
Satan stripp'd of his Angelic Robe.

Being an ABRIDGEMENT of
THE SUBSTANCE OF
SEVERAL
SERMONS
PREACHED AT

Philadelphia, January 1742-3.

From 2 *Theff.* ii. 11, 12.

Shewing the Strength, Nature and Symptoms
of DELUSION.

With an APPLICATION to the

M O R A V I A N S.

By *SAMUEL FINLEY*, Minister of the Gospel.

2 Cor. xi. 14, 15. *For Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light, Therefore it is no great Thing if his Ministers be also transformed as the Ministers of Righteousness, whose End shall be according to their Works.*

P H I L A D E L P H I A:

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THE
P R E F A C E
To the R E A D E R.

WHEN I view the present situation of affairs in the Church, it seems nativly to extort from me that complaint of the prophet, Sam. 1. 12. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there be any sorrow, like unto my sorrow. For why, I seem to be presented with an amazing scene of persons, reeling to and fro; drunken but not with wine; staggering but not thro' strong drink; fickle and unsteady; carried hither and thither as withered leaves in autumn by veering gales. I wou'd not tell it in Gath, nor publish it in the streets of Askelon: But alas! it cannot be hid. 'Tis carried around the world, and the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice. Our opposers laugh at our toil; and the prophane and proud have us in derision, saying, Ha! so we wou'd have it. Some are offended, some stumble and fall, the love of many waxes cold, and sinners harden themselves against religion in general.

The more I conversed with the Moravians, the more I was convinced that their scheme was dangerous and of bad tendency to the souls of men.

I considered it, as I gathered it from themselves, being convinced I did not wrong them. Besides, all I have said, I can make appear from their writings, and the testimony of persons worthy of credit. A few I will here give: I received a letter from Penny-pack, informing, that a Moravian said in his sermon at Samuel Wells, "That some people
" brought up their children to one profession, some to another;
" but such as brought them up in the most religious way, eru-

" ed them no better than the children of Israel did theirs,
 " when they sacrificed them to Molech. Also, That all
 " mankind were alike in Christ's view, he died alike for all.
 " Also, that we cou'd not help but believe, when we thought
 " on Christ's sufferings. Also, that all men grew better,
 " when they arrived to 30, 40, or 50 years and forward.
 Mr. Mason of London in a letter to Mr. Hazard here, has
 these words, ' The Count Zinzendorff (the Moravian Bishop)
 ' told Doctor Doddridge, that the satisfaction of Christ to the
 ' Father, he (the Count) made a jest of. Some of them say,
 they have given their hearts to their saviour, and therefore
 are not much concerned, tho' they shou'd sin, &c. since they
 cannot help themselves, say they. Mr. Bruce, one of their
 preachers, told me, ' that sin was in the flesh: I asked, was
 it in the flesh that covers the Bones? He answered yes;
 present Mr. and Mrs. Hazard. Another of them, named
 Rouch, said the same thing. To this agrees what the Count
 speaks in his printed discourses, ' That the best remedy against
 ' the infection of the sinful matter, is the body's fermenta-
 ' tion in the grave. Strange philosophy! Peter Bohler said
 in his sermon at Philadelphia, ' That Christ made a satis-
 ' faction or ransom to the Devil for them,' (speaking to his
 hearers) which several can testify. Their hymn books contain
 the same doctrine: In one of them, where speaking of the
 blood of Christ as the ransom for sinners, they have this line,
 ' This is the Fiend's deserved Fee.

Parleus, one of their preachers, said, ' That some chari-
 ' table people who did not get their sins pardoned here, wou'd
 ' be pardoned hereafter; and that by means of others to
 ' whom they had done good, interceeding for them. Witness
 Mr. Rees, Peters and others. The Count said the same to
 Mr. Theodore Frilinghousen.

Parleus said he looked upon Barclay's Apology to be sound.
 The Count said at New-York ferry, ' He never prayed when
 ' on a journey.' Peter Bohler in a sermon said, ' People
 ' made a great noise about justification and sanctification, and
 ' endeavoured to distinguish them, but they were the same
 ' thing

The P R E F A C E.

v.

' thing, and no difference between them : ' Witness, Mr. John Redman, &c.

But why need I multiply instances? I might fill a volume, should I mention every thing I have heard and known of them. But what is spoken may suffice to make mankind beware of these persons.

If what I have in this Sermon offered to the service of my generation, may be a means, by the blessing of GOD, to inform the minds, and confirm the faith of the weak; to establish the unsettled, and reclaim wanderers from wisdom's ways; to engage the unwary to watchfulness and circumspection, and guard the simple against the wiles of deceivers; Then I have mine end. And since it is in some small measure, adapted to answer its end, I shall make no apology for the sake of the meerly curious and nice; but commit it to the blessing of my great LORD, to whom I owe my self and all I can do.

S. F.



SATAN *stripp'd of his Angelick Robe.*

Being an Abridgement of the SUBSTANCE of
several SERMONS preached at *Philadel-*
phia, January 1742-3.

2d. Thessalonians, ii. 11, 12.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they shou'd believe a lie: That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

THO' a good testimony from conscience always produces pleasure an' confidence, yet every conscience that speaks smoothly is not to be credited: We are told in *Pro. 10. 22. That the heart of the wicked is little worth;* and surely its testimony is of little value: For if conscience errs, will it justify in a case wherein God condemns, who is greater than our hearts and knows all things? And what avails any judgment or sentence, which is contrary to his? He has given his word, thereby to regulate the conscience, and therefore we should look to it, and see whether conscience speaks its master's will. Or if it be stupify'd, seared or hardened, it will then fail in executing its office, notwithstanding all its information. And in a word, it may be deluded, and then will believe a lie to be truth, and truth to be a lie. Now it is of this kind of conscience I am to treat; and therefore shall chiefly notice only such things in the text, as coincide with the point I mean to handle, not insisting on all the doctrine obviously contained in it. To shew the connection and
scope

scope of the place, I need only observe, 1st. That in the foregoing verses, the Apostle declares the progress of Antichrist from first to last; describes his character and manners, and in particular tells us the methods he uses to accomplish his designs, and obtain his kingdom; and they are even the same that Satan uses; for his coming is after the working of Satan, v. 9. that is, according to the manner in which Satan works, wickedly and cunningly both: He covers his wickedness with a shew of righteousness; and hence he is said to come with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, v. 10. He is wicked to a prodigy, but it is all in a mystery, couched and shaded, v. 7.

Secondly, We have a general description of Antichrist's subjects, They are such as receive not the love of the truth, do not believe it, but believe a lie, and have pleasure in unrighteousness: They love not the truth, and therefore believe it not; and they who believe it not, will more easily believe a lie; they, who turn away their ears from the truth, will be easily turned unto fables 2 *Tim.* 4. 4.

Thirdly, We have the punishment of their treachery set forth, in that God sha' lend them strong delusions, that they shall believe a lie. He will answer them according to the idol of their own heart. We may not understand this as if God did infuse delusive notions, or yet influence or excite inferior agents to do so; but only that he withdraws or withholds those influences of his grace and spirit which would prevent delusion: For it is blasphemy once to imagine him to be the author of sin; but it is just to call him the author of punishment, as being the sovereign judge of the earth.

Fourthly, We have their end here declared, they will be damned, and perish with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; if dying in this condition. The rejection of the truth, is a dismal foretoken of being rejected of God. *Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, Hosea, 4. 6.* Let us then mark the paths that lead to destruction, for the first step to avoid, is to know them.

Fifthly

Fifthly and lastly, We have in the text the power of delusion set forth in that it is called strong, and also the nature of it, which in sum is, to believe a lie: This is the point I have in view: In treating of which I propose the following method, *viz.*

1st, I will shew that delusion is strong.

2^{dly}, Mention some things that add strength to it, or (in other words) wherein its strength lies.

3^{dly}, Give the distinguishing marks of it, And,

4^{thly}, Make application.

First, I am to prove that delusion is strong. This will be clear by observing what the Holy Ghost ascribes to it in scripture. And,

1st, So much is plainly asserted in our text; where we may observe, that the same word which denotes the firm assent of the mind to truth, is attributed to delusion, that is belief. And what clearer proof can we have of its power over the heart, than that it commands assent? What confounding energy must it be, that can set a lie in so strange a light, as to appear a truth? 2^{dly}, It carries persuasion with it, *Gal. 5. 8. This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you,* that is, it cometh not of God; by which words is plainly intimated, that it was contrary to the mind of God, and it so it must be a delusive persuasion, yet still it is persuasion; and surely it must be a great power that persuades, and can remove suspicion. 3^{dly}, It's power is intimated, in that it can turn a man aside, *Isaiah, 44. 20. He feedeth on ashes: A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?* However fixed and steady he seemed to be, yet a deceived heart can turn him out of his way, and carry him before it as easily as a whirlwind can carry a feather or withered leaf: He cannot suspect, that there is a lie in his right hand; for when he believes and is persuaded of the thing, it then takes hold of his conscience, the power and authority of which is very great: And conscience being prejudged by falshood, truth

cannot take hold of it. If we urge an hundred scriptures against one under strong delusions, they will have as little effect as handfuls of chaff thrown against a brazen wall to cast it down.

Secondly, I proposed to mention some things, that strengthen Delusion. And,

I. The imaginary sweetness and pleasure, that attend it, do add strength. That it hath such attendants, appears from the scriptures, that express its power; for the deceived man thinks he feeds, tho' it be on ashes: Now an hungry stomach feeds with pleasure: And our text speaks of a pleasure in unrighteousness. When one has his confidence fixed on a foundation, which he thinks is sure, he's then at ease, and ease is sweet. The saving belief of the truth, and a fixed dependance thereon, gives joy unspeakable and full of glory. And hence we read of peace and joy in believing, *Rom. xv. 13.* and believing a lie, must needs have a peace and joy peculiar to it. So deluded *Eve* thought there was much pleasure and sweetness in the forbidden fruit, *Gen. iii. 6.* Now this pleasure and sweetness commits a rape, *1st*, On the affections and softer passions of the soul, and these being entangled, drive *Jebu-like*, and burry down the stream, deaf to the remonstrance of a calm judgment; their solicitations are strong and can hardly take any denial. *2^{dly}*, The imagination is hereby fixed, and the thoughts pore on that which deludes, while the affections dress it with tempting colours; and thus the mind is quite taken off from an impartial enquiry into such things as would clear the case, and is hindred from attending to a fair debatement of it, by which means the conscience being prejudged, is hardened. *3^{dly}*, The affections and fancy being stormed and taken, do confuse and blind the understanding; so that the man cannot judge of things as he could before, he cannot take up the truth, seems to have neither eyes to see nor ears to hear: Becomes quite awkward and stands in his own light. The strongest arguments are like beating the air or striking the water, as to him; for tho' the water will suddenly divide, it will as quickly close together again. II. The

II. The temptations of Satan. Delusions are as strong as he can make them, and when permitted to exert himself, we know his power is great. He is called a god, a prince, a lion, a dragon, a strong man armed, which epithets denote power and dominion: He can blind the mind so as the meridian light of truth will appear as midnight darkness. He can cloath error and sin in beauteous array, and make poison seem good for food, and what is forbidden to be very desirable, *Gen. 3. 6.* He can transform himself as an angel of light, and with a specious appearance, will he do; and dun the conscience, urge, excite, and make restless, and tormently hurry the soul, until his dictates be obey'd; and with serpentine subtilty can construe away what is advanc'd against him; and hence he is said, to take away the word of the kingdom, that was sown in the heart, *Mat. 13. 19.*

III. Another thing that adds strength to delusion, is the apostacy of great professors, so we read, in *2 Tim. 2. 18.* that the fall of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* overthrew the faith of some, which they would not have effected, had they not been eminent professors, and highly thought of. Or when God suffers for a time some of his own children to wander from his way and favour, or, to encourage such persons or things as deceive, then indeed he may be said to send strong delusion; and Satan will improve such providences to the utmost, and make his argument strong: Why, will he say, such and such who are certainly believ'd to be real Christians, do act thus, and hold such things, surely it cannot be so bad, as is said, else why shou'd they favour it? Or how shou'd God suffer such dear servants of his to fall in with it? It may be the right side of the case. — I would reply to such a suggestion, that God suffers it to be, as a just vengeance on other treacherous, and false professors, who received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and for a trial to saints who will be made more wise and circumspect hereby, and be more humble and dependent. Now when all these things conspire together, how strong will they make delusion!

Now that we may the better apprehend and avoid Delusions, I proposed,

Thirdly, To give the distinguishing marks of it. For however near this delusive spirit can counterfeit the truth, yet still there is enough to discover its coming to be after the working of Satan. There is always something sensual, earthly, devilish, in the operation, as the following characters will manifest. And,

1st, A spirit of delusion (as we may collect from what is said of it's nature) hurries the soul irrationally; to alude to *Mark, 5. 13.* It seems as tho' it would make the person rush violently down a precipice at all adventures; and seeks to persuade, not by clearing the case by cogent reasons, so much as by urging with imperious assertions; will dog the conscience, as tho' it would hall the man by force into compliance, and that with such haste, as not to enquire whether the matter be right or wrong; but still insists, ' Sure, sure it is right, whatsoever can be said against it.' The impulse of a deluded conscience is furious, and the man has no prospect of ease or peace, by compliance with the dictate, and yet cannot impartially regard any thing that would give clearness in the affair. No, he's not free that the case be tried and decided by the word of God, understood in a consistent sense; but represents the matter to be good, and desirable, and beauteous, whatever scripture or reason say to the contrary. 'Tis true, a good conscience gives no peace without obedience to its dictates; but it urges in a different manner from this: For it being influenced by the spirit and word of God, still adheres to the law and to the testimony, and is best pleased when a case is well cleared, and when sin and duty is made plain from scripture and reason, because it loves reasonable service.

2dly, A deluded conscience will hurry to some one thing in such a manner, as to neglect all other things in comparison of this particular; or more properly in such a manner, as to make all other duties inconsistent with this particular. Thus we find, that errorists will harp on some few texts, and explain them in such a way as would overthrow the whole scripture scheme: They will not compare other portions

portions of scripture to make it consistent, but right or wrong, hold a text in that sense which seems to favour their delusion, and think it better, that other scriptures shou'd have no meaning at all, than be contradictory to their notion. That particular, wherein conscience is deluded, will be more delightful to the person than every thing else, will even rapture the soul, and carry all before it. Thus we find some in our day, who on pretence of exalting faith, will make void the law as a rule of life; on pretence of depending entirely on the guidance of the spirit, make void the use of proper means to know between sin and duty; on pretence of exalting the witness of the spirit, make void self-examination; and others on pretence of spirituality, contemn outward ordinances. Now that this is an evidence of delusion is plain, by observing that a conscience, which is influenced by the word and spirit of God, will press and urge the man to all duties, esteeming every thing to be beautiful in its season, will not set one doctrine, one precept, in opposition to another, but makes pure religion to be consistent with itself; and counts all God's commandments concerning all things to be right; all holy, just, and good.

3dly, A deluded conscience is still indistinct, as to the ground from which its consolation flows, has much more peace and comfort than either it can give satisfying reasons for, or yet can be warranted from scripture. Satan still over-shoots himself. Thus some do monstrously pretend to have constant peace and quiet in Christ, without any disturbance from corruption or sin, which the scripture does not warrant, as we shall hereafter shew.

Fourthly and lastly, A deluded conscience is bold without fear, and confident without suspicion. Such an one is not afraid of falling into sin, or offending God; nay mocks at fear, 'and receives no impressions from the word and judgments of God,' but is heady, high minded; cannot suspect himself so far as to enter into an examination of the case, and put the question, *is there not a lie in my right hand?* Isaiah, 44. 20. I do not design my words to imply, that

that a Christian should indulge a slavish dread, or yet that he is still in fear and suspicion of his state; no, but tho' he fear neither of those ways, yet I will say, *happy is the man that feareth always*, Prov. 28. 14. There is a fear, which is so far from having torment in it, that it has in it the greatest satisfaction. *Happy is the man that always fears the Lord and his goodness*, Hosea, 3. 5. 'Who always keeps
 ' up in his mind an holy awe and reverence of God, his
 ' glory and government, that is always afraid of offending
 ' God and incurring his displeasure; that keeps a tender
 ' conscience and has a dread of the appearance of evil;
 ' that is always jealous of himself, and distrustful of his
 ' own sufficiency, and lives in expectation of troubles and
 ' changes; so that whenever they come, they are no sur-
 ' prize to him. He that thus fears, will live a life of faith
 ' and watchfulness, and therefore happy is he, blessed and
 ' holy.' And without such a fear, 'tis absolutely impossible to live a life of faith, continually depending upon God for support and protection; and therefore they who pretend to live continually by faith, and yet declare against such fear, suspicion and tenderness, are eminently deluded. 'And
 ' as sure as the Rock of Ages lives their presumptuous folly
 ' will be their ruin.' For he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. May God for ever keep his people from such lawless confidence as excludes fear! How many cautions have we against it from his word? Such as *Rom. 11. 20, and 10, 12. Be not high minded, but fear: And let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

Application.



Application.

THE only inference from this doctrine which I purpose to clear, is this, *viz.* That the *Moravians* are deluded; that they are deceived themselves, and deceiving others.

Brethren, let it not be grievous to you that I entertain you with a discourse concerning them at present; seeing I am set as a watch-man for some time upon your walls; I am obliged at my peril to warn you of the coming sword, and sound an alarm to war. And you, my brethren, are also obliged to take the warning and improve the opportunity for your necessary defence. When I consider the practice of the inspired Prophets, of Christ and his Apostles, how carefully they warned mankind of deceivers, describing their conduct, and unfolding their principles; It makes me bold to desire your attention, and to deliver my present discourse as a part of the counsel of God, necessary to be known by you at this time. And surely it is his counsel and will, that errors and deceivers be discovered. 'Tis as needful to guard and fence the seed sown as to sow it; and to discover by-paths and blinds, as to point out the right road.

Now that I may clear the above inference, I will,
First, Shew you some of the *Moravians* main principles.
 And, *Secondly*, Shew the malignity of them.

And, *Thirdly*, Shew that they come with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

In doing of these I will not knowingly misrepresent them in the smallest tittle; for I speak in the name of the God of truth, whose cause cannot be promoted or upheld by falshood and deceit.

The Principles I charge upon them, are such as I can testify they hold, from my own knowledge; and I was at pains not to mistake any of them, with whom I had opportunity

portunity to converse. The principles take as follows, *viz.*

• That the law is not our rule of life, and ought not to be
 • preached under the gospel, we have nothing to do with
 • it, for that Christ is our rule. That obedience to the
 • law is not a duty, but only a privilege. That one
 • who knows the Saviour and lives near him, will not,
 • need not be troubled or concerned for sin. That he will
 • not be overcome of any sin, the Saviour subdues it wholly,
 • and the believer has nothing to do with it. That he
 • ought not to struggle against sin or conflict with it, but
 • only war against temptations and the world. That tho'
 • there be sin in a believer, yet there is none in his heart
 • or affections. That he can always do the things he
 • would, having no flesh or law in his members, to war a-
 • gainst the spirit or law of his mind, for that the Apostle
 • only speaks these things, and such like, of convinced sinners.
 • That he has no heart-condemning, no down-castings thro'
 • challenges of conscience; no doubts, darkness or desertion,
 • but constant peace and comfort. That God under the
 • title of the Reconciler, is to be preached without any
 • medium. That the affections are first to be wrought on
 • and not the judgment. That to believe, is to be as tho'
 • we did see . . . nail-prints, and put our fingers into his
 • nail-prints, and thrust our hand into his side, *Cat.* page 25.

The wickedness of these things is so manifest, that hardly any positions can be contrived more opposite to true religion. How lamentable then is it, that there should be any necessity of reasoning against them among professing Christians, and most of all, among serious persons? And yet this is our necessary task to-day, to convince even some serious professors, that these principles are sensual, earthly, devilish, and the plainest evidences of delusion. Some deluded persons believe these lies; others again will not believe that the *Moravians* hold them, tho' their ears hear them, so strong is the delusion! But I trust, I shall make it manifest, that I do not mistake the scheme.— I return to consider them in order, and shew their malignity. And,

First, That the moral-law is not our rule of life, and
 ought

ought not to be preached under the gospel; we have nothing to do with it, for that Christ is our rule.

When I ask what they mean by saying, Christ is our rule, in opposition to the moral-law, they seem at a loss; and no wonder they be. Some of them, however, say, It is his witness within; and thus they have no need of a law without them. Others, that a Christian's conscience will tell them what is right, or wrong; and so no need of preaching the law. But all this is opposite to the counsel of heaven; see the encomiums given to the law, and the uses it serves, in *Psalms* 19. and 119. throughout. And does not our Lord preach the law in *Matth.* 5th and 6th chaps. throughout? Does he not degrade the hardy mortal, that shall venture to break the least command, and teach men so, in *Matth.* 5. and 19. asserting, that heaven and earth may sooner fail, than a jot or tittle of that law, which he there explains; which we know is the moral-law? The apostle *Paul* would surely curse that faith, which makes it void, as a rule of life. He preaches it every where, particularly *Rom.* 12th and 13th chapters. So does the apostle *James* thro' his whole epistle, which seems to have been wrote upon some such occasion as this sermon; and until the gospels and epistles be expunged out of the bible, we must say the law is preached in it. And will the *Moravian*s be more evangelical than Christ or his apostles? With horreur be it spoken! Christ preached the law, so will I. It is holy, just, and good; it is the very standard of sanctification, the very pattern of perfection, and a transcript of the holiness of God; the glory of his unspotted purity is therein to be beheld. 'Tis the very rule whereby we can examine our uprightness, and see our deformity; and hence is compared to a glass; and unless we view ourselves in it, and use it as a glass, we can neither know God nor our selves; and how can it be accounted so good and so useful, if it must not be preached? It's true to preach it as a covenant is legal, but to preach it as a rule to direct our lives is evangelical. The law as a school-master sends us to Christ; and Christ as a prophet sends us back to the law as a directory for

