

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER

Of the Broad Way in this World, which leadeth us into the Abyss. And of the Narrow Way [that leadeth] into the Kingdom of God.

1. DEAR children of God, let us heartily and seriously *consider*, from whence we are, and whither we are to go, and what we do and purpose, that we may *not lose* the *eternal and highest good* ; wherefore do we so very much labour after temporary pleasure and voluptuousness, after honour, money, and goods ? Are we not in this world strange guests, and pilgrims, which should *continually expect* when this life shall end ? We are *not created* for the pleasure and lust of this life, but for paradisaical joy, and to lead a simple child-like life; we should not know of any pomp, state, or haughtiness, but live together *as children* in a loving sport of joy: we are gone out from our true, pure, paradisaical *mother*, wherein we should live in her as dear and *loving* children.

2. We are shut up in the mother, [the temporary nature], which generateth the evil beast; and we have *received bestial properties*; we do no otherwise than as evil beasts, we have given up ourselves to a strange mother, which educateth us and leadeth us captive in her bands: and we must at length leave the outward man to the earthly mother, we cannot get away from her, for she hath captivated us in flesh and blood; she breedeth us, and bringeth us up *in herself*, and keepeth us for her children: But yet we have a very precious *jewel* hidden therein, with which we are God's children: with that let us *endeavour* after the highest good, that we may attain it.

3. Dear children, our strife about the highest good consists not in the sword, in killing and slaying, that we should make wars and fight for the cause of God and his kingdom, *and so persecute*

and murder one another: neither doth it consist in much knowing, but merely in a simple, childlike obedience, that we should go out from the will of our flesh, which is *bestial*, wherein the devil dwelleth, and enter into the will of God: it lieth in no man's opinion or knowledge, for the spirit of God giveth knowledge *to every one* out of the wonders, out of which he is born.

4. You see how we are put under subjection to the spirit of this world: for when a child is sown in [into] its mother's womb, *that spirit* is there ready, and *formeth it* according to the *wheel* of the outward nature, *that* giveth condition, will, and disposition to it; *that* sheweth it the wonders of its secret mystery, and openeth to *it* the way of the will thereof, *that* leadeth it into the entrance into its mother, and out of its mother through this world: *that* giveth its body to the earth, and its soul to hell.

5. Therefore, since we know this, we ought to lift up the spirit of our soul, and *make war only* against that evil earthly spirit, and oppose it with our soul and body, and *not against our brethren and sisters*; we cannot overcome the devil with disputing and knowing much; neither can we maintain God's word *with wars and the sword*, but with the simple obedient life of God, that we be contented with that little which we have, and depart from the evil lust after pride, into an humble, child-like life, wherein every one should with all diligence perform his work, for the *benefit* and profit of his brethren and sisters, endeavouring thereby to serve God his Creator, and to pleasure his brother; *not seeking his own honour*, but with a desire to do so well, that his brother and sister may sincerely love him, and wish all happiness and welfare to him.

6. If you will serve God, give offence to none, that your good and benefit be not hindered ; Let not *Satan* have power over your heart to sift [or

prevail with] you; *Put away all evil thoughts, instigations, and influxes* [of the mind]; for Satan insinuateth himself in the influxes from the spirit of this world, and possesseth your mind; be continually *watchful*, and strive against him; cast those false and evil influxes upon his head, and send him away with them; and consider that you walk upon a very narrow path between heaven and hell, in very great danger; be at *no time* secure or careless, for you know not when the spirit of this world will take away from you its own, *for your limit was set in your mother's womb, which you cannot pass*, neither do you know the day and hour wherein the spirit of this world will *leave you*, and then your poor soul will stand quite naked, hungry, and empty, and then if it have not Christ's body on it, it will be captivated by the devil.

7. Dear children, it is a very strait, narrow way that leadeth into God's kingdom ; he that will walk therein in this life must [*submit* and] prepare himself for affliction; for *every thing* is against him ; the devil is altogether against him; his own flesh and blood set themselves earnestly against him; for the spirit of this world, in flesh and blood, seeketh only the matters and dominion of this world: the devil continually sets on his children and servants against him : he [that walks towards heaven] must be *trampled upon* and *despised*: he is not in this world acknowledged to be a child of God.

8. Dear children, look well to yourselves in this world : at present men lead you on in hypocritical ways: they *boast* much of *faith*, and lead people on in an *historical faith*, which is but mere notion [or opinion], they teach you the notion, and he that doth not stick to that *is accounted an heretic*: O how *dead* is the present faith! It stayeth at the knowledge, or the notion; they suppose that when people know how to speak much of God, of Christ's merits, sufferings, and death for mankind,

and comfort themselves therewith, that it is *the way* to eternal life.

9. O no, all that availeth nothing, that thou knowest and ticklest thyself with it: *true faith* in Christ is quite another thing; it lieth not barely in the history, and in the letter: the [bare] letter is not the Word, it is but a leader and director to the word: *the Word is living, and hath the spirit*; the right faith is the right will, which entereth into the Living Word.

