

THE TRUE GOSPEL

Vindicated, from the Reproach of a New Gospel.

In which many things are opened that tend to the comfort of sad souls, and for their understanding of the Scriptures, and their assurance of faith. Whereunto is annexed, with submission to the Churches of Christ, and the true servants of Jesus Christ, a small taste of the Rule of Faith.

By John Traske.

*"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him."
Prov.18:17.*

"He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool." Prov.10:18.

ORIGINALLY PRINTED – 1636.

COMPLETE & UNABRIDGED

Supralapsarian Press
www.sovereignredeemerbooks.com
2020 EDITION

Brief Biographical Sketch

John Traske, 1585-1636, a rather complex and radical theologian of early seventeenth century England, was born in Somersetshire, where we also first hear mention made of the fact that he became a schoolmaster in the area, just prior to his ministerial ordination around 1611. He preached at Axminster, Devon, before leaving for London around 1615, where he, according to one witness, allegedly, "marched like Jehu most furiously, making divisions in the churches." Once in London, he oddly embraced a form of Jewish Legalism, which, amongst other practices, insisted on the necessity of fulfilling the entire Mosaic Law, demanding strict observance of the Jewish Sabbath, whilst also observing many of the Old Testament dietary laws. Traske, now known for his forceful manner of declaring his own misguided principles, soon became quite influential in that particular circle of those who might accurately be termed Gospel legalists, {attempting to mix Law & Gospel in one toxic manner after another,} winning gullible converts over to his position, whom eventually became known as Traskites, distinguished by their more radical adherence to Jewish laws & regulations, whilst also retaining certain elements of what might be termed 'Calvinistic' theology, prompting one contemporary to describe Traske as "a puritan minister lately grown half a Jew," and another to denounce him as "a wolf in sheep's clothing, a seducing imposter, and cunning deceiver." By 1617 these views led to his imprisonment by the High Commission, and upon refusing to recant further punishment was threatened, which led to his being brought before the infamous Star Chamber in June of 1618, presided over by Bishop Lancelot

Andrewes, {who in 1611 oversaw the translation of the Authorized Version of the Bible,} where he was stripped of his ministerial title, sentenced to be whipped, have his ears nailed to the pillory, branded with a "J" for Jew, fined a huge sum of money, and essentially imprisoned for the rest of his life, if he did not recant. Andrewes in a heated sermon preached against Traske, accused him of Judaizing, in seeking to make "Christian men, the people of God, his majesty's subjects, little better than Jews, both in the matter of abstaining from eating meats which the Jews were forbidden in Leviticus, and that they were bound to observe the Jewish Sabbath." Ephraim Paggitt, {"Heresiography, or, A Description of the Heretics and Sectaries of these Latter Times," 1645,} says that he was "sentenced, on account of his being a Sabbatarian, to be set upon the pillory at Westminster, and from thence to be whipped to the Fleet Prison." After spending three years in Prison, he finally renounced his views, and it would seem that the Lord actually granted him repentance unto the acknowledgement of the Truth of the Gospel, for he soon published his "Treatise of Liberty from Judaism," although his wife, {also imprisoned by now,} would retain her convictions, and eventually die in prison for her beliefs around 1645. Traske on the other hand, was re-instated and became a minister at Tillingham, a small village in Essex County by 1623. Around 1630, Traske, now in London, appears to have joined himself to a Society of Independents, under the pastoral care of Mr. John Lothrop, and afterwards of Henry Jessey, who was then a prominent spokesperson on the behalf of those who dissented from all organized forms of institutional or state religion. This assembly was to become the first Independent Church in London, a congregation of around sixty members which met at

Southwark. {Historians sometimes call this assembly the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Church, named for its first three pastors, Henry Jacob, John Lothrop and Henry Jessey.} It's here where it seems that the way of Christ was unfolded unto him, and where no doubt those who were brought under the umbrella of the true Gospel had expounded unto them "the way of God more perfectly." It's reputed that his inner circle of friends included John Eaton, {"Honeycombe of Free Justification in Christ," 1642,} and Robert Towne, {"Assertion of Grace" 1644,} both faithful dispensers of the mystery of Christ, which seems evident, as the harmonious nature of these writings compared, echo forth a precious unity of thought, amongst these brethren in attempting to set forth the glory of Christ, in such simple, yet sublime a manner! As to his death, it would seem that he was still alive when his book, "The True Gospel Vindicated, from the reproach of a new Gospel," was printed in 1636, but must of died shortly thereafter, as his chief antagonist Edward Norrice, wrote of his "late dangerous errors" in that same year, putting his death sometime in 1636.

TO THE READER.

Christian Reader, hearing of a slanderous appendix to another pamphlet published by one Mr. Edward Norris, who is termed in this answer the slanderer; an English minister silencing himself at the dreadful approach of the Vicar General to Gloucestershire. It seems, suspecting his ability to suffer against some few ceremonies which he hath strained at, though his throat be wide enough, as it appears by this, to swallow a camel. And thereupon asserting himself and ensnaring his congregation, and many others for a New England voyage, being at Bristol, ready for passage, the wind being boisterous, flipped the ship, and sent his gathered flock without their conceited shepherd; yet now his light being out, the stuff only remaining which he hath left, as to send abroad this stink, by printing his malice and ignorance; his malice in so many forgeries of his own, to wound the reproached, through the pretence of faithfulness to the Gospel, and his ignorance in branding glorious truths for pernicious errors. Forbear therefore with some stoutness in him that is branded with straying from the truth, and condemn not true zeal or dexterity as far as it stands with the truth. A fool must be answered, {though not foolishly,} lest he be wise in his own conceit. Some good may be gained in the mystery, by this unexpected opposition. The Lord sanctify it all to his glory, Amen.

Thine, who are Christ's, in the same Head,
John Traske.

THE APOLOGY.

It is no small transgression to bear false witness against our neighbour, and a far greater against ourselves, seeing therefore this man, who would be esteemed a singular pattern of piety and charity hath dug up such faults, as charity should have buried long since, and lays his foundation upon a manifest untruth. It can be no offense to the wise, that a word or two be spoken for satisfaction of such as are ignorant of these proceedings. If it had been an open enemy of religion, it might've been borne, but the words of these cloaked adversaries do fret as a gangrene. Know therefore, that it is a most notorious untruth to affirm that the reproached was ever censored in that high court for Judaism, for it was not the High Commission, but the Star Chamber, which court, the entire kingdom is not ignorant thereof, doth never meddle with mere opinions; and the censurers, all, or for the most part, did waive the opinions objected, and meddled only with a letter written to King James, and that letter, {in which, no such opinions were mentioned,} was the only cause of that censor, and these words in the letter, "if thou know these things, happy art thou if thou do them," and no otherwise; for in that letter, being the last of twelve, that his Majesty did receive, many things out of his printed books being alleged, and some contrary practice in his Government implied; and having entreated him to apply such his excellent writings against Rome and the Jesuits, two men of the same or worse spirit in this nation, the conclusion was, as before, "if thou know these things, happy art thou if thou do them." To the doers run the promise; for not the boasters of the law, but the doers thereof shall be justified. This was entreated by the Attorney General, {Sir Henry

Yelverton,} as if his Majesty had been taxed with hypocrisy in those words, and it was the only Judaism which he suffered for. If the books be objected that were printed by the reproached, to that end, he denies not but such an acknowledgment was yielded unto by him; and that at that time, though he was not censored simply at all for those words, yet he was not free from such tenants, as his own private opinions; and if the publisher of these gross mistakes be free from all Judaism, he is the more happy.