our christian walk. The law discovers our sin, our wants, our weakness, and sends us to Christ for strength and righteousness. But if we make no account of the law, and yet pretend to live by faith, 'tis but a pretence: For without comparing ourselves with the law we have no errand to Christ; and can we compare ourselves with it, if it be not laid open in its large extent? In a word, if we weigh the Scripture impartially, we must conclude thus, *viz.* if the law be not preached, so as to lead us to Christ; and if Christ be not preached, so as to lead us to the law; neither Christ nor the law is preached aright. If our doctrine of faith do not establish the law, 'tis false doctrine; for we must charge them that believe, carefully to maintain good works, *Tit.* 3. 8. But the law is the only rule by which we can know either good or bad works, therefore it is to be preached to believers.

They assert,

Secondly, That obedience to the law is no duty, but only a privilege. Indeed if we grant the first, we may the second: For if the moral-law be not our guide, it is no duty to follow it; if not our rule of life, 'tis no duty to preach it. But then, how can it be a privilege to obey, if it be not our duty? This I see not. Is it a privilege to do, what is not a duty to do? A privilege to obey, what we have nothing to do with? A privilege to practice, which ought not to be preached? Horrid Privilege! Indeed I count it a blessed privilege to have a directory for my walk every day: But if I do not look on it, as obliging me in duty so to walk, I cannot call it a privilege; it cannot be the one and not the other.

Thirdly, They say, that one that knows the Saviour and lives near him, (for so they qualify their words) will not, need not, be troubled, or concerned for sin. This also may be granted if the former were true; for why shou'd I be troubled for omitting what was not my duty to do? Or what need I be concerned for doing what was not a duty to refrain? Sure I may dispense easily with my neglect in both cases. This is the way to escape trouble at once. But it is contra-

ry to *Zech.* 12. 10. where we find these that look on Christ our Saviour, in bitterness for sin that pierced him; and this even while near him, for they look on him. This again is exemplified in the instance of the woman, in *Luke* 6. 38. who washed her Saviour's feet with tears, while she was near, even at his Seat; and we have the testimony of Christ that she then loved much. — But the *Moravians*, as if to quarrel against such arguments, do assert,

Fourthly, That one who lives near the Saviour, will not be overcome of any sin, the Saviour subdues it wholly, and the believer has nothing to do with it. Nay more, that they stamp it under their feet as easy as a fly. This also is connected with the foregoing articles; for how can I think myself overcome of sin, if I do not learn what it is? And I cannot know it but by the Law, and if the law is not my rule of life, I may think myself perfect; the less I look to it, the less sin I see in myself; nay I cannot sin, if it be not my duty to obey it; for the apostolick maxim will still hold, *No law, no transgression*. This is a way to be perfect at once. They say the Saviour subdues it all, and yet say there is no sin in their hearts, which they explain to be their affections; if so, then how does he subdue what is not, that is, how does he subdue nothing. For if no sin in the heart, then it is perfect, and they have no need of renewed applications to Christ, for pardon of heart-sins; no need to press forward, after more holiness. We doubt not but our Lord delivers all his people from the reigning power and dominion of every sin, and does so more and more. Neither do we question his power to root it perfectly out of the heart in this life. But we assert from his word that he does so for none of his children. We say, tho' sin does not reign, yet it may, and often does rage and cause grief and trouble to them, and some times overcomes for a time and leads them captive. *Paul* asserts, that he only knew in part, *1 Cor.* 13. 9. and was sanctified but in part, as he makes evident in *Rom.* 7. 14, 25. and *Philip.* 3. 12, 13. Now can any think to honour God, by saying he does for his people what he does not? He that

argues wickedly for God, argues against him. They assert,

Fifthly, That a christian ought not to struggle against sin, or conflict with it, for that he has only to war against temptations and the world. Now this is a consequent of the former natively enough. For if the law be not such a rule as binds us in duty to obey, why should we strive to conform to it? Or how can we struggle against the corruptions of the heart, if none be in it? Nay, if we ought to be troubled about sin, we may not fight against it; for if we do, there must be some concern for the issue of the battle. But after this rate, we must not strive after more holiness, for it's impossible to do that, without striving against sin. But opposite enough to this the Apostle speaks in *Heb. 12. 4*, where he plainly intimates, that believers must strive against sin. And agreeable hereto, he often gives them the character of soldiers, calls them to put on armour, exhorts them to bravery and courage, and captain-like, sounds an alarm to war: And can they be called soldiers, if they must not fight? To such things the *Moravians* reply, 'not in their own strength.' I grant they cannot overcome in their own strength; but must they neglect therefore the appointed means? Must a sinner tamely yield to sin, because he has not the presence and grace of God? Must he not resist, because he cannot conquer? Or not walk, because he cannot fly? Is not striving the very way in which he shou'd wait for God, and in which only he can expect his blessing and strength? Surely it is. But suppose they shou'd only fight in the strength of Christ, is it not still fighting? They say they fight against temptations and the world? But why this? Is their Saviour more able, or more willing, to deliver from sin, than from Satan? Or, is there legality in striving against the one, and not the other? Is the Devil a more stout and formidable enemy than sin? Or what can they mean? 'Tis a mere shift and equivocation, a plain contradiction. But agreeably enough hereto, they assert,

Sixthly, That one who knows the Saviour, and lives near him, can always do the things he wou'd; having no flesh or law in his members, to war, against the spirit or law of his

his mind ; for, that the Apostle only speaks these things of convinced sinners. This too may subsist, if the former be true : For if the law be not the rule of duty, they have yet to chuse what is duty ; and whatever is agreeable they do, so may easily do what they would ; having neither the Devil nor corruptions against them. For the corruptions of the heart are irritated by the law, and rise against it ; and one that strives for conformity to it, will find corruptions striving against him, as *Paul* testifies, *Rom. 7. 8, 9, &c.* But when he disclaims the law for his rule, he gets free from intestine broils, for his corruptions find no provocations to rise in arms : Hence the man begins to think they are dead, and then *Moab* to the spoil without weapons of war, *2 Kings 3. 23.* This is a way to make peace with corruptions, and be free of hindrances at once. But if the Apostle speaks of himself as a christian, in *Rom. 7* chap. then all this glittering scene will vanish into darkness ; and he that trusts it will be as much disappointed of his hope, as *Moab* of the spoil of *Israel.* Nor is it plain, that *Paul* is speaking of two opposite principles, that he found in himself ; they cou'd not both be sin, for sin is not contrary to itself ; nor cou'd they both be grace, for that also is consistent ; therefore the one must be sin, and the other grace ; which he calls flesh and spirit, the law of his members, and the law of his mind. And can there be a principle of grace in a graceless sinner ? 'Tis more than a natural awakened conscience, for his heart consents to the law, that it is good ; he delights in it, and hates what is contrary to it, and rejoices in God, through Christ Jesus. At the same time he finds another principle warring against this. Now they must either prove, that an unconverted, awakened sinner, has some true grace, that sin delights in God's law, thanking him for Christ ; nay more, that sin hates itself, and that Satan is divided against himself ; or else own, that *Paul* speaks of himself as a christian, in *Rom 7* chap. and consequently overthrow their own scheme intirely. But it is impossible to prove the former, therefore the latter is true.

Seventhly, That a true christian, who lives near the Saviour

our, has no heart-condemnings or down-castings, thro' challenges of conscience or sorrow, darknels or desertion. Indeed, if conscience be persuaded there is no duty, and that the man is not overcome of sin, that neglect of obedience, is only neglect of privilege; it has nothing to accuse or condemn for. And if no heart-condemning, they cannot but have constant peace; if no spiritual conflict with sin, then no sorrow, anxiety, or downcasting: If the Saviour never hides his face, they can have no darknels, desertion, or doubts; for he's a sun and shield. Against heart-condemning, they have argued with me from *Rom. 8. 1. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*; and from *1 John 3. 20. If our heart condemn us, God is greater, &c.* and hence conclude, he will condemn too; therefore they guard against challenges of conscience, and work themselves upon, to a strong confidence, reject the first motions to a doubtful enquiry, as tho' it were a temptation to consult with carnal reason; and affirm stoutly, that the Saviour died for them. They seem to look upon heart-condemnings or challenges of conscience, as unbelief; and hence, are careful to stamp them under foot, and maintain their peace, lest God shou'd condemn them for doubting; so accusations of conscience, go for unbelieving doubts; and doubts, for evidences of condemnation, and of not being in Christ: For they constantly affirm, that such as doubt do not know their Saviour. But if they say, as they generally do, that they quickly look to the Saviour, and by that keep their peace: I answer, if they have no trouble from challenges of conscience, how can they look to the Saviour, to answer their conscience before it says 'ought against them? But further, as conscience is God's deputy, 'twill surely arrest in his name, the greatest saint on earth, if it believes Him offended; and the more holy the man, the more tender is his conscience, and the more smarting will its twings be. So that we must either hold, that a true christian is sinless, or that his sin is not accounted sin; and so conscience has no authority to molest him for it; or if this be untenable, then we must say he will have challenges of conscience, or else 'tis deluded; and

and if he have challenges he cannot avoid sorrow and trouble for sin. So contrary is *Moravianism* to the nature of things.

Again, they that are unacquainted with desertion are surely unacquainted with Christ, for he was deserted; and why was he so? that he might be made like unto his brethren, *Heb. ii. 17.* and be touched with the feelings of their infirmities, and so might be a merciful high-priest, able to save such as shou'd in like manner be try'd. But if desertion befall not christians, then Christ was not made like them in that particular, or they like him, who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs. If they have no damps or down-castings, why need we be exhorted to lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, *Heb. 12. 12.* Or why any need that christians be in heaviness, *1 Pet. 1. 6.* Or why shou'd we hear of comfort to them that are in trouble, *2 Cor. 1. 4.* And numberless places in both testaments speak the same. God may and doth hide his face from the house of *Jacob* of his own good pleasure, *Song 2. 7.* Instance *Job.* If he sovereignly manifests his love and grace, it easily follows, that he may sovereignly withdraw the manifestation; tho' his promise secures the continuation of his love.

Thus we see the nature and ground of the *Moravians* peace and comfort: And could I believe their principles, I cou'd not miss of their peace: The one has a direct tendency to produce the other; their peace cannot subsist without their principles, and such principles cannot fail of creating peace. They must both be embraced or both discarded. And this may demonstrate I have not mistaken their scheme. But O my soul! enter not into their secrets; unto their assembly, mine honour, be thou not united: Taste not of their dainties, for they are delusive as the apples of *Sodom*: Neither listen to their enticing words: Be assured such peace will end in trouble, and their expectations be lost in disappointment. Wait on him, who hides himself from the house of *Jacob*, that he may prove them, and shew what is in their hearts; and know thou that the king is held in the galleries wherein he used to walk.