10. If you comfort yourself *never so long* with the sufferings of Christ, and yet your will and purpose remain in deceit and wickedness, then the spirit which proceedeth out of your will, is a *thief* and a *murderer*; you teach one thing, and do another: God desireth no flattering hypocrisy, but an earnest [*sincere purpose* and] will, which entereth into him by obedience, and this is right *believing* [or faith] *in the Holy Ghost* ; and therein is the word and death of Christ fruitful indeed.

11. Christ saith, *You must turn and be as little children, who are not yet conscious of any falsehood, deceit, or wickedness, and in Christ, through Christ's death, be born of his flesh and blood, if you will see the kingdom of heaven; for he that eateth not the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinketh not his blood, hath no part in him.*

12. Dear brethren, it consisteth not in the Host [which the priest delivers for Holy Bread] only, which you deliver to the people, and in the cup or chalice [wherein they carry the Host]: No, but when the soul *converteth*, and bringeth the body under subjection, and giveth itself up wholly in obedience unto God, and into his will, and desireth to go in at Christ's entrance to the Father; then it goeth out from the life of this world, and *goeth with Christ* into the Father, who giveth it Christ's flesh and blood; for it eateth of the Word of the Lord *at God's table*, and getteth

Christ's flesh *for its body*, and Christ's blood for its refreshment and habitation; for the soul dwelleth in the heart, and burneth out of the heart-blood as a kindled light; and hath its principal dominion in the head, in the brains, and there it hath *five* open gates [the five senses], in which it governeth with the spirit of its life.

13. And therefore if the *tinctor* in the soul, in the heart-blood, be *entered into Christ's will*, then that will governeth the spirit of the soul *in* the head; and though it hath many obstacles and hindrances from *the earthly bestial spirit*, as also from the *devil*, who *infecteth* the earthly spirit, (so often as the soul is secure or careless), and bringeth it into fleshly lust; yet nevertheless, when the soul doth *but reject* the earthly bestial thoughts and influences, or instigations, then it remaineth in Christ still; for the body of Christ, which the soul hath, is too hard a bit for the devil to overcome; and yet a harder bit it is for the soul to turn away from the spirit of this world, and enter into the obedience of God.

14. Dear brethren, it is not a handful of historical faith that will do, for men to set the merits of Christ aloft: it must be sincere and earnest: You must earnestly enter through death and hell of the devils *into the merits of Christ*: You must *overcome* the spirit of this world: Your will must press itself with all its reason and thoughts into the will of God, and then you will see how little the historical knowledge can do.

15. If you *will not* drive the devil out of your heart, then he will not let you enter into God's will: If you will *keep* the iniquity of falsehood in your heart, and so fight with the merits and satisfaction of Christ against him, then you will be *hindered*; for the devil opposeth it strongly: He striveth against the soul as long as he can: He letteth not the soul go *before* it heaps all earthliness upon his neck, and *departs from it*; when the

soul doth so, then it departeth out of his *country*, and then he is overcome: But O, how doth he continually lay that [as a net] before it, and goeth always about like a fowler; and if he can possibly, he will cast the earthly garment on to it again.

16. O how hard a combat must the poor soul hold out against the devil; but therein the sufferings, merit, satisfaction, and death of Christ, *are available*, when the devil hath ensnared the poor soul again, and will not let it go, but goeth down with it into the abyss, into *despair*: There the soul must take with it the sufferings and death of Christ, and walk with the devil *through hell, into the death of Christ*, and out of Christ's death spring up with Christ into God again; and *then it is the lily* which the devil doth not like to smell upon.

17. But for you to depend wholly on *the history*, and so to apply the merit, suffering, and death of Christ, and will still keep the devil lodging in your soul, that is *a reproach* to Christ: What doth it avail you to pray, *that God would forgive you for Christ's sake*, when you forgive not all others? Your heart sticketh full of revenge and robbery.

18. You go to church, into the congregation of Christ, and you bring a false hypocrite, liar, a covetous, angry, adulterous, proud person and soul *in with you*; and the same you bring *out with you* again. What benefit have you thereby? You go into the *congregation to the Supper* of Christ, and desire Christ's flesh and blood, and yet keep the black devil in you for a guest: What mean you? You receive nothing but the *severe anger of God*: How would you feed upon Christ's flesh and blood, if your soul be not inclined with all earnestness and sincerity into God? Do you *suppose* that Christ's body and blood dwell so in the earthly element that you can chew it with your teeth? *No*, friend, it is a more pure and subtle thing; the soul must apprehend it, the mouth of the soul must receive it: But how shall it receive Christ, if the *devil* be still

lodging in the soul ? The soul must be in the will of God, if it will feed upon God: Indeed it can *continually* eat of Christ's flesh, if it live in the flesh of Christ, for *every* spirit eateth of its own body [is fed by its own substance which is its flesh and blood].

19. This testament is ordained to that end that in the congregation we should there *eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood*; that we should thereby commemorate his death, and teach the same to our children, and tell them *what Christ hath done for us*, that we might be preserved in one mind and will, and that we should be one body in Christ, and walk together in *one love*; and therefore we should eat of one and the same bread, and drink of one and the same cup, and acknowledge that Christ hath begotten us again *to one body* in himself, and that he hath, through his death, brought us again, through hell and the fire of God's wrath into his Father in himself, that we might wholly put our wills into his will, and love one another, and make one another rejoice in him, and sing, speak of, and declare his marvellous deeds and *benefits*, and thereby *renounce* the old devil who hath held us captive, and tread him under foot in our mind.

20. This is the right *Catholic* [or universal] way of true faith: He that teacheth and liveth otherwise is *not appointed* for a shepherd by Christ, but is a shepherd sprung up of himself from his own art and reason, which, in the kingdom of Christ, according to the outward man, should be continually dead, that *Christ in us* may live: None is a *true* shepherd over Christ's sheep unless he hath the spirit of Christ; if he hath not that, then he hath not the true *apostolical* power and authority of *Excommunication*: He must in Christ's spirit have the *key* to heaven and to hell, else he is but a *vizor* and image without life : How can such an one, who is captivated by the devil, judge in the congregation of Christ ? Can the word and commandment of such an one be the word of God, whereas he speaketh but from a *false spirit* ?

21. O you false bishops [come] from the universities, how hath the devil of pride blinded you, that *you set shepherds* over the lambs of Christ, according to your own favour and respect! St. *Paul* teacheth you, do but read it, what a heavy account you are to give: Nothing availeth with you but art; and in the kingdom of Christ art is but dross and dung : *God leadeth a pure heart by his own spirit*; if one incline towards him, and submit unto his will, to such an one he teacheth *heavenly art*.

22. The congregation of Christ should be in one will, and the shepherds thereof should have the spirit and will [or consent] of the congregation: It is not so slight a matter to put on the garment of Christ, as many suppose who seek only covetousness and honour therein, and they find nothing but the anger of God therein.

23. Or, what shall we say? The priest-devil hath blindfolded the kingdom of Christ, so that the congregation of Christ is *stark blind*, where men suppose they *are* gods, and that *they teach from the Holy Ghost*, whereas their own honour and covetousness are merely sought after in deceit and falsehood: Men see how great mischief *they* have caused in the world: How many countries have they caused to be laid waste, and murdered many hundred thousand persons with their *false opinions*, and have only served the devil in the garment of Christ. If the congregation did but discern it, they would presently consider it ; but all this cometh to pass, in that they afford *not* honour to *the spirit of Christ*: Men will choose shepherds themselves, whereas the devil is in all mere human elections, when it concerneth the honour and doctrine of God.

24. The bishops [or pastors] that are grown up of themselves, and chosen for favour, *without* the spirit of God, are as profitable to the world as a fifth

wheel to a waggon: Indeed they do but little, except it be to make the congregation go astray, slander, jangle, and dispute; as their *scandalous pamphlets testify*, in many of which there is as much of the fear of God, and love to their neighbour, as the devil in hell hath: Bloody *provocations* are the devil's *drums* and *trumpets*, by which he reproacheth the simple congregation of Christ.

25. O dear children, *open* your eyes wide, go out from the *priest's contentions*, and enter into combat against the devil, *against* your voluptuous flesh and blood : A Christian is not a wrathful soldier or warrior, who desireth the kingdom of this world: For Christ saith, *My kingdom is not of this world, else my servants would contend for it*. St. Paul saith, *Seek that which is above, where Christ is; we are called by Christ out of this world*, that so we might serve God with the soul, and be in Christ; but with the body in this world, that we may have maintenance and sustenance for it : Therefore the *earthly life* ought to labour and maintain its body, but *the soul* should be lord and governor, and rule the body; it should not suffer the *starry-spirit* to practise any falsehood, and fill itself with lies and deceit, for such things are so brought into the soul.

26. The poor soul is here in this life in very great *danger*, where the jaws of hell continually reach to its lips, for it is infected with the spirit of the stars and elements, which fight against it day and night: Consider thyself now, thou dear mind, and think in what vessel thy soul, *viz.* thy best treasure, lieth, and thou wilt surely *awake out of the sleep of the bestial life* ; and consider what will follow hereafter, when the spirit of the stars and elements will leave thee, where then, thy best jewel (which thou thyself art) will remain, in what condition thou wilt be *for ever* without end ; for we know that the soul dwelleth in the heart: Its own substance is the *centre* of the seven spirits

of nature : The six spirits are the government of the life, and the seventh is the *tincture* of the substantiality, for its substantiality is blood and flesh which maketh the tincture, though the tincture is not blood and flesh, but a virgin *without generating*; yet the six spirits in the tincture continually generate one another, as is mentioned before concerning the centre of nature; but the brightness of the noble pearl of the soul is *especially* known in the tincture, for therein it attaineth God's power and spirit; and there getteth its right name [*Seel*], *SOUL*; for, as God is above nature, which cannot comprehend him, so the virgin [Sophia, Wisdom] in the tincture is a spirit above the spirits of nature, which belong to the centre: and yet the virgin, without the spirits of nature, would not *be*; even as the Number Three of God, without the eternal nature, would not be known: so also the soul.

27. The six spirits of nature contain *the eternal centre*, with which the darkness and anger of God is comprehended, for the original of mobility consisteth therein; for the fire existeth therein, though indeed it standeth but in *four* forms, and in the *fifth* form springeth up the true life, and in the *sixth* the understanding; and then first there is in the *seventh* another spirit, which is not the centre in the anguish source [or property]; for in the seventh form there is another source [or property]: Indeed the first six forms rule therein, and are the life of the source, and a cause of the life; but they *make together one spirit*, which liveth in the blood, water, and air.