THE TRUE GOSPEL

Vindicated, from the Reproach of a New Gospel.

Truth in all ages hath its opposers; and the greatest enemies it hath are often times its most seeming friends. It is not safe for anyone to dig up the buried faults of others, and yet men of the lowest lives are most busy with the blemishes of their brethren. It is no great marvel to stagger about the Truth, whilst men are still drunk with the whores cup; nor to waiver in opinion till the Lord Jesus Christ is made known to be the Way, Truth, and Life; the King, Priest and Prophet of his own people. To stumble at the Law of God in the infancy of faith is common with the most sincere, especially such as are educated by legal principles. Our liberty by Christ, though confessed by all believers, yet is not so easily understood as it may be limited through ignorance of the truest, yet weakest believers. He that still doubts of his own salvation, believes not yet unto

salvation; as he that never doubts, may be justly suspected to have no true faith at all. Men "shall run to and fro, {saith the Spirit,} and knowledge shall be increased." Dan.12:4. A man may be a Jew, a Turk, an Infidel or an Idolater, or anything for any affections that appear in many, great in the profession to help them out, and if there were a will, yet is there little skill to bring them to the truth of faith. It is before confessed what that Judaism was for which, he that is reproached, was so censored, and not denied, but such tenants were for a while held by the accused; yea, God be thanked, that ever he saw the bondage under the law for a season, that he might be brought to know the truth of the liberty by Christ forever; and why should any man, wanting just matter of blame for the present, take up such dung to cast in the face of any witness of Jesus Christ? But it is believed that God hath a blessing in store for this cursing and railing, which shall turn to the honour of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And he that writes these words, believes, that though he were still more brutish than any man, and had not the understanding of a man; though he had neither learned wisdom, nor yet the knowledge of the holy; yet he that ascended up into heaven, and also descended; he that gathereth the wind in his fist, and binds the waters in a garment, he that establisheth all the ends of the earth; if the reproacher can tell is his name, or the name of his Son. The Lord alone hath power to make men to see, and to preserve his eyes from dimness, to cause him to hear and attend doctrine; yea, his rash heart shall understand knowledge, and his stammering tongue shall speak plainly. He which hath so erred in spirit, shall come to understanding, and he which hath been amongst the murmurers shall learn doctrine.

Neither is it any discouragement to his proceedings to hear of reproaches; but he esteems it his glory to be thus slandered for the Name of Christ; but albeit the slanderer hath sought all means to cast out his name as evil, yet the Lord that never leaves his own, knows a way to deliver him, and to make His righteousness imputed to him to come forth as the light, and his sincere and upright proceedings as the noon day.

As for those corrupted true doctrines, now termed by the corrupter, pernicious errors, vented, {as he claims,} under the splendid names and shows of Christ, Faith, Gospel, Joy, and such like alluring titles. Let him boast that bears away the honour of this unexpected conflict. "And the king of Israel answered and said, tell him, let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." I Kings 20:11.

And to speak as it is, the slanderer hath done well, {though he meant otherwise,} to awaken the reproached, that that which was spoken in the ear may be preached on the house tops, and what was learned in darkness may be spoken in the light. Matt.10:27. And why should we fear them that can kill only the body? Confessed it must be, that the reproached hath been hidden overmuch and overlong; much longer than the slanderer and his likes were willing that he should; but the Lord hid him until his own season. Jer.36:26.

Now to the assertions of the most of which, it may be said, that the slanderer misreporting those assertions makes them now to be his own errors. When the truth thus suffers by seeming friends, who can but be stirred? If David were justly offended when his servants, whom he sent to comfort Hanun, were judged as spies, and returned with their beards half shaven, and their coats cut off to the buttocks,

II Sam.10:4, by the evil surmising Amorites; and if for this they did stink in David's nostrils, why should it be savoury to the reproached, or any, that so many glorious truths, sent forth for the comfort of sad souls, and for no other end, should return so disgraced, so half shaven, and curtailed by this jealous Amorite.

It is now affirmed, and might be justified by many and sufficient witnesses, if there were cause, and liberty served, that the now published Gospel grounds were at first wrested from the reproached, by many and daily reiterated by the vehement entreaties of an English minister, not unknown to the slanderer, but a near neighbour of his, in the presence of many, as rules of direction, for his own preaching the Gospel, often professing that he should cast all his sermons into that way, and as it is believed in the uprightness of his heart. At what time yielding to his importunity, some forty or fifty at most were written, and a copy also taken by the reproached, in no more large terms than the grounds now run, upon which others that observed what was done, {as eye and ear witnesses of his request,} desired also copies of the same things; and upon a review of what was delivered him, there issued out many more, to the number of about four-score, which were in love sent them as they desired, which coming to the slanderer's hand he begins to except against five or six at most, and instead of rectifying them, began to rage against the author, to the shame of his own friends and the discovery of much envy. And now he that spake long since of writing against the reproached, hath verified the moral of a father, "the man hath mustered all his forces, and it was only to shoot at an eggshell."

Now to his catalogue of pernicious errors, {as he falsely affirms,} published by the reproached, for

they being one and twenty in number, are some of them utterly perverted by the slanderer's malice or ignorance, and some remain undoubted truths, though branded by him as such dangerous errors.

One of them is absolutely rejected as never coming in any sense into the reproached mind, the rest shall be paralleled with the truth, defended or else proven in the very same terms in which they are set down.

That which is rejected in this only, that. 1. The Gospel was in man's nature before the fall. Answer. This was falsely collected out of a letter written to a neighboring minister, which had he honestly produced, with the circumstances before and after, his malice or ignorance would easily have appeared. It was never any part of the Gospel grounds, nor ever so delivered by word or writing in any appearance. If he can produce it, it shall be confessed as an error and oversight; if not, it must stand as a gross lie and a malicious slander of the accused. The rest follow, in which shall be observed these terms to avoid confusion. His imaginary errors or mangled and maimed truths shall be called the accusation; the parallel or explanation to which {were need is} shall be added the confirmation of the same truth. The branded truths shall stand as they are for truth; and to that shall be annexed also their several defence, were necessity call for it, at least for the help of the weakest believer.

I. Accusation: The Law is a rule of the flesh; and to live after the Law, is to live after the flesh.

Explanation: The Law requiring absolute perfection, and the flesh at enmity with it; to seek life by obedience of works is to walk after the flesh.

Rom.8:1-8. **Confirmation:** This was never any of the Gospel grounds, nor written in a letter, nor ever

so delivered, as the slanderer hath it; but it is a false collection from discourses that dealt with the difference between the obedience of faith, and the obedience of works; that we can perform by our own personal obedience to the Law of God, in our most exact walking according thereunto; and that which we believe is performed for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, and found only in Him, and his rich, royal, glorious and everlasting Robe of Righteousness. This walking by Faith is to walk after the spirit, and that walking by works of the Law was termed a walking after the flesh. Rom.8:1-8. And for adding works of the Law, in this sense, to faith in Christ, the Galatians were called foolish and bewitched by that great Apostle; and again foolish, so beginning in the spirit, and seeking perfection by the flesh. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Gal.3:1-3.

II. Accusation: The Law did once discover sin, but it doth so no more; nor yet for direction, for love herein transcends Law, as far as life doth death.