Eighthly, They hold, That God under the title of Reconciler, is to be preached without any medium. This is one of their fundamental articles, published with their catechism, which they also religiously adhere to, in preaching and conversation. And if they allow it any meaning at all, it may signify, that the Reconciler is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And indeed they speak of him as such, for tho' they use the words, Father, Son, and Spirit, yet they seem to mean one and the same person by them all; and have alledged such scriptures, when I conversed with them, as these, *In him dwells all the fullness of the God-head bodily*, Col. 2. 9. *He that honours the Son, honours the Father, or he that hath seen him, hath seen the Father*, John 14. 9. And some of them stop not in plain words to assert all that I charge upon them: And we all know that they usually mention only the SAVIOUR: And when they tell us that hereby they mean God without any medium; how can we but judge them *Antitrinitarians*. Or if we put another meaning upon the words, yet they will be equally absurd: For God without any medium, can not be the object of faith to fallen man: 'Tis a God in Christ we only can believe in, and hope for mercy from: A God under this formal consideration, as in Christ a mediator; his glory cannot shine upon us, but in the face of Jesus, 2 Cor. 4. 6. So that their assertion can no way agree to the Christ of God, as he is held forth in the scriptures of truth. They call the Saviour, the Creator, Sanctifier, Teacher, and that in opposition to the Father, and Holy Spirit; that so their whole doctrine may be Christ, as they say in *Cat.* page 3. art. 1. They are careful to ascribe the ineffable Tetragrammaton or name Jehovah to Christ, but avoid giving it to God the Father, *Cat.* page 5. q. 5, 7, 10, 11. compared with page 7. q. 17, 18.

However, to shew that I do not misrepresent it or them, but understand it as they do, I will give the testimony of one of their preachers, who, in conversation with me, said, • That it was a falshood which is asserted in our creed, *viz.* That God the Father Almighty was maker of heaven and earth,

Earth; for said he*, it was Christ who made them; abusing that text to his purpose, in *Heb. i. 10.* From all which it is plain, that they speak of Christ as Creator, as Jehovah, &c. in opposition to the Father and Holy Spirit.

Let us observe,

Ninthly, What sort of faith they speak of, and we will find it all of a piece. 'Tis this to be, as tho' we did see his nail-prints, and put our fingers into his nail-prints, and thrust our hand into his side': And this they call a seeing him who is invisible. And to this agrees their other uncouth communings, 'of laying in the wounds of Christ, of seeing into his heart, &c.' Now is this any other than a visionary faith? Nay I might defy mankind to shew any thing in this definition, but what is purely seated in the imagination. It is such a faith as the Devil can easily give, and I may add, does give, when permitted to delude. It is such a faith as any person has power to make, who has a warm fancy, and a qualm of devotion.

They plainly bewray their delusion by describing their actings of faith in such a manner. How useful soever the imagination be, in matters of religion, to convey the representations, or scripture-images of comfort or terror to the mind; yet we may assert, it's not the seat of faith: Neither do I catch at words; for this representation of their definition, is perfectly agreeable to their whole strain. The principles I noted before, and particularly under the 7th and 8th heads, cannot subsist without this notion of faith.

Now whoever would believe all their foregoing principles, must lay aside their understanding. And,

Tenthly, Suffer his affections to be first wrought upon, and not his judgment. This is a principle of great weight with them, and mightily influences their practice and conversation. The principle itself is opposite both to reason and scripture: A little reflection will discover the understanding to be the leading faculty of the soul; and so every

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regular motion of the affections will be to what the understanding approves to be good; for what is unknown cannot be desired. Love without reason, is fancy and enthusiasm. If the affections lead the van, they cannot fail of leading into absurdity. Nay, if this principle were true, I cou'd no longer call religion a reasonable service, *Rom. xii. 1.* But we know that the holy Spirit first enlightens the understanding, and informs the mind in order to reform it: So in *2 Cor. iv. 6.* *He gives light out of darkness, even the clear knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. He convinces of sin, of righteousness and judgment, John xvi. 8.* And conviction is proper only to the judgment.

Now what an abominable Scheme do the *Moravians* advance, seeing knowledge, and principles, and doctrinal-truths, stand so much in the way of it? What saviour is he, whose operations, the knowledge of truth and attachment to it, hinders? If they would let him do any thing for them, they must surrender the armour of truth, renounce attendance on their judgment, and let affections be guide. They may not once question any joyful impressions they receive, nor ask from whence they come, lest they should consult with flesh and blood, or enter into a parley with carnal reason, but plunge head-long forward. Thus they be open to be practised upon by Satan, that spirit of delusion, and mimick of the angels of light; and by rejecting self-examination, they are effectually secured from disentanglement.

I proceed to the third thing proposed, which was to shew that the *Moravians* come with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

Some of them have argued with me point-blank, that all religion consists in the affections, and therefore they should first be touched, and let the judgment follow behind: And one of their preachers* insisted, that our Lord's design in *John v. 3, 9.* was to upbraid the *Jews* for searching the
 scriptures

* Mr. Bruce.

