

**THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF
MENNO SIMON,
TRANSLATED FROM THE
ORIGINAL DUTCH OF
HOLLAND.**

Volume One

Volume 1 Contains Renunciation of Popery, Foundation and Plain Instruction, The True Christian Faith, Concerning the New Birth, Cross of Christ, Pleasing Meditation on the Twenty-fifth Psalm, The Spiritual Resurrection, Excommunication, The Education of Children and Letters.

Volume 2 Contains Reply to Gellius Faber, A Supplication to Christians, Apology, Reply to John A'Lasco, The Triune, Eternal and True God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Christian Baptism, Reasons Why, A Confession, Reply to Zylis and Lemmekes, Replication, The Incarnation, Reply to Martin Micron, Jesus, the True Scriptural David, Letters, etc.

Volume One.

**“The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,
and his tongue talks of Judgment. The Law of
his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall
slide.” Psalm 7:30, 31.**

**“Remember those who rule over you, who
have spoken the word of God to you, whose
faith follow, considering the outcome of their
conduct.” Hebrew 13:7.**

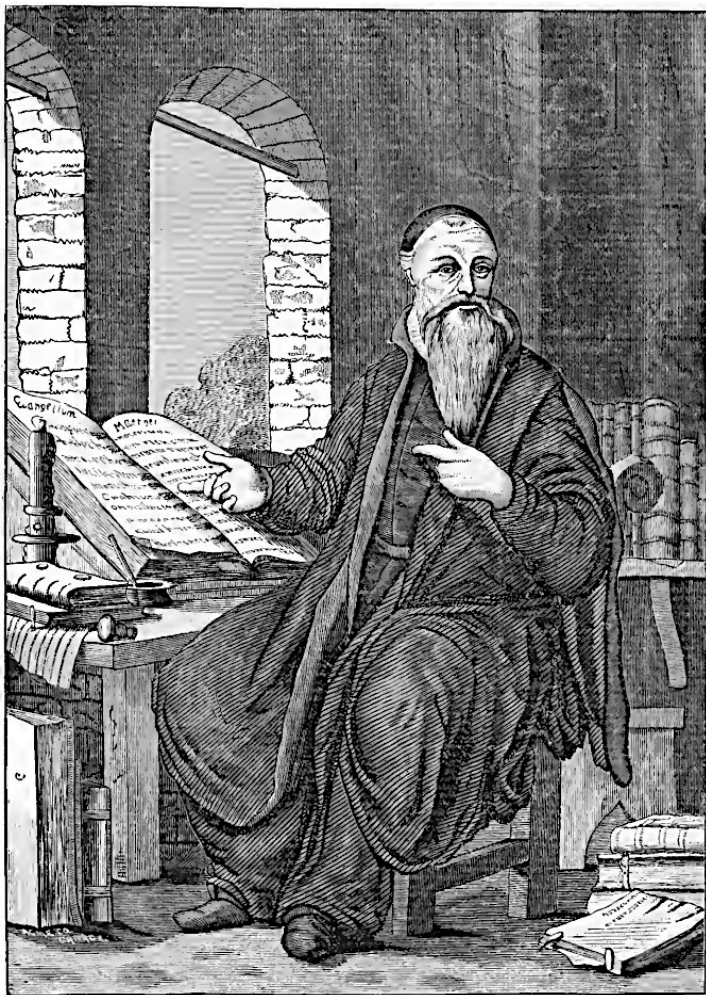
Elkhart, Indiana

**Published by John F. Funk and Brother,
1871**

**Entered according to Act of Congress,
in the year 1871, by**

JOHN F. FUNK & BROTHER,

In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.



MENNO SIMONS.

**Born in Witmarsen, in Friesland, Holland, in the year 1496,
and died in Woestevelt, formerly called Oldeslohe, on the 13th
of January 1561, in the 66th year of his age.**

The Complete Works of Menno Simon, Volume 1

Menno Simons' prominence as a leader of the Anabaptist movement came somewhat as a result of his prolificacy. Being one of the few Radical Reformers who did not suffer an early martyr's death, he had much more time to write and develop his ideas. His complete works include his *magnum opus*: The Foundation of Christian Doctrine, plus essays, devotionals, letters, and tracts. Even skimming through his work can lead to much greater appreciation and understanding of both early Anabaptism and the contemporary Mennonite tradition.

Kathleen O'Bannon

CCEL Staff

Digital Versions
Restored, Corrected and Reset
by
Bruce Armstrong
Central Highlands Congregation of God
3rd September, 2023
Revised 19 January, 2024

Published by
Central Highlands Christian Publications
PO Box 236 Creswick Vic 3363 Australia
info@chcpublications.net
chcpublications.net

Digital Edition Foreword

It is almost 500 years since Menno Simon wrote this material, and 150 years since the English translation was printed, but his work remains valuable for God's children to read and understand. From the moment Menno decided to truly walk with Christ, his life was in constant danger, and many of his fellow believers were cruelly murdered for their faith. This edition has been 'translated' into modern English, as it seems inappropriate to leave it in the archaic King James Bible style English which the 1871 translators chose and the CCEL version retained, rather than contemporary language like the Dutch used by Menno.

As Menno stressed many times, we too need to hold fast to Christ, study his Word, and follow His Instructions to the end of our days. Menno taught baptism was only for believers, our need for the indwelling of the Holy spirit, non-violence, obedience to Christ and then secular rulers, separation from the unbiblical myths and traditions of Catholicism and Protestantism and the exclusion of unrepentant sinners from their congregations. May Menno's work inspire you to deepen and strengthen your faith, especially if you find yourself threatened with the viciousness the early Mennonites faced in the coming Great Tribulation.

Bruce Armstrong

Central Highlands Congregation of God

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

The writings of a good man, when read with an unbiased mind, and with a sincere desire to be profited and instructed, are always beneficial to those who read them; for “of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks,” and “a good man, out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things.”

Such writings may be the means of doing much good among men, especially in these times of worldly conformity, in which there is such a great opposition to the cross of Christ; in which men love ease and pleasure, and who make many devices to avoid those self denying principles of the religion of Jesus, and hope to gain the crown of life in some other way than that in which he himself walked, and pointed out to all his true followers; in which mankind are so much given over to the pursuit of the perishable things of this world, to honor, wealth and power, and are so deeply sunk in sin and unrighteousness; in which error and deception are so prevalent that on every side we hear the cry, “Lo, here is Christ,” and “Lo, he is there,” so that sometimes it seems almost impossible for those who are not firmly established in the faith to maintain themselves unmoved, and remain unshaken in the midst of this “crooked and perverse generation.”

We believe that these works of the zealous and pious Menno, in which he protests so powerfully against the prevailing corruptions of the times, both in the church and in the ordinary walks of life; in high and in low places, or wherever found, and advocates with such uncompromising firmness and devotion, the imperative necessity of a true and sincere change of heart through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, a new life, a pious and holy walk, which delights in good works, follows the footsteps of Jesus in love, humility, and meekness; is a light in the world, and labors for the glory of God and the salvation of all men, are well adapted to promote vital, Christian piety, to strengthen and confirm the faith of believers, to encourage and cheer the weary pilgrim on his journey Zionward; to instruct and teach us clearer views of duty; to set before us the true character of the truly penitent child of God, what he must do and how he must live to become an heir of the kingdom above; to show what the church, and what all believers should be; to warn the impenitent; to expose erroneous views; to teach sinners the way of life, and admonish them to turn from their evil ways, to flee from the wrath to come, and seek the Lord while he may be found; and thus believing, we have felt that these writings should be placed before the public in English, so that all who understand this language may have the opportunity to read and examine them for themselves.

These works were originally written in the Dutch language, only a portion of which have been previously translated into the English and German languages. Hence the greater portion of the book will be entirely new to most of the readers of the present day. And inasmuch as the church, bearing the name of Menno, has now so extended itself that it has become a body of considerable importance, and many of the members are much better versed in the English language than in the German, it is meet that the complete works should be published in the English

language, so that those professing the same faith with Menno, may enjoy the benefit of his labors even at this distant day.

For the foregoing reasons we have undertaken the arduous and laborious task of translating from the original Holland or Dutch language the entire work, including all his writings, as far as known, with the exception of such of them as he himself rejects and of which he makes mention in his article on the Ban or Excommunication.

In the translation, we have followed the edition of his works, published in the Dutch language by John Van Veen, in Amsterdam, in Holland, in 1681.

The first part of the writings of Menno Simon, with the exception of the "Account of the severe persecutions of Menno Simon," &c., and several letters in the latter part of the volume, were formerly translated into the German language and published in several editions; and from the German translation, they were again translated into the English language, by I. Daniel Rupp, and published by Elijah Barr & Co., in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1863. This translation has been followed in part in the present work, though the whole of it was diligently compared with the original Dutch language, revised and corrected.

The work has required a great deal of time, care, labor and expense. The original work being written in very old style language, on which account many passages were difficult to be understood, but the translators have worked faithfully, and by comparing such passages with different editions of the work, and using such other means as they could command, we feel assured that we can offer to our readers a reasonably correct translation of the works of Menno.

We have found a few places where neither the English nor the German editions formerly published were entirely correct, and this will account for some differences which the reader may

observe by comparing the different translations, and there may still, possibly, be some passages which could be greatly improved, but without boasting of anything that we have, humbly, in the fear of the Lord, sought to accomplish, we believe that as the result of our labor, we are enabled to present to the reader, a book which gives a very correct expression of the writings of Menno in the English language.

And if by the publication of this work we may be instrumental in doing good to the souls of others; if thereby the cause of Christ shall be advanced and the faith of believers confirmed; if thereby a single soul may be saved, and God glorified, then we shall feel that our labor has not been in vain.

May God bless the work; may it be the means of doing much good; yes, through it, may many souls be converted, and brought from the darkness of sin and error to the glorious light of the Gospel of Truth. May God be glorified and honored and mankind humbled and brought to Jesus. This is the prayer and sincere desire of your humble servants,

The Publishers

**THE CONVERSION of MENNO
SIMON,
AND HIS RENUNCIATION OF THE
CHURCH OF ROME,**

WHEREIN IS BRIEFLY AND PLAINLY NARRATED HOW,
AND FOR WHAT CAUSE, HE RENOUNCED POPERY;
ALSO, HIS SUBSEQUENT CALLING TO THE PREACHING
OF THE GOSPEL.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF,
AND ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE DUTCH
LANGUAGE

A.D. 1554.

TO THE READER.

BELOVED READER, We are falsely accused, by our opponents, of following the teachings of Munster, concerning the king, the sword, rebellion, retaliation, polygamy and other abominations. But my kind readers, know that I have never in my life accepted any of the foregoing doctrines; but on the contrary, I have opposed them for more than seventeen years, and to the best of my abilities, have warned all mankind against this abominable error. I have also, through the word of God, led some on the right way. Never in my life have I seen Munster, nor have I been in the communion of that sect. I also hope, through God's grace, neither to eat nor drink with such (if such there are), as the

scripture teaches me; unless they confess their error with all their heart, bring forth fruits appropriate for repentance, and follow the Gospel in the right manner.

MENNO SIMON.

MENNO SIMON'S RENUNCIATION OF THE CHURCH OF ROME.

MY READER,

I write to you the truth in Christ, and do not lie. In the year 1524, being then in my twenty-eighth year, I undertook the duties of a priest in my father's village, called Pingjum, in Friesland. Two other persons of about my age also officiated in the same station. The one was my pastor, and was well learned in part; the other succeeded me; both had read the scriptures partially; but I had not touched them during my life, for I feared if I should read them, they would mislead me. Behold! Such a stupid preacher was I, for nearly two years.

In the first year thereafter a thought occurred to me, as often as I handled the bread and wine in the mass that they were not the flesh and blood of the Lord. I thought that it was the suggestion of the devil, that he might lead me off from my faith. I confessed it, and often sighed and prayed, yet I could not be freed from this thought.

Those two aforementioned young men and myself spent our time daily in playing, drinking, and all manner of frivolous diversions, alas! as it is the fashion and way of such useless people; and when we were to treat a little of scripture, I could not speak a word with them without being scoffed at; for I did not know what I asserted. Thus was the word of God concealed to my understanding.

At length I resolved that I would examine the New Testament attentively. I had not proceeded far in it, ere I discovered that we were deceived. My conscience, which was troubled on account of the sacramental bread, aforementioned, was soon greatly relieved, without any human aid or advice; though I was encouraged by Luther in the belief that human authority cannot bind to eternal death.

Through the illumination and grace of the Lord, I continued daily to examine the scriptures, and was soon considered by some, though undeservedly, as being an evangelical preacher. Every one sought my company, the world loved me and had my affections, yet it was said that I preached the word of God, and was a fine man.

Afterwards it happened, before I had ever heard of the existence of brethren, that a God-fearing, pious man, named Sicke Snyder, was beheaded at Leeuwarden, for being rebaptized. It sounded strange to me, to hear a second baptism spoken of. I examined the scriptures assiduously and meditated on them earnestly, but could find nothing in them concerning infant baptism. After I had discovered this, I conversed with my pastor on the subject; and after much discussion, he had to admit that there was no scriptural foundation for infant baptism. Notwithstanding all this, I dared not trust my own understanding, but consulted several ancient authors. They taught me that children were to be washed by baptism from their original sin. I

compared this doctrine with the scriptures and found that it made baptism take the place of the blood of Christ.

Afterwards, desiring to know the grounds for infant baptism, I went and consulted Luther. He taught me that children were to be baptized on account of their own faith. I perceived that this also was not in accordance with the word of God.

Next I consulted Bucer. He taught that infants were to be baptized, that their baptism would cause those who had their training, to be more careful in bringing them up in the way of the Lord. I perceived that this doctrine, too, was without foundation.

I then consulted Bullinger. He directed me to the covenant and circumcision. This I found incapable of being substantiated by scripture.

Having thus observed that authors varied greatly among themselves, each following his own opinion, I became convinced that we were deceived in relation to infant baptism.

Shortly after, I went to the village in which I was born, called Witmarsum. Covetousness and a desire to obtain a great name, were the inducements which led me to that place. There I spoke much concerning the word of the Lord, without spirituality or love, as all hypocrites do, and by this means I made disciples of my own stamp, such as vain boasters and light-minded babblers, who, alas! like myself, cared but little about these matters. Although I had now acquired considerable knowledge of the scriptures, yet I wasted that knowledge through the lusts of my youth in an impure, sensual, unprofitable life, without any fruit, and sought nothing but gain, ease, favor of men, splendor, reputation and honor, as all generally do who embark in the same ship.

Thus, my reader, I obtained a knowledge of baptism and the Lord's supper through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, through

much reading of the scriptures, and meditating upon them, and through the gracious favor and gift of God, but not by means of the service of misleading sects, as it is reported of me: I hope that I write the truth and do not seek vain glory; though some, doubtless, may have contributed to my assistance in the pursuit of truth, yet will I, for this, render thanks to the Lord forever.

Meanwhile it happened, when I had resided there about a year, that quite a number broke in upon baptism; but whence the first beginners came, or where they resided, or who they properly were, is to this hour unknown to me, neither have I ever seen them.

Afterwards the sect of Munster made inroads, by whom many pious hearts in our quarter were led into error. My soul was much troubled, for I perceived that though they were zealous, they erred in doctrine. I exerted my feeble efforts, as far as I was able, in opposing them by preaching and exhortations. I conferred twice with one of their leaders, once in private, and again in public; but my admonitions availed nothing, because I did that myself which I well knew was not right.

The report spread far abroad that I could readily silence these persons. All looked to me. I saw that I was the leader and defender of the impenitent, who all depended upon me. This pained my heart; I sighed and prayed, Lord help me, lest I make myself a partaker of other men's sins. My soul was troubled and I reflected upon the result of my doings, namely that if I should gain the whole world, and live a thousand years, and at last have to endure the wrath of God, what would I have gained?

Afterwards, the poor straying flock, who wandered as sheep without a shepherd, after many severe edicts and slaughters, assembled near my place of residence, called Oude Klooster, and, alas! Through the ungodly doctrines of Munster, and in opposition to the Spirit, the word and the example of Christ, drew

the sword to defend themselves, which the Lord commanded Peter to put up in the sheath.

After this had transpired, the blood of the slain, although it was shed in error, grieved me so sorely that I could not endure it. I could find no rest in my soul. I reflected upon my carnal, sinful life, my hypocritical doctrine and idolatry, in which I continued daily under the appearance of godliness. I saw that these zealous children willingly gave their lives and their estates, though they were in error, for their doctrine and faith. And I was one of those who had discovered some of their abominations, and yet I myself remained satisfied with my unrestrained life and known defilements. I wished only to live comfortably and without the cross of Christ.

Thus reflecting upon these things my soul was so grieved that I could no longer endure it. I thought to myself, I, a miserable man, what shall I do? If I continue in this way, and do not live agreeably to the word of the Lord, according to the knowledge of the truth which I have obtained; if I do not rebuke to the best of my limited ability the hypocrisy, the impenitent, carnal life, the perverted baptism, the Lord's supper and the false worship of God, which the learned teach; if I, through bodily fear, do not show them the true foundation of the truth, neither use all my powers to direct the wandering flock, who would gladly do their duty if they knew it, to the true pastures of Christ—Oh, how shall their shed blood, though shed in error, rise against me at the judgment of the Almighty, and pronounce sentence against my poor, miserable soul.

My heart trembled in my body. I prayed to God with sighs and tears that he would give to me, a troubled sinner, the gift of his grace, and create a clean heart within me; that through the merits of the crimson blood of Christ, He would graciously forgive my unclean walk and unprofitable life, and bestow upon me, wisdom, Spirit, candor and fortitude, that I might preach his

exalted and adorable name and holy word unperverted, and make manifest his truth to his praise.

I began in the name of the Lord to preach publicly, from the pulpit, the word of true repentance; to direct the people into the narrow path, and through the power of the scripture to reprove all sin and ungodliness, all idolatry and false worship, and to present the true worship, also baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the doctrine of Christ, to the extent that I had at that time received grace from God.

I also faithfully warned every one in relation to the abominations of Munster, concerning *kings, polygamy, dominion, the sword, &c.*, until after the expiration of about nine months, when the gracious Lord granted me his fatherly Spirit, aid and power; then I voluntarily renounced all my worldly honor and reputation, my unchristian conduct, masses, infant baptism, and my unprofitable life, and at once willingly submitted to distress and poverty, and the cross of Christ. In my weakness I feared God; I sought out the pious, and though they were few in number, I found some who were zealous and maintained the truth. I conversed with the erring, and through the aid and power of God, with his word, reclaimed some from the snares of damnation, and gained them to Christ, while the hardened and rebellious, I commended to the Lord. Behold, thus, my reader, the God of mercy, through the benign influence of his abounding grace, exerted upon me, in my heart, a miserable sinner, produced in me a new mind, humbled me in his fear, taught me to know myself in part, turned me from the way of death, and graciously called me into the narrow path of life, to the communion of his saints. To him be praise forever more, Amen.

About one year thereafter, while I was secretly exercising myself in the word of God by reading and writing, it happened that six, seven or eight persons came to me, who were of one heart and one soul with myself, in their faith and life, and as far

as man can judge, were unblameable, and according to the testimony of the scriptures, separated from the world and subdued to the cross. They sincerely abhorred not only the sect of Munster, but the anathemas and abominations of all other worldly sects. For the sake of those pious souls who were of the same mind and spirit both with them and with me, they with much solicitude kindly requested me, to reflect on the great sufferings and necessity of the poor, oppressed souls (for the hunger was very great and the faithful stewards were very few), and apply to advantage the talents which I had unmeritedly received from the Lord.

When I heard this my heart was greatly troubled. Trouble and fear were on every side; for on the one hand I was sensible of my limited talents, my great ignorance, my weak nature, the timidity of my flesh, the unbounded wickedness, perversity and tyranny of the world, the powerful sects, the subtlety of different minds, and the heavy cross that would oppress me, should I comply with their solicitations, and on the other hand, the miserable, starving condition and necessity of these God-fearing, pious children, for I saw plainly that they erred as innocent sheep which have no shepherd.

At last, after much prayer, I placed myself and these circumstances before the Lord and his church, in order that we might pray earnestly to the Lord for a season; should it accord with his acceptable and holy will that I could or might labor to his praise, that he would give me such a mind and heart as would enable me to say with Paul, "Woe is me, if I do not preach the Gospel," and if not, that he might provide a way to prohibit the same, for Christ says, "That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. 18:19, 20.

Thus, my reader, behold, I was not called to serve among the followers of Munster, nor of any other seditious sect (as it is falsely reported concerning me), but I have been called, unworthily, to this office by a people who were ready to receive Christ and his word, led a penitent life in the fear of God, served their neighbors in love, bore the cross, sought the welfare and salvation of all men, loved righteousness and truth, and abhorred wickedness and unrighteousness, which shows pointedly that they were not such perverted persons as they are slanderously reported to have been. But they were true Christians, though unknown to the world, if in anywise we believe that Christ's word is true, and his unblameable, holy life and example infallible.

Thus have I, a miserable sinner, been enlightened by the Lord, converted to a new mind, fled from Babel, entered into Jerusalem, and finally, though unworthily, called to this high and arduous service.

When the persons before mentioned did not desist from their supplications, and my own conscience in some degree made me uneasy (although in weakness), because I saw the great hunger and need, already referred to, I surrendered myself, soul and body, to the Lord and committed myself to his grace, and commenced in due time, according to the contents of his holy word, to teach, and to baptize, to labor in the vineyard of the Lord with my limited talents, to build up his holy city and temple, and to repair the dilapidated walls. The great and mighty God has made known and revealed the word of true repentance, the word of his grace and power, together with the salutary use of his holy sacraments, through our humble service, doctrine and unlearned writings, together with the careful service, labor and help of our faithful brethren, in many towns and countries, to such an extent, and made the condition of his churches so glorious and bestowed upon them such a subduing power that many exalted and proud hearts not only became humble; the unclean, pure; the drunken,

sober; the avaricious, benevolent; the ferocious, mild, and the ungodly, pious; but they also faithfully yielded their possessions and blood, bodies and lives, for the blessed testimony they had, as may yet daily be seen. These are not the fruits and evidences of false doctrines, in which God is not a coworker. Neither could they endure so long under such grievous misery and oppressive crosses, were it not the power and word of the Almighty which sustains them. Yes, more, the Lord endued them with such grace and wisdom, as Christ has promised to all his children in their trials, so that all the worldly-wise and renowned teachers, together with the blood-guilty, daring tyrants, who, O, God, boast that they are Christians, were vanquished and abashed by these invincible champions and pious witnesses of Christ. Those ferocious persons knew of no other weapons or refuge to which to resort than those of banishing, seizing, punishing, burning, murdering, and destroying, even as has always been the custom of the old serpent, from the beginning, and as may yet, alas! be daily witnessed in many places of our Netherlands.

Behold this is our calling, our doctrine and fruits of our labor; on account of which we are so grievously slandered, and so malevolently persecuted; whether or not all the prophets, apostles, and faithful servants of God, have endured similar sufferings on account of their faithfulness, we willingly leave all the pious to judge.

But as much as regards my poor, weak and imperfect life, I freely confess that I am a poor, wretched sinner, conceived in sin, of sinful seed, and sinfully brought forth. I can say with David that my sins are ever before me. My thoughts, words and actions convince me. I see with holy Paul, "That in me (that it is in my flesh), dwells no good thing," Rom. 7:18. Nevertheless, I must be allowed to boast this much in my weakness, if this wicked, desolate world would hear our doctrine (not ours, but the doctrine of Christ), with patience, and, in the true fear of God follow it

submissively, this would undoubtedly, be a more Christian-like and better world than, alas, it now is.

I thank God, who has made me willing with holy Paul, to hate the evil and follow the good; and willingly would I with my own blood, reclaim this wicked world from ungodly and evil works, and gain it to Christ. Through the grace of God, it is my desire to fear the Lord with all my heart; to love, seek and serve him, to do right before him, and be an unblameable pious Christian.

I hope through the mercy and assistance of the Lord that no one upon earth may have reason to accuse me of leading an avaricious and luxurious life. Money and affluence, I have not; neither do I desire them, although alas, some from a perverted heart, say that I eat more roasted than they do seethed; and drink more wine than they do beer. My Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, was also called a winebibber and a glutton. I trust that through the grace of the Lord, I am innocent in this matter, and stand acquitted before God.

He who, purchased me with the blood of his love, and called me, who am unworthy, to his service, knows me, and knows that I seek not wealth, nor possessions, nor luxury, nor ease, but only the praise of the Lord, my salvation, and the salvation of many souls. For this I, my poor, feeble wife and children have for eighteen years endured extreme anxiety, oppression, affliction, misery and persecution, and at the peril of my life, have been compelled everywhere to live in fear and seclusion; yes, when ministers repose on easy beds and downy pillows, we generally have to hide ourselves in secluded corners; when they at weddings and feasts, pipe and beat the tambour, and vaunt loudly, we must look out, when the dogs bark, lest the captors be at hand. Whilst they are saluted as doctors, lords and teachers by every one, we have to hear that we are anabaptists, hedge preachers, deceivers and heretics, and must be saluted in the name of the

devil. In short, whilst they are gloriously rewarded for their services with large incomes and easy times, our recompense and portion must be fire, sword and death.

Behold, my faithful readers, in such fear, poverty, misery and danger of death, have I, wretched man, performed to this hour, without change, the service of the Lord, and I hope through his grace to continue in it to his glory, as long as I remain in this earthly tabernacle. What I and my faithful coworkers have sought or could have sought in performing these our arduous and dangerous duties, is apparent to all the well-disposed, who may readily judge from the works and their fruits.

I will here humbly entreat the reader for Jesus' sake, to accept in love, this my confession in relation to my illumination, conversion and calling, and to meditate on them. I have made it out of urgent necessity, for the information of the pious reader, because I was slandered by the clergy, and am accused, without foundation of truth, of being called and ordained to this service by a seditious and heretical sect. He that fears God, let him read and judge.

MENNO SIMON.

AN ACCOUNT of the SEVERE PERSECUTIONS of MENNO SIMON, AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE WHERE HE LAST PREACHED THE GOSPEL, DIED AND WAS BURIED.

“All that will live godly in Christ Jesus,” says Paul, “shall suffer persecution,” 2 Tim. 3:12. These words, although often confirmed, through the inconsiderate wickedness of this world, we find particularly confirmed in the example of our author Menno Simon. For, after he had been persecuted in many ways and sought for by his opponents, they, in order that their design might be accomplished with certainty, issued a decree in which it was stated that whosoever should shelter, or in any manner conceal Menno Simon or any of his followers, should suffer death; which decree was enforced in the year A.D. 1539 in the case of Tjaert Reyndertz,* a peasant living near Harlingen (prov. Friesland, Neth.), who, because he secretly harbored Menno Simon in his house, in his great danger and distress, was a few days after, taken to Leenwarden (in the same province), and as an ungodly criminal put on the wheel, though even his enemies acknowledged that he was a pious man.

Besides this, another decree was issued in the year A.D. 1543, throughout West Friesland, by which a general pardon, the favor of the Emperor, freedom of the country, and besides, one hundred Carl guilders† was promised to any criminal, even a murderer, who would deliver Menno into the hands of the

* See Martyr’s Mirror, English edition, published by D. Miller, Lampeter Square. Pa., 1837, Page 382.

† [CHCoG: More than 6000 USD in 2023, if this was a standard guilder.]

executioner; and, in order that their purpose might be more readily accomplished, his name, person, clothing and stature were described, and this description posted upon the church-doors; so that he could not even find a butt of straw where he could quietly rest with his wife and little children, for any length of time. Menno himself relates that in 1546, at a certain place, where they yet boasted of being evangelical Christians, four dwellings were, at once, confiscated, because the owner had rented one of them for a short time to his sick wife and little children, though the neighbors were not aware of it. This severe persecution compelled Menno to remove to a place situated between Hamburg and Lubeck, six and a half or seven miles from Hamburg, three miles from Lubeck, and nearly a mile from Oldesio, which formerly was a large forest of oaks, but which is now an open field, generally called Woeste Veldt, belonging to the nobleman and estate of Van Yriesenburg; which nobleman was at that time a very cruel person, on which account he was generally shunned and feared. But having spent much of his youth in the Netherlands, and having often witnessed the death of martyrs, he was very compassionate towards them, being conversant with their doctrines. He clandestinely gave them liberty to dwell there, and assiduously and faithfully assisted them; although he was requested by the king's order not to permit them to live there; therefore he announced to them, through one of his servants that they should leave before sundown, at the risk of punishment; yet he sent a faithful servant after the first, to tell them the cause of this announcement, and to inform them that the men should either absent or conceal themselves for a week or two. In the mean while he succeeded in quieting this excitement, through one of the courtiers. After this the exiles came hither from every aide, until there was quite a little community there, who lived in comparative quiet. Each family had to pay one dollar a year for this protection, and were taxed no further: This may well be considered a special dispensation of God's

providence that the exiles were fostered and protected by a very cruel person, who was feared by all around him. For which reason Menno considered it expedient, as it was said, to remove to that place.

Menno Simon died about thirty years after he left the church of Rome. During this time he taught and proclaimed the gospel, purified of Roman idolatry and superstition. His last exhortation was given on his deathbed, while the hand of death seemed already to rest upon him, showing his unquenchable zeal. He, however, partially recovered and was better for several days, but on the day of the anniversary of his renunciation of popery, he suddenly became worse, though well taken care of, and the next day, being Friday the 13th of January, 1561, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and was buried in his own garden, which according to Hoornebeck, was also customary with the primitive Christians under the persecutions of the pagans.

NOTE 1. Although the “*Martyrs’ Mirror*,” page 59, and T. J. van Braght in his “*Bloody Theatre*” and others, write that Menno Simon died on the 13th of January 1559, yet we are led to think that he died in 1561, for the following reasons:

The old biography of Menno Simon mentions 1561 as the year of his death, which statement we deem correct; also on the 23rd of January 1559, he wrote a tract (see his *Reply to Zylis and Lemmekes* in this book), and sent it to the German teachers, Zylis and Lemmekes. Now, if he died on the 13th of January 1559, he must have written this ten days after his death.

NOTE 2. The reader should know that although some old biographies mention 1505 as the year of his birth, yet we will

take 1496; for, the “*Martyrs’ Mirror*,” “*The Bloody Theatre*,” “*The Decline of Tyrants*” and “*Annals*,” all mention that he died in his sixty-sixth year. If Menno, then, died in 1561, he necessarily was born in 1496, or else he died in the fifty-sixth year of his age.



A
FOUNDATION
and
Plain Instruction
of the
Saving Doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ
BRIEFLY COMPILED FROM THE WORD OF GOD.
TOGETHER WITH OTHER INSTRUCTIVE
TREATISES.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid,
which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11.

TO THE READER.

PIOUS, BELOVED READER, Since I perceive that our work, called “THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE”, which I published a few years ago, has been, through the grace of God, to whom be eternal praise and thanks, productive of much good to some; and God’s holy word which was obscured for such a long time, has been again a little explained, through our limited talents, and as many well disposed children requested and entreated me, diligently to revise and correct such parts as were obscured through the negligence of the printer, and which deprived the reader of the sense, I was prevailed on, and did so. In some places I made additions;

explained the obscure parts, corrected those that were defective, and omitted redundancies; the style and language I improved, in order to be better suited to aid the kind reader, and to make known and acceptable to many, the despised truth.

Not, my reader, that I changed the original doctrines and contents; by no means! I have not changed, but as appears to me, improved its form, and given it more force and distinctness. Those who fear God may judge. The former, as well as this, is God's word; and all that the first teaches, this teaches also. May the Almighty, Merciful Father grant that through his grace our little work, so lightly esteemed, may produce much fruit in many thousands. Amen.

MENNO SIMON.

PREFACE.

NOTE. — The following Preface shows to whom this book is addressed, and was written at the time when the errors of Munster yet prevailed.

To those in authority and all others, of whatever condition, class or calling they be, Menno Simon wishes the illumination of the Spirit, and the pure knowledge of the kingdom of God, from our heavenly Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has loved us and washed us from our sins with his blood. To him be praise, honor, glory, and thanksgiving forever, Amen.

Dear Sirs, Friends and Brethren, since we learn from the scriptures, and from experience find that the prediction of the prophets, Christ and of the apostles, concerning the terrible oppression, misery, want, persecution, danger, anxiety, and false doctrine in these latter times is being accomplished to its full measure, Matt. 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3; 2 Pet. 2; Jude 1, and this so powerfully that unless the merciful Father graciously shortens these days no flesh will be saved.

Therefore, we poor miserable men entreat and admonish every one, and that through the mercy of the Lord, for once candidly to read our doctrine and faith, lay it well to heart and understand it correctly, that you might know what kind of doctrine we inculcate, what kind of faith we maintain, what kind of life we lead, and how we are disposed, on account of which we have to hear and suffer so much, endure imprisonment, exile, be robbed, derided, defamed and slain as poor, innocent sheep. In order that you may sincerely lament and weep over your former bloody deeds, before God, and with greater circumspection guard and preserve yourselves from such things, and henceforth be found a more pious, sincere, yes, a more God-fearing magistracy, Exo. 18:23; Deu. 1:17; not afflicters and destroyers, but fathers and guardians of all miserable and wretched; not exterminators, but defenders of righteousness; not persecutors but followers of Christ and his word. Therefore, anoint your eyes with eye-salve that you may see and understand which is the right way, the truth and the life; the way which is so strait and narrow and found by so few; the truth which is known to none, except those who are taught by the Spirit of the Lord, illuminated and drawn by the Father; the life which is to know God the Father as the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he sent; that you may see him whom you fiercely pierced, and that you may with holy Paul, with your whole hearts, humble yourselves before the Lord with much

fasting and weeping; clothe yourselves in sackcloth; rend your hearts and not your garments, that you may find grace in his sight. For he is long-suffering, gracious and merciful, and pardons the iniquity of all who sincerely repent and seek his grace. Be no longer like Jeroboam, Ahab and Manasseh, but like David, Hezekiah and Josiah; that you need not on account of the office entrusted to you stand confounded in the great and dreadful day of the Lord, in that day which shall burn as an oven; and all who have dealt unrighteously and used violence upon the earth shall be burnt up as dry straw and stubble, Mal. 4.

Therefore, we most humbly entreat you, for the sake of the merits of Christ, that you would thoroughly ponder and reflect upon our faith, doctrine and undertaking; and not esteem us to be worse than you do thieves and murderers, whom you do not condemn without having certain knowledge of their case. Our doings are not thievish, nor have we to do with perishable possessions, but with God and his word, our bodies and souls, everlasting life or eternal death. Therefore do not look upon the usages and customs of the fathers, nor upon the worldly wise and the learned, for it is deeply hidden from their eyes. They were always those who, from the beginning, thrust from them the wisdom of God through their own wisdom and have trampled it under foot; for the wisdom of God, which we teach, is that wisdom which none may understand, except those who are desirous of living and walking according to the will of God; it is that wisdom which is not to be brought from afar nor taught in colleges. It must come from above and be learned through the Holy Spirit; as Paul says, Rom. 10:69. "Do not say in your heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (That is, to bring Christ down from above). Or, who shall descend into the deeps (That is, to bring up Christ again from the dead). But, what does it say? The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart; that is the word of faith which we preach; that if you shall confess with

your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.” Therefore, look to God’s word, to the testimony and example of the holy prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. Let these be your doctors and teachers, and not the ambitious, mercenary preachers of this world; then you will soon perceive whether we are within or without the truth. May the almighty and eternal God give you such hearts and minds. To him be honor, praise and gratitude, dominion, power and majesty forever, Amen.

Seeing then, beloved, that satan can transform himself into an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11, and thus sow tares among the Lord’s wheat, such as the sword, polygamy, secular kingdom, and kings and other like errors on account of which the innocent have to suffer much; hence we are prompted to publish this our faith and doctrine; and we desire for Jesus’ sake that we might obtain so much grace that they would not treat and judge us except according to the word of God, as is reasonable and just. But should we not obtain so much grace, we have to commend it to the Lord, who is the only helper of every one in need. We will, nevertheless, through the grace of God, abide in the word of the Lord; and comfort ourselves with the scriptures, which say, “Thus says Jehovah that created you, O, Jacob, and he that formed you, O, Israel, do not fear; for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you; when you walk through the fire, you shall not be scorched; neither shall the flame burn upon you; for I am Jehovah your God, the Holy one of Israel, your Saviour,” Isa. 43:1, 3. Again: “Do not fear the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings; for the moth shall eat them up like a garment and the worm shall eat them like wool.” “I, even I, am he that comforts you: who are you that you should be afraid of a man that shall

die, and the son of man which shall be made as grass.” Isa. 51:7, 8 and 12. Christ also says: “Do not fear them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven,” Matt. 10:28, 32, 33. “With the heart,” says Paul, “man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,” Rom. 10:10.

Since then the scriptures urge us so much, both to believe and to confess, and so kindly comfort us against the raging and raving of men, therefore, we also desire to abide by the same until death. And hereby testify before you in Christ Jesus that we neither have nor know any other foundation, faith or doctrine, than that which may be plainly read, heard, and understood in the following, from the word of God, Amen.

MENNO SIMON.

THE DAY OF GRACE.

In the first place, we teach what Jesus, the teacher from heaven, the Oracle and Word of the Most High God himself taught, John 3:2, that now is the time of grace, a time to awaken from the sleep of our abominable sins, Rom. 13:11, and obtain an upright, converted, renewed, contrite and penitent heart, and sincerely lament before God, our past profligate and dissolute course of life, and in the fear of God, to crucify and put to death our depraved, sinful flesh, temper and nature, and arise with

Christ into a new, righteous, and penitent life and conduct, Eph. 4:22; Gal. 5:24. Even as Christ says, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent and believe the Gospel," Mark 1:15.

The time is fulfilled, and the promised day of grace approaches; the time for the appearing of the promised seed; the time of redemption, the time of that offering by which all things were to be reconciled in heaven and upon earth, Gen. 3:15; Col. 1:19; the time for the consummation of all the literal and figurative transactions into a new, spiritual life and an abiding truth; the time for which the fathers, Jacob, Moses, Isaiah, David, Daniel, &c., with all the patriarchs and prophets hoped, and which they desired with many tears, and through faith saw from afar, and drew comfort and hope from there, Heb. 11:23; yes, it was to them such a great and pleasing consolation that good old Simeon desired to no longer live, when he beheld the time and saw the Redeemer. He said, "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation; which you have prepared before the face of all people," Luke 2:29-31.

The time is fulfilled, the predictions of the prophets and promises of the fathers appear in their full power; the sworn oath is accomplished; Israel has received its King David, its Prince and Chief, who has arisen as a mighty one to prepare his way, Psm. 2:7; Isa. 9:5; Jer. 30:9; his going forth is from the heavens; the Anointed, who was the desire of all nations, has come, girded about his loins with the sword of the Spirit and valiant for battle, Mic. 5; Hag. 2; Isa. 24.

He has declared the gospel of the kingdom, the word of his Father; he taught and left unto his followers an example of pure love, and an unblemished life, Matt. 4:17; Jn. 7:14, 15; conquered the mighty, destroyed the power of the devil, bore our sins, abolished death, reconciled the Father, acquired for all the chosen

children of God, grace, favor, mercy, eternal life, dominion and peace, Heb. 2; 1 Pet. 2; 1 Cor. 15, and has been ordained by his Eternal and Almighty Father as an omnipotent King over the holy Mount Zion, as the head of the Church, a Provider and Dispenser of heavenly blessings; yes, an Almighty Ruler over all in heaven and on earth, Isa. 2; Eph. 2; and this is what Christ here declares, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand," Mark 1:15.