28. And though it be so, that we are, through the heavy fall of *Adam*, brought into the outward dominion, so that the soul swimmeth in the palpable [or visible water], yet the eternal water, *viz.* the mother of the water, is hidden in the outward, in which the soul is *an angel*: We give you to understand that the soul is a spirit, as God the Holy Ghost is, who goeth forth from the Father

and the Son, and is the *mobility* of the Deity; for the Father standeth still, and hath moved himself but once, *viz.* in the creation; but the spirit hath the Word of the Father, and performeth all things through the Word.

29. And thus, also, the soul is a spirit generated out of the eternal centre of nature, out of its own spirits of its own nature, not strange ones, *which* [soul] hath the word, which compriseth itself in the *six* forms of nature upon the wheel of the cross, and *performeth all things* through the Word; for it is the spirit and life of the Word, and moveth upon the wings of the wind as a flash or blaze ; it formeth the Word, and produceth it, and the *six spirits* are its counsellors ; though there are but *five*, for the *sixth* is the form of *the Word itself*, but the *five* contain *the five senses*.

30. Where we woefully find, and have great cause to lament it, how our father *Adam* hath here introduced the evil, poisonous, earthly dominion, so that the poor soul is thus wholly captivated by the spirit of this world, which floweth forth, and worketh powerfully in the soul; so that often and hourly there breaketh forth out of *the word of the soul* the evil of the abyss; in which the devil mingleth himself, and *possesseth* our hearts outwardly, and then also most inwardly, *viz.* in the *first four forms of nature*, and turneth us away from the will of God, into all abominations and wickedness *which are in him*: And as he now observeth how man is qualified, *viz.* what spirit is *predominant* according to the dominion of his body, [whether it be pride, covetousness, envy, wrath, unchastity, wantonness, voluptuousness, and such like], accordingly he assaulteth [or tempteth] him *continually*, and effecteth such great wickedness with the soul, as no tongue can express; for in the outward dominion there are *also seven forms*, *viz.* *the seven planets*, which rule the outward-man, and reach into the bottom of the soul, if without ceasing

it do not resist, and reject the *evil* malignant influences [influxes or instigations]:

In the same the devil hath a powerful access to the soul, but yet he hath *not* that dominion, nor any complete power therein, unless the *Turba Magna* in the anger of God be kindled [as in judgments, pestilence, thunder, and the like plagues and punishments], and there he is the executioner; but he hath the *inward dominion* of the four forms to the fire-life, these he can possess, as often as the soul plungeth itself thereinto: If he get it there, O how fast he holdeth it, and will quite down with it, for *that is his kingdom*, [viz. the abyss of the four forms].

31. And observe it, according to its precious depth : The four forms contain in them the *original* of nature; where first (in the desiring willing,) the darkness, with the attracting, entereth into a desire ; and so the *desiring* becometh strong,[sharp, astringent], harsh, hard, and cold; and the desiring maketh an attraction and stirring in the strong harshness, which are *two forms*, and the *third form* is the great anguish, in that the desiring would be free, which stirreth the anxious wheel of nature, and in the end [stirreth up] the flash of fire, which is the *fourth form*, as is at large mentioned before.

32. And so that harsh attraction maketh in the desiring of the will, in the outward nature of this world, a great covetousness, so that the mind would attract all to itself, and possess it *alone* ; and though it cannot devour it, yet will possess it, and would not willingly afford any thing to any other; and this is *one root* of the abyss of hell, wherein the devil vehemently assaulteth the soul, that it might not go out, and come to the light of God.

33. The *second root* is the bitterness of nature, which in the harshness is an inimicitious sting, and will not endure to be subdued: The more it is resisted, the greater is its sting: This is the *second form*, which maketh in the outward nature,

an inimicitious, stinging, envious, bitter mind, whereinto also the devil windeth himself, and kindleth the word of the soul, with a despiteful, stinging, envious subject [matter or substance], so that the will continually burneth in envy, and never speaketh any good, but mere vanity and wantonness, which is serviceable to the devil; *whence* proceed liars, slanderers, backbiters, false hearts : God have mercy upon us in our great misery, into which we are plunged!

34. The *third root* is the anxious wheel of the mind, whence the senses [or thoughts] arise and are generated, which containeth in it especially the miserable house of *sadness*, and yet is the house of the springing up of life; this is *chiefly* the dwelling place of the devil, within which he seateth himself: It is his seat, and he continually raiseth up that house of sadness, so that the soul groweth timorous and *doubteth* of the grace of God, and of the light of eternal life: He continually casteth in the *two* first forms, *viz.* covetousness and envy, and with that poison windeth the wheel of the mind about, and maketh a hurlyburly in the essences of the *thoughts*: He continually mixeth covetousness and envy together, that he may retain his seat; and so when the poor soul would go out aloft and be gone, then he barreth it up into the chamber of anguish, and straiteneth it, that it might and should despair; for the *chamber of anguish* is always in darkness, and there he casteth it down, that it may not get aloft on the wheel, lest it should *discover the fire*, and so he would be known.

35. The *fourth root* is the fire-flash; and when the devil *cannot* detain the soul still in the house of sadness, but that it reacheth after the flash of the light of the liberty of God, then *he slips into the flash*, and bringeth the thoughts in the word of the soul out aloft above the cross in *high-mindedness*, [as men that through learning strive after the light of God, and having attained it, little think how the devil slippeth into it, and bringeth

them into high-mindedness, to be proud of themselves, esteeming themselves as *clergymen* to be better than the *laity*], so that the soul thus flieth out aloft, and elevateth itself above the meekness, as the devil himself did.

36. For (as we have mentioned before) nature getteth, in the kindling of the fire, *two kingdoms*, [or two Principles, as may be seen in a candle, out of which (in the kindling) ariseth the consuming fire, and the pleasant refreshing light], *viz.* one in the fierceness of the fire, which flieth out aloft above the centre, with the four wrathful severe forms; and the other in the light of the meekness, which remaineth standing immoveably, and hath also *all the power of the centre*, in which power the spirit of the Deity and of the Majesty is known; wherein standeth the [rain-] bow with the cross of the Number Three; for the Majesty is here the *brightness* of the Deity; and here the eternal liberty without [or beyond] nature, (which hath but one only will), getteth the strength, power, majesty, and glory; for the eternity is thus *revealed* [or manifested], which otherwise would be as it were *a still nothing*, in the creature's esteem and account.

37. Above this still soft humility the devil leadeth the soul of man in its will out aloft in the fire-flash; for herein, according to the spirit of this world, consisteth the *dominion of the sun*, which giveth might and strength to the outward man, and also the light and power of the outward senses, so that reason cometh to see; and the outward spirit getteth great *outward skill* and wisdom, according to the dominion of this world.

38. Also herein all subtleties of the essences and senses disclose themselves, which the devil very well *observeth*: If any, in the upper dominion, according to the spirit of this world, be a child of the sun, then he [the devil], in *the centre of nature* without ceasing, slippeth into the fire-flash of the soul, where the fire and heat exist, and always bringeth

in with him the *other three poisonous forms* in the original: He bringeth the soul out aloft over the cross above the meekness of the Majesty, in the wrathful fire-flash, *so that it groweth* proud, lascivious, and fierce; he maketh it to contemn meekness and humility, and so it flieth forth in its *own wit*, in the fierceness of the flash, above God and the kingdom of heaven, [and scorneth all that belongeth to God and to eternal life].

39. And all this, (dear brethren in *Babel*), proceedeth from hence; that you are void of the *divine* wit and understanding, so that you fly above the wheel of nature in your *own* wit; you should stay in the cross in humility, and your soul should be inverted and inclined into the meek Majesty of God; but now you fly upon the wheel of the fire in your pride, aloft over the Deity; and this the devil doth to you in subtle craftiness, that he may thus lead you, that thereby the kingdom of God might not be known; you seek the kingdom of God *in art*; but art hath the *six forms* of the wheel of nature; the Deity hath *another centre* in the cross; for the divine spirit separateth itself from the fire, and yet is not quite asunder from it ; but it maketh *another* Principle, which consisteth in meekness, in mere love and joy; the forms of nature are therein a mere power of love ; for it is an accomplishment of the eternal will, out of which nature existeth, and the wrathful kingdom is an accomplishment of the eternal hunger and thirst, which cannot be otherwise in eternity, for the essence of all essences is thus.

40. For it is sufficiently known to us (seeing God is merely good) that he created *nothing* evil; for that which was not from eternity, was not in the creation.

41. God created *no hell, nor any devils*, but angels: Only *Lucifer* hath turned himself away from the meekness, and is flown out above the cross

of the Number Three, and hath himself awakened the fire of anger in the flash, which had from eternity remained *hidden in secret*, which is now his hell and habitation; he can now be no otherwise than covetous, envious, anxious, and wrathful; there is no other property [quality or living faculty] or source in him; for his own mother, out of which he was brought forth and created, *holdeth him now*, so that he is a devil with all his legions.

42. Therefore, dear children, since we know that we are thus environed with hell and the devils, in the anger of God, it is very necessary for us to fly *into humility*; and *therefore* Christ teacheth us so very earnestly to study meekness, love, and mercy, that we should love one another, and should *not* so eagerly endeavour after the spirit of this world; for the devil slippeth into it, and seduceth us: We should *watchfully* take heed of pride, for the devil flieth into it; and of anger, for that is the devil's sword, wherewith he commiteth all murders.

43. O how lamentable a thing it is that the soul is *thus blinded* that it knoweth not the heavy shackles and bands wherein it lieth captive ! The fire of hell riseth up to its very lips, the *whole world* is full of snares which the devil hath laid to catch the poor soul: If the eyes of the outward man should be opened, he would be terribly *affrighted*: All whatsoever man doth but touch or look upon, there is a net and snare of the devil in it; and if the *Verbum Domini*, the Word of the Lord, which is become man, were not in the middle, so that the hidden eternal substantiality of the Word is a body, *there would none be saved* : the devil would catch and devour *all* souls.

44. Therefore, dear children, Christ hath well told us, *That the kingdom of God in us is small as a grain of mustard-seed*; but he that endeavoureth seriously, and striveth after it, *to him it groweth great as a tree*, and the devil must needs let it alone; and though he often breaketh

off a twig, yet the stock standeth still.

