

and pleasure, and as such, will be acquiesced in by the wise and good. The natural and first relation in which mankind stand to each other is that of fellow-creatures; but besides this, a number of other natural, political, and gracious relations have been either necessarily or graciously called into existence—such as that of parent and child, husband and wife, and the whole table of consanguinity and affinity; besides all the political relations, and those found in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Now the relation between God and christians, or the relation which the New Institution developes, is the most gracious and desirable which can be conceived of; and therefore presents to the human mind the loftiest and most comprehensive principles which can excite to moral action. As in physics, so in ethics there are principles or powers more influential than others. But christianity discovers principles of action which no political, moral or religious relations hitherto known, could originate. These new relations, and these new principles of action, are stronger than death, more triumphant than the grave, and lasting as eternity. The discovery of a new, gracious, spiritual, and eternal relation, and correspondent principles of action, moral and religious, is the basis of that association called the christian church or congregation. It is called the Reign or Kingdom of Heaven, because of the high and sublime nature of the relations, principles, duties, and privileges which it developes. All the political, commercial, and temporal relations of what nature or kind soever, which human passions, interests, partialities, or antipathies have given rise to, are weak and transient as the spider's thread compared with these. Hence the superlative glory of the New Institution. The world knows it not. It knew not the founders, and it apprehends not the institution. The light shines in darkness, but the darkness reaches it not.

These premises merely stated, not illustrated, suggest the true reason why, in the discipline of the church, so much is to be done before a member is to be severed from her embraces. In the politico-ecclesiastical relations of schismatic corporations the ties of consociation are neither very binding, nor the relations very endearing. They are not much stronger than the purse-strings of the treasurer, nor more durable than the paper on which is written the shibboleth of their Magna Charta. Members may be, and often are, separated without a pang or a sorrow. There is none of that tenderness of reproof, of correction, of admonition, of dehortation, of persuasion, known in such confederations as that which the New Institution enjoins upon the citizens of Heaven.