

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER

Of the mixed World, and its wickedness, as it now standeth, and as it exerciseth its Dominion at present. A Glass wherein Every one may see himself; and may try what Spirit's Child he is; out of the Seal of the Wonders.

1. CHRIST saith, *Matth. 23. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ! How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and you would not: O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, etc. Also, We have piped unto you, and you have not danced, etc. What should I do more to this stiff-necked people, who will not suffer my spirit to reprove them ? Also, Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; the poison of adders is under their lips; they speak mere deceit, and their hearts are never at unity. O how fain would I eat of the best grapes; but I am as a vine-dresser that gleaneth: I had planted me a vineyard, but it bringeth forth nothing but sour grapes: I am become strange to my mother's children: They which eat at my table, tread me underfoot.*

2. Thus the mother *then* complained of the wicked children of men; but what shall she now do in these present times? She standeth yet in great sorrow and lamentation, and hath turned away her countenance from those wicked children, and will not have any of them that are in that garment: [Of filthy wickedness] *She crieth, and none heareth:* She standeth in great mourning and lamentation over the wickedness of those false unruly and perverse children: Every one runneth after the covetous whore, *who is full of blasphemies, and abominations;* both the shepherd [pastor] and the sheep [people] do so: It is a most lamentable time, and if it should not be shortened,

no man should be saved.

3. It is *a time* which all the prophets have prophesied of, and thou supposest it to be a golden time; but consider thyself, thou *blind man*, whither art thou gone ? Dost thou *suppose* that this wickedness and falsehood which thou practisest is *the ordinance* of God? Wait but a while, and you will soon see. It is the time of *the last seal*, wherein the anger of God hath poured forth its vials, so that the wonders of hell come to light [that they may be known]. Let this be told you, we have known it *in Ternario Sancto*; [or understood it in the angelical world, in the heavenly substantiality].

4. For the mother hath rejected it, and will have none of those abominations any more: She is big with child, and *bringeth forth a son in her old age*, which shorteneth the days of wickedness. Let this be told you; whosoever persevereth and goeth on in wickedness, shall have great shame thereof.

5. Is not the *little boy* (which runneth up and down in his childish sport) *very full of the poison, venom, and wickedness of the devil* ? And do not all vices and abominations stick in him ? He is a scorner, and blasphemmer of God, a swearer, curser, liar and deceiver, very fit and *apt* to serve the devil in all manner of shameful filthiness: Scurrility and obscenity are his best Latin and eloquence, he knoweth how to mock, disgrace, and lay all manner of *aspersions* upon the simple : All manner of thievery, cheating *tricks* and cozenage, are fine arts with him : Deceit, over-reaching, and circumvention, are his glorious boasting: They mock and deride poor people without any cause : He that feareth God is *by them* accounted a fool, and set as an owl to be wondered at. This, *parents* and ancient people see, and take delight

and pleasure in it, that their children are so dexterous and *witty* in their *wantonness* and *waggery*: They are tickled at the heart with it when they unhappily jest at honest people; that which old folks dare not do for shame, that they teach the children, that *thereby* the lust of their hearts may be brought to pass : *All this the devil teacheth them*, and so rideth in their hearts as lord over body and soul.

6. If any can but cozen and cheat his neighbour, despise, slander, and find fault with him, and bereave him of his honour and goods, these are *the satisfying of their lusts*: All immodest wanton words and manners are held the best art and *courtship*: He that can laugh and jeer his neighbour out of countenance, is *master upon the place*: All these are devil's pranks and tricks; and thus he leadeth the poor soul in his string, and man understandeth it *not*.

7. Youth, both of the male and female sex, learn first the devil's trade before they take any thing else in hand : Disdainful malicious wantonness is the *first work* they learn; and the parents encourage their children in it, and hold it for a necessary worldly fashionable accomplishment.

8. *When* they are *grown up* a little, then the desire of bestial unchastity is the *second work* they learn, which they call a trick of youth, and allure one another to it : Thus youths give room to the devil, at the first blossoming, to enter into the heart, so that the devil maketh his *nest* therein, and so catcheth one with the abominations of another, the male with the female, and the female with the male.

9. If any one *send a son to the university* to learn somewhat that is good, that he may be serviceable to God, and useful in the world ; then he learneth wantonness, bravery, pride, subtlety,

how to deceive the simple of their own, and bereave them of their sweat, and contrive a cloak for it, saying, it is his right by law; *but that cloak is the devil's*, and the false deceitful heart is *his minister*. If he can speak a little Latin, or foreign language, then no simple man is good enough for his company: His high-mindedness flies aloft, the stinking carcase [which is but meat for worms] must be trimmed with ribands and baubles ; to go a-whoring, and deflowering maids, is *courtship* : There are people that can behave themselves so finely, till they awaken the gnawing worm of conscience in the heart of many a mother's daughter.

10. And such are advanced in *the churches* and *universities*, and set up for *shepherds* [pastors or ministers] *of Christ*, and yet they have the devil lodging in their heart; and so also they are promoted to worldly government [or the *civil magistracy*], and then they govern as their guest in their heart will have it: Thus the *superior, or magistrate*, worketh the greatest abominations, and the inferior learneth of him : He *inventeth* tricks how he may, with the appearance of law, justice, and equity, get the goods or estate of the inferior to himself: He maketh constitutions, orders, and statutes, and *saith they are for the public good* : He constraineth the poor and miserable to do hard service, that he may satisfy his pride and state : He crusheth the simple with harsh, cruel language, he taketh away his sweat, and tormenteth his body: He maketh him *his very slave*, and though he hath no more but one soul of his own, [no more than others], and is but a stranger and pilgrim in this world, [yet he thinks] the needy must spend his sweat *wholly* in his service; there is no pity nor release to be had from him: *his dog* hath a better life than the poor needy soul under his roof, and this he accounteth his right and prerogative; whereas it is not at all grounded in nature, *but only in the abyss*, where

one form or property plagueth, vexeth, and tormenteth the other, where the life is its own enemy ; [and there it is grounded].

11. This *the inferior learneth* from the superior, and so getteth his living also with subtlety and deceit, covetousness and knavery ; for, if he doth not use these things, he can hardly fill his belly in righteousness; and therefore *reason persuadeth him* that necessity forceth him, that he must enhance his labour and commodities, and must wrest from his neighbour his sweat again, without love and righteousness, that he may but fill his belly : He leameth from his superior to gormandize and pamper his body, and *live a bestial life*. What the superior spendeth in a *courtly stately fashion*, that the inferior spendeth in a beastly, swinish fashion, and manner of life: Thus one wickedness effecteth another, *and the devil remaineth prince on earth over body and soul*.

12. How wilt thou be able to subsist, when God in his zeal or jealousy shall judge the secrets of mankind, *when the cause of every thing will appear*, why that or the other thing came to be evil ? And there every soul will cry out of those that lead it astray, and curse them: Every thing will have *its cause* appear before it, and the soul will feel it in its conscience : Where then will you, superior, remain, when your inferior shall cry out and say, *Woe be to you*, in that you have forced him to such wicked courses, and that you have bereaved him of his sweat, and consumed his goods and labours in *idleness and wantonness* ? How will you give an account of your office, into which you are put, wherein you should stop unrighteousness, and hold the wicked in *awe* by reproof and punishment? And you have not regarded his wicked courses, that you might prevent and hinder them, but have only looked after your covetousness, how

you might *bereave* him of his sweat: You have not sought his soul's good, but his sweat and labour : He might else do what he would: And besides, you have given an evil example to him, so that he hath looked upon your courses, and made them his *pattern*. Cursing, blaspheming, threatening, daring surliness [provocations], have been your fashion, and that he hath learnt of you, and hath so constantly reproached the name of God, which you have *not* regarded; you have only looked after, his money, and *not* after his soul.

13. And now, when the severe judgment of God shall appear, and that every work shall be manifested in the fiery essences, where then *all shall be tried in the fire*, what think you? Shall not all such works remain in the eternal fire ? And there will the poor soul cry out upon your ungodly cursed deeds, words and works: And one will curse and wish all evil to the other, for being the cause of such evil to him, and the source and property of falsehood and wickedness will rise up in the soul, *and gnaw it*, that, for so short and empty vanity, *voluptuousness* and false lust, it hath fooled away such great eternal glory.

14. All manner of reproaches, all slanders, all scoflings, all covetousness, pride, and deceit shall rise up in the soul, and one source [or property] shall continually kindle and gnaw the other, which hath *given cause* to the stirring up of the other, and the soul will think, if these abominations were *not* in thee, *thou mightest attain* grace; and when it shall behold and consider itself, it will find how one abomination hath generated another, and will see that itself is a *mere stinking abomination* in the presence of God; and there it will cast itself down in the source of anguish, into the centre of nature, and curse God, that he hath made it *a soul*; and the deeper it desireth to plunge itself, the deeper it falleth, and yet must continue in

the place of its abominations: It cannot go from thence, for the hellish *matrix* holdeth it, and it must thus feed itself with anguish, cursing, abominations, and bitterness, and even *with that* which its heart hath done here [in this life], wherein at length it despaireth, and that is its eternal food.

15. All earthly food and lust passeth away at the end of days, and returneth again into the *ether*; but the *will* remaineth standing eternally, and the desire in the will.

16. Therefore, you *parents* and *children*, you *superiors* and *inferiors*, observe, you have filled the mother of nature full with abominations, the fierce anger of God is at hand, the Last Judgment is at the door, God will purge the earth with fire, and give every one his wages: The harvest cometh, this *garment* will remain no longer, every thing will be gathered into its barn: He that will not take counsel, let him take his course; he will find by *woeful experience* what the *seventh seal* at the *centre* bringeth with it.

17. When reason looketh all about and considered, *it saith*, I see not yet that it is otherwise than it was in former times: Moreover, the world was always good and bad, *as histories relate*: Also, a man must take such courses, else he will be accounted a fool and an owl in the world, *and must starve and perish for hunger*.