45. Christ warned the rich young man *to beware of covetousness*, and told him, *that a camel would easier go through the eye of a needle, than a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven*; and the *cause* of all this is, that the soul entereth into lust, and into the dominion of this world: for if the soul wholly giveth up itself into the lust, pleasure, and dominion of this world, then the devil *doth not sift* [or tempt] *it* so strongly, but carrieth it in his triumphant chariot, from one abomination and wickedness to another: *his chariot is Venus*, viz. the love of the flesh, wherein the soul continually endeavoureth after temporary power, authority, and honour, after riches, beauty, and the desires of the flesh, after bestial inordinate copulation; though indeed the soul doth not so eagerly desire it, unless it be *totally infected*: but it is only from hence that the soul in *Adam* hath lusted after it, and is captivated therewith; and the devil continually maketh it stirring, he continually tickleth the soul therewith, that it might *confidently and freely eat of the forbidden fruit*.

46. We find that the human life is *Threefold*, with three spirits together *in one*, as if it were but one spirit, and it is indeed but one life; but it hath three dominions, each of which hath its own mother, which afibrdeth or generateth it ; the *centre* of nature, with its forms [or properties], is the eternal life; for it is the fire-life ; and the spirit, which is generated and goeth forth out of the centre of nature, which dwelleth in the *tincture*, is the eternal life of the soul; and the air-spirit, with the qualities or properties of the *dominion of the stars*, is the beginning, ending, and transitory life, which is the *bestial* life, [the animal life which we have in common with beasts].

47. Now the soul is generated only out of the *first two*, and the *third* is breathed into it ; not that it should enter into it, and give up itself

thereto, as *Adam* hath done ; but that the soul should mightily rule over it, and therein open the great wonders of God, which from eternity were beheld in the wisdom of God; for the *third* dominion is generated and created out of the *first*; and the *second* dominion should continue in its own place (in the noble tincture) in paradise, and should open the great wonders in the third : And therefore man was made *lord* over all things ; he had *the tincture* [or life] of the earth in his own hand [or power], and *gold and silver* were as easy for him to find as any other visible thing: The tincture of the earth was his ornament and sport, altogether child-like, without covetousness; he needed no other clothing; and as the gold was pure without dross so was his child-like mind also.

48. But the devil awakened unto him the *sulphur* [or gross matter] therein, and hath set the *bestial* spirit in the superior dominion in him ; that which man should have ruled over, ruleth over him, and that is his *Fall*.

49. Thus now the devil hath gotten power, inasmuch as the outward dominion is generated out of the inward, [*viz.* the centre of nature], and that he dwelleth in the most innermost, and so he slideth out of the innermost into the outermost, and kindleth the outermost in the *mind*; from whence arise false lusts and inclinations, and evil concupiscence, so that *two dominions* [*viz.* the inward and the outward] strive against the soul; and so the poor soul is in the *midst* between the dominion of this world, and the dominion of the hellish source [or quality], and there it standeth before the gate of heaven, in a very great deep, *in great danger*; its root is the anger of God and hell-fire; and its superior or predominant spirit is the dominion of this world; and there it standeth in the tincture of the fire, in the *midst*; and whithersoever it inclineth, thither it entereth; if it goeth into the lust and pleasure of this world,

then it standeth therein, and is captivated by the devil; but if it entereth into itself inwards into God, then the devil will *buffet it*, for then it is in his country.

50. But when it getteth the flesh of Christ for a new body, then it is *not* in his country: that is a tree before him, which is poison and death to him : at which he is vexed, and loath to touch it: But he stirreth up his servants and ministers *against the outward body*, that must bear reproach and scorn, that thereby he may cover and hide this tree, that it may not be known ; else it *might bring forth more branches*, whereupon at last hell would be too narrow for him ; therefore he will prevent it as long as he can.

51. And so now, when the poor soul breaketh away from him, and with its dear bridegroom *Christ* turneth to the love of God, so that through earnest *Repentance* and turning into God, it entereth into the will of God; yet then the devil hath *seven cords* still, with each of which he holdeth it fast, before he will let it go; and then it must get itself through all the seven, and leave his cords wholly to himself. [These *seven bands* are *the seven spirits of nature* hereafter mentioned.]

52. And *eighthly*, it must go through *the fire*, and there is the earnest severe *proba*, or hard trial; and when it is come through, it getteth the heavenly *tincture* in the *ninth number*: and in the *tenth number*, upon the cross, it getteth the body of Christ, and so is an angel in heaven, and a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, in this *tabernacle*.

53. The *seven snares* wherewith it is entangled, are *the seven spirits* of the outward nature of the dominion of this world : these it must wind through, and press quite through them, and cast them all behind it; and in the *eighth number*

standeth *Moses*, with his Law; and there is first read to the soul, what a fine fowl it was; and there cometh the devil with his *register* or catalogue, and readeth what it is, and sheweth his right to it: and there it is directed to bow down and lay hold on *the wounds* and *passion of Christ*: and here it is necessary that the poor soul take hold on the merits and death of Christ, and wrap itself fast therein, for out of these *swaddling bands* the devil cannot pull the soul; nay, he dare not touch them: and here the devil must leave the soul, for Christ standeth in the fire of the Father's anger, and is the *accomplishment* of obedience ; and there the soul is brought into the *ninth form*, into *the tincture* of the eternal life: and there it is surrounded with the Majesty of God; and the fair blessed virgin (the wisdom of God) meeteth it with her garland of pearls, and crowneth the soul as a heavenly conqueror.

54. What joy is here to the angels of God, and what joy the soul attaineth there, we have *no pen* to describe it, nor in this world any *tongue* to express it ; only we wish to the Reader, and all men, that they might themselves have *experience* of it, for which cause we set about this writing with much toil and deep labour.

55. For we write what we ourselves have known, and have *seen with spiritual eyes*; we speak it not to our own boasting, but that the Reader may know, that if he will *follow us*, what he is to expect from it; seeing he perceiveth how the world maketh a gazing stock of the children of God : But we shall after *this short life* have full recompense; and moreover, this garland is more delicious than this whole world: and though it be often covered and hidden from us, yet it dieth not.

56. For as the rough winter hideth the budding and flourishing of the earth, so that reason saith, *All is dead*; but when the spring cometh, then

it beginneth to bud and blossom again; so also it is with the noble and fair garland of Christ; when that springeth again, then it produceth *lilies without number*; and every spring, when the mind is renewed in Christ, it multiplieth *tenfold*.

*Of the Company and Assistance of the
Holy Angels.*

57. As we that are men in this world, if we be the children of God, *assist* and help one another in necessity and distress, and readily deliver one another from misery and trouble; thus also it is in heaven, concerning the children of God, while the soul belongeth to the *fellowship* of angels; they affect the company of honest, virtuous, and chaste men, *that fear God*, and stand by them in necessity: for the Scripture saith, *They are all ministering spirits, sent forth for the service of those that are to inherit the kingdom of God*. They often avert the fiery darts of wickedness: what mischief would the devil often do, if he were not opposed and hindered by the throne-princes of *the legions*! How often would he terrify and cast men down headlong to the ground!

58. But the angels are our servants and keepers, if we be *Christians*, and not beasts; though indeed the devil setteth upon Christians most of all; how very often would many be drowned and killed by a fall, who yet receive wonderful deliverance from *angels*: they are ready about people, who sing and speak of God; they have great delight among little infants, so that they many times manifest themselves to an infant, and play with it, if it be the child of God.

59. How many examples are there in the Scripture, of the angels leading and conducting the children of God; especially the example of

Tobiah: though our school-rabbis will rather have it cast out of the Bible [than believe it] : but consider of the three angels with *Abraham*, and the two angels with *Lot*: also how they have plainly foretold and declared the conception of highly worthy men, [as of *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *Samuel*, *Samson*, etc.] especially of *John* [the Baptist], and of *CHRIST*: consider what was done at his *birth*, [to the shepherds in the field] and to the *wisemen* [Or Magi] *of the east*: and at length to *Joseph* [how he was directed] to go with *Mary* and the *Babe* into *Egypt*: whereby we may sufficiently perceive their great carefulness about us; for they are God's *ministers*; he sendeth them to conduct us [through this valley of misery, through this world of thistles and thorns], and to defend us from the devil: O *how great joy* they have for *one* poor soul, when it is delivered from the snares of the devil, yea, more than for *ninety-nine* righteous, as *Christ* saith.

60. Therefore we should not so suddenly despair in adversity, when we are in necessity; when often suppose that the whole world is against us, yet the *choir* or *host of angels*, and the *spirit of God*, are with us; it is often with us as with the *Canaanitish woman*, so that we cannot find the countenance of God; but we must wait for the proof, and trial must pass over the soul; the more gold is purified, the finer it is; so also the soul, the more it is brought into trial, if it *holds out*, the fairer and brighter it is : and God's aim is to have fair and lovely children, and such as are of understanding, and learn to discover [the deceits of] the old devil.

61. But you must know that the angels are *very pure*, *chaste*, *modest spirits*, also *humble and friendly*, and are like to infants who know of no deceit or iniquity, but what is innate in them.

62. Now, whosoever will enjoy the company and assistance of angels must *not* be a *lustful bull* or

heifer, or a *lascivious wanton Venus*, or have a false wicked mind, which day and night studieth nothing but cunning tricks and deceit, how to get money and wealth: neither must always dabble and swim in the world's back-biting, scoffing jests and conceits, and tickle and feed the soul with them, in which the world useth to provoke one another, and to take exceptions one at another: No, *no angel will stay* with such men, but the black devil, who possesseth the hearts of these men, so that they *take pleasure* in wickedness.

63. Whosoever will have the assistance of angels need not call upon them, or pray to them; for they *accept not* of that honour, they give all honour to God; but [he] ought only to turn away from uncleanness of heart and enter through *true Repentance* into God's will, and continually *put away* evil thoughts and influences ; he must continually incline his will to God [and goodness], and *pray to God for the guidance of his holy Spirit*.

