1. My questions focus on Article VI "Of the Old Testament" of our confession: The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the one Mediator between God and man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

2.1 The problems, I think, begin with the first sentence: "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New..." Is it really not? At first, we call the O.T. the "old" one, the N.T. the "new". Doing this, we refer to the first difference: It is undoubted that the O.T. is a document of Jewish faith. It reflects the history of God's own people Israel from the first beginnings to the post-exilic period, and it exposes this history as a history signed by God's election, his admonition, punishment and new pitying. In this extent it is a Jewish selection of religious literature, even when it is fixed in newtestamental times to delimit the Jewish faith from the Christian.

For us, on the other hand, the N.T. is the quite new one, because it treats Jesus from Nazaret, whom we confess as the only savior, a confession, what separates us from the synagogue. Jesus Christ himself emphasizes the separating new by his words "But me, I say to you...". An Paul finally radicalizes this separation believing the Jewish faith to be the failure of doing the law and the Christian faith to be the victory of forgiving grace.

So there are really existing contraries between the two testaments, and we surely still see more of them, what are making the strained relations in the harmony of Holy Scripture.

2.2 It is said that "in the Old ... Testament everlasting life is offered ... by Christ ..." I ask me (and you) where in the Old Testament Jesus Christ himself is offering. He himself is never mentioned in the O.T. But this is not even the main question.

Is really "everlasting life" offered within the O.T.? The answer must be "Yes, indeed". But This "Yes" is not an absolute one, because we must say, that only latest parts of the O.T. are more groping towards a new life after the death than they are speaking about.
The probable oldest mention can be Ps 16 (H.J.Kraus: possibly pre-exilic), if the verse 10 really treats of a resurrection or immortality and not only of a rescue from mortal danger. But this cannot be sure and is energetically denied by H.J.Kraus (see also G.v.Rad, Theology of the O.T., Vol. I; H.W.Wolff, Anthropology of the O.T.) even when Act 2,26ff. make Ps 16 a dictum probantum for the resurrection from the death.

The only incontestable mention of permanent community with God within the psalms which even death cannot loose is Ps 73,23ff: rather a late psalm (H.J.Kraus; later than Jer 12,1ff.). But here, in the late psalms, a word of Jahwe is only spoken personally to a single man and carrying man over the sill of Death, because he gave himself up to God. That means, here is no generally believed hope in an other world so that men only can trust in the living word of God and save in it for the moment of death (G.v.Rad). And only oldtestamental apocalyptic gives us a hint of a general resurrection of the Believer at first (?; Isa 26,19), and the of all men for eternal horror or for everlasting life (Dan 12,1-3).

But even this can hardly be an "offer" of eternal life, I think.

2.3 A third question: Is it really right to say, the old fathers did not only look for transitory promises? But the prophets of the O.T. - as far as I understand them - speak of hopes to be fulfilled in this world. Even Isaiah 9,1ff.; 11,1-9 (vv. 6ff.) don't speak about the time of an new heaven and a new earth. We only, confessing Jesus Christ to be the fulfilment of such words, must assert an finally fulfilment in an other world. But this cannot be said about Isaiah himself. Or do "transitory promises" mean other facts I don't see now?

2.4 Finally, the distinction of laws which concern ceremonies and rites and those which give moral commandments must be dubious for our understanding today. Within the O.T. itself cultus and ethics belong together and can't be distinguished (see only Ps 15; 24). Because oldtestamental service, when it was a right one, had to radiate to the whole life and all his behaviour (cf. the criticism of the prophets concerning the cultus of their times, for example Am 5,21ff.; Isa 1,10ff.).
3. You see my questions. You understand my own positions in these questions. And you see my problem, too. How can we think of these ancient sentences today?

We can have a historical point of view. These sentences have been formulated in the 16th century in Great Britain. And they have been said again by John Wesley in the 18th century, because they still have been an answer for the questions of his time. And therefore they must be understood in this historical context which is not ours. This point of view seems to be unsufficient for me, because it conserves these sentences as a historical document (by the reason of piety?) without seeing a real value for our believing today.

We can have a point of view informing ourselves about the topics of faith which should be newly discussed and formulated today. "Therefore the Article Of the Old Testament induces us to ... meditate, how the fundamental desires mentioned here can be newly advocated in our different times." (G.Burck) But do the confessions be only a quarry of ideas and topics when we ask for problems and answers of our days?

4. I still have an other question for myself: Did we really develop as far away from the words of this confession as I mean it?

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