it is deep as eternity and higher than the heavens. It is brighter than noonday, yet it blindeth not. It is warmer than the sun, yet it scorcheth not, but gladdens the soul of man and fills it with a happiness that human words can never tell. And it is in that cruel and shameful death on the cross that this God of love revealed Himself to men; that this love of God found its deepest and highest and mightiest expression.

Why this is so, will become more clear to us, as we now fix our attention on those whom God so loves that in order to deliver them from death He spares not His only Son. Who are they? Are they angels of heaven, beautiful in holiness, swift to do His bidding, pleasing in His sight, joyfully responding to His love? No, they are not angels of heaven. It is not for such as these that God manifests His great love on Calvary. Are they, then, holy men and women and children, sinless creatures, who live before Him in glad obedience and are happy in the sunshine of His fatherly love? No, those for whom the Son of God dies on the cross are not holy people, are not sinless creatures, in whom God's holy nature could de-

light, and who on their part answer love with love. But certainly they are the best possible people on earth, the noblest, the purest, the saintliest that the human race has produced? No, they are not such, Christ did not die for the noble and pure and saintly. Not for such as these did God manifest His wonderful love when He gave up His only begotten Son into that terrible death on Golgotha. Moreover, the human race has never since the Fall "produced" any man woman or child that was truly noble, pure and saintly. There is among Adam's children, no difference; they all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Rom. 3, 22. 23. It is contrary to the Word of God; it is not in keeping with fact that God loves **unconverted men** because of anything good and amiable in themselves. For in His holy sight there is in them nothing but evil. Whatever of genuine goodness and purity and saintliness there may at this moment be found in **any** human heart or have dwelt in human hearts since the Fall, is not, and never was, there by nature or from birth; nor was it "produced" by the human race in any other possible manner or degree as, for instance, by environment, **by** example, or by education. No, indeed! Let us not be deceived by what unbelievers may say and teach, preach, and write of the natural "goodness" of the human heart; of the inherited "nobility" of the human soul; of all the "moral improvement" that can be brought about by education **apart from the preaching of the Gospel**. The fact is quite otherwise; and this fact must be maintained over against all who ignore or openly deny it. And what is this fact? It is this: Since the days of Adam all men's hearts have been in God's sight only evil continually. This has

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been sufficiently set forth and proved from Holy Writ in chapters III. and IV. of this book. There is positively no room for "boasting" in the holy presence of God. Not even Mary, the mother of Jesus, can stand before Him in her own virtue and merits. She, too, was conceived and born in sin. Scripture allows of no exception. "There is no difference all have sinned." "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5, 12.

By all possible means the Church of Rome is trying to lead men to accept her false doctrine concerning Mary, whom she has gradually raised to a position almost equal with God! This is not the place to enter into a discussion of this important matter. We merely wish to draw attention to the doings of Rome and warn our readers against the insidious influence Rome is exerting in favour of Mary worship, especially by means of the gramophone. Some of Rome's most pernicious doctrines have been given expression in very exquisite and captivating music, sung by some of the world's best singers. Lutherans or, for that matter, any other true believers in Christ must not permit themselves or their children to be led into fatal error by the strains of beautiful music. They must let the Word of God be their guide, also in this respect. Thus when we hear an "Ave Maria" sung, we may love and praise the music, but we must condemn the error in the words of anthem, hymn, or song. We have heard a beautiful voice sing in a perfect manner, and with deep feeling, words like these. "Had I but Mary's sinless heart to love Thee with my dearest kin." The music was attractive; the voice sympathetic; the subject sweet and solemn; the desire for a sinless heart is the desire and

longing of every true child of God. But to make Mary the pattern of holiness to strive after, and not the Lord Jesus (Phil. 2); to say that she had a sinless heart, is a very grave and dangerous error which we must condemn while we approve of the music. Generally speaking, it would be well to exclude such music from the Christian home. For error has a way of stealing into the heart, in company with something naturally attractive, such as sweet strains of devotional music or the persuasive tones of a pleasing human voice.

But we must return to our subject. That is the love of God as shown on Calvary, concerning which we read: "God commendeth (shows, proves) His love toward us, in that **while we were yet sinners** Christ died for us." Rom. 5, 8. It is very difficult, even for true believers who have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, to get into their minds an adequate idea of that love for sinners which from the cross of Christ shines forth and out into a world of selfishness; which like a great beacon light flames heavenward, to all sin-weary voyagers of time a welcome token of the Father's love, and a sure pledge of home and rest and happiness in His heavenly mansions for ever. God proves His love toward us by giving His Son into death for "**sinners**"; for the "**ungodly**"; for His "**enemies!**"

Apart from the Holy Spirit's renewing work in our hearts and lives, which is an **effect** of that love which we see revealed on Calvary, and not a cause of it, there is nothing in human life that can even remotely be compared with the love of God as proved by the death of Jesus Christ, with that

"Love divine, earth's loves excelling,  
Love from heaven to earth come down."



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We have no human standards by which we could measure this love. According to our natural way of thinking and feeling we love those who love us. We love those to whom we feel ourselves drawn by some attractiveness of face or form or character. We love those who have won our hearts by kindness and all manner of tokens of personal regard. We love those who have proved their love for us by some form of self-denial, some sacrifice in our behalf. We love those who are of our way of thinking; who at least make an earnest effort to understand us; who in true sympathy weep with us in our sorrow and without envy rejoice with us in our prosperity. . We love those who in our absence speak well of us, promote our interests, and defend us against the slanderous tongues of our adversaries. In short, we love our friends, and our friends love us—to a certain extent and with varying degrees of attachment. But, however beautiful this earthly, natural, human love may seem to be, when seen and considered in the light of Calvary it shrivels up into something very small and narrow and selfish, very ugly and unholy. If properly examined and probed to the very bottom this natural human love and friendship will be found to contain but very slight traces of true love, the essence of which is unselfishness expressed in sacrifice, an unselfishness that seeks no acknowledgment and a sacrifice that is content to remain unrecognised and unrewarded! All natural human love is either a matter of blood ties (parents and children) or of reciprocity. Love unreturned becomes indifference and even hatred. The pathway of most human lives is strewn with the dead leaves and withered flowers of loves and friendships that are no more. Eyes that once looked fondly and trustingly into each

other's depths, understanding without words the call of soul to soul and answering love with love, are now cold and indifferent, when they happen to meet, or even flash forth envy and jealousy and bitter hatred and disdain.

The world makes much of a mother's love. Of all natural human loves it is the purest and sweetest, the strongest and most constant. But experience teaches that even a mother's love for her own child can fail and turn to indifference, if not to actual hatred. And how about a mother's attitude towards the children of other women, women who are not her relatives or friends, and whose children are moreover naturally unlovely: ugly in face, dirty in habit, vicious in character? How much will the fondest mother love these other children, especially if they on their part show no appreciation of her love, but are continually ungrateful and doing all in their power to frustrate all her kind and self-sacrificing efforts at mothering them? How much and how long will she really love them? Many a mother has gone to an early death for the sake of her own offspring. Would these same mothers have given their lives for the children of their enemies, for children who were not their own flesh and blood, and who, on their part, despised all sacrifices made on their behalf? So far as we are acquainted with the history of the human race, such a thing has never happened. We are, moreover, quite certain that such a thing can never happen outside of Grace, that is, apart from the Christian love which comes into the human heart by the power of that love which is revealed on Calvary. For we are not now speaking of the world, as the love of God, to some extent at least, has made it by the preaching of the cross, but we are

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looking at the world of men and women, as God found it—that world for which Christ died. He died for us “while we were yet sinners.” He died for the “ungodly.” He died for His “enemies.” We must make an earnest effort to get away from the false notion as though Christ had died for us, as we now are, true Christians, and also from the wrong idea that He died for those only whom in His omniscience He saw entering His fold and serving Him in faith and love in the days to come. Oh, no! He died also for all those who, as He knew, would never accept His sacrifice; who would always be indifferent to His great love’s appeal. He died even for those whose bitter and lasting opposition to His work, whose persistent enmity against His person, He foresaw. He died also for those who, He knew, would mock at His love and ridicule His sacrifice, and trample on the blood that was shed for **their own redemption** no less than for that of all other sinners. “He is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice, das Suehnpfer) for our sins; and **not for ours only**, but also for the sins of the whole world.” 1 John, 2, 2. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God that bears, and in bearing (suffering its punishment) takes away, the sin of the world! John 1, 29.

It is this world of sinners, of the ungodly, of His enemies, that God loves. His love for men was not awakened and attracted toward them by anything good or sweet or lovely in themselves. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” 1. John, 4, 10. The whole world, ourselves included, is by nature a world of sinners, of ungodly people, of enemies of the Most High. Even at the risk of being accused of

saying some things too often, we say again that this fact must be faced and realised and grasped with mind and heart, if we are to understand anything concerning the love of God as shown and proved by the death of Jesus, Christ. We are too prone to think ourselves not quite so bad as these pages tell us that we are. We do not like to be classed with "ungodly people" and "enemies of the Most High." Our old Adam objects to such language as applied to our "respectable" selves. He is inclined to call such words "extreme," (exaggerated), "uebertrieben," etc.; but we are not going to let the old Adam have a say in matters that he does not, and will not, and cannot understand. I. Cor. 2, 14. We are going to listen, not to the opinions of the writer of these lines, for he is not so vain and so foolish as to offer any of his opinions on these matters, but we are going to listen attentively to the truth of God, who knows infinitely better than the wisest old Adam what this same old Adam's character really is like. We are in some danger of judging the world too favourably especially when our life has been lived in a Christian environment, when all our days we have enjoyed the blessings of a Christian home and true Christian fellowship with our friends and neighbours. That in a Christian home sin is also more or less in evidence, we do not and cannot deny; but we feel somewhat wronged in ourselves and in our friends, when we are told that we are "ungodly people" and "enemies of the Most High." A dear old lady once told the writer that he must not compare our present Christians with those of Corinth in St. Paul's time. We, in this "enlightened" age were much better people than those

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among whom the holy apostle laboured. Dear old soul! She had forgotten her catechism, which in her childhood she had learnt by heart, and no doubt often repeated, but never really understood. We are referring to the words of the Second Article, where we read that Jesus Christ, God's and Mary's Son, "has redeemed me, a **LOST AND CONDEMNED CREATURE.**" Could St. Paul's Corinthians have been much worse? And again in the Third Article: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him." Could the Corinthians have had any less spiritual strength of their own? The fact is that we did not say the **Christians** are ungodly people or enemies of God. To say that would have been very incorrect, and a gross reflection on the blessed work of the Holy Spirit within the heart of all true Christians. What we did say was that by **NATURE** all men are "sinners," "ungodly," and "enemies of the Most High." Does not St. Paul himself write to the Ephesian Christians, saying: "**We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**"? And to the Colossians he writes: "You that were sometime (i.e., formerly, before their conversion) alienated and **ENEMIES** in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death." Col. 1, 21. Futhermore, what in the following words the apostle has to say to the Christians at Ephesus applies with equal emphasis to all Christians of all times, as far as their natural condition is concerned, apart from the blessed influence of the preaching of the cross, the Word of Life. Now what does St. Paul have to say to his dear Ephesian Christians. This: "And you hath He quickened (i.e., made alive, raised from the dead!),

who were **DEAD** in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked **ACCORDING TO THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD**, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that **NOW** worketh in the children of disobedience (unbelievers), among whom also **WE ALL** (who are now Christians!) had our conversation (our daily life) in times past in the lusts of the flesh and of the mind." Eph. 2, 1-3. Comment on these words should be unnecessary. Christians who have been born into a Christian home must remember that they were not born Christians, but that they came into this world as corpses, spiritual corpses, dead in sin. Even before they had any consciousness of their own existence; while the fond parents, the aunts and uncles, and neighbours generally were watching, with more or less interest the gradual development of the dear little baby, the innocent, sweet little "angel"—yes even then, those who by the grace of God and by the power of the love manifested on Calvary are now Christians, were dead in sin. Not that they had done any evil action, or spoken a sinful word, or even thought an unholy thought, but their little hearts were evil, and not good; the poison of moral corruption was in their souls; they were dead in reference to communion with God; they were sinful beings and in the power of the prince of darkness. But, we hear someone say, the child was baptised soon after birth, and therefore your words do not apply to a Christian child. We answer, you who make that remark, are obscuring the point at issue. We ask you, why was the child baptised? You reply, "Because it was conceived and born in sin." True, all children are by nature, by the very fact of conception and birth, "children of wrath." The

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Son of God died also for their sin, for the impurity and depravity of their hearts. This, too, is guilt in the eyes of God. This hereditary guilt (Erbschuld), the Saviour took upon Himself. Also for this He suffered and for this He died. In baptism, the forgiveness of sins in His name is applied and sealed to the little children. They are by baptism placed into living communion with Him and His vicarious death, suffered also on their behalf, and thus they are no longer children of wrath, but children of God through Jesus Christ. The point to be especially observed here is that the children of Christian parents are by nature no better than the children of non-Christian parents; that there is not in them from birth, by transmission from their parents, any spiritual life whatever. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." John 3, 6. By the word "flesh" is meant the natural depravity, the sinful corruption of the human heart. And "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. 8, 8. In the sight of the holy God, a new-born child that "innocent little darling," is not a pleasing thing. For He cannot but see the corruption within; the spiritual death in which it is born; the dark and terrible power of sin that as yet indeed lies sleeping in the infant's little breast, but which will only too soon awaken and exercise itself to the surprise and consternation of a fond but foolish mother, an indifferent father, or a doting, ignorant aunt. They will not listen to us when we tell them how very bad their children are from birth. They refuse to see them in the light of God's holy truth. But often, when it is too late to undo the mischief their foolish sentimentality and pampering treatment of the child has caused, they come to the minister of the Gospel and

with equally foolish expectations desire him to set right in a few months what has become evil character, established by years of wrong training.

But we must not, at the present, pursue this highly important topic further, lest we lose sight of the main theme now under consideration. Jesus Christ died for sinners. The love of God manifested by the death of His Son is a love shown to sinners. Among these sinners are all little children born into this world! Let us remember that. Let us make a determined effort to get away from the foolish and sinful imagination of our pharisaic old Adam, as though we Christians were by nature nearer to God than the heathen who worship their idols of wood or stone; as though we had in some possible way or in the slightest possible degree **merited** God's love or **deserved** a more favorable treatment than the most abandoned wretch in darkest heathendom. We daily have before our eyes what God's **GRACE** in Jesus Christ has accomplished, and we very foolishly ascribe it to **NATURE** ("good birth," "environment," "education," etc.). We see round about us and notice within us the wonderful **EFFECTS** (Wirkungen) of our Saviour's dying love, and ungratefully give the credit to men, or seek to find it in ourselves, while it is all due to the cross of Christ and the preaching of that cross as the highest revelation of God's love for sinners. We are like people who, seeing the sun rise in his splendour, imagine that it rises, because they are pleased to look at it, instead of coming to the very sensible, conclusion that they are looking to it, because he is rising and by the power and glory of his light has attracted their attention. The Son of God has loved us unto death, not because we were so good, but because we



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were so desperately bad, that nothing less than His death could help us. On Calvary, God proves His wonderful love for sinners, for the ungodly; for His enemies.

Those among our readers who have not yet awakened from their spiritual slumbers to a proper knowledge of sin; who do not realise as they should their own pitiable and dangerous condition with reference to God; who still feel fairly secure in the consciousness of their own rectitude of conduct and who, therefore, have not yet from a truly humbled heart sent up to the throne of Grace the prayer of the publican: "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18, 13)—all these cannot understand why we so often and with so much emphasis place before their eyes and minds the fact that Jesus Christ died for sinners and for the ungodly; that by suffering the most shameful and agonising death He proved His own as well as His Father's divine love for their **enemies**. But all those who have at least in some degree experienced the terrors of an awakened conscience are eager to hear and to read again and again these very words, this heavenly assurance: Christ died for sinners; God proves His love toward the sinners and the ungodly by sending His own Son to die for them. Their soul is athirst for God's forgiveness. They find no rest until they are fully satisfied that God's just anger is removed from them, that there is peace between themselves and Him. With David they have cried out: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Ps. 42, 1-2. And from the cross on Calvary's hill has ever and again come the heavenly answer, the divinely

sweet assurance. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Jer. 31, 3. "The measure and the proof of My love for you is this cross, this death, this sacrifice which I make to set you free!"

Could even God do more? Is there any other possible way in which He could have given to sinners a greater proof of His love for them? Think it over with us, dear reader. In the person of Jesus Christ, God Himself enters this earthly sphere of human life. He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2, 7. He shoulders the burdens of our common humanity from infancy to manhood. He enters, with true and deep sympathy, into all the labors, trials, sorrows, and bereavements of His brethren according to the flesh. He weeps with them that weep; He rejoices with them that do rejoice (though without sin). He lives a life of poverty and humble retirement from the world. And when at last, after thirty years of self-denying earthly pilgrimage, He appears on the scene of public life, He is but slightly regarded by those whose word was the people's law. In the carnal, worldly, proud eyes of men in general "He hath no form nor comeliness. . . . He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Is. 53, 2, 3. At the very outset of His public ministry we hear the voice of His messenger, John the Baptist, saying aloud to all the people around: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1, 29. These words pointed unmistakably to cross and cruel death. He knew Himself to be that Lamb of which Isaiah had spoken (Is. 53). The shadow of the cross had no doubt been upon His

human soul from the outset, though it must be remembered that according to His human nature He grew both in body and soul. We are expressly told that He "increased in wisdom." Luke 2, 52. Without inquiring further as to whether even in His childhood the Lord was always humanly conscious of the death that awaited Him, we are quite certain that this was the case from the beginning of His public ministry. "Behold the Lamb of God," John had said, and not very long after this, in the first year of our Lord's public life, we hear Him saying to Nicodemus: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up (crucified): That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3, 14. 15. Let us think a little and consider what this knowledge of His own cruel and shameful impending death must have meant to Him. How His sinless soul must have abhorred such a death! How His pure and sinless body must have shrunk in horror from such torture, such cruel bitter pain as He knew was in store for Him! That accursed tree was always before Him. He was every day and hour of those three years, at least, suffering in anticipation the agonies of the cross. The burden of the whole world's sin, the guilt and the curse of God resting upon sin, the punishment for all sin: all this was upon His soul day and night. Could He have borne anything more? Was there anything more to bear? Was there anything else that kept the world of sinners from re-union with God than the world's sin? No, there was not; and Jesus Christ bore upon His own soul and conscience the whole world's sin, with all its guilt and curse and shame. This is a tremendously great statement. But it is after all a very

weak and unsatisfactory expression of the divinely great fact that "GOD was in Christ reconciling the WORLD unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5, 19.

We ask again: Could God do more to show to a fallen race His divine love and His most passionate desire to save sinners? Has He not given into a shameful death the best and dearest, the holiest and most glorious being that He could possibly give? "GOD SPARED NOT HIS OWN SON!" "GOD SO LOVED the world that He gave His only-begotten Son!" This Son is true God, is of the same divine essence and being as the Father. "GOD was in Christ." O mystery of divine love, we cannot fathom thee. No human length of line can plumb Thy depth. We cannot reach up to thy height. The strongest pinions of human thought are not able to rise high enough to view Thy full dimensions!

The eternal Lord of Glory, the high and holy God, enters into a personal union with human kind. God, in Jesus Christ, stoops down from His seat of heavenly majesty, takes upon Himself the awful and loathsome burden of the whole world's vileness, and godlessness, and transgression, and iniquity, carries all sin and guilt in His own body up to the cross, nails it there, suffers its full penalty, dies as an accursed one on the accursed tree! Thus has God's love for sinners proved itself. If the measure of love is the sacrifice it is willing to make and does make—and it is— then from this sacrifice on Calvary we get at least an approximate idea of God's love for sinners. **GOD SACRIFICED HIS BEST.** The **LORD OF GLORY** gave Himself into a most shameful death in order to save from eternal shame—His enemies. God's only-begotten,

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well-beloved Son dies under the curse, that the children of wrath might inherit the promised blessing. Gen. 22, 18. The eternal Son of the Father sheds His precious blood as a ransom (Loesegeld) for the prisoners of eternal death, and thus opens for them the way to everlasting life.

“O wondrous love, whose depth no heart hath sounded,  
That brought Thee here by foes and thieves surround-  
ed.

O mighty King, no time can dim Thy glory!  
How shall I spread abroad Thy wondrous story?”

This “wondrous story” is another term for Gospel. The Gospel is the story of Jesus and his love for sinners; of the Father’s love that gave Him into death for the ungodly. The heart of the Gospel is this death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the sinless Substitute of us all; and the greatest thing about this death is the divine love that it shows and proves to us and to all that do not, in Satanic blindness, refuse to see it and rejoice in it. And lest the enemy of souls, always lying in wait to undo the work of his conqueror, should twist these words and, if possible, rob some despairing soul of the help and blessing we have laboured to put before him, we feel constrained to say deliberately and in words that even the Devil shall not be able to wrest from their intended meaning: that the love of God as shown to the world by the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, comprehends and includes also those who now reject it; who now despise and ridicule it; who now treat it with mockery and scorn. Even for such as these may come the blessed day, when the surpassing

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power and sweetness of this love of God, so manifested, will by means of the "wondrous story," the preaching of the Gospel, open their eyes to see its beauty, and make their hearts willing and eager to receive its heavenly consolation. It is the Father's loving desire, the Son's dearest wish, that also such as these should come to the fountain of love and pardon and peace, concerning which all true believers say and sing:—

"Grace, fathomless as the sea;  
Grace flowing from Calvary;  
Grace enough for eternity;  
Grace enough for me."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD—THE DIVINE SEAL OF THE GOSPEL.

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So far we have said very little concerning our Lord's resurrection. We did not, however, keep silent in reference to this subject, because we considered it to be, as so many modern teachers do, of little importance. On the contrary, we hold and believe, teach and confess with the holy apostle: "that Christ rose again the third day according to the Scriptures," and that this resurrection is of the highest possible importance for our faith and life. For if the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, may be called the heart of the Gospel, His resurrection can be said to be its very life, its divine seal and confirmation, its glorious crown. The Gospel is a proclamation of the grace of God in Christ Jesus; the glad tidings of pardon and peace through the blood of our crucified Redeemer; the declaration of a perfect righteousness by which sinners can stand unafraid and uncondemned in the judgment of the holy God—a righteousness procured for them by the death of their sinless Substitute, even the Son of God. But if it had not been for the resurrection of our Saviour, the previous chapter on His death could never have been written. All that we know, and to our eternal comfort by the grace of God believe, concerning that great sacrificial death on the cross, we know and

believe and hold fast because of the resurrection of that same Jesus Christ. Why this is so, we shall very clearly see as this wonderful subject is unfolded before our eyes.

We do not intend to enter upon anything like an exhaustive treatment of the resurrection. That would be quite impossible within the limits of one chapter in a little book like this. The subject is so very great and many-sided, and it touches upon life and death, time and eternity at so many points and from so many different angles, that even a large book, devoted to it exclusively, would not be able to do it full justice. But we trust that from what we here shall say on the resurrection of our blessed Redeemer, the reader will at least be impressed with the vital importance of this glorious fact in reference to the Gospel, and, therefore, to His own highest interest, both for time and eternity.

Our Saviour is a **LIVING** Saviour. It is not merely His influence that lives on, by the means of the wonderful story of His life and death. Thus, for instance, many other great men, long since dead, are said to live on in their works and in their words transmitted to us in their writings. In this manner, the great Greek teachers, Plato and Aristotle, and the Roman writers, Cicero and Seneca, and many others live on and exert a powerful influence on many minds by means of their writings, which have come down to us. It is not in this sense that we speak of Jesus Christ as a living Saviour. Some so-called Christian teachers do, but they are no Christians in the true sense of that word. Neither does our Saviour live merely as to His soul, His human soul that in dying on the cross He commended into His Father's hands and which went, with that of the Thief on the cross, to Paradise. For in



## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

this manner innumerable souls are now living before their God, together with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with the poor Lazarus and the Thief on the cross. Their souls live, but their bodies have returned to earth and mingled with the dust. There they will remain until the last trumpet shall sound, when they shall be raised again to life by the almighty power of Him who rose from the dead on the third day after His crucifixion. If our Lord's body had remained in the grave, we could not say that He lives in the sense that we do say it. He would be dead; as dead as are, for instance, the two great religious leaders, Confucius, who died in 479 before Christ, and Mohammed, who died more than a thousand years later, in 632 A.D. Their influence lives on; their words are still on many men's tongues and exert an influence on countless lives. And their souls have not been annihilated; neither have they become a part of the "great world spirit," losing their personal and individual identity. Their souls live. But they themselves, these men, who lived and labored here on earth so long ago, they are dead. Their bodies are dust, until He, who rose from the dead shall call also their dust from its hidden places; even He, who is so often named in the same breath with these poor mortals, erring children of time and death and decay!

When we say that Jesus Christ lives, we use the word "lives" in the common everyday meaning of that term. He lives, even as he now lives who is writing these words. He lives, even as you, dear reader, are at this moment a living man or woman, youth or maiden. Let us not permit anyone to twist this word from its commonly accepted meaning. The body and the soul of Jesus Christ were after death re-united, never-

more to part. Rom. 6, 9. The Son of God is now alive, not only according to His divine nature, but also according to His human nature. It is even Jesus of Nazareth, Mary's son, that is bodily alive at this moment, and will be so forever. His body is no longer in the grave. It did not see corruption and did, therefore, not return to earth. Acts 2, 27-32. His human soul came back from "Paradise," re-entered His human body, and from the grave, from Joseph's tomb, there came forth the same Man who had died on the cross. The risen Christ had in His hands and feet and side the marks of His suffering, and the memorials of His death. John 20, 20. It was no new body, specially created, but the very same body that had been nailed to the cross as a sacrifice for the world's sin. It was the body of the Lamb of God that had been slain for sinners. It was the body of our own sinless Substitute, who had given Himself into death on account of our sin, but who had come forth from the grave, a victor over death, and is alive forevermore. Rev. 1, 18.

"Death could not keep his prey,  
 Jesus, my Saviour;  
 Christ tore the bars away  
 Jesus, my Lord!"

To Christian readers all this is a very familiar story. But do we always remember that we are here in the presence of an historical fact? And do we always realise, as we should, that this fact is of the utmost importance for ourselves and for all other children of Adam? Could we, at a moment's notice, show an anxious enquirer how the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead stands in vital relation to the forgiveness

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of sins, and our peace with God? And do we draw from the resurrection of our Saviour that comfort and strength, that life, and joy and hope which are therein contained? In any case it will be very much worth while to consider anew at least those aspects of our Lord's resurrection which most nearly concern us in our Christian faith and life. To begin, then, let us become reassured that—

### I.—THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS AN HISTORICAL FACT.

When we say that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is an "historical fact," we mean by these words to tell the reader that it really and truly happened on this earth in the course of human history; that it is as much a fact as, for instance, the battle of Waterloo in 1815, or the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. It is, of course, very much more than a mere historical fact. But of that we shall hear later. The importance of the bodily resurrection of our Saviour as an historical fact has not been overlooked by the enemies of our most holy religion. They have ever recognised in the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ the keystone of the Christian faith, and on that account have done their utmost to break this keystone out of the arch of Christian teaching, and so bring down into ruin the whole structure of the Christian religion. But the keystone remains in the arch unmoved. A fact is a fact, and "facts are stubborn things."

Were we to place before the reader all the evidence for this fact of our Lord's bodily resurrection, we should weary him beyond endurance; he would give up reading before he were half finished. There is no

## LAW AND GOSPEL.

other historical fact so well attested. And yet it is not only possible or probable that members of the Christian Church may be ignorant of it, but there are some who actually deny and ridicule it as "unreasonable" and "against nature" and so forth. If it were not for such as these we should have assumed the fact as sufficiently well known, and at once dealt with its significance. "But," some of our readers might feel inclined to say, "is it possible that any member of the Christian Church should be ignorant of the fact that our Saviour rose from the dead on the third day?" For the benefit of such readers, we will here relate a little story, a true story, of a conversation we ourselves had many years ago with a member of a Lutheran Church of our own synod. It was Passion week, a few days before Easter. The woman referred to announced to us her desire of going to the Lord's table on Maundy Thursday evening (Gruendonnerstag). Our conversation drifted toward Easter and the Lord's resurrection. We emphasised the fact that Jesus came forth from His grave with the same body that had died on the cross, and we were painfully surprised to hear this "Christian" woman ridicule the very idea of a bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. We need hardly state that she did not go to the Lord's table that week, nor, as far as we know, ever after. She was certainly not ignorant of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. She knew the words of the Creed: "The third day He rose again from the dead." She knew these words, but that is all. She had not realised that these words are meant to express a **FACT**. And so it is with not a few Christians, so-called. They know words; they repeat words; they say their prayers in so many mere

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words! It has not dawned on their minds that the words they use have a meaning; that they are signs of **THINGS**; that they denote great **FACTS** and glorious **TRUTHS**. It seems never to have occurred to them that when the whole Christian Church on earth confesses, "The third day He rose again from the dead," she means to let the whole world know about that great and comforting **FACT**: our Lord's body resurrection from the dead.

This fact is very clearly and forcibly stated by an eye-witness of unimpeachable character, one who had often seen Jesus after His resurrection, had eaten and spoken with Him many times during a space of forty days, and who at last died a most cruel death in consequence of witnessing to a risen Saviour; a man, moreover, who was naturally inclined to moral cowardice, and who had, **before** the Lord's death, actually denied Him three times, because he had feared for his life; **but** who now, about seven weeks **after** that death, stood boldly forth and before a great gathering of people, the same people who had crucified the Saviour, made the following declaration: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him being delivered (given over) by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be holden of it (held by it) . . . Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre

is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to Him, that of the fruit of His loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on His throne; He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell (separated from the body!), **NEITHER HIS FLESH DID SEE CORRUPTION.** This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made **THAT SAME JESUS, WHOM YE HAVE CRUCIFIED,** both Lord and Christ (by His resurrection and ascension)." Acts 2, 22-36.

Could Peter have spoken these words; could he have braved the bitter and powerful opposition of the Great Council of the Jews, who had so recently put the Saviour to death; could he for so many years, and in great self-denial, have testified to his Lord's resurrection and at last sealed such testimony with his own life blood; could he have done this, if the Lord had **not** risen bodily from the grave; if His death on the cross had been the **end** of His career? Let the doubter of the fact of the resurrection come forward with a **reasonable** explanation of the Apostle Peter: his words, his labours, his sufferings, and his martyr's death, on the supposition that Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead! Let him make an honest effort to explain that one fact, the Apostle Peter, from Pentecost to his death, **apart** from the fact of the resurrection. So far no unbeliever has succeeded in doing this. Attempts to do so have been made by many foolish minds, but they have failed and must ever be vain and futile; for without the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ an apostle Peter, as

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we know him, would be impossible and unthinkable.

What applies to St. Peter, applies with even greater emphasis to his great fellow-apostle, St. Paul, the former enemy and persecutor of the Church of Christ. What could have brought this proud Pharisee, this fiery zealot for Judaism, to the feet of Jesus, making him the greatest and the most successful messenger of the cross, and the boldest and most powerful witness of the resurrection—what could have done this if not the fact that the risen Lord appeared to him on the way to Damascus, and made him henceforth a witness to the resurrection?

Let us hear a few words of this same apostle, Paul, concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, written about twenty-five years after the death of Christ, he writes as follows: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that **HE ROSE AGAIN** the third day, according to the Scriptures (i.e., the Old Test. prophecies!), and that He was seen of Cephas (Peter), then of the twelve. After that He was **seen** of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain (alive unto this present time of writing), but some are fallen asleep (have died). After that he was **seen** of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all He was **seen** of me also." 1. Cor. 15, 3-8. These words should be familiar to most of our readers. They form part of the epistle lesson read in our churches on the eleventh Sunday after Trinity. The evidence contained in these words for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, considered as an historical fact, is very weighty indeed. Four

times the apostle uses the little word "seen." The risen Saviour was "seen" by one; He was "seen" by twelve; He was "seen" by five hundred at once. He was "seen" by the apostle himself. We are, of course, fully aware of the fact that St. Paul himself is only **one** witness, and not five hundred. As to the twelve and the five hundred, we are expected to take his words. Cephias (Peter) we have already heard. So we really have only these two, so far, St. Peter and St. Paul. We should be quite safe, if there were no others to refer to. As far as we are concerned, we are quite certain that these two witnesses, both of them blood witnesses, martyrs to the preaching of the crucified and risen Saviour, we are quite certain, we repeat that these two, **Peter and Paul**, are more credible witnesses than all the unbelievers of all times put together! What say you, dear reader? But our risen Saviour, knowing better than any mere man, the high importance of the fact of His resurrection, saw to it that it was witnessed by more than two; by more than twelve; by five hundred at the same time! But how can we prove to the unbeliever that what Paul writes concerning the five hundred is true? Let us not place undue importance on proving these things to the satisfaction of the unbeliever's reason. What the unbeliever needs is not so much a chain of close reasoning, that shall **convince his head**, but rather the power of God's loving Gospel, that may **convert his evil heart**. This point is very interestingly illustrated by a story told by Dr. Torrey, who writes: "A brilliant lawyer in New York City some time ago spoke to a prominent minister of that city asking him if he really believed that Christ rose from the dead. The Minister replied that



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he did, and asked the privilege of presenting his proof to the lawyer. The lawyer took the material offered in proof away and studied it. He returned to the minister, and said, "I am convinced that Jesus really did rise from the dead." But, he then added, "I am no nearer being a Christian than I was before. I thought that the difficulty was with my head. I find that it is really with my heart." ("The Fundamentals," vol. v., p. 104). That is true, and so it will ever be. The ground on which those who deny the resurrection stand is not the ground of reason; for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not unreasonable, nor against nature, considering **WHO** it is that rose from the dead. No, the ground from which men refuse to accept Christ's bodily resurrection as a fact of history is their sinful heart; their enmity against God; their **love of sin**. And even when their reason has to yield to the overwhelming power of proof, which compels them, if they are honest enough, to admit the Resurrection as a fact, many of them will yet, in spite of that tremendous fact and what it implies, remain in unbelief, that is, they will not accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour from sin and as Lord of their heart's allegiance. Such is the power of sin! But although we may not, by proving the fact of Christ's resurrection, convert men to Jesus, it is, nevertheless, of no little importance to be in possession of as much evidence as we can gather, so that we may be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. 1. Peter 3, 5. If we cannot by such reasons and proofs convert the unbeliever to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, we can at least victoriously meet him on his own ground and remain by Him unshaken in our most holy faith.

This is especially important in the case of Christian young men, who must, in the course of their earthly calling, mingle with all sorts of men, often of brilliant parts and keen intellect, who would with comparative ease undermine their faith and wreck their living hope, if they were not armed with infallible proofs of their Saviour's glorious resurrection, and were not upheld by the power of His endless life. But let us return to St. Paul's witnesses to the resurrection.

According to St. Paul, many had "seen" the Lord after His resurrection, and of these the greater part were living at the time when he wrote those words. For it is well to bear in mind that St. Paul did not write his first Epistle to the Corinthians in the year 1900 A.D., but in the year 57, A.D., certainly not much later. In other words, he wrote it about twenty-five years after the Resurrection. Thus it becomes very clear how he could refer to those many witnesses as still living. As he himself remembered very vividly the day and time and place, when the risen Jesus had appeared to him, so "the greater part" of those "five hundred" still living, would also remember that glorious occasion, when they had "seen" with their bodily eyes, and in a waking state, their risen Lord and Saviour, not to speak of those of the "twelve" who were then living, or of the still larger number of those who had been present at the Lord's ascension. The great evidential weight of St. Paul's words lies in the fact that he, in a public letter, written to a very prominent congregation in a great commercial city, appeals to the testimony of hundreds of living witnesses! It will not do to say that they were far away. They were not so far away as some would make us believe. Who is

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going to assert that some of them were not actually in Corinth at that time? The Christian Jews had, by persecution, been scattered far and wide. It is not to be assumed that all those living witnesses were still residing in Palestine. And even Palestine was not so very far away from Corinth. The Great Council at Jerusalem was very well informed of St. Paul's doings also at Corinth. For the Jews had a synagogue in that city, and there had been an open rupture between the apostle and the unbelieving Jews of that place. Acts 18, 5-17. It must also be remembered that a goodly number of the members of the Christian congregation at Corinth were converted Jews. We know for certain that "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house." Acts 18, 8. But we have no reason to assume that this was the only Jewish family in that large congregation. These Jewish Christians would keep up their connection with Palestine and Jerusalem and, if at all possible, pay personal visits to the land of their fathers and to the city of their God, even as St. Paul himself was, at the very time of writing his letter, really on his way to Jerusalem. Acts 19, 21; 20, 1-4. In the face of all this, could the apostle have dared to write as he did; to appeal to the testimony of so many living witnesses, when those witnesses were within reach? Could he, the preacher of righteousness, the apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the messenger of divine truth over against heathen idolatry and superstition: could he, even from the merely human standpoint of common prudence, have risked his reputation for truthfulness? He knew, moreover, that he had many bitter enemies in Jerusalem, in all parts of Asia Minor, and in Greece, aye, in Corinth

itself, so that shortly after the writing of this very letter, when he had been staying in Corinth three months, the Jews there, "laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria (and visit Jerusalem)," thus compelling him to make the roundabout journey by way of Macedonia. Acts 20, 3. These enemies and "false brethren" were ever dogging his footsteps and watching, with the tireless energy of fanatics, for some plausible ground of accusation against him that should discredit his preaching and bring his great career to a shameful close. Is it at all thinkable that this clear-headed, large-visioned, and far-seeing man should have been so foolish; that this noble mind should have been so base; that this messenger of truth, this holy man of God, could have so perjured his soul as to write, in the name of God, a deliberate lie? Especially when he had nothing whatever to gain by it but persecution and stripes and chains and death?

But did St. Paul really write that first epistle to the Corinthians? Your unbeliever, who will not be convinced, when pressed by the sheer weight of evidence to make an admission as to one point, will quickly raise another, in order to weaken and if possible to rule out of court, the evidence he must otherwise accept. Did St. Paul really write that letter? Yes, he did. He himself tells us so on every page. All the attempt of the enemies of truth to discredit it have ignominiously failed. The most searching criticism of the keenest minds has not succeeded in finding any flaw in regard to its authorship. The most learned among St. Paul's adversaries, from his time down to the present day, have had to admit that St. Paul wrote that epistle, and no one else. If St. Paul did not write that letter,

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then Charles Dickens did not write *David Copperfield*; then Morley did not write the *Life of Gladstone*; then Luther did not write the *Smaller Catechism*; then Bunyan did not write *Pilgrim's Progress*.

And so we have here, in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, documentary evidence of the first class for the historical fact that Jesus Christ rose bodily from the dead; evidence that is not only unquestionably accepted by the true believer, but evidence that **must be accepted** in the court of **Reason**. It is of some importance to emphasize this in these days of rampant unbelief, when men pride themselves on their reason; when they would make inexperienced and uneducated Christians believe that the Church with its doctrine of the Resurrection has no scientific ground to stand upon, whereas the Church is in very truth standing four-square on reasonable ground, on the greatest and best proven fact of human history—the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Turn back, in spirit, dear reader, to the days of St. Paul; forget, for the present, if you can, all the years and centuries between the year 1925 and 57 A.D.; come into the presence of the man of Tarsus. He is writing a letter to his much-troubled converts at Corinth. He is telling them of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He is a **contemporary** of the event of which he writes. He is an **eye-witness**, having himself at midday and in full possession of his powers of mind, seen with his own eyes the risen Jesus. He is willing to have his own testimony checked and confirmed by others. He mentions several of them by name (great names well known to his Corinthians)—Peter and James. He refers to others, the twelve, also well-known names at

Corinth. He refers to five hundred witnesses, of whom "the greater part" are living and accessible. If you were to ask him for several or for dozens of names among this "greater part," he would tell you them, without hesitation, and also make known to you their place of residence. He has seen and talked with many of them, with some of them repeatedly; for he loves to compare notes with those who, like himself, have "**SEEN**" the Lord after His resurrection. He is a man known for moral blamelessness, a lover of truth, a hater of lies and deceit. He is on his way to Jerusalem, to take to the Christians there a large sum of money, which the love of the Christian Gentiles has contributed for the bodily wants of the poor Jewish Christians of that city. From Jerusalem he intends to go to Rome; for he cannot rest until he has preached the glad tidings of a crucified and risen Redeemer also in the capital city of the world. He is willing and eager to brave danger and tribulation, galling chains and a shameful death in the cause of his Lord, the living Saviour of all mankind, "who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light." 2 Tim. 1, 10.

Yes, verily, "we have not followed cunningly devised fables," but we have listened with reverent attention, with intelligent minds and believing hearts, to the very words of those who "were **eye-witnesses** of His majesty." 2 Pet. 1, 16.

Within the narrow limits of a mere section of a chapter we cannot, of course, produce all the evidence for the historical character of the Resurrection. We have heard two very prominent and highly reliable witnesses. This will be quite sufficient for every can-

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did inquirer. We conclude this section with several quotations bearing on our subject. They are taken from "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ," by the Rev. R. McCheyne Edgar, M.A., in "Present Day Tracts," No. 45. He writes: "Now it will not do to say that these proofs of the resurrection were given in the sphere of faith as distinguished from the sphere of sense and sight. They were given to the sense, not of disciples only, but of one who, till the moment of the risen Saviour's manifestation to him, had been an open enemy, but who was so convinced by the manifestation as to become ever after a friend. The question consequently is a purely historical one, for which the testimony is that of eye-witnesses with all their senses about them. And if it be insinuated that the witnesses were not scientific experts, it is sufficient to reply that the question to be determined in the case was the fact of life and death, not the **cause** of either; and experts are only introduced in inquests when the **cause** is to be determined, the matter of fact as to life and death being left to the twelve plain men who view the body. The more, consequently, the evidence in favor of our Lord's resurrection is investigated, the more complete and satisfactory it will appear, so that we do not wonder at a painstaking investigator like Dr. Westcott concluding his admirable summary of the evidence for the resurrection with words like these:

"Indeed, taking all the evidence together, it is not too much to say that there is no single historic incident better or more variously supported than the resurrection of Christ. Nothing but the antecedent assumption (*vorhergehende Annahme*) that it must be false could have suggested the idea of deficiency (*Man-*

gel) in the proof of it.'

We have tried to show that the resurrection of our Lord is the most significant and pregnant fact in all the range of history. We are convinced that if some of those who have with so light a heart rejected the evidence for it, were simply to study it in its manifold bearings, they would come to the conclusion that it is individually worth all the other facts of history put together. There has been nothing approaching it in significance and importance since the creation of the world."

The Gospel that we preach is the Gospel of a living Saviour. He died for our sins and on the third day rose again from the dead. This is a glorious fact, and in this fact we have the divine assurance, given publicly to all the world, that our Substitute has indeed finished His work of redemption; that His sacrifice for the whole world's sin has been accepted by God. This point let us now briefly consider.

2.—BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST  
GOD PROCLAIMS TO A WORLD OF LOST  
SINNERS THAT HE HAS ACCEPTED THE  
SACRIFICE OF THE GREAT SUBSTITUTE.

"I am content! My Jesus liveth still,  
In whom my heart is pleased;

He hath fulfilled the law of God for me,  
God's wrath He hath appeased;  
Since Him from life death could not sever,  
I also shall not die forever.

I am content!"

130, I.

"Him, being delivered (given over into the hands



## GOD'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE SACRIFICE.

of His enemies) by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye ("men of Israel") have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. **THIS JESUS HATH GOD RAISED UP**, whereof we all are witnesses." Acts 2, 23. 32. Let us for the present fix our attention on this fact. It is **God Himself** that hath raised up Jesus of Nazareth from death and from the grave! In the hour of trial, in the soul's deepest gloom, when the consciousness of our sins, oh, so many sins! comes rushing in upon us like a roaring, mighty flood; when the skies are dark and lowering and we tremble at the thunders and lightnings from Sinai; then, if not before, we shall realise the unspeakable comfort contained in this fact: **God raised my Substitute from the dead!** The significance of this fact in reference to our righteousness before God, our peace of conscience, and free access to the throne of grace, is briefly expressed in the words of St. Paul: "Christ was delivered for our offences, and **was raised again for our JUSTIFICATION.**" God gave our great Substitute, His beloved Son, up into death on account of our sins. This has been set forth in abundant detail in chapter vi. And now we are to learn to take to heart, to rely on, and rejoice in this other great fact: God raised even this same Jesus up from the dead "for our justification." By raising His Son, our Substitute, from the dead, God has justified that same world of sinners, whose sin the Lamb of God has borne. God has justified, that is, He has declared righteous in His sight, all those for whom Christ has died. God Himself sets free the Substitute, and thereby declares and proclaims to all the world that the sacrifice brought by Him for sin is sufficient to satisfy His justice, to

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appease His holy wrath, to reconcile all sinners to Himself. By raising our great High Priest from the dead, God in the most impressive and powerful way possible to Him has made known to men that the great Sacrifice for the world's sin has been accepted.

When our Lord died on the cross, the work of redemption was accomplished. Before He gave up His spirit into the hands of His Father, He said, "It is finished," My task is completed. My sacrifice is accepted. The world is redeemed from sin and death and hell. He knew this. His Father also knew this; for both He and His Father knew that He would rise again from the dead; that He was through death going to His father and to power and glory with that same human body hanging there on the accursed tree. He had no misgivings as to whether His Father would accept His sacrifice or not. He had foretold not only His death, but also His resurrection. Matth. 17, 22. 23. He knew that His flesh would not see corruption, but would be glorified and, together with His human soul, ascend to the Father's right hand. During all the weary days of His earthly ministry, living and labouring ever under the terrible shadow of the cross, He had, according to His human nature, drawn consolation and strength from the glorious Easter light that He saw beyond the gloom and darkness of the cross. And His disciples should also have known this. He had so often spoken to them of His resurrection, and of His going to the Father. Moreover, they might have expected His resurrection from numerous prophecies of the Old Testament. But neither the prophecies nor the Lord's own words seem to have made any impression on their minds. They were looking forward to the establish-

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ment of an earthly kingdom, with Christ as a powerful and glorious earthly ruler and themselves as sharing in such power and glory. The idea of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel had so obsessed their minds that even forty days after His resurrection, on the very day of the Lord's ascension into heaven, they foolishly asked Him: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel." Acts 1, 6. The full significance of the Lord's resurrection had, even then, not dawned on them. They were still more concerned about the earthly and temporal glory of Israel than about Israel's and the world's eternal glory, which can be entered upon only by such as have no longer any **sin** to separate them from God. This eternal happiness and glory not only of Israel, but of the whole world had been the Lord's aim and object in living and dying. He had come to save His people from their **sins**. Matth. 1, 21. He had come, not to ascend a throne of earthly glory, but "to serve and to give His life a ransom for many." Matth. 20, 28. He had come, not to rule men with the sceptre of earthly power, but to lead them with a shepherd's staff to green pastures and to lay down His life for the sheep, for both Jews and Gentiles. John 10, 15. 16. And it was for the purpose of **assuring** a world, lost in sin and death, of a finished redemption, of an accepted sacrifice for sin, that the Father raised the great Shepherd from the dead. As long as their Substitute remained in the grave, a prey of death, sinners could not have this assurance. They must then have come to the natural conclusion that He had failed to satisfy all the demands of God's justice in their behalf. St. Paul brings this point out very powerfully when he writes: "If Christ be not risen,

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then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." And again, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins." I. Cor. 15, 14. 17. So important is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that without it there is not really any Gospel at all, any more than if He had not died for our sins. "Our preaching is vain," quite empty of consolation against sin, and, therefore useless, if we cannot tell sinners of a living Saviour, a Substitute raised from the dead. "Ye are yet in your sins." That is, your sins have not been atoned for; your guilt has not been removed; the penalty has not been paid; there is for you sinners no forgiveness, no righteousness before God, no peace of conscience, no joy, no hope! If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain." Faith in a Saviour that was not raised from the dead is a mere imagination, an idle fancy. It rests on nothing; it holds and possesses nothing; it gives the soul no support in life; it has no power to comfort in death. For faith saves not because of its sincerity or of its intensity or in any sense because of itself, simply because a person believes, no matter what it may be. No, faith saves only because of what it holds and relies on and rests in. Therefore that faith which does not hold and rely on and rest in a living Saviour from sin, the released and free and glorified Substitute, that faith is vain. So God Himself, through St. Paul, teaches us, and the experience of sinners all through the centuries corroborates such teaching. What comforts a sinner is not that he is repentant and believes, but that his guilt is removed, his sin forgiven for the sake of Him who has borne the guilt and suffered the punishment and reconciled the Father by His own great sacrifice. All

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depends on this Substitute, on this sacrifice, on this Jesus Christ who was delivered up into death for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Both His vicarious and sacrificial death and His release from that death, His resurrection, are essential to a sinner's comfort in life and death. "But now is Christ risen from the dead," writes the apostle (1. Cor. 15, 20) and therefore our preaching is not vain, your faith is not vain, ye<sup>e</sup> are no longer in your sins. Your faith now lays hold on Christ, the crucified and **risen** Redeemer, whose sacrifice on your behalf has been accepted; and in accepting the sacrifice of your Substitute, God has accepted **YOU** as no longer a sin-stained, sin-burdened and accursed being, but as sinless and righteous, and altogether pure and holy in His sight **for Jesus' sake**. Not for your own sake, remember, for you have nothing to boast of in His sight, but only and exclusively because Jesus Christ has rendered full satisfaction for your sins and has been raised from the dead in evidence of that fact.

But let it be borne well in mind that God raised up Jesus Christ from the dead for the justification, not only of believers, but also of unbelievers, in fact, of the whole world of sinners, quite irrespective of faith or unbelief. Our hearts are by nature self-righteous. We do not take easily or kindly to a truth that absolutely excludes our merits. But we must, for the sake of truth and our own abiding peace, resolutely face the fact that as by the vicarious death of Jesus Christ the whole world's sin was taken away, removed in respect of guilt and curse and punishment from all sinners, even so by His resurrection from the dead God provides the divine evidence that such has actually

been done. He who gave Himself as a propitiation (Suehnopfer) for the sins of the whole world (1. John 2, 2) is raised from the dead by the Father. God Himself sets free the world's Substitute and by that act He sets free the world! It is a very great truth, so great that it is very difficult to grasp, even on the part of true believers. We still see so much sin in the world; so much indifference to the death and resurrection of our Saviour! so much opposition to the preaching of the Gospel; so much bitter enmity and cruel persecution of Jesus Christ in the persons of His followers. And in the face of all this, are we to believe that by the resurrection of Jesus Christ God declares the whole world justified from sin and righteous in His sight? Let us ask the gentle reader several other questions: On what do you base your own justification before God, that is, your forgiveness of sins and your righteousness in His sight? Do you base this on the fact that you believe in Jesus Christ? Is **your** faith the foundation of your peace with God? Do you think that you are justified by God because **you** have been so good as to believe, while others, who do not believe, are not so good and have, therefore, no claims on God? Do you think that God has declared you just and righteous in His sight in return for something that **you** have done? No! Then on what **do** you base your justification in the presence of God? On your Saviour's dying love, his vicarious death, and on the resurrection that sets God's seal of perfect approval to such death? Yes! Well, you are certainly right and safe in so doing, for that is the only ground on which a sinner can stand before God in life, in death, and in the day of judgment. But what if you did **not** believe in

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Jesus Christ as your Saviour, for whose sake alone you have forgiveness of sins and peace with God? Would your unbelief make invalid the sacrifice offered on Calvary for all the world's sin, or make void the resurrection, as God's sign-manual that He has accepted such sacrifice? Has anyone the right to say, "There was no sacrifice for the world's sin on Calvary, and there was no resurrection to prove its acceptance by God, because I, Mr. Infidel, do not believe it?" Just as well might a man deliberately close his eyes at midday and assert with great emphasis, "There is no sun and no sunlight, just because I chose to keep my eyes closed." There is sufficient light and to spare also for him whose eyes are shut. If he **will** not or **cannot** see, it is his personal loss, but not because there was any deficiency in the light supply. If ten thousand million more people lived on earth there would be light enough for all and very much to spare. Even so is the Sun of God's righteousness in Christ Jesus, the forgiveness of sins in His name, more than sufficient for all the needs of sinful men. Whether men believe or reject the preaching of the crucified and risen Saviour, and all that is implied in such preaching; the fact remains, nevertheless, that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world, and also the other fact that He was raised again for the world's justification. If it is true that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5, 19), it is equally true that by raising this same Jesus Christ from the dead He has once for all set His divine seal of perfect approval and satisfaction to the work of reconciliation accomplished by His Son. Yes, "accomplished," finished, and completed is the work of

reconciliation, quite independently of any man. It was finished before St. Peter preached it on the day of Pentecost; finished before ever St. Paul was converted; finished before any of us were born. And so with the Resurrection. It is God's seal upon the finished work of the world's redemption. What the preachers of the Gospel, the messengers of peace, bring to sinners is the glad tidings of a full and free and unconditional pardon, based upon Christ's vicarious death and divinely certified and confirmed by the incontrovertible fact of His resurrection. And this message is for **ALL** sinners, even for those who ultimately reject it and treat it with scorn. The Saviour of the **world** has come forth from the grave bringing with Him a perfect righteousness for all sinners. For "as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon **ALL MEN** unto justification of life." Rom. 5, 3. Even as the sun rises upon all men, though some cannot see and others, perhaps, will not see, so the righteousness of Jesus Christ has risen from the deep dark shadows of grave and death upon a world of sinners. If some believe not, the fault is theirs. God has made ample provision for all. He has raised His Son for our justification. By this resurrection of Jesus Christ He is still proclaiming to a world of lost sinners that He has accepted the sacrifice of the great Substitute, even His own dear Son. And when messengers are required to preach the Gospel of a living Saviour (and when are they not required!) may we not be found slow and backward in supplying the men and the means!

Let it be always distinctly remembered that when



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we proclaim the Gospel of a living Saviour we are not serving men only, but God Himself, and that not merely in the sense that we are carrying out a divine command, but also and chiefly in this sense that the subject and content of the Gospel, its very heart and marrow, life and soul is none other than the Son of God Himself. This fact has indeed been very much stressed especially in chapter vi., but in this present connection we must once more draw the reader's attention to it, as it is essential for the proper understanding of the significance of the Resurrection in reference to our own assurance of salvation.

3.—THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE THAT HE IS INDEED THE SON OF GOD AND THAT HIS DOCTRINE IS THE TRUTH.

(Compare Catechism, Que. 163).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a fact of history. Every honest enquirer into all the evidence will accept it as such. It is a matter of history, that not only was Joseph's tomb found to be empty, but the body of Jesus, which had been deposited there, was seen alive by many witnesses. Let us bear in mind this fact, as we now proceed to consider that our Lord's resurrection is conclusive proof that He is the Son of God.

"He made Himself the Son of God," the Jews answer Pilate, who could find no fault in Jesus and was inclined to let Him go. John 19, 7. The occasion to which these Jews refer was when the Lord had been examined by the Great Council. They had "sought

false witnesses against Jesus, to put Him to death; but found none." At last, having failed to fasten upon Him any guilt worthy of death, the high priest said unto Him, I adjure Thee by the living God, that **Thou** tell us whether Thou be the **Christ, the Son of God**. Jesus saith unto him: "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man (the risen Saviour according to His human nature) sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken **BLASPHEMY**; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard His **BLASPHEMY**. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." Matth. 26, 59-66.

We have emphasised the word blasphemy, because we wish to draw the reader's special attention to it. This word, used twice, indicates beyond a doubt that the Jews had not misunderstood Jesus. He had been asked, adjured in fact, to tell them whether He were indeed **THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD**, who had been promised of old from Moses to Malachi, and for whose coming the Jews were eagerly waiting. They did not believe that He was that Son of God and therefore pronounced His truthful avowal of the fact to be blasphemy (*Gotteslaesterung*). According to their law, blasphemy was to be punished with death. That is why they say to Pilate: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Pilate yielded to their clamors, and He who had in the face of death called Himself the Son of God, and who had spoken of sitting on the right hand of power and of coming in the clouds of heaven—He was crucified, died, and was buried, leaving His

disciples and friends utterly dejected and terrified and His enemies triumphant.

Now, could God have raised from the dead a man who had died with "blasphemy" on his lips? Idle question. If Jesus had been no more than a son of God in the very wide sense in which by creation all men are such, and had yet arrogated to Himself the honor of being **the** Son of God, He would, we may rest assured, still be numbered with the dead. But He had not been guilty of blasphemy. He had spoken the truth. He **was** the Son of God. His resurrection proves it. He is declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead." Rom. I, 4. God raised Him from the dead, thereby declaring in a new and deeper sense, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." It is a remarkable fact that St. Paul connects this passage of the second Psalm with the resurrection of Christ. For thus we read (Acts 13, 32. 33): "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." As the Father sent His Son into the world by means of a humble human birth from the Virgin Mary, so now He takes His Son from death and grave, out of the world, into heaven and glory, ever to be at His side, and this, of course, according to His human nature. By raising Him from the dead, God not merely declares Him to be His Son, as He had done on previous occasions (at His baptism, for instance, and His transfiguration), but He declares and constitutes Him **His Son with power**, even

as the Lord Himself had prophesied in the presence of His enemies, saying: "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power." While here on earth, in his state of humiliation (*Erniedrigung*) He had denied Himself the full and constant use of His divine power and majesty, and made Himself "of no reputation," He now has entered upon a higher plane of His human existence. The Son of Man is sitting at the right hand of power. That "holy thing" which was conceived in the Virgin Mary of the Holy Ghost, and was born of her in Bethlehem, is now shown to be indeed the "Son of the Highest" (Luke 1, 32) and "Christ the Lord." (Luke 2, 11). The Son of David now stands forth, in the presence of heaven and earth and hell, as the Son of God with power. The incarnate Son of God, even the Word that became flesh and pitched His tent among us (John 1, 14), the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth:—He now freely exerts almighty power, not merely according to His divine, but also according to His human nature. The **HISTORIC JESUS**, that same man, who died that cruel and shameful death on Friday afternoon, is on the following Sunday morning raised from the dead and thereby constituted the Son of God with power, leaving behind Him forever human weakness, death and grave and corruption (Acts 13, 34. 36), and sharing, in His human nature also, the throne of heavenly might and majesty with His Father. The Son of God, who had glory with the Father before the world was (John 17, 5), and who said: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world" (John 16, 28), now fulfils that other word spoken immediately after that just quoted, namely: "I leave the world and go to the Father." But

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He that returns to the Father is in one very important respect different from the eternal Son of God, whom the Father sent into this world (John 17, 3). The Father's only-begotten Son entered this world by assuming from the Virgin Mary a true human nature (body and soul), but on leaving this world, **He does not put off** and leave behind the human nature. This was from its very conception inseparably united to His divine nature, so that the Son of God, who was **before** all time, and the son of Mary, who was conceived and born in the "fullness of time" (Gal. 4, 4), are one and the same person. This person, this God-man, this Jesus Christ of history, who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, and who has risen from the dead—it is He and no other that goes to the Father. In the person of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, His human nature now for the first time in the history of eternity enters into the full and uninterrupted use and exercise of boundless divine power at God's right hand; into the unclouded state of heavenly majesty and glory, before which the highest angels fall prostrate in worship and adoration. For thus we read in Holy Writ: "When He had by Himself purged our sins (He) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained (according to His **human** nature) a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee? (Ps. 2, 7). And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son? (2 Sam. 7, 14). And again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him." (Heb. 1,

3-6). St. Peter, referring briefly to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, continues: "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him." (1. Pet. 3, 21, 22). And St. Paul writes of Christ Jesus, the same historic person that had been "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," that "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every other name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2, 8-11).