Explanation: The Law discovering sin doth not set forth the horribleness of the least sin, as the sacrifice of Christ doth; and for direction, it is not fetched from without, from the letter of the Law, but flows from the love of God shed abroad in the heart; and this kind of obedience doth as far transcend that other, to the letter, by the flesh, as Life doth Death.

II Cor.3:1-8. **Confirmation:** And doth anything so set forth the odiousness and horribleness of the least sin, as the sacrifice of the Son of God, that Prince of

life, and Lord of glory, that image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Glory, that he must die to purge away the least sin, as well as the greatest transgression. What error is there in this; to say, believers are occasioned more to detest sin by the Death of Christ, than by all the legal terrors that can be used? I Cor.2:8. And doth not that obedience, which flows from an inward principle of love far transcend that which is forced by fear. Is not love of God, and God love; and the Law made only for the creature, and not for God himself, who is in no way limited by any Law; and if God does transcend the creature in his best estate, so infinitely, as cannot be conceived, why may not Love be said to transcend Law, as a Life doth transcend Death?

III. Accusation: Faith is not to be tried by the fruits and effects, but only by the persuasion itself.

Explanation: Fruits and effects do not infallibly demonstrate faith to any man's own soul, but faith only demonstrates them to be the fruits and effects which attend itself.

Confirmation: And if faith does not most infallibly prove its fruits and effects to be the fruits and effects of faith; tell us how any may know that faith hath such fruits and effects, and not by the Word; and how we may know the Word is Truth, and not by faith only? And then you say something, or whether the work be accepted for the man, or the man for the work, if the work for the man, how shall the man know he is accepted, if not by faith?

IV. Accusation: Faith is the only sign of salvation.

Explanation: Faith is the only infallible evidence of salvation to a believer's own soul.

V. Accusation: The new creature is only faith in Christ. **Explanation:** The new creature is only the true believer in Christ.

VI. Accusation: Regeneration is not to be tried by any other fruits, effects or signs, but only by faith, wherein it consists. **Explanation:** Regeneration hath no infallible trial, for a man's own assurance, but only by the truth of his faith, by which it is attained. **Confirmation:** This, nor any of the former were ever any of the Gospel grounds, except some pieces stolen mischievously from them; and it is confirmed, as it is now explained, in the confirmation that faith is the only infallible evidence of salvation to the believer's own soul; only this may be added, that whereas he saith it consists in faith, it was affirmed that it is attained, apprehended and enjoyed only by true believers; for we may truly convert the terms, whereas we read, "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," I John 5:1, thus, whosoever is born of God, believeth also that Jesus is the Christ. And if faith be only the evidence of things not seen, by the eye of the natural man, Heb.11:1, then it is the evidence of Regeneration; and if any powerful effects attend Regeneration, faith only witnesses to the believer, that they are the effects of the new birth; or else they must show us something else, by which we believe things that are not discernible by human reason or sense at all. I Cor.2:14-15.

VII. Accusation: Sanctification is not by the Spirit in ourselves, but only in Christ, showed in the acts, and not in the habits of grace. **Explanation:** Sanctification is not by the Spirit in ourselves, that is in the flesh, Romans 7, but only as we are in union with Christ. John 17:19-21. **Confirmation:**

Sanctification is by the Spirit only, as we understand it of its operations by mortification, or quickening these our mortal bodies, yet it is not so in us, as mingled with uncleanness; but as distinct absolutely from the flesh; and being another, or a new nature; indeed, a participation of the divine nature, II Pet.1:3-4, which though it make up one person, yet it is none at all of the old man, nor of the old creation, but it is that new creation, that new heart and that Spirit of God which is bestowed upon us, Ezek.11:19 & 36:25-27, which yieldeth no new habits in the flesh, as if the flesh were changed or renewed, but is so subsisting of itself, that it is of power to manifest itself by acts of subduing, and acts of quickening, and reviving, and in enabling this mortal flesh as the life of Christ in us to do, though not perfectly, yet to do that which is good, so that the sanctified person is no further sanctified than he is in union with the Lord Jesus Christ; and it is not he that hath any habit of grace in his flesh, but the Lord Christ dwelling in him who doth put forth the bright beams of his glory, and in such virtues as do best fit the time and place in which he lives. Rom.8:9-11, II Cor.1:8-9.

VIII. Accusation: Believers, when they fall into any sin, be it of adultery or murder, are not to mourn or grieve, {for that savours of the flesh,} but still to rejoice, because it is written, rejoice evermore; and that joy is the special means to bring them out of their sin. **Explanation:** Believers, when they fall into any sin, be it of murder or adultery, are not to mourn as people without hope, as if there were no mercy at all for such sins committed of frailty, to which believers are seldom left, but still in the greatest sorrow for sin, to rejoice in the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is not written, weep

evermore, but rejoice evermore, and such joy nourished, is our especial means to bring such out of their sin. **Confirmation:** And what if we should now turn proposition, which is the slanderers own invention only, mischievously collected, and altogether perverted out of a conference to this purpose, as is explained, we shall turn it thus upon himself and say: Believers, when they fall into any sin, be it of adultery or murder, are to mourn without all joy in a hopeless manner, {for that savours of the spirit,} and joy, is no means at all, though it be only in the Lord, to bring any man out of his sin. Doth this way like the slanderer better than the other, or can he find out the third way and solve all? Is not joy commanded more than sorrow, and is it not a Gospel precept, a part of the kingdom of God, which consists in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Rom.14:17. Is there any precept or warrantable pattern of such desperate sorrow, as that may be as is destitute of all joy; may we not dispense with the absence of sorrow after sin, of frailty, {as are all the sins of true believers,} and may we dispense with the absence of joy at all in any sense, when we find that a precept is calling for perpetual obedience thereunto? To speak in the slanderers legal sense, if the Law command joy, doth not the least omission make such as are under it, as liable to the curse as the greatest transgression? Gal.3:10; Lam.2:10. May not sorrow for sin, and joy in the Son of God stand together? And was anything else affirmed in that conference, which is thus wilfully perverted? And if faith be any means, and the prayer of faith, to bring believers out of any sin or temptation, then is joy a special means; joy in the Lord, a powerful means not only to bring such out of their sins, as have been captivated, but also to keep from sin, and support from despair, if

faith and joy be inseparable, Rom.5:1-2; Phil.1:25, and the joy of the Lord be our greatest strength. Neh.8:10. That is, that whereby we are chiefly supported as the evidence of the Spirit's presence, who is called the Comforter. John 15:26. Whereas that joyless sorrow, which it seems, is maintained by this derision of holy joy, and that desperate mourning, which is forced by ignorant and blind guides, is the cause of so many self-murders that abound in this a day, and amongst whom, if not such as this slanderer is, and his likes, who daily hang, drown, poison and stab, and take away themselves, as being first poisoned by such corrupt legal teaching, by which pretended Christian assemblies are turned Jewish, and worse than Jewish Synagogues, by the neglect of holding forth the ensign of the Lord Jesus Christ, Isa.11:10-12, and magnifying his infinitely powerful blood and righteousness; for in those Jewish assemblies, there were daily sacrifices, but in these meetings, is not Christ once named, except in their prayers in many sermons, but sin only cried down, and duties enforced upon the poor creature, as if the creature had power of his own to do them; by which it comes to pass that those zealous men, through ignorance, in seeming to be the greatest enemies of sin are the greatest advancers of iniquity in the world; and that it may not be said, but also proved, and made manifest to all, the greatest sin, and the root of all others, now under the Gospel, is unbelief. Now those men in their thronged assemblies do nourish nothing more than unbelief.

Though they do now and then call for faith, yet they do cry it down with all their might, as they tell the people that faith is not so easily gotten, as they think; that it is very hard to attain unto, and tell them that they must strive for it, and press hard

for it, and take heed they be not deceived, for many are deceived with false faith, for true; and therefore they must look it be of the right kind, and if it be, then they tell them, that these and these signs will follow, as if they have not those signs, as a change of the life, and uprightness of heart, and universal obedience to all God's commandments, and such like, they have no faith at all, it is only a fancy. They deal with their assemblies in pressing them to believe, as many men do with friends, whom they invite to their houses, and when they come, they shut the doors against them, and fall to quarrelling with them, and do forbid them again by their rude behaviour. So these bid men to believe in Christ, and tell them that they must believe, but they must first be humbled, and well prepared for Christ by a change of life, for he will not dwell with men that are ungodly, and take up his habitation in such as are sinners; they make them to believe that there is a long mourning for Christ, or repentance for sin, and an absolute turning to God, before Christ may be received or believed upon. All which marks are in none, but in true believers, whereas Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, Rom.4:5, and seeks the lost before they seek him, and God justifieth the ungodly that believe in Jesus. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." I Tim.1:15. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Matt.18:11.

They are like the false spies, that by the sons of Anak, and of the high walls of the cities, did utterly dishearten and discourage the people from attempting any further progress to the land of Canaan, had not the Lord himself come in to the rescue, the true spies of Moses had been stoned, and the people made a captain to go back to Egypt again.

Numb.14:1-3. So these do altogether weaken the hands of God's people, and keep them so under the bondage of legal terrors, that the people are forced either to despair or go back from all religion. Witness the many that are glad to slip collar by Familism or Antinomianism, or flat Libertinism, or else to stand up in defiance of all such teachers, as hardened in a profane way, rejoicing at their confusion and ruin under the odious name of rigid Puritanism. And thus they do hail upon themselves, by such means, even the powers of men, and do trouble their own peace, and utterly dishearten all their hearers, keeping them always dependent upon their own lips. Neither is this all, but if it were not to increase the volume, or to oppress the book, much more might be spoken; only it shall be concluded with an illustration, that all may see, whether in their way of crying down sin, they do not in all actuality set it up, even much more abundantly.

Take but into consideration the behaviour of two generals in the field, the one saith to his soldiers, come on my comrades, for the day is ours; this be sure of, you have a general that was never vanquished, nor can be; you have all the advantages, we are all fresh men, not a wounded man amongst us, all valiant men of war, our number is more, our munition more plentiful, we have advantage of the ground, of the sun, of the wind, there is no comparison between our adversaries and us; we have new supplies at command, a city of refuge, if worse came to worse. Whereas they are half wounded and sick men; they are in a manner famished, and have a general that hath been often vanquished, and their munition is spent. Would not this {were it all true} more encourage and put on that Army, than if he should say on the contrary thus, I charge you all to look to yourselves, and keep

every man his rank-and-file upon pain of death, for we are as good as conquered already, if you be not valiant, we are all wounded men, and our adversaries are untouched, men of great strength and valour, who have a general that is invincible, and they have all advantages of ground, of sun, of wind, and stores of munitions and victuals, and a strong city to which they may for advantage retreat when they please, let us therefore show ourselves men, and be stirred up, or we are all undone. Is not this a way to cause all his army to forsake their colors, and to betake themselves to flight, or to cast themselves upon the mercy of the adversary?

Even so it is with those persons of so much sorrow for sin, and joyless mourning; instead of magnifying the grace of God in Christ Jesus, and the Almighty Power of the Son of God, and setting forth the Glory of his Sacrifice, and of his Prophecy, and Princely Power, these do set forth the strength of sin, and power of Satan; and the dangers to which poor souls are subject; and thus conceal liberty by Christ, and God's readiness to receive all that come unto Christ, and to Him in Christ's name; and the glory, honour, happiness and excellency; the safety and perpetual felicity by the Everlasting Covenant, to which believers are come; so that by this means, such as are not believers, are discouraged and hardened; and such as are but weak in the faith, are exceedingly perplexed, and ensnared by such miserable men; and the only opposition of this dangerous way, by which all things are turned upside down, conversion hindered, religion scandalized, and God's people put to a stand in their happy progress, by the ignorance and pride of envious men; for this only were these, and this accusation raised and published by the malicious

and avenging enemy; but it shall proceed no further, for his madness is now made manifest to all men.

IX. Accusation: Careless Christians are the choicest believers because they depend wholly upon Christ. **Explanation:** Careless Christians, whose care is cast wholly upon the Lord are the choicest believers; for they are not negligent in the use of lawful means. **Confirmation:** And why may not carelessness be used in an holy sense, seeing that all our care is to be cast upon the Lord, who only careth for us; and seeing carefulness for anything, is also expressly forbidden, and prayer put instead thereof. I Pet.5:7; Phil.4:6. What if such a conclusion were so set down as the explanation shows; as an antidote against the pernicious carking care that cuts the throat of all true religion and discovers infidelity in many who make great profession? Must this man wilfully leave out the circumstances, and cut and mangle it to serve his own turn, and toss it at ordinances before profane men, to the disgrace of religion, as much as in him lay? Doth he not see himself in the devil's allegation of Scripture, for Christ's casting himself down from that pinnacle of the temple? Deals he not just as the devil did? Matt.4:1-11. Or let them show if they can, this or any of these accusations explained, or to be explained and confirmed upon Gospel grounds, the path to peace; or in any letter, or by the testimony of any that heard them so uttered, and he saith something, or else his evil dealing returns upon himself, or he is fallen into the pit that he hath dug, and is taken up in his own snare.

X. Accusation: To doubt of God's favour after sin is committed is worse than the sin itself. **Explanation:** Doubting's of God's favour nourished by true

believers after new sins, are greater added to lesser evils. **Confirmation:** If new sins committed of frailty, as all the sins of believers are, may cause doubting's of God's favour, then all their sins may give cause of the same doubts; and so the least omission as well as the greatest commission whatsoever; and if it be not a greater sin to call in question God's favour upon such new sins, than so to sin, then is it not a greater sin to sin so immediately against God, and call him a liar to his face than to sin against ourselves or our neighbours? Nor is it a greater sin in a son to question his sonship, because he hath been faulty towards his Father, and to nourish that doubting than any usual offense he may give besides. Are not the greatest sins, the sins of infidelity under the Gospel? If not, let a greater sin be showed in a true believer than such nourished doubtings of God's free favour in Christ, and you have gotten the day in this conflict also, only this may be remembered, that out of this comfortable ground or antidote against accursed doubting, the slanderer hath stolen these words, {true believers and nourished,} as appears in the explanation, by which he utterly perverts the sense and exposes it to the derision of the reader.

XI. Accusation: The 15th Psalm is only a description of Christ; and that the Beatitudes, Matthew 5-7, only belong to him, and to no man that ever was, or would be, because all men are vanity. **Explanation:** The perfections required in the 15th Psalm, and in all other Scripture of like nature, are not, nor ever were, or shall be found in any man, but by their union with Christ, for all men severed from Christ are vanity. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption,

that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." I Cor.1:30-31.