64. And though the devil holdeth fast, and will not let go, and layeth open his uncleanness before him; there is no better course to be taken, than to leave all his uncleanness and filthiness upon the devil's neck, and wind himself out from it, in spite of all [carnal] reason, and cast himself in humility into God's will, and commit himself to it, and leave all doubting to the devil (*for that is his lodging*), and he must consider that it is a great sin to *continue in doubting*; he should consider that *doubting* is the devils band wherewith he holdeth the soul fast: When any man's uncleanness meeteth him and representeth itself before him, so that the soul *can receive no* strength, that is *not* God's hardening [of the heart], but the devil wrappeth himself about the soul, and will not let the soul come to the light, that it may receive strength and virtue; and there the words and promises of Christ, with his bloodshedding, suffering and death, are a *sovereign* medicine; when the soul wrappeth itself up in them, and leaveth all its uncleanness upon the

devil's neck, that *is poison* to the devil, which maketh him faint and feeble ; and so the soul then presseth forth into the light of God, and *receiveth* strength and virtue; and there it must earnestly enter into humility, and *then* it treadeth upon the devil's head, and destroyeth his hell; and *then* the angels associate with that man, and have great joy that the devil is overcome, who intended to be God and creator in the soul.

65. But a soul in Christ must be a continual warrior, and although the devil cannot get possession of the soul, yet he still holdeth it before *the unclean forbidden tree*, that it should *taste of unchastity, iniquity, lies and deceit, of anger and envy*: and if he can bring it to pass that the soul *letteth* the evil lust and desire kito itself, O how doth he hide and cover it! how doth he strew sugar upon it! And if he should once draw it into *Venus's* heaven, he will spare no pains to get his fortress again. For the devil is *never better at ease than in man*, for there he can be lord of this world, and perform his work, and accomplish his will; which he cannot do in the spirit of this world without man ; for his kingdom is not in the outward dominion of this world, but in the inward, *in the root in the abyss*.

66. He can do nothing in this world, in the external [part], unless the *turba Magna* in the wrath of God be kindled, and there he is busy, especially when the elements are kindled [or inflamed] with tempestuous storms [of thunder and lightning]; and then if the anger of God burneth therein, there he is a busy *executioner*; if he could ruin the whole world he would do it ; but he hath no further room than the fierce wrath in the *turba* affordeth him; *The turba [plague, vengeance and destruction] is his master*, he is but a juggler and destroyer, so far as the anger in the *turba* is kindled.

67. Know also, that the devil often striveth and fighteth with the angels; and when the soul is

careless and secure, he setteth upon it strongly; but he is held off, that he cannot do what he will; but so soon as the soul *imagineth*, and is captivated by the *lust*, [like *Adam* and *Eve*], then the devil overcometh; but then again so soon as the soul *casteth away* that evil lust, [and entereth into repentance], then he is driven away by the angels.

68. And there is a continual strife about the *soul of man*; God desireth to have it; the devil also would have it ; and the cause of this is, that the *two kingdoms part* in the cross : the one is the love of God, the kingdom *in Ternario Sancto*, viz. the angelical one: and the other is the fierce wrath out of the centre of nature, which is the anger and severity [or sharpness] of God.

69. And *therefore* it is that God manifesteth his will to us, and setteth before man light and darkness; he may endeavour after which he will: And that we might know that God would have the soul into his holy kingdom, he affordeth us *teaching* and *instruction*, and sheweth us the way to life [or light]; he stirreth up by his spirit *highly worthy teachers, who are the light of the world*, that men might beware of his anger and fierce wrath, and not awaken it in themselves.

70. For the anger must indeed be in every life, [as the gall in living creatures] ; but where the love and meekness prevail over it, *it is not manifested* in eternity, but is only a cause of the life; for in the love, the anger maketh great exulting joy and paradise. The anger [or *Mars*] in the kingdom of God is the great wondrous joy, where *nothing of the anger* is perceived. As weeping and laughing come from one place, and the weeping is turned into joy; after such a manner is it with the love and anger of God.

71. *Therefore it is*, that Christ so earnestly teacheth us love, humility, and mercifulness; and the cause why God is become man, is for our

salvation and happiness sake, that we should not turn back from his love : God hath spent his heart that we might be his children, and remain so eternally; when there was no remedy, neither in heaven nor in this world, then he moved himself *for man's sake*, that he might be delivered from the devil, and from his anger [into which he was fallen in *Adam*],

72. Therefore, dearly beloved children, *do not* so *reject* and cast from you the love and grace of God, else you will lament it in eternity; for after this time [of the temporary life] there is no more remedy or help. Pray learn divine wisdom; *and learn to know what God is*; and do not imagine or set any image of any thing before you, thinking God to be an image any way but in Christ: *We live and are in God, we are of his* [essence or] *substance* [or being] : We have heaven and hell in ourselves. What we *make* of ourselves, that we *are*: If we make of ourselves an angel in the light and love of God in Christ, we are so; but if we make of ourselves a fierce, angry, false and wicked, haughty, flying devil, which flieth aloft above all love and meekness, in mere covetousness, greedy hunger and thirst, then also we are so ; for after this life, *it is otherwise with us there* than here; what the soul here embraceth, that it hath there; and so, though the outward breaketh in death, yet the will retaineth that embraced thing in its source [or property,] and that is its sustenance; but how that will subsist before the paradisaical source and dominion of God, and before his angels, *you yourself may consider*: We would have it faithfully set before you [for a warning], as it is given to us [for that purpose].