This, O sinner, is your Substitute; this the Lamb of God that was slain for your sin; this the sacrifice offered up to God for your transgressions! Are you not satisfied and fully assured that your debt is paid and that you are free?

But more! The resurrection of Jesus Christ is conclusive evidence that He is the Son of God, not only because the Father raised Him from the dead and highly exalted Him. This would be evidence quite sufficient. But we have yet more. In His resurrection our Lord was not passive and helpless, like, for instance, the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8, 41), the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7, 11), or Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha (John 11.). These had died. There was in them no principle of life, no vestige of power to raise themselves from the dead, no strength to compel the departed soul to return and re-animate the body. They were a helpless prey to corruption (*Verwesung*), which, in the case of Lazarus, was already evident to the senses of those who came near the corpse. (John

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11, 39). They were raised by a power from without, even by the exercise of almighty power on the part of Him, whose own dead body, some time later, His friends placed in Joseph's tomb, closing the entrance by "a great stone." (Math. 27, 60). And His enemies "went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Matth. 27, 66). Did they have some haunting and disturbing fear, lest after all He would make good His word and rise from the dead? It seems so; for they say to Pilate: "Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead." (Matth. 27, 62-64). But whatever they may in their secret hearts have thought or feared, they have their way, and they make sure the Tomb and set a watch of Roman soldiers, who very well knew that if their silent "prisoner" escaped, they would be in danger of their lives. (Compare Acts 12, 19). Thus the very enemies themselves must all unwittingly contribute towards the glory of our Lord's resurrection. For the more secure they make the sepulchre, and the more jealously they guard its only entrance, the more difficult and unlikely becomes any interference from without, on the part of the disciples and friends of the "sleeper" within. And as it has been made practically impossible for the Lord's friends to get at His body, and also for a man to get out from the tomb, even if that man were alive and strong, the resurrection becomes all the more glorious a demonstration of the power of Him who rises from the dead and comes forth from that closed and sealed

and guarded tomb in Joseph's garden. And He did.

Within that tomb there lay the lifeless body of Jesus of Nazareth, but recently taken from the cross. That was all that His enemies imagined to be there. And even His friends were more or less blind to the wonderful truth. But actually there was much more in that silent chamber of death, with its one still form as visible occupant. For with that body in inseparable and eternal personal union was, and is now, the Son of the living God. The Lord's human soul had indeed left His body. That is why He was really dead. But His divine nature, the chief part of this unique person, remained with His body in the tomb no less than with His soul in "Paradise." This body **could** not see corruption. It had within it, by virtue of its personal and inseparable union with the eternal Son of God, the power of an endless life. That is what He meant when long before His death He spoke the majestic words: "I have power to lay it (My life) down, and I have power to take it again." (John 10, 18). As His death was a willing self-surrender of His precious life, so this resurrection was in very truth a **self-resurrection!** "Destroy this temple (My body), and in three days I will raise it up," He had said to His enemies. (John 2, 19). They did "destroy" it on the accursed tree, and behold! He has made good His word—He has raised it up; and not only so, but He has raised it to higher power and dignity than ever it had enjoyed before. He is "declared (or constituted) to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." "According to the spirit of holiness," that is, by virtue of His divine nature, which in its essence is eternal spirit (Heb. 9, 14; John 4, 24),



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He rose from the dead and so stands forth in history as the Son of God with power. By the exercise of His own divine power and in perfect co-operation with His Father, He that was dead is now alive forevermore. He is the resurrection and the life (John 11, 25); He is the life (John 14, 6). It was impossible that He should be held by death. For the purpose of redeeming the fallen race of Adam from the power of death, He had surrendered His own dear life to that dread enemy of man; but when His hour was come, according to His own foretelling, He broke the bonds of earth, flung them aside, a conquered, powerless thing, and stood over the prostrate foe as the triumphant victor, the Prince of life, the Son of God.

This is the sober truth, a truth, however, that is so great and high and wonderful that we shall never be able fully to realise its tremendous meaning. For the present it will be sufficient, if we are thoroughly convinced that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is conclusive evidence that He is **THE SON OF GOD**, and if we do not lose sight of the fact that this same Son of God is **OUR REDEEMER!**

Our Saviour having by His resurrection been "declared to be the Son of God with power," we need have no misgivings as to any of His teachings. His resurrection places the doctrine of our Lord beyond and above the regions of doubt. We may rest assured that what His holy apostles and evangelists have in His name written is inspired by that same Holy Spirit which He promised to send and did send to them and upon them, so that what they tell us concerning His person, His work and His doctrine is infallibly true and absolutely reliable in life and in death. (John 16, 12-14;

1. Cor. 2, 12-13). He who prophesied that He would raise Himself from the dead and has kept His word, and by His own divine power has broken the bars of Death's prison house, He can and will gloriously do and perform all that He has ever promised to His believers. Among these promises there is one that in this connection naturally suggests itself. It is this: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: **AND I GIVE UNTO THEM ETERNAL LIFE**; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." (John 10, 28). This promise, one of the brightest gems among so many precious words of our Lord, is found in that beautiful chapter in which He tells us that He is the good Shepherd, that He lays down His life for His sheep, and that He has power to take it again, to raise Himself from the dead. After He had said these things, He gave utterance to the great promise quoted above. This promise is based on those preceding words concerning His own death and resurrection. First He will rise from the dead, and then He will give to His sheep eternal life. If He had not kept His word as to His own resurrection, His promise of eternal life for His sheep would have been vain and useless, an empty mockery and cruel jest. But now He has risen from the dead to an endless life in power and glory and therefore His promise is as good as that which He made concerning Himself. It is the promise of Him who is declared to be the Son of God with power; of Him who is sitting in divine Majesty at God's right hand. We may, therefore, with unwavering confidence and unerring trust, depend upon it that in His own proper time He will most gloriously redeem His promise, and of His grace

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and wondrous love give unto His sheep eternal life.

But lest some readers should see less in that promise than is actually contained in it, it will be highly profitable and also most comforting to consider that.

### 4.—THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE DIVINE AND INFALLIBLE PLEDGE THAT ALL BELIEVERS SHALL RISE FROM THEIR GRAVES UNTO ETERNAL LIFE.

(Compare Catechism, Que. 163, 3).

The Lord's promise of eternal life for His sheep is based on His own resurrection. That is what He had in view when He made it. But His own resurrection is, of course, a resurrection of the body from death in the grave. That life which He promises to give unto His sheep is an eternal life of the body as well as of the soul. And now that He has risen from the dead and His human body, once nailed to the cross, dead, and buried, has entered upon an endless life in glory, the bodily resurrection of His believers is assured. His own resurrection is conclusive evidence that we, too, shall live, even as He lives; that is, not only as to our souls, but **body and soul**, in complete and glorified humanity. He will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby **HE IS ABLE** even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Phil. 3, 21). What He has promised to do He will do, and by virtue of His own resurrection is abundantly able to do. He has distinctly said: "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life; and **I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY.**" (John 6, 40). This

is what He meant when on the evening before His death He said to His disciples: "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14, 19). Although, for a short season, He was about to give up His human soul into His Father's hands and surrender His body to the tomb, yet even during that period of His death His divine nature, "the Spirit of holiness, the eternal Spirit" was present with both body and soul, in inseparable personal union. In the life of His divine nature there was no break, no interruption. Conscious of this divine life within Him, having life of Himself, knowing that He was the very source and fountain of all life, He says, "Because I live, ye shall live also." "Though the world shall henceforth see Me no more, until I come in the clouds of heaven to judge it, yet shall ye see Me, both after my resurrection and, later on, in glory. **BECAUSE** I live, ye shall live. Your life is closely connected with mine; your life of soul and body throughout eternity. Ye shall live and die no more." This is most certainly true, and therefore the believer sings in divine assurance and with a living hope:

"Jesus, my Redeemer, lives,  
 I, too, unto life shall waken.  
 Endless life my Saviour gives,  
 Shall my courage then be shaken?  
 Shall I fear? Or could the Head  
 Rise and leave His members dead?" 133, 2.

The last two lines of the hymn verse just quoted point to the reason why the Lord says: "**Because** I live, ye shall live also." We shall not rise from the dead, merely because He has promised to give unto His own followers eternal life, and because He is able to

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keep that promise. The connection between His rising from the dead and the resurrection of all believers is much more close than that. His relation to those who believe in Him is like that of the head to all the living members of the body. Where the head goes, the body with all its members **necessarily** follows. The Holy Spirit Himself tells us that this is actually the connection between Christ and His Church and all its members. "He is the Head of the body, the Church," so we are distinctly told in Holy Writ. (Col. 1, 18). To the Corinthians St. Paul says: "Ye are the body of Christ." (1. Cor. 12, 27). Of each individual Christian it is said, "We are members of His body." (Eph. 5, 30). And this "body of Christ," the Church, is not composed of spirits, say, of angels or the spirits of men who have left their dead bodies behind them forever. O no, the Church consists of human beings, having body and soul; and these human **bodies** as well as the souls that dwell in them, are members of Christ, the Head. "Know ye not that your **bodies** are the members of Christ?" (1. Cor. 6, 15). When a Christian dies, he **does** leave his body behind, but not forever. That individual body is a member of Christ. He will not leave it in the clutches of death. He Himself "is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence (Vorrang)." Col. 1, 18. He is the first born, but others are to follow, namely, the members of His body, the Church. As Adam is the head and representative of a sin-cursed race subject to death, so Jesus Christ is in a much higher degree the Head and representative of a sin-cleansed race, of a new humanity, destined according to body and soul for eternal life. "For since by man

(Adam) came death, by man (Jesus Christ) came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1. Cor. 15, 21-22). "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain (at the time of His coming!) shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall be forever with the Lord." (1. Thess. 4, 14, 16, 17). Then will be fulfilled what in the days of His flesh He had foretold, saying: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14, 3).

"Jesus lives! to Him the throne,  
 High o'er heaven and earth is given;  
 I shall go where He is gone,  
 Live and reign with Him in heaven.  
 God is pledged; weak doubtings, hence!  
 This shall be my confidence. 132, 2.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of a living Saviour, whose resurrection from the dead is conclusive evidence and pledge that we, His members, too shall rise from our graves, henceforth to die no more. Our hope of resurrection is a living hope, because it is based on a living Saviour, who has on our behalf conquered death, and so opened to us the path to life, Himself going before and in the power of His resurrection life drawing us after Him, as the head

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draws and directs the members of its body. The Gospel of Christ is therefore **THE GOSPEL OF HOPE**, as well as of forgiveness and peace; of hope not merely as to our soul's eternal happiness in the presence of a reconciled heavenly Father, but of hope also in reference to this dear body of ours and to the bodies of those we love. It is a hope that has not sprung up in the hearts of men in consequence of the yearnings of their souls for re-union with their loved ones. It is not a mere longing desire, a vague expectation that may or may not be satisfied. It is not that poor and powerless thing, which the world calls "hope," when it says "I hope so"; or what Alexander Pope had in mind when he wrote:

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,  
Man never is, but always to be, blest."

In the presence of death the world has no hope at all. (1. Thess. 4, 13; Eph. 2, 12). It has nothing but cold and helpless resignation or black despair. But the child of God can and does, in the power of the Spirit of Christ that dwells in him, from his very heart say with St. Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1. Peter 1, 3-5). The salvation here spoken of is the final and complete salvation, which includes the resurrection of our bodies from the dead. In the very face of death and on

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the brink of the grave he who by the grace of God has come to believe the Gospel of a living Saviour can say and sing, with an assurance born of God:

“Nay, too closely am I bound  
Unto Him by hope forever;  
Faith’s strong hand the rock hath found,  
Grasped it, and will leave it never;  
Not the ban of death can part  
From its Lord the trusting heart.

What now sickens, mourns and sighs,  
Christ with Him to glory bringeth;  
Earthly is the seed and dies,  
Heavenly from the grave it springeth;  
Glorified we then ascend,  
To the life that knows no end.”

103, 3. 5.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### SEVERAL IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE GOSPEL.

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In this chapter we desire to draw special attention to certain points which are implied in what we have so far said concerning the Gospel. Some of them have indeed been expressly touched upon in passing; but they are of such importance that they require separate treatment and special emphasising.

#### I.—THE GOSPEL IS A FREE GIFT OF GOD'S GRACE.

“Grace first contrived the way,  
To save rebellious man;  
And all the steps that grace display,  
Which drew the wondrous plan.” 342, 2.

“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified **FREELY BY HIS GRACE** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 3, 23-24). The word “**grace**” is a great word and has many different meanings; but in this present first section of chapter viii. it is used in only one particular meaning and in no other. What, then, do we here mean by the word “**grace**,” when we say that the Gospel is a free gift of God’s grace? The meaning of the

word grace is indicated by the word "freely" in the text from Rom. 3, just quoted. Grace is the unmerited and undeserved loving favor of God, bestowed upon the unworthy, upon sinners and the ungodly, upon those who are by nature His enemies, and while they are still such. (Rom. 5, 8-10). The grace we are here speaking of is not anything in man, but something that is from eternity in God's mind and heart; not anything that man has in any possible way brought about or caused God to exercise toward him, but the "free out-coming of God's love" for the sinner's salvation. Thus when God forgives sins, when He justifies a sinner, declaring him righteous in His sight for Jesus' sake, the sinner himself has absolutely no merit in that transaction. He is "justified **FREELY**" by God's grace. His forgiveness, his justification, is a free gift, an unearned and undeserved present from His God. Not because of anything that the sinner has done or can do, is he justified. "It is the **GIFT OF GOD, NOT OF WORKS**, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2, 9). Grace, on the part of God, and works of any kind, on the part of man, absolutely exclude each other. "If by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Rom. 11, 6. This is God's own definition of grace as used in this connection. Grace emphasizes the freeness of God's pardoning love, flowing from His divine heart regardless of our merits or demerits, (Mangel an Verdienst). Grace has reference to man's guilt and is bestowed on the undeserving. The very essence (Wesen) of grace is that it is free. If grace is not gratis (free, unearned), it is not grace, says St. Augus-

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tine, in agreement with St. Paul. Men are by nature such inveterate (eingefleischte) Pharisees that they cannot grasp this simple truth until God's grace in Christ Jesus has by means of the Gospel opened their eyes to see it. And even then the old Adam will continue to obscure this glorious truth in the believer's consciousness. Only too often we hear people, whom in charity we must assume to be true Christians, using language which indicates that they are not sufficiently conscious of the fact that they are saved by grace alone; that they can do absolutely nothing to earn or to deserve even in the very slightest degree the forgiveness of their sins. Oh no! they answer, we are quite well enough aware of the fact that we cannot earn God's forgiveness, for our Saviour has done that, but we must, on our part, accept that forgiveness, we must believe, must we not? And that certainly is our share of the transaction. God does not believe for us, does He? We believe; we exercise faith in Jesus' merits and so we are justified in God's sight by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, as also St. Paul teaches, Rom. 3. No, St. Paul does not teach what you think he does. He does not teach that your faith has anything to do with **procuring** or bringing about your forgiveness. He does not teach that you are saved on account of your faith or because of anything you may do. He does not teach that your faith in any respect **moves** God to forgive you your sins. He does not teach that faith is a meritorious cause (verdienstliche Ursache) of your salvation; that you who **believe** are more **deserving** of pardon than he who does not believe. He does teach, however, that we are justified and saved **through** faith,

by the way of faith. And he also teaches that such faith is not anything to boast of, but a free gift of God's grace through the preaching of the Gospel. St. Paul in very plain words tells us: "By grace are ye saved **through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast.**" Eph. 2, 8. In other words: God forgives your sin not because you are so good as to believe in such forgiveness; but you believe because of His pardoning love in Christ Jesus. Your faith is the outcome, consequence, and effect of His Grace, and, it had no influence whatever on His willingness to pardon you. Of the proper relation of faith to God's grace as revealed in the Gospel, we shall have a few more words to say in the next chapter. For the present this must suffice.

The Gospel is a free gift of God's grace. This subject is a very large one. But we must here confine ourselves to a few outstanding features and be satisfied with a mere outline.

We sometimes meet with such words as these: Jesus Christ has by His death on Calvary earned and procured God's grace. He has by His suffering and death induced His heavenly Father to be gracious to us. Now such manner of speaking is at best very confusing and does not do justice to God's grace. The death on Calvary did not make God a gracious God; but a gracious God sent His Son into the world to die for sinners. God's grace was **before the death on the cross.** Christ was delivered into the hands of His tormentors "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," Acts 2, 23. God's grace was **before the incarnation.** "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law,

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to redeem them that were under the Law," Gal. 7, 4. 5. ("Aus Gnaden kam sein Sohn auf Erden." Out of God's grace His Son came upon this earth.) God's grace was **before Abraham**, who, of God's **grace**, received the promise that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Gen. 18, 18; 22, 18. God's grace was **before the Fall**, when God gave the promise of the woman's seed Gen. 3, 15. God's grace was **before creation**. Eph. 2, 4-6. Our Saviour was in the counsels of God's grace "fore-ordained before the foundation of the world." (1. Pet. 1, 20) and to suffer and to die for us. And in Hebrews, Chapter 2, verse 9, we are distinctly told "that He by the **grace of God** should taste death for every man."

The Gospel is a free gift of God's grace. It is Grace that fashions the plan of salvation away back in the mysterious depths of eternity. It is Grace that promises to fallen man a deliverer from sin and its curse. It is Grace that sends prophet after prophet to announce the coming One, the Virgin's Son, the Lamb of God, the Prince of Peace. It is Grace that in the fulness of of time sends forth God's Son from heavenly glories to a manger in a stable. It is Grace that delivers Him up to be slain on the accursed tree. It is Grace that raises Him from the dead for our justification and our hope of glory. It is Grace that sends the Comforter, who equips the messengers of peace for their world-wide task. It is Grace that sends them out to proclaim the glad tidings of pardon and of peace in the blood of the Redeemer. It is Grace that has brought this Gospel of redemption also to us, and has caused us to believe, from our inmost hearts, its wonderful message of our Saviour's "dying love," which has made us heirs of eternal life.

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Grace first inscribed my name  
In God's eternal book;  
T'was grace that gave me to the Lamb,  
Who all my sorrow took.

Grace taught my soul to pray,  
And made mine eyes o'erflow;  
T'was grace that kept me to this day,  
And will not let me go.

Grace all the work shall crown,  
Through everlasting days;  
It lays in heaven the topmost stone  
And well deserves the praise.

242, 3. 5. 6.

### 2.— THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS ALL-SUFFICIENT FOR MAN'S SPIRITUAL NEEDS.

“My grace is sufficient for thee,” says the Lord to His Apostle Paul, who had prayed to Him fervently to be relieved of a very sore affliction. 2. Cor. 12, 7-9. “My grace is sufficient for thee,” is a word spoken to every believer. Whatever we may lack in worldly goods or pleasures or honours, His grace is ever sufficient for our deepest needs. Whatever affliction of body or soul may burden us and press us down on to our knees in tearful supplication, His grace is sufficient to comfort, to uplift, and to strengthen us. Our most pressing need it is not the possession of earthly things, or the deliverance from earthly and temporal afflictions, but it is the grace of God. In the power of this grace, this loving favor

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of God in Christ Jesus, we can bear poverty, sickness, the loss of friends, and many other evils, not only with resignation, but in a happy frame of mind. As long as we are in the actual possession of the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ; in other words, as long as we have the forgiveness of sins offered to us by the Gospel, we have a treasure that outweighs and surpasses in value all earthly blessings taken together. And however painful earthly afflictions and losses may be, yet in the very midst of our sufferings, we can still be glad at heart, because our heavenly Father is our friend, our good Shepherd is ever at our side, and the divine Comforter, the Holy Ghost, makes ever clearer and dearer to our souls the worth and preciousness of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, the abiding sufficiency of the Gospel. And even supposing, there are some who refuse to acknowledge, that the Gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ is sufficient for all the spiritual needs of men—and there are many such—, that refusal to be satisfied with what God has provided for the soul's happiness does not alter the fact that all things "are ready;" that the King has prepared His dinner and is graciously inviting all to come and partake and be satisfied forever. Matth. 22, 2-4. He who has been invited to a rich banquet or wedding feast, but refuses to accept the kind and pressing invitation to come and eat and be happy, must not, if he remains hungry and unsatisfied, blame him who has prepared the feast and kindly invited him to it, but he must blame himself for his folly of declining such an invitation.

There are those who say that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has failed; that its message has lost its power to satisfy the spiritual needs of men, and that we must

therefore, look for something better and more satisfying. But the Gospel has **not** failed and never will fail to be fully sufficient for all the deepest needs of sinful souls. The physician is the same as he ever was. He has lost none of his skill to cure even the most hopeless malady. But how can the best of physicians effect a cure, when men will not accept his services? When they pass his open doors and deliver themselves over to the tender mercies of quacks and sham doctors, who while seeming for a time to alleviate the distress, actually make the evil worse? The Gospel has not failed, but men have failed to use it, to give it a fair trial, to give themselves into its care, to submit to its terms and yield themselves to its healing power. The Gospel has not lost its power. It is to-day what it was in the days, when St. Paul wrote from Corinth to Rome: "The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Rom. i, 16. No, the **Gospel** has not lost its sufficiency, its power to save and to satisfy. When people say that the Gospel has failed, they mean something quite different from what we mean when we speak of the Gospel. Their "gospel" is no gospel at all. It is law, and even that watered down and diluted beyond recognition. What they understand by the term "gospel" is a poor, insipid, powerless moral teaching, with Christ in its centre as a great example of virtue. False teachers—legions of them—have, as far as in them lay, destroyed the Gospel, have taken out its very heart—the blood of the Son of God, shed on Calvary for the world's sin—and then people prate about the Gospel having failed to satisfy the needs of sinners! Let us never for one single moment be dismayed by such foolish talk of the Gospel's insufficiency. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, slain for



sinner and risen again for their justification and their living hope, can never fail. And the church that preaches this Gospel to people who through the proper preaching of the Law have come to realize that they are lost sinners, will never give just grounds for the complaint that the Church of Christ has failed.

The Gospel is sufficient for man's spiritual needs. It puts man right with God. It restores to his soul that harmony with its Creator which Adam destroyed through sin; that "peace of God which passeth understanding." Phil. 4, 7. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5, 1. The Gospel brings into our hearts and lives Him, who "of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." I. Cor. 1, 30. Day by day, as we struggle along life's rough road, stumbling often, and sometimes falling, we in the Gospel ever hear our good Shepherd's loving voice saying: "My son, my daughter, be of good cheer, all thy sins are forgiven thee," I have borne thy guilt; I have suffered thy punishment; I have bought thee from sin's curse, from death, and Satan's power. The price I paid was my life-blood! Go and sin no more.

The Gospel is sufficient. In the most difficult situations of this complex life of ours; in all our dangers, trials, and temptations; in all our sorrows and bereavements, the Gospel of a crucified and risen Redeemer draws us ever to the heavenly Father's heart, tells us of His abiding love and gracious favour, and gives us words of unerring counsel, of divine comfort, and of living hope. And when at last our life's frail barque, weather-beaten and tempest-tossed, comes near the heavenly shore, He who died for us will guide it safely through

the roaring surge of angry waters and place our feet upon the promised land, where we shall dwell in full contentment and in heavenly peace with Him forever.

When ends life's transient dream,  
 When death's cold sullen stream  
     Shall o'er me roll,  
 Blest Saviour, then in love  
 Fear and distrust remove;  
 O bear me safe above,  
     A ransomed soul!

360, 4.

### 3.— THE GOSPEL IS UNIVERSAL IN ITS APPLICATION.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did not suffer and die for some men only, but for **all**. "He taketh away the sin of the world." John. 1, 29, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of **the whole world**." 1. John. 2, 2. And let us bear in mind that the word "propitiation" denotes a sacrifice for the sin of others, by which guilt and punishment are removed from those in whose favor such sacrifice is made. Thus it is quite clear, and should be particularly noted, that both the guilt and the punishment in reference to the sins of the "**whole world**" have been removed by means of that one great sacrifice on Calvary. God was in Christ reconciling **the world** unto Himself." 2. Cor. 2, 19. This is the reconciliation effected once for all by Christ upon His cross, not only for us who have by faith accepted such reconciliation, but also for all those who either have not yet heard of it or, having heard, have in unbelief rejected it. God on His part

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is reconciled to all the world. Even those who bring into the Church "damnable heresies" and deny the Lord Jesus, have been truly and fully redeemed by His blood. That they are given over to swift destruction" (2. Pet. 2, 1.) is not owing to any deficiency in God, or in the vicarious death of Christ for all sins of all men, but to their own refusal to be reconciled to God. They have "trodden under foot the Son of God" and have "counted the blood of the covenant," wherewith they also were "sanctified" (made acceptable in God's sight) an "unholy thing." Heb. 10, 25. God raised His Son from the dead for the justification not only of some, but of **all men**. "By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men. unto justification of life." Rom. 5, 18. That is the reason why the risen Saviour could issue His great command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16, 15. It was the Gospel that made no exceptions as to race, color, or nationality; a Gospel that did not exclude from its blessings any single individual, however sinful and depraved. It was the Gospel, furthermore, for all the succeeding generations of men on earth until the end of time. "This Gospel of the Kingdom," says our Lord, "shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations; and then the end shall come." Matth. 24, 14. Thus it clearly appears and is certain beyond a doubt, that the Gospel is universal in its application.

But let us not be misunderstood. We do not mean to say that God confers the benefits of His glorious Gospel on each and every sinner, even if the sinner does not want them, but in unbelief and hardness of heart rejects them. The Gospel is universal, not in this sense that every sinner actually receives forgiveness of

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sins, but in the sense that such forgiveness is in very truth ready and waiting for all that are in the right frame of mind to profit by it. Let it be distinctly understood and always borne in mind that the Gospel is God's message of a finished work; of an accepted sacrifice; of a free and sufficient pardon for all sins of whatever kind and degree, and for all sinners of all times. But if the sinner will not admit and confess his guilt to God in true repentance; if he will not give to God the glory of being perfectly just, and take to himself the blame and the shame of his sin, then God cannot apply to him his Gospel blessings, though there is a superabundant supply in store also for the impenitent. Not as though the sinner could by his repentance in any way move God to forgive him, or in any sense earn, or partly earn, His forgiveness. That is ready, waiting for him. But in the moral order of things it is simply impossible for God to forgive guilt which is denied by the guilty. This is so simple, and on this moral principle men act continually in everyday life. Yet when applied to God and the sinner, people object and complain, as though the holy God were doing a wrong in refusing pardon to those who will not admit and confess their offence. We are told that God is unjust, because He will cast from Him eternally those who will not admit that His Law is just; that they have transgressed it; that they are guilty and deserve punishment. If Christ died for all; if He bore their guilt and suffered their punishment; if the Gospel is universal in its application, why, then, should any human soul be forever lost? So these people ask, and it is a great pity that they so often receive a wrong answer to their question. These dear people lose sight of the very important fact that Jesus Christ died for all

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on account of **their sins**; and that therefore the benefits of His vicarious death cannot be conferred on such as refuse to admit that it was also **their very own sins** for which Christ died. Forgiveness of sins is inseparably bound up and connected with Christ's death. It is in Him, in His blood, for the sake of His perfect sacrifice, that God forgives sin. Those, therefore, who will not admit their share of sin in that sin which Christ bore and atoned for on Calvary, cannot possibly expect to have a share in that forgiveness of sin which that sin-offering of His has made possible to a just and holy God. It cannot be too often and too emphatically stated that God does not forgive sin, merely because He is so good and kind and forgiving, without any reference to His justice, which must be satisfied, and His Law which must be vindicated as holy, just, and good, and His threats which must come true. God does not, and by His very nature cannot, forgive sins, absolutely, that is, without any reference to a substitute or mediator between Himself and sinful men. But He forgives sins relatively, that is, for the sake of His Son, who is the world's substitute and as such has satisfied all the demands of God's justice; has established the Law as righteous and just by suffering its penalty, and has received the fulfilment of God's threats in His own body and soul on the accursed tree. Now, such as will not acknowledge that they have deserved to suffer, as their substitute has suffered, thereby deny that He was their substitute. Their sin remains upon their own souls, and they must not blame God if His wrath abides on them, as it certainly will, unless they do confess their sins and accept God's pardon in Jesus' blood. John 3, 36. Without repentance (sorrow for sin, hatred of sin, confession of sin) there

is no forgiveness. This is the truth as the Saviour would have it preached, in this order, and in no other, because there is no other. The risen Lord Himself told His disciples that He had suffered and had risen from the dead for this very purpose, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." Luke 24, 46. 47. And the apostles did as the Lord had Commanded them. Thus St. Peter preached saying: "Repent ye, and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." Acts 3, 19. And so St. Paul preached and "taught publicly and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 20, 20. 21. And so St. John taught and still teaches: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. . . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us." 1. John 1, 8-10. He is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins" does not, of course, mean that His forgiveness is a just reward of our confession of it, but that He will keep His gracious promises in Jesus Christ and not punish our sins twice, having in His Son punished them once for all (Heb. 9, 12). But He will, upon our confession of sin, immediately, and without imposing on us any conditions, apply to us the full merits of our great High Priest, who has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Heb. 9, 28. Without repentance there can be no forgiveness of sins. Thus we are taught by our Saviour and by His apostles. And the very same teaching we find in the Old Testament. Two examples must suffice. The prophet Jeremiah is commanded by the Lord to go and proclaim

these words: "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep mine anger forever. **Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.**" Jer. 3, 12, 13. Mark the words, **I am merciful.**" Israel's repentance is not going to make Him so; is not going to earn or deserve His pardon. God is in Christ Jesus ever ready to pardon, is in His love yearning for the return of His wayward children and eager to forgive them. But He cannot, unless they acknowledge their guilt. The other example is that of David. This will be familiar to every Christian reader, so that we do not think it necessary to print the words. They will be found in Psalm 32, 1-5, and also in Psalm 51, 1-3.

The Gospel is universal in its application. No penitent sinner shall ever go away from God's presence unforgiven. And though his sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Is. 1, 18. Let no sinner in his secret heart imagine that his sin is too great to be forgiven. It is not. His sin cannot possibly be as great as the sacrifice by which all guilt has been removed. Here it will be seen how highly important for a sinner's peace is the truth that the Gospel is universal in its application. Since the Gospel covers all sinners without exception, it certainly covers also each and every individual sinner. If Jesus Christ is the propitiation, (Suehnopfer) for the sins of the whole world, He certainly is the propitiation also for all the sins of Adam and of David, of Judas and Peter and Saul of Tarsus. Let us not hesitate to make this application to ourselves and other penitent sinners of our acquaintance. If the

Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world, He most certainly has taken away also your sin, dear reader, and the sin of those you hold dear. If He has done the greater, He has so much more certainly done the less. And He Himself is very careful to make this point clear when He expressly commands His disciples to go and preach the Gospel not only to the world in general, but to **“every creature,”** to every poor sinner in particular. Let it also be remembered that Jesus Christ died for **sinner**s; for **real** sinners; for **desperately wicked** sinners. There on the cross, with arms of love extended, the Lover of our souls, our great High Priest and God’s own almighty Son, calls out in tones of tenderness and deep compassion: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.” Matth. 11, 28; 6, 37.

Many years ago, the writer of these lines was sitting at the bedside of a man who was very sick and expecting death. His conscience was burdened with many a sin. We knew that, partly from his own confession and partly from our own personal knowledge of his life. He had often expressed deep sorrow for his sin and was, as far as we could judge, a true believer. But there came hours of doubt and gloom. His sins would rise up before him and torment him, so that temporarily he seemed to have lost his hold on God’s pardoning love in Jesus Christ. The heaven of God’s grace was overclouded by the tempest raised within his soul by the remembrance of his great and many sins. We took his hand in ours and looked him straight in the eye. His eye was hungrily, yet somewhat doubtfully, fixed on ours. So looking at him with unwavering assurance of



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heart and pressing his hand we told him that he need not fear; that his sin, all his sin, that which was known to us and that which he was ashamed to tell us, that **all his sin was absolutely blotted out** and should not be remembered against him forever. We told him that the **world's Redeemer** had redeemed him too; that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Rom. 5, 20; that all his sins were as nothing compared to the sins of the whole world, and that because Christ had atoned for the sins of the world, He had beyond the slightest shadow of a doubt also atoned for his sin. So the poor soul was comforted with divine comfort; for what we told him was heavenly truth, based on the divine fact of a **universal** redemption of sinners by the blood of the Son of God. It is because of this fact that each individual sinner can confidently sing and say:—

Just as I am, and waiting not  
To rid my soul of one dark blot,  
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,  
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;  
Because Thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I Come, I come.

346, 2. 5.

### 4.—THE GOSPEL IS EXCLUSIVE.

"There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4, 12. The Gospel of Jesus Christ absolutely excludes each and every competitor. That religion alone which pro-

claims the Gospel of a crucified and risen Redeemer, is the true religion. All others are false and are in no sense guides to God and eternal life. In no other religion, however ancient and venerable, can the human soul find peace with God. It is of the utmost importance that this truth be preached and taught, defended and maintained against all opponents, especially in these days of shallow indifference to Divine truth.

The Gospel is not an invention of human thought, but a supernatural revelation of God to man. It is not a mere human opinion as to the way to God, but it is the one and **only** way to our heavenly Father. It is not a piece of good advice as to what man should do to ease his conscience, advice which need not necessarily be the best advice, and which might be safely ignored, but it is heavenly news of a great deliverance; the divine proclamation of what God has done to make peace with the world; the glad tidings of an accomplished redemption through the death of God's own Son.

They tell us that we must not be so very positive in our statements concerning the Gospel; that we should be less dogmatic in our assertions with reference to the Christian religion; that it is not considered "good form" to be so peremptory (*keinen Widerspruchduldend*) in our attitude over against people of other persuasions. And such voices may be heard not only out in the world of unbelievers, but within the Christian Church itself. These voices are multiplying. But this does not surprise us (compare Matt. 24, 4-14). Neither shall it prevent us from saying and preaching and writing that the Gospel is exclusive of every competitor, and that the Christian religion, as revealed in the Scrip-

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tures, is the only true one. To those among our readers who have followed us so far, this will require no special proof. As a matter of fact, no true believer in Christ Jesus requires any such proof. He has in his heart the deep conviction, the divine assurance, certified by personal experience, that the Gospel is the truth and that all doctrine contrary to the Gospel must necessarily be false doctrine. But every believer has also in his own bosom an enemy of the Gospel. This is his old Adam, who is ever opposed to the word of God. And if the Christian is not always on his guard, keeping in living touch with Gospel truth from day to day, and continuing in prayer to the God of his salvation, his old Adam will again obtain the upper hand, weaken his conviction, and dim the light of faith in his soul, especially if influences from without co-operate with the old Adam in undermining his assurance of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. It will, therefore, not be superfluous for us to say a few words more in connection with the fact that the Gospel is exclusive.

If the Gospel were a matter of mere human opinion, we should not be positive, or dogmatic, or peremptory about it at all. We should in that case not have taken all this trouble to write about it. We should have felt it to be unpardonable presumption (Anmassung) on our part, to foist upon our readers an opinion which might not be so good as their own, and which in no case would warrant our being so absolutely positive about it. We say all this, in order to assure the reader that we are well aware of what we are doing, when we assert with all the emphasis at our command, and in the face of all gainsayers, however learned and virtuous, that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is

divine and everlasting truth, excluding each and every teaching that is contrary to it and branding such teaching as false teaching and dangerous to the souls of all that believe it, however **sincere** they may be in such belief.

In saying this, we simply repeat, in our own words, what Jesus and His apostles have said before. Those who quarrel with our position must take their quarrel to Jesus Christ and His first ambassadors of truth. Our Lord says, plainly enough, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father **but by me.**" John 14, 6. And to the Pharisees, who would not admit His claims to be the Messiah, He said, in equally plain words, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above. Ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins. For if ye believe not that I am He, **ye shall die in your sins.**" John 8, 23, 24. And again: "I am the door. By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." John 10, 9. The Lord's apostle and bosom friend, St. John, writes: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him." John 3, 36. The reason for this is obvious. He who rejects the Gospel of Jesus Christ remains under the wrath of God forever; for there is no other Saviour and no other Gospel of salvation. St. Peter, speaking to the "rulers of the people and elders of Israel," concerning Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified and whom God had raised from the dead, said also these words: "This (namely Jesus) is the stone which was set at nought (verworfen) of you builders, which is become the head

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of the corner. Neither is there salvation **in any other**; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4, 10-12. St. Paul, writing to the Galatians, who had been troubled and led into error by false teachers has a more emphatic statement as to the exclusiveness of the Gospel than we have anywhere else in the Bible, and every true Christian thanks God for those words, which Christ's ambassador writes in the name of His Lord and Master. The words are these: "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert (verkehren, verdrehen) the Gospel of Christ. 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**. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that (which) ye have received, **let him be accursed**. He also gives the reason for being so positive, so very "dogmatic" about the Gospel. "I certify you, brethren," he continues, "that the Gospel which was preached of (by) me is not after man (man's invention or "opinion"). For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. 1, 7-12.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is **God's truth** come down from heaven, and it is **the power** of God unto man's salvation. Rom. 1, 16. There is no other way for man to be saved. The Gospel is the **only** gateway to the soul's life, liberty and happiness (1. John, 5, 12; John 8, 36; Rom. 4, 8). The Gospel is the **only** fountain when flow the "streams of living waters" which alone can bring to the hearts of men true and abiding peace, lasting joy, and living hope (Rom. 5, 1; John 16, 22; 1. Pet. 1, 3). In the face of this truth, shall

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the Church of Jesus Christ look calmly on, shall the called and ordained ministers of the Gospel stand by with folded hands, while the father of lies (John 8, 44), and arch-enemy of God and man is undermining, in the hearts of men, through many willing and energetic instruments, the foundations of the world's only hope? God forbid! If the present-day "ambassadors for Christ" are not mere hirelings, out for popularity and pelf; if they are not moral cowards, mere servants of men; if they are not base deceivers, wolves in sheep's clothing: then they will sound the Gospel trumpet in no uncertain tones; but they will assert the paramount claims of the Gospel with the authority and firmness of messengers sent of God; and in the faithful and fearless spirit of the greatest of all Gospel preachers they will, on occasion, not hesitate to say: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that (which) ye have received, let him be accursed." Such language is too seldom heard in the churches of to-day, too rarely met with in the writings of modern churchmen. Such words sound very strange to the ears of the average modern churchgoer, who is very indifferent to distinctions of doctrine. They are actually offensive and repugnant (abstossend) to those who pride themselves on their large-mindedness, their gentle tolerance of all kinds of views, their charity for all men. Such people as these consider it a fault in the holy apostle to have written as he did, a lack of charitable tolerance for such as held other views than his own, a loss of temper even, not at all in keeping with the mind and heart of His "gentle Master." Well, people who speak and write in this strain need not detain us long here. They are no believers in Christ Jesus. They

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know neither St. Paul nor St. Paul's divine Master. In spiritual things they are absolutely blind, even though they may stand high in the councils of some church, and are, by the world in general, considered to be among the leaders of Christian thought. How such poor fools will stare, when they hear St. Paul's "gentle Master" thunder forth these words: "Depart from me, ye cursed, unto everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"! Matth. 25, 41.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is for human souls a matter of life and death. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3, 36. "God has given to us eternal life, and this life is **in His Son**. He that hath the Son (by believing the Gospel) **hath life**; and he that hath not the Son of God, **hath not life**." 1. John. 5, 11-12. Satan very well knows this absolute importance of the Gospel for the salvation of sinners. Wherever the precious Gospel seed is sown he is very busy in preventing its taking root and bringing fruit. "When they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts." Mark 4, 15. He employs hosts of false prophets, going about in sheep's clothing, to deceive the unwary and the simple-minded; to prejudice their minds against the Gospel and its faithful messengers. St. Paul speaks of "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." These are the people who raise the cry against God's faithful witnesses of Gospel truth, saying that they are narrow-minded, uncharitable, arrogant and proud, simply because they maintain, over against all opposition, that the Gospel is the only truth concerning the world's salvation. And

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such "false apostles" and "deceitful workers" are all the more dangerous because they "transform themselves into the apostles of Christ." Men are so easily impressed by outward appearances. True Christians also are in danger of being deceived by the tricks that Satan employs to make his messengers of unbelief attractive and acceptable. They make a show of piety, of self-sacrifice, of deep learning in the Scriptures. They have a persuasive manner, can pray beautifully, and make themselves generally very agreeable. They softly steal themselves into the hearts of their dupes and possess their very souls. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." 2 Cor. II, 13-15.