XII. Accusation: The saying of Solomon, rejoice with the wife of thy youth, Prov.5:18, is not meant of a man's wife, but of Christ, because he alone can satisfy us at all times. **Explanation:** That saying, Prov.5:18, is a proverb, and so a dark saying, Prov.1:6, and no fallen man can rejoice in a Gospel sense, but by his joy in Christ, and he alone can satisfy us at all times, and is an unchangeable object of true joy. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Heb.13:8. **Confirmation:** And that it may not seem so strange to any, the Holy Spirit in Malachi calleth the covenant of God made with the Father, and the people of Israel, the wife of youth, Mal.2:10-15, against whom the whole nation had dealt treacherously by putting her away, and marrying, {not more wives, but,} the daughter of a strange god, that is, by taking up a corrupt way of God's worship, and so profaning the holiness of the Lord.

XIII. Accusation: It's too great presumption for any minister to undertake the exposition of any whole book in the Scriptures, because he cannot show how Christ is involved in every part. **Explanation:** It is too great presumption for any man to undertake what he cannot do, seeing that no man is to minister but according to the proportion of faith, and only as God hath dealt to him the measure of faith. Rom.12:3-6.

XIV. Accusation: No man can say that he doth love his brother until he hath laid down his life for him; neither can we say so of ourselves, that we love the brethren, but we may say of others that they do, so

expounding I John 3:14. **Explanation:** No man can truly say he doth love his brother until he hath trial of his own love; neither may believers say, without vain ostentation in saying so; but yet may they perceive that others do so, preferring others to themselves, and that of I Jn.3:14, "we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death," is to be understood of the mutual love that is in believers one towards another. **Confirmation:** And though some may say that they do love the brethren, yet like Joab take them by the beard with one hand, and ask how they do, and let out their bowels with the other, II Sam.20:9-10, just as he that slanders the Lord's children doth; who pretends love to them, and yet exposes them to everlasting reproach by his devilish lies. And who can truly say that he so loves the brethren as he ought, and as Christ commands, not knowing whether he can lay down his life for them as Christ did. John 15:12-13, Eph.5:1; I John 3:16. This was only urged to show the vanity of that common mark of faith taken from I Jn.3:14, {"we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren, &c.,"} which neither can be an infallible mark, but as it can be directly proved to proceed from faith; and the Apostle contrasts the love of the brethren one to another, as a sign of their translation from death to life against the wonder at the hatred of the world, verse 13, "marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." And such is the nature of true faith, that it carries the creature so out of its own love, and all; as that it pitches it upon Christ's only love; neither do true believers ever boast of their love, for faith excludes all such boasting. And yet they rejoice to see the love of others, and do prefer it to their own; they press unto perfection in love, that want of love,

and the rest of those fruits, being their daily just complaint of themselves, though they question not the favour of God for that; nor are infallibly assured by it at all; sometimes sensible they may assure their hearts so before God; but their infallible assurance is only by faith in Christ. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." Heb.10:22. "And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." I John 3:19.

XV. Accusation: The Law is not to be preached to believers by Gospel ministers. **Assertion:** The Law, as Law is not to be preached to believers, seeing all edification is in faith. **Confirmation:** And why may it not be affirmed, that seeing there is no commission to preach the Law at all now under the Gospel, and seeing the Gospel contains the whole mind and will of God, and that the Apostles did never preach the Law, but as subordinate to the Gospel, and Paul doth charge Timothy, to charge some that they teach no other doctrine but the Faith; and brandeth such as were desirous to be law-teachers to have swerved from the doctrine, and to be vain janglers, and such as know not what they said. Why shall we not say, that the Gospel only is to be preached to all, as well as to believers; except any can show a larger commission than Christ himself, or dare leave apostolic doctrine, or will deny the Gospel only to be God's power to save all those that believe. Need believers anymore but God's power to save them now? Mark 16:15; I Tim.1:3-7; Rom.1:16, &c. Yet, whoever denied the use of the Law or its excellency to discover sin, convict such as the Gospel shines not unto, be a ground for all human Law, a notable confirmation of Gospel

precepts, the very rule of Love, and a means to show the greatness of sin, so that Grace may appear to be the greater; that it is of use for the lawless and unholy, and for such slanderers as these who accuse; and of very plentiful use for true believers, and against any that oppose the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. I Tim.1:8-11. Is this to abolish the Law; nay, rather it establishes it! When men are showed no life by the Law, but all hope of happiness only in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so the vanity of this accusation is also made manifest.

XVI. Accusation: If repentance and faith be wrought only by the Gospel than what doth the Law work in any man's conversion to God or conformity to Christ? **Confirmation:** This needs no explanation, for it is a plain truth granted in a letter, by a neighbour minister of this slanderer, at that time; only the inference upon his concession was made by the reproached. And if the Gospel be able to beget, I Cor.4:15, to edify, Acts 20:32, to save perfectly all that are begotten, Rom.1:16, then what need the Laws help? As much as Christ did need the aid of Moses and Elias when Peter desired ignorantly their cohabitation with his Master, that answer from heaven might stop their mouths, if they were not bereft of knowledge, when it was spoken by God himself, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Matt.17:5.

XVII. Accusation: Christ is involved in every Proverb of Solomon. **Confirmation:** This needs no explanation, only for the justification of this truth let the accuser take this argument. The wisdom or power of God is involved in every proverb of Solomon, and Christ is that wisdom and power of God. "But unto them which are called, both Jews and

Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I Cor.1:24. Therefore do all the prophets bear witness of Christ, and to Christ. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." John 5:39.

XVIII. Accusation: It is as easy to believe the remission of sins, as to ask forgiveness.

Explanation: It is as easy to believe forgiveness of sins, as truly to ask forgiveness, for both are the gifts of God. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." I John 1:9. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph.2:8. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18.

XIX. Accusation: The New Covenant hath no conditions at all; faith is not the condition of the Gospel promise, but only a qualification in us.

Confirmation: If there be any condition of the New Covenant to be performed on the part of the creature, that is not freely promised in that Covenant itself, then that which {as the former} he hath produced out of a printed book called the "Path to Peace," will be found erroneous; but until he or any man can show any such condition is required of any man, which is not promised to be given him freely in the Covenant itself, that shall stand for truth still, though branded by him for a pernicious error.

XX. Accusation: Believers {however it may seem} do always grow in faith and love, and answerable fruits. **Confirmation:** This needs no explanation to vindicate it from any show of error, but may stand and stare forever in the accuser's face, to his shame here and condemnation hereafter, without his unfeigned repentance and like publication of his malice or ignorance, if we appeal to that commonly known principle, which is "that not to proceed is to retreat, or not to go forward is to go backwards." And how can such as are true believers, for so it must be understood, whose root, stock, mountain, living waters; in, and on, and by which they are planted and watered, the ever rising sun that warms them, and gives them life is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; who watcheth them day and night and waters them every moment; therefore, how can they but grow, and bear fruit continually, and their fruit be for meat, and their leaves for medicines? Shall they go forth as the sun in his strength, and can they go back? Is the Lord unrighteous, and unfaithful to say, and not to do? "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the LORD is upright, he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Psal.92:12-15. But such blasphemies are frequent with ignorant men to judge the best of the accuser, and so much to his catalogue.

NOW A FEW WORDS TO HIS CAUTIONS.

That the reproached is not to be trusted in his Gospel grounds, because he contradicts himself. If he do so, the slanderer's advice is good, for truth does not contradict itself, the way of the righteous, or the truth of God is as the shining light, there is no crookedness, no wreathing or contradiction in it. "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Prov.4:18. "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." Prov.8:8-9.

But what are the contradictions, they are these, that believers do always grow, and a man may be a believer, and yet for a time, have neither humility, love, or any other fruit bud forth. This reproacher is not to be trusted in his report, and therefore to be taken heed of as a malicious slanderer, unless he can show this latter to be any of those Gospel grounds. If it were, yet his ignorance appears in this, that seeing that growth is inward, as well as outward; in the root, as well as the fruit; for a man may grow, though such growth sensibly appears not as is intended by budding forth. The grass, corn, trees, and plants grow, though we perceive not how at the present; the sun, moon, and stars do run in a most harmonious manner, yet who can discern their perfect motion?

Also saith he, {but untruly,} that there is another contradiction, and that it is this, the Law shows what man should do, and the Law is not the rule of life. If he can show these in any catalogue of

Gospel grounds, that belong to the reproached, it returns upon himself as a fiction. If he could, yet his gross ignorance appears in not being able to distinguish between the law in the Letter, and the law of the Spirit; the law of perfect liberty in Christ Jesus; the royal law of love which is only fulfilled by believers, this latter being written in their hearts, and shining out in their lives, is their rule, as Christ the living Law, is their pattern; but these things are spiritual, and natural man cannot understand them. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor.2:14.

But the man is surely besides his wits as he knoweth not what he saith, nor what he affirms. I Tim.1:6-7. He is perhaps perplexed in his thoughts about his perfidiousness with that New England troop, and the disgraces he had undergone, the songs that have been made of him; his conscience smiting and dogging him for undoing so many families, as much as in him lay, and preferring his Bristol morsels at the Merchants houses before the charge of so many souls, she thinks how he hath rooted out so many families, and sent them away as the surpluses of their native country to a barren wilderness; or else it may be that he did this worthy work at his hours of recreation, to make sport for himself, and his likes; or he supposed that it should never come to the reproached ones hand, or it may be imagined, that if it did, his hands were bound for any reply, or that he had his schoolboys in hand, and so his dogmatic statement would carry it, as he supposes his authority so great and his name so famous, as that his words are oracles, because none can tax him of railing, lying or wrangling with any, no not at Tetbury, nor Horsleigh, with Mr. Edwards,

nor Mr. Mandy; nor he. The country resounds and echoes again the quietness of his spirit, and his moderation in all things, and that he is the only man of judgment and learning in all those parts; or he imagined that his courage is so renowned, as if he only drew his sword, and do threaten a combat, all will fly before him, as an invincible man.

And if it be true as he saith, that his so contemned adversary be able to gather readily out of the Scriptures any sense that will serve his turn, he that is so able, would not vent such pernicious errors as the slanderer intimates, nor leave things so barely as might tend so much to his disgrace; if he sought but the honour of men, and not the honour of him that sent him.

And may not his protestations be trusted, that is thus slandered for a protestation in a letter. That was but one only, and it is not without examples in the story of martyrs who have used that way for all their last refuge, when they had to do with like unreasonable men, who sought all manner of ways to disgrace them or the truth which they held forth. Must all his protestations be false, because that is suspected by this eminent man; but if what is written in the explanations and justifications of this true Gospel be found undeniable, then his protestation in that letter, was, and is true, if nothing be affirmed by him but that one Gospel which Moses wrote of, and the prophets foretold, the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles preached, and the faithful martyrs witness, and is now witnessed by many in pulpit and print, then is that protestation true, and not false, as the slanderer would have it, and doth plainly affirm so peremptorily.

As for his riddles which are part of his accusation, that when he would deceive, he turns all into a riddle, as that, the Law only is a rule of life, to

such as know it in the infinite holiness thereof, and so denying all power in themselves to keep it, do look altogether to the Lord Jesus Christ to keep it for them, and in them. Is this a riddle to this learned man? Or that which follows, that believers have most of all others to do with the law, though the law hath least to do with them. If these be riddles, what would he say to these? That the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ; that a virgin did conceive and bear a son without the knowledge of man. That any Son should be as ancient as his Father, or be his mother's father, and his daughter's son, that the incomprehensible God should be enclosed in a woman's womb, the Prince of life be killed, and the Lord of glory crucified, that God should die, and man overcome death, that God, who hath no blood, should shed blood, and a thousand like riddles, that the Gospel holds forth.

But as is the man, so is his judgment, and who shall give understanding but the Most High, and what hath any, which they have not received? And seeing God have not chosen the wise of this world generally, it is no wonder if Nicodemus, though ruler in Israel, knew not the New Birth.

Now for his saying imputed to him, only because in a conference he once laid aside that authority and dexterity which he might've used, lest the children should cry, but was feign to keep rocking, in order to keep them quiet. If the slanderer find any saying here, let him reproach still, but if plain and downright dealing be used, let him think himself towards whom meekness and gentleness was judged, for if he had been a flatterer of any, he might perhaps have fared as well as the slanderer at this day. As for his pride, if the slanderer had been free from it, he would not have so contemned the reproached, as not worthy of an answer, nor have

supposed that idle, frothy, false and empty rehearsals of imagined and so feigned errors would have taken with all men; neither would he have vented his credit so far as to show himself so wise a man in print as he hath done; for in this case, the reproached of all other accusations can at least free himself in the flesh; for he thinks himself every way as proud as the slanderer, and if he had been proud in his sense, he never would've invented so poor things as the slanderer doth intimate by his curtailings and half shaving so many glorious truths, as he hath done. But indeed, he confesses that in Christ is all his humility, and if any can find fault in Christ's humility, he is confuted forever and hath nothing to say. Lo, here are those flowers refreshed again, which are most sweet in the reproached nostrils, and those glorious truths now vindicated from a host of errors; and so you have the true Gospel of Jesus Christ dispensed before in pulpits, print, letters, and conferences, once more defined; and he saith also, that the spirit of Jesus Christ is the spirit of truth; and the sum of all is, that Christ Jesus is the believers fullness to God, and believers are his fullness to men; and that Christ is not to be looked at by believers, without his body; nor the body without the head, without error, absurdity and gross ignorance of the mystery of Christ.

**GLORY TO GOD ALONE THROUGH JESUS
CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.**

THE RULE OF FAITH

That a Rule of Faith there is, not only the Holy Scriptures do witness, Rom.12:6; Gal.6:16; Phil.3:16, but all men that profess the knowledge of the Doctrine of Faith do assent thereto; and they call it the Analogy, Rule, or Proportion of Faith. In all their confirmations of what is true, they say this agrees with the Analogy of faith; and in their constitutions of error; this is contrary to the Rule, or Analogy of Faith.

Neither hath the Holy Spirit left us precepts to try the spirits; that is, the doctrines of men; without a Rule for to try and examine them by; or how can we know what is true, or what is false? What right, what wrong, what is to be held fast, what to be rejected; if there be not a known and infallible Rule to examine things by; that all things being tried, we may cleave only to that which is good. I John 4:1; Phil.1:10; I Thes.5:21; II John 9-10.

Neither can this Rule be any long, dark, uncertain, or private way or trial, which all men to whom the Faith is preached, and by whom it is received, cannot enjoy; but it must be short, plain, certain, and a public way, common to all the faithful; learned and unlearned, high and low, rich and poor, in prison and at liberty, in all places and times, and conditions that the Saints are found.

It is not then the early Church Fathers, nor Councils, not Confessions, nor Cannons, or Pope's decrees; nor yet the large expositions and writings of men of contrary spirits, though ever so excellent. It is not the Church, nor yet the whole volume of the Bible, nor every private man's spirit that can be the Rule of Faith at all. For the most of them are impossible for every believer to know, or use, and

they are also all of them contrary to one another, in so many things as cannot be reconciled; and if it be left to every man's private spirit, then so many men, so many minds, as it is at this day, among such as understand not what this Rule is, or are not regulated thereby.

The Rule cannot be the Church, as many say; for it is a Rule for the churches, to be ordered thereby; and if faithful men be the matter of those churches, this Rule is that by which they are to try all things, and to walk in the Way which they find is of God. Can the square be the Carpenter, or the line and level the Mason? Or is the last {a mechanical form shaped like a human foot} the Shoemaker, or the card and compass the Mariner? Neither can the Rule be the whole volume of Holy Scriptures, no more than the sea is the map and compass; or the timber to be framed; the square or the leather to be cut out, the shoe-maker's last; or the wares in store-houses, the measures or weights.

But the Rule is, and ought to be such a thing as is profitable for men to know whether the doctrines taught, be true or false. It may not be the men, the Church, nor the sea of doctrines, even the whole Scriptures; for either of these for a Rule are absurd, and intricate, if not impossible to discern. For can any know the Church, her sentence of every doctrine that he hears, every private book he reads, every conference he is at in difficult things? Must no man be able to determine until he hath been at Rome, and over all the world were the Lord's people are scattered, and have heard all their several opinions?

Besides, such as are subject to the Rule cannot be the Rule, except it be granted, that some only are subject, and others exempt, and if any be subject, they are termed laity; and if any be free and

exempt, and so not to be judged by the Rule itself, these must be termed clergy; and so they shall appear to be lawless, and liable to no examination or control; which if it be not above God, II Thes.2:4-8, let all judge.

Or on the other side, can any know the Scriptures meaning so exactly, upon every occasion, and everything? Is it possible that any true believer can have all the Scriptures by heart; and know what their scope and interpretation is, so as not to miss it upon any occasion? If any such be showed, such as are for the Scriptures to be the Rule, have said something to the purpose; but otherwise they are as far from the Rule as the former, and say no more than if they should bear us in hand, that the weights and scales, the touchstone and the gold itself must be one and the same thing, and that there is no difference betwixt the sea and the card and compass, or that the sea and sea-marks are the same things.

To show therefore what this rule is, this Golden Reed, this measuring line; albeit some may scorn it, and other stumble at it; though many may say, "what will this babbler say?" Acts 17:18. What new rule will he produce? Will he take upon himself to be wiser than all men; and to teach his teachers, and guide his elders; and men so much superior to him for age, learning, holiness, and excellency of parts in every way? Yet with submission to the true churches of God, and to all true believers in Jesus Christ, and in honour of the Lord Jesus, and for no other cause but that discord may cease, and concord increase; that the elect may not be without some help against the delusions of these desperate times; that Christ's sheep may know his Voice, and not attend strangers, and do expose them as seducers, whatsoever they be, Jer.50:6, that neither force

may drive them from their resting place, nor flattery move them from their standing; but that they may indeed be able to try and examine all things that they hear, and be established in that which is good.

KNOW WHAT THE RULE IS.

One only; short, plain, ancient, infallible, universally useful, impartial, and of great authority; whatsoever it be, it must be one, for believers are of one way, and of one heart. "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God, and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." Jer.32:38-39. It must be short, that it may be always remembered. II Pet.1:12-15 & 3:1-2. It must be plain and easy to be understood, that it may serve for babes and simple ones to whom the Gospel is to be revealed, and to them chiefly and above all others. Matt.11:25, I Cor.1:26, Isa.35:8, Prov.4:18, I Cor.3:1, Rom.14:1. It must be ancient; yea, from the beginning of the world; since man stood in need of a Rule, that it may be the same that Adam, Seth, Enoch, Abraham and the rest did walk by, Rom.4:12,19-20, that it may be made apparent that we are of the same Faith, which was before either Law or Prophets, or the Gospel was written; and so this Rule must be before the Scriptures themselves, much more before the termed Catholic Church.

It must be infallible; or else it may be a ground of uncertainty, and wavering; and such as doubt, and waiver, and are not established in the Truth, they are condemned in the Scriptures, and often reproved by the Lord Jesus Christ, Matt.14:31, James 1:6-8, Mark 9:19,23, and confidence, assurance and steadfast standing is much more commended and commanded by the Holy Spirit. II

Cor.5:6-8, Heb.10:22, I Cor.15:58, Col.2:7. It must be universally useful, as fitted to the trial not of some, but of all man made doctrines, and therefore it must be such a thing as is found {for substance} necessary to try whatsoever doctrine may seem profitable, whether it be true or false; or else it will be but as weights and scales that serve but for some pieces of coin, but not for all; but God's Rule that he bestowed must be a perfect Rule, like unto Him that giveth it; for that his gifts are all perfect, as his way is perfect, and his works perfect. James 1:17, Psal.18:30, Deut.32:4.

This Rule must be impartial also, and not lean to this side or that, it may not be swayed to one part nor other, {which the Church may, and the whole Scriptures are often made to do by wrested and forced interpretations,} but must stand firm between God and believers, and between believers amongst themselves; for as weights and scales, and measures in cities must be the same in every like thing, and should they be various, it would breed confusion, and great loss to some, as gain to others; and therefore to continue peace, and that justice may be maintained, a just balance and just measures are provided. Deut.25:15, Prov.20:10, Rev.11:1-2. So this Golden Reed, this Measuring Rule is so straight that it sways no way at all, but leads right on without the least partiality. Prov.4:18, Prov.8:8-9.

Last of all, this Rule of Faith must be of so great Authority, as all men may be compelled to stoop, and submit to the determinations and conclusions that it makes; in all controversies this Rule must be the umpire and judge, and have the deciding voice. What the Rule saith, so it must be, and none otherwise; and what then shall this Rule

be, if not the very kernel, the subject or principal scope of the Holy Scriptures.

For howsoever the whole volume of the Bible cannot be the rule, as many have affirmed, and do still maintain; {with much difficulty, as they themselves best know, with their tedious and large volumes, and the use of all their arts, and languages, and wits, and authors have proven insufficient;} yet such honour is to be yielded to that sacred, most absolute, and revered Volume of the Holy Scriptures, that this one, short, plain, ancient, infallible, universally useful and impartial and commanding Rule is there revealed and nowhere else! II Tim.3:15-17.

It is not only that evangelical light set up in the soul of true believers, that law of the mind, Christ in us, that mind of Christ, that anointing of the Holy One, by which we know all things, Rom.7:25, Col.1:27, and what is true, and what is a lie; I John 2:20-21,27; nor yet can the Rule be known to any that are destitute of that Gospel light, for the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, I Cor.2:9-14, 1:18-21, John 3:3, and this Rule is spiritual, and only for such as are spiritual, and spiritual things are spiritually discerned; yet may even the natural man be convinced that it is the Rule; and as in other arts and sciences there are rules to be held fast, and not to be parted with; and though none but artists do truly understand the rule, yet may it be evinced to be a rule for that art or science whatsoever it be.

As for instance, there are rules in grammar, in logic, geometry, music, astronomy, in arithmetic, and so of the rest. As in grammar the parts of speech and the attendants known well, the rules of congruity and regiment, and the rest are also known

to the grammarian himself, and to none else. So in logic, invention of arguments, and disposition of them to the things argued are known to the exact Logician, and to none besides. So geometry hath its instruments known to the artist himself, and to none but him. In music, the tune must be well known, and is known to the musician, and to none besides, and so the rest. So here, albeit a Rule there is, that the believer must be, and is acquainted with; yet is it that Rule discerned, nor can be made use of by any but such as are believers, and are endued with the Spirit of God; and to hold you no longer from the discovery of this Rule, it is this.

***THE LORD JESUS CHRIST HATH ALREADY
DONE ALL THAT IS TO BE DONE, FOR ALL
TRUE BELIEVERS, TO GOD, AND DOTH ALL
GOOD, IN AND BY THEM, TO THEMSELVES
AND OTHERS.***

This Rule is but one, it is short for memory, plain for the capacity of the simplest babe in Christ. It is as ancient as the doctrine of Christ itself; it is infallible and cannot deceive; it is universally useful for the discovery of Truth in all the doctrines that shall be propounded for Gospel, as having in it all the three offices of Jesus Christ - Prophet, Priest & King. It is impartial, and cannot be wrested without violence being done to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that violence offered, cannot be hidden from such as understand it; and it is also of the greatest Authority in the world, for all power is given to Jesus Christ in heaven and in earth, Matt.28:18, and therefore all of necessity be subject unto Him, Psal.2:11-12, and be silenced by Him and his great Authority. In this Rule we see that fully verified, and expressly declared, which was spoken of the Son of God at his

Baptism, and in the Holy Mount at his Transfiguration, where we read it thus proclaimed of him, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him." Matt.3:17 & 17:5. So here is Christ's only Priesthood and Sacrifice, of which all the priests of the Law, especially the high priest and all the sacrificers were only shadows, Hebrews chapter 9 & 10, and that in these words.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST HATH DONE ALL THINGS ALREADY THAT ARE TO BE DONE FOR ALL TRUE BELIEVERS TO GOD.

This Rule being adhered to in all disputations, conferences, preachings or writings; that God is already pacified, his justice fully satisfied; all man's merit, satisfactions of God's justice, all man's performances in turning away God's wrath and indignation, fall to the ground; all heresies, and errors of that kind are fully discerned, and may be by this part of the Rule opposed, and the conscience pacified, Matt.11:28-29, and the soul find true rest; though man's repentance, humiliation, sorrow for sin be defective; and are liable to question; yet Christ's humiliation, sorrow for sin; that sin which he took upon him, II Cor.5:21, gives full rest unto every soul that is enlightened in the Infinite Power of his Blood; and the Absolute and Everlasting Perfection of the glorious, rich, royal and unspotted robe of that Righteousness of Jesus Christ, yielding full, strong, and abounding joy and delight, when it is known to be the blood of God. Acts 20:28. The death of the Prince of Life, the Lord of Glory, of God Himself, Acts 3:15, I Cor.2:8, though not of the Godhead, or God nature; the Righteousness is acknowledged, and cannot be denied to be the Righteousness of God, Rom.3:22, 10:3, by the personal union of both

Natures in Christ. John 1:14, I Tim.3:16, Heb.1:1, 2:3, Col.1:14,15-20, 2:9-10, Jer.23:6 & 33:16.

Again, in this Rule we have the Prophecy of Christ, Acts 10:43, 3:22-23, of which all the prophets were but shadows, and to which they all bear witness, from the beginning of the world; of which Moses wrote, Deut.18:15-18, and the prophets foretold with a joint consent; and this prophecy of Christ is contained in this Rule, in these words, that.

***CHRIST DOTH ALL GOOD IN US, TO
OURSELVES.***

That is, by informing us of our Reconciliation, Adoption, Election, Calling, Justification and Glorification, with all the concomitants whatsoever; for so it is written, "we shall all be taught of God." Isa.54:13, John 6:45-46, Matt.11:25-26. Now who is the Teacher, but the Lord Jesus Christ, for he it is that reveals the Father unto us. John 1:18, Matt.11:27-28. God speaketh only now by His Son, Heb.1:1-3, to the dead, John 5:25, I Pet.4:6, or to the living; for their awakening, and raising unto their new relation, and growth to all manner of perfections that the Word reveals.

This part of the Rule silences all other teachers, that bring us their own traditions, whatsoever; and not simply, purely, and only, II Cor.1:11-13, and at all times the doctrine of Jesus Christ. I John 4:2-5, II John 9-11, II Cor.2:17 & 4:1-2, II Pet.2:2. When we hear not the Voice of our Shepherd, the Voice of the Bridegroom only, John 10:3-5,27;3:29, and this stops their mouths forever that are contrary minded. Lastly, this Rule contains the Kingly Office of Jesus Christ; who not only teaches and informs us; but also dwells in us, and

unites us together, Col.1:27, John 17:21,23, and rules and leads us truly into all Truth, Rev.7:15-17, John 14:6, causing us to submit to his only sceptre, and to stoop to his only government, Isa.9:6-7, to give him the Supreme Glory of being the King of kings, and Lord of lords, I Tim.6:15, and to be above all the princes of the earth; who were all, as far as good princes, but shadows of Him, and His Government, as David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, Josiah, and the rest; and are all but His vice-regents and deputies to rule for Him, and receive all their directions from Him alone; and to be as subject to Him, as any else; and not to advance any government but His, to make no laws, but grounded upon His; nor set up any officers, but by his Divine Appointment and Direction, Isa.33:22, Rom.13:1-3, to praise the good, encourage well doers, and suppress the evil, and punish transgressors, only for Him, and in the way that He requires, and hath prescribed in His Word; and this is contained in these words of the Rule; that.

***THE LORD JESUS CHRIST DOTH ALL
GOOD IN, AND BY US, TO OURSELVES;
AND TO OTHERS.***

And this good he doth is not only by mortifying the deeds of the flesh, by the power of his Spirit, in setting our affections upon a better Object, which is Himself, Col.3:1-5, Gal.2:20, and the privileges attending Him; but also by casting forth the bright beams of His Glory, Matt.5:16, Phil.2:15-16, in love, joy, peace, virtue, knowledge, temperance, and the rest, Gal.5:22-23, II Pet.1:4-6, by which we are made to shine out before men; but also causing us so to stoop to Him, and whatsoever He commands,

we are enabled also to do it, Matt.28:20, by the only working of his Almighty Spirit. Phil.2:12-13.

In sum, this Rule discovers not only our election, adoption, vocation and justification to be free, all of grace, but also our sanctification, renovation, translation and conformity to Christ to be His own free and only work, Eph.1:3-5, Rom.3:24, II Tim.1:9, Col.1:29, and we always but as agents, acted by Him, and as instruments used in his hand alone; and subjects which he hath created for his own Glory, and doth only and always use to the same end. Col.1:18. And so you have a short epitome or summary of the Rule of Faith, or that Doctrine which is according to godliness.

**GLORY TO GOD ALONE
THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR
LORD. AMEN.**