18. If I do not give my children leave to learn the manners and fashions of the world, then they would be *despised* and scorned of every body : And if I myself did not carry it out with state, loftiness, and stoutness, I should not be *regarded* : And if I must have credit, I must use some cunning to get it; for with truth, love, and righteousness, I shall not attain it: I must therefore

do as other people do, and then I may be able to live *amongst them*: Must I needs be made the fool of all the world? Though indeed I commit sin, yet God is gracious and merciful; and hath not Christ slain sin and death on the cross, and taken away the power of the devil? I shall *one day* repent well enough, and be saved.

19. This is the rule of the world which the *superior* and *inferior* go by; also the *shepherd* [pastor] and the *sheep* : Christ's sufferings must be a cover for their wickedness: Every one will be a Christian under the cover of Christ, when the poor soul sitteth a-whoring with the devil: If one do but *say* with the mouth he is a Christian, and yet cover his wickedness with the purple mantle of Christ, *all is well*: Thus we are brave lip-Christians under the mantle of Christ; but in the heart we have the Antichristian whore sitting as a guest.

20. O you *false shepherds* of Christ, who go into the sheepfold at your thievish back-door, why do you cover your wickedness with Christ's sufferings and death? Do you think Christ was wicked? Seek the centre of nature, and shew people the abyss that is in their heart: Shew them the snares of the devil, wherewith we lie bound, that they may *not esteem* cursed worldly things; but that they may learn to strive against flesh and blood, against the devil, and against the hypocritical life and conversation, that they may go forth from the devil's high-mindedness into righteousness, *into love and humility*.

21. The suffering of Christ is profitable to none, unless they *turn* from their false evil purposes, and repent, and enter into the covenant of God ; and to these it is very effectual. The hypocrites use this for a *show*, and that they may be *called* Christians ;

but thereby they take the name of God in vain,
and must give a strict account thereof.

22. O you *Antichristian shepherds* of the new order [ordination], who use the suffering of Christ with false hypocrisy *to please men*, for their favour, and for your idol the belly's sake, to cover over the hypocrite and false *deceiver*, who is but a show-Christian : How will you be able to answer it, when Christ will require his sheep at your hands, and you have wittingly and willingly, under his purple mantle, covered wolves, in whom the devil dwelleth? Why do you not *crack* the nut-shell, wherein the kernel and heart lieth, and tell the *superior* as well as the *inferior* of his abominations ? Are you Christ's shepherds? Why do you not then as Christ did, who set the truth before the eyes of *every one* ? He reprov'd and healed, not for man's favour and respect, but according to the will of his Father; and so ought Christ's shepherds to do also.

23. O dear reason, thou walkest wisely in the paths of this world, in what concerneth *the outward body*: But where lieth the poor soul? The soul is not at home in this body, that is not its eternal native country. What will it avail thee to enjoy pleasure *for a little while*, with eternal shame and torment? Or, why dost thou suffer thy children to have their wills to follow fashions and finery, for *a little while in this world*, and takest delight therein when they scorn the miserable and the needy, and shalt lose them hereafter eternally ? Thou thinkest thou lovest them, and dost well for them : When the world commends their cunning and bravery, falsehood and wickedness, that commendation delighteth thee, but the devil accepteth and receiveth it as belonging to him, and *thou art the murderer* of thy children : Thou art their greatest enemy; for children look upon their parents, and when their untoward tricks

please their parents, then they follow them the more, and grow the more audacious in them. At the Last Judgment-day they will cry out of their parents, that they have *not* rebuked their *wantonness* and ungodly life, and brought them up *in modesty and in the fear of God*.

24. If you love your life, and your children, then lose them as to the wickedness of this world, that they may not be nor converse therein; and then you shall find them, together with your life, in heaven again; as Christ teacheth us, saying, *He that loveth his life shall lose it; but he that loseth his life, goods and honour, for my sake, shall find it in the kingdom of heaven*: Also, *When the world despiseth, persecuteth, and hateth you for my sake, then rejoice, for your recompense is great in the kingdom of heaven*. Also, *What will it profit a man to have all temporal honour and pleasure, and lose his own soul?* Whereas this life continueth but for a moment, in comparison of the eternity.

25. Dear children in Christ, let every one have a care in what soil he groweth : You must not expect any better time of life to repent in; *but to-day*, while the voice of God soundeth, let every one enter into himself, and search himself, let none regard the *broad way* of this world, for it leadeth into the abyss to all devils ; but the way to the kingdom of heaven is very *narrow and strait*: He that will set into it, must not defer nor linger out the time till the devil barreth up the door: He must not regard the course of the world, he must go directly into himself, and seek himself: The time will come that he will think that he is *alone* in this way, but God hath always his seven thousand with *Elijah*, whom he knoweth not of.

26. For a sincere Christian doth not *wholly*

know himself, he seeth nothing but his *vices*, in which the devil striveth against him, they are continually before him; but in this world he knoweth not his *sanctity* [or holiness]; for Christ hideth such people under his cross, so that the devil doth not see them. Therefore *be watchful and sober, and resist the subtle devil*, that you may live eternally.