Satan uses many means of undermining, in the minds and hearts of men, the everlasting truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He attacks it at many points, and usually begins his operations very far away from the central fortress—the death and resurrection of the Son of God. Thus, for instance, he worms himself into the minds of men and women, aye, into the hearts of school children, by the truly Satanic theory of evolution, which at present dominates and actually permeates (durchdringt) many text books used in primary schools, high schools and colleges. That people who call themselves Christians should be so indifferent to this terrible danger, is one of the saddest signs of these sad times. For wherever the theory of evolution is taught, there the Gospel of Jesus Christ is attacked in its foundations. If man has gradually evolved (sich entwickelt hat) from lower forms of life; if there was



no special creation of Adam and Eve; if there was no fall into sin, well, then the Gospel of a crucified **Saviour from sin** becomes quite meaningless, if not actually ridiculous. When young people, who have been to a non-religious school, begin to express doubts as to whether the Bible story of Adam's creation and fall were really true or not, then it is time to apply the principle of exclusiveness, that is, we must not for a single moment tolerate that error in the minds of our young people, but must do all we possibly can to remove it. We must convince them that they are absolutely wrong, even though some very much respected teacher has told them that the story of Adam and Eve is a beautiful fable. In the name of God, whose Word is called in question, we must fight that error. In the name of Jesus Christ, who has placed His divine seal of truth upon **ALL** Scripture, we must fight that error. In the name and in behalf of the Gospel of salvation, we must by all the means at our command eradicate that fatal error from the minds of all those over whom we have any influence or authority. Huxley himself, one of the apostles of evolutionism once said: "The doctrine of evolution is directly antagonistic (im Widerspruch) to that of creation. Evolution, if consistently accepted, makes it impossible to believe in the Bible" (1), and therefore also impossible to believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Not that the eternal truth of the Gospel were thereby in any way endangered. The Gospel is and remains true, but by unbelief those poor deluded sinners are robbed or rob themselves of its blessings. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life." When in the interest of maintaining the truth of God's Word

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1.—Horsch: Modern Religious Liberalism, p. 232.

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and in defence of the Gospel truth we oppose ourselves to the prevalent error of evolutionism, men sometimes smile, in a very superior manner, as though they half pitied our "ignorance," and half despised our "stupidity," and sometimes they will condescend to speak to us and tell us that we are "narrow-minded," and "behind the times," and "foolish" to pit our own little selves against the general opinion of the world, and "ridiculous" in trying to know better than so many great and learned men of science, whom the world delights to honor and to follow. Well, we let them smile and pay us compliments, remembering meanwhile the good old proverb which says that "he laughs best who laughs last."

But, on second thoughts, it is just as well to let these "wise" people know that we are not the only "ignorant" and "stupid" ones; that, on the contrary, many of this world's most learned and scientific men are on our side. Thus the writer had the privilege of listening, on a June afternoon, in 1920, in Queen's Hall, London, to a lecture on Spiritism, read by the aged Dr. A. T. Schofield, one of England's great physicians. The learned doctor in his lecture stood foursquare on the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the **only** way to God and heaven. The writer is very sorry that he cannot quote the identical words used by Dr. Schofield; but anyone sufficiently interested in disproving the above could, no doubt, procure a verbatim report of the proceedings of that afternoon. To the writer that day—it was the first of June—will ever be a memorable one, just because of the victory of the Gospel over a mind like that of the said Doctor of Medicine.

Sir Andrew Clarke, President of the Royal Col-

lege of Physicians, while presiding in 1890 at its annual meeting of the Christian Evidence Society, gave his reasons for accepting Christianity. The following were his concluding remarks: "No one with any wide experience, such as my own, can doubt how vast, how terrible, how far reaching, are the sins and sufferings of men to-day, as they have been in all days; no one can doubt for a moment, whatever be his creed, that human remedies have been tried and have all failed. No one can doubt who has had adequate opportunities of observation, adequate powers of reflection (sorely lacking in our "wise" worshippers of a mere assumption—evolution!) that there is one remedy, **AND ONE ALONE**, for all this spiritual disease, and that remedy is to be found in the person and work of Jesus Christ."

(1). Well, our "wise" evolutionist, would you call Sir Andrew Clarke an ignorant and stupid fellow? Would you say that he was behind the times? When he said those words, evolutionism was at its height, and yet Sir Andrew Clarke—and ever so many others like him—believed in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin and its misery. We could quote many more scientists of very high standing. But it is not necessary. We cannot, however, refrain from quoting a few words of a man who was very great in another sphere of life, and who also lived at a time when the theory of evolution was in full flower. We mean England's "Grand Old Man"—Gladstone, three times Prime Minister of Great Britain. The words we desire to quote are these: "Talk of questions of the day, there is but one question, and that is the Gospel. It can and will cor-

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1.—"Present Day Tracts," lxxvii., p. 35. The words in brackets and the heavy type are our own.—G.C.K.

rect everything needing correction. My only hope for the world is in bringing the human mind into contact with divine revelation." (1). "Mr. Gladstone, in 1890, as an old man well acquainted with the progress of science, and with the attacks made upon Christianity during his long life, has written a book entitled, **The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture**. The following extract expresses his views with regard to the future of the Bible:

"They (the present observations) lead upwards and onwards to the idea that the Scriptures are well called Holy Scriptures; and that though assailed by camp, by battery, and by mine, they are, nevertheless, a house builded upon a rock, and that rock impregnable (uneinnehmbar); that the weapon of offence which shall impair their efficiency for aiding in the redemption of mankind has not yet been found; that the Sacred Canon . . . is likely to wear out the storms and the sunshine of the world, and all the wayward aberrations (Abirrungen) of humanity, not merely for a term as long, but until time shall be no more.'" (2).

The Gospel is exclusive. It simply will not and cannot tolerate any opinions or doctrines, however highly recommended, that would in any way invalidate (ungueltig machen) its claims of being the truth of God and the **only means** whereby human beings can get back to God and have eternal life. This being so, it is the duty, not only of the ministers of the Gospel, but also of each and every Christian, to stand up for its defence, whenever it is attacked. The Christian who defends the Gospel defends his own very life; for with-

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1.—"Present Day Tracts, lxxvii., p. 48.

2.—"Present Day Tracts, lxxvii., pp. 51, 52.

out it he would die eternally. It is very pathetic; it almost brings the tears to one's eyes, to hear Christians, Lutheran Christians, too, objecting to their ministers attacking false doctrines and, occasionally, false teachers, warning against them and giving his reasons according to Scripture. Such "Christians," not content with neglecting their own solemn duty, would tempt, and **do** tempt God's own messenger to keep silence when he sees members of his flock endangered by false teaching and by "deceitful workers," servants of Satan, who by smooth and persuasive words would lead men to accept "damnable heresies." When these "false apostles" proclaim from platform, pulpit, and motor car to the wide, listening world their fatal errors, shall the servant of Jesus Christ, the messenger of God's everlasting and saving Gospel, be silent and hide himself? Shall he not, at least before his own flock, and from his pulpit, publicly brand as untrue and dangerous those errors, and also warn his people against those persons who have publicly proclaimed them? Verily, he shall, and if he is faithful to his trust, in the name and in the power of God, he will, no matter what some of his time-serving parishioners, who love the world's friendship more than Christ's approval and their fellow-men's salvation, may have to say.

But we must not exceed the limits of our space. The subject of this section is a very large one. To do full justice to it would require hundreds of pages. Let us ever bear in mind that the Church of Jesus Christ here below is the Church militant, the fighting Church. This is so, because she is beset on all sides with opposition; attacked continually by many and persistent and powerful enemies, Satan himself leading them on.

She preaches Jesus Christ and Him crucified. She tells a lost world that He is its Saviour, its **ONLY** Saviour; and straightway the opposition and the enmity of the world arises against such preaching. The world hates Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the only Saviour from sin. The world hates His Gospel. The world hates all faithful Gospel preachers. The world hates all true believers in the Gospel. So it was. So it is. So it will be, till He comes for whom the Bride is waiting, comes in glory to take her home to be forevermore His Church Triumphant; when the sword of her warfare shall be forever laid aside, and she shall bear in her right hand the palm of victory, and on her brow shall shine the crown of everlasting peace.

“Mid toil and tribulation,  
 And tumult of her war,  
 She waits the consummation  
 Of peace forevermore;  
 Till with the vision glorious  
 Her longing eyes are blest,  
 And the great Church victorious  
 Shall be the Church at rest.                    232, 4.

#### 5.—THE GOSPEL IS FINAL.

(Endgueltig Abschliessend.)

“God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by His Son.” Heb. 1, 1-2. And to those “Jews who believed on Him” this same Son of God spoke as follows: “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.”

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John 8, 31-32. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great Prophet of God. All the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles and evangelists of the New Testament were but His servants and instruments for spreading abroad His Word, the truth of God. Concerning this unique Prophet a voice came from heaven, saying: "Hear ye Him." Matth. 17, 5. While He was visibly with His disciples, He gave them words of heavenly truth, so, that Simon Peter, in the name of the twelve, was constrained to confess: "Lord, to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life." John 6, 68. And when He was about to withdraw from them His visible presence and go to the Father, He said to them: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, **HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH**; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." John 16, 12-14. After His resurrection He said unto them; "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." Luke 24, 46-49. The redemption of the world was accomplished; the witnesses of His resurrection and messengers of His Gospel of reconciliation were before Him; but to make quite sure that they should teach the world **THE INFAL-LIBLE TRUTH** concerning Himself and His work, He bids them wait for the promised spirit of truth,

saying: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued (angetan) with power from on high." Luke 24, 49. When he had parted from them on Olivet and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1, 3). He fulfilled His promise and sent upon them the Spirit of truth and power, thus equipping them for their work of proclaiming to a world in spiritual ignorance the truth of God, as it is in Him:—the Gospel truth, the full Gospel truth, the final Gospel truth. They spoke and wrote "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." (1. Cor. 2, 3). It was even He Himself, the risen Saviour, the great divine and infallible Prophet, who, through the Holy Ghost, by means of these human instruments, continued to exercise His prophetic office. That is why St. Paul could write to the Ephesian Christians: Christ "**CAME AND PREACHED**" peace to you which were afar off (the Gentiles), and to them that were nigh (the Jews). It is, of course, well known to our readers that during His earthly and visible sojourn among men our Saviour never came to Ephesus. And yet St. Paul distinctly writes that He came and preached peace to the Ephesians. It was even so. For He was actually, though invisibly, present with His Church according to His promise. Matth. 18, 20. It was He that had called and sent the apostle into the Gentile world (Acts 9, 15), and thus also to Ephesus. It was He that had revealed to His ambassador the Gospel he was to preach (Gal. 1, 11-12) and to write, leaving it behind for all time in his wonderful epistles, the richest legacy ever bequeathed to posterity by any mortal man. Those who actually heard the apostle's preaching there in Ephesus had no real advantage over



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us who now read the epistles, that written to the Ephesians among their number. And thus that same Jesus who came and preached peace to the Ephesians, Corinthians, and Romans through the mouth of His apostle, comes to us to-day, preaching the Gospel of reconciliation through the pen, through the writings of that same apostle, and through the writings of His other apostles and evangelists, whom He had also equipped for that task, and whose minds and pens He guided through the Holy Ghost (1. Cor. 2, 13). When, therefore, our present day ministers of the Gospel preach to us, we rightly expect them to preach nothing that is contrary to what Jesus Christ, the great prophet, has once for all given to the world through His accredited witnesses, and specially equipped ambassadors of peace, that is, his apostles and evangelists. If ever any modern preacher should, in the name of Christ, preach to us something that is evidently contrary to the writings of the apostles and evangelists, such preaching is not true, but false doctrine, no matter who may be the preacher. Such teaching comes not from the Spirit of God, who spoke through the Lord's apostles and evangelists, and **who cannot contradict Himself.**

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the final revelation of God to men. Till the day on which the Saviour of the world comes in power and glory as the Judge of the world, there will be no other revelation given to the children of time. And even when time is swallowed up by eternity, there will be no other Gospel, no better or higher Gospel, no, not as long as God is God. The "Spirit of truth" has come long ago, has guided the Lord's messengers into "all truth," all truth, ever

required for men to be saved by. The Spirit of truth has glorified Christ by the preaching, and in the writings of Christ's ambassadors. Through this same Spirit Christ has told them all He had to say concerning Himself in reference to the world's salvation. Revelation ceased when the last apostle, St. John, died. And though the Holy Spirit is still with the Church of Christ, and will remain with it to the end, He no longer acts as the Revealer of things before unknown, but as the Interpreter (Ausleger) of that very truth into which He guided the apostles and evangelists. He still glorifies Christ in the hearts of men, but not by means of "new revelations," but by means of the revelation once for all given to the world in the apostolic age. He still guides ignorant and erring sons and daughters of Adam into all truth, but He does this by means of that very Word of Truth, which He brought from heaven, and which is our Saviour's very own divine truth concerning Himself and the salvation through His name. John 16, 15. As God Himself could not give to the world a higher evidence of His love for sinners than He has done by means of that great death on Calvary, so likewise He cannot give a better or a higher revelation of saving truth than He has done on that great day of Pentecost, and all through the Pentecostal age, till the last eye-witness of the resurrection closed his eyes in death. This same Gospel that John, the beloved disciple, preached and wrote; that St. Peter and St. Paul preached and penned; that the Lord Himself preached and taught; "this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached," so says the Lord, "in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then the end shall come." Matth. 24, 14. And lest (auf dass nicht) someone should

twist these words and say that they refer merely to the end of the Jewish State, which came with the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D., we direct the reader's attention to the fact that in the same chapter our Lord in unmistakable words speaks also of the end of the world, and in verse 36 He distinctly says: **"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."** Besides, it is quite unthinkable that the Saviour of the world, who had promised to be with His own to the very end of the world (Matth. 28, 20), should not have meant His saving Gospel to be preached in all the world to the very end of time. But it is well that He has distinctly told us, in very clear and simple words, that His Gospel shall not only be preached till the end of time, but that it shall outlast heaven and earth and time itself, and endure for ever. This great and comforting truth concerning the finality (Endgueltigkeit) of the Gospel we find very strongly and beautifully expressed by St. Peter, who in his first epistle writes: **"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."** 1. Pet. 1, 24-25. Of this same Gospel he writes in the previous verse (23) as of **"The Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever."**

Yes, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is final, is the highest and the last revelation of God to the world. And though men in their pride persist in saying that it is not, we can well afford to ignore their foolish talk, no matter how wise it may sound in the ears of an unbelieving world. We know that all the glory of

man is as the flower of grass. His beauty and strength; his wealth and honor; his wit and wisdom; his learning and science; his arts and his achievements in every field of human endeavor and activity: they are all as the flower of grass. They have their little day; they flourish, decline, and pass away, to make room for others, which in their turn will also disappear, and in most cases leave no trace behind. And even those "glories" of the human race, which so far have escaped the greedy fangs of all-devouring time, will not endure. The curse of vanity and decay rests upon man and all his works, however much he may try to gloss over and to hide the unpleasant fact. Apart from the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ and what the Holy Ghost accomplishes here on earth by its means, all man's toil and effort is like pouring water into a sieve. It is vain and of no ultimate use. It has no real meaning, no inner strength, no abiding value. If the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not absolute and final truth; if we must ever grope in ignorance and uncertainty and unrest of conscience, searching for truth, but never finding it, then what do we live for? Then it would indeed be wisdom to say, as they said of old: "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." For thousands of years men have tried to solve the problems of life and death; of sin and suffering; of the way to man's lasting happiness. But they have always failed to find a solution that would stand all tests and really satisfy the soul. **God has provided the answer** to the soul's deepest and most insistent questionings. His answer is satisfying. It has stood the severest tests through all the ages. It has given sweet and perfect rest to innumerable hearts. It has been a firm anchor of living hope in the midst

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of utter desolation and in the hour of death. For the sake of this divine Truth, this Gospel of salvation, hundreds of thousands, old and young, men and women, youths and tender maidens, have gone to a most painful death, with prayer and praises on their lips. And here come these modern wiseacres and tell us that it was all a sad mistake; that all these blessed martyrs of God have died for a mere illusion, a personal opinion, a passing faith that had no foundation in divine realities!

And who are these people that treat the living and abiding word of God as though it were a mere product of man and time, bound to be superseded by something better and more up-to-date. Who are these people? we ask once more.

Have they received from God a later and a more perfect revelation than the Gospel? No, indeed not! On the contrary, they **deny** all supernatural revelation of God to man. They are the priests and devotees of science, so-called. We say advisedly, "science, so-called; for with true science the Gospel has no quarrel, and no true scientist has ever denied the claims of the Gospel, because it contradicted his science. For it did not. True science and the Gospel of Jesus Christ are not and never can be antagonists (Gegner). True science is natural truth, and the Gospel is revealed truth, and both are God's truth, but in entirely different spheres. For our present purpose it will be quite sufficient to say that science is the sum total of **EXACT human knowledge**, gained without revelation by **natural means**, and the application of such knowledge to the uses of man. The scientist as such studies the book of Nature. He does so with the help of all his senses.

He takes note of whatever Nature has to say to him through sight and hearing, through touch and taste and smell. The power of his senses, especially those of sight and hearing, he has contrived to increase by means of the microscope, the telescope, and amplifiers of sound. His knowledge of Nature will always be limited by the powers of the instruments of his observation. He cannot get beyond the power of his senses, assisted by instruments. The very highest actual results of all scientific labours of the whole world are as yet only a very small part of Nature's secrets, of that which might be known, if man had the necessary powers of actual observation. It is well to remember this fact. The true scientist is humble. He realises more and more the limitations of his power to know all that is contained in the book of Nature. He does not set himself up as a master of Nature, but knows that he is and will ever be a mere pupil, with much labour spelling out letter by letter the lesson she would teach him. The true scientist will agree with Alexander Pope when he writes:

“What is it to be wise?

’Tis but to know how little can be known.”

and with the great scientist, Sir Francis Bacon (died 1626), who writes: “Man the servant of Nature understands as much as his **OBSERVATION** of it, either with regard to things or the mind, **permits him**; and **NEITHER KNOWS NOR IS CAPABLE OF MORE.**”

We are truly thankful for all the **TRUTH** about Nature that the scientist, by patient labour, has brought to our knowledge and for the applications of such truth to the uses of man. We wish him God's richest blessings in his chosen field of human endeavour. May he be more

and more successful in his laborious search for natural truth and also find a proper appreciation and due reward for his invaluable contributions to human creature comfort and earthly happiness. And the more he really studies Nature, keeping his eye on facts as they present themselves; the deeper he descends into her wondrous depths, discovering one by one her hidden treasures and unveiling some of her long-hidden mysteries, the more, we are quite confident, will he learn to "look from Nature up to Nature's God," who is the Creator and Preserver of all those things, which to find has taken puny man so many thousands of years. The true scientist will not proclaim to the world as scientific truth what is not based on established fact gained by actual observation and tested in such a manner that no reasonable doubt remains. Such a truth based on a fact so established will never contradict the Gospel! It is the **GUESSES** at truth, all kinds of personal ideas and views of Nature, which quasi-scientists pass off as science upon the unthinking majority; it is this science so-called, that so often finds itself in conflict with the Gospel as well as with true science. These false disciples of science and enemies of revealed truth go far beyond the true limits of natural science and busy themselves about matters concerning which Nature is absolutely silent, things which Nature can never teach, and which no amount of the most honest, faithful, and efficient scientific research will ever bring within the reach of men.

These people who so glibly speak of natural science as the only source of truth, putting aside the Gospel of Jesus Christ like a worn-out garment and promising the world something better to take its place

—these quasi-scientists and the great host of their blind followers, who on every possible occasion raise the cry: Great is the Diana of the Ephesians; great is our goddess, Science. Away with St. Paul and his Gospel, give us Science! She is our mother and our father, our consolation in the present and our hope for the future. Not merely all Asia but all the world is worshipping her! (Acts 19, 24-28)—what do these worshippers of science, which is merely another word for exact human knowledge, what do these worshippers of knowledge really **KNOW** of God and man; of life and death and immortality; of the balm that heals men's sorrows; of the cure for man's most deep-seated malady—**sin**? What can they **do** to give a troubled conscience rest? What comfort can they **give** to the bereaved and heart-broken mourner standing by the open grave of parent, child, or friend? And a dying sinner, about to meet his Judge, will he call in the priest of science to assure him of forgiveness and to put into his wavering, terrified heart the living hope of a blest hereafter?

Science! By all means let us have as much of it as we possibly can. The true article is always in demand. We can never know too much about our own bodies, of this earth on which we dwell, and of the starry heavens above us; of all things near and far that the human mind **can** reach and study and know. But let us not look to Science for that which she cannot give. And if she steps out of her proper and natural sphere, meddling with things that are beyond her boundaries and promising what she can never possibly fulfil, then let us tell her to mind her own business; to learn her own lessons and stop playing truant in her neighbor's



garden, shaking the fruit from the trees and trampling on the choicest flowers.

But are we not living in a progressive world, in an age of wonderful progress in all directions? Why should the Gospel be exempt from this general tendency towards change and improvement? What was good enough for our grandfathers, and even our fathers, need not necessarily be good enough for us. Our grandfathers mostly walked from place to place, or rode on horseback, or at best travelled over the ground in cumbersome and springless waggons at the rate of from four to eight miles an hour. We ride in luxurious motor cars at thirty miles an hour, and sometimes in an aeroplane or Zeppelin at the rate of from fifty to a hundred miles an hour! We can converse with friends thousands of miles away! Sermons preached and hymns sung in St. Louis, in the centre of the United States, can be heard and enjoyed in New York and San Francisco, on the shores of Lake Superior and the Gulf of Mexico! It is all so very wonderful that it easily takes people off their feet, as it were, and lifts them up into the air as though they were a superior race no longer requiring the old, old story of Jesus and His love. This material progress makes people impatient of old restraints and proud of modern achievements of applied science, even though they themselves have had no share whatever in bringing such changes about. Thus we read, for instance, of a man who recently made a 6500 mile tour of Europe in various aeroplanes, and this is what he writes, among other things, concerning his feelings under that experience: "Some remote . . . instinct is stirred at this sudden break with accustomed limitations, flooding one's soul with a new spirit of

power and importance, as his magic carpet (the aeroplane) bears him swiftly through the sky." And again: "It is hard not to look down with a touch of **conscious superiority** on the jostling street throngs, tired workmen, who have trodden the dusty road of common tasks, hurrying home, while for us **all the heavens have sung of liberty.**" (1). O yes, it is all very glorious. But, however fast we may travel, however high and far we may fly in aeroplanes, we can never get rid of three companions: **SIN—CONSCIENCE—DEATH.** . Whatever progress there may be in store for us and for our children to the end of time, the children of Adam will never be able to progress away from these three: **SIN—CONSCIENCE—DEATH.** Out of darkness and mystery man comes into this world for a little while and he brings these three with him as inseparable companions. And when "life's little day" is over, he returns into darkness and mystery, with these three still clinging to him. And they will continue to do so, till the last man is born, till the last man enters eternal death, with all his sins upon him, and an accusing conscience gnawing in his soul forever. So it will be as far as "science" and "progress" are concerned. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is to-day and will ever be **THE ONLY REMEDY** against these three deadly enemies of man's temporal and eternal happiness. The Lamb of God has taken away, by His vicarious sacrifice, the guilt and curse and power of **SIN.** He has come, and in the **Gospel** preached **PEACE OF CONSCIENCE** to those who were far off and to those who were near. He has by His resurrection "**ABOLISHED DEATH** and brought life and immortality to light." Yes, the Gospel is final,

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1.—"The National Geographic Magazine," 1925, pp. 266-273.

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is not subject to change or progress, cannot in any way be modified for the better. It is perfect, where science is not merely imperfect but absolutely helpless and ignorant. It is always up-to-date, as long as there is sin to be forgiven; a troubled conscience to be set at rest; the bitterness of death to be overcome. The Gospel is like the sun in the heavens, which has since its creation given light and warmth and power to all the world, and which will continue to do so to the end, without even the slightest improvement on the part of "progressive" man! The Gospel is **unlike** the sun in this that while the sun that shone on Adam, and is shining to-day on us, will one day cease to shine and vanish, the Gospel of the Sun of righteousness, that same Gospel of Jesus Christ, which the worldly wise in their blind folly reject as out-of-date, will abide for ever as the highest revelation of God's eternal love for a sin-cursed world.

**The Gospel is final.** It satisfies man's deepest and most vital needs. All true Christians know this from their own experience. They look for no other Gospel. They need no other. They are fully content with the Gospel they possess. It is their greatest treasure on earth. They would rather part with all their worldly possessions than with this Gospel of a crucified and risen Saviour. They hold it dearer than this earthly life and, if need be, are prepared, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to lay this life down rather than surrender to Satan and his followers the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The true Christian passes at least some little time each day meditating on the Gospel, looking ever deeper into its fathomless depths, seeing with increasing wonder and delight its beauties unfolding be-

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fore his gaze; bringing forth from it ever new treasures of consolation and of hope; satisfying his soul's daily needs from its boundless store of the unsearchable riches of Christ; and waiting with longing desire and glad expectation for the coming of that blessed day, when he shall see His Saviour face to face and be forever with the God of his salvation and the Lover of his soul.

## CHAPTER IX.

### BY MEANS OF THE GOSPEL THE HOLY SPIRIT CREATES, SUSTAINS, AND INCREASES IN THE HEARTS OF MEN A NEW LIFE—THE LIFE OF FAITH, WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE.

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“The Church’s one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
She is the new creation  
By water and the word;  
From heav’n He came and sought her  
To be His holy bride;  
With His own blood he bought her,  
And for her life He died.” 332, 1.

To give anything like a full treatment of the subject indicated in our chapter head, is not within the scope of the present work and would far exceed the limits of our remaining space. The full treatment of “the life of faith” (das Glaubensleben) would have to deal in detail with such subjects as Regeneration and Conversion, Justification, Sanctification, and Preservation (Wiedergeburt und Bekehrung, Rechtfertigung, Heiligung and Erhaltung). In this chapter we shall try to give, in simpler words than the long ones just used, a brief summary of all these things, yet complete enough to fulfil the promise given in the words heading this chapter.

“I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh (this earthly life), **I LIVE BY THE FAITH** of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Gal. 2, 20. Thus writes St. Paul concerning his own Christian life, the life of faith in Jesus Christ, his Saviour. And this is the life that every true Christian lives. It is a **new** life. This life of faith in Jesus Christ did not come with us into the world through conception and natural birth. We were by nature **DEAD** in sins, children of wrath, enemies of God. This has been made sufficiently clear in Chapters iii. and iv. The life that St. Paul lived after his conversion, was something that had never before been in him, even while he was most zealous (eifrig) in keeping the Law, and was considered to be a model Jewish “churchman.” The life of faith is in each case **A NEW CREATION** (Neu-Schoepfung). “If any man be in Christ (through faith in Him), he is **A NEW CREATURE**: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Cor, 5, 7. This new life, the life of faith in Jesus Christ, is created in the hearts of men by the Holy Spirit. For thus we read (1. Cor. 12, 3): “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” To “say that Jesus is the Lord,” is here evidently to be taken as equivalent to faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world. And again we read: “Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of **regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost**, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.” Titus 3, 5-6. Let it be well noted that St. Paul is here not speaking of that great out-pouring

of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; but he has in view the regenerating and renewing work that the Holy Ghost is continually carrying on in the hearts of men. For St. Paul was converted to Jesus Christ long after that great day of Pentecost, and Titus was a Gentile convert of the apostle (Gal. 2, 3; Titus 1, 4).

But the Holy Ghost does not create a new life in the hearts of men without employing certain means (nicht ohne Mittel). This is a very important point to bear in mind. Many have gone sadly astray, because they have overlooked this fact, imagining that the Holy Spirit had come to them to regenerate and renew their hearts, while all the time they were deceiving themselves and others. The Holy Spirit had not come to them, and their hearts were not regenerated and renewed, simply because they had neglected the means by which alone the Holy Ghost will create the life of faith. And what means does the Holy Ghost employ for this purpose? We answer: He employs the **Word of God**, once for all given to the world by divine inspiration, the Spirit's own peculiar work, concerning which we have said a few words in section 5 of the previous chapter. But which Word of God does the Holy Spirit employ in creating the life of faith? The Law or the Gospel? Or does He employ both? No, He does not. He uses only **one** of these two. That one is **not the Law**, but **THE GOSPEL**. The Law as revealed in Scripture is certainly the Word of God and eternal truth; but by its means no new life can ever come into human hearts. The Law demands, threatens, condemns, curses, kills, but cannot make alive. All

true Christians know this from their own sad experience. "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the Law," writes St. Paul, Gal. 3, 21. But no such law has ever been given. The Law cannot give life. Its very nature makes that impossible. Our readers will readily understand this, when they recall to their remembrance what they have read concerning the Law in chapters iii. and iv. The Law is indeed of the highest importance in preparing sinners for the reception of the Gospel, the Word of Life. It is the plough that breaks up the soil and makes it ready for the seed to be sown. But no amount of ploughing and harrowing would ever result in one single green blade of wheat. Only when such seed is sown as has within itself the germ and the power of life, can the farmer expect to reap from his field a crop of wheat. The living seed sown by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the means, and the only means, whereby the Spirit of God creates in human hearts the life of faith. Believers are people who have been **born again**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **BY THE WORD OF GOD**, which liveth and abideth forever." I. Pet. 1, 23. And lest anyone should understand the apostle to refer to the Law, he distinctly adds: "This is the word which **by the Gospel** is preached unto you" (I. Peter 1, 25) the word of glad tidings concerning the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10, 17. Here again the Word of God, by means of which the Holy Ghost creates faith in the hearer's heart is not the Law but the Gospel, of which the apostle has spoken in the two preceding verses,



quoting, in the fifteenth verse, the familiar words of Isaiah: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace and bring glad tidings of good things." Rom. 10, 15. It is by means of this Word of God, this Gospel of Jesus Christ, that the Holy Spirit Himself enters the hearts of men, making all things new. The Galatian Christians of St. Paul's day had neglected to make the proper application of this great truth. They had not given the Gospel the first and foremost place in their lives, but had fallen back on the Law and its various ordinances, giving to outward observances an importance quite out of keeping with that much greater thing, the life of faith in Christ Jesus, created in their hearts by the Spirit of God through the hearing of the Gospel. "This only would I learn of you," St. Paul asks his backsliding converts, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith. Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Gal. 3, 2-3. They had received the Spirit of God by hearing the Gospel. By means of this Gospel the Spirit had entered their hearts creating faith in Christ Jesus. In this manner and in no other, had they become possessed of that life of which St. Paul speaks a few verses previously in the words we have quoted above at the beginning of this chapter. These words will bear repeating. **"I live,"** says the apostle, **"yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and what I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."** This is a very great saying. To bring out its full meaning would require many pages. We will take a shorter course and illustrate this great text and the whole subject of this chapter by re-telling the more or

less familiar story of the old Negro slave woman.

In America, before the abolition of slavery, there used to be held auctions for the selling and buying of slaves. It must be remembered that slaves were as much the personal property of their masters as mere horses and cattle, and could be bought and sold like these four-footed beasts.

Well, one day there was, somewhere down in the Southern States, an auction sale of slaves. There were old slaves and young slaves, male and female, and children, too, no doubt. The sale was nearing its close. All the slaves presented for sale had been sold under the auctioneer's hammer. All except one. It was an old woman of about seventy years of age. She, poor soul, had been a slave from her birth, had labored for various masters ever since her childhood. Very likely she had passed a number of times from one master to another. Perhaps she had been sold and bought at auctions more than once or twice. But to-day no one offers anything for her. There is not a single bid. There she stands, the poor old woman. There, in public view, before an indifferent, jesting crowd of men! The auctioneer, as is his trade, draws attention to her again and again, with loud voice and impatient gesture, for he is tired and wishes to close the sale as soon as possible. Still, there she stands. No one wants her. No one has a kind word for her. No one can spare some little odd corner for this veteran of labor, to let her spend there her last few years and die in peace. What an outlook! How lonely and desolate and forsaken! No home to go to, not even a master to work for. What shall she do? She hardly knows. She is a slave, a poor, ignorant, toil-worn slave, with hard and shrivelled

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hands, and a dull brain. And as to her heart, her feelings? Well, slaves are not supposed to have a heart. They are supposed to work, and when they can no longer work, the sooner they die, the better! How would you feel, dear reader, if that poor woman had been your mother? Very likely she was somebody's mother, but her children, being slaves, like herself, could not help her. Still, there she stands. The auctioneer is quite hoarse from his labours of throat and voice and will soon give up all hope of selling her. But there, over yonder! Was not that, a bid? Yes, it was. Both the auctioneer and the poor old woman heave a sigh of relief. A gentleman has made a bid. She is declared sold to Mr. Nobleheart of Mercy Town. And now, what may be passing through the brain and heart of the poor old Mammy standing there, awaiting her new master's orders? "Will he be a kind master, or a cruel one?" "Will he consider my old age and my worn-out frame, or will he be impatient with my feebleness and drive me with the lash till I drop down dead?" She has not long to wait for an answer to her questionings. Her new master comes up to her, speaks to her kindly, and tells that she is—free! that she may go where she likes as well as all other free people. The poor old soul cannot at first understand him. She has been **born a slave**. She has been a slave for seventy long years! Her mind is tuned in to that fact, and she cannot, all at once, get away from it. The announcement of her freedom has come upon her so unexpectedly, and its meaning is so great and wonderful that she is stunned, as it were, unable to think and understand, to accept her freedom and be glad. But at last the light breaks in upon her mind. She begins

to realise the meaning of Mr. Noble-heart's words. To reassure herself that she has not misunderstood him, she asks: "May I really go where I like?" "Yes, you may; you are quite free, as free as I am." "Well," she falters, with tear-dimmed eyes, from which gleams the light of gratitude and affection, "Well, then I will go with you. I will work for you and serve you with all my remaining strength. You have been so kind to me. You have bought me with your money, when nobody else would have me. You have broken the chains of my slavery and set me free. My service, my love, my life, shall be yours, freely given out of a thankful heart." And she went with him, serving him in faithful love and unflinching devotion to the end.

"I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord, **WHO HAS REDEEMED ME**, a lost and condemned creature, **PURCHASED** and won (delivered) me from **ALL SINS**, from **DEATH** and from the **POWER OF THE DEVIL**, not with gold or silver, but **WITH HIS HOLY, PRECIOUS BLOOD** and **WITH HIS INNOCENT SUFFERING AND DEATH**, in order that I may be His own, and **LIVE UNDER HIM** in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true."

It is this Gospel of a crucified and risen Redeemer that the Holy Spirit employs to create in sinners' hearts the life of faith. To the slaves of sin and death and Satan comes the divine message of freedom. This message is backed by the love of God that spared not His own Son; by the love of Jesus Christ,

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who paid in full the price that sets men free; by the love of the Holy Spirit, who pleads with sinners to accept the freedom so purchased and freely offered to all. It is the glad tidings of this love of God, revealed on Calvary, that **wins the penitent sinner's heart**, that causes to spring up within it a new life, the life of faith. The sinner begins to believe the Gospel as a true expression of God's heart towards him; he trusts in the redeeming blood of Jesus also in reference to his own sins; he begins to rely with confidence and sweet assurance on the great fact declared in the Gospel that we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Through the operation of the Holy Spirit working by means of the Gospel the sinner becomes bold and rejoicingly applies to himself all that His Saviour has done for the world in general. The treasures of God's infinite grace in Christ come into His heart as his very own possessions. He takes courage and stands erect and thankfully exclaims; I am no longer a slave. I am free. I am not only free, but I am a child of Him that set me free. I am an heir of all the things in my heavenly Father's house for ever. And though the memory of his many sins may at times overcloud the believer's heaven of freedom from the guilt and curse and bondage of sin, yet the Holy Spirit by means of the Gospel continues to reassure his soul that his sins are indeed forgiven and blotted out; that his heavenly Father does indeed again and again declare him righteous in His Holy sight for Jesus' sake (Rom. 3, 21-28). The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ." Rom. 16-17. Thus the Holy Spirit sustains and preserves the new life in us.

The life of faith would certainly droop and wane and die in us, if it were not continually fed and nourished by the Gospel. For from its very beginning this life, born of the Spirit of God and spiritual in its nature, is endangered chiefly by an enemy that is in deadly opposition to it and is ever near. That is the "flesh," the old Adam, the remaining natural depravity in our hearts which is always at war with the new life created in us by the Spirit. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." Gal. 5, 17. It is for this reason that the Spirit of God not merely creates the new life in our hearts, but also feeds it with the Word of God to sustain and strengthen it. Thus St. Paul says to the elders of Ephesus that the Holy Ghost has made them overseers over the flock for the purpose of **feeding** the Church of God. He also leaves no doubt whatever in their minds as to **what kind of food** they are to place before their flock. In parting from them, for this life, as he thought, he said: "I commend you to God and to the **Word of His Grace**, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Acts 20, 28, 32. By this Word of Grace, the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins in Christ Jesus, the overseers, the pastors or shepherds of the flock, are to be kept in the faith and built up, they and all the souls committed to their care. By the Word of Grace and by no other means! This is of the utmost practical importance both for the individual Christian and for the Church as a whole. To convert a soul to Jesus Christ by means of the Gospel is one thing, and to keep it with Christ in true faith to the end is another. For a sinner to be born again of the incorruptible seed of the living Word is the most

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fortunate thing that can possibly happen to him in the whole of his earthly life; but to see that new life being starved to death for want of Gospel food is one of the saddest sights before earth and heaven. There are many churches that are even now in the last stages of spiritual starvation, because "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed." There are ever so many followers of Jesus, bearing the name of Christ, who are living in a state of semi-starvation, because they are not making proper use of the means that God has provided for sustaining and strengthening spiritual life. There are ever so many Lutheran Christians, too, who in respect of their spiritual life are woefully underfed and miserably undeveloped; because they neglect to make full use of the means of grace that are so easily within their reach. There are so very many Christians everywhere, who foolishly imagine that for the spiritual man one meal a week is sufficient, whereas they provide physical man, their bodies, with at least three meals each day. There are Christian parents—O, so many of them!—who fed their children's bodies three times a day and have their minds fed at non-Christian schools five days in the week, but who think it quite sufficient for their immortal souls to be fed with the Word of Life one little hour each week, and that not by any means regularly! There are those who on Sunday, say on Pentecost Sunday, sit in church and sing: "O Holy Spirit, enter in, and in our hearts thy work begin, Thy temple deign to make us," and who go home and promptly shut the Holy Spirit out of their daily lives and hinder his working in their hearts; because they do not make proper use of the **MEANS** whereby alone the Holy Ghost creates and sustains spi-

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ritual life—the Gospel. No amount of praying for the Holy Spirit and all His “quickenings powers” will avail us anything, if we at the same time prevent His blessed work in our hearts. This we do, whenever we neglect to hear, to read, and to meditate on the Gospel, or when we do not appear at the Lord’s table as often as we should. For the Lord’s Supper is in its very essence (Wesen) the sweetest Gospel applied in a very solemn and impressive manner to each individual communicant. The Gospel is, as it were, the vehicle on which the Holy Ghost comes into the hearts of men; the means whereby He keeps alive the flame of faith which he has kindled; the heavenly manna with which He feeds, sustains, and strengthens the life of faith; the living waters that ever and again refresh the souls of us poor pilgrims passing through the desert of this world on our way to the promised land. The Gospel is the wire along which God sends into our souls the currents of His divine power, both for creating and sustaining the life of the Spirit. Those who, by neglecting to use the Gospel, cut the wires of communication between God and the soul, have themselves to blame, if the fire, the light and warmth of their spiritual life grows weaker and eventually dies. The Gospel is the voice of the heavenly Bridegroom speaking to our hearts of that “love divine, all love excelling”; of the forgiveness in His blood that we stand every day in need of; of that peace which passeth all understanding; of that comfort in all our earthly afflictions, which only He can give; of that hope, and joy, and glory, which are to be found in Him alone. But if we do not listen with our hearts, with the response of faith and love, to His words of love and



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life, of hope and glory; if, on the contrary, we foolishly give our ears and hearts to other voices, voices that can never satisfy, however sweet, for a time, they may sound, then we must not wonder why our spiritual life is so weak; why our afflictions seem so unbearable; why the future looks so hopeless.

In these days of such widespread indifference to the Gospel of Redemption in the blood of Jesus Christ it is doubly necessary to urge upon the attention of all those who are still spiritually alive, the vital importance of **USING** the Gospel more regularly, more thoughtfully, more prayerfully. It is the Lord's express will that this should be done. That is what He means to tell us through St. Paul, who writes: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you **RICHLY**, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Col. 3, 16. Thus the Holy Spirit will not merely sustain but also **increase** our life of faith. Through St. Peter He distinctly tells all those who have been born again: "As new-born babes, **DESIRE** the sincere (pure) milk of the Word that ye may **GROW** thereby." 1. Peter 2, 2. And it seems necessary to point out that St. Peter is here not speaking of the Law, but of the Gospel, that same living and incorruptible seed by which men are born again.

That life of faith, which by means of the Gospel the Holy Ghost creates, sustains and increases, is **A BUSY LIFE**. The faith of true believers is a "faith which worketh by love." Gal. 5, 6. Concerning this aspect of the life of faith we cannot do better than to quote the golden words of the great Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, on this subject. The words are taken

from his great preface to St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, from which we have already quoted in the fourth chapter of this book. Here are Luther's words: "Faith is a divine work in us, which transforms us, gives us a new birth out of God (John 1, 13), slays the old Adam, makes us altogether different men in heart, affection, mind and all powers, and brings with it the Holy Spirit. Oh, it is a living, energetic, active, mighty thing, this faith. It cannot but do good unceasingly. There is no question asked whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, the works have been done, and there is a continuous doing of them. But any person not doing such works, is without faith. He is groping in the dark, looking for faith and good works, and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, although he indulges in a lot of twaddle and flummery concerning faith and good works.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in the grace of God, of such assurance that it would risk a thousand deaths. This confidence and knowledge of divine grace makes a person happy, bold and full of gladness in his relation to God and all creatures. The Holy Ghost is doing this in the believer. Hence it is that a person, without constraint (*ohne Zwang*), becomes willing and enthusiastic to do good to everybody, to serve everybody, to suffer all manner of afflictions, from love of God and to the praise of Him who has extended such grace to him. Accordingly it is impossible to separate works from faith, just as impossible as it is to separate the power to burn and shine from fire." (1). So far Dr. Luther.

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1.—"Theological Monthly," November, 1924, p. 327.

## THE LIFE OF FAITH.

Yes, faith and works are indeed inseparable. Faith first in order. The life of faith is the good tree planted by the Holy Ghost, and works are the fruit of that tree. By faith we are the branches on the vine, even Jesus Christ, and our good works are the luscious grapes growing on those branches. And both tree and fruit, branches and grapes, owe their existence to the mighty operation of God's grace through the Gospel. "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for **WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING.**" (John 15, 5), that is, nothing that is really worth while, nothing that is good in the sight of God. For how can anything that men may do be really good in God's holy sight and acceptable to Him, as long as those who do it are still dead in sins, children of wrath, and enemies of God? Can sweet water flow from a bitter source? Can a dead tree produce any fruit? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit." Matth. 7, 16-17. First, there must be created in the heart the life of faith, the life of the Spirit, the life that is of God, and then love will come forth, beautiful and radiant as the morning, willing and ready and able to serve both God and man. First, the slave to sin's guilt, and curse, and power must be set free by his **ACCEPTING** the freedom procured for and declared to him, and then he will stand erect and walk henceforth a free man who answers love with love, and in love's sweet name and sacred power willingly serves its heavenly liberator. First, the sinner, dead in sins and a child of wrath, must be raised from the dead and born of God, and then

his new life will manifest itself as the free life of a child and heir of God, who is no longer under the constraint and curse of the Law, but under grace. First the enemy of God must be personally reconciled to his heavenly Father by accepting in true faith "the word of reconciliation." (2. Cor. 5, 19), and then he will live as a child in his Father's house, ever eager to do his Father's bidding. It is the love of God, as manifested in the death of Christ, that ever prompts and impels the believer to love Him in return and to do that which pleases Him. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Eph. 5, 1-2. With St. John, the true Christian confesses: "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. We love Him **because** he first loved us." 1. John 4, 16-19. And in the power of this His love for us we also love the brethren. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1. John 3, 16. "We know that we have passed from death into life, because we love the brethren." 1. John 3, 14. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and every one that loveth Him that begat (namely, God), loveth him also that is begotten (the brother in Christ). This is ever the only way in which sinful man can come to love both God and man. First, he must be raised from spiritual death to a new life; first, he must be born again of the incorruptible seed, the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; first, he must be made a new creature, and then he will live that life concerning which we have heard St. Paul

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saying: "I live; yet not I (not my old Adam, with his evil lusts and sinful desires), not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2, 20. All the earthly life of a true Christian, with its innumerable details of deed and word, of thought and desire; the performance of all his duties and the enjoyment of all his pleasures; every phase of his earthly existence, and every circumstance in which he can possibly find himself—it must all be lived and suffered in Jesus Christ, in the most intimate union and communion with Him. It is really a life that Christ Himself lives in and through His believers. Whatever in a Christian's life is not of Jesus Christ, and with Him, and for Him, and through Him, is not life at all, but death. His love, as manifested on Calvary, is the basis of it all. His Spirit pervades, strengthens and purifies it all. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, **DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS**, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. **WIVES SUBMIT** yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. **HUSBANDS, LOVE** your wives, and be not bitter against them. **CHILDREN, OBEY** your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. **FATHERS** provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. **SERVANTS OBEY** in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily (from the heart, with a willing mind), as to the Lord, and not unto men. Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ."

Col. 3, 17-24. **"MASTERS**, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." Col. 4, 1. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or **WHATSOEVER YE DO, DO IT ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.**" I. Cor. 10, 31. **YE YOUNG PEOPLE**, keep yourselves pure. I. Tim. 15, 22. "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord, out of a pure heart." 2. Tim. 2, 22. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile (verunreinigt) the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." I. Cor. 3, 16-17. "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. Flee fornication (Hurerei). Every sin that a man doeth is without the body but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, **AND YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN?** For ye are **BOUGHT WITH A PRICE** (and what a price!). Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." I. Cor. 6, 15, 18-20. **YE OLDER PEOPLE**, "Take heed and beware of covetousness (Geiz); for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Luke 12, 15. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, **THEY HAVE ERRED FROM THE FAITH**, and pierced themselves

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through with many sorrows." 1. Tim. 6, 9-10. For this ye know, that no . . . covetous man (Geizhals), who is an idolator, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Eph. 5, 5. And "what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matth. 16, 26. Ye **RICH IN THIS WORLD**, be not high-minded (stolz), nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy. But do good, **BE RICH IN GOOD WORKS**, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. 1. Tim, 6, 17-18. "Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (not at all!) 1. John 3, 17. **YE POOR OF THIS WORLD**, lay aside all envy (Neid), and all evil speaking against the rich (1. Pet. 2, 1), and remember that "though He was rich, yet (also) for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2. Cor. 8, 9. Bear in mind that the inequality in earthly possessions is a matter of a few years, and that your inheritance in heaven is as great and as sure as that of the richest of this world. 1. Peter. 1, 3-6. And even here and now you have your full share in the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." Eph. 2, 7. **YE WISE OF THIS WORLD**, who are so prone (geneigt) to pride yourselves on your limited knowledge and your little wisdom, looking down with a certain contempt on the "ignorant masses," you worshippers of science, ah, be not so proud. It looks so utterly foolish in the sight of God. Remember that it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

and will bring to nothing the understandings of the prudent." 1. Cor. 1, 19. "The world by wisdom knew not God," and without this all other knowledge is ultimately (im letzten Grunde) useless and vain. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **THINK ON THESE THINGS.**" Phil. 4, 8. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another; for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet (begehren); and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended (zusammengefasst) in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law." Rom. 13, 8-10.

This fulfilling of the Law on the part of the true believer, this love that now dwells in his heart and manifests itself in his life is indeed not yet perfect. The Gospel of the perfect love revealed on Calvary is ever necessary to purify, ennoble, and strengthen it. For the old Adam still remains with those who are born of God; and the old Adam is essentially and incurably selfish, and in all respects opposed to God's holy Law. But a real and genuine **beginning** of true holiness **has** been made in believers' hearts. They **are** new creatures in Christ Jesus. They do love Him who first loved them. They **do** love His holy Law and find it "holy, just and good." They **do** take delight in fulfilling it and so pleasing their heavenly Father. They do indeed, ac-



cording to the new man and in the power of the Spirit, serve God with a willing mind and glad obedience. They no longer follow the line of least resistance and yield passively to the desires and suggestions of their natural heart and mind, but they disapprove of the evil thoughts that rise in them; they resist all sinful leanings and impulses of their old Adam. They crucify their flesh and its lusts. By faith they are in very close fellowship with the death of Christ. It was **their** sin there nailed to the cross, and they **will** no longer serve it and put their Saviour to shame and trample under foot the blood of the New Covenant, by which was purchased their freedom. They consider themselves as having died to sin and living unto God, even as their Saviour lives. They consider themselves as risen from the dead, as indeed they are, being Christ's members, "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Eph. 5, 30. This union between the Saviour and His own is a great mystery to us, but it is also a great truth. We cannot at present pursue this wonderful subject further. Suffice it to say that in the persons of true Christians there are now, and there have ever been in this world such people as have truly loved and do love God and man in the spiritual sense of the Law. The image of God, lost absolutely through Adam's sin, has by the Holy Ghost, through the Gospel, been re-created in their hearts, and they are in very truth sons and daughters of God by virtue of a new birth, as we have seen. There are in this world no other sons and daughters of God than those who have been made such by the Gospel. There are in this world **NONE** that in any respect truly fulfil the Law of love except only those who have been born of

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God by means of the incorruptible seed—the Gospel. But even these cannot stand before God, are not righteous in His sight by virtue of the love which they actually have in their hearts; because that love is not perfect. They realise this more and more, feel genuine sorrow for their shortcomings and go each day for pardon and peace to God in their Redeemer's name, and not in their own. The righteousness in which they stand before God and which alone can give their conscience rest is **NOT** their own, not those good works which are a genuine fruit of faith, but it is that perfect righteousness which Christ has procured for them in living and dying, and which in the Gospel is freely declared, offered, and by the power of the Spirit **THROUGH FAITH** made their own. The righteousness of a Christian's life here on earth will always be imperfect and cannot therefore be the ground of his peace with God. But it is, nevertheless, a precious thing in God's sight to see His children earnestly fighting the sin that still clings to them, and sincerely trying to please their heavenly Father. For this new life of faith in Jesus Christ, with all its manifestations (Aeusserungen) of love for God and man is God's very own creation. True Christians are indeed born of God. He has, therefore, a very special and loving interest in the maintenance, growth, and development of this life of the Spirit that He has wrought in their hearts. Its imperfections He does not indeed overlook, for He is holy, hating **all** sin with an unalterable hatred; but He is ever ready and willing to forgive to His truly penitent children **all** their sins for Jesus' sake. But true Christians do not play with sin. They earnestly try to keep their old Adam in subjection. They know

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that all sin displeases their heavenly Father whom they love. They have realised how much it cost Him to deliver them from sin's guilt and curse and power. They strive after holiness of heart and life. They long and yearn with holy desire for perfection in deed, word and thought. They are eager to grow from day to day up toward the full measure of the moral and spiritual stature of Christ their Saviour. They are ever willing to follow the promptings of the Spirit of holiness that dwells in them. Their love, the beautiful daughter of faith, is ever reaching upward in deep and true response to the love of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, ever reaching outward to all God's children and to those who through the Gospel may yet be brought into the Saviour's arms. They have actually begun to love their enemies and to pray for those who despitefully use them. Putting aside the injuries they have received, their hearts go out in true love to those who have bitterly wronged them. They have now a spiritual, a heavenly mind; they do to others as they have experienced their heavenly Father doing to themselves. His love has saved them from eternal wrath. The Saviour has died for them while they were yet enemies. So it is a small thing on their part if they from their very hearts forgive their fellow sinners any wrongs suffered at their hands. All this may still be very far from perfect. There are still many weak and faltering steps in a Christian's life of love and holiness, many sad relapses into sinful habits of thought and speech, and even of action. Nevertheless God's children do "walk in newness of life," and even their weakest efforts in serving their God in righteousness and holiness are a miracle of His grace in Jesus Christ. For

whatever of true and loving obedience to the holy Law of love is found in their hearts and lives, is not of man, but of God; is not a product of natural man at his best, but exclusively a product of the Gospel, the living Word, the incorruptible seed of a new life. The good works that Christians do, in so far as they are good and truly pleasing to God, are not the outcome of a "favorable environment," or of a "good education" in a secular sense, or of "good breeding," or any merely human influences whatsoever. But they are wrought by the Holy Ghost through that same Gospel which the worldling despises as "foolishness." "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2, 10.

What the world in its wisdom could never accomplish, that the Gospel has done, is doing, and will continue to do till the Lord shall come to close this Gospel age. What the highest wisdom of men has ever failed to bring about, that the preaching of the Gospel has achieved. By "the foolishness of preaching" God has changed men's hearts and lives, has caused His fallen creatures, the children of wrath, His enemies, to love Him truly, to look Him trustfully in the face and say, Our Father; to love His Law and gladly do His will; to face death without fear and look confidently forward to their enjoyment of a heavenly inheritance. By the preaching of the Gospel the Holy Ghost has conquered man's inborn selfishness and has instilled into his heart a genuine love for his fellowman. There is nothing greater in heaven than the love of God. There is nothing greater on earth than that love toward God and man which, through the Gospel has been creat-

ed in human hearts by the Holy Ghost. And so that which the proud son of human wisdom calls foolishness is wisdom indeed, even the wisdom of God unto man's salvation. a salvation not only from the guilt and curse of sin, but also from its terrible power. The love of God as revealed in the death of His Son, the preaching of a crucified Redeemer, is so powerful in its appeal to sinners that it draws them with a mighty attraction to Him who has so loved them, and makes them willing to serve Him who has so utterly humbled Himself that He might raise them to eternal glory. Such love, such devotion to their welfare makes sinners ashamed of themselves, humbles their pride, causes them to hate their sin, and in the power of His dying love to conquer it, and to love Him more and more. He knew this would be so. He knew also that this way of the cross was the only way to win the love of sinful, rebellious, stubborn man. "He died for all (in order, zu dem Zweck) that they which live **should not henceforth live unto themselves**, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." 2. Cor. 5, 15. He "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." 2. Tim. 2, 14.

This is the true Christian's chief business here on earth—to live unto the Lord; to be zealous of good works; to become more and more like Jesus; to let his light shine before men, to glorify God in all he says and does, making manifest to men the life of Christ in his soul; to draw men's attention to the Gospel of salvation; to bring others under the spell and power of divine love as revealed in Christ Jesus; to bring men back from Satan, from the world, from

themselves—to God. The true believer is willing to become an ever more useful instrument of the Holy Ghost in the saving of blood-bought souls by means of the Gospel. He is ever ready, according to his abilities, to sacrifice time and strength and money and pleasure and worldly honor to the Saviour's cause; to consecrate (weihen) all his powers and accomplishments, his influence, his resources to the most important, the most necessary, the most blessed work that men can do—that of preaching to lost sinners the glad tidings of Jesus and His love. True Christians are willing and zealous fellow-workers with God in the noblest, the holiest, the grandest employment for immortal souls here on earth—that of helping to realise the eternal purpose of God: a new humanity (Menschheit) that shall serve Him in holiness and righteousness for ever and share with Him His heavenly bliss and glory. This new humanity is not the image of an idle fancy, the fleeting vision of a happy dream, or the mere longing of the human heart for better things. No, indeed! For this new humanity is even here and now a glorious fact. It is the only oasis in this world's dreary desert of vanity and sin, of corruption and decay. It is a lonely Noah's Ark upon a waste of waters. It is, besides the incarnation, the greatest miracle of all the ages. It is that "new creation" by the Spirit of the living God, through the Gospel, even the Church of Jesus Christ on earth, together with all those who have died in the faith of their crucified and risen Redeemer. All true believers of all times and nations and races belong to it, but true believers **only**. This new humanity is indeed not yet perfect in holiness, and as to numbers, not complete. It is that great spiritual temple

which by means of Word and Sacrament the Holy Ghost is **building, joining living** stone to living stone, until it is completed. When the last of the elect shall have been joined to it through faith in Jesus Christ, then will come the end of this present world, which is preserved for **no other** purpose than that the spiritual temple of God may, by the preaching of the Gospel, be completed. And as the scaffolding is removed from a finished building, so this world, with all its pomp and show, will be put away, burnt and destroyed, while this temple of the new humanity, the habitation of the living God, the Church of Jesus Christ, shall remain and stand resplendent in the beauty of perfect holiness and **indestructible on the** "one foundation," even the Rock of Ages, an everlasting and a living monument to the power and the beauty and the glory of the love of the Father as **revealed in** Jesus Christ, His Son, our Saviour and our God.

"Glorious things of thee are spoken,  
 Zion, city of our God;  
 He, whose word cannot be broken,  
 Formed thee for His own abode:  
 On the Rock of Ages founded,  
 What can shake thy sure repose?  
 With salvation's walls surrounded,  
 Thou may'st smile at all thy foes." 225, 1.