Scriptures, and not to command searching of them; for if we search them we must use our judgment, and it wou'd be the way to get head-knowledge; and this was what he reasoned against. We all know that they claim against knowledge and reasoning, or contending principles and truths; as also against all reading other writings, thereby at once cashiering the labours of all the faithful ministers of Christ, that have gone before us, lest we should know too much, or see the foot-steps the flock has trod. If we seek to know their principles, they will strive to turn it off, by saying, 'It's better to talk of the Saviour.' If we ask whether knowledge ought to be obtained, or sought after, they answer with an evasion, 'That head-knowledge will not save.' But if still we insist, that tho' it will not save, yet it is our duty to seek it, for that it may be of service; they will plainly deny it, and say it does hurt and deceives. If we advance arguments against them, which they cannot answer, they will shift about and say, 'head-knowledge will not do, unless we know the Saviour.' After the same manner, they will reason against using reason at all. And when they see themselves non-plus'd, will tack about and say, what they know we do not dispute, viz. 'That reason is not our supreme guide.' Just so they will reason against preaching the moral-law, or having any thing to do with it: And when they cannot stand their ground, will say, 'we should not preach the terrors of the law, but exhort men only by the love and grace of Christ. If they cannot stand it here, will turn it to what we do not controvert, viz. 'that we cannot be justified by the law.' Well, we grant this, and now one would think we were agreed, and that they were sound in the point; but when we anew put the case, viz. that the law as a rule of life ought to be preached to all; they will not confess it, nay will deny it as much as at first; and, without answering our arguments, will shift from one stage to another, until we meet again, by variously diversified steps, at the point we do not controvert: And still we are as wide as ever.

Again, they will confidently profess a great love to the truths of Christ, and say, the Saviour makes his truths dear to their souls. If we urge, that then we should strive in the use of means, to get knowledge of these truths, they will reply, 'he is the truth: If we know the Saviour, we know the truth.' And thus they do not distinguish between Christ's person and his revealed will.

They pretend the purest gospel simplicity, while in reality they are most opposite to it; being inconsistent, equivocal, and deceitful. They make no scruple to equivocate in their conversation. Nay, will contradict to day, what they said yesterday; will turn, and shift, and quibble; will speak so ambiguously, that one can hardly tell in some cases how to take them. I will briefly mention one stratagem, by which they take some. When they meet any convinced persons, or doubtful christians, they brow-beat them with their bold confidence, saying, 'do you know the Saviour? Are you sure of it?' If one says he is, they proceed no farther. If he answers cautiously, and dare not be so positive, and off-hand with it, they go on to declare how sure they are, and how fearless; will redouble their imperious assertions, and seem to triumph over the doubtful, saying, 'you do not know the Saviour, if you did it would not be so with you: But I know him, and am sure he is mine; I feel him in my heart, and can see into his heart.' Thus they will go on, until the person is even stunn'd, and begins to be puzzled about them, and love them, not knowing but they may be right, because, not able to be so confident as they. This agrees to what is spoken of deceivers, in *Gal. iv. 17. Yea they would exclude you, that you might affect them.*

Now upon the whole, view their scheme, and say, are they the men, and shall wisdom die with them? Are these the only true people, the only true principles, the only upright and honest practices? Is this the religion several sober persons are so fond of, as to prefer it before all others? *Alas! How is the gold become dim, and the fine gold changed!*

How is precious truth bartered for fables! And now, dear brethren, having laid before you this mysterious Scheme, (for doing of which, after this publick and solemn manner, I have the undoubted warrant of Christ Jesus himself, and his apostles, who warned their hearers of deceivers) I say, having done thus, need I use any further arguments to raise your abhorrence of such a Scheme? I trust there are a number of you, whose main desire is, to know and do the will of God, and fear to offend him. To such, my warning will be timely and welcome. And methinks, my way is quite clear to exhort you, in the apostle's words, 2 John 10th verse, Receive not these persons into your houses, neither bid them God-speed, lest you be partakers of their evil deeds. Their words will eat as doth a canker, therefore cease to hear the instructions, that cause to err, Prov. six. 27.

As for such, who are dubious and unfixed about these things, I would expostulate with you. Do you think there is any such thing as deceit in the world? If there be, must it not have some good appearance? If not, it cannot in propriety of speech be called deceit: A fish cannot be taken by an unbaited hook. Well, and have I not advanced as much against the *Moravians*, as might, at least make you afraid of being deceived by them? O! be entreated to examine the matter by your judgment, while you have a judgment, before your affections altogether betray it. Why should you go a step farther than your judgment, informed from scripture and reason, goes along with you: When you find your affections excessively drawn to what your judgment approves not, can you bear a spirit of delusion? Can you imagine, that a good conscience would urge you to any thing blind-fold, or hurry you contrary to scripture precepts? Surely no.

But after all, if any that hear me, will be so hardy as to refuse counsel and despise reproof, and go on stubbornly bold; how clear will the dreadful justice of God be, in giving you over to strong delusion, that you should believe
a lie?

a lie? I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have warned you of your danger, and shall be clear from your blood in this matter. At the peril of your souls, you reject the warning, given in the presence, and in the name of my great master, Jesus Christ.

But, through distinguishing grace, there are some names among you, who have not defiled your garments. To you I would say, watch, and keep your garments clean. Hold fast that you have, that no man take your crown. Remember Jesus your lord has committed his name and his truth to you, as well as me; O, may we ever faithfully keep that which is committed to our charge! Hold fast his name in this day of blasphemy and rebuke, for it is your stay. Hold fast his truth, for it is your directory, a light to your feet and a lamp to your paths. And may God give you a good understanding in all things, for Christ's sake. *Amen.*

F I N I S.