Out of compassion and a sincere heart, I exhort you with the apostle Paul that you take heed to this day of grace, and be obedient to the word of God, which says, "I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored you; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation," and with Paul let us "give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults (understand this in relation to things which befall us), in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor, and dishonor; by evil report, and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things," 2 Cor. 6:2-10. Oh, my beloved Sirs, Friends and Brethren, my mouth is open unto you, and my heart is enlarged towards you; for your sakes I am much grieved that you are so careless, and do not observe the people by whom these plain and intelligible scriptures were written; that you so entirely despise the word of the Lord, and allow this precious time of grace, which God gives us all for improvement, to pass away so

shamefully, and regard nothing more than to live with the whole heart, according to the impure and wicked lusts of your flesh, bowing the knees before dumb idols. Alas! it is time to awake! Remember that the angel has sworn, Rev. 10:6, by the eternal and living God, who created heaven and earth, that after this time, there shall be time no longer. From the scriptures we cannot otherwise conclude, but that this is the last watch of the year, the last proclamation of the holy gospel, the last invitation to the marriage of the Lamb, which is to be celebrated, promulgated and sanctified before the great and terrible day of the Lord. Hereby we may learn and determine that the summer will pass away and the winter approach. Those, who, like the foolish virgins, neglect to prepare their lamps, will come too late, knock in vain and be excluded, Matt. 25:11. Therefore do not comfort one another with idle comfort and vain hope, as some do who think that the word should be taught and observed whilst they reject the cross. I mean those who know the word of the Lord, but do not live according to it. Oh, no! it is the word of the cross and will, in my opinion, remain so to the last, for it must be sustained with much suffering, and sealed with blood. The Lamb is slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. 13:8; yes, he did not only suffer in his body, but also through the cross and death entered into that glory, which he, for a time, had left for our sakes, Luke 24:26; Jn. 11:25. If Christ then had to suffer such torture, anguish, misery and pain, how shall his servants, children and members expect peace and freedom from suffering while in the flesh? “If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?” Matt. 10:25. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus,” says Paul, “shall suffer persecution,” 2 Tim. 3:12.

Christ also says, “You shall be hated by all men for my name’s sake,” Matt. 10:22.

Therefore banish the pernicious thought that you may hope for another time, from your hearts, and be not deceived by your vain hopes, for I have known some who waited for a more convenient season, but did not live to realize their hopes. Had the apostles and fathers thus waited, the gospel of the kingdom would not at this day have been preached, and the word of the Lord would have remained unknown.

Alas! Were you christians and the people of God as you boast yourselves to be, you should be able to say with Paul, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” Rom. 8:35. For then the flesh, the devil, sin, hell and death would all be subdued; there would then be no desire to remain long in this depraved, wicked, sanguinary world; neither would you then boast of anything save the cross of Christ, Gal. 6:16, and like Paul, with the whole heart desire to be delivered from this body and dwell with Christ, Phil. 1:23.

I sincerely desire that you may awake, and not hope nor wait for a more acceptable time. If, however, the merciful Father will give us liberty and peace, we will gladly receive them with all thankfulness from his gracious hands; but if he will not, his great name shall, notwithstanding, be praised forever.

We have all enjoyed the acceptable time of grace, for now is the day of salvation, Isa. 49:8. Let us therefore not be like ungrateful, disobedient, blood-thirsty Jerusalem, who with such perverted minds rejected the divine peace, the heavenly grace and merciful calling; but let us awake, with sober hearts, and give ear to the inviting voice, and in this accepted time arise from the deep slumber of our abominable and offensive sins, for the Lord is at hand. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light, let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision

for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts of it,” Rom. 13:12-14. Let every one be vigilant, and improve the time which God has graciously given for repentance. *Ecce nunc tempus acceptum, ecce nunc dies salutis*. “Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation,” 2 Cor. 6:2.

SINCERE AND TRUE REPENTANCE.

In the second place we exhort you in the language of Christ, “Repent, and believe the Gospel,” Mark 1:15. Oh, you faithful word of grace! Oh, you faithful word of divine love! You are read in books, sung in hymns, preached with the mouth, with life and death and proclaimed in many countries, but in your power they do not desire you;* yes more, all those who rightly teach and receive you are made a prey for the whole world. Alas, beloved Sirs, it will avail us nothing to be called christians, and boast of the Lord’s blood, death, merits, grace and Gospel, as long as we are not converted from this wicked, impious and shameful life. It is in vain that we are called christians; that Christ died; that we were born in the day of grace, and baptized with water, if we do not walk according to his law, counsel, admonition, will and command and are not obedient to his word.

Therefore awake, and behold the doings of the world. On every hand you see nothing but sensuality, wine-bibbing, infernal pride, lying, fraud, avarice, hatred, strife, adultery, fornication, war, murder, hypocrisy, open blasphemy, idolatry, and false worship, Hos. 4:11; Mic. 6:14; Gal. 5:19-21; in short, nothing but

* There are multitudes in the world who profess to believe in the word of God, but by their works deny the power of it.

a powerful persecution of all that God teaches, commands and enjoins. Who can relate the terrible and alarming condition of the world at the present time? Yet they (the wicked) want to call themselves the holy christian church. Oh, no! They who do such things, says Paul, shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:5. Oh, you men, awake and see for yourselves, for thus says the word of the Lord, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, except you be born from above you shall not see the kingdom of God," Jn. 3:3. Also, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," Jn. 3:5, and again, "Truly, I say unto you, except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 18:3. What does it profit to speak much of Christ and his word, if we do not believe him and obey his commandments? Again, I say, awake and banish the accursed unbelief with all unrighteousness from your hearts, and live a pious, penitent life, according to the scriptures; for Christ says, "Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:5. Here do not understand such repentance as is taught and practiced by an erring world, which consists only in an outward appearance and human righteousness, such as hypocritical fastings, pilgrimages, praying and reading Pater Nosters and Ave Marias, hearing frequent masses, auricular confessions, and similar hypocrisies which Christ and his apostles did in no way teach and command. Hence it cannot be a propitiatory sacrifice, but rather will be a provocation, and tend to excite the divine displeasure. Such doctrines are unavailing and fruitless commands of men, the accursed and enchanted wine of the Babylonian whoredom, which those who have dwelt upon the earth, through the just anger of God, have drunk for so many ages, Rev. 17:2. But we speak of a repentance possessed of power and works, as John the Baptist teaches, saying, "Bring forth therefore fruits appropriate for repentance, and do not think to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father," Matt.

3:8. “And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; every tree, therefore, which does not bring forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire,” Luke 3:9.

Behold, dear reader, the repentance we teach is to die unto sin, and all ungodly works, and no longer live according to the lusts of the flesh, even as David did, 2 Sam. 13:12; 18:1. When he was reprov'd by the prophet on account of his adultery, and for numbering the people, he wept bitterly, called upon God, forsook the evil, and committed these sinful abominations no more. Peter sinned very grievously but once, and no more. Matthew, after being called by the Saviour, did not again return to his ways of life. Zaccheus and the sinful woman did not again return to their impure works of darkness. Zaccheus made restitution to those whom he had defrauded, and gave half of his goods to the poor and distressed. The woman wept very bitterly, and washed the feet of the Lord with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; she anointed them with precious ointment, and sat humbly at his feet, to listen to his blessed words.

These are the precious fruits of that repentance, which is acceptable to the Lord; therefore, it was said to David that the Lord had put away his sins from him; to Peter it was proclaimed that the Lord had arisen from the dead; Matthew was called to be an apostle; Zaccheus was told that he had become a son of Abraham, and Mary was told that she had “chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her,” Luke 10:42. To the adulterous woman, Christ said, “Go, and sin no more,” Jn. 8:11.

Such a repentance we teach, and no other, namely, that no one can glory in the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins, the merits of Christ; and count himself pious, unless he has truly repented. It is not enough that we say we are Abraham's children, nor that we are called christians and esteemed as such, but we must do the works of Abraham, that is, we must walk as all true

children of God are commanded by his word, as John writes, “If we say we have fellowship with him (God) and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not do the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sins,” 1 Jn. 1:6, 7.

I ask all my readers, if they ever have read in the scriptures that an impenitent, obdurate man, who does not fear God nor his word, who is earthly minded, sensual, devilish, and lives according to his lusts, can be called a child of God and a joint heir of Christ?*

I believe you will be constrained to answer, no. But he that with all his heart, ceases from evil and learns to do well, to him the grace of the Lord is proclaimed throughout the whole scriptures, as the prophet says, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes, cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,” Isa. 1:16-18. Again, “If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die; all his transgressions that he has committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him,” Eze. 18:21, 22. And further, read and search the whole scriptures, the true instructions and testimonies of the holy prophets, evangelists and apostles, and you will find it clearly set forth, how this godly repentance is to be earnestly received and practiced, and that without it no one can receive grace, enter into the kingdom of heaven, or ever hope for it.† In short, as far as it lies in us, we teach repentance [derived] from the word of the Lord, in order

* The impenitent are without grace.

† These remarks apply to those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand, and not to infants that are incapable of understanding.

that we may subdue those carnal lusts which war against the soul, 1 Peter 2:11, crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, Gal. 5:24, refrain from conformity to this world, Rom. 12:2, cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, Rom. 13:12; that we “do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world,” 1 Jn. 2:15; “put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,” Col. 3:9,10; yes, cast off the old Adam with his whole nature and deceitful lusts, such as pride, avarice, unchastity, hatred, envyings, gluttony, drinking, idolatry, and put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness, whose fruits are faith, love, hope, righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Spirit, Eph. 4:22; Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:16; be patient in suffering, merciful, compassionate, chaste, sincerely hating and rebuking all sin, and entertaining a sincere love and zeal for God and his word.* I repeat it, that this repentance which we teach must be sincere, fruitful and acceptable to the Lord, according to the instructions in his word. He that receives this repentance in sincerity, and abides in it unto the end, [we] may rejoice and thank God, for the end of it is eternal life. But he that rejects it and does not desire it, let him take warning that the end of it is eternal death.

Beloved Sirs, Friends and Brethren, do for once truly and sincerely lay it to heart, what it is, and what the consequences will be, to willfully transgress the commands of the Lord and haughtily sin against the word of God. Adam and Eve did but once eat of the fruit which the Lord had forbidden them, therefore, for Adam’s sake the earth was cursed. In the sweat of his face he was doomed to eat his bread all the days of his life. Eve and her daughters must bring forth in pain, and be in subjection to their husbands. They were driven from Paradise, and with all their race, doomed to return to dust, from whence

* Such are the fruits of true repentance.

they were taken. Here also there was no forgiveness nor consolation of grace to be obtained.* But the Eternal Word, God's Eternal Son must needs come from high heaven, assume human nature, suffer hunger, temptation, misery; the cross and death, as the scriptures teach.† Oh, beloved Sirs, if this single transgression was so great before God, what will become of those who so proudly, all their days, despise the holy word, covenant, will and commandment of the Lord, who do not confess their sins and transgressions, though they are full of iniquity from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet. Cain was cursed and became a vagabond upon the earth as long as he lived, because he so enviously slew his innocent brother Abel. Alas! What will become of those, who, at the present day without compassion or justice, persecute, plunder and murder the pious Abelites, who with fervent hearts seek Christ and everlasting life?

The ancient world was drowned in the waters of the flood, because the sons of God looked upon the daughters of men, that they were fair, and took to themselves wives of all which they chose, and also because they would not be reprov'd by the Spirit of God, for every imagination and thought of their hearts were evil continually. Reflect upon the lusts with which the marriages of the world at the present time are contracted, yes, like dumb beasts; how the Holy Spirit is reviled, slandered and grieved, and how they all walk in their perverted ways which lead to hell, yes, to eternal damnation and death.

Sodom and Gomorrah, with the surrounding cities, on account of their pride, wantonness, cruelty, and abominable

* [CHCoG: Though death and all these punishments came upon them, there was some hope and mercy shown to them when God sacrificed lambs and covered them with their skins, symbolic of what Christ would one day do for them and their descendants, as they had been told (Gen 3:21 & 3:15). These were likely the first deaths in Creation.]

† Thus Christ came into the world to redeem mankind.

crimes, were burned up with the fire of the furious wrath of God, and cast into the abyss of hell. [CHCoG: Gen 19. The inhabitants of these cities were burnt up, there is no account of them also being cast into hell (the grave) then.] Alas, alas, what will befall those miserable men in the great and terrible day when the Lord will appear in his glory, [to those] whose pride, excess, debauchery, pomp, tyranny, blood-thirstiness, adultery, fornication, and papal abominations, no heart can conceive, no tongue express, no pen describe! Rom. 1:24.

Koran, Dathan and Abiram, though they were of the seed of Abraham, and some of them were born of Levi, yet because they revolted against Moses and Aaron, and sought to enter into the sacerdotal office, without being called, they and all their company were swallowed up by the earth alive, Num. 16:32. Consider what will ultimately happen to our Korites, whom God never acknowledged, much less were sent by him, and whose office, calling and service are not from God and his word, but as the scriptures teach, from the bottomless pit, the dragon and the beast, Rev. 9:1; 13:4; 20:1-3, who mislead so many poor, miserable souls with their seducing doctrines, Babylonian sorceries and hypocritical lives, and not only despise, but also rail [against], persecute, crucify and kill Christ, the righteous Moses and Aaron. If Moses, the faithful servant of God, could not enter the promised land because he once doubted the word of the Lord, how much less shall this unbelieving, perverted and obdurate generation enter the everlasting land of promise and glory, that not only disbelieve and despise the word of the Lord, the acceptable gospel of Jesus Christ, but also bitterly hate and persecute it, trample the blood of Christ under foot, stop their ears against the truth, and refuse to be taught by any means, either with the truth, the unblameable lives of the saints, or the innocent blood of the witnesses of Jesus, which has been shed, and in many countries flowed like water.

O, you miserable men, who are so entirely depraved and miserable before God, take heed to the word of the Lord, cleanse your bloody hands, and your impure and unbelieving hearts, and no longer despise the grace of God with your vain boastings, and do not say Abraham is your father, Jn. 8:39; that you are the children of God; that Christ died for you, or that you will also confide in his mercy. “Do not trust in lying words,” says Jeremiah, the prophet; “do not say, here is the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah,” [Jer. 7:4] for it avails nothing that Christ died, and that we are called by his name, if we do not possess a sincere, regenerating, vigorous faith in Jesus Christ, pure, unfeigned love, willing obedience, and a pious and irreproachable life. God’s mercy, we read, is to his saints, and he has care for his elect, but the hope of the wicked is vain, Wis. 3:9; 5:15. “The eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry,” Psm. 34:15. “You are my friends,” says Christ, “if you do whatsoever I command you,” John 15:14. Therefore, we pray and exhort you again to reform; he is still the same unchangeable God, Mal. 3:6. He is a strict, jealous and rigid punisher of all wickedness; yes, a righteous judge of all ungodliness and of every evil work. He visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate him, Exo. 20:5. On the other hand, he is compassionate, kind, and merciful unto all that do righteously, and fear his name, to many thousands who love him and keep his commandments. [Exo. 20:6].

O, reader, reader, beloved reader, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! [Heb 10:31] The time is fulfilled, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. The kingdom of heaven is at hand; if you would inherit and enter into it, you must repent, not only in appearance, as the hypocrites do, but as sincere penitents, with all your hearts, and all your powers, and bring forth good fruit. If not, you must be cut off

and cast into the fire of his fierce wrath, John 15:6; Luke 3:9. *Imo nisi resipuerite, omnes similiter peritites*, i.e., "Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3.

FAITH.

In the third place, we teach with Christ and say, "Believe the gospel," Mark 1:15. That gospel is the glad tidings and promulgation of the favor and grace of God toward us, and the forgiveness of our sins through Christ Jesus. The believer, by faith, receives this gospel through the Holy Spirit, and does not look upon his former righteousness or unrighteousness, but hopes without hope, Rom. 4:18, and with the whole heart depends upon the grace, word and promises of Jehovah; since he well knows that God is true, and that his promises are sure, Psm. 33:4; Rom. 3:4; 1 Cor. 1:9; thereby the heart is renewed, converted, justified, made pious, peaceable and joyous, Rom. 14:17; Gal. 5:22; he is born a child of God, John 1:13, approaches, with full confidence, the throne of grace, Heb. 4:11, and thus becomes a joint heir of Christ and a possessor of everlasting life, Rom. 8:14; 1 Tim. 1:16. Such then awaken in time; they hear and believe the word of the Lord; they weep over their past unworthy lives and conduct; they desire help and advice for their sick souls. To such, Christ, who is a comforter for all troubled hearts, says, "Believe the gospel;" that is, do not fear; rejoice and be comforted; I will not punish nor chastise you, but will heal you, comfort you, and give you life, Isa. 41:10. A bruised reed I will not break, and smoking flag I will not quench, Matt. 12:20; "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick," Eze.

34:16; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Matt. 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32; according to the good pleasure of my heavenly Father, I came into the world, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, I became a visible, tangible and dying man; in all points like unto you, yet without sin, Heb. 4:15; I was born of Mary, the spotless virgin; I came down from heaven, proceeded from the mouth of the Most High;* I am the first born of every creature, the first and the last; the beginning and the end, Rev. 22:13; the Son of the Almighty God, Luke 1:32, anointed with the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to the poor, and to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to give sight to the blind, to open the prison to them that are bound, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:18. Believe the gospel. I am the Lamb that was offered for you all. I take away the sins of the whole world. My Father has made me unto you “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,” 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 6:10. Whosoever believes on me shall not be ashamed; yes, all that believe that I am he shall have eternal life, Rom. 10:11; John 3:16.

Behold, beloved Sirs, Friends, and Brethren, all who believe this are those of whom the scriptures say, “To them, he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” Jn. 1:12,13. These are they who are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, Rom. 5:1,2, and this, as Paul says, is all of grace and love,

* [CHCoG: I cannot find a verse where the Bible specifically says Jesus came from “*the mouth of* the Most High”. It seems more likely that the way God created Eve from Adam’s rib was intended to indicate how He created Jesus from himself.]

[as] all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, &c., Rom. 3:23-25. There is none that of himself, can rejoice in, or boast of this faith;* it is the gift of God, Eph. 2:8. All who receive faith from God, receive a tree full of all manner of good and delicious fruit; happy are they who receive this gift of God, for it is more precious than gold, silver or precious stones; it is incomparable, for he that obtains it, obtains Christ Jesus, forgiveness of sins, a new mind and everlasting life; for the true faith, which is acceptable to God, cannot be dead; it must bring forth fruit, and thus manifest its nature; it works continually in love; walks willingly in righteousness; mortifies flesh and blood; crucifies the lusts and desires; rejoices in the cross of Christ; renews and regenerates, quickens, makes free and gives peace in Christ Jesus. Behold, such a faith, I say, is the gift of God, Eph. 2:8, by which the righteous, according to the scriptures, are to live as did Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab and all the saints. Every good tree brings forth good fruit after its kind, Matt. 7:17; every tree which does not bring forth good fruit, although in its full foliage, must be accursed and consumed with fire, Matt. 3:10. Thus also a fruitless, powerless faith, such as is possessed by the world, and does not work by love, be it ever so learned, wise, eloquent, plausible and miraculous, still, it is in the sight of God unclean, dead and accursed, 1 Cor. 13:2.

Therefore, we exhort you, with Christ Jesus, "Believe the gospel;" that is, believe the joyful news, the message of divine grace through Jesus Christ; leave off sinning, manifest repentance for your past life, submit to the word and will of the Lord; then you will become heirs and joint heirs, citizens and children of the new and heavenly Jerusalem, made free from your enemies, hell,

* Salvation is the gift of God.

sin, death and the devil, and walk according to the Spirit, and not according to the flesh, Rom. 8:6. *Quid credit filio dei habet vitan aeternam*, i.e., He that believes in the Son of God has everlasting life, John 3:36.

A SUPPLICATION TO THE MAGISTRACY.

We poor, wretched men, deprived of all human assistance and consolation, who like innocent sheep without a shepherd, have become a prey to the roaring lions of the forest, and devouring beasts of the field; a spectacle and reproach to the whole world, have to suffer daily, under the oppressive sword of lords and princes; have to hear and endure the inhuman revilings and abuse of the learned, the abominable lying and scoffing of the common people. We humbly entreat the imperial majesty, kings, lords, princes, authorities and officers, every one in his calling, dignity and honor, and all our beloved and gracious rulers, through the deep and bloody wounds of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ that you would but once lay aside all displeasure and evil opinions concerning us, and with sincere pity reflect upon the inhuman and severe trials, misery, depredations, crosses and martyrizations of your distressed and innocent servants; for the great God before whom we stand, who is the Searcher of all hearts, and before whose eyes all things are open and revealed; who knows that we seek nothing else upon this earth than that we, with a good conscience, may live according to his holy commandments, ordinances, word and will; but if there are some pernicious sects, as alas in our day there have been, they will, no doubt, in due time become manifest.

Do therefore condescend so much as to peruse our writings diligently and meditate upon them with a God-fearing and impartial heart, so that you may know with certainty why we are not deterred from our doctrine, faith and practice, by coercion, poverty, misery, persecution and death; that you may thus more thoroughly examine the truth and be no longer guilty of innocent blood. Be pleased to show some natural candor, and human charity towards your poor servants. Do not think in your hearts that we poor, forsaken men, after the flesh, are wood or stone; but we are with you descended from one father, Adam, and from one mother, Eve, and are created by the same God; having a common entrance into this world, are clothed with the same nature, desiring rest and peace, concerned for wives and children as well as you, and naturally, as all other creatures on earth, fearful of death.

Therefore, humble yourselves in the name of Jesus, that your poor souls may be saved. Examine, I say, our doctrine and instructions, and you will find through the grace of God that they are the pure and unadulterated doctrines of Christ, the holy word, the word of eternal peace, the word of eternal truth, the word of divine grace, the word of our salvation, the unconquerable word, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, Matt. 16:18; they are the two-edged sword that proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord, Rev. 1:16, the sword of the spirit by which all must be judged that dwell upon the earth, Eph. 6:17.

O, you beloved sirs, put the sword into the sheath; for as true as the Lord lives, you do not fight against flesh and blood, but against Him, whose eyes are a flame of fire, who judges and makes war in righteousness; who is crowned with many crowns, with a name no one knows but himself; who is clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; whose name is called the Word of God; who rules the nations with a rod of iron; who treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; who has on

his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS, Rev. 19:11-16.

O, you highly renowned lords and princes, it is against this Being that you are in this manner contending with your counsel and sword. Remember what the great prophet of the Lord, Zechariah, said concerning the children of God, who, in this world are ever subject to suffering, "He that touches you, touches the apple of my eye," Zec. 2:8. It is a fearful abomination, and bitter enmity, thus miserably to murder, destroy and exterminate those, who with such warm hearts, seek the Lord and eternal life, and who would not molest any one upon the earth. "Precious in the sight of Jehovah," David says, "is the death of his saints," Psm. 116:15. It is Jesus of Nazareth whom you persecute, Acts 9:5, and not us; therefore awake, forbear, fear God and his word, for we shall all be called to appear before one Judge, before whom neither power, exaltation, comeliness, fine speech nor talents will avail. Judgment will there be passed in righteousness upon all flesh, impartially and without respect to persons; the oppressed will then receive justice, and the crucified Jesus with his elect, released from the power of death and the hands of tyrants, will enter into his promised inheritance, kingdom and glory.

Seeing then that you deal so unjustly and tyrannically, according to the evil intentions of your hearts, without the sanction of scripture and mercy, with the helpless and God-fearing, how can you expect any grace and mercy in the day of the Lord, when we shall all have to stand before the impartial judgment seat, where every one will be rewarded according to his deeds? 2 Cor. 5:10.

We do not desire such favors as the evildoers of this world; for we have not sinned in this: our doctrine, faith and practice, although we have to suffer so much; but we, only with the word of the Lord, as the scriptures direct us, resist the anti-christian

doctrines, ordinances and life. We resist neither the emperor, the king, nor any authority to which they are called by God; but we are ready to obey till death, in all things which are not contrary to God and his word, and well know what the scriptures teach and enjoin concerning this matter, Rom. 13:18. But we desire so much mercy that under your gracious protection we may live, teach, labor, and serve the Lord, according to the dictates of our consciences, so that to you and many with you, the gospel of Christ may be rightly preached, and the gate of life opened. Alas! if the learned had the word of God, and we had it not, how gladly would we be taught by them. But since we have it, and they do not, therefore we pray, for Jesus' sake, do not urge us to leave Christ and join anti-christ; to go from truth to error; from life to certain death.

Oh, you renowned lords and princes, who are appointed by God, to be heads and rulers, consider well and believe on the word of the Lord; for if you will not desist from unrighteousness, fear God and do right, it would be better for you if you had never been born. The innocent blood of Abel calls unto heaven, and will be strictly demanded at your hands at the last day. Again we say, awake, fear God's word; for God, the Lord himself, will rule in heaven, in his kingdom, that is in the hearts of men. He will permit none to detract from his glory, or become exalted above him. Lucifer, the fair angel of God, desired to exalt himself to the Most High, and was cast out of heaven into the abyss of hell; and is retained in chains of darkness till the judgement of the last day, Isa. 14:12-15; Rev. 12:7-9; 2 Pet. 2:4.

Beloved Sirs, receive it in love, and do not be offended, for the truth must be made known. Your pride has arisen to heaven; look to Christ and his word, his example and his life; judge impartially, and you will find this to be true. The Almighty, eternal Father, through his everlasting Wisdom, Christ Jesus, has instituted and commanded all things in his kingdom, that is in his

church, relating to doctrines, sacraments and life, according to his divine counsel, will and wisdom. But you, through the counsel and instigation of the learned, by your inhuman and cruel mandates, have changed, destroyed and corrupted these, as if the almighty and eternal word should yield to your command and authority; and as though the divine ordinances of the Son of God might be changed into a more suitable form, and to a better purpose through the wisdom of men. O, presumption of all presumption! O, folly of all follies! Why exalt yourself, O, earth and dust! Acknowledge Christ Jesus, your chief Lord, who, by God, is made your Prince and Judge. “The heaven, even the heavens are Jehovah’s,” says David, “but the earth he has given to the children of men,” Psm. 115:16. I have no doubt that if any were to rise up against the emperor or king, and enter into his kingdom and government, he would not be borne with patiently, nor go unpunished; how much less then, will a poor, fleshly mortal go unpunished, who rises up against the Almighty Emperor, and King, Christ Jesus, to dethrone him from the seat of his divine majesty, and to rob him of his sceptre; and the crown of his glory, as though Christ Jesus, the everlasting wisdom of God, was unreasonable and unfit for the heavenly government. Reflect on what became of those haughty and proud hearts from the beginning, who desired to place their seats unto the throne of God.

Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, as Peter teaches. Take as an example the great and prosperous king Nebuchadnezzar, and observe how grievously God punished him, on account of his pride; and how, after being punished, he turned to wisdom, feared the Almighty, highly praised his wonderful and glorious works, and his great and adorable name.

Beloved Sirs, awake, and mend your ways, for it does not become the creature to rise up against the Creator. Christ *alone* will be the head of his church, the Teacher in his school; and he

alone, the King who will judge his kingdom; not with the doctrines and commands of men, nor with slaying and murdering, but with his Holy Spirit, power, grace and word.

Therefore, we pray you, O, you great ones of the earth, whom we, through the mercy of God, acknowledge in all temporal things as our gracious lords, that you would receive the everlasting, Almighty King, Christ Jesus, as the only Savior, Lord and sovereign of our poor souls, even as he was ordained by his Father; and that you would attend to the duties of your office and temporal government to which you have been called; for we with all our hearts, desire to render unto “Caesar, the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things which are God’s,” Matt. 22:21. Be pleased also to consider this, our doctrine and instruction, concerning baptism, the Lord’s supper, and the shunning of Babylonian deeds; and compare them well with the word of the Lord. We hope, through the grace of God that you will find, in truth, that we believe and teach nothing but that which the true oracle of the Lord has commanded us, and the holy apostles have taught and confirmed; to this end, may the great Lord grant you his grace, Amen.

CONCERNING BAPTISM.

Christ, after his resurrection, commanded his apostles, saying, “Go, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world, Amen,” Matt. 28:19,20.

Here we have the Lord's command concerning baptism, when and how, after the ordinance of God, it shall be administered and received; namely, that the gospel must first be preached, and then those baptized who believe in it, as Christ says, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that does not believe shall be damned," Mark 16:15. Thus has the Lord commanded and ordered; therefore, let nothing else be taught or practiced forever. The word of God abides forever. Young children are without understanding and cannot be taught this, therefore, baptism cannot be administered to them without perverting the ordinance of the Lord; misusing his exalted name, and doing violence to his holy word. In the New Testament there are no ordinances enjoined upon infants, for it treats, both in doctrines and sacraments, with those who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand, Matt. 13:16. Even as Christ commanded, so the holy apostles also taught and practiced, as may be plainly perceived in many parts of the New Testament. Thus Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," Acts 2:38. Again, Philip said to the eunuch, "If you believe with all your heart, you may," Acts 8:37. Here, faith did not follow baptism, but baptism followed faith, Mark 16:16.

Christ has thus commanded baptism, and received it himself, according to the following manner: When the time had come, and the hour had approached, in which he would fulfil the commission enjoined upon him, preach the word, and make known his Father's holy name, he came to John, to the Jordan, and desired to be baptized by him, that he might fulfil all righteousness. He prepared to meet temptation, misery, the cross and death, and as a willing, obedient child, resigned himself to the will of his Almighty Father. He himself says, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent

me,” Jn. 6:38. He was baptized by John, attested to by the Holy Spirit, and acknowledged by the Father as a beloved Son, Matt. 3:17; 17:5.

Behold, thus Christ commands, and was himself baptized; thus the apostles taught and practiced. Who will rise up against the Lord, and say, it shall not be so? Who will teach and instruct wisdom? Who will accuse the apostles and evangelists with falsehood? It would be entirely unbecoming for a child to command and judge his father, or a servant, his master, and it is much more unbecoming for the creature to exalt himself above his Creator. But now it is manifest that the whole world, with its unprofitable doctrines, and commandments of men; with its anti-christian customs, long standing usages, its tyrannical, murdering sword, judges over Christ and his word. The truths of Christ are esteemed lies; his wisdom, foolishness; his light, darkness, and his gospel, perverted and false. In short, Christ must be silent and suffer.

Now it may perhaps be said that this was necessary in the beginning of the gospel, because at that time, there were no believers whose children might be baptized; but now, if the parents are believers, then are the children also to be baptized, even as Abraham, when he believed, circumcised his children, Gen. 17:23. O, no! This does not follow.

Although Abraham believed God, only one-half of his seed was circumcised, namely, the male children, and not the female, though he was the father of the female, as well as of the male children, of which, by the grace of God, more shall be said in the replication.

In the beginning the gospel was to be preached, and faith followed hearing, and baptism followed faith; this is incontrovertable, for so the Scriptures teach, Rom. 10:17. But that the children of believers should be baptized because

Abraham's children were circumcised, can in no way be sustained by Scripture; but if it could be established, though it cannot, there would then be but few children baptized, for the number of true believers, it is to be lamented, is very small, as any one may see.

They are not all christians who are so called. But those only who have the Spirit of Christ are true christians, though I do not know where many are to be found. Yes, what more shall we say? All who with Abel bring an acceptable offering; those who are born with Isaac of the free woman, and with Jacob have the birthright, and have obtained the paternal blessing must be slain by blood-thirsty Cain, mocked by Ishmael, and hated by Esau, even as we hear and see on all sides. May God effect a change for the better.

Behold, this is the word and will of the Lord, that all who hear and believe the word of God shall be baptized (as above stated), thereby to profess their faith, and declare that they will henceforth not live according to their own will, but according to the will of God. That for the testimony of Jesus they are prepared to forsake their homes, chattels, lands and lives, and to suffer hunger, affliction, oppression, persecution, the cross and death; yes, they desire to bury the flesh with its lusts, and arise with Christ to newness of life, even as Paul says, "Do you not know that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life;" Col. 2:11,12; Rom. 6:3, 4.

Beloved Reader, take heed to the word of the Lord, for this also Paul teaches, who did not receive his gospel from men, but from the Lord himself; even as Christ died and was buried, so also we ought to die unto our sins, and be buried with Christ in baptism; we are not to do this after we have been baptized, but we must commence and do all this before hand. "For if we have

been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; for he that is dead is freed from sin,” Rom. 6:5-7; for even as Christ died, has taken away sin, and lives unto God, so every true christian dies unto sin, and lives unto God.

Do not think that we teach that christians are to die unto sin in such a manner, as to become insensible to sin. Not by any means; but they die unto sin, so as to be no longer obedient to their impure lusts, as Paul says, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts of it,” Rom. 6:12; also, John says, “Whoever has been begotten by God does not sin, for His seed is in him; and he is not able to sin,* because he has been begotten by God.” 1 Jn. 3:9; (and 5:18).

For as the death of our Lord would not have profited us, had he not risen from the power of death to the praise of his Father, neither will it avail us anything to bury our sins in baptism, if we do not arise with Christ Jesus from the power of sin, unto a new life, to the praise of the Lord. “For in that he (Christ) died, he died unto sin once,” says Paul, “but in that he lives, he lives unto God; likewise, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ.” And, “As you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity; even so now yield your members, servants to righteousness and holiness.” “For being made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness, and have your fruit unto holiness, and in the end, everlasting life,” Rom. 6:10, 11, 18, 19, 22.

Here observe, intelligent reader; you who desire to know the truth, and seek the salvation of your soul, what the great and holy apostle Paul has taught you. If you believe his word, doctrine and

* According to the Holland, “He has *no desire* to sin.”

testimony to be true, you will no doubt readily perceive, from these instructions, and from many other passages in the Scriptures that baptism is no more applicable to infants than circumcision was to the females of the Israelites; for we are no more commanded to baptize infants than Israel was to circumcise female children. It is also impossible for little children to die to sin, as long as they have not been made alive to it; neither can they rise to a new life, as long as they are not born by God through faith, and by the Spirit of God led into righteousness. Therefore beware, for the intent of baptism is to bury sin, and to rise with Christ into a new life, which can by no means be the case with infants; therefore, consider well what the word of the Lord teaches you on this subject.

Again, Paul calls baptism “the washing of regeneration.” Lord, how lamentably your Holy Word is abused. Is it not greatly to be lamented that men are attempting, notwithstanding these plain passages, to maintain their idolatrous invention of infant baptism, and set forth that infants are regenerated thereby, as if regeneration was simply a pressing into the water? O, no, regeneration is not such a work of hypocrisy, but is an inward change, which converts a man by the power of God, through faith, from evil to good, from carnality to spirituality, from unrighteousness to righteousness, out of Adam into Christ, which can in no way take place with infants. The regenerated live by the power of the new life; they crucify the flesh with its evil lusts; they put off the old Adam with his deeds; they avoid every appearance of evil; they are taught, governed and influenced by the Holy Spirit, Rom. 1:17.

Behold, this is true regeneration, with its fruits, of which the Scriptures speak, and comes through faith in the word of God, without which no one who has arrived to the years of understanding can be saved; as Christ says, “Truly, Truly, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom

of God,” Jn. 3:3: Yes, it is all in vain, if one were even baptized by Peter, or Paul, or Christ himself, if he were not baptized from above with the Holy Spirit and with fire, Matt. 3:11. As Paul says, “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,” Gal. 5:6; 2 Cor. 5:17. All who are thus born by God, changed and renewed in the inner man, and translated from Adam into Christ, are ready to obey the word of the Lord, and say with holy Paul, “Lord, what will you have me do?” They deny themselves with all their minds and hearts; they submit to the word and ordinances of the Lord, without dislike or opposition; they receive baptism according to the command of the Lord, Matt. 28:19. They become and manifest themselves as fruitful branches of Christ, the true Vine, and joint heirs in the church of the Lord, John 15:6. They receive forgiveness of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit; they put on Christ; enter the ark of safety, and are secured from the dreadful flood of wrath, which, like a net, will come upon all them that dwell upon the earth. This, however, is not effected by the power of the water or the sign, but by the power of the divine word, received through faith; for where there is no faith, which through love works obedience (we again speak of those who have come to the years of understanding), there is no promise. “He that does not believe the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him,” Jn. 3:36.

The Lord commanded Moses that he should stretch forth his hand, and with the rod smite the sea, and the waters should be divided. Moses believed the word of Jehovah, stretched forth his hand and smote the sea with his rod; the waters were divided and Israel was redeemed; not by the rod and the stroke, but by the power of the divine word received by Moses, through a sincere and living faith.* Had Moses not believed the word of God, and

* [CHCoG: Exodus 14:16 & 21 only say that Moses was to hold his rod and stretch out his hand over the sea. There was no command to strike

through disobedience not smote the sea, undoubtedly frightened and oppressed Israel would have fared ill. He also received a command in the wilderness to erect a brazen serpent, so that when Israel looked upon it, they might be healed of the bite of the serpents. Moses believed the word of the Lord, and erected a serpent; Israel looked upon it and was healed, not through the virtue of the image, but through the power of the divine word, received by them through faith. [Num. 21:4-9] In the same manner salvation is ascribed to scriptural baptism, Mark 16:16; the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38; the putting on of Christ, Gal. 3:27, and incorporation into his church; not on account of the water, or the administered sign (or else the kingdom of God would depend upon the elements and signs), but on account of the power and truth of the divine promise, which we receive by obedience through faith. For all those who teach reliance upon words, the elements and works, with Aaron, make a golden calf, and allow a people without understanding to commit idolatry and abominations with this, for in Christ, faith alone avails, which works by love, the new creature, and the keeping of the commandments of God.

Beloved sirs, friends, and brethren, awake and do not delay, render the Most High his due praise and honor, and give ear to his holy word, for those who maintain that the baptism of infants who are incapable of understanding, is a washing of regeneration, do violence to the word of God; resist the Holy Spirit; make Christ a liar, and his holy apostles false witnesses; for Christ and his apostles teach that regeneration comes through faith from God and his word, which word is not to be taught to those who are unable to hear or understand,* but to those who have the ability, both to hear and understand; this is incontrovertible.

the sea. The actual dividing was performed by God's Spirit.]

* This has reference to infants, who are too young to understand.

The holy apostle Peter also explains the same and says that “even baptism does also now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God (or the covenant of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” 1 Pet. 3:21.

Here Peter teaches us how the inward baptism saves us, by which the inner man is washed, and not the outward baptism by which the flesh is washed; for only this inward baptism, as already stated, is of value in the sight of God, while outward baptism follows only as an evidence of obedience which is of faith; for if outward baptism could save without the inner washing, the whole of Scripture which speak of the new man, would be spoken to no purpose. The kingdom of heaven would be bound to elementary water; the blood of Christ would be shed in vain, and no one that is baptized could be lost. No, no! Outward baptism avails nothing so long as we are not inwardly renewed, regenerated, and baptized by God, with the heavenly fire and the Holy Spirit. But when we receive this baptism from above, we will be constrained through the Spirit and word of God, by a good conscience, which we thereby obtain, to believe sincerely in the merits of the death of the Lord, and in the power and benefits of his resurrection; and henceforth, because we are inwardly cleansed by faith, and the spiritual strength which we have received, we submissively covenant with the Lord, through the outward sign of baptism, which is enjoined on all the believers in Christ, even as the Lord has covenanted with us in his grace, through his word, that we will no longer live according to the evil, unclean lusts of the flesh, but walk according to the witness of a good conscience before him.

Though these words of Peter are very plain, the learned are not ashamed to force them into a very different signification, by

means of their [slightly] plausible comments* and their much boasted reason (probably that they may retain the favor of satan's world, and live in opulence without cross or affliction), and teach that baptism is a sign of grace; which according to my limited understanding, can in no way be established. Our sign of grace is Christ Jesus alone, through whom God's abundant love is freely dispensed and declared unto us. By signs he was gloriously prefigured to the ancient patriarchs, as by the coats of skin to Adam and Eve; by the rainbow to Noah, by circumcision to Abraham, by which sign they were assured of the divine covenant. But we are assured by God, of his divine grace, and his eternal peace, by this one sign only, which is Christ Jesus. The seal in our consciences is the Holy Spirit, but baptism is a sign of obedience, commanded by Christ, by which we testify, when we receive it, that we believe the word of the Lord, that we are sorry for, and repent of our former life and conduct; that we desire to rise with Christ unto a new life; and that we believe in the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ. Not, my beloved, that we believe in the remission of sins through baptism; by no means; because by baptism we cannot obtain faith and repentance, neither do we receive the forgiveness of sins, nor peace, nor liberty of conscience, but we testify thereby that we have repented, received pardon and faith in Christ, as we said before. With the fathers it was not thus, for they, through the signs, received assurance and comfort that the promise would be true and sure. We have this assurance in Christ Jesus alone, in whom

* [CHCoG: These comments relate to their claim that in Acts 16:33, when the jailer and all his household were baptised, that would include his young children. However, the passage does not indicate that the jailer had any young children, nor that any infants were baptised. Even if he had young children, there is no reason to expect that they would be baptised too, as all of the other, and clearer, passages show that only repentant people who could understand and accept the gospel message would be baptised by the apostles. Menno confirms this later.]

all the figurative signs were completed; so that we have in this only true sign, Christ, that which the fathers had in many figurative signs. In short, if we had forgiveness of sins and peace of conscience through outward ceremonies and elements, then the REALITY would be superceded, and his merits made of no effect.

Behold, this is the only and true foundation of baptism maintained by the Scriptures, and none other. This we teach and practice, though all the gates of hell rise against us; for we know it is the revealed word of the Lord, and his divine ordinance, from which we do not dare take away, nor add to this, lest we be found disobedient and false before God (who alone is the Lord and God of our consciences), for, “every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him,” Prov. 30:5.

Oh God, what are the learned and highly learned masters of this world doing, who are so earnestly engaged in derogating from God’s word and wisdom, and ingeniously urging their own vain reason and wisdom? They will not prosper; God will not give his honor to another, for he is Jehovah; that is his name, and beside him there is no other, Isa. 42:8. Conquering, he will conquer them. He will turn wisdom to folly and their reason to disgrace, for he “knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain,” 1 Cor. 3:20.

Luther writes that children should be baptized on account of their own faith, and adds, “If children had no faith, then their baptism would be blaspheming the sacrament,” &c. It appears to me, to be a great error in this learned man, through whose writings at first the Lord effected much good, that he maintained that children, without knowledge and understanding, had faith, while the Scriptures teach so plainly that they do not know good from evil, that they cannot discern right from wrong, and he (Luther) says that faith is dormant and concealed in children even as in a believing person who is asleep, till they arrive at the years

of understanding. If Luther writes this as his sincere opinion, he writes much in vain concerning faith and its power, but if he writes to please men, may God have mercy upon him, for I truly know it is only human reason and the invention of men; but it shall not make void the word and ordinance of the Lord. We do not read in Scripture that the Apostles baptized a single believer while asleep. They baptized those who were awake, and not the slumbering. Then why do they baptize their children before that sleeping faith awakes and is confessed by them?

Bucer does not thus support this doctrine, but he maintains infant baptism differently, namely, not that children have faith, but that they, by baptism, may be added to the church of the Lord, and instructed in his word. He admits that infant baptism is not expressly commanded, nevertheless he maintains that it is right. O, Lord! How lamentably they do err, who court the favor and honor of men, and seek not the favor and honor of God. Since infant baptism is not expressly commanded by God, as he acknowledges, it cannot be acceptable to the Lord, *Et per consequence*, i.e., and by consequence, no promise can follow. Therefore, the reader should know that true christians ought not to be governed in this matter, by the opinions and traditions of men, but by the word and the ordinances of God. For we have but one Lord and Master of our conscience, Christ Jesus, whose word, will, command and ordinance, it becomes us, as his willing disciples, to follow, even as the bride rejoices greatly to hear the bridegroom's voice, John 3:29.

Since we have not a single command in the Scriptures that infants are to be baptized, or that the apostles did practice it; we modestly confess, with a good conscience, that infant baptism is but human invention; a selfish notion; a perversion of the ordinance of Christ; a manifest abomination, standing in the holy place, where it ought, properly, not to be, Matt. 24:15.

Beloved sirs, how little the word of the Lord is regarded, which says, You shall not do after that which is right in your own eyes, but observe whatsoever I command you, Deu. 12:8. Did not the Father testify from heaven and declare, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him."? Matt. 17:5. Does not the whole of Scripture direct us to Christ? Are we not baptized in his name, that we should hear his voice, and be obedient to his word? Do you not boast to be the apostolic church? Then why do you depart from Christ and adhere to anti-christ; and go from the apostolic doctrine and practice to the doctrine and practice of the 'educated'? Do observe how severely and frequently God punished men for the self-formed opinions which they maintained as works of holiness and divine worship.

Nadab and Abihu, because they offered strange fire before Jehovah, were suddenly destroyed by fire, before the altar, through the wrath of God. Num. 3:4.

Saul had mercy on Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and prompted by his good intentions, spared the best sheep and oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord, contrary to the word of the prophet. That seeming act of mercy and laudable zeal was punished, as were the sins of witchcraft and idolatry, because he acted according to his own judgment, and not according to the word of the prophet. He was reprov'd by Samuel, smitten with a pestilence, his kingdom taken from him, and given to a more faithful one, 1 Sam. 15:9 &c.

Manasseh, the king of the Jews, and others in Israel, made their children pass through fire. They built temples and altars in all the high places, also in cities and countries, with good intentions; for they were desirous thereby to honor the Almighty and eternal God, as may be plainly seen, 2 Kings 21:3-6. This glorious and holy choice was so offensive before God that [even

after Manasseh's death], Jeremiah refused to intercede for the people.

[CHCoG: The above paragraph is bizarre, but it is likely that Menno was being sarcastic, and thus comparing Manasseh to the popes. Let us read what the Bible actually says here:

And he [Manasseh] did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, after the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah cast out before the children of Israel. For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made an Asherah, as did Ahab king of Israel, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And he built altars in the house of Jehovah, of which Jehovah said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of Jehovah.

And he made his son to pass through the fire, and practised augury, and used enchantments, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of Jehovah, to provoke him to anger.

There was **nothing** Mannaseh did at this time that was intended to be either good or holy in Jehovah's eyes. He was totally dedicated to promoting paganism, and blatantly inserting it even within God's temple. And as a result:]

Israel was desolated, Jerusalem and the temple burnt; the people and the holy vessels were carried into a foreign land, 2 Kings 25:9; 2 Chr. 36:16-19. Therefore, says God by the prophet,

Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you; not those of your own choice; that it may be well with you, Jer. 7:23.

What advice then, my beloved friends, shall be given in relation to such wilful deceivers, who so presumptuously do violence to the expressed word of the Lord, and so shamefully slander the Almighty, the Most High God, and teach that it is the word of God; though such things he never proposed, much less commanded, and never will.

How awful it is thus to sin against God, and so lamentably to pervert his holy and precious word! Yes, they shall be severely punished by the Lord with heavy judgments, they shall not escape the ire of his fierce wrath, if they do not repent and reform; for God is an enemy to all liars. They have neither part nor lot in his kingdom; but their portion is eternal destruction, in the lake of fire, 2 Thes. 2:8; Rev. 20:10; 19:20.

In the second place, it is evident that infant baptism is an accursed, abominable and idolatrous institution; for all those who are baptized in infancy are called christians and are accounted partakers of the Lord's grace, merits, death and blood, and are called his people, although the whole course of their lives is entirely heathenish, wild and dissolute; yes, they indulge in nothing but gluttony, drinking, gaming, whoring, cursing and swearing, as though the water in baptism could make and preserve them as christians. O, no! Paul declares, "He that does not have the Spirit of Christ, is not his," Rom. 8:9. Yes, the helpless, innocent children, though baptized with the blood of the Lord, and having the sure promise of the kingdom of God, if not baptized with their baptism, must be buried outside the grave yard as accursed. What infamy!—what blindness! We will say nothing of godfathers, of crossing, breathing upon, sprinkling with salt water, anointing, spitting upon, and their abominable exorcism, all of which are nothing else than open blasphemy, and

not commanded by God. What abominable, detestable idolatry these things are.

In the third place, we are informed by historians, ancient and modern, and also in the decrees that baptism was changed both as to its mode and time of administering. In the beginning of the holy church, persons were baptized in common water on their first profession, upon their own faith, according to the Scriptures. Afterwards a change was made; they were examined seven times before being baptized; after that they were baptized at two stated periods; namely, at Easter and Whitsuntide. Higinus, the tenth pope, instituted godfathers, in the year A.D. 146. Finally, Luther tells us that in the year A.D. 407, Pope Innocent confirmed infant baptism by a decree, and it is to be feared that it will not be abrogated, except at the expense of much innocent blood of the saints and children of God; even as the prophets, in their days, reprov'd the accursed abominations and idolatry of the kings, priests and people, not by admonition only, but also with their blood, as we read in both sacred and profane history.

If infant baptism was commanded by God, in his word, why did Innocent add his decree? How can baptism as practiced by the world, be right, since it has been so frequently changed? We entreat you, for Jesus' sake, to reflect that Christ Jesus and not the 'learned', is King and Lord of his Church; and rules over it with his sceptre, Spirit and word, Matt. 11:27. As it is said, He is made unto us Wisdom, and none can instruct him; he appeared in order that he might testify to the truth. They that love the truth hear his voice and believe his word; and not that of the learned, for his word is truth; but the word of the learned, in this respect, is seduction; for Christ commands that believers should be baptized; but in relation to infants that are without understanding, he gave no command. But the learned say he that does not have his children baptized, and is himself baptized upon his faith, as Christ commanded, is a fanatic, anabaptist and heretic.

We have here given you the principal reasons why we oppose infant baptism, not only in doctrine, but also to the sacrifice of our lives and possessions. For we well know, by the grace of God that there is not one word in the Scriptures in its support. We tell you the truth and do not lie. Is there anyone under the canopy of heaven who can show us, by divine truth, that Jesus Christ, who is the Son of Almighty God, [Jehovah,] the Eternal Wisdom and Truth, whom alone we acknowledge as the Lawgiver, and Teacher of the New Testament, has given a single command that children should be baptized; or that Christ's holy apostles ever so taught, or practiced?

What need is there to urge this upon us by tyranny and punishment? Only show it to us in the word of God, and the difficulty is removed. For God, who is omniscient, knows that in our weakness, we humbly seek to walk according to the divine ordinances, word and will, for which we, poor miserable men, are shamefully reviled, banished, robbed and slain by every one in many countries, like innocent sheep; but the Lord be eternally praised! We are esteemed as unworthy of heaven or earth, even as Christ said, "They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and you shall be hated by all nations for my name's sake," Matt. 24:9.

It is our determination, in this matter as in all other matters of conscience, in view of the wrath of Almighty God, that we will not be influenced by lords and princes, nor by doctors and teachers of schools, nor by the influence of the [church] fathers, and long established customs, for in this matter, neither emperors, nor kings, nor doctors, nor licentiates, nor councils, nor proscriptions against the word of God, will avail. We do not dare be bound to any person, power, wisdom or times, but we must be governed only by the expressed and positive commands of Christ, and the pure doctrines and practices of his holy apostles, as remarked above; for if we do so, we neither deceive any one in

this matter, nor are we deceived. Alas! Woe to him, woe to him, who departs from this foundation, or is compelled to do so, either through the infirmities of the flesh or tyranny, or by false doctrine; and will not testify of the word of his Lord until death, unto this wicked and sinful generation, both in word and deed, Matt. 10:38; 16:24.

Observe, all of you who persecute the word of the Lord and his people, this is our instruction, doctrine and belief concerning baptism, according to the instruction of the words of Christ; namely, we must first hear the word of God, believe it, and then upon our faith be baptized; we are not seditious or contentious; we do not approve of polygamy; neither do we seek nor wait for any kingdom upon earth.

O, no! no! To God be eternal praise; we know well what the word of the Lord teaches us and testifies to on this subject. The word of the Lord commands us that we, with a sincere heart, desire to die to sin, to bury our sins with Christ, and with him to rise to a new life, even as baptism is a figure of it.

That we seek to walk humbly and uprightly in Christ Jesus, in the covenant of his grace, and his everlasting peace, and with an approved conscience before God, even as the mouth of our Lord has commanded; as he has testified by his example, and as we are taught by the pure doctrines and practices of the apostles, 1 Pet. 3:21.

COUNTER ARGUMENTS WITH THEIR REPLICATIONS.

Having briefly noticed the Lord's command, and the apostolic doctrine, practices and signification of baptism; that it is and will be the true baptism to the end of time, we will also, now, through the grace of God, as a duty, refer and reply to some scriptural passages of which the learned wrongfully make use, to make void the ordinance of the Lord, and place in its stead their own.

In the first place, they teach that we are all the children of wrath, and sinful; born of the sinful seed of Adam, and therefore, say they, children are to be baptized, in order to be purified and washed from original sin, &c.

To this we reply thus: With the word of the Lord, we believe and confess that we all come from, and are born of, unclean seed; that we through the first Adam, who was of the earth, became wholly depraved, and children of death and of hell, Rom. 5:12. Nevertheless, as we fell, and became sinners in Adam, we also believe and confess that through Christ, the second and heavenly Adam, we were restored to grace and justified. For he appeared upon earth, that in and through him we might have life. Through him only, we glory to have obtained grace, favor and the forgiveness of our sins with God our Father; and not through baptism, whether we are children or believers; for if redemption, and the washing away of original sin, were through baptism, and not by the blood of Christ alone, then would the sweet smelling sacrifice, which is of eternal worth, have been in vain, and without effect, or there would be two remedies for our sins. But, no! The Scriptures speak only of one, which is Christ, with his merits, death and blood, 1 Pet. 1:19. Therefore, he who seeks the remission of his sins through baptism rejects the blood of the Lord and makes water his idol. Therefore, let every one be

careful, lest he ascribe the honor and glory due to Christ to the outward ceremonies and created elements.

It is true, Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." But this is not to be understood [as meaning] that we receive the remission of our sins through baptism. O, no! For if it be so, then Christ and his merits must fall. But we receive the remission of our sins, in baptism, as follows:

The Lord commanded his gospel to be preached to every creature, so that all who believe and are baptized may be saved. Where there is faith, which is called the gift of God, by Paul, there also are the power and the fruits of faith. Where there is an active, fruitful faith, there also is the promise; but where such a faith does not exist (we speak of adults), there also is no promise. For he that hears the word of the Lord, and believes it with the heart, manifests his fruit, and faithfully observes all things the Lord commanded him; for the Scriptures teach the just shall live by faith, Heb. 10:38. Then the remission of his sins is preached to him, as Peter teaches and instructs.

Had Noah and Lot not believed the word of the Lord, they would have fared ill. Had Abraham not believed, he would not have obtained such glorious promises; but they believed, and did right, and became heirs of righteousness, Heb. 11:8.

Had Moses and Israel not believed the word of the Lord and been disobedient, how could they have been succored in the sea and in the wilderness? But they believed, and according to his promise, were protected by the mighty hand of the Lord. But those who provoked him, and did not believe his gracious word and the great miracles, fell in the wilderness, and did not enter the promised land.

There was also reconciliation connected with the sacrifices of the Old Testament, not on account of the worth of the smoking

offerings upon the altars; for it was not possible, says Paul, that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin, Heb. 10:4. Before it was offered, it was all Jehovah's, and the cattle upon a thousand hills were his, says David. Psm. 50:10. But because the righteous believed the word of divine promise as true, and walked in obedience to his command, so now also is the remission of sins preached through baptism; not on account of the water, or the ceremonies performed, for Christ, I repeat, is the only source of grace; but because the righteous receive the promises of the Lord by faith, and obediently follow his word and will.

This direction does not extend to infants. For in all the Scriptures, there is not a single command given to baptize them. Therefore, it is not required of them as a sign of obedience. Since, then, infant baptism is performed *without* the command of God, it cannot be a ceremony of God, but a pernicious superstition of men, and evidently idolatry; therefore, the promise of God cannot rest upon such abominations. It seems to me, it is high time to awaken, and to give heed to the Scriptures. For Jesus' sake, sin is not imputed to infants that are innocent, and incapable of understanding. Life is promised, not through any ceremony, but out of pure grace, through the blood of the Lord, as he himself says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," Mark 10:14. But concerning baptism he did not command them any thing.

According to my opinion, it is a great error, which some entertain, that the children of the Jews were acceptable to Christ on account of circumcision; and that ours are acceptable to him on account of baptism. O, blasphemy and infamy! In every instance, Christ, the only medium of divine grace must be set aside, and grace must be attributed to the lifeless rites and elements. Here I would ask all pedo-baptists, how they are going to prove that these blessed children were all circumcised, and that there were not among them female children! If they were

acceptable on account of their circumcision, as they pretend, then, why were [some] adults who were circumcised not acceptable?

Although they were circumcised, he commanded that adults should be baptized upon their faith; but concerning infants he gave no such command. He took them into his arms, laid his hands upon them and blessed them; promised them the kingdom, and dismissed them; but he did not baptize them.

Thus did the wisdom of God himself do; but the world would be his teacher. Christ does not command that infants should be baptized, but believers; but the world commands that we should baptize children and not believers.* Yes more, if any one is baptized upon his faith, because the Lord has so commanded; and for conscience' sake does not have his children baptized, because God does not command it, his name, alas! is reproached by all, and he is subjected to torture, misery and death; and this is not to be attributed so much to the rulers, as to those who are esteemed teachers and preachers, for what the rulers do, they generally do by the counsel and instigation of the [supposedly] learned. By their fruits, they show who is their father, for they do his works. It seems to me they always have been, and ever will be, those who, with their false doctrines, revengeful spirits, and hard hearts, shed the blood of the righteous, Rev. 17:6; 18:24. Alas! Such persecution is so disgraceful that it is almost a shame to mention it. For as clear as the sun shines on this world, and is seen by every one, so manifest is the inhuman, raving tyranny of the learned against the Lamb and his chosen. God grant that the eyes of these blind, perverted, blood-thirsty teachers, with all their tyranny, may be opened that they may become satisfied and

* Menno means that Christ commands that those who have come to years of understanding, who have the ability to receive the truth and believe it, should be baptized, and not infants who can neither receive nor understand the truth, and therefore are incapable of believing.

weary of their false doctrine and the shedding of innocent blood, Amen.

In the second place, they teach that the children of Israel under the Old Testament, were admitted into God's covenant and church through circumcision; but now, our children are admitted through baptism. To this, in accordance with Scripture, we reply, No. Whoever reads the Scriptures understandingly, will clearly perceive that Abraham was in covenant with the Lord many years before he was circumcised. And that the children were circumcised on the eighth day, although they had been in the covenant before. For it is evident that we do not become the children of God through any outward rites, but through the paternal and gracious choice, through Christ Jesus. But an outward sign was required of Abraham as a seal of obedience and faith. And likewise of his seed, that they should circumcise the male children on the eighth day; not sooner nor later, and not the female children. Had the covenant depended upon the sign, and not upon the assurance of grace, what would have become of the females, and the males that died uncircumcised before the eighth day?

Beloved reader, give heed to the word of God. Although the women and female children were not circumcised, they had the promise in common, in the promised seed, the holy land, the kingdom and glory. They were no less the seed of Abraham and subject to the covenant of God, and the things signified by the sign of it, than the circumcised men and male children. From which it is evident that the children of Israel were not in the Lord's covenant on account of circumcision, as pedo-baptists assert, but through the divine choice of grace.

And even as Abraham and the children of Israel, the female as well as the male children, were in the covenant not through the sign, but through the divine choice, so also are our children in the covenant of God, although not baptized. The word of Paul is

incontrovertible. He (God) has chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, and has ordained us as his children through Jesus Christ, Eph. 1:4.

Again, children are entitled to the kingdom of heaven, and are under the promise of the grace of God through Christ; as has been said; and therefore we truly believe that they are blessed, holy and pure, acceptable to God; are under the covenant, and in his church, but by no means through any external sign; for there is not a word in all the Scriptures by which to maintain that children should be admitted into the covenant and the church by such a sign. Besides, it is very evident that they cannot be taught or admonished by word or sacrament, as long as they are without the ability to hear and understand.

Therefore, the signs are not to be used for any other purpose than that for which they were instituted and commanded by the Lord. Since Christ has ordained and commanded us to baptize believers; and has not said a word about infant baptism, we believe and teach that the baptism of believers is from God and his word, and infant baptism is from the dragon and the beast.

All the rites ordained by God, both of the Old and New Testament, are ordained to exercise our faith and to show our obedience. Therefore we should not use and change them at our pleasure; but we must use them as the Lord himself has ordained and commanded, if we would escape being punished by the fierce wrath of God, as were Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10:2.

Since Christ has commanded that believers should be baptized, and not infants, and the holy apostles taught and practiced thus, in accordance with the instructions and commands of Christ, as may be seen in many places of the New Testament, all reasonable-minded men must admit that infant baptism, although alas, practiced by nearly the whole world, and maintained by tyranny, is nothing less than a ceremony of anti-

christ: open blasphemy, an enchanting sin, a molten calf; yes, abomination and idolatry.

We also well know how they apply circumcision as a figure of baptism, and adduce the saying of Paul in proof of it, namely, “In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, &c., Col. 2:11. He that will attempt to prove by this passage that infant baptism is right, does violence to holy Paul, and falsely perverts his testimony. For he does not teach that external circumcision is a figure of baptism, but alludes to inward circumcision. For even as actual circumcision of the foreskin was performed with a knife of stone, so also must our inbred and carnal nature be cut off with that spiritual knife of stone, and circumcised with a circumcision made without hands. The stone is Christ. The knife is the word of God, 1 Cor. 10:4; Heb. 4:12. It is with this circumcision that believers, not children, are circumcised, as Paul evidently intends to teach by this scripture, “In Him you were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of sins through the circumcision of the Messiah, and you were buried with Him in immersion, in which you also arose with Him because you believed in the power of God, who raised Him from the house of the dead.” Col. 2:11-12 [CHCoG version]. It appears to me that these words plainly show that Paul did not speak in relation to the baptism of infants; but in regard to the inner circumcision of the believers. Read also what we said above concerning Romans 6.

In the third place, they say that children are regenerated, put on Christ, and receive the Holy Spirit in baptism.

To this we reply: To be regenerated, to put on Christ, and to receive the Holy Spirit, is one and the same thing; and according to its power, inseparable. Have you the one, you have the other also. But that does not at all concern infants; for regeneration takes place through faith, through the word of God, and is a

change of heart, or of the inward man, as said above. To put on Christ is to be transplanted into Christ, and to be like-minded with him. To receive the Holy Spirit is to be a partaker of his gifts and power, to be taught, assured and influenced by him, as the Scriptures teach. This cannot take place with infants, for they do not have ears to hear the word of the Lord, as they do not have the understanding to comprehend it; for through the word and the understanding of the word all this is accomplished.

Here it may be asked, whether God is not powerful enough to work faith in children: because John the baptist, yet unborn, leaped for joy in his mother's womb.

We reply to this, that we are not speaking of the power of God; he made aged and barren Sarah fruitful, and caused Balaam's ass to speak. But it does not follow that all old, barren women will become fruitful, and that all asses are to speak. He does not at all times do all that could be done, or has power to do; we speak only of the precept of the Scriptures; what they teach and command us concerning this matter.

Because infants do not understand, they cannot believe, and because they do not believe, they cannot be born again. Reason teaches us that they cannot understand the word of God. That they do not believe and are not regenerated, is evident from their actions. Whether they are baptized or not, their inbred nature is prone to evil from their youth. They know no difference between Christ and satan; between good and evil; between life and death. Whereby then shall we know their faith, regeneration, or that they possess Christ and his Spirit? The regenerating word must first be heard and believed with a sincere heart, before regeneration, the putting on of Christ and the influences of the Holy Spirit follow.

Behold, thus we are taught by the word of the Lord. He that does, therefore, not desire the palatable bread of the divine word,

upon which our souls have to live, may satisfy himself with the husks that the swine eat, Luke 15:16; we cannot forbid him. I trust that the gracious Father will protect and preserve us forever, through his great mercy, from their anti-christian doctrines and Pharisaical leaven.

In the fourth place, they say that although infants are not so washed from original sin in baptism, that there are no remains of it still, for the sake of baptism it shall not be imputed to them as sin.

To this we reply: Thus to teach and believe is open blasphemy against Christ and his blood. I have proved more than once by the word of the Lord that Christ is the only remedy for our sins, and that there is forever none other, Isa. 43:25; Matt. 1:21; Acts 4:12. If men will not believe the word of God, there is no human help for them. But the way or manner in which believers receive the remission of sins, in baptism, is fully explained above, and he that reads it understandingly, will give the Lord Jesus the praise due him, and not ascribe the remission of his sins to rites and elements.

In the fifth place, they say that Christ has cleansed and sanctified his church with the washing of water by the word. Children, they say, belong to the church, therefore they must be cleansed with the washing of water by the word, Eph. 5:26.

To this we reply: Paul does not speak of infants, but of those who hear and believe the word of the Lord, and thus by faith, are sanctified and cleansed in their hearts; for such are cleansed by the washing of water, as the mouth of the Lord has commanded.

Since infants have not this pure, sanctifying faith, nor the means to this (that is the understanding), and are not commanded in Scripture to be baptized; how can they then be cleansed with the washing of water by the word, having no faith in the word, and no washing of water by the word? Therefore, all pedo-

baptists should know that their infant baptism does neither cleanse nor sanctify, but that it is idolatry *in toto*, without promise, pernicious, and contrary to the word of the Lord.

We have before shown that the remission of sins, or reconciliation, was connected with, and consequent upon, the Jewish offerings, if performed according to the instructions of Moses. But when not thus performed, they did not obtain reconciliation, but made themselves the more guilty, as Saul, Uzziah, Nadab, Abihu and others. In like manner is the church sanctified and cleansed, with the washing of water, by the word, if it is done in every respect according to the instruction of the word. But if it is not done so, we are not cleansed but commit much more sin.

And although infants have neither faith nor baptism, do not think therefore that they are damned. Oh no! They are blessed; for they have the Lord's own promise of the kingdom of God; not through any elements, ceremonies and external rites, but only by grace, through Jesus Christ, Matt. 19:13-15. And therefore, we do truly believe that they are under grace, acceptable to God, pure, holy, heirs of God and eternal life, and on account of this promise, all sincere christian believers may assuredly rejoice and comfort themselves in the salvation of their children.

In the sixth place, they say that infants are to be baptized on account of the promise made them, as above stated; although Christ did not baptize the children brought to him, nor had them baptized; but they say that he had infant baptism taught and practiced after his death.

To this we reply: This is a false doctrine, and does not have the word of God to sanction it; indeed, it cannot be supported by a single word in the Scriptures. We rejoice with all our heart that they have this promise; the Scriptures, however, do not teach that they should, therefore, be baptized; and that they were not

baptized before Christ's death, gives us greater assurance of this still, and for this reason: We certainly know that he taught no other word, no other doctrine, no other baptism, nor did he give another Spirit, or another promise, nor did he instruct others to teach differently after his death, than he did before that event. That he commanded his holy apostles, after his death and ascension, to teach and practice infant baptism can never be proved by the word of the Lord.

Oh Human Nature! You are not ashamed to charge lies upon Jesus Christ and his apostles, and to practice infant baptism under the semblance of the divine word, as if the Lord had taught it, although he never did. How much you are like those who say, "Jehovah says; although I have not spoken," Eze. 13:7; thus says the Lord Jehovah.

As often as the question is put to us, Why shall infants not be baptized, since they are in the church of God, and partakers of his grace, covenant and promise? We answer: Because the Lord neither taught nor commanded it.

In the seventh place they say, The Scriptures inform us that the apostles baptized whole families, from which we may readily conclude that there were infants among them.

To this in the first place, we reply: Since they endeavor to maintain their position with uncertain conjectures, they acknowledge by their own arguments that they have no scriptural authority for this doctrine.

In the second place, we answer: In things of such importance, we do not dare build upon uncertain suppositions, but upon the sure word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, Psm. 119:105.

In the third place, we answer: Four families are mentioned in the Scriptures as having been baptized; namely, that of Cornelius,

of the Jailer, of Lydia and of Stephanas, Acts 10:48; 16:15; 16:33 & 1 Cor. 1:16. The Scriptures plainly show that three of these were all believers; namely, the family of Cornelius, of the Jailer, and that of Stephanas. But touching the family of Lydia, although the Scriptures say nothing definitely concerning it, the reader should know that it is not usual in Scripture, nor the common custom of the world, to call the family by the woman's name, as long as the husband is living. Since Luke mentions the family by the name of the woman, reason teaches us that Lydia was at that time either a widow or a virgin. Of the probability as to whether there were infants in her house or not, we shall let the pious reader judge.

In the fourth place, we answer: The word *household*, or *houses*, does not include the minor children as mentioned in the Scripture; for Paul speaks of vain talkers who subvert whole houses. Now it is incontrovertable that an infant cannot be subverted by any false doctrine. Therefore, by the word *house* or *houses*, no others can be understood than those who have ears to hear, and hearts to understand.

In the last place, they appeal to Origen and Augustine, and say that these assert that they have received infant baptism from the apostles.

To this we answer and inquire, Can Origen and Augustine prove this by the Scriptures? Have they done so? We desire to know; if not, then must we hear and believe Christ and his apostles, and not Augustine and Origen.

That this is not the case may readily be seen from Cyprian, because he neither enjoined nor condemned infant baptism, if those who for many years past have been preachers at Norlingen, have rightly informed me in their church records, and not deceived me in the meaning of the word *Liberum*.

Cyprian also was a Greek, as well as Origen, and lived twenty-five years after him. If infant baptism was the doctrine of the apostles and practiced by them, as Origen and Augustine assert, it must first be proved by the Scriptures, and in that case Cyprian must have committed a great sin to leave the observance of the doctrines and practices of the apostles at liberty. For any thing that is apostolic dare not be changed by any man. The word of Paul is indisputable, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. 1:8. Else we would be constrained to acknowledge that the twelve apostles with their doctrine, were not the twelve foundations and twelve gates of the new Jerusalem, Rev. 21:12-14.*

If infant baptism is apostolic, why does Tertullian write and say, "They who are to be baptized, confess for a considerable time in the church, before the overseer, that they renounce the devil, his pomp and angels. After that they are," &c.

Revanus annotates on this passage and says: That it was the custom of old that adults (grown persons) be baptized by the washing of regeneration.

That infant baptism was not apostolic may be distinctly seen from the insipid remarks of Athanasius, as Rufinus plainly shows; see *Eusebius, 10 Libro Ecc. His., Cap. 14.*

Remember also how the early writers contended about infant baptism. Had it been apostolic, and found in the gospel, why should they have thus wrangled?

Read also Erasmus Rotterod, *in sua concion, i.e., in his public orations*, Sebastus Frank's *Chronicle*, Ulrich Zuingli, in his book of *Articles*, Martin Cellarius, *de immensis operi, Dei*,

* [CHCoG: The 12 foundations are named after the Apostles, but the gates are named after the 12 tribes of Israel. Rev 21:12-14.]

i.e., Concerning the immense works of God, and you will find that infant baptism is not the doctrine and practice of the apostles.

Behold, beloved reader, I admonish and advise you, if you seek God with all your heart, and do not wish to be deceived; do not depend upon men and their doctrine, no matter however old, holy and excellent they may be esteemed; for the ‘divines,’ both ancient and modern, are opposed to each other; but put your trust alone in Christ and his word, in the sure instruction and practice of his holy apostles, and you will, through the grace of God, be perfectly safe from all false doctrines and the power of the devil; and may walk with a free and pious mind before God.



AN ADMONITION ADDRESSED TO THE SCORNERS OF THE WORD CONCERNING BAPTISM.

We well know, beloved reader, that there are many unprofitable talkers, who teach from the letters of the Scriptures, that infants should not be baptized, but only Christian believers; nevertheless they say: Why my beloved, what can water avail us? We have been baptized once in the name of God. Had we only the new life, it would suffice us. O, dear Lord! Thus is your precious word every where esteemed in this vicious world as the fables of Æsop; as if Omnipotent Majesty, the Eternal Wisdom and Truth had taught and commanded some things to no purpose. No, my good reader, no; his name [title] is the Sovereign Lord; his word is his will; his command is eternal life. All things which he has taught and commanded us, he will undoubtedly have us to observe; if we do not, woe to us. Christ says, “You are my

friends if you do whatsoever I command you,” John 15:14. “My counsel,” says his prophet, “shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” Isa. 48:10. Therefore, O, creature, do not fight any longer against God. Give ear to him and obey his voice, for it is his divine counsel, word and will. Who are you that you would contend with God? Christ’s sheep hear his voice. True Christians believe and obey. Are you a sincere Christian, born by God? Then why do you dread baptism; which is among the least that God commanded you? It has always been a difficult and important command to love your enemy; to do good to those who hate you; to pray in spirit and in truth for those who persecute you; to crucify your wicked and ungodly flesh, with its impure lusts and desires; to subdue your arrogant pride; your avariciousness; your offensive unchastity; your bloody hatred; your eating and drinking to excess; to renounce your accursed idolatry; to desist from your envious revilings; to curb your slanderous tongue; to govern your heart and flesh; to love and fear with all your heart, your Lord and God, your Creator and Redeemer; and in all things to submit to his holy word, and serve your neighbor in sincere and unfeigned love, with all your powers, with all your possessions, with your counsel, with your labor, yes, if required, with your death and blood; with a sincere heart to suffer misery, disdain, and the oppressive cross of Christ for the Lord’s word; and to confess Christ Jesus before lords and princes, in prison and bonds, by words and deeds, unto death.

We think that these, and similar commands, are more painful and difficult for perverse flesh, which is naturally so prone to follow its own way, than to have a hand full of water applied;*

* [CHCoG: A hand full of water?? Like the Catholics do? Christ was baptised by immersion in the Jordan river. Mat 3:13-15. Later, John was baptising at Aenon because ‘there was much water’ John 3:23. Philip took the eunuch down into the water to baptise him. Acts 8:36-38. The Greek word *βάπτισμα* *baptisma* literally means immersion or

and a sincere Christian must at all times be ready to do all this; if not, he is not born by God; for the regenerated are of one mind with Christ Jesus.

All who, by the grace of God, have been translated from Adam into Christ, and become partakers of the divine nature, and are baptized by God, with the Spirit and the Fire of heavenly love, will not contend so deridingly with the Lord, and say: My beloved, what can water avail? But they say, with trembling Paul, "Lord, what will You have me to do?" And with the penitents on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They will renounce their own wisdom, and willingly obey the word of the Lord, for they are influenced by his Spirit, and through faith, with willing, obedient hearts, perform all things commanded to them by the Lord.

But as long as their minds are not renewed, they are not of the same mind with Christ; and are not washed in the inner man with clean water from the living fountain of God, they may well say, 'What can water avail us?' For as long as they are earthly and sensually minded, the whole ocean would not cleanse them.

My faithful reader, do not think that we put great stress upon the elements and rites. I tell you the truth in Christ, and do not lie. If any one were to come to me, even the emperor, or the king, and would desire to be baptized, yet still walking in the unclean, ungodly lusts of the flesh, and were he not unblameable, penitent and regenerated, I hope by the grace of God, I would rather die than to baptize such an impenitent and sensual man. For where there is no renewing, regenerating faith, leading to obedience, there is no baptism.* Even as Philip said to the Eunuch, "If you

submersion. Our baptism is, in part, a symbol of us being buried with Christ. Col 2:12. A hand full of water can't bury us, nor can we rise up out of it. Surely full immersion should be used whenever possible.]

* There can be no scriptural baptism administered.

believe with all your heart, you may.” But nevertheless, you ought to know, should the subject for baptism come with a hypocritical heart, under semblance of faith, that his hypocrisy would not be imputed to the baptizer as a sin, but to the dissembler; for no man knows the heart of man, save the spirit of man which is in him, 1 Cor. 2:11.*

It appears to me that you may readily conclude from the language which we have used that we desire no other water than that which the word of the Lord has commanded. For since we believe that Christ is the true Messiah, to whom the law and the prophets pointed, whom all the righteous fathers and patriarchs desired; that he came from heaven and testified to the truth, and that his command is eternal life, we must, therefore, hear his voice and obey his word. If not, we actually show that we do not believe, but that we reject his counsel and word, and are ungrateful towards him, for his love.

I know well that many of you will say, We were baptized once in the name of God, and we are satisfied with that. To which we reply: If you fear God with all your heart, and acknowledge that his word and ordinances are just and good, you must decide that you are not baptized in the name of God, but contrary to it. It is true that the adorable, exalted name of [the Son of] God was pronounced over you, but not otherwise than it is pronounced over church bells, churches, altars, consecrated water, tapers and palms. All anti-christian idolatry and abominations, alas, are performed under the semblance of the divine name; although they are not done by *virtue of*, but *against* his name, for they are done contrary to his word and will.

My dear reader, reflect well upon these words and judge them by the word of God, and you will find that the baptism which you

* [CHCoG: Or more certainly, the Spirit of God, as 1 Cor. 2:11 says, also Deu. 12:8.]

have received is outside the command of God's word; that it originated through self-righteousness, and was invented by man, and therefore it must be accursed of God, who alone will reign and rule in his church. If you would rejoice in the promise and be partakers of the church of Christ, you must believe the word of the Lord, be obedient to, and follow his counsel, will and ordinances. But if you refuse, and follow your own, and not the Lord's counsel and will, you cannot comfort yourselves with any scriptural promise, for "he that does not believe," says Christ, "is condemned already." John 3:18.

Therefore, do not comfort yourselves any longer with such vain comfort, and say, We have been baptized once; for at heart you are yet entirely unbelieving; yes, rebellious and unclean. Your whole life is earthly and carnal, your baptism anti-christian, and without the sanction of the word of God. Therefore, awaken, repent, believe in Christ, seek, fear and love God with all your heart, then the word of the Lord and his anointing will teach you what is proper for you to do or not to do, in this matter. And do not say, as some do, 'I will renounce the church and idolatry; I will serve my neighbor, &c., but I do not wish to be baptized.'

O, you blind men! Do you think that the Lord is pleased with your staying away from that church, or with your alms, or any thing of the kind, if you reject his counsel and word? No! No!! He desires your obedience, but not sacrifice. He desires the whole heart, the entire man. With him, neither church nor alms will avail, neither words nor deeds, as long as you do not manifest a new heart and life. "For in Christ Jesus," says Paul, "neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which works by love, a new creature, and the keeping of the commandments of God," Gal. 5:6; 6:15; 1 Cor. 7:19.

And whosoever is renewed in Christ and born by God, he lives no more, as Paul says, but Christ Jesus lives in him. In all his ways he conforms to the word of the Lord, for that powerful,

active faith constrains him to all obedience, and to every good work. But where this new life is not, there fair words may indeed be, but in truth, there is only unbelief, disobedience, wantonness, presumption, and perverseness.

I hereby entreat and admonish you, beloved reader, not to be so obstinate against the Lord, and say, What can water avail us? But do reflect that Christ Jesus himself was baptized, Matt. 3:13, although he was without sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, 1 Pet. 2:22; yes, who was himself righteousness, the way, the truth, and the life. Tell us then, what could water avail Christ, who was all in all things? The disciples also at Ephesus were rebaptized by Paul, because they knew nothing of the Holy Spirit, although they had been baptized with the baptism of John. If Christ himself was baptized, who was without sin, and others were rebaptized by Paul, who had been baptized with the baptism of John, which was also from heaven, why do you then despise the Lord's baptism, you who are poor, miserable sinners, who were baptized without knowledge and faith, with the baptism of the dragon and the beast?

Cyprian, the Martyr, with his entire council in Africa, resolved that those who were baptized by heretics should be rebaptized with the christian baptism, and for this reason, that they maintained that the baptism of heretics could not be the baptism of Christ. Reflect a little, kind reader, who they were that baptized you; by whom they were sent; what kind of faith they had; what kind of lives they led; with what doctrine and practices you were baptized. If you will seriously reflect upon this, I hope by the grace of God, if you desire true peace and liberty of conscience, you will soon be aware that you never knew either the external or internal baptism, much less received it.

Behold, beloved reader, here you have the true foundation and scriptural instructions of the baptism of Christ, and an explanation of the baptism of anti-christ.

Pray to the Lord, the Most High God, for a sound and clear understanding that you may sincerely know the right and blessed truth, believe, and in the fear of the Lord, faithfully observe it. Cease from all useless disputing and gainsaying; for whosoever will dispute and gainsay with the determination to remain in the broad way, will ruin his soul, never walk with a good and sure conscience before God, and always find occasion to dispute and wrangle.

Therefore, do examine, believe, and obey the word of God with a sincere and devout heart, and do not be deceived by being led into the appearance of godliness, by fair speeches, and you will certainly obtain the sure doctrine of the saving truth, and the consoling promise of grace. The Lord Jesus Christ grant you his grace, Amen.

THE LORD'S HOLY SUPPER.

You know, beloved sirs, friends and brethren, that every where much is written, preached and said concerning the Lord's Supper. But with what knowledge, with what faith, love, peace, unity, and after what manner and ordinance they celebrate it, is plainly evident. It is true, the Lord commanded, in the New Testament, the breaking of bread, or the last Supper, but not in the manner in which you celebrate it. Your Lord's Supper is common to all, no matter who or what they are; to the avaricious, proud, gay, drunkards, haters, idolators, debauchees, adulterers, whore-

mongers, and rogues. It is also celebrated, as may be seen, with abominable pomp and splendor, with hypocrisy and idolatry; and besides, it is dispensed by such ministers who only seek worldly honor, ease and the satisfaction of the cravings of their flesh and bodies.

Since so many of you are so zealous about the Lord's Supper, but not according to the Scripture, as you shall hear; for your table may more properly be called the devil's table than the Lord's table, 1 Cor. 10:21, I desire for Jesus' sake that you would, in the true fear of God, reflect to whom, why and wherefore the Lord instituted, ordained and left this, his last Supper, to his church, so that it may prove to you a living and an affecting sign; that it might bring to your minds, and set forth the Lord's great and abundant kindness, true peace, the love and union of his church, the communion of his flesh and blood; and that you may die to unrighteousness, and every ungodly work; live to righteousness and godliness; renounce the devil's table; and that you may sit down at the Lord's holy table, in the church of Christ, with true faith, a pious, penitent and regenerated life, and with unfeigned brotherly love.

Thus says Paul, "I have received from the Lord that which also I delivered unto you that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

Here you have Paul's explanation of the words of the Holy Supper, instituted by Jesus Christ, Luke 22:19,20, concerning which words the learned have disputed much; and alas, some of them, through their idolatrous misunderstanding (if we may call it such, and not pride), have disputed at the expense of much

innocent blood; and what holy Paul says concerning them is fulfilled, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,” Rom. 1:22. For they disputed most about the sign, which avails little, but the thing signified for which the sign was instituted, which avails much, they do not touch. In my opinion, they also pay little attention as to what the qualification of the guests or communicants should be, in order to sit with Christ at his table, and to celebrate this Holy Sacrament.

There is not a single word commanded in the Scriptures that should give cause for dispute concerning the visible and tangible sign, or what it signifies. The spiritual judge all things spiritually. For whatever that may be in substance, it can be handled, seen and tasted. But this we should most consider, that we in our weakness ought to follow, and as much as possible conform ourselves to the signification which is set forth, represented and taught by this sign to all true christian believers.

On this account, we will not trouble the well meaning and pious reader with jarring, fruitless disputing, concerning the outward sign, as the learned do; but we only desire, by the help and grace of the Lord, by the power of the divine word, to point out correctly, for whom, and why Christ Jesus left and ordained this Supper; so that we may not esteem the visible sign above the reality, and depart from the truth to images.

To come to a right, profitable and christian understanding of the Lord’s Holy Supper, what it is, to whom, why, and wherefore it was enjoined, four things in particular should be observed and well considered.

In the first place, we must take heed that we do not do as some, who ~~make~~ [pretend that] the visible, perishable bread and wine [becomes] the Lord’s real flesh and blood. To believe this is contrary to nature, reason and Scripture; yes, it is open blasphemy against the Son of God, an abomination and idolatry.

Israel had to hold the Passover annually, at the appointed time according to the command of Moses, to commemorate that Jehovah, the Almighty God of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob, did graciously preserve his people from the punishment and plagues when he slew the first born of the Egyptians; and by his strong hand and outstretched arm, so gloriously and wonderfully led them out, and redeemed them from the iron furnace of Egypt and the dread tyranny and dominion of Pharaoh, according to the word of his promise. Hence the *paschal lamb* is called the *Lord's passah*, that is, *Passover*; the sign for the reality, for the lamb was not the Passover, although so called, but it only typified the Passover, as said.*

* [CHCoG: Please re-read Exo 6:1 to 13:16. There are several points to consider here: First, the lamb, and its blood, was not merely symbolic, but was *essential* to ensuring that the destroying angel passed over their house. Each household had to kill their own lamb, symbolising how each of us have killed Christ because of our sins. Lev 16:15, John 1:29. Just as they needed to eat the flesh of the lamb and pass through its blood, painted on the lintel of their door, Jesus and his blood are *essential* to saving us from the second death in the Lake of Fire. Jesus, the lamb of God, IS the reality of Passover. And just as the death of Pharaoh's first-born son led to the release of the Israelites from slavery, the death of God's first-born Son releases us all from slavery to sin. What was done in Egypt for the Israelites was really just revealing the pattern for what Jesus would do for the entire world. And spiritually, we are all Israelites, for God has grafted us in (Rom 11). Jehovah has commanded that the Passover be kept forever, and made understanding and keeping His Passover part of His Mark on our foreheads and hands. Exo 13:16. Likewise, *when* Jesus instituted the Last Supper and foot-washing is important. We need to observe it on the same evening each year as a memorial, on the beginning of the Passover Preparation Day, just as He commanded us. Satan's churches pretend that keeping God's Holy Days is no longer required, and have supplanted God's Passover feast with Lent and Easter, etc. Read [*God's Holy Days for Christians*](#) for more on this.]

So in the Holy Supper, the bread is called the body, and the wine the blood of the Lord, Matt. 26:26-28. I say the sign is put for the *reality*,* not that it actually is the real flesh and blood of Christ; for with that he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of his Father, [and is now] immortal and unchangeable, in everlasting majesty and glory. It is an admonishing type and memorial that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has redeemed us from the power of the devil, from the dominion of hell and eternal death, by offering up an immaculate sacrifice; his innocent flesh and blood, and has triumphantly led us into the kingdom of his grace, as he himself says, “Do this in remembrance of me,” Luke 22:19.

In the second place, it is to be observed that there is no greater evidence of love, than that one suffers death for another, as Christ says, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,” John 15:13. Since this holy sign is only a memorial of the Lord’s death, and since death is the greatest evidence of love, as said, we are therefore reminded, when we are at the Lord’s table, to eat his bread and to drink his cup, that we not only earnestly show forth and remember his death, but also all the glorious fruits of divine love, manifested towards us, in Christ; namely, that God, in the beginning, made man after his image, incorruptible,† placed him in Paradise, and made all creatures subject to him. After he was beguiled by the serpent, he was cheered and comforted with the promise of a coming Conqueror and Savior, Jesus Christ. God sent Moses and the prophets, who sedulously practiced the law, and pointed to the promised Christ and his kingdom. Christ Jesus, according to the promise of the Scriptures, finally appeared in this world, a true man, born of the Virgin Mary, and in much misery, affliction and

* Reality, the thing signified or typified.

† [CHCoG: If Adam and Eve were incorruptible, they could never have fallen. However, they were created pure and uncorrupted.]

labor, preached the saving and gracious word to the house of Israel; sought the lost sheep, and brought them to their true Shepherd; appeased and reconciled us before the Father, through his painful death and precious blood, Rom. 8:3. As he himself says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John 3:16.

Oh, wonderful, overflowing and unsearchable* love of God! He did not send into this unfriendly world [only] an angel, a patriarch, or a prophet, but his eternal MIGHTY WORD, his ETERNAL WISDOM, the brightness of his glory, in the form of sinful flesh, and “made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2 Cor. 5:21.

My good reader, do not understand this as if Christ had been a sinner; by no means. The Scriptures acquit him of all sin. He was the spotless lamb. He did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. But Paul calls him *sin*, according to the Hebrew manner of expression; that is, an offering for sin, as the prophet says, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and

* [CHCoG: The original translation has *incomprehensible* instead. The only time I can find this word in a Bible translation is in the Tyndale-Coverdale version at Romans 11:33, where it should have been properly translated as *unsearchable*. Incomprehensible means “*not able to be understood; not intelligible*.” Unsearchable means “*beyond our capacity to search out*.” Incomprehensible has been replaced the eight times it appears in this book with unsearchable. Please understand this: Our God does NOT claim to be incomprehensible. This is a false teaching of the Trinitarians, who have ‘created’ their own incomprehensible god.]

with his stripes we were healed, Isa. 63:5. He gave his life as an offering for sin.*

Behold, worthy reader, all those who sincerely believe in this glorious love of God, this abundant, great blessing of grace in Christ Jesus, manifested toward us, are more and more renewed through such a faith; their hearts overflow with joy and peace; they break forth with joyful hearts, in all manner of thanksgiving; they praise and glorify God with all their hearts, because they, with a good conscience have received the Spirit; they believe and know that the Father loved us, so that he gave us poor, wretched sinners, his own and Eternal Son, with his merits, as a gift and an eternal ransom, as Paul says, The grace and love of God, our Savior, appeared not on account of the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior, “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life,” Tit. 3:7.

Here it is proper to observe how the Righteous died for the unrighteous, when we were yet sinners and enemies; how the spotless Lamb was prepared for us, in the fire of affliction, suffered upon the cross, and was offered as an eternal propitiation for our sins; how the Creator of all things was bruised for our sakes, and he, who was above all the children of men, became the most unworthy, and was counted with evil doers; how the Innocent bore the sins of the whole world, blotted out all our transgressions, and redeemed us with his crimson blood, as the Scriptures declare, “I restored that which I did not take away,”

* [CHCoG: Jesus was more than just an offering for sin: our sins were actually placed on him, as the above scriptures say, and which is why he was sweating blood at the thought of this happening to him. That crushing load of all of everyone’s sins is why he suffered so badly, felt abandoned by His Father, and died so quickly on the stake.]

Psm. 69:4. In short, Jesus Christ, through his obedience, delivered Adam and all his seed from the consequences of disobedience, and by his painful death, again restored life.

The apostle Paul acknowledged this great and glorious work of divine love, broke forth and said, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, as it is written, For your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” Rom. 8:35-39.

And this is what John says, Let us love him for he first loved us. 1 John 4:19. Nature teaches us to love those who love us. And this is the first fruit of the Holy Sacrament, if rightly celebrated.

In the third place we have to observe that by the Lord’s Supper we are reminded of, and admonished to christian unity, love, and peace, after which all true christians should seek and strive. “For we being many,” says Paul, “are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread,” 1 Cor. 10:17.

Just as natural bread is made of many grains, broken by the mill, and kneaded together with water, and baked by the heat of the fire; so is the church of Christ made up of many true believers, broken in their hearts with the hammer of the divine word, and are baptized with the water of the Holy Spirit, and with the fire of pure, unfeigned love, into one body, 1 Cor. 12:13. And as the natural body is in harmony and peace with all its members, and as each member naturally discharges its duty to promote the good of the whole body; thus it also becomes the true and living

members of the body of Christ, to be in harmony, of one heart, one mind and one soul; not quarrelsome and unpeaceable, not spiteful and envious, not cruel and hateful, not malicious, not obstinate or rancorous, one toward another, like the ambitious, covetous, and the proud of this world; but in all things, one toward another, be long suffering, friendly, peaceable, ever ready in true christian love to serve his neighbor in all things possible; by exhortation, by reproof, by comforting, by assisting, by counselling, with deed and with possessions, yes, with bitter and hard labor, with body and life. Ready to forgive one another, as Christ forgives and serves us with his word, life and death, as Paul says, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do you; and above all things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body; and be thankful," Col. 3:12-15.

And again; as in the natural body, the more honorable members, such as the eye, the ear, the mouth, &c., do not despise the less honorable members, on account of their inferiority; and as the inferior members do not envy the superior members, on account of their superiority, but as every member in its place, is peaceable, and contributes to the good of the whole body, be its functions high or low; so it is also in the church of the Lord. Paul says, some he appointed apostles; some prophets; some evangelists; some pastors and teachers. Let every one be mindful that he does not boast of what he is, has, or possesses, for it is all the grace and gift of God. Let every one attend to his duty, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect

man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” Eph. 4:12, 13.

This is also set forth in the Holy Supper; but how the world, calling themselves christians, live up to this is shown by their fruits and actions.

In the fourth place, we have to observe that the Holy Supper is the communion of the body and blood of Christ, as Paul says, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” 1 Cor. 10:16.

Since it is a communion, as said, we would fraternally exhort all of you that you would earnestly examine yourselves, whether you have been made partakers of Christ? Whether you are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone? Whether you are in Christ, and Christ is in you? For all who would worthily eat of this bread and drink of this cup must be changed in the inner man, and converted and renewed in their minds, through the power of the divine word and the operation of faith; and become new creatures, born by God, and translated from Adam into Christ; be of a christian disposition, long suffering, peaceable, merciful, affectionate, truly humble, and obedient to the word of the Lord. The proud, ambitious, selfish and carnal heart must be circumcised; the evil eye must be plucked out; the ear that delights to hear evil must be closed; the unprofitable, backbiting tongue must be bridled; the unclean, bloody hand must be cleansed; the impure, unchaste flesh must be restrained, &c. They must lead a crusade against the world, the flesh and the devil; their loins must be girded about with truth; having on the breastplate of righteousness; their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. They must be armed with the shield of faith; with the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. They must be led by the Spirit of God, that they may become sincere christians; and strive with all their powers, that they, in

their weakness, may be like-minded with Christ Jesus, Rom. 8:14.

When Christ instituted and celebrated the Holy Supper with his beloved disciples, he said, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. Luke 22:15. Then he took the bread, and broke it, and said, Take, eat this is my body which is broken for you. Likewise also the wine: This cup is the New Testament in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. It was as if he had said, Behold, dear children, so far has that love which I have had for you and the whole human family, and ever shall have for you, constrained me, that I left the glory of my Father, came into this world of affliction, and am as a poor, miserable servant, to serve you, for I beheld that you all belonged to Satan, and there was none to redeem you; that you had all gone astray, like erring sheep, and there was none who cared for you; that you were a prey to devouring wolves, and there was none to ransom you; that you were wounded with death, and there was none that could heal you. Therefore, I came from heaven, and became a poor, weak, and dying man, in all things like unto you, sin excepted. In my great love I zealously sought you, and I found you helpless, loathsome, and miserable, yes, half dead. The services of my love I have so cordially manifested toward you; your sores I bound up; your blood I wiped off; I poured wine and oil into your putrid wounds; set you free from the jaws of the bears and lions of the pit; I laid you upon my shoulders, and led you into the tabernacles of peace; your nakedness I covered; had compassion on you in your misery; I fulfilled the law for you; I took away your sins; I proclaimed to you the peace, the grace and favor of my Father; I made known to you his good will; I pointed out the way of truth; and I have powerfully testified to you, by my unheard-of signs and great miracles, that I am the true Messiah, the promised Prince and Savior.

Behold, beloved children, so long have I been with you, taught my Father's Word, admonished, reproved and comforted you in his name; but now my hour is at hand; this night I shall be betrayed. All that the prophets said of me has come to an end. But since I can serve you no longer with my doctrine and life, I will, at last, serve you with my painful sufferings, body, blood, cross, and death.

And this is the reason why I called you to this Supper, so that I might institute a memorial for you in the use of bread and wine, that you might occasionally come together after my death, and commemorate the gracious favors of my ardent love, so abundantly manifested towards you; and especially that I loved you so dearly that I offered my body and shed my blood for you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. I have by my death obtained for you everlasting reconciliation, grace, mercy, favor and peace with my Father, as I told you, namely, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life as a ransom for many," Matt. 20:28.

Beloved reader, take notice of the word of the Lord and this institution. For where this Holy Supper is celebrated with such faith, love, devotion, peace, harmony, and so much sincerity of heart, there Jesus Christ is present with his grace, Spirit, and promise, and with the merits of his sufferings, misery, flesh, blood, cross and death; as he himself says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them;" Matt. 18:20. But where the pure knowledge of Christ, living faith, the new life, christian love, peace and harmony do not exist, there is not the Lord's Supper, but a despising and mocking of the blood and death of Christ, a consolation of the impenitent, a seducing hypocrisy, and open blasphemy and idolatry as, alas! We know and see in the world.

Oh! Delightful assembly and christian banquet, commanded and ordained by the Lord himself, where there are no carnal pleasures to gratify the flesh and appetites, but where are set forth, sought for, and desired by all true christian believers, the glorious and holy mysteries, by the visible signs of bread and wine.

Oh! Delightful assembly and christian banquet, where there is no unseasonable, slanderous mockery, and where no trivial songs are sung; but where the pious christian life, peace, and harmony among all the brethren; besides the joyful word of divine grace, his gracious kindness, favor, love, service, tears, prayers, cross and death are set forth, and taught with cordial thanksgiving and devout joy.

Oh! Delightful assembly and christian banquet, to which the impenitent and proud despisers, according to Scripture, are not invited; such as whore-mongers, rogues, adulterers, debauchees, the giddy, robbers, liars, defrauders, tyrants, shedders of blood, idolators, slanderers, &c., for such are not the people of the Lord; but those who are born by God are the true christians, who have buried their sins, and walk with Christ in a new and godly life; those who crucify their flesh; who are led by the Holy Spirit; who sincerely believe in God; who seek, fear, and love him, and in their weakness, willingly serve and obey him; such are members of his body; flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone.

Oh! Delightful assembly and christian banquet, where neither gluttonous eating and drinking is practiced, nor the impious vanity of piping and drumming is heard; but where the hungry consciences are filled with the heavenly bread of the divine word, and with the wine of the Holy Spirit; and where the peaceful, joyful souls are singing melodies before the Lord.

Awaken, O, you who sit in darkness and walk in the region and shadow of death. Awaken, I say, and observe that the supper,

which you have held to the present, is not the supper of Christ, but of anti-christ; not the table of the Lord, but the table of the devil. For it is generally dispensed only by open deceivers, and worshippers of idols; and received by a people who are as yet entirely obstinate and carnally minded, disbelieving and rebellious against the word of God. And moreover, they believe it to be the real body and blood of the Lord, and celebrate it with such unbecoming, heathenish pomp and splendor. O! abomination and idolatry!!

Beloved reader, I bear witness to the truth in Christ and do not lie, that the Holy Supper of Christ is not to be dispensed by a deceiver, nor to be received by an impenitent and obstinate sinner. It does not require such a gorgeous and splendid array, as that in which the world is wont to celebrate it; neither golden vessels, nor hypocritical semblance of confessions, absolution, bowing, and smiting upon the breast, &c., but it must be celebrated with a broken heart, true penitence, a humble mind, with unfeigned, ardent love, with peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Again I say, awaken, and reflect upon what I write. God's work is not imitating a dead letter; it is not trifling; nor is it the sounding of many bells and organs, and of singing; but it is a heavenly power, a living moving of the Holy Spirit, which warms the heart and mind of the believers; pervades, comforts, anoints, encourages, awakens and enlivens them; makes them joyful and happy in God. For this is the true nature and power of the Lord's word, if it is rightly preached, and of his Holy Sacraments, if rightly used.

It is, therefore, high time to take heed to the word of the Lord; for all who are earthly and carnally minded are not born by God and his word; are obstinately averse to the Lord's word; do not love their neighbors, nor are they ready to help them; * and are

* [CHCoG: Though this is often true, Jesus cites examples where unconverted people help those around them. Luke 10:30-37. But they cannot help them save their souls, for they do not know the Way

not in the communion of God, therefore they cannot be members of his body, or guests at his table. For Paul says, To be carnally minded is death. Christ says, Those who are not born from above, cannot see the kingdom of God. Samuel says, Defiance is as iniquity and idolatry, 1 Sam. 15:23. John says, He that does not love his brother (neighbor), abides in death. Again, He that does not love, does not know God, for God is love. [1 John 3:14 & 4:8.] In short, without love, all preaching, all faith, baptizing, celebrating the Lord's Supper, prophesying and suffering are vain.

We do, therefore, admonish all those desiring to celebrate this Supper, that they would rightly learn to know what the true Supper is, what it signifies, how and wherefore it is to be used, and who are to be partakers of it. And then also to examine themselves well, as Paul teaches, before they eat of this bread and drink of this cup; that they do not comfort themselves with the visible sign, and err in regard to the reality represented by the signs; for they who do not know Christ and his righteousness, do not believe him and his word, and do not walk according to this; but according to the superstitious doctrines and commands of men, and partake of the Lord's table, eat and drink damnation to themselves.

All who have received the word of the Lord through faith, acknowledged it to be true, and have again transgressed it, and have not continued to walk in the acknowledged truth, but are walking again in the broad way, have returned to the love of the world, and are rejecting Christ and his word, and depending upon the seducing doctrines, the interpretations and false promises of the learned; such have no part at the Lord's table, for they are without God, as John says, "Whosoever transgresses, and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God," 2 John 1:9.

themselves.]

All who walk in the pride of their hearts, despise their neighbor on account of poverty, distress and affliction, and do not know that they themselves are poor mortals, seed of Adam, food for worms, and a wilting flower; yes, dust and earth, whether they are emperor, king, rich, or learned, and all who thus sit at the Lord's table with a proud heart, eat and drink damnation to themselves.

All who boast of the Lord's Spirit, name, covenant, word, knowledge, merits, grace, blood and death, yet reject his holy counsel, doctrine, command, ordinance and his unblameable example, despise and grieve his Holy Spirit, hate, defraud and speak falsely against their neighbor, and sit at the Lord's table, eat and drink damnation to themselves.

All who love houses, lands, possessions, friends, children, the world, favor, ease of the body, honor and this life, more than they do Christ and his word, and attend the Lord's table, eat and drink damnation to themselves. Christ says, He that loves any thing more than me, is not worthy of me, and cannot be my disciple, Matt. 10:37; Luke 14:26.

And this is the sum of the whole matter, that all those who would sit at the Lord's table, with the disciples and guests of Christ, whether rich or poor, high or low, must be sound in the faith, and unblameable in conduct and life. None are excepted; neither emperor nor king, prince nor earl, knight nor nobleman. Yes, as long as they err in doctrine and faith, and are in their lives carnal and blamable, they are by no means to be permitted, with the pious, to partake of the communion of the Holy Supper; for they are not in Christ, and therefore must remain without, till they are truly converted to Christ; walk in the ways of the Lord, are of one spirit and one faith with Christ and his church. For the Lord's Supper is a communion of the flesh and blood of Christ, which is not to be given to the ungodly and obdurate, but to the sincere, penitent, christian believers, as a pledge of reconciliation.

If any one has a good appearance before men, and is inwardly proud, avaricious, carnal and without the Spirit of God, he is not judged by the church, but by Lord Jehovah himself, the Searcher and Trier of men's hearts and minds, as the Scripture says. Jer. 17:10. We do, therefore, admonish all those who would go to the Lord's table, to examine themselves before they partake of it; for all who eat this bread and drink this wine unworthily, eat and drink damnation to themselves, 1 Cor. 11:29.

Thus, beloved sirs, friends and brethren, does the Holy Supper instruct and admonish us: First, The bread, as the body of Christ, which he offered for us, and the cup, the blood of Christ which he shed in great love, for the remission of our sins.

In the second place, we are admonished to union, love; and peace, which must be among all true christians, according to the spirit, doctrine and example of Christ; for Paul says, "We being many are one bread, and one body," &c.

In the third place, we are admonished to a pious and unblameable life, to true regeneration, which is from God; to all righteousness, thanksgiving, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For it is a communion of the blood and body of Christ, of which no one is a partaker, nor can be, unless he becomes a humble, peaceable, pious christian, dead unto sin, and born by God according to his word; one who is in Christ, and Christ is in him; flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, is a true partaker of the body and blood of Christ; as Paul says, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," Heb. 3:14.

Behold, beloved readers, here you have the true instructions concerning the Lord's Holy Supper, with its significations, fruit, power, nature, and the guests, as the mouth of the Lord has ordained, and the holy apostles have left and taught us; and with what knowledge, faith, love, unity, peace, piety, and according to

what usage and ordinance it should be celebrated in the church of God.

Compare this with the supper of the world, and you will learn to know which is the true one; what an abomination anti-christ has made of it, what enchantments he practices with it, and how we poor sinners, with all our forefathers, have, as idolatrous Israel of old, for hundreds of years, offered incense unto the brazen serpent, and danced before the golden calf. O! My faithful reader, fear God, with sincerity examine the Scriptures, and believe the truth.

THE CORRUPTION OF THE HOLY SUPPER.

The Scriptures teach that we have no other offerings for sin than the body of the Lord, as before said. But since the enemies of Christ have possessed the cathedral for so many years, they have, as the Scriptures teach, altered the laws of the Most High,* and instead of it, instituted their abomination of desolation, and corrupted the Holy Supper with their councils, violence and false doctrine, till, alas! it retains only the shadow, and the mere name. This they did to destroy and corrupt the true, eternal offering of

* [CHCoG: Yes, as prophesied in Dan. 7:25, which also says they will intend to change God's Times, meaning His Holy Days, as well. And so they did, changing Jehovah's seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath into a first-day Sunday Sabbath, and replacing all of God's Annual Holy Days, which outline His entire Plan of Salvation, with their own vacuous holidays, usually taken from pagans and given christian-sounding names. Do NOT follow the popes: Do not only reject their fakes, which include Christmas and Easter, but keep Jehovah's Holy Days, as he commands us to do, and just as Jesus and his apostles did.]

Christ, which alone avails with God, and changed it into a daily offering for sin, as we may plainly read in the canons of the mass; which undoubtedly is an abomination of abominations; for by it, Jesus Christ, the all-sufficient and eternal offering, is entirely renounced and made of no effect, as the Propitiator and Mediator of the New Testament. He is thrust from the throne of his Majesty; his merits, cross, blood, and death are rejected; yes, all the types and shadows of Moses, all the predictions of the prophets; the promise of angels, and the whole New Testament, are denied by it; though all harmoniously point to the one and eternal offering of Christ. Instead of this, they have ordained an unholy, blind, seductive and carnal idolatry, [and that] with a piece of bread! Beloved reader, put no other construction upon these words; for what I write is the truth.

They have brought it so far with this ungodly seduction that they have arrogated to themselves all power in heaven, upon earth, and in hell; they therefore break the bread into *three* pieces. With the *first*, they [claim to] reconcile God; with the *second*, they intercede for the world; and with the *third*, as they pretend, they pray for the souls in purgatory.

Through their accursed infamy they rose so high in honor, that they are above all the potentates of earth, whom they made their own servants. By their hypocritical service and enchanting idolatry, they have hoarded money, goods, gold, silver, land, rents, cloisters, cities, principalities and the dominions of this world; because [almost] every one loved this splendid service as a holy and divine work; and honored and feared their exalted and pompous names as the messengers of God.

By this ingenious and subtle magic, the Roman anti-christ has gained such respect and authority that even the imperial majesty, the highest sovereignty on earth, whom we are commanded by God to respect and fear, had to humble himself and kiss his feet; yes, what is still worse, Frederick Barbarossa, a great and

renowned emperor, could not be reconciled with Pope Alexander III., until he humbled himself at Venice, before the church, and suffered the Pope to tread upon him with his feet!

Behold, thus *anti-christ* has enchanted the whole world with his offering. The gracious Father be eternally praised that he has, through his paternal grace, delivered us, his poor children, from this enchanting offering, and made known to us the only and eternal offering of his Son, Jesus Christ, who, according to the order of Melchizedek, is ordained as everlasting High Priest over the house of God; who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save from death, and was heard, because he honored God. This one, I say, offered an acceptable offering, a sweet smelling sacrifice of eternal worth, by which he appeases the Father's wrath, reconciles the human race, opens heaven, closes hell; makes peace between heaven and earth; and sits now, and henceforth, at the right hand of his Father, till his enemies are made his footstool; yes, with this *one* offering, he has perfected forever all those who are sanctified. Heb 10:12-14. This cannot be denied, whether by emperor or king, doctor or teacher, angel or devil. His word stands firm and immovable. He has with one offering, I say with *one* offering, perfected for ever those who are sanctified.

O, my beloved reader! I now mean all those who are yet without the Spirit of Christ and his word, Take heed to what the word of the Lord teaches you, and observe the true doctrine of Christ, the true teachers, the true sacraments, the true church, and the true christian life, which is of God, so that you may learn what kind of pastors feed you; what kind of baptism and supper you practice; by what kind of offering you are reconciled; what kind of lives you lead, and of whose body you are members.

O, how long, says Solomon, will you simple ones love simplicity? And you scorers delight in scorning? How long will

you remain under the heavy bondage of sin? How long will you remain in the communion of the devil, and allow yourselves to be dragged down to the abyss of hell by the cords of unbelief? Awake, and ransom your poor souls! Come out from among them. Flee from all false doctrine; avoid every appearance of evil; believe in Christ Jesus; repent and lead an unblameable life; follow Christ with a sincere heart; enter into the house and covenant of his everlasting peace, into the communion of his flesh and blood. Take upon you his easy yoke and light burden, and you will find rest for your souls; you may then truly say that you are christians; that you have obtained the remission of your sins, by the grace of God, through the merits of Christ; and that you are joint heirs of the eternal kingdom. May God grant unto you all his grace and mercy, Amen.

In the second place, they ‘made’ the bread in the Holy Supper into the real flesh, and the wine into the real blood of Christ, and understood the words of Christ literally. Take, eat, this is my body, &c., and did not observe that Christ, in John 6, does fully instruct us how we are to eat his flesh and drink his blood; and says that it would profit nothing to really to eat his flesh, and to drink his blood, for this could not be done, because he was about to ascend to heaven where he was before. We are therefore not to understand this eating his flesh, and drinking his blood literally; but spiritually, as he himself says, “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” John 6:63. All those who thus understand this from the Scriptures, are reproached as accursed heretics and profaners of the sacrament by many, and must suffer for it by water, fire and the sword.

O, dear Lord! Is this not an ungodly error, and great blindness, to teach and to believe that a piece of bread, and a drink of wine should be changed into the real and essential flesh and blood of the Son of God, by which we may be delivered from

hell, the devil, sin and death, and are made children of grace? O, horrible heresy!

O, miserable, blind people, believe the words of Christ, when he says that it profits nothing to eat his visible and real flesh; and that his words are spirit and life, John 6:63; believe that he ascended up to heaven and sits at the right hand of his Father; therefore he cannot be eaten and confined in the body by any one, nor can he be consumed by age, fire, or worms, as may be plainly seen, is the case with the visible bread and wine.

But where the Lord's church, [composed of] the beloved disciples of Christ, have met in Christ's name to partake of the Holy Supper in true faith, love and obedience, there the outward perishable man eats and drinks perishable bread and wine; and the inner, the imperishable spiritual man eats (in a spiritual sense) the imperishable body and blood of Christ, which can not be eaten nor consumed, as said above. Like is profited by like; this is incontrovertible. The visible man is nourished upon visible food, and the invisible man is fed upon invisible bread, as we may plainly learn from the word of the Lord.

Therefore, all who are in Christ and have believing, penitent hearts, rely upon the pure offering of the body and blood of Christ, and know that it is the only ablution and reconciliation for their sins, the only and eternal medium of grace; and eat the true flesh and drink the true blood of Christ, not with their mouths, but *spiritually*, by faith, as said before.

The reader may readily observe from these words that the bread is not flesh, and that the wine is not blood; for if they were flesh and blood, as the idolators pretend and teach the poor people, one of two consequences must follow; either the perishable bread and wine are changed into the imperishable and heavenly Son of God; or the Son of God must be changed into bread and wine. This is incontrovertible.

O, dear Lord! They are more ignorant than the heathens ever were! True, the heathens worshipped and honored the sun, moon and stars, which have their influence upon things below. They worshipped the ox, the dragon, serpents, fire, and other creatures; some of which had living breath within them. They also worshipped images of wood, stone, silver and gold, made by skilful workmen, who cast, carved and decorated them in the likeness of man. But these, who are called by the name of Christ, pray to, worship, and adore a piece of bread and a mouthful of wine as [if they are] the real flesh and blood of Christ, who came from heaven for our salvation; became man, and was made an offering upon the cross for our sins. O, intolerable abomination and infamy! The praise of God, the glory of Jesus Christ is converted and changed into such a feeble idol, which can neither avenge, speak, hear, see, stand nor walk; which worms eat and time consumes; and it must be locked up, preserved, assisted, and carried about by the hands of men, like the idols at Babylon, of which Baruch writes.

O, my faithful reader, learn to know Christ Jesus truly. He is not like the fabulous Proteus,* *now* like the everlasting Almighty Son of the eternal, Omnipotent God, and *then* a perishable creature, merely bread and wine. Oh no! He is unchangeable through all eternity.† Neither can he be confined in any house,

* Proteus could, according to poetic fables, change himself into different shapes.

† [CHCoG: It is true that Christ is unchangeable in many things: he is the truth, the way and the life. But in other ways he has changed. From when he was begotten by his Father until he was begotten again in Mary, he was exclusively the Son of God. But when he took on a human body, he also became the Son of Man. And this is even true of Jehovah, Christ's Father. When he begot Christ, he changed from being the sole living intelligence into being a father. When He was about to destroy Israel, He listened to Moses and repented, which was another

church nor chamber, in silver or golden vessels; for, according to his eternal, divine Being, heaven is his throne and the earth his footstool, and after his holy humanity, he ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of his Father. He is the everlasting and Almighty Power, Brightness, Word, Truth, Wisdom, and image of God. He has all power in heaven above and on earth below, all things are under him; at his name every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to him that he is the Lord, to the honor and glory of his Father, and he will not appear again in the flesh, but he will come in the clouds of heaven, to judge the goats and sheep. Mat 25:31-46.

Therefore I say again, He cannot be eaten, nor can he be digested in the body of man. Augustine plainly acknowledges this; when he says, “Why do you make ready to eat? Only believe, and you have eaten him.”

Beloved reader, we well know that Augustine did not write this of the natural eating of the Holy Supper; but of the spiritual eating, which is by faith; and with that view, we adduced it, so that the god-fearing reader might see the difference between outward and inward eating, and not mistake the one for the other; for the external use of the sign is nothing but a false appearance and hypocrisy, if the thing which is invisibly represented is not connected with it. That this is the case with infant baptism and the world’s supper, may be readily proved from the Scriptures; but where the mystery is connected with the sign, for which purpose it is ordained, there is the baptism of Christ, and his Supper, as the Scriptures teach. But this is hidden from the world. They acknowledge that the Scriptures teach a Supper, but what it actually is, what it prefigures, and who are to partake of it,

change. (though this may have primarily been a test of Moses.) Deu. 9:12-20. But like His Son, God does not change in anything critical, such as his love of truth and life, nor in his Plan of Salvation.]

they do not know, so completely has the Babylonian whore deceived and bewitched them in this matter.

The Holy Supper, as taught by Christ and his apostles, reproves all idolatry, foreign mediums of reconciliation, hatred, discord, and unrighteousness; for it directs only to the one offering of Christ, which was made by his flesh and blood, once for all, as related; it represents christian peace, harmony, brotherly love, and a pious, unblameable life, as already said. Therefore they do not desire this Supper, and have forsaken the Lord's word and ordinances, and have turned away from the Creator to the creature, and from the true Reality, to the perishable signs. Yes, they call their disgraceful and sinful mass, the sacrifice of the Lord; and the bread and wine his real flesh and blood; for this is the custom and manner of the ungodly, because they do not know Jehovah, the true God of heaven and earth, and do not believe his holy and inestimable word; but hate the true service and are opposed to it. Instead of God they have a visible and tangible object; and maintain a service of their own choice. So did Israel with the golden calf; with Baal and Moloch; and Antioch with his Maosim (god of forces); the Babylonians with their Bel; the Egyptians with their Isis, &c. From this source originates all disgraceful idolatry, which is practiced with this abomination, such as carrying about the bread, exalting it, praying to it, offering of incense, and on every occasion seeking to pay it divine honor and divine service; and to maintain which there is not a tittle nor a letter, nor an inference, in all the Scriptures. Yes, alas! Many esteem it so highly that they say this is the one who reconciled us upon the cross. Even as Israel said to the calf, "These are your gods, O, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt," Exo. 32:4.

Beside this, the use of the cup is withheld from the people in the Roman church. If it were the Lord's Supper, as they pretend, they would, in every respect, use it according to the ordinance of

the Lord. But this custom shows that it is not the Supper of Christ, but a deluding seduction of anti-christ.

Therefore, be wise and sober, you who name yourselves after the name of Christ. Spew out the wine of Babylonian whoredom which you have drunk. You have danced and burned incense long enough to the golden calf. Give the Almighty the praise and honor due to him, lest it happen to you as it did to faithless, disobedient, and idolatrous Israel. Although Jehovah God graciously redeemed them from the power and tyranny of Pharaoh, yet they had to suffer punishment on account of their unfaithfulness and obstinacy, and were destroyed in the wilderness. And so it is also in vain that we are redeemed by the blood of the Lord from the dominion and power of the devil, if we do not repent, but remain idolatrous, and do not believe in Jesus, and in our weakness are not obedient, nor live according to his word.

In the third place, they teach that this bread is dispensed for the remission of sins. My faithful reader, take notice of what I write. Where Jesus Christ, his word and Spirit are not known and acknowledged, there is nothing but unbelief, idolatry, error, and an uncertain, wavering conscience, as may be seen.

They all seek some remedy for their sins, but the true remedy, Christ, they do not acknowledge; hence they have contrived so many remedies that we can neither describe nor relate all of them; such as absolution, holy water, fastings, confessions, masses, pilgrimages, infant baptism, bread and wine, &c.

I do not know to whom to compare this generation, other than to a sick and wounded person, who has entrusted himself under the care of an unskilful physician, who can give him no suitable medicines, and apply no healing plasters. He spends his money in vain; he suffers pain and affliction, and is getting worse instead of better. A skilful, experienced physician is recommended to

him, who, prompted by pure love and mercy would visit him without money and without price, bind up his wounds, and gladly cure him; but the sick man will not receive such a good and well-disposed physician. Who then could feel [compassion] for such a man, because he would rather perish than get well?

So it is with this perverse generation. They feel and are aware, at times, that they are failing and sick, but they seek medicine and counsel from those who sicken them still more with their poison; and are not healed of their wounds and cured of their diseases. They refuse the skilful, the heavenly Surgeon and Physician, Jesus Christ, recommended by all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and by angels; yes, appointed by the Father himself. They will not have him who would willingly visit all the deadly wounded; he offers his services without money and without price; he has a well-scented, healing salve, good to heal our wounds, it is his powerful word to instruct us; and his crimson blood to reconcile us, as was said. But they do not desire him; they turn him away with violence, false doctrine, reproach, lying, treason, rebellion, persecution, and murder; as has been fully shown. O, dear Lord! What counsel shall be given to this disobedient, perverse, and blind people?

My worthy reader, we testify the truth in Christ; beware, believe, obey, hope and seek, where and what you will; we are assured that you will find in the word of God, no other remedy for your sins than the one we have pointed out to you, which is Jesus Christ; else the Scriptures must be false.

Thus says Isaiah, "I, even I, am he that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins," Isa. 43:25.

"Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. 53:6.

The angel said to Joseph, “You will call his name Jesus,* for he will save his people from their sins,” Matt. 1:21.

“This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins,” Matt. 28:27.

“Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,” John 1:29

“For he has made him who knew no sin to be sin for us; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2 Cor. 5:21.

Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree,” 1 Pet. 2:24.

“The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin,” 1 John 1:7.

“He loves us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,” Rev. 1:5.

My good readers, look well to yourselves, and do not be deceived; if there were any other remedy for sin than the one pointed out, as related, we might then with propriety say that these and other passages have not rightly directed us, and holy Paul also erred not a little, when he says, “There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,” 1 Tim. 2:5,6.

All those, then, who seek other remedies for their sins, however glorious and holy they may appear, than the only remedy provided by God, deny the Lord’s death, which he died for us, and his innocent blood which he shed for us; and they are those of whom the Lord complains and says, through his prophet Jeremiah, “My people have committed two evils; they have

* [CHCoG: Jesus, which is the Greek from Joshua in the Hebrew and Jeshua in the original Aramaic, means *Jehovah is Salvation*.]

forsaken me, the Fountain of living waters, and have hewn themselves out cisterns that can hold no water,” Jer. 2:13.

All false doctrine goes to deny the true throne of grace, Jesus Christ, who alone is our righteousness, acceptable to God; and all false doctrine goes to the erection of strange Baals [Lords] to be worshipped instead of Christ, as said before.

Behold, beloved sirs, friends and brethren, here you have the salutary truth and the only ground of the Lord’s Supper plainly and briefly set before you, what it is, for whom it is ordained, and what it teaches, and represents to us with its mysteries and significations.

You have also a view of the anti-christian supper, with its dreadful abominations, by which the Lord’s Supper is destroyed, and the kingdom of anti-christ is fortified, and is placed instead of God’s throne, by which, alas! So many hundreds of thousands of poor souls were and are yet daily deceived; on account of which so many pious hearts are so slanderously spoken of and reproached by the learned, and so dreadfully murdered and slain in some cities, because they renounced this abominable idolatry.

Place these two beside each other; weigh them well by the spirit, word and ordinances of the Lord, and you will find, if you do at all believe that the word of God is true, to what abomination and frightful idolatry the world has come, and that we have, according to our feeble abilities, plainly explained to you the immovable foundation of truth from the word of God.

Praise the Most High, all of you who fear the Lord, that he has manifested his unbounded love and grace toward us poor sinners, in this dreadful time of unbelief; that he let shine out of darkness the clear light of the holy gospel, and the true knowledge of his son Jesus Christ, which was [mostly] concealed for several centuries in this dark Egypt, under the thick clouds of the anti-christian abominations, 2 Cor. 4:6. Therefore, let us be

vigilant to it, and diligently walk in it, so that thick darkness may not again cover us, as the prophet says, Jer. 13:16.

O, my dear reader, rightly learn to know Jesus Christ, who has ordained this Holy Supper and the breaking of bread for his disciples and all christians. Believe the glorious and unspeakable gifts of his grace. Fear, love, honor, and serve him; walk in godly union, love and peace with your neighbor, even as this Supper, with its representation, testifies and admonishes; die to your wicked flesh, crucify its unclean lusts; in all things lead a life according to the spirit, word, and example of the Lord; so shall your Supper redound to his praise, and your souls shall have life everlasting.

SHUNNING BABYLON.

We further teach and admonish from the word of God that all true children of God, who are regenerated from the incorruptible living seed of the divine word, who have separated themselves, according to the Scriptures, from the idolatrous generation, and yielded to the yoke and cross of Christ, and who are able to judge between true and false doctrines, between Christ and anti-christ, must shun, according to Scripture, all seducing and idolatrous preachers with their doctrines, sacraments and worship. They must avoid all, of every doctrine, faith, sect, creed and name, who are not found in the pure doctrine of Christ, and in the scriptural usage of his sacraments, because they have neither calling, doctrine, nor life, according to the word of God, but are sent by anti-christ, and ordained in his employment and service.

Because they not only fail to observe and acknowledge the pure doctrine of Christ, and the established usages of the apostolic church in relation to the holy sacraments, but because they also have changed them into vain confusion, abominable and open idolatry, as has been stated.

Because they have deceitfully mingled the light froth of man's doctrine with the fair, precious gold of the divine word; and the pure wine with the unclean waters of their foolish wisdom.

Because they so shamefully censure, abuse, assail, and would willingly root out and burn the city of God, the city of righteousness and everlasting peace; the lovely Jerusalem with its sacred temple, the house of prayer, and rule in it with their spiritual money-changers, Pharisaic commands, and enchanting traffic.

Because like Belshazzar, they, in their Babylonian idolatries and drunkenness, so miserably misuse and degrade the precious vessels and utensils of the Lord, the precious souls whom he has consecrated with his crimson blood, and by whom the *true* service of the Lord should be performed, Rev. 1:5; Dan. 5:3.

Because like Herod, they mock Christ, the everlasting Wisdom of God, as a fool arrayed in a fool's garment; and his holy apostles, the witnesses of his eternal truth, they regard as useless talkers and liars, and thrust them out with scorn.

In short, they preach and lay before the poor people, lies for truth; darkness for light; death for life, and anti-christ for Christ.

Therefore it is unfit that the bride of Christ, who stands prepared to hear only the bridegroom's voice, the dear children of God who have their feet washed and their garments cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, John 3:29; who are established upon the immovable foundations of the apostles and prophets, upon the

precious corner stone, Christ Jesus, should again hear the strange voice and doctrines of anti-christ, again defile their garments, and in faith, doctrines, worship, and life accord with anti-christ. They who do so, if they do not repent, are condemned by the Scriptures and adjudged to death.

This we teach according to our limited talents, with all earnestness, as much as in us is, not out of contempt, as the Lord knows, nor yet out of obstinacy, caprice, or party stubbornness, as the world ascribes to us. Oh no! God preserve all his own from party spirit. But we so preach out of the true fear of the Lord and the great distress and burden of our consciences. God's pressing word, and love for your poor souls, urge us, as may, through the grace of God, be seen with more clearness hereafter.

SENDING PREACHERS.

According to the Scriptures, the calling and sending of true preachers were performed in two ways; some were called by God alone, without any human instrumentality, as was the case with the prophets and apostles. Others were called through the medium of the pious, as may be seen from Acts 1:23-26; 1 Tim. 3:7. We hope no one will be so ignorant, who is otherwise of a candid and rational mind, but that he will know that the whole Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, were written for our instruction, admonition and correction; and that they are the true sceptre and rule by which the Lord's kingdom, house, church and congregation must be governed and adjusted, 2 Cor. 3:16. Every thing contrary to Scripture, whether it be in doctrines, faith, sacraments, worship or conduct, should be measured by this

infallible rule, and demolished by this just and divine sceptre, without any respect to persons, and brought to nothing. Therefore would we, your willing servants and associates, of like mortal nature with you, each one in the office and station to which he is called, humbly admonish you, in all love, that you would reflect on the salvation of your immortal souls and would rightly examine the *sending* or *calling*, the doctrine and conduct of the overseers, pastors and preachers of your churches. Examine them by the aid of the spirit of the Lord, and by the doctrines and customs of the apostles, because you have persecuted and destroyed so many pious godly Christians, by the idols' houses of the ungodly, which are supported by the bloody havoc and cries of the [supposedly] learned. Yes, we do not doubt that if you follow our advice with a sincere heart, you will soon perceive that we, miserable men, do nothing more in this matter than the word of God teaches and enjoins; and that your preachers are not the servants of Christ, but hirelings, hypocrites, deceivers and mockers, concerning whom the Scriptures warn us, on every side; and represent them under many evil names, John 10:12; Matt. 3:4.

Candid reader! Let this be to you a true and unwavering rule, that all who rightly preach Christ and his word, and thereby bring forth obedient children to the Lord must have been called through one of the aforementioned means. They must have been brought into the vineyard of the Lord, through the true and unfeigned love of God and man, through the power of the Holy Spirit. They must improve the talent of grace which they have received from God, they must rebuke sin, and teach faith and righteousness, without any respect of person, they must set forth the word and praise of the Lord; they must faithfully perform the work and service of the Lord and bring the gathered sheaves into his barn and the acquired wealth into his treasury. Such a shepherd was the faithful Moses; for when Jehovah informed him that Israel

had made a molten calf, he hastened from the mountain, and when he heard the tumult and saw the multitude playing and dancing, a provoked zeal burned in his heart, so that he cast down and broke the stone tables which the Lord had written with his own finger. He cared neither for life nor death, but rushed forth among the idolatrous people, and rebuked them by his word and by the sword, because they gave to a molten creature the honor of Almighty God, who with such love gloriously effected their deliverance from Egypt, Exo. 32:7.

When Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, a man full of the Holy Spirit, saw the false worship of the people, he hazarded his life, and stood forth for the honor of the Lord. He rebuked his brethren, erring Israel, and said, "Why do you transgress the commandments of Jehovah, that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken Jehovah, He also has forsaken you." 2 Chr. 24:20.

Also the worthy prophet Jeremiah was burdened with much suffering and cares. He was much troubled on account of his faithful services, and had determined in his heart to prophesy no more in the name of Jehovah; but when he saw that the people were ungodly and neither acted nor spoke aright, he said, "God's word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay," Jer. 20:9.

Again, also holy Paul says, "Woe is unto me, if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me," 1 Cor. 9:17.

Behold, my good reader, all who by such a power are touched in their hearts, who are moved by the Holy Spirit, who are pressed by love to God and man, and urged by the Lord himself, or by his spotless Christian church; or are called to the service of the Lord by an unblameable, truly believing Christian church, to

rightly teach in the house of God; that is the church of Jesus Christ, with sound doctrine, and by pious and unblameable conduct, admonish, rebuke, reprove and comfort them in paternal love; to set forth and administer the Lord's holy baptism and Supper, in a right manner; to repel diligently, with God's word, all deluding and false teachers; and to exclude all evil members from the communion of the godly, &c. To such, the word of Christ is, 'As my Father has sent me, even so I send you;' without such a sending, no one can ever rightly preach the gospel, as Paul says, "How shall they preach except they be sent?" Rom. 10:15.

Yes, it was with this sending and calling that all the prophets, apostles and servants of God came forth. They did not assume the Honor for themselves, as do the preachers of this world; but like Aaron, they were called by God, or, as has been said, by the spotless church. They were brought by the spirit of God, with pious hearts, into his service; they had always esteemed themselves unfit to serve the people of God, or stand forth in such a high and responsible station.

When Moses was called by the Lord, that he might lead out the people, he refused from his heart, he excused himself and declined, because he was of a slow tongue; he did not desire the office to which the Lord had chosen him, yes, he resisted so long that Jehovah was angry, Exo. 4:10-15.

Isaiah was confounded because he was to preach the word of Jehovah. He lamented that he was of unclean lips, till the angel purged them with a coal from off the holy altar, Isa. 6:6.

Jeremiah was called and prepared from his birth by God, to be a prophet; he said, "Ah, Lord Jehovah! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth." Jer. 1:6.

Peter was asked by our Lord three times, if he loved him, before he gave him charge of his sheep, John 21:15.

Paul was called from heaven, and appointed by the Lord himself in the service of the Gospel; for the Lord chose him as suitable for the ministry, Acts 9:3.

Matthias was chosen through the zealous prayers of the church, and the lots of the apostles, to be an apostle in the place of Judas, Acts 1:26.

All who are not sent by God, nor by an unblameable christian church, conformable to the regulations of Christ and the apostles, are not called, as said above. Such are not called by the Holy Spirit; by the pure, unfeigned love of God and their brethren; and with a correct knowledge and zeal for the divine word; but they enter upon it with a temporal, sensual life, seeking man's favor, praise, money and profit. They will never gather fruit in the vineyard of the Lord, though they may be learned in language, eloquent and esteemed as great and excellent men. But all that they attempt is lost labor. They will rise too early, or go out too late, their calling is powerless, their service is vain, their labor without fruit, yes, it is nothing but sowing by the way, and beating against the wind; for no one can serve in this high and holy office, conformably to God's will, except those whom the Lord of the vineyard has made worthy and fit, by the spirit of his grace.

Since this sending is the true sending and calling, which is taught in the Scriptures, as has been observed, we faithfully counsel the reader that in the pure fear of God, he would mark what kind of people their teachers are; of whom, in what way, and to what they are called. For it is manifest that some of them are useless, haughty, lustful men; some are avaricious, usurers, liars, deceivers, others again are drunkards, gamblers, licentious, open seducers, idolaters, &c., concerning whom it stands written, If they do not repent, they shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:9,10. Some also, are idle profligates, young and haughty, wholly unlearned in the Scriptures; and were anointed and shaven

by anti-christ, when they obtain a little knowledge of the Latin tongue, as if the qualifications for the ministry and for the care of our souls were not to be founded upon godliness and the gifts of grace, but upon language. Oh no, my reader, no, their foundation must be sought for more deeply.

Besides this, those so chosen desire nothing but a sensual, corrupt, carnal life; dishonest, filthy lucre and benefices, which up to this time anti-christ and his servants have collected together and multiplied by means of sorcery, theft and robbery.*

They are only called by carnal love, favor and faction; one has a son, another a brother, a third a favored friend, a fourth is made willing by money and gifts.

They are also with a similar spirit installed and established in their office; to wit, with eating, drinking, gormandizing and luxury; with pompous greeting, choir letters, appellations, presentations, investitures, and similar anti-christian titles.

But by whom are they thus called? By the [true] church? No. Christ's church knows no such callings, customs, practices and teachers, but they are called by the assemblies of the impenitent, the haughty, avaricious, fornicators, gamblers, drunkards and idolaters, who neither know God nor his word, but who abuse, persecute and hate all christian truth, and walk after the lusts of the flesh.†

Again, to what are they called? That they may preach the pure word of God? That they may go before the poor people, with doctrines and conduct consistent with the commands of Scripture? O, no; but that they may teach the doctrines and commandments of men; that they may withstand the holy truth, and betray the pious and godly, who refrain from the broad way,

* That is what the priests seek.

† Observe by whom the priests are chosen.

into the hands of the blood-thirsty; and in this manner assiduously serve and support the dominion of hell.

My beloved reader, why do I complain so much? Because it is yet much worse than I can write. One blind man calls another; one idolater another; one ungodly man, another. It is as the prophet said, deceivers, liars, drunkards, and gluttons are good prophets for this people, Mic. 2:11.

O, sensual preachers! You who with Korah, Dathan and Abiram ran uncalled, particularly you who know that your calling and conduct are not of the word and Spirit of God, judge your hearts by the word of the Lord, fear his rigid punishment and severe sentence, and reflect how the aforementioned persons, for the same reason, were fearfully destroyed by Jehovah before all Israel, Num. 16:32.

It suits perverted fleshly ease to live in voluptuousness here upon earth, with fattened bodies, with gloves on the hands, with ostentatious show, to be greeted by men as doctor, lord and master. But when the messenger of death shall knock at the door of your souls and say, “give an account,” you will no longer remain as stewards and hirelings; then you must appear before the throne of the eternal Majesty, and [see] the poor miserable souls which you have led out of the true way of Christ, with your lying mouths, your unbelieving, blind hearts, sensual, corrupt bodies, false and deceiving doctrine, idolatries, sorceries, and ungodly wanton lives. O, where will you conceal yourselves from the wrath of God? Then shall you cry, O, you mountains fall upon us, and you hills cover us, Rev. 6:16. O, then you will know what kind of calling you had; what kind of life you led, that you served no other God than your belly, the devil, and your selfish evil flesh, that you came uncalled, that you have sought nothing but the milk, wool and flesh of the sheep, and that one blind man has led another, till both have fallen into the abyss of the eternal wrath of Almighty God, and the torments of hell.

O, precious souls, awake and fear God, for the hour draws near that your momentary laugh will be changed into an everlasting weeping; these short lived joys to eternal darkness, and this easy, carnal life to endless death. Jude says, “Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.” Again, to them “is reserved the blackness of darkness forever,” Jude 1:11, 13.*

Behold, beloved sirs, friends and brethren, we openly declare that the sending and calling of your preachers are neither of God nor his word, but are from anti-christ, the dragon and the beast; that they are not called to preach the word of our Lord, by the Spirit of God, and the church, but they are called and urged by their lusts with the priests of Jeroboam, to worship the golden calf, 2 Chr. 13:8,9. They do not enter in by the right door, therefore, the Scriptures testify that they are thieves and robbers, John 10:8.

Since we have been saved out of the mouths of the lions and bears of the pit, and out of the snares of concealed thieves and robbers, through the great Shepherd of the sheep, the High Priest of our souls, Christ Jesus, and are now upon the chosen and fruitful mountain of Israel, and the green luxuriant pastures of the holy word (the Lord be eternally thanked), our hungering consciences have been fed with the food of eternal life. It must

* [CHCoG: Verse 12 puts this in context: “These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;” As Christ says, God will destroy them both body and soul in the Lake of Fire. Mat. 10:28. In the first death, our body dies; in the second death, both their body and soul are destroyed. The blackness will last forever for them, for they will never be resurrected from it, and cannot be, as there will be NOTHING left of them. Mal. 4:1-3]

ever be a condemnable folly to forsake such a true shepherd, and such precious pastures, and again enter upon the barren and waste deserts, under the false shepherd who does nothing else but rob and deprive God of his glory, and ruin and murder our poor miserable souls, John 10:10.

This I have said particularly in relation to the *Popish priests*. What the calling and sending of the Lutherans and Zwinglians is, by what spirit they are moved, what they seek, and what fruits of repentance they show by their doctrines and sacraments, we willingly leave all the godly to judge.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE PREACHERS.

As I have presented to the reader the first part in relation to the sending and calling of a true preacher, according to the word of God, I will now, through the grace of God, present in like manner the second part, relating to the doctrine; for there is but little difference between their calling and their doctrine, as the calling is, even so, most commonly, is the doctrine.

Where the spirit of God urges or moves [one] to preach, there will the word be incorruptibly taught in the power of God; and upright children of the spirit will thereby be born. But where flesh and blood calls, there will a carnal doctrine be taught and carnal disciples will be made, for that like produces like is incontrovertible. I deem it unnecessary here to prove this with much scripture, for their actions bear testimony.

The Scriptures plainly show how a preacher rightly called by the word of God is to rightly teach that word without perverting glosses, without any mingling of leaven; as Peter says, "If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God," 1 Peter 4:11.

They are the children of the Holy Spirit who speak the word of the Spirit, as Christ said, "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you," Matt. 10:20. "For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God," John 3:34. To preach the word salutarily and unblamably, is one of the highest and greatest commands enjoined by Christ. He said, "Go in all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark 16:15.

The Gospel, the word of God, preached unmingled, in the power of the spirit, is the only right, true seed from which are born the truly believing and obedient children of God. If the church of Christ brings forth children from the doctrine of man, and not from God's word, she is not faithful unto Christ, and her children are not of his seed.

Therefore nothing else may be preached in Christ's kingdom and house, the church, except her King and husband's own commands and words, according to which she and all her servants must conform.

This command and word (I say), Christ commanded all true messengers and preachers to observe, as he spoke; *Preach the gospel*. He does not say, preach the doctrines and commands of man; preach councils and customs; preach glossy ordinances and the opinions of the learned, but he says, "**Preach the gospel**," and "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28:20.

My faithful reader, observe that all the true servants of God, both of the Old and New Testaments, taught nothing but God's word, as may be seen and read in many places in the Scriptures.

Moses was found faithful to God in all his house. He regulated and taught nothing which God had not before commanded him, Num. 12:7; Heb. 3:2.

Isaiah, and all of the other prophets, testified in many places what kind of doctrine they taught, and from whom they had received it; and said, Thus says Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; thus spoke Jehovah of Hosts, again the mouth of Jehovah has spoken it. Paul did not dare speak of any thing which Christ had not wrought through him, Rom. 15:18. Yes, Christ himself did not teach his word, but the word of his father, for he said, My doctrine is not mine, but is that of him who sent me, “All things that I have heard from my Father, I have made known unto you,” John 7:10; 15:15. Since then the true messengers of God [have] taught nothing but the word of the Lord, which is the only doctrine from which our souls can obtain eternal life, as Jehovah said, Deu. 8:3. So it is easily here to mark and judge what kind of teachers they are who direct the poor uncultivated people to legends, histories, fables, holydays, images, holy water, tapers, palms, confessions, pilgrimages, masses, matins and vespers; who teach of purgatory, vigils, times, bulls, offerings, and satisfaction for souls and sins, who also ‘make’ a piece of bread and a drink of wine to be the essential body and blood of Christ; who teach and say that when they have spoken these words, *Hoc est enim corpus meum* (For this is my body), the Lord Jesus, willing or not willing, **must** descend unto their idolatrous hands, even though the Heavens should rend asunder, and the earth crumble down. O, blasphemy!*

O, dear Lord! My heart trembles in my body, that I must relate and mention such terrible abominations. But because the simple plain people, who do not guard themselves against such seducers; who, consequently, are bound hand and foot, and are blindly rushed into eternal death, and the abyss of hell, by these useless men, therefore I cannot remain silent, but must disclose this, through undissembled love to God and your souls. Who

* [CHCoG: This farce continued until the 1970s; since then their priests are also permitted to say their ‘magic words’ in the local language.]

knows: God may give grace that you may be prevailed upon to hear, your eyes opened to see, and your hearts to understand that you may be freed from the snares of the devil, by which you are taken.

Yes, my dear reader, they have made lords, princes, and the world drunk from their cup, Rev. 17:2, and have completely bewitched them, so that all who turn from their shame, and would not pervert the honor of their Savior, by a piece of bread, all who shun false teachers, and desire the salutary administration of the Lord's Supper, as said above, will be upbraided by all men, as profaners of the holy Sacrament, and they must suffer and be banished, as degraded and accursed heretics.

O, blind leader! You, who during your life have not rightly understood one sentence of the word of the Lord, nor have received one ray from his spirit, but have trodden on the kingdom of God with your feet, and have thrust it from you with your horns, Eze. 34:21. How truly are you associates of those of whom it stands written, that they say, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves," Isa. 28:15; again, "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness," Isa. 5:20. "Woe unto you, for you shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men," said Christ, Matt. 23:13, and make the poor souls err from the way. Yet again, Woe unto you!

However, I am not much astonished that such persons teach such shameful doctrine, since they have neither known Christ nor his word, but they hold and teach all things as they were taught from youth up, out of the old usages, and the papistical laws. But that which grieves me most is that those also who now are aware in part of the hidden whoredom of the Babylonian woman, and have put from them some of her abominations, yet cling to human

sophistry, so that they can neither be moved nor taught, with the powerful word of God, with the unblameable lives, the candid professions, or the innocent blood of so many godly saints. Nevertheless, some of you have, at times, yielded to the truth with stopped mouths and subdued hearts, but still you do not cease to upbraid, defame, and slander, with envious tongues and slanderous lips, the bright, clear truth of Christ, and the pious children of God, before your carnal, blind churches which are of a like calling with yourselves. This your writers also do, as may be seen and heard every where. Besides, I fear that they are not less guilty than the papists in moving the lords, princes and ruling powers, by commissions, complaints, revilings, outcries, and writings, to persecute the Lamb of God, and his chosen, Rev. 17:8; and to cause an uproar when their deceiving leaven, particularly the calf worship of their infant baptism, and their unfounded supper, is rejected. Let each one behold for himself and learn to know them rightly. I know the truth; that they are without the Spirit, the sending, or the word of Christ; for I am aware of how malicious they generally are toward those who are rightly led, who fear the Lord with all their heart and who would gladly become christians. In their doctrines and deeds they seek, not less than the papists, friendship of man, honor, pomp, bounties, fine houses, and an easy licentious life.

O, my beloved reader, these are not the teachers who lead many to righteousness, and who shall shine as the light of heaven and as the stars, now and in eternity, Dan. 12:13. For I do not know where a single congregation can be found which they have led, with their doctrines and conduct, to repenting lives and to the worship of God. Their great clamor is against the pope and his cardinals, bishops, priests and monks. Moreover, all those who gladly seek the best for their poor souls must be upbraided by them as profaners of the sacraments, anabaptists, fanatics, and

heretics, who through the word of God, reprove their deceiving doctrines, idolatrous sacraments, and idle lives.

Yes, when they can find but one (though cut off), who was before united with the people of God, but who has now fallen into some vice, they judge and sentence *all* the godly by this *one*; Behold! They say, what manner of people are they. They seek nothing so much as to find cause of censure; therefore, they look upon Judas, but not upon Peter, Andrew and John; they do not regard what manner of people they are themselves, nor what kind of disciples they have.

Besides, it is nothing but the grace, favor, mercy, and the love of God that they teach and preach to their covetous, proud, gorgeous, impure, drunken, and impenitent church, not observing that such as they are cannot inherit the kingdom of God, as the whole Scriptures testify; they also strengthen the hands of the wicked, so that no one repents of his wickedness, as the prophet lamented.

O, you useless unprofitable teachers, who are believed to bear the vessels of the Lord, these my words are to you! Why do you declaim so much of faith and love, whose fruit you so greatly hate and dislike? If you have the fear and unfeigned love of God, let them appear and be made manifest through your words. Say, beloved preachers! Where is your christian humility, your godly, christian zeal, pleasure, peace and joy in Christ Jesus?

Where is your mercy which you [should] show? Where are the naked whom you have clothed, the hungry whom you have fed, and the needy whom you have entertained? Matt. 25:41-43. Where are the lost whom you have again sought, the wounded whom you have bound up, and the sick whom you have healed? Eze. 34:4. Where is your unblameable, pious life which is from God? That which you preach, perform and do, is for the most part idle hypocrisy.

Some of you approve in some degree, of a pious, christian life, preach also much of Christ, of his merits, spirit and grace, and [yet] are yourselves, manifestly those who lead a gross, carnal life, who crucify Christ anew, grieve his spirit, and despise his grace, as may be seen.

O, preachers, preachers! How aptly has the Holy Spirit likened you to dry wells and empty clouds from which no water can be obtained, and to unfruitful trees from which no fruit can be taken, 2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 1:12. I do not know to what you may be more suitably compared, than to a woman who lives in all manner of shame and wantonness, and yet talks much about modesty, decency and virtue. Should her words not be regarded as mockery? Might it not be said, why do you talk of modesty and chastity, since you are full of all manner of immodesty and shame?

We are well aware that you have demolished some of the little idols of Babylon, such as the Roman ablution, the invocation of departed saints, vile purification, abstaining from meats, and the like; also self-righteousness, idolatry, and other superstitions, but, alas, the horrible blasphemy and abominations are still retained; such as accursed unbelief, obstinacy, earthly-mindedness, unscriptural infant baptism, the idolatrous supper, and the impenitent, old life which is of the flesh.*

* [CHCoG: To this list can be added their universal observation of Rome's Good Friday-Easter Sunday abominations, which deny that Jesus kept the Sign of Jonah, requiring him to spend three nights and three days in the tomb. Mat. 12:29-40. Linked to this is their refusal to observe Jehovah God's weekly Sabbath and annual Holy Days, commanded in Lev 23, their unwillingness to honour our Father's Name of Jehovah, and their insistence on retaining the papacy's pagan trinity. Learn the truth in: [*God's Calendar and the Sign of Jonah, What is God's Name, Jeshua the Messiah \(Jesus Christ\), Is He the Son of God, or Part of a Trinity?*](#) Sadly, most of these aberrations began

Therefore, we testify with the truth and declare that you are not ambassadors of God nor teachers of Christ. "I listened and heard, but they do not speak aright. No man repented of his wickedness, saying, 'What have I done?' Everyone turned to his own course, as the horse rushes into the battle.", Jer. 8:6, and have pastured yourselves under the name and appearance of the evangelical shepherds of the Lord, and have led to destruction so many hundreds of thousands of souls, through your wanton doctrine, idolatrous sacraments, and carnal lives.

But the teachers who are sent by God, and who have been rightly called, teach the word of God in purity, abide in its holy ordinances, and live (after their weakness) unblamably, for they are born by God, and are taught and moved by his Holy Spirit. They seek neither gold, nor possessions, neither an easy life nor earthly applause, they wait upon their enjoined duties with all earnestness, they fear God from the heart, seek their neighbor with fidelity; they are armed with the weapons of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left, Rom. 6:7. They deal without respect to persons. The powerful, sharp sword of the divine word cuts out of their mouth; it is a shining lantern in their hands; they are taught in righteousness, are full of all spiritual wisdom; they divide the good from the evil; the holy from the unholy, and the clean from the unclean. Eze 22:26. In short, they shine in doctrine and conduct, even as from the beginning till the present time, it has been written and remarked of all true prophets, apostles and servants of God.

O, dear Lord, how lovely are those pastors and teachers who seek nothing else but the extension of the kingdom of God; who rightly preach the word of repentance and grace that they may win many souls; and for this end, they expose their reputation, houses, property, persons and lives.

These are they, who, with Christ, the chief shepherd, gather together and feed his lambs; but the others are those who scatter and destroy them. They are prophets, but not of God; they preach, but not out of the Lord's mouth. They strengthen the hands of the ungodly. They destroy the souls who should have everlasting life, and encourage those who must forever die; and this they do for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread. They preach to the people peace when there is no peace. Therefore, they shall stand in shame, who follow such abominations, although they yet are not ashamed and yet forbear to blush, Eze. 13:16.

Behold, dear reader, since they so shamefully deprive Christ of his honor and gain, and scatter his sheep, and, with the sword of their deceiving doctrines, destroy the poor souls who are so greatly loved by the Lord, for whom he so earnestly seeks, and whom he so dearly purchased. Since they so enviously war against the word and ordinances of the Lord, we say and teach with Christ, "Leave them alone; they are blind leaders of the blind." Guard yourselves against such false prophets; for though they come in the appearance of sheep, they are nevertheless, inwardly ravening wolves. They are the strangers whose voice Christ's sheep do not know. They are those of whom Paul warns us and says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them; for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple," Rom. 16:17,18.

Again, John says, "Whosoever transgresses, and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God. If there come any unto you, and do not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, neither bid him God speed, for he that bids him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 1:9,10,11.

The word of God abundantly exhorts us that we should leave such and beware of them; shun their voice and retreat from them, and not take them into our houses, as has been said. If we are Christ's sheep and the children of the Holy Spirit; so must we ever hear Christ's voice, and follow after and obey the monitions of the Holy Spirit. Reflect how sincerely holy Paul admonished the Philippians that they should guard against strife, evil doers, and the concision.

He taught the true servants of God that they should shun those who failed no further (as it appears) than that they out of zeal, without knowledge, held fast to the circumcision which they had received from their fathers, and would not admit that it should be abolished through Christ, for this he sharply reproves them. How much more earnestly it becomes us to beware of them who deceive the whole world, who upbraid and persecute the godly, and crucify all truth, [and stand] against all false teachers and blasphemers of God, who urge, institute and practice all manner of idolatrous and abominable doctrine.

THE CONDUCT OF PREACHERS.

As you have just heard the ground of the calling and doctrines of the preachers, we will proceed, and through the grace of God point out by the Scriptures how the *true* apostles, overseers, teachers and pastors, in the church of Christ, should conduct themselves in their deportment and lives; it is not enough that a man appears to speak much of the word of the Lord, but what he says must also be maintained by devout and unblameable conduct, as the Scriptures teach.

Thus says Paul, “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” 1 Cor. 9:27. If it becomes the hearers and disciples to lead an unblameable life, how much more does it become teachers, because they rule the hearers and are their overseers; as Paul says, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversion,” Heb. 13:7.

He also admonishes Timothy about this, and says, “Let no man despise your youth; but be an example to the believers, in word, in conduct, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,” 1 Tim. 4:12. In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works; in doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, &c., Tit. 2:7. For it is undoubtedly proper, if any one teaches and reproves others that he first himself be rightly taught and unblameable, as Paul teaches, “If a man desires the office of an overseer, he desires a good work: An overseer then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, not a striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that rules his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must have a good report from them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil; he must be sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word, as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers; even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things,” 1 Tim. 3:1-11; Titus 1:8,9.

Behold dear reader, it is requisite that every preacher and teacher, who would rightly govern and rule in the church of God

be thus qualified; for if any one were to reprove and teach others, and is himself not blameless and is ignorant; he will justly have to hear; Why do you teach others and not teach yourself first! You teach a man should not steal, and you do steal. You say a man should not commit adultery, and you do. You abhor idols, yet you commit sacrilege. You boast of the law of God; and dishonor God by breaking the law, Rom. 2:21-23.

All those thus called, who are in sound doctrine, and unblameable in life, may teach, exhort, reprove, root up, and build in the name of the Lord; their labors will not be fruitless, as may be seen in the case of Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, John, and with all the true prophets, apostles and servants of God, who preached the word unblamably in the power of the Spirit.

Their doctrine cuts like a sharp edged sword, for it has power, it is fruitful, has spirit and energy, as the prophet says, "As the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and returns not thither, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," Isa. 55:10,11.

Yes, all those who enter the vineyard of the Lord with such a sending or calling, and with such a spirit, doctrine and conduct, as said, are the shepherds of whom it is written, "I will give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding," Jer. 3:15.

They are the teachers who turn many to righteousness; and they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, as the stars forever, Dan. 12:3.

They are the spiritual streams, and the rivers of the paradise of Christ, which issue from the fountains of the paradise of God, to irrigate and fertilize the whole country, Gen. 2:10-14.

They are the spiritual posts and pillars in the court of the tabernacle of Moses with hangings of fine twined linen, Exo. 27:9.

They are the three score valiant men, of the valiant of Israel, who are around Solomon's bed; they all hold swords; being expert in war; every man with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night, Cant. 3: 7,8.

They are the seven horns or trumpets, of the golden years, before whose sounds, teaching and preaching, the walls of Jericho fell, that is all false doctrine, all powers and dominions raised up against the true Joshua, Jesus Christ, and his people, are brought low, Josh. 6:10.

They are the beautiful messengers of peace, who preach the gospel of grace, favor, mercy, love, and peace, and bring glad tidings of good things, to us, poor, miserable, troubled sinners, Isaiah 52:7; Rom. 10:15.

They are seven mighty mountains, whereupon grow roses and lilies, whose sweet scent refreshes with joy all who fear the Lord, 2 Esd. 2:19.

They are the splendid crown of twelve stars of the woman, pregnant and in travail, Rev. 12:1, 2.

They are the walls of the new and heavenly Jerusalem, based upon the twelve foundations, that is upon the ground and doctrine of the twelve apostles, Rev. 21:14.

See, worthy reader, with such and similar glorious images and parables, are all the pious pastors and teachers honored in the Scriptures, whom the Holy Spirit has ordained as overseers in his church, congregation and house.

These may say with holy Paul, Follow us as we are the followers of Christ, “for our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile, but as we were allowed by God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, who tries our hearts; for neither at any time, did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from men,” 2 Thes. 2:3-6.

I repeat it, These are they who gather with Christ what has been scattered, bind up the wounded, and heal the sick, for they are influenced by the Spirit of the Lord and urged by unfeigned love. They are vigilant, and assiduous in the discharge of entrusted duties. They fight daily with the weapon of obedience. They tear down, break and destroy all that which is against the word of God, not by external power, with sword and spear, but by the preaching of the holy word, in power and spirit, with the word of the Lord. They till, sow, water and plant. They cut down what is ripe. They gather their grain and sheaves, and carry them into the Lord’s barn, and their fruits will abide unto eternal life.

Since the Scriptures require such teachers, as mentioned before, it is then indispensable that we weigh the conduct of your preachers in the balance, and determine their actions, by the plummet of the divine word, before your own eyes, that you may discover how much they are wanting in their conduct of the pattern of the true overseers, preachers and pastors, spoken of by Paul to Timothy and Titus, in all their lives and actions; and that they are the very reverse, who, without spirit, word, work or truth, but in semblance only, are so called by the world.

It is manifest, beloved reader, that they have changed the meek office of a true overseer, preacher and pastor, which is an office of christian service, and if rightly attended to, is an office full of labor, poverty, trouble, care, reproach, misery, tribulation, cross and affliction, into ungodly gorgeousness and princely

glory, that they may be greatly respected and feared by those whose names are not written in heaven, to this end they appear in splendid robes; are dressed in shining garbs, Rev. 13:8; are called by pompous names, and use in their services crosses, ointments, caps, togas, unclean purifications, and have cloisters, chapels, bells, organs, music, masses, offerings, &c., of which there is not a word to be found in the Scriptures. Under these splendid trappings may plainly be seen the sly, crouching wolf, the earthly, sensual mind, the anti-christian seductions and bloody abominations; for they seek nothing but the favor of men, honor, splendor, sexual predation, idleness, selfishness, gold, silver, gluttony, &c., and allow themselves to be called spiritual doctors, teachers, lords, abbots, guardians, fathers and priors.

Alas! How vastly do they differ from the prophets and apostles in their office, services, examples, usages, lives, and in all they did; who entered the vineyard of the Lord without purse, without money, or much clothing; who were made a spectacle to the whole world; and for Christ's sake were killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter; as may be seen from the Scriptures.

But these have their chests and coffers full, they are waxed rich through the abundance of the Babylonian sorcery, and have become princes on earth, Rev. 18:15. In all things they are blamable, violating female chastity, which is carried on to such an unblushing degree that it cannot be expressed; they are unchaste, unmerciful, malicious, scorners, unfriendly, unrighteous, liars, drunkards, and full of inordinate desires. Their tables are full of uncleanness, as Isaiah the prophet says. Their hearts are full of avarice, and they are malicious towards those who will not contribute to their support. They even prepare war against them, as Micah teaches. They are full of adultery; sit with harlots in their houses; beget children illegitimately. They are unbelieving, refractory, proud, ambitious; do not obey the word of the Lord;

are bound with the cords of the devil, and there are many who have not known the truth, and are a scandal and disgrace to the world. Their dreadful, abominable fruits make this manifest to all. They fight against Christ and his word; hate all the pious; speak reproachfully of all those who seek, love, and fear the Lord with all their hearts. In short, it is impossible to relate all their abominable crimes, lewdness, ungodly deeds, private and public vices, infamy and abominations.

O, dear Lord! How much more have they become the reverse of the upright and true teachers, overseers and pastors, although this proud generation boast that they can bring Christ down from heaven, reconcile God, forgive sins, and that they are the true pillars, heads and eyes of the church.

Although I have written this especially of the Roman priests, the reader should know that I cannot acquit those in any wise, who boast of the word; for with the exception of adultery and fornication, and a few of the abuses of the bread, which are not found with them, they seek and desire, in the common walks of life, unreasonable gain; they idolize baptism and the Holy Supper, and oppress, backbite and slander the pious, about the same as the others do.

Therefore, I fear all who preach for money, and flatter the world, are the spiritual sorcerers of Egypt, 2 Tim. 3:8, priests of the groves, servants of Baal, and prophets of Jezebel, destroyers of Jehovah's vineyard, Jer. 12:10, defilers of the land, Jer. 23:11, blind watchmen and dumb dogs, spoilers of the good pastures, they trouble the clear waters, are devourers of souls, Eze. 22:27, false prophets and ravening wolves, devourers of widows' houses, thieves and murderers, enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things, Phil. 3:18,19, false teachers, founders of sects, cursed children, wandering stars, withered trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

foaming out their own shame, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever, Jude 13; anti-christs, locusts that rose from the bottomless pit, come to hurt those who do not have the seal of God in their foreheads, Rev. 9:4. In short, if they will not repent, they are already condemned according to the Scriptures, Tit. 3:11; Rev. 21:8.

Not that I would judge any one, my good reader, I well know that it is written, Judge not, that you will not be judged; condemn not and you shall not be condemned; but they are judged by him, who says, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," John 12:48.

Whose who do such and similar things, says Paul, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But if any one shall do the works of which Paul speaks, he will not be judged by me, nor by any other man, but by the word of the Lord. Therefore we entreat you to measure the conduct of your preachers with the Scriptures, and you will find by whom they are judged.

O, miserable preachers, whose blindness we may well lament; how much better would it be for you never to have been born. For if you have finished your short, perishable, voluptuous and idle life; and have not repented, as above stated, your portion will be God's eternal wrath, punishment and judgment in the torments, the pains and burnings of hell; woe and death shall be your end, as the Scriptures threaten, Phil. 3:19.

The reason is because you reject Christ, and despise his word, which is everlasting food for the soul, upon which we must eternally subsist. You despise his word because it reproves your vain and frivolous conduct, showing that you are indeed sensual; Of the world, and of the devil, as is evident; and that you so miserably deceive poor souls; and so cruelly hate, slander, reproach and betray all those who sincerely seek the salvation of their souls. You take their property, deprive them of honor, and

life. In great love we admonish, by the word of God, your deceiving teachers, and reprove their ungodly deeds with all discretion, Deu. 8:3; Matt. 4:4.

O, Balaam, Balaam, how long will you so unmercifully kick and cuff the poor ass which has to suffer all the opprobrium, scorn, and disgrace, for the sake of his master's testimony? And never kindly listen to how he answers you in a human voice, and reproves your great folly and error? That he is driven by an angel with a naked sword, namely, by the Spirit and word of the Lord, that he can no longer carry (endure) you in your ungodly deeds.

Well now! Seed of Cain, Korah and Balaam, prepare your defence; lie, cheat, censure, blaspheme, hate, root up, disgrace, and murder as much you can; allege all the councils, authors, and learned teachers who have been [with you] for centuries; appeal to all the lords and princes, emperors, kings and the mighty of the earth. Use all the power, art and cunning that you can command; it will avail you nothing, the Lamb will conquer and gain the victory, the people of God will triumph, not with tangible weapons, but in patience with the Spirit and Word of God. Jerusalem and the temple must be built up, although the Azotus and Sanballat may attempt to hinder it, not with inanimate stones, which are now tread upon in every street with your unclean feet, Neh. 4:6; although all the gates of hell may resist, Babel must be destroyed and laid waste. The ten kings *will* and *must* perform their services. You will gnaw your tongues for pain, bitterly cry and weep on account of the torments of Babel, and say, Alas! alas! That great city was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour such great riches are come to nought; for her sins rose up to heaven, and the Lord remembered her wickedness, Rev. 18:16.

The gospel *will* and *must* be heard; lies must be exposed, and your blind folly made known to all men; although I and my

brethren may be called off by death before this takes place, yet it will undoubtedly happen at the appointed time, which the Holy Spirit so plainly foretold and taught through the worthy disciple, John.

O, stiffnecked, and evil generation, how long will you resist the Holy Spirit? How long will you revile the truth, and prefer lies? How long will your hands drip with the blood of the innocent? Reform your wicked lives, fear God with all your hearts, renounce all your glossy, sensual and carnal doctrine, come forward with us, treat us according to the word of God, that the gospel may be rightly preached and maintained by a pious and blameless life. O, if you would do this, no innocent blood would be shed, and the truth would be made known.

But we are afraid it will be as the prophet said, "The wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand," Dan. 12:10. For it is the custom of all the sects, who are out of Christ and his word, to defend their foundations, faith and actions with the sword. The Romans, the Arians, the Circumcellions, the Lutherans, the Zwinglians, and the Munsterites, are our witnesses; but Christ's people suffer and forbear.

Is it not a grievous error that these poor people want to be called Christians, and are guilty of such abominable things, such as exterminating, robbing, apprehending, burning, torturing, murdering, &c., under pretences, as if the kingdom of Christ, the glory of the Lord, the word and truth of God, were to be defended and maintained with such horrible disgrace?

Alas, no! You miserable men, no. All who are moved by the spirit of Christ know of no sword but the word of the Lord; their weapons are powerful, fervent prayer, a long-suffering and patient heart, strong, immoveable faith, a living hope, and an unblameable life, by which the gospel of the kingdom, the word

of peace, is to be promulgated, and to be defended against the gates of hell.

Beloved reader, if you have the fear of God, then learn rightly to know your overseers, prophets, pastors and teachers, and remember what is written, "Come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and do not touch the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. 6:17,18; and again, "Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues," Rev. 18:4. Consider that the mouth of the Lord said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: you shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Matt. 7:15,16. They are the salt which has lost its savor, and is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under the foot of men, as the Lord says, Matt. 5:13.

In short, they are those of whom Paul warned and said, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power of God; from such turn away," 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Again, thus you see that your preachers are such persons as described, and that the Scriptures abundantly admonish and command that we shall forsake them, fear them, avoid and flee from them, &c. And this is the reason why we openly teach *not* to hear their seducing doctrines, *not* to use their sacraments, and to have *nothing* to do with their false worship.

Rather say, what godliness can Israel bring from Assyria, Egypt, or from Babylon?

How can the true service be found with the priests of Baal? How can you be taught in divine way to righteousness, by those who are ignorant of it themselves?

How can you learn Christ from anti-christ; and the word of God from false prophets?

How can you be blessed by the cursed, and be rightly led by the blind? How will you draw water from dry fountains, and gather fruit from withered trees? 2 Pet. 2:17.

How can you be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils?

How can you drink both of the Lord's cup and the devil's cup, and be in the communion of Christ and of anti-christ? 2 Cor. 10:21.

You cannot serve two masters who are opposed to each other; you must love the one and hate the other, or else you will hold to the one and despise the other. You must be for Christ or against him, you will gather with him, or destroy in opposition to him, Matt. 6:24.

Since we, by the grace of God, so plainly see how your preachers are sent, see their doctrine and lives, how they go without being called, falsify the word of God, lead a wanton, sensual life, deceive the poor people; and being so abundantly admonished by the Scriptures that we should forsake, avoid, and shun such preachers, because they are so diametrically opposed to Christ and his word, and we desire to be obedient to the voice of our shepherd in this matter as it becomes all the pious of Christ, for the kingdom is promised to the obedient, as the Scriptures say, "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the

kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father,” Matt. 7:21.

And we also, agreeably to the contents of God’s word, have departed from their doctrine, sacraments and service, and this we testify both by word and deed, with possessions and blood, before lords and princes, in cities and in the country, before you, and the world, as an admonition, doctrine and instruction, so that you all, both teachers and hearers, might awaken, to reflect on the truth, repent and come out from the kingdom and fellowship of anti-christ, and enter the kingdom and communion of Christ; and thus extricate your poor souls from the snares of unbelief, that you may be rescued, preserved and eternally saved.

For we will sooner endure, in our mortal bodies, misery, poverty, tribulation, hunger, thirst, heat, cold, bonds and death, and adhere to the word of the Lord, than lead secure easy lives with the world, and for the sake of a short and temporal life, ruin our souls.

We think with holy Peter that we should rather obey God than man; and with virtuous Susanna, it is better to fall into the hands of man, than into the hands of God.* All who fear the Lord may read and judge.

* [CHCoG: As noted previously, it is far better for us to be *in* the hands of God, as He loves us and is merciful.]

COUNTER ARGUMENTS OF BABYLON AND ITS BUILDERS, WITH THEIR REPLICATIONS.

Beloved reader, although we have clearly shown you the difference between true and false preachers, and why we should not hear them, we hope that the god-fearing, who acknowledge the word of the Lord to be true, might fully comprehend this **GROUND AND TRUTH**; still we find some among those preachers, who partly know that their cause cannot stand the test of the Scripture.

Nevertheless, not being born by God, nor fearing him but seeking unlawful gain, the world and ease, they have garbled a variety of scriptural passages, by which they persuade the simple, and those who dread the cross of Christ, that it is lawful to hear their doctrine and attend their church services, and this they do in order to live at ease and enjoy good times.

In the first place, they say that Christ said, “The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you to observe, that observe and do; but do not do after their works,” Matt. 23:3. From which they conclude that as the Scribes and Pharisees were sitting in the seat of Moses, and mingling leaven with the unleavened lump, of which Christ warned his disciples, saying, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, they also now sit in Christ’s seat, although they are in their doctrine and lives not upright and free from guilt; that therefore we are to hear them, so far as they preach the word of God, but not to do after their works.

To which we reply: First we ask them whether they and the Pharisees are one or not? If they answer yes, they must then be their own judges, and decide that they are of those who crucified Christ, stoned Stephen, beat the apostles, persecuted the saints,

and they are of those who are threatened with eternal woe; they may well then be afraid and fear the Lord and his judgments. If they answer no, then they can prove nothing with this passage.

Secondly, we reply: If they adduce this passage, *quasi argumentum assimili*, i.e. as it were an argument of similitude, and remark that to sit in Moses' seat, is to rightly preach and attend to Moses' law with its ceremonies. This the Scribes and Pharisees did; they left the law and ceremonies entire and altered nothing in it, although they practiced much superstition with it, as may be seen from Matt. 15:3. For had they altered the law and ceremony, they would not have been sitting in Moses' seat.

But even as the Scribes and Pharisees did sit in Moses' seat, these will then also have to show that they sit in Christ's seat; they must prove that they preach Christ's gospel, baptism, supper, separation; preach and practice all things correctly, or the *argumentum assimili* cannot stand. If this is the case, we may then ask counsel of the Scriptures; why do they allow the traditions of men to be added to this? But we well know that the Scriptures are silent on this subject.

[CHCoG: Menno is too kind to the Pharisees, as Mat 15:3 clearly shows: "He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" They did not merely add some superstition, but actually undermined God's Law, as shown throughout Mat 15:1-9 & Mar 7:3-13. Christ's advice to his followers was clearly limited to only observing the things that the Pharisees taught which were indeed biblical.]

Thirdly, we reply: So long as the Scribes and Pharisees were sitting in Moses' seat, and practiced the ceremonies and taught

the law which pointed to Christ, as before related; so long did Christ direct his disciples and the people, at that time, to them; for the law was not fully accomplished; the perfect sacrifice, which was to abolish all typical sacrifices, was not yet offered; the veil of the temple was not yet rent, the figures and shadows were not yet changed into the new and abiding reality. After it had all been accomplished according to the Scriptures, and all things made new in Christ, he did not then send out the Scribes and Pharisees with Moses' law, but his disciples with his own doctrine; and said, "Go you into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark 16:15, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28:20.

Since then all things are new in and through Christ; and as the people of Moses were directed to his preachers, by Christ before his death, to those who sat in Moses' seat and rightly taught the law and ceremonies; in like manner, in the new Testament, after the death of Christ, we are directed to those preachers who sit in Christ's seat, teaching his words unblamably, and using his sacraments as the Scriptures teach.

[CHCoG: Here Menno accepts the corrupt reasoning of the Roman church. Why would Jesus tell his followers to observe the ceremonies and laws of Moses if he is about to take it all away? After Jesus' resurrection, his disciples continued to obey the Ten Commandments, including Jehovah God's weekly and annual Sabbaths. The changes included the addition of the Lord's Supper, and the discontinuation of the animal sacrifices for sin, which had all pointed towards Jesus's sacrifice. Heb. 7:26,27. It took the 'orthodox' churches several centuries to supplant the Biblical Holy Days with their fakes. One of the most blatant was replacing the true Passover with their Good Friday-Easter Sunday tradition. The true Passover preparation day, the day of Christ's crucifixion, is held on the fourteenth day after sighting the new

moon which starts the new year. It can occur on a different day of the week each year. Why is this important? Because in 31 AD, the year of the crucifixion, the Passover was on a Wednesday. Therefore Christ was placed in the tomb at dusk that evening. Exactly three nights and three days later, at the dusk which finished the weekly Sabbath, he rose from the dead, exactly as he said he would do: “But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Mat 12:39,40. But Easter cuts this in half, with Jesus spending only two nights and one day in the tomb. Thus they mock Jesus’s greatest sign, the one which proves that he is the Messiah. The dispute over this was called the Quartodeciman controversy. Our article, [*God’s Calendar and the Sign of Jonah*](#), at chcpublications.net, explains this in detail, and deals with scriptures that have been misused to support the pope’s trashing of God’s Holy Days, which teach us his entire Plan of Salvation.]

But the Scriptures abundantly warn us of those who adulterate Christ’s doctrine, misuse his sacraments, seduce the people, and lead dissolute and wanton lives; such we are to shun, avoid and abandon, not to admit them into our houses, for they sit in anti-christ’s, and not in Christ’s seat, as said, Matt. 7:15.

Secondly, they adduce what Paul says, “Do not quench the spirit; nor despise prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast to that which is good, abstain from all appearance of evil,” 1 Thes. 5:19-22.

I answer: Paul himself explains, according to our opinion, of what spirit and prophecy he thus spoke. For if it were the opinion

of the apostle that we should repair to houses where this open seduction and idolatry are carried on, and there prove their spirit and doctrines, Paul would then have contradicted himself, when he says that we shall separate, shun and flee from them; for we know for a certainty that they do corrupt the word and sacraments of the Lord, and seek nothing but a good living, and are without the spirit and doctrine of Christ.

O, no; Paul did not write this of such preachers as the Scribes and Pharisees were, neither of the idolatrous priests of Egypt and Babylon (understand well what I mean): but he said this touching the prophets, pastors and teachers in the Church of Christ, that we are not to quench their spirit, but prove their doctrine, and hold fast to that which is good. And if they taught anything not in accordance with the Scriptures and the true faith, to avoid it. If any man prophesy, let him prophesy according to the proportion of faith, Rom. 12:6, and this is what John exhorts his disciples, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God,” 1 John 4:1. And this passage, Abstain from all appearance of evil, may be understood as not properly referring to what is just mentioned.

My good reader, we have proved your preachers so well, both as to their spirit and doctrine, that we may with a clear conscience say that they are not of God and his word, but of the bottomless pit, of the dragon and of the beast. Say, dear reader, how shall we acknowledge those as teachers who so wantonly fight against the word of God? What communion has light with darkness? What concord has Christ with Belial? 1 Cor. 6:14. The greater part of their teaching and action is delusion and hypocrisy. My reader, do not pervert these words, for what I write is the truth, and I can prove it to the whole world, from their doctrines, lives and sacraments.

Thirdly, they ask, Why will we not hear them; for the wise men of the East gave heed to what Herod said?

Answer: To adduce this passage seems to me to be so puerile that it is by no means worthy of reply. For Herod did nothing else than by the instruction of the scribes, point out to the wise men the town in which the king of the Jews should be born, and he did it with a blood-thirsty heart, as the following act shows; he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search diligently for the young child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also,” Matt. 2:8.

Herod was afraid when he heard that the Jews had a king born, lest he might lose his kingdom and glory; he therefore spoke out of pure hypocrisy and slyness with the wise men, for he was desirous of the child’s death, to prevent its becoming a king. But when he saw that he failed in his hypocrisy, he became very much enraged, and showed his fierce, tyrannical, ungodly disposition; he sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all its districts, from two years old and under, that by the slaying of all the innocent children he might also destroy the [new-] born king, as may be seen from Matt. 2:16.

O, my good reader, how justly do they appeal to this hypocritical, lying, ambitious and tyrannical Herod; for the greater part of them are of the same spirit and disposition. They are so much pained that Christ is born again through his word. They practice hypocrisy like Herod; they lie, and say that they are sincere; but they fear their unlawful gain, their rich and lazy life, lest Christ should rule, as Herod feared, lest he should lose his kingdom. And they are ready to destroy the pious, as Herod was determined upon the blood of Christ, as you have heard.

Since then they are manifestly hypocritical liars, and earthly-minded, and also intent upon blood, as may be seen in some places; therefore we will also take for an example in this matter the wise, who, being admonished by a heavenly inspiration, did not return to Herod, and, through the grace of God faithfully observe the Lord’s inspiration, counsel, doctrine and admonition,

and turn to those who point out Christ in full power and practice, and teach the truth, according to the spirit.

Fourthly, some of them say, Although the devil should preach the word of God, why should we not hear him?

In the first place I reply to these vain, slanderous calumniators that it would be well for them to learn rightly to distinguish between the spirit and disposition of the devil, and the spirit and nature of Christ, before they would utter such unseasonable, blasphemous words before the poor people.

The devil was a liar from the beginning, and will undoubtedly always be. Since he is a liar, and lying his nature, disposition and work, as the Lord says, how can he then sincerely and rightly teach and preach the word of God, which is truth, and is diametrically opposed to his lying disposition and nature, and even if he did teach the truth correctly, and give Christ his praise, still he does so with a false heart; for he is a devil and the truth is not in him.

He confessed Christ, rightly and according to the contents of his word, when he said, You are Christ, the holy one of God; you are Christ, the Son of God. However, Christ did not desire his confession, but reproved him and said, Hold your peace, and come out of him, for his confession was made with a diabolical heart, as said.

Secondly, I say, If any one would hear the voice of the devil, he need not go far; alas! he can hear him every where. All who speak lies, speak of the devil. In the beginning he spoke through the serpent; in Israel through the false prophets, and now through his preachers, in order to deceive the people of the world, and divert them from the truth, that they never can be saved.

Since from the beginning he has been, and still is, a lying spirit, an adversary of God, a falsifier of the Scriptures, and a

murderer of souls, and will eternally be such, who can neither teach nor endure any thing good, because he is by nature unclean, a liar, and a deceiver, always the enemy of every thing that is good, we will therefore stop our ears, through God's grace, and not hear such blasphemous speaking; turn our backs upon the devil, with all his lying preachers, as the Scriptures teach; and we will sincerely believe the Scriptures, which direct us to Christ to hear him. Christ directs us to his disciples, and they direct us to such teachers who are blameless in doctrine and life, as related. May the merciful and gracious Lord eternally preserve all the pious hearts against this Herodian generation, and against the devil's preachers, Amen.

Fifthly, some also say that we may hear them, if we do not allow ourselves to be deceived by them.

I answer: The reader should observe how the people of God ever were, from the days of Abraham, separated from the world; and especially since the days of Moses, they have had their own particular preachers, teachers, ceremonies, ordinances and services, as may be abundantly read and seen in all the books of Moses.

Secondly, that Israel was commanded by God that if a false prophet were to rise up among them, and though he were to do wonders and signs, he should die, Deu. 13:4.

Thirdly, Israel was not allowed to teach or to receive any doctrine or worship from any strange nations circumjacent to them, but to keep closely to the law and testimonies.

Fourthly, where there arose some ungodly kings, such as Jeroboam, Ahab, Manasseh and many others, who loved their own righteousness and idolatry more than the word and right worship of the Lord; and when the false prophets multiplied, who turned the people from the Lord and his law, then also did the Lord raise up true prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c., to

reprove the disobedient, idolatrous kings and false prophets, and to warn the people faithfully of them, and said, “Do not listen unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they make you vain; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of Jehovah,” Jer. 23:16. These prophets all gloriously pointed to Christ, to his kingdom and reign.

Fifthly, that Christ, as well as Moses, ordained and appointed in his kingdom, community, or church, prophets, preachers, teachers, ceremonies and ordinances, *which are to be observed by all true christians for ever*.

Sixthly, the holy apostles teach, advise, and admonish us that we are to separate ourselves from those in doctrine and in worship, be they baptized or not, who do not agree with the spirit, doctrine, regulations and examples of Christ.

Seventhly, that the whole world with their spirit, doctrine, sacrament, worship and conduct, are far from Christ’s spirit, word, sacrament, worship and example; and, alas! are nothing but a new Sodom, Egypt and Babel, Rev. 11:8.

Eighthly, that all those who acknowledge God’s word, and are partakers of his Spirit, are, called on to let their lights shine out of darkness and give light to the world that they reprove all ungodliness by word, deed, life and death, confess the Lord’s holy name, word and will, and confirm it by a pious and unblameable life, according to the Scriptures.

Ninthly, that “who ever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me (Christ); it were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea,” Matt. 18:6.

Tenthly, that we reflect well, why or for what reason we are not to hear such preachers. If we do hear them, and desire to be taught by them, then we seek the truth among lies, and life among

the dead. But if we will not be taught by them, but use our liberty, as they call it, we must confess that such hearing is no hearing, but trifling and hypocrisy, by which we despise the spirit, doctrine, ordinances, counsel, admonition, community and [so-called] church of Christ; and strengthen the seducing abominations, idolatry, and kingdom of anti-christ, and conform to the world in all appearance of evil, act the hypocrite, grieve and vex many a pious child of God, cause strife among the pious, and esteem lightly the innocent blood which is shed in many places on this account.

Behold, my readers, all who fear the Lord, and rightly examine and judge these ten articles, here briefly stated, by the Spirit and word of the Lord, will not halt here, but they will faithfully take heed to the counsel and admonition of the Holy Spirit; reprove the world both by works and doctrine; avoid every appearance of evil, and walk unblamably in the house of the Lord.

But touching the false worship, the light-minded comfort one another, and say, children may be baptized; for the child is clean; the water is clean; to wash and to bathe is also clean, &c. We may also receive the supper of the Lord at the hands of these preachers, although it is in idolatrous houses; Christians have no idols any more, they only use bread and wine as such, which is pure to the pure; Paul says, To the pure all things are pure. They appeal to the case of Naaman, the Captain of the king of Assyria; and to the house of Rimmon, and say, We do not care for the idolatry of the priests, but we worship Him who made heaven and earth.

I answer: Can a single passage be adduced from the Scriptures that uncleanness, sin, falsifying the ordinances of God, idolatry, disobedience to the word, and hypocrisy are all pure to the pure, that is, to the true believers? Then we might consider a

little on it, but we know certainly that not a single passage can be advanced.

O, my reader, if the men of God had thus understood the Scriptures, as these poor people do, the three valiant young men would have by no means suffered themselves to be cast into the fiery furnace. The upright Eleazer, the God-fearing pious mother with her seven sons, the holy prophets, apostles and pious witnesses of God, would have saved their lives, would have escaped the cruel tortures and pains, and said, To the pure all things are pure, we will cheerfully comply.

O, no! My good reader, no: the clean are not to touch the unclean. Do not touch the unclean thing, says the Spirit of God through Isaiah and Paul, that is what the Scriptures forbid. He that has washed himself after touching a dead body, if he touches it again, what avails his washing? Is it not folly for any man to wash his clothes, and afterwards tread them into the mire again! The Scriptures plainly teach that “the just shall live by faith,” and that a “good tree brings forth good fruit.” We certainly know that a humble, lowly-minded soul will never magnificently array itself in gold, pearls or other costly apparel; that those who fear the Lord will be honest, chaste, sober; they will not talk, drink, sing and dance with dishonorable women; for the knowledge, fear and love of God and his word forbid them; and should one do so, we would know that his light is darkness, and his conduct is not agreeable to the Scriptures. And so it is unbecoming to those who boast of the word, and would reprove seduction, the idolatry and abominations of preachers by the Scriptures, and yet associate with them in their doctrine, sacraments, and false service, for words without actions profit nothing. “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them,” Eph. 5:11.

It is true that to the pure all things are pure, which are not contrary to the Spirit and word of God. For none are called pure

in the Scriptures, except those who conform to the Spirit and word of the Lord. All who agree with the word, to them all lawful, pure things, are pure, such as eating, drinking, clothing, houses, manors, land, gold, silver, wives, children, goods, food, to wake, to sleep, to speak, to be silent, and all things which God has given us as necessities; because they are pure, they will also use all lawful, pure things purely; namely, in the fear of God, with thanksgiving and moderation, to the praise of God and to the service of their fellow man; to which end, these things were given by God, for the use of men.

All things prohibited by God, such as hypocrisy, unfruitful works, conformity to the world, living in affluence and splendor, and living in idolatry, are by all means, impure to the pure, to the faithful, obedient children of God; and the pure can never use impure things through all eternity, according to the will of God; for the Spirit of God and his word forbid them.

Adam was allowed by God to eat of all the vegetables and fruits of the earth, for his subsistence, except from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; for if he should eat of it, he must die. All the fruits and creatures [this should be vegetables, as Adam was not permitted to kill and eat any animals] allowed by God, were pure to pure Adam, but one tree was impure to him through the command of God. Yet he ate of it, and he, with all his seed, fell under the power of death.

And even as all things are pure to the pure, and are for the good of the pious, so also to the impure all things are impure, and to the evil all things are evil; because they are impure, they use all the creations of God impurely. They eat and drink to excess, they dress gorgeously and indulge in lewdness; they raise their children to idleness; they avariciously hoard gold, silver, houses and lands, and there is nothing they use purely, according to the will of God; for they are impure, sensual, disobedient to the word, and are earthly-minded, as the Scriptures say.

Further; it is also an abominable calumny and slanderous seduction, what some pretend and say: that outward idolatry cannot defile and make impure, if not sanctioned by the heart.

My good reader, if that were true all the passages would have been spoken to no purpose, which say; neither be you idolaters as were some of them; have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; avoid all appearance of evil, &c., then would also the offence of the cross have been ended. No, no, a true christian must become wholly pious, to glorify God, both in body and spirit.

Aaron, a high priest called by God, a type of the Lord Jesus, when he was constrained by the people to make gods for them which should go before them, he was overcome through the weakness of the flesh, that he yielded to the idolaters, and made them a golden calf. Aaron did not worship it in his heart; for he well knew it was not the God who led them through the red sea, but that it was a creation made of gold. Nevertheless this guilt was charged to Aaron, for Moses said, "What did this people do unto you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?" Exo. 32:21. Yes, Jehovah would have destroyed him had not Moses interceded for him, Deu. 9:20.

We would that all founders of sects and erring spirits, whose rejection of the cross, ease, carnal minds and hypocrisy, is cloaked under the semblance of the word of God, would reflect well upon the history of Aaron; I trust they would no longer conceal their nudity and disgrace with fig leaves; but would clothe themselves with the true coat of skins, with Jesus Christ, made by God; for they comfort and encourage the poor, rude people in their idolatry and faith, by their ungodly dealings, which they call liberty, grieve the pious unto death, discourage and offend the poor, wavering souls of whom it is written, "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hung about his

neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea,” Matt. 18:6.

What christian liberty is, and how it is to be used according to the will of God, is fully explained in Rom. 14.

Say, beloved, how can we include in christian liberty that which is so openly committed against so many passages in the Scriptures against brotherly love, and contrary to all the examples of so many saints, as said?

O, were they pure in heart, who introduce such subtle arguments, and would they but love Christ supremely over everything, how soon they would then know that that which they maintain is contrary to the spirit and word of God. But I fear they are those concerning whom it is written, “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness,” Prov. 30:12.

Touching Naaman, we have to notice attentively the following passages.

First, that Naaman was neither a Jew, nor a proselyte, but a foreigner, who was not included in the doctrine, ceremonies, ordinances and righteousness of Israel, although he would no longer serve idols, and would serve and offer to Jehovah God, he had not yet received the sign, viz., circumcision.

Secondly, that he was the servant of his master, upon whom the king depended; and therefore had to attend to the service of his master when the king worshiped in the house of Rimmon, and would worship none other than the true God who had cleansed him.

Thirdly, that we cannot conclude with certainty from the answer of the prophet, how far he did, or did not comply.

Fourthly, that the house of Rimmon, and the service of it, and our temple with its services, are not the same; for in the house of

Rimmon the name of God, the laws, the ordinances and ceremonies, were not abused, for they were not known there. But what abuses, disgrace, scoffings, abomination and blasphemy, are carried on in our temples under the name of Christ, all rational men may determine by the Scriptures.

But if any one says, Why do you concern yourselves about the doings of the priests? Worship God as Naaman did, this sounds to us thus, “Behold, your pious father will be often slanderously mocked, insulted, reviled and much abused; let such things not move you or confound you, but be unconcerned and contented. Submit quietly, but in your heart honor your father, &c.” Say, beloved, what rational and upright child could bear to see his father thus assaulted, and yet keep his silence?

Since we see with unclouded eyes how miserably they treat our eternal Father, who loves us so greatly, in their houses of abomination; and how they behave towards his son, Jesus Christ, who bought us with such a precious price. Again: How they quench his Holy Spirit, hate his will, his word, and abuse his sacraments, reject his ordinances and commands, revile and reproach his children, deceive poor souls, and rob Christ of his glory; and with all this, they desire us to unite with such open enemies of God; to act the hypocrite with them, to listen to their ungodly seductions and abominations. If we should, we would be very ungrateful children, and without love. This is incontrovertibly true.

No; such is not the way of pious christians; but as Christ defends his church, is not ashamed of her, and enlightens her by his Holy Spirit and word, comforts her in all her distresses, strengthens her in sufferings and endows her with power and wisdom, before lords and princes, wise and learned, and before the whole world, that all have to be silent and ashamed in presence of a poor, humble christian; and in the day of judgment acknowledge her before his Father, and will bestow upon her the

eternal kingdom; and so do the spirit and love of Christ also demand of us, that we confess before men his divine honor, word, will, ordinances and commands, and besides, we are to testify it by our works, possessions, blood, life and death, and not clandestinely frequent such houses of abomination, where his great and adorable name is so miserably dishonored and slandered; and where we do not hear the truth, nor learn any piety. For it is nothing but hypocrisy which they teach; although they disguise it with the word of the Lord, as may be evidently observed by their works.

All teachers and hearers, run, says the prophet; like a frantic heifer, they all hate reproof and instruction, and live imprudently according to their own lusts. They do not desire God's word, therefore, I fear the scourge is ready, and the avenging sword of the Lord is drawn; that soon one ungodly man will eat another, so that many of them will be destroyed, for these foolish people will be punished.

Fifthly, we have to observe that in the New Testament we are only directed to the Spirit, word, counsel, admonition and usages of Christ; what he allows us we may do, but what he forbids we do not dare do; it becomes all true Christians to conform to this, and not according to such doubtful histories and obscure passages, from which we can draw no sure ground, and which teach the very reverse of what the Lord's apostles publicly taught.

Here I would faithfully admonish the sincere reader that he would not allow himself to be deceived with such words; but at all times to keep and abide in the unchangeable and sure ground, which the faithful witnesses of Christ, the holy apostles have left us, which they taught us plainly in their writings; for the deceivers seek but to confound the wavering, and to be free from the cross of Christ.

But, say they, We esteem it to be better to do so sometimes, in order that we may administer to our wives and children, and serve the poor, than that we should wholly abandon the preachers, and thereby make all our possessions a prey.

To which we reply, in the first place: The first command teaches, “You shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” Where the name of the Lord is profaned, and where his word is violated, there it behooves you in all love, to reprove such things with an unblameable life, by the word of God, and to defend the praise of God, as much as is in you; reflect upon what the Lord says, Whosoever loves father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, possessions and life more than me, cannot be my disciple, Luke 14:26.

Secondly, that all who believe that God made heaven and earth, and sustained Israel forty days [years] with bread from heaven, and water from the rock, sent Elijah his necessary food by a raven; who gives the birds in the air, the fishes in the water, and the reptiles upon earth, their food: they will not doubt the goodness, power and promise of their Lord Jesus Christ, who says, “Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,” Matt. 6:33, for if the countenance of his grace is in this matter over those who reject him, how much more over those who fear him and keep his commandments.

Thirdly, that the Almighty, bountiful God, God Almighty, who is all-sufficient to support the poor and needy without any idolatry, hypocrisy and service of the devil; because he has no delight in such offerings and gifts of unrighteousness; as the prophet says, Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen, than the fat of rams; for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and defiance is as iniquity and idolatry, 1 Sam. 15:22, 23.

All, therefore, who say that they do this on account of their wives and children, and for the sake of the poor, ought to know that they love their wives and children more than God, and the arm and power of God less, and lie unto the Lord. They should know that they only cover and adorn their indolence, their dislike of the cross, their unbelief, earthly-mindedness and hypocrisy under such pretence. Let every one take heed to himself and fear God, who has eyes like flaming fire, which penetrate heaven and earth, and cannot be blinded by fair words.

Again, they further pretend that Paul purified himself according to the custom of the Jews, and Timothy was circumcised. This is quite different, for these were things which God had commanded, although they ended in Christ. [If this was so, Paul would not have consented to it.] The reason why Paul consented to this was that he might preach the word with more freedom to the Jews, as he says, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law," 1 Cor. 9:20.

And since these works did not originate with anti-christ, but from God, with which Paul would not offend the weak Jews; as explained; how can we then show by them that we are at liberty to hear false preaching, receive the baptism and enjoy the supper of anti-christ; and to take part with the world in open idolatry and blasphemy? Although this may not be done with the heart, it is at least so in appearance. Or we must consider the works of the law, which were from God, to be as unclean and ungodly as the works and abominations of darkness, which are of the devil; and esteem the renunciation of the cross of Christ as highly as the zeal with which Paul undertook to teach the Jews the Gospel of Christ.

O, my faithful reader, if you would not lose your poor soul, do not then dishonor Christ, rightly seek his praise, obey his Spirit, doctrine, counsel, admonition and example, and you will

never be made ashamed; you will soon discover that the purification of Paul and circumcision of Timothy, are different from the doings, abominations, idolatry and blasphemy of anti-christ, which have been practiced from time to time, in the name of Christ, even to the present day. May the gracious, merciful God grant that you may all come to the knowledge, and walk in his truth, Amen.

Lastly, they say that we are yet prisoners in Babel, and that we may therefore do in semblance the works of Babel; and assert the sayings of Baruch, “You shall see in Babylon gods of silver, and of gold, and of wood, borne upon shoulders, which cause the nations to fear; beware, therefore, that you in no way be like to strangers, neither be you afraid of them, when you see the multitude before them and behind them, worshiping them; but say in your hearts, O Lord, we must worship you,” Bar. 6:4,5.

Answer: Here we have first to observe what is shown by the Babylonian captivity; when the Israelites did not serve God aright in their own country, they were scattered according to the prediction of Moses, by the righteous and gracious judgment of God, among the heathen nations, and were led captive under the dominion of Babylon. So it is with those who boast themselves as being the spiritual Israel; because they became unfaithful to the Lord, and rejected his word, and turned their ears to preachers of lies, the Babylonian king, anti-christ, has taken advantage of them and deprived them of the true doctrine, ceremonies and services, and led them captive under his dominion, and has bound them miserably with the cords of error and idolatrous abominations.

But all those who are again enlightened by the Spirit and word of the Lord, born from God, and die unto the old man, sin; forsake all human misleadings, and rightly use the holy sacraments of the Lord, his ordinances and divine services, they are freed from spiritual Babylon, that is, from sin, hell, death, devil, from the doctrines and commands of men, from all idolatry

and abominations. As Paul says, There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and death, Rom. 8:1,2.

All, then, who say that they are yet captives of Babylon, testify that they have not been set at liberty by the Cyrus (Jesus Christ), from their sins, and have not come from Chaldea to Jerusalem, Isa. 24:28; Ezra 1:1-4.

Secondly, that Israel is not commanded here to conform themselves to the gentiles; but when they saw them carry their idols, even as we may see on the days of papistical processions and abominations, although we are not in their temple, then they should worship God only, and give him the honor; for if God had commanded them to conform in all things to the Babylonian idolatry, and only serve the Lord with their heart secretly, then Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego acted foolishly in refusing to worship the great golden idol, on account of which they hazarded their lives. O, no! The miraculous work, shown by God to them, testifies that they acted rightly. All, then, I say, who teach that true believers are not released from Babylon, do thereby deny the merits, death and blood of Christ, deny faith with its power, and the Holy Spirit with his liberty, and despise wholly the innocent blood of the free witnesses of the free children of God, which is shed so abundantly.

Let every one see well to what he believes and teaches; for I fear that both the shedder of blood and the despiser are alike guilty. My good reader, examine the Scriptures well, and you will find that to the free children of God here upon earth, there is no liberty promised as to the flesh, for Christ says, "You shall be hated by all nations for my name's sake," Matt. 24:9. Again, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me," Matt. 16:24. Again, "Whosoever kills

you will think that he does God service,” John 16:2. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus,” says Paul, “must suffer persecution,” 2 Tim. 3:12. And “through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God,” Acts 14:22. For the liberty of the spirit is to be maintained with much misery, tribulation, persecutions, bonds, fear and death. “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord; it is enough for the disciple that he be like his master, and the servant like his lord,” Matt. 10:24.

Behold, beloved sirs, friends and brethren, here you have the leading parts, and chief articles of a CHRISTIAN GROUND AND FOUNDATION, with a plain instruction and exposition of the anti-christian abominations and Babylonian acts, by which the true apostolic foundation, for a long time, was corrupted and razed to the ground; and we have contrasted light with darkness, truth with falsehood, that the whole truth by our seeking, doctrine and belief, undertaking and weak attempts, may be made manifest.

And I hope by the grace of God that you will readily receive it, if you are at all honestly disposed, read it with a sincere heart, fear God, and acknowledge Christ as the true head; and see that we are grounded upon the only everlasting corner stone, that we walk in the right way, although in weakness and to have the plain truth, and that there is no other ground or way, and truth to be found in the Scriptures that can stand before God, other than this, which we have pointed out, and which we on every occasion maintain and defend in so much tribulation.

I have served you all with this small gift, as I received it from my God. I gladly would that I could serve you longer with great and abundant grace, to the praise of the Lord. Therefore, have I renounced praise, honor, ease, and forsaken all, and willingly submitted to the pressing cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, which oftentimes weighs very heavily on my weak flesh. I seek neither

gold nor silver (the Lord knows this), but am ready, with faithful Moses, to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; and I esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for I know what the Scriptures have promised us, and this is my only joy and desire of my heart, that I may extend the borders of the kingdom of God, publish the truth, reprove sin, teach righteousness, feed the hungry with the word of the Lord, lead the stray sheep into the right path, and win many souls to the Lord through his Spirit, power and grace, and so, act in my weakness, as he taught me who purchased me, a miserable sinner, with his crimson blood, and gave me this mind, by the gospel of his grace, namely, Jesus Christ, to him be praise and glory, and the eternal kingdom, Amen.

A CHRISTIAN AND AFFECTIONATE EXHORTATION TO ALL IN AUTHORITY.

Also to the learned, to the common people, to sects and to the bride of Christ, that it be not a little scorched by the heat of the sun every where.

We have shown you in the preface, faithful reader, why we published our writings, to wit: on account of the abominable deceptions, and the manifold dangers at this time, for there are to be found so many schisms, communities, churches and sects, who are all called after the name of the Lord; such as Romans or papists, Lutherans, Zwinglians, erring sects, and the Christians who are upbraided as Anabaptists. Even as in former times among the Jews, were the Chasidim, Zadikin, Essenes,

Sadducees, Pharisees, &c., which sacred and profane history mention. Each boasts to be the Church of Christ, and to have the word of the Lord, although the greater part of them not only live inconsistently with the Spirit, word and example of Christ, but they very enviously upbraid and slander, and are inimically opposed to it; and it is just as it was in the beginning, that the pious every where have to suffer much from the impious; as Abel had to suffer from Cain; Isaac from Ishmael; Jacob from Esau, &c., although created by the same God, by nature have one common origin, boast all of one Christ; and in the day of judgment, find the same judge. Anti-Christ rules through hypocrisy and lies, with power and sword; but Christ reigns patiently with his word and spirit. He uses no other sword nor sabre. O, man! Man! Look upon the irrational savage creatures, and learn wisdom. Roaring lions, frightful bears, and all devouring wolves agree among themselves with their respective species; but you, poor, helpless worms; you, who are created after God's own image, and are called rational beings, born without tusks, claws and horns, born with an unsound, feeble nature, senseless, speechless and powerless, yes, neither able to walk nor stand, and have to depend entirely upon maternal aid, which teaches you that you are to be peaceable and not contentious; but when you attain your understanding and manhood, you are so very unsettled, tyrannical, revengeful, blood-thirsty and unmerciful, so much so that it cannot be fully conceived, related or described. Your open works bear testimony to this, notwithstanding, you boast yourselves to be Christians. O, no! My faithful reader, no! Christ teaches, "Peace I leave you, my peace I give unto you," John 14:27. Paul says, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you are called in one body, and be thankful," Col. 3:15. Again, "The Son of man has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them," Luke 9:56.

Since there are so many of you who treat the children of God so inhumanly, as we see, we have compiled a summary of our *acts, principles, faith and doctrine*, from the word of God, and have published them; so that every slanderous evil speaker and bloody persecutor, may from them learn what our undertaking properly is, what we seek and do, and upon what ground the city of God must be built, and which of all the aforementioned congregations or churches is the right and true church of Christ. Even as there was but one Adam and one Eve; one Noah and one ark, one Isaac and one Rebecca, so there is but one church of Christ, which is the body, the city, the temple, the house and bride of Christ, having but one gospel, one faith, one baptism, one supper, and one service; walking in the same way and leading a pious, unblameable life, as the Scriptures teach.

All who do not have the pure, uncorrupted word of God, the true, living faith, with the Lord's holy baptism and Supper, in power and Spirit, and who walk the broad road of the flesh, are not the community and church of Christ. Here neither name nor boasting avails; we must be in Christ, and Christ in us; we must be moved by his Spirit, and in every respect abide in his holy word, otherwise we have not God.

[Most of] the children of Israel were not saved, although they were of the seed of Abraham, because they did not walk in the way of Abraham. Much less will we, though we are called after the name of Christ, if we do not seek his promise with all our souls, and do not sincerely hear and follow, and be obedient to his holy will.

Since it is well known to all the pious that we and our forefathers, for many centuries, were under the heavy burden, and in the service of Egypt, deceived by the false prophets, never heard the book of the law, the holy city and temple lay waste, and were under the tyranny and dominion of Babylon, as heard above. The merciful Father had compassion on the pressing misery and

tribulation of his people, and raised up to us the true Moses, Zerubbabel, Christ Jesus, through his word and Spirit; now then, it becomes you, O, you highly renowned lords and princes, since you and we boast of the same Christ, gospel, redemption and kingdom, that you no longer obstruct by your mandates and powers, the journeying of the people of God to the everlasting promised land; but you should favor them more, and prosper their journey by your gracious permission; that you may hear and read with the venerable and pious Josiah, with a broken, meek heart, in the true fear of God, the lost book of the law of Christ, which has been lost for a long time. Rend your hearts and not your garments; for you are not only led off from the true path, but you are so much bewitched by the man of sin that you persecute the innocent, pious hearts, who in no way injure you or any one upon earth.

That you would, with king Cyrus, release the poor captive children from the land of Chaldea, who cry and weep at the rivers of Babylon, that they may again possess the spiritual land of Canaan, and build up the spiritual Jerusalem, the altar and the temple in their ancient city, and establish the spiritual priesthood, and practice the spiritual offering and divine service according to the instructions of the word of God, that they may no longer hear and observe the Babylonian laws, namely, the teachings of men and their commandments; but the law of Israel, God's word and righteousness. Some of you, though alas, so few! are so far taught, through the grace and word of God that I trust you know that neither usages nor councils, neither learning nor sword, nor mandate, can bend or break the word of the Most High, the word of truth, the word of the heavenly witness, the gospel of the kingdom, for no other foundation can be laid to all eternity, than what is laid, which is Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 3:11.

Therefore, wisdom cries, “Turn at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words to you,” Prov. 1:23.

Love righteousness, you rulers of the land. “Be wise, now, therefore, O, you kings; be instructed, you judges of the earth, serve Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling,” Psm. 2:10,11 for the king that honors wisdom shall rule forever.

Do, therefore, with a meek heart, and in the fear of God, examine these our faithful instructions, and judge by the Spirit and word of Christ, as much as it is in you; compare them with the doctrine and lives of the apostles, with the piety, love, customs, actions, misery, cross and sufferings of the primitive church. I hope, by the grace of God, you may plainly comprehend that our doctrine is the infallible doctrine and ground of the Scriptures. Read this: *OUR FOUNDATION*, together with other books, appended to this, viz: *the book concerning faith and its power; concerning regeneration or the new creature; of the cross, sufferings and persecution of the saints; of excommunication, ban or exclusion, and other tracts*, published from time to time, and you will then find, by the grace of God, that this doctrine is the pure gospel, which the Lord taught by his own mouth, and which his holy apostles preached through the whole world, and by the power of the Spirit testified to this with life and death. Ours is no new doctrine, as the preachers without truth, pretend and persuade you; but it is the old doctrine, which was preached and practiced in the church for more than fifteen hundred years, by which the church was, is, and shall be borne, till the end.

O, you highly renown lords and princes, turn to the truth of God, and receive reproof, and wisdom; for through wisdom, kings reign, and princes decree justice; observe how far your spirit, faith and lives differ from the Lord’s Spirit, word and life.

Do you think, dear sirs, that you are born to live merely in splendor and magnificence, and to lead a vain, sensual life? That you may freely continue in your licentious and pernicious lusts, and still be Christians? O, no, “If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his;” Rom. 8:9.

Solomon says, “As a roaring lion, and a raging bear; so is wicked ruler over the poor people. The prince that lacks understanding is also a great oppressor,” Prov. 28:15. The poet also well knew this, when he says, *Quic quid delirant reges, plectantur Achivi*, i.e., The mischief which kings do, the common people have to pay or atone for; but a wise king disperses the ungodly.

Therefore, beloved sirs, see well to it; this is that to which you are called, namely: that you are to chastise and punish, in the true fear of God, with all equitable and just discretion, the open evil doers; such as thieves, murderers, sodomites, adulterers, debauchers, menslayers, the violent, fornicators, sorcerers, robbers, &c., that you give each his portion, execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, that you are to prevent, by proper means (understand without tyranny and bloodshed), open deceivers, who so miserably lead poor, helpless souls, by hundreds of thousands into destruction, whether they are priests, monks, preachers, baptized or unbaptized; so that they will no longer derogate from the almighty majesty of God, our only and eternal Savior; Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, together with the word of grace; nor introduce those ridiculous abuses and idolatry, under semblance of truth, as has been done to this time; and by this means, in all love and earnestness, enlarge, assist and protect, without violence, blood or sword, the kingdom of God, by your gracious permission, wise counsel, and pious, unblameable life.

Behold, beloved lords, this is your calling and your incumbent duty; do not domineer so maliciously over the children

of God and his word, as alas, many of you evidently do, and as it is customary.

Such rulers were Moses, Joshua, David, Hezekiah, Josaphat, Josiah, Zerubbabel, &c., they faithfully discharged their enjoined duties, conformed to the word of God, protected their subjects with solicitous concern, obeyed the commands of the Lord, abolished the false prophets and the priests of Baal, with their altars, groves and idolatry, and faithfully kept their people and country, to observe the ordinances of Jehovah, his laws and divine service as commanded by Moses; they feared God, and had the book of the law to which they conformed, and by which they judged the people; and always remembered their Lord Jehovah, who set them over his people as potentates and rulers.

They feared God with all their hearts, praised his name, and humbled themselves with all their strength, as David did, when he was girded with a linen ephod, and danced before the ark of the Lord, yes that he was even despised of his wife Michal; but he said, "It was before Jehovah, who chose me above your father, and above all his house, to appoint me prince over the people of Jehovah, over Israel. Therefore I will rejoice before Jehovah." 2 Sam. 6:21.

O, you highly renowned, noble lords, believe Christ's word, fear the wrath of God, love righteousness, do justice to widows and orphans, judge rightly between man and man, fear no man's highness; despise no man's littleness, hate all avarice, chastise with discretion, allow the word of God to be taught in liberty, prevent none to walk in the ways of truth; yield to his sceptre who called you to this high charge, and your throne shall be established for ever.

Now as the sceptre of Christ is an upright sceptre, and teaches, judges and corrects every one, without respect to person, I, a poor and unlearned being must lay aside my diffidence, and

grow bold in love, by which I would desire to save your poor souls, and with Samuel reprove Saul, with Ahijah reprimand Jeroboam, with Elijah chide Ahab, with Isaiah reprehend Hezekiah, with Nathan and Gad rebuke David for their misdeeds and transgressions, and thus proclaim my Lord's Spirit, word and will. Who knows but there might be some one that will regard the fidelity and love of his poor minister; hear his well meaning voice and Christian exhortation, and depart from an ungodly and evil way; thus some of the aforementioned kings heard the reproving word from the mouths of the prophets with fear, and reformed, and meekly received the word.

And were it even so, that my faithful service and love should be rewarded with death, as I have reason to suspect it may happen, because haughty and proud flesh is unwilling to be reproved, but uses at all times its evil nature, however, nothing worse can happen me than did to the pious Isaiah by Manasseh; Zechariah by Joaz; Urijah by Jehoiakim, Abimelech and other priests of Saul; John by Herod; Christ by Pilate and by the Scribes; and as it happened to all the apostles and pious witnesses by the whole world.

I do not esteem my life to be better and dearer than the beloved men of God did their lives: I can only be deprived of perishable and mortal flesh, which must once die, and return to dust, though I should live to be as old as Methuselah. Not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my heavenly father; if I lose my life for the sake of Christ and his testimony, and on account of my sincere love for my neighbor, I certainly know that I will save it in eternal life, therefore, I cannot conceal the truth; but I must testify and reveal it without hypocrisy in the true fear of God, to my beloved lords.

Beloved, noble lords, learn rightly to know yourselves, from where you are, what you are, and what you will be. All of you, one as well as another, be he emperor or king, are from the same

seed that we poor and unregarded are, and you came into this sorrowful world as we did, and you are no more than vapor, frail flesh, a withering flower, dust and ashes, as we all are. Today you are kings and triumph in great and high honor, tomorrow you are laid low, and must be food for serpents and worms.

O, Sirs, my beloved sirs, humble yourselves; righteous is he who will examine your case, and mighty is he who will pass judgment upon you; his name is [Jehovah,] the RULING LORD; he is the Almighty, the holy, the terrible, the high, adorable and omnipotent God, who created heaven and earth, and who has in the hands of his strength all majesty, power and dominion. Learn to know him; learn to fear him. Awaken, look out, the time is not far off, when you will hear, *“Give an account of your stewardship; for you may be no longer steward,”* Luke 16:2.

Therefore, do not hear those who seek fat prebends and a lazy life, they deceive you, they teach you according to the lust of your hearts; they flatter you for the sake of unlawful gain, they preach to you wanton deception according to their own opinion, and not out of the mouth of the Lord; they fatten their bodies, and have fine times, from the fatness of your poor souls (beloved sirs, understand rightly what I mean), although they boast much of the gospel. Hear those who are not like the wind-shaken reed, those, who with John and Elijah, are not so much frightened by the wilderness of misery, who suffer daily for the truth’s sake, love gold and wood alike, who esteem all things alike, both praise and reproach, riches and poverty, life and death, who seek only the honor of Christ, and the salvation of their beloved brethren, and preach nothing but the pure, unmixed word of God, and seal it, with spirit, power and work, as it is commanded by Christ, and as it is proclaimed and taught through the whole world by his holy apostles.

I repeat it, do not listen to, do not follow, and do not believe the multitude of the learned, who allow themselves to be called

doctors, lords and masters, for they are sensual and blood-thirsty; instead seek and follow the faithful in Christ, who are called the curse and filth of the earth, among these you will find Christ's Spirit, truth, power, works and life. You will also, through the grace of God, find how far you and your spirit, faith, baptism, supper, conduct, church and actions are outside of Christ's Spirit, doctrine, commands, prohibition, ordinance and usage.

Say, O, you kings and rulers of the land, Where is your faith and love, with their pious nature? Where is the fear of your God? Your lamp and light? Your humble heart, dead unto sin? And your unblameable, godly life, which has come from God? Is it not all world and carnality which you seek and follow? We generally find in your houses and courts nothing but extravagance, pomp and showy clothing, hardness and presumptuousness of heart, insatiable avarice, hatred, envy, backbiting, betraying, whoredom, debauchery, gambling, gaming, eating, drinking, dancing, swearing, stabbing, housebreaking, &c. This is your chivalric custom and court conduct during the whole course of your lives; and you never once reflect on the misery, tribulation, humility, love and righteousness in which the Lord of lords, and King of kings, lived before you, what he taught the children of men, and what pattern or example he left for them; the affliction and misery of the wretched do not reach your ears; the sweat of the poor we find on your houses, and the innocent blood on your hands; you receive gifts and presents to pervert judgment, and you take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed. The prophets of Jezebel, and the priests of Baal [the Lord], sensualists and flatterers, are much respected with you, they sit upon soft cushions, and live well. But those who, with Micah, preach to you adversity and truth must expect imprisonment, bonds, and death, and are [as it appears] deserving of all disgrace; yes, it has come so far (may God make it better) that where four or five, ten or twenty have met in the name of the

Lord, to speak of the word of the Lord, and to do his work, in whose midst Christ is, who fear the Lord with all their heart, and lead an unblameable life before all the world, that if they be apprehended, and a complaint is brought against them, they must then be devoured by fire, or be destroyed by the sword, or sink into the depths of the waters.

But they who meet in the name of Baal, a meeting of all manner of mischief, who far exceed Sodom and Gomorrah in wickedness, where all manner of perverse things are carried on between man and man; and between woman and woman; as it is in Spain, in Italy, and in the cloisters, in public brothel-houses, theatres, fencing schools, and the accursed drunken taverns, where many live in open disgrace, and act so shamefully against God's word. Such live unmolested and at peace.

I do not mention the public assemblies of all manner of idolatry, where the most high, blessed and precious name of Jehovah God is so miserably blasphemed, the blood of Christ despised, the Holy Spirit grieved, the truth disgraced, lies commended, and poor souls deceived. The blind, ignorant people are not only directed to the holy water, bread, wine and the mass, but also to the dumb idols of wood and stone, as alas! it may be so extensively witnessed.

O, my beloved lords, what are you doing? Where is the sword of righteousness which was given to you, of which you boast? You have to acknowledge that you leave it in the scabbard, and in its stead you have drawn the sword of unrighteousness. Yes, beloved sirs, things are so (may God better it), that the prophets write and call with propriety, "Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loves gifts, and follows after rewards; they do not judge for the fatherless, neither does the cause of the widow come unto them; therefore says Lord Jehovah of Hosts, the Mighty One of Israel, Ah! I will

relieve myself of my adversaries, and take vengeance on my enemies,” Isa. 1:23, 24.

“Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the immigrant; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. You have despised My sanctified things and defiled My Sabbaths.” They are like the devouring wolves to shed blood and destroy souls for the sake of their avarice: “In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbours by extortion, and have forgotten Me,” says Lord Jehovah. “Behold, therefore, I beat My fists at the dishonest profit which you have made, and at the bloodshed which has been in your midst.” Eze. 22:6-8, 12-13.

“Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away; so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Therefore, thus says Jehovah; behold against this family do I devise an evil, from which you shall not remove your necks; neither shall you go haughtily; for this time is evil,” Micah 2:1-3.

“Hear now, O, heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice? You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones; who also eat the flesh of My people, flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron.” Then they will cry to Jehovah, but He will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them at that time, because they have been evil in their deeds. Micah 3:1-4.

“Woe to her who is rebellious and desecrated, to the oppressing city! She has not obeyed His voice, she has not received correction; she has not trusted in Jehovah, she has not drawn near to her God. Her princes in her midst are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves that leave not a bone until morning. Her prophets are reckless, treacherous people; her priests have defiled the sanctuary, they have done violence to the Instructions.

“Jehovah is righteous, he is in her midst, he will do no unrighteousness. Every morning He brings His judgements to light. He never fails, but the unjust knows no shame. “I have cut off nations, their fortresses are devastated; I have made their streets desolate, with none passing by. Their cities are destroyed; there is no one, no inhabitant.” Zeph. 3:1-6.

There are but few of you, I fear there is scarcely one, who seeks the Lord with all his heart, fears, loves, and serves him; therefore, will also the fury of God be poured out upon you like water, and the sword of his wrath will come upon you, as may be seen daily in many places. May God better it.

The wise man says, “Power is given to you by the Lord, and sovereignty from the Highest, who shall try your works and search out your counsels; because being ministers of his kingdom, you have not judged aright, nor kept the law, nor walked after the counsel of God; horribly and speedily shall he come upon you; for a sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places. For mercy will soon pardon the meanest; but mighty men shall be mightily tormented. For he who is Lord over all shall fear no man’s person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man’s greatness; for he has made the small and great, and cares for all alike. But a sore trial shall come upon the mighty,” Wis. 6:38.

Therefore, beloved lords, take heed that you rightly execute your responsible and dangerous office according to the will of God; for, alas! I fear that many of you, as yet, have paid but little attention to this matter, and hence it is that anti-christ, rises up with his wickedness, and Christ is rejected with his righteousness; lay to heart what is written, “Keep far from you a false matter; and do not slay the innocent and righteous; for I will not justify the wicked,” says Jehovah, Exo. 23:7.

Here I well know that we have to hear of Munster, dominions, polygamy, sword, theft, murder and of similar abominations and disgrace, which, you always assert, result from baptism; and under this pretext you reprove every thing the mouth of the Lord commanded, and what the holy apostles taught and practiced, and for this purpose you cite some seditious sects and factions that the cry of the learned and your blood-shedding may be sanctioned.

No, my beloved sirs, it will not acquit you in the day of the righteousness of God. I tell you the truth in Christ; notice the rightly baptized disciples of Christ, who are baptized inwardly with Spirit and fire, and externally with water, who are baptized according to the word of God; know of no weapons other than patience, hope, quiet, and God’s word. Paul says, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,” 2 Cor. 10:4,5. Our weapons are not weapons with which cities and countries are desolated; walls and gates broken down and human blood shed in torrents like water, but they are weapons with which the spiritual kingdom of the devil is destroyed, and the ungodly passions are annihilated, and the flinty hearts are broken that have never been sprinkled with the heavenly dew of the holy word. We have and know no other

weapons besides, the Lord knows, even if we should be torn into a thousand pieces, and as many false witnesses were to rise against us as there are spears of grass in the fields and grains of sand upon the sea shore.

Again, Christ is our fortress; patience is our defence; the word of God is our sword; and our victory is a candid, firm, unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ. We let those [who] take spears find swords, who, alas, regard human blood and swine's blood alike. He that is wise, let him judge what I mean.

We acknowledge, beloved sirs, that some of the false prophets were baptized externally in appearance with us, with the same baptism; even as thieves, murderers, highway robbers, sorcerers and the like, were baptized with you; but they were not of us, for had they been of us, as John says, they would no doubt have continued with us.

Christ says, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect; behold, I have told you before," Matt. 24:24.

This warning of Christ was not given to the ungodly, obdurate despisers, for they are already entangled in the snares of unrighteousness, but is given to the contrite of heart and to the willing souls, so that they may learn to know the Spirit, and not allow themselves to be led into error; "For the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour," 1 Peter 5:8.

The craftiness and artifice of the devil, who assumes the appearance of an angel of light, are not perceived by some, therefore, so many have stumbled and erred, and were led into crooked paths by the deceivers; but this was not through baptism; for the elementary water can neither teach nor pervert, but it was done through false prophets, of which, I say, we have been so faithfully warned by the mouth of the Lord.

Beloved sirs, fear God, judge rightly; the truth of God can never be changed into seduction and error, through the lies of the devil. O, no! The word of our God shall stand forever.

Should the devout angels be unjustly judged, for the sake of Lucifer's arrogance and be punished with his punishment? Or should all the apostles be [condemned as] traitors, because of Judas? By no means. Every one shall bear his own burden. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The soul that sins, it shall die," Eze. 18:20.

Should we reproach the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, because the father of lies has resuscitated, in the name of Christ, the practice of circumcision as essential to salvation? Or that the dead will not rise in the day of judgment? Or that Philetus and Hymenius asserted that the resurrection of the dead has already taken place? Or that some pretended that the great day of the Lord was at hand?

How could the apostle help it, that the Nicolaitans had their wives in common, as Eusebius relates? Or that the Ebionites denied the deity of Christ, and taught that Christ began only to exist in Mary? And that [some] Corinthians maintained that the world was created by angels; that Christ was no more than a mere man, and had not yet risen, but shall rise with us in future, and that he would reign one thousand years in the flesh with his saints?

[CHCoG: And in what is above, we have a mix of lies and truth. Beyond dispute, the Bible teaches that the universe was made by Jehovah God and His Son Jesus, working through the agency of the Holy Spirit. And as a direct consequence of this, it is clear that Jesus' soul and spirit originated long before Mary, though part of his DNA certainly did come from her egg. The

male portion of his DNA was uniquely created for Jeshua, who had been truly begotten by Jehovah, his Father (Isa 7:14, Heb 10:5). This made Jeshua a new and independent Adam (1 Cor 15:45), while the part of his body that came from Mary made him also a descendant of Adam, Abraham and David (Luke 3:38, Gal 3:16, Mat 1:1, 1 Chr 17:11-14) and also the prophesied seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). This is confirmed in the Aramaic manuscripts of Matthew, which tell us that the genetic line of Mary is descended from King David, because the last mentioned Joseph is not her husband, but her father. In contrast, Luke lists the genetic line of her husband Joseph, which differs after David. Mary is descended from King Solomon, while her husband is descended from Nathan.

Jesus can NOT come back and rule in his fleshly body. After he died, his fleshly body was transformed into his new glorious spiritual body at his resurrection, which happened exactly three nights and three days after he was placed in the tomb. Mat. 12:40.* In a similar way, we will be resurrected into spiritual bodies at the first 'mass' resurrection. Rev. 20:4-6. Re-read the glorious description of this in 1 Cor. 15:35-54. It was in this new spiritual body that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after his resurrection. It is a new, unaging spiritual body like his that I am hoping to one day receive, through the grace of God. So no, he cannot reign with us for one thousand years in his earthly body, as he no longer has one. But he has already demonstrated that he can live on earth in his new body, and he has promised that we will also live here, on earth, with him for one thousand years after he returns (with us) to destroy all of Satan's works and imprisons him during the Thousand Years of Peace. (Rev. 1:7, Rev. 5:10, Matt. 5:5, Rev. 19:19 to 20:10. The Bible teaches that about ten percent of the world's [fleshly-not transformed] population will survive the Great Tribulation, as referred to in Mark 13:20.

* Read about this in [*God's Calendar and the Sign of Jonah*](#).

Christ will set up an earthly throne for His Father in a new temple just to the north of Jerusalem, as described in Eze. 40:4 to 47:12. Note especially vss. 43:1-7 and 47:1. We will serve under Jesus, and joyfully help Him restore our crippled earth into a true paradise, with those still in the flesh as our congregations and citizens. Isa. 11:1-12, Mic. 4:1-7. And at the end of the Thousand Years, Satan will be released to test the faith of those who have only lived during the Millennium, the second resurrection will happen and then the final judgement, Rev. 20:7-15.* Oddly, Menno seems to overlook these chapters speaking of the Great Tribulation leading into the Millennium, Matt. 24:3-42, the enormous and magnificent ‘Ezekiel’ temple and the promised thousand years of healing and peace. Nor does he explain why God will have two resurrections a thousand years apart. Our [*Holy Day Service transcripts*](#) explain many more details, and keeping God’s real Holy Days, summarised in Leviticus 23, help us to understand these things. Christ is returning soon. It is time to restore all things.]

All these sects arose in the days of the apostles, nevertheless the gospel of Christ remained the true gospel, the doctrines of the apostles, the true doctrine.

The Scriptures teach that we are to flee from, and avoid, such leaders of sects and heretics; and we hope to obey willingly this injunction all the days of our lives.

Therefore, my beloved sirs, pass an impartial and rational judgment in this matter, as before God, who will judge you in the

* By the way, verse 10 says that it is the devil, the beast and the false prophet who will be tormented forever. This is likely referring to their unclean spirits (Rev. 16:13 & 19:20), and is not the fate of ‘normal’ unrepentant humans, who will be destroyed, both body and soul, Matt. 10:28.

great day; this we ask of you for Jesus' sake; for we seek nothing else upon earth (the Lord knows), than the true foundation of the truth, the praise of Christ, the obedience of his word, and that with a good conscience, as we testify to the whole world, with our writings, word, possessions, blood, life and death.

We also write the truth in Christ and do not lie, that spiritually, we acknowledge no king, neither in heaven above nor upon earth beneath, [other] than the only, everlasting and true king, spiritual David, Christ Jesus, who is Lord of lords, and King of kings.

And if there is one who will declare himself king in the kingdom and dominion of Christ, as did John von Leyden, of Munster, he shall not go unpunished with Adonijah, 1 Kings 1, for the true Solomon, Christ Jesus himself must possess the kingdom, and sit eternally upon the throne of David.

But according to the flesh, we teach and exhort to be obedient to the emperor, king, lords and princes, yes, to all in authority, in all their transactions and civil regulations, so far as they are not contrary to the word of God, Rom. 13:1-3.

We teach and confess that we know of no sword, nor commotion in the kingdom or church of Christ, other than the sharp sword of the Spirit, God's word, as is abundantly shown in our writings, which is sharper and more piercing than any two-edged sword, and it proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, by which we make the father at variance against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, and daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. But the sword of worldly policy we leave with those to whom it is committed. Let every one be careful and not take the sword, lest he shall perish with the sword, Matt. 26:52.

We acknowledge, teach, and approve of no other matrimony than that one which Christ and his apostles publicly and plainly

taught in the New Testament, namely, one man and one woman, Matt. 19:4, and that they may not be divorced except in case of adultery, Matt. 5:32, for the two are one flesh, but if the unbelieving depart, a sister or brother is not under bondage in that case, 1 Cor. 7:16.*

We acknowledge, teach and seek no other kingdom than that of Christ, which shall endure for ever, in which there is no pomp, splendor, gold, silver, meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; we confess with Christ that our kingdom is not of this world; we brought nothing into this world, therefore, it is evident we can not take any thing out of it, as the Scriptures say, 1 Tim. 6:7.†

We know of no murdering, much less do we teach or permit it; for we truly believe that a murderer has neither lot nor part in the kingdom of God, Gal. 5:21. O, beloved sirs, how should we desire the blood of any man, since we have to die daily for man's sake? The Lord who created us knows that we seek nothing, but that we might instruct, and be a pattern to all the world, with our doctrine, life, blood and death, that they might reflect, awaken, repent and be saved, for this is the nature of pure love: to pray for persecutors, to render good for evil, to love the enemy, [thereby] heaping coals of fire upon their head; and let him avenge who judges rightly, Rom. 12:20.

* [CHCoG: Though they can separate from that partner, they are not free to remarry until their previous spouse has died. Mark 10:2-12, 1 Cor. 7:39]

† [CHCoG: Though we can indeed take nothing from here, the New Jerusalem will be truly splendid, in fact far beyond anything we can even imagine, as shown in Rev. 21. Though Menno retains the peace and joy of New Jerusalem, why does he downgrade God's special gift to us, our homes in the most magnificent city in the universe, into something resembling a peasant's hovel? And why did the original English translators make no comment on this?]

We know of no theft, much less do we teach or permit it, but we are ready before God and man, with all our hearts, to bestow our possessions, gold, and all that we have, however little it may be, and in addition to this our sweat and labor, to meet the necessities of the poor, as the Spirit and word of the Lord, and true brotherly love teach us. We well know that theft is expressly forbidden in the Scriptures, Eph. 4:28, and that it will be punished by death* according to the laws of the land, and if not repented of, with eternal death according to the word of God.

The Almighty merciful Lord, through his paternal grace, Spirit and power, will undoubtedly keep and preserve, inoffensive to the end of the world, all the pious, god-fearing, and faithful who acknowledge him, and are sincere, from all such terrible errors and ungodly abominations.

And should it be the case that one remained among us who uses violence (which is quite unknown to me), and would do that which is from the devil, my beloved sirs, know that such a one was not of us from the beginning, and will for ever not be of us, except he be thoroughly converted, repent sincerely, and become one with the Spirit, doctrine and example of Christ, as the Scriptures teach. May the gracious Lord grant that they may awaken, overcome their drowsiness, learn to know their works, see their nakedness, and be extricated from the snares of the devil, by which the poor, miserable people are so lamentably led captive at his will.

Therefore, beloved lords, beware that you be not, in judging faith, like the reckless and senseless, who persist without any knowledge of the matter, in their own opinion and wantonness, like irrational creatures, upbraid the good, and praise the evil, persecute and condemn what they do not understand. Again, I say, do not be like those blood-thirsty, raging and malicious men;

* In some countries theft was formerly punished by death.

but examine the Scriptures with trembling, with Solomon pray for wisdom, look to the Spirit, word, doings and example of Christ, and pass an impartial righteous sentence, according to the truth, as it is enjoined upon, and commanded unto all the princes and judges in the Scriptures, as is heard.

O, beloved sirs, take heed. If our faith, doctrine, sacraments, transactions and doings are not of God, as we are every where slandered, then are we the most miserable of all men upon earth; if whilst we are to be every one's deceiver, heretic, anabaptist, knave, footstool and prey; and have to endure the stocks, gallows, wheels, sword, water, fire, and all manner of misery; our poor souls must nevertheless be the property of the devil, and brands of hell, although in our weakness we so cordially seek the Lord, and are so sincere, as may be seen. O, no! My beloved sirs, no; the Spirit, doctrine and life of Christ will not deceive us; for his word is truth, and his commands eternal life. The promises of God stand sure and immovable; and they will not fail to the pious.

Therefore, we pray and admonish you, yes, we counsel and desire that you would contrast our seeking with your seeking; our spirit with your spirit; our doctrine with the doctrine of the learned; our conduct with your conduct; our poverty with your riches; our rejection and reproach with your seeking of honor; our affliction and tribulation with your voluptuousness and luxurious living; our patience with your tyranny; our hard bonds and reproachful death, with your ungracious fury and unmerciful fierceness. I speak of the guilty; if you should then find that your doctrine, faith, life, seeking and doings are more in accordance with the Spirit, word and life of the Lord, and are better than ours, then instruct us with a paternal spirit; we will willingly hear it, and be obedient, for we do desire to obey the truth unto death.

But if you can not reprove us by the Scriptures, and see that our doctrine is the best, it would then be heathenish, ungodly and

tyrannical, to force us out of life into death, thrust us from heaven into hell, by the sword and violence; this you will have to acknowledge and confess. But I am afraid, so much discretion will not be manifested to us wretched children, that the matter be weighed in the balance of the holy word, and determined by the plummet of Christ. But the upbraiding, betraying and tumult of the priests and your unmerciful edicts must be [y]our scriptures; and your rackers, hangmen, wrath, torturing, water, stocks, fire and sword, O, God, of which we, grieved children, hear in many places, must be our instructors, which we must pay at last with our possessions and blood. Beloved lords, with christian discretion, love and friendship, reflect upon this: how does it agree with the Spirit, doctrine and life of Christ? We well know that all the bloody preachers who teach and advise such things, and all the rulers who practice and uphold the same, are not the disciples of Christ; the hour in which you shall have to render accounts, when you depart this life, will teach you this truth. It can never be, says Cyprian, that such lion-like fury and lupine ferocity should dwell in the heart of a Christian. O, how good it would be for some of you, yes, how good it would be if you had never been born; for there are so many of you who neither regard law nor gospel, heaven nor hell, God nor the devil; but the evil flesh will follow its propensity.

Do you think, beloved sirs, that the Almighty God and Lord, who holds the heavens and the earth in the hollow of his hand, who kills and makes alive, the ruling Lord over all, who upholds all by the word of his power, who creates and destroys, the consuming fire, before whose presence the hills melted like wax, Psm. 97:5, that he will yield and give away to sensual minds and earthly hearts? No! no, before him the great and small are alike; the rich and the poor; the strong and the weak; the learned and unlearned; the wise and the foolish, are all alike. He is no respecter of persons, all who do not fear him, and do not conform

to his counsel, doctrine, Spirit and example, be he emperor, king, doctor, or licentiate, he must suffer punishment under his judgment and wrath, followed by eternal death.

Beloved sirs, fear God, do right, learn wisdom and truth, cleanse your hands, which are wet and imbrued in innocent blood, and reflect how the righteous God will punish in due time, all unrighteousness, malice and violence; and how severely he ever did, and will avenge and require the innocent blood, torture and death of his saints, from those blood-thirsty tyrants.

The blood-thirsty Cain had to be an accursed vagabond and exile in the land all the days of his life, because he so miserably murdered his innocent brother Abel.

The unmerciful, arrogant murderer, Pharaoh, with his whole host, was destroyed in the Red Sea, by the righteous judgment of God, on account of his tyranny and cruelty, which he exercised towards the children of Jacob, God's people.

Joash was slain by his own servants to avenge the innocent blood of Zachariah, whom he slew between the temple and the altar, 2 Kings 12, 2 Chr. 24:20-22.

Manasseh was led captive on account of his great abomination and idolatry which he practiced; and on account of the innocent blood with which he filled Jerusalem, 2 Chr. 33:1-18.

Ahab was shot through with an arrow, and his blood was licked up by the dogs at the waters of Samaria, 1 Kings 22:34-38, and his wife Jezebel was thrust out of the window, and was trodden under foot by horses, and her flesh was eaten by dogs, 2 Kings 9:33, to punish her for her ungodly deed, and the blood of Naboth, according to the word of Jehovah, which he spoke by Elijah, the Tishbite.

Sennacherib had to leave Jerusalem with disgrace, on account of his slanderously pompous words, by which he blasphemed the Most High. The angel of the Lord slew, in one night, one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in his camp, and he was thrust through with the sword by his own children, in the temple of his idol, Nisroch, 2 Kings 19:35, 37.

Nebuchadnezzar, on account of his pride, was rejected by the people for the space of seven times, or years, his dwelling was with the irrational creatures, he ate grass like oxen, his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws, Dan. 4:32, 33.

Belshazzar caroused with his mighty men, princes, wives and concubines; they were merry, drank out of the holy vessels which Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had plundered out of the temple at Jerusalem; and being in full glee and joy, praising their gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, and stone, the impenitent and obdurate tyrant was punished by God without mercy, such that he, the same night was deprived of his dominion, nation, body and life, Dan. 5:23,30.

Antiochus the Great, a king and prince of all wickedness, a tyrant of tyrants, was punished by God with such a plague that worms crept from his bowels when yet alive, and pieces of flesh fell from his body, and the stench was so intolerable that no one could endure it, yes, he himself could not abide his own smell. The righteous wrath of God laid hold upon this ungodly miscreant, and he had thus, under unheard of pain and sufferings, to end his proud, blood-thirsty, unrighteous life, and depart from this world, 2 Macc. 9:9-12.

Herod, arrayed in his royal attire, seated upon his throne, through the flattering applause of his people, on account of his eloquence and wisdom, exalted himself against God in his heart, and in that very hour he was smitten by the angel of the Lord,

was eaten by worms, and, according to the writings of Eusebius, departed this life in such a way that all the proud, haughty tyrants may look at themselves in the case of Herod, as in a mirror, and fear.

In short, it happened to Pilate, Nero, Domitian, Maximinius, Diocletian, and generally to all malicious, blood-thirsty tyrants, and what kind of death they generally died, who rose up against Christ and his saints, may be read both in sacred and profane history.

What kind of death and with what conscience some of these blood-guilty of our day, departed this life, I will not write for certain reasons; I will nevertheless say this much, that neither emperor nor edicts, upon which they relied all the days of their lives, could neither quiet nor pacify them in the hour of their death, but oftentimes they were troubled in their hearts, and with lamentations, painfully bewailed the innocent blood which they shed in the emperor's name, and said, O, we poor, miserable men, what will become of us?

O, God, what counsel? Beloved sirs, what counsel shall be given to you? How will your poor souls fare, in the day, "In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are in it shall be burnt up?" 2 Peter 3:10, when we must all appear before the judgment seat, and stand before the impartial judge? When every one shall be rewarded according to his works? He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb. 10:37.

Therefore, desist from touching the apple of the Lord's eye; for he that touches his saints, touches the apple of his eye. Take pity on your own souls, which must suffer for it with eternal death, if you do not turn to God with all your heart, and no longer

shed the blood of the innocent; for they daily call to him, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, do you not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Rev. 6:10. They call, I say, and their cries enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, avenging he will avenge, and the blood of his servants he will require at your hands.

Do not excuse yourselves, beloved sirs, and judges, that you are the servants of the emperor; this will not acquit you in the day of vengeance. It availed Pilate nothing that he crucified Christ in the name of the emperor. Serve the emperor in imperial matters, so far as Scripture permits, and serve God in divine matters, then you may claim his grace and call yourselves after his name.

Do not interfere with the right and kingdom of Christ; for he alone is the Ruler of the conscience, and beside him there is no other, let him be your emperor, and his holy word your edict in this matter; and you will soon be satiated with raging and murder. You must heed God before the emperor, and obey God’s word before the word of the emperor, if not, then you are the judges of whom it is written in Micah, They all lie in wait for blood; every man hunts his brother with a net. “That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asks, and the judge asks for a reward; and the great man, he utters his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; the day of your watchmen and your visitation comes; now shall be their perplexity,” Micah 7:24.

Therefore, fight no longer against the lamb and his chosen, it will be hard for you to kick against the pricks.

But you will, with all scoffers, say in your hearts, when is the promise of his coming? O, beloved sirs, do pay attention, we have known so many who have made as ostentatious a display as you, in silk and velvet, with gold and silver, and sat in exalted

seats, and passed sentence upon innocent blood, but now they are no more; we inquire for their places, and they are not to be found.

The day will usher in as lightning, and the hour shall come upon them like a tempest; beware and reform. We see that the tree buds, that the summer is near at hand, and our Redeemer is hastening, who redeems all the troubled souls from their afflictions, and he will recompense all proud scoffers according to their demerits.

Yes, the day is coming, and is not far off, when “the righteous man shall stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors; when they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for, and they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This was he, whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach; we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honor; now is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints! Therefore have we erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness has not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction; yes, we have gone through deserts, where there lay no way; but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it. What has pride profited us? Or what good has riches with our vaunting brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hastens by,” Wis. 5:1-9.

Then will the terrible, intolerable judgment pass upon all who do not know God, and that do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be adored by all them that believe. Then the wicked will hear, “Depart from

me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” Matt. 25:41.

Then shall your laughter be changed into weeping, your joy into sorrow, your sumptuous, temporal lives into everlasting death, your luxury into everlasting woe, your pride into dust and worms, your violence into suffering, your pomp into stench, and your cruel and unmerciful tyranny be retributed with unquenchable hell-fire.

My beloved sirs, with him nothing will be concealed or forgotten. He is the judge that searches the hearts and tries the minds, who penetrates the heights of heaven and the depth of the abyss, and the length of the earth, who will not only judge and punish evil works, and every idle word, but also every unclean, carnal thought.

O, dear Lord! O, Lord of lords! Where then will be the emperor and his edicts, the false prophets, and their deceiving doctrine? Then they will howl and weep, and cry in anguish of soul, O, you mountains, fall upon us, you rocks hide us from the face of him that sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Then, there you will see that it was nought but lies and wind with which you comforted yourselves, as said, Rev. 6:16.

Beloved lords, awaken! It is yet today; do not boast because you are of the royal family, and are called gracious lords, for it is but smoke, dust and pride; but boast and rejoice when you are born by God, when you become a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light,” 1 Pet. 2:9.

Do not boast that you are mighty upon earth, and have great power, but boast rather that you rule your land in the true fear of God, with virtue, wisdom and righteousness, to the praise of the Lord.

Do not boast that you can subdue lords, princes, cities and countries; but boast if you subdue your earthly mind and can overcome carnal temptations by the power of faith, and die to ungodliness, and triumph through Christ, and be taken into the kingdom of glory, with all the pious soldiers of God, and receive the promised crown at the hand of the Lord, for if you be such kings, then you are not only kings according to the flesh, but also according to the Spirit; those who love the prince of all kings, who are cleansed of sin by his blood, who have made God and his son their kings and priest, who reign and conquer with all the children of God, the world, flesh, blood, sin, death, devil, false doctrine, and the infernal gates; they rejoice not because their names are enrolled in the register of the kings of this world; but they rejoice because their names are written in the book of life, in heaven.

O, you highly renowned noble lords and princes, O, that you would in all love and meekness receive this simple, plain, but true instruction of your poor servant, and not despise it, by which I have so fully, and with a good heart, admonished all your worthy highnesses.

Do not look upon my weakness nor to my little understanding, but look to the Spirit, word and example of Christ, which I have recommended and taught in sincerity of heart to you and to all men, according to my weak abilities.

Do sincerely repent, so that you stand before God; wail and weep with David; put on sackcloth and raiments of hair; scatter ashes upon your heads; humble yourselves with the king of Nineveh; confess your faults with Manasseh; die unto your ambitious flesh and pride; fear the Lord, your God, with all your powers; judge in all wisdom with fear and trembling; help the oppressed; do not grieve the distressed; promote the just cause of the widows and orphans; protect the good; punish the evil in a christian manner; discharge the duties of your offices properly;

seek the kingdom and country that will endure forever; and reflect that you, however highly esteemed upon earth, are only pilgrims and sojourners in a strange land.

Obeys, believe, fear, love, serve and follow your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for it is before him whom every knee shall bow; he is the eternal word, wisdom, truth and Son of God. Seek his honor and praise in all your thoughts, words and actions, and you shall reign in eternity.

APPEAL TO THE LEARNED.

Herewith I will leave all the lords and princes, with all the magistracy and rulers, and those sent by them, in the hands of the Lord, and address myself to you, O, you learned, you who think that you have the keys of heaven, and are the eyes and the light of the people; I will speak with you, as with those whose salvation I seek with all my heart, because I see with open eyes that both you and your disciples run voluntarily into the eternal destruction of your souls, and nevertheless boast that you are the sent teachers, and your churches are the churches of Christ, and I would cordially and brotherly admonish you, one and all, Romans, Lutherans and Zwinglians, concerning the following articles.

That you would notice, in the first place, that your ministry and services are not from God and his word, but are from the bottomless pit, for it is evident that you blaspheme and persecute [or pervert] the word, ordinances and commands of Christ, and teach and enforce the word, ordinances and commands of anti-christ; that you profane the temple of God, build and honor temples of stone, break the living images in which the Spirit of

God dwells; make and dress images of gold, silver and wood; that you hate a pious, blameless life; encourage and defend, by your dissolute examples, a disorderly, passionate life of the flesh. Say, my beloved, Where is there a single letter in the Scriptures concerning all your doings and worship, such as of masses, infant baptism, auricular confession, &c.? Is not, in truth, the greater part of what you do and transact, all deception, hypocrisy, blasphemy, abomination and idolatry? From where do you derive your offices and services, and from whom are they? I would advise you, in true love, that you would reflect upon them according to the Scriptures, and in the true fear of God.

Secondly, consider what you are properly seeking through this, your office and service: You and I, up to this time, stood in the same calling, office and service. I candidly confess that in all my studies from my youth, in preaching and singing, I sought only a vain, lazy, good living, praise and favor of men, yes, solely the gratification of my carnal desires, till the gracious and great Lord bestowed me upon the gift of his gracious Spirit, and opened the understanding of my heart, that I acknowledged with the preacher Solomon that all my seeking, life and doings were vanity, and that the end of it was certain death and hell.

But that you continue so to seek is too palpable to be denied. For if there were no prebends and cloisters, but few preachers, priests and monks would be found. This I certainly know. So long as these exist, the world shall never be in want of deceivers and hypocrites.

Say, beloved, what else is your whole seeking and doing, than worldly carnality, gluttony, and a voluptuous life? Who can scrutinize and fully describe your earthly mind and sensual life? Some of you make an ostentatious display in ermine, in silk and velvet, others live in full revelry, others are avaricious and hoard; some violate virgins and maids, others pollute the bed of their neighbor, others' chastity is like the chastity of Sodom; all your

doctrine is deceiving, your sacraments are enchanting, your piety is principally ungodliness, and your divine service is an open abomination and idolatry. Some of you neither fear God nor the devil; you blaspheme the name of God, you falsify his holy word, his children and servants you persecute, and, in reliance upon his grace, you do all manner of evil; if you can only lead a life free from care, and enjoy fine times, then all is well done. Say, beloved, is it not so? Worthy men, is it not so? This is your chief seeking and striving, among great and small, this you must acknowledge and confess; for the fruit is manifest to all the world, and it cannot be any longer concealed.

O, men, men! Beware! If any one could enter into life on this broad way which you teach, and in which you walk, and keep his soul in God, we might truly lament and say that the prophets, apostles, and all the witnesses of God, and also Christ Jesus himself, did not act wisely, and that they have not dealt rightly towards us, that they passed their lives with so much anguish, suffering, tribulation and pain in this sorrowful vale of tears, and directed us miserable, weak children into such a way.

O, no, my beloved, no; truth will eternally be truth; if you are not converted to a better and christian mind; if you do not die to your deception, and also to your vain, carnal life, repent, and become in your dispositions like innocent little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, "For to be carnally minded," says Paul, "is death." Rom. 8:6

Teach, call, hope, boast in any way you choose, if you desire to be saved, you must walk in the ways of the Lord, hear his word, and be obedient to this; for nothing avails in heaven and upon earth, by which you can be saved, neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper, neither eloquence nor erudition, neither councils nor long standing usages, neither emperors nor edicts, neither Christ with his grace, merits, blood and death, if we are not born by God (understand it right, those who have ears to hear, and

minds to understand). Believe his word sincerely, walk in the light, and do right, as John says, “This, then, is the message which we have heard from him, and declare unto you that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all; if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin,” 1 John 1:5-7.

O, transgressors, transgressors, examine your hearts, give heed to my words and learn wisdom, you who live in voluptuousness and sit at ease, who say in your hearts, It is we, besides us there is none other; what we command shall be heard, and what we speak must be valid upon earth; we cannot go astray in the Scriptures, and in counsel we cannot err, and we can teach nothing unlawful. Ah! alas! your boasted wisdom leads you astray, and the pride of your hearts causes you to stumble; return, your path is slippery, and your way leads to the abyss of hell.

Beloved men, learn to know what God’s own and eternal Son, Christ Jesus, sought upon earth, what he taught, and what example he left you; his seeking was his Father’s praise, and the salvation of our poor souls; his doctrine was his Father’s word, and his precedence a sure way to the kingdom of God. “Who being in the form of God,” says Paul, “thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,” Phil. 2:6,7;* and came poor and miserable into this sorrowful world; there was no room in the inn when he was born; he had nowhere to lay his head; nor in his death had he anything to quench his thirst, although it is he

* [CHCoG: This is an accurate translation: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Jeshua, who, while He was in God’s form, did not consider the extortion that He was the equal of God, but He stripped Himself and He took the form of a servant, and was in the form of a child of man and was in nature as a man.”

through whom the almighty, all-bountiful Father grants to all his created beings, residence, clothing, food and drink, as Paul says, "For you knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that through his poverty you might be rich," 2 Cor. 8:9.

If you have any fear of God, and would not lead your own, and the souls of your poor people, wilfully to death, then contrast your seeking with the seeking of Christ, your doctrine with the doctrine of Christ, your spirit with the Spirit of Christ, and your life with the life of Christ, then you may truly find whether you are in or out of Christ, and then who is your God, what Lord you serve, and of whose spirit and kingdom you [really] are.

Thirdly, observe what fruits and usefulness your office and services bring forth; for what is your doctrine, other than a useless, feeble sowing in the wind, which has neither spirit nor power; your sacraments are an encouragement to the impenitent, and your lives examples of wickedness. Where are the avaricious whom you have meliorated, the drunkards you have made temperate, the polluted you have made pure, the haughty whom you have humbled? How will you teach others, being yourselves untaught, and beget Christ an acceptable church, [when you] are yourselves the servants of anti-christ, and the children of Belial? You and your disciples, therefore must ever confess, both high and low, men and women, that you are all dead bodies, and do not have the Spirit of God; for with you we do not find contrite hearts, true knowledge of Christ, true love, an earnest desire after the kingdom of God, dying to earthly things, true humility, righteousness, friendliness, mercy, chastity, obedience, wisdom, truth and peace; but every where we find hateful, envious, obdurate, malicious hearts, an aversion and despising of the divine word, lust and love of this world, haughtiness, pride, pomp, lies, knavery, disgrace, adultery, whoredom, robbery, burning, slaying, cursing, swearing, and all manner of malice.

Behold, you withered trees and careless shepherds, these are the fruits you bring forth, and the sheep you pasture, these are the churches and disciples you comfort with the blood of the Lord, preach to them grace and peace, and to whom you dispense baptism and the Lord's Supper. If I do not write the truth, reprove me.

O, beloved sirs, so entirely have you lost every christian virtue and understanding, besides the light and the Scriptures; you hold captive in ungodliness under the power of hell, the poor, ignorant people, whole kingdoms, cities and countries; yes, the whole wide world, and that, O, God, for such small hire, namely, for one hand full of barley and one piece of bread, as the prophet says. O, that my words might be a lie, and not the truth; sunshine is clear, but still clearer is the truth which I write.

And this is not enough for you, O, you men, that you so miserably deceive the poor wretched souls; and besides this, you also rebuke, defame, slander, and betray all those who seek and fear God with all their hearts, rebuke all unrighteousness with doctrine and life, and so willingly walk in Christ. You deprive them of their possessions and lives, that you may be greatly honored among the people, and be not evil spoken of in your doings, that you may not be hindered in your unlawful gain; and that you may enjoy an easy and voluptuous life to the end of your days.

O, how rightly you are depicted by the wisdom of God, which says, "Woe unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves (mark), neither do you allow them that are entering to go in," Matt. 23:13.

What I think, I write, and do not dissemble. I fear, worthy sirs, that there are many of you so ungodly, and so far determined upon unlawful gain, indolent life, and the praise of men, that you

would rather see all the god-fearing put to the stake, than lose a guilders of your rents, or to hear a harsh word from the magistracy, for the sake of the truth.

O, you, with wanton looks, when will you be ashamed? You diamonds! When will you be softened, and you Moors, when will you become white? I think never more; for how can you do any thing good, because you have learned evil, and are used to it from your infancy?

Alas! My soul must grieve and painfully mourn for your sakes, that you have erred so lamentably, and besides this, you cover all your disgrace under the word and name of Christ; and do not observe, O, you men, that you, together with all the false prophets, are promised in the Scriptures, and threatened by the Spirit of the Lord, every where with nothing but punishment, wrath, gnashing of teeth, weeping, wailing, woe, damnation, the flaming lake and the eternal blackness of death.

The hour is near at hand when we shall hear, "Give an account," &c. Alas, would it then be due to us, when the day is at hand, to walk a thousand years on burning coals and in red hot armor (flames), then we might even rejoice and be of good cheer; but now it is hidden from your eyes, through your haughtiness, avarice and momentary luxury.

Perhaps I would be smitten on the cheek by some of you, and with Micaiah, be compelled to hear from Zedekiah, "Which way did the Spirit of Jehovah go from me to speak unto you?" 2 Chron.18:23.* O, my beloved, fear God and understand the truth. You direct the poor dissolute souls to the subtlety and philosophy of the learned, to the many councils, to customs and usages of long standing, to imperial edicts, to the doctrines and commandments of men, which are nothing but quicksands, which cannot save the house from the tempest, but I do not do so, but,

* [CHCoG: Showing that even false prophets can say God's Name.]

with Moses, the prophets, apostles, angels, and the Father himself, I direct you to Christ Jesus, to whom all the emperors, kings, councils, usages and the learned, will have to yield; for his word is truth, and his commands are eternal life. To him every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth; all who reject him, reject the Father that sent him, Phil. 2:10.

This I teach you; I direct you to his Spirit, word, life, command, prohibition, ordinances and usages, as to a sure and immovable foundation, laid in Zion, to a plain and safe way, prepared by God, who, according to his sure promises, will lead all the truly penitent and Christian believers into eternal life.

Beloved men, observe: there were four hundred false prophets in the days of Ahab, king of Israel, who unanimously prophesied prosperity and felicity, that he should advance, for God would give the enemies of the king into his hands; while there was but one Micaiah, who spoke the real truth and predicted adversity in the name of Jehovah, 2 Chr. 18:6,7.

And there were also four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal [the Lord], and four hundred prophets of the groves, all of whom did eat at Jezebel's table; there was only one Elijah, a man of God, and a prophet of Jehovah, who was zealous for the law of his God, and defended his praise, 1 Kings 18.

Joash, with all the princes, priests and common people, were unanimous in their groves and their false worship, which they had chosen after the death of Jehoiada, the high priest, and there was but one Zechariah, who reproved their ungodly abominations, and threatened them with the wrath and punishment of his God, 2 Chr. 24.

Even as those renowned and worthy men of God, though they were few, reproved, with pure, divine ardor, in the power of the Spirit, and faithfully admonished by the law of God with their

great and glorious talents, to all the disobedient and idolatrous kings, princes, priests and the common people, without respect to persons; and on account of it suffered disgrace, misery, tribulation, bonds and death, as we may abundantly read and see in the Scriptures and in history. I do also here, with my small talents, for similar views and reasons, openly testify to the truth, because I see that you all hypocritically flatter lords and princes, and caress the world, and because there is, alas, nobody who opposes this ungodliness with the word of the Lord, nor reproves the wickedness of the world; I must, on this account, hear and bear much, as did the above mentioned, although I mean it so well, and have such true grounds.

O, worthy men, deliberate! Reflect on the matter. Consider the end; contemplate the consequence. You console yourselves with the inventions of men; but we put our trust in the word and truth of God; you seek the world, we seek heaven: you place your affections upon the present, we upon the future; you depend upon the emperor and temporal powers; we depend on Christ and his promises, till we all shall appear before him who will come in the clouds of heaven, to requite all flesh. Then you will see what you sought, what office you conducted, what fruits you brought forth, for what hire you served, whose word you preached, whose counsel you rejected, and whom, O, men, you have so enviously pierced.

Hereby I will commend you to the Lord, you learned and preachers; and entreat for God's sake (to the good of all your souls), that you accept my faithful warning with gratitude and love, written to you with a sincere and Christian intention; read it with an understanding heart; reflect upon it, and examine it with fear and trembling. I certainly know that you will find nothing in it but kindness, love, zeal, and a sure foundation of the only and invincible truth.

And though some of you may think that I reprove too severely, you ought to know that I have not done so without the instruction, counsel and doctrine of the holy prophets, Christ and the apostles. I have given no name without the word of God. Let him that is innocent thank God and rejoice; he that is guilty is not reproved by me, but by the Spirit and word of God.

O, you whom I desire as friends, fear God and his judgment; reform your earthly carnal life; abandon all your deceptions, blindness, seducements and abominations, in which you have hitherto been involved; seek the right truth with all your powers; pray to God for wisdom; warn every one; deal and act unblamably; then you will not be of that number of shepherds called by such dreadful names in the Scriptures, and you will not be partakers of that displeasure, punishment and wrath, but you will inherit grace, mercy and life, as the prophet says, "But if the wicked will turn from his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die; all his transgressions that he has committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him," Ezek. 18:21,22. The gracious and merciful Lord grant you all his grace, knowledge, Spirit, wisdom, light and truth, that you may sincerely awaken, repent, and be eternally saved, Amen.

APPEAL TO THE COMMON PEOPLE.

Give ear, you people; you who trust in lies, and boast that you are Christians; tear your bands asunder, and allow yourselves to be led no longer as asses bound and under a heavy burden of sin, by these aforementioned drivers, for they deceive you; they

preach to you according to their own opinion, and not out of the mouth of the Lord; they comfort you in your wicked ways; they call and cry only mercy and peace, though it is displeasure and judgment, as the prophet says. The priests and prophets teach a false worship, and comfort my people in their calamity; that they shall esteem it lightly, saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace;" Jeremiah 8:11.

They are the blind leaders, who lead you and themselves into the pit, and the blind watchmen who do not watch over the city of God. Thieves and murderers, who slay your poor souls with the sword of their false doctrine, and steal from you the word and kingdom of the Lord; greedy shepherds who seek your wool, milk and flesh, and not [what is good for] your souls. In short, they are those who wholly desolate the kingdom of Christ, and promulgate in high honor the kingdom of anti-christ through the whole world, and who always comfort and defend you, poor children, in your dissolute abominations, your obdurate, blind life, so that alas! There is none who is sincerely converted to the Lord, laments his sins, and says, What do I do?

O, worthy children and brethren, my heart quakes in my body and fears, when I reflect that such a numberless multitude of men are born in vain and to no purpose; who will have to endure the wrath and judgment of the Lord, if they do not repent, and shall never find grace.

Beloved children, take heed, for thus Christ Jesus teaches you, I tell you truly, "Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 18:3. O, dear Lord, this is spoken by God's eternal truth, which cannot lie, and how ungodly you ignorant people live, and how far you are from the innocence of children, your fruits testify; for you despise God and his word; you hate all righteousness and truth, many of you live as the irrational creatures, others quarrel, curse, swear, are covetous, practice

usury, lie, cheat, injure and defraud one another; fidelity and piety are seldom found among you, faithlessness, and knavery, alas, every where; eating to excess, gambling, gaming, drinking and carousing are pastimes amongst you; to pollute women and defile virgins is called courting and loving. To take advantage of and defraud one another, is called understanding and wisdom; you are valiant at beer, and mighty at wine; unrighteousness and destruction are in all your ways, the poor and weak you oppress, and you revile the afflicted, the god-fearing and pious; you think and practice nothing but evil, you are without understanding, says the prophet, Rom. 1:28-32 as a frantic heifer. Pomp and splendor you call the fashion and custom of the country. The one lies in wait for the other's honor, property, and life, and seeks his destruction. As the prophet says, your faith is hypocrisy, your worship idolatry, your whole life is world and flesh, as may be seen, and then you say, he that walks in simplicity, walks right, as if ignorance, blindness, despising the truth and godliness, were a pious, humble and plain life. Dear children, be ashamed of your offensive wantonness and accursed folly.

Do you suppose that Christ is a liar, and his word a fable? O, no! His sentence stands immovable, and shall never be altered; if you live in pride, avarice, voluptuousness, unchastity and in carnal lusts, do not believe Christ and his word, continue to be earthly-minded, and are not born by God, you must die eternally, or the Spirit of God is not true, but false.

Say, beloved, why [do you] extol the apostles and prophets, while you revile their doctrine as heresy, and their lives as madness? Why allow yourselves to be called christians, while you hate and oppose Christ's word and example?

You say we are without understanding, untaught, and do not know the Scriptures? I then again reply: The word is plain and needs no comment, namely, "You shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your

strength, and your neighbor as yourself,” Matt. 22:37, 39. Again, You shall give bread to the hungry and entertain the needy, Isa. 58:7.

If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; for, to be carnally minded is death; the avaricious, drunkards, and the proud, shall not inherit the kingdom of God; for he will judge adulterers and fornicators, Rom. 8; 1 Cor. 6, and many like passages. All who do not understand such passages, we must confess and acknowledge; are more like irrational creatures than men, more like blocks than christians.

O, my children, my beloved children, do not deceive your own souls; seek wisdom and understanding, even as you do your daily food, that you may find great riches; for the kingdom of heaven suffers violence. Strive, says Christ, to enter in at the strait gate; ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. Matt. 7:7-23. The Almighty, great God is not satisfied with a bare name, but he desires a true, sincere faith, unfeigned, ardent love, a new, converted heart, true humility, mercy, chastity, patience, righteousness and peace; he desires the whole man, heart, professions and actions. He who delights in the word of the Lord, speaks the truth from the heart, crucifies his flesh, and will give his goods and blood for the word of the Lord, if it is required.

Behold, dear children, this is the way in which we will all have to walk, if we desire to be saved; therefore, awaken and learn wisdom. Hear the inviting voice of God, open unto him, and meet him, that he does not complain of you, as he did formerly through his prophets, of obdurate and stiff-necked Judea and Jerusalem. “I have nourished,” says he, “and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me; the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children that are corrupters! They

have forsaken Jehovah, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they have turned away backwards,” Isa. 1:2-4.

Jeremiah says, “Every one turned to his course, as the horse rushes into the battle; yes, the stork in the heaven knows her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people do not know the judgment of Jehovah,” Jer. 8:6,7.

Remember, dear children, how greatly Jesus Christ took to heart the obstinacy and blindness of the Jews when he said, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would not,” he wept and said, “If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes,” Luke 19:42.

“Therefore put away from you all abominations and the multitude of evils, and accept in humility the Word which is planted in our nature, which is able to save your souls,” James 1:21. Seek God with a full heart, repent sincerely, cleanse yourselves inwardly before the Lord, let go [of the] world, flesh, false doctrine, and every thing contrary to the honor, will, and word of God; hear, believe and follow Jesus Christ, the only and true shepherd of your souls, who sought you in such great love, and purchased you with such a precious price. Then you may, in truth, boast that you are the people of God, and the church of Christ. To him, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, be praise and the eternal kingdom, Amen.

APPEAL TO CORRUPT SECTS.

Christ said, "False christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take heed, behold, I have foretold you all things," Mark 13:22,23. O, you backsliding, erring children! Mind, had you taken to heart this faithful warning of our Lord and Savior, Christ; had you acknowledged his Spirit, doctrine, and holy life in a perfect Spirit, doctrine and life, and acknowledged him as the true Prophet, promised in Scripture; and had you received him as the true and living Son of God; you would never have been led so far from his ways, nor would such frightful errors have taken place. But, O Lord! I fear that some of you are so far enchanted that you will nevermore come to Christ, the true Shepherd; for you, through a perverted and obscure understanding of the Scriptures, defend, as just and right, the abominable works of ungodliness, which are not only contrary to the Spirit, word and will of Christ, but also contrary to reasonable modesty, nature, and reason.

Is it not a grievous error that you allow yourselves to be so sorely bewitched by such worthless persons, and so lamentably misled from one unclean sect to another; first to that of Munster, next to Battenberg, now Davidists; from Beelzebub to Lucifer, and from Belial to Leviathan? Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the real truth. You allow yourselves to be led about by every wind of doctrine. You choose out a way for yourselves; as do also the priests and monks; you do not hold to the head, Christ, from which all the body, fitly joined together, comes unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

I fear that your sins will be punished; for you are earthly, and carnal minded, by which you thrust from you the pure knowledge of Christ, and hate his cross; and against all admonition of

Scriptures, against the undeceiving example of Christ and his saints, you conform yourselves in the splendor, pomp, eating, drinking, folly, hypocrisy, and false worship of this proud, useless, vain and idolatrous world, which you should, by right, instruct and admonish by a pious, humble, sober, and godly walk.

O, you backsliding children! Consider how grievously you disgrace the holy Moses, who teaches and speaks to you out of the mouth of God. He says, "I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brethren, like unto you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not listen unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him," Deut.18:18,19. This is repeated by Peter and Stephen in Acts 3:23 and 7:37.

What do you do with all the great prophets of God, such as David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who, in so many places, with such plain words, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, direct us to Christ and his word? They must either testify to lies, or your prophets must be deceivers and false teachers. This is incontrovertible.

Did not holy Paul say, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. 1:8. That your prophets, with their king, dominion, polygamy, sword, &c., do not agree with Paul and the doctrine and gospel of the apostles, you are all forced to acknowledge and admit, from which it forcibly follows that they, with their doctrine and conduct, are cursed and anathematized.

Say, my beloved, what do you do with the revealed and infallible word and testimony of the Almighty Father, which he himself has testified of his Son, and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; you hear him," Matt. 17:5. *Him*

you shall hear; but since you reject his Spirit, word and example, you follow and hear those who, with their spirit, doctrine and conduct, are from the bottomless pit, yes, are manifestly anti-christs and false prophets.

Do you not know that the Son of God has himself commanded us that we should observe all that he has enjoined, and that he will be with us until the end of the world?

Will you then say that the doctrine of Christ and his apostles was imperfect, and that your teachers bring forth the perfect instruction? I answer that to teach and believe this is the most horrible blasphemy, the most mocking perversity that can be uttered against the Most High; for you thereby declare that Christ is not the true Son of God, the perfect Teacher, and the true image of righteousness. You deny the whole Scripture, you reject the testimony of Moses and all the prophets, who pointed to the only and true Christ, as has been shown; you disparage the word of the Father, and reject Christ Jesus, with his Spirit, word, kingdom and spiritual government; you put your trust and hopes in lying, mortal flesh, and upon earthly, carnal things, which, as the Scriptures teach, must be dispersed like dust before the wind. Examine the Scriptures in the fear of the Lord, and reflect if such is not a gross blasphemy against the Almighty.

Say, you deceived children, where is there a syllable in the whole doctrine of Christ and the apostles (according to which Spirit, doctrine, conduct and example all Scripture must be understood), by which you can prove and establish one of all your erring articles?

If you would appeal to the literal understanding and transactions of Moses and the prophets, then must you also become Jews, receive circumcision, literally possess the land of Canaan, again erect the Jewish kingdom, build the city and temple, and according to the law, offer sacrifices, attend to the

worship of God, and declare that Christ, the promised Savior, has not yet come, [but] who has changed the literal and figurative ceremonies into new, spiritual and abiding substances.

You miserable, erring sheep, observe, I have before remarked to the magistrates that the kingdom of Christ is not of this visible, perishing world, but that it is an eternal, spiritual and abiding kingdom, where there is no eating and drinking,* but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. There no king reigns, but the true King of Zion, Christ Jesus. He is the King of righteousness, the King of peace, the King of kings, who has all power in heaven above, and on earth beneath; before whom every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. The true king David in Spirit, who, through his righteousness, merits and crimson blood, has ransomed the sheep from the mouths of the savage lions and bears of the pit, has slain the great and terrible Goliath, and obtained for the spiritual Israel of God, eternal welfare and peace. Neither the King nor his servants bear any sword but the sword of the Spirit, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, the word of God, with which he brings forth, builds, extends and governs his kingdom, guards and defends it under the pressing cross, in all trials and temptations, from the gates of hell, onsets and powers, and not with iron or steel, as the rude, vindictive world does; for his kingdom and dominion is spirit, and not letter, as has been shown.

[CHCoG: There is much right in the above paragraph, but also some errors. Yes, Jesus is to be King of Kings, but that is throughout the Millennium. And even then, His Father will

* [CHCoG: Perhaps so, but remember, Jesus ate food after he was transformed and resurrected, and told his disciples that he would one day drink wine with them in his Kingdom. Luke 24:36-43, John 21:9-15, Luke 22:18, Isa 25:1-12.]

remain above him. At the end of the Thousand Years, Jesus will hand the kingship back to His Father, as stated in 1 Cor. 15:22-28. And yes, Jesus will always judge righteously, with full knowledge, and in accord with the Word of God. But no iron?? Psalm 2:9&12, and Rev. 2:27, 12:5 & 19:15 ALL tell us that Jesus will rule with a rod of iron when required. Jesus' kingship during the Millennium is another gift from his Father Jehovah, as part of his Thank You for his willingness to die on the stake for our sins. And the reward should be vast. Many billions of people will live during the Millennium, and many, perhaps most, will learn to love Jesus and become true christians.]

Again, under this kingdom, and under this King, no other wedlock must be tolerated, except between one man and one woman, as God had in the beginning established in the union of Adam and Eve; and Christ has further said that these two are one flesh, and that they shall not separate, except for the cause of fornication, Matt. 5:32.

This is not a kingdom in which a display is made of gold, silver, pearls, silk, velvet and costly finery, as is done by the proud wicked world, and which also your leaders teach and give you liberty to do under this deception, viz., that it is harmless if you do not desire and serve them from your heart. Thus might satan approve his haughtiness, and make pure and good the desire of his eyes. In the kingdom of all humility (I say), the outward adorning of the body is not desired and sought with power, but the inward adorning of the spirit, with zeal, diligence, and a broken, contrite heart.

[CHCoG: Again, much of this is true. But the examples we have do not fit Menno's austere image. I will cite three: 1: The mobile Tabernacle that Moses was told to build was in fact

magnificently made, using only the finest materials and workmanship, and many of the articles in the tent were made of pure gold, or covered with gold. 2: The same considerations apply to the temple Solomon built. 3: Ezekiel's millennium temple descriptions do not mention gold, but they specify a stunning complex that is 500 cubits (261 meters or 856 ft) to a side, giving it more than double the area of the entire Temple Mount, and it is centered within a dedicated Holy Portion which is 13.1 km (8.1 mi.) long and 5.23 km (3.25 mi.) wide. Eze 45:1-4. It will be a beautiful setting for Christ's Father during the Thousand Years of Peace after Jesus returns to earth. Should our Great God hide his glory, merely because Satan and his minions try to emulate it?]

Here is known no lying, eating, drinking, or hypocrisy; here none conforms himself to a drunken, luxurious, idle and idolatrous world, nor lays from him the cross of Christ, as you do, but all are upright and godly in heart and deed. They speak the truth from the heart. They lead a circumspect, temperate life; shun all idolatry and false doctrine from within and without; abstain from all appearance of evil; perform the true worship of the heart; abide firmly in the word and ordinances of Christ; lead an unblameable life before the whole world, and testify of Jesus Christ with the mouth, works, possessions and blood, as the divine honor requires it.

Here that confession is unknown to which some of you pretend, here we confess only to the true God before whom we have sinned, and to our neighbor against whom we have trespassed.

Here modesty, rectitude, and honesty are taught and practiced, but not immodesty, disgrace and uncleanness. I think you understand well what I mean.

In short, here the Spirit, word, will, commands, prohibitions, ordinances, customs, and examples of Christ are taught. To which all Scriptures refer us, and not the opinions of false prophets, high sounding words, enchanting appearances, boasting, dreams, and lying miracles, against which, the Spirit of God, and the Scriptures everywhere warn and counsel us.*

Dear children, reform yourselves. Every one who teaches you otherwise than is testified by the word of the Lord, even though he were one who could dry up the bottom of the sea, and hurl the stars down from heaven, let him be abandoned, and let his doctrine be regarded as deceiving and erroneous, for, to all eternity there may no other foundation be laid than what is laid, Christ Jesus. He is the corner stone and foundation in Zion, on whom all the building is fitly framed together (according to his will, Spirit and word), and grows into a holy temple unto the Lord.

O, you backsliding children, hear the word of God and make haste, for your way is in darkness, and your path leads to death. Embrace the truth and learn wisdom, for your comforters have destroyed you and rendered the way in which you must go uneven. Munster and Amsterdam may well be to you an eternal warning and example. When a prophet, said Moses, speaks in the name of Jehovah, if the thing does not follow, nor come to pass, that is not the thing which Jehovah has spoken. Deu. 18:22.

O, dear Lord! How many innocent hearts have they ruined? How many poor souls have they deceived? What gross shame have they cast upon the word of the Lord? What great abominations have some of them committed under the appearance of good? How have they made the poor, blind

* [CHCoG: Apart from the no eating and drinking statement, the three paragraphs above all relate well to what life should be like on earth during the Millennium.]

magistrates, who are, alas, destitute of a correct understanding of the holy word, to be guilty of innocent blood?

I think it is time you should see and learn to know your lying, faithless, and deceiving prophets. They are the foxes which destroy the vineyard of the Lord. These are the thieves and murderers of your souls; false prophets who deny the Lord that bought them; who have directed you, poor erring sheep, by their own lying visions, dreams, and thoughts of their hearts, and have led you against all the Scriptures upon a false and loose foundation.

How like unto those you have become, of whom Busebius writes, that they walked according to the lusts of their hearts, as the prophets foretold; who denied Paul and the New Testament, and carried with them a book, which they boasted, fell from heaven as a present to them.*

So it is with you, O, you entranced (bear with me, for it is the truth which I write). The prophets you read according to the Jewish understanding. You say the doctrine of Christ and the apostles is at the present time fulfilled; and pretend that there is now another dispensation, &c., and you do not observe that you thereby deny the Son of God, and speak against the whole Scriptures; you comfort yourselves with mere lies, as also did disobedient Israel in their time.

Oh dear Lord! How long shall these sore plagues endure? How long shall the name of the Lord be blasphemed through you, and his holy word be disgraced through you? Is it not a grievous error (a mad frenzy), that Christ, the Son of the living God, who was brought forth in everlasting righteousness, has reconciled heaven and earth by his blood on the cross, with his word of truth, and with the counsels of eternal life, is rejected from your hearts, which he so dearly bought, and which should so properly

* [CHCoG: Sounds almost like a prophecy about Mormonism.]

be the dwelling place of Christ; and poor, sinful flesh, and a mortal man descended from Adam, full of all unrighteousness, haughty speeches, lies and open deception is received by you and adopted instead.

Oh, beloved children, what are you doing? Are you so thoroughly enchanted that you have lost all reason, intelligence, the Scriptures, and everything, so that you cannot see at all? Then may God be merciful unto you. Good children, observe that a letter of the law of Moses could not be changed till the new Moses, Christ Jesus, came, who was promised through the law and the prophets. If then the letter of the law was so strong, effective and firm, and in its time unchangeable, although given only through a servant, and sealed by perishable blood, how much more powerful, effectual, firm, and unchangeable is the free law of the Spirit, which was given through the Son himself, and confirmed by the blood of the eternal covenant.

All who taught anything contrary to the word of Moses were false prophets, for nothing was to be taken from, nor added to this, but all appeals were to the law and the testimony, Deu. 4:2. All the prophets of the present day are false who teach contrary to the Spirit, word, commands, prohibitions, ordinances and example of Christ, even though such should exhibit themselves in appearance as holier than John, more zealous than Elijah, and more miraculous than Moses.

They persuade you that the doctrine of the apostles is imperfect, but that they now teach that which is perfect. This is a deception above all deceptions, as said above, for thereby the creature is honored more than the Creator. Paul does not refer to any better doctrine or perfection other than that which is shown by the doctrine of the apostles, which will abide in everlasting clearness, according to the infallible promise of God, and which we shall receive in the resurrection of the righteous, when all doctrine shall receive an end. This is true, otherwise Paul is at

variance with himself, and the true reality is not to be found in Christ.

Again, will you say, then, with the Jews and Scribes, that Elijah will come before the great and terrible day, and thus wait for something new?

First, I answer with Christ's own words, that "all the prophets and the law prophesied until John, and if you will receive it, this is Elijah, which was to come," Matt. 11:13,14.

Secondly, even though Elijah himself were to come, he would not dare teach any thing against the foundation and doctrine of Christ and the apostles, but he must, if he would preach aright, teach and preach conformably to the same, for, by the Spirit, word, actions and example of Christ, all must be judged, and receive the last sentence, otherwise the whole Scriptures are false.

Therefore, one of two things must follow, either that we are not to look for an Elijah any more, since John was the Elijah who was to come; or if an Elijah should come yet, he must propose and teach us nothing but the foundation and word of Christ, according to the Scriptures; for Christ is the man who sits upon David's throne, and shall reign forever in the kingdom, house, and congregation of Jacob.

I would then, herewith sincerely admonish you all to weigh and prove all spirit, doctrine, faith, and conduct, with the Spirit, doctrine and conduct of Christ, and that you be temperate. All spirits which accord with this are from God, but those which are contrary, are from him, who from the beginning has turned Adam and his race aside from God, and has led them by lies onward to death.

If you will not hear, but will ever turn your ears to lies, and believe the deceiving creature more than the infallible Creator; if you set your feet upon slippery places; if you neither fear nor

regard Scripture admonitions, nor the power and punishments of God, but reject and set it all aside as idle and useless, and allow yourselves always to be comforted with falsehoods, visions, dreams, splendid delusions, false interpretations and continue, without the cross, on the broad way, then will the righteous Lord send to you mockers and deceivers, and by his righteous judgment allow you to be led from one ungodly course to another, as may already be seen.

You shall be satiated with lies, vanity, folly and hypocrisy. You will reap the fruits of your wantonness, and at last, with all false prophets and lying wonder workers, you shall hear the words, "I do not know where you are from; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity," Luke 13:27.

You are then eternally warned and faithfully admonished by God. Beware, the Day approaches, repent, reform. The word of God is true. If there any one among you who fears God; let him reflect on what I here write; search the Scriptures and believe the truth, for God hates all liars. Eternal woe and gnashing of teeth will be the portion and reward of the hypocrite; "Whosoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God," 2 John 1:9.

O, you miserable, enchanted children! Turn again. If you knew what it was to forsake the living fountain of Christ, and dig for yourselves dry wells which can neither yield nor hold water, Jer. 2:13, how soon would you turn your back on the false prophets and their hypocritical lives, surrender yourselves to the true Shepherd of your souls, Christ Jesus, and follow and obey his sure counsel, teaching, admonition, ordinance, and holy example (although in weakness); but alas, enchanting blindness has obscured your understanding. The beloved, merciful Lord grant you eyes to see and hearts to understand; this is our sincere wish, Amen.

TO THE BRIDE, KINGDOM, STATE, and CHURCH OF THE LORD, GRACE AND PEACE.

Thus spoke the Bridegroom, Christ Jesus, through Solomon to his bride, the church, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away, for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land; the fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away,” Cant. 2:10-13.

Chosen, true children, you, who with me, are called to the same grace, inheritance and kingdom, and are named after our Lord’s name, hear the voice of Christ, your king; hear the voice of your bridegroom, ah, you bride of God, you friend of the Lord, arise, and adorn yourself to honor your king and bridegroom. Though you are pure, purify yourself yet more; though you are holy, hallow yourself yet more, and though you are right, rectify yourself yet more; adorn yourself with the white silken robe of righteousness; hang about your neck the golden chain of all piety; gird yourself with the fair girdle of brotherly love; put on the wedding ring of true faith; gird yourself with the precious fair gold of the divine word. Adorn yourself with the pearls of all modesty; wash yourself with the clear waters of grace, and anoint yourself with the oil of the Holy Spirit. Wash your feet in the clear, restoring river of Almighty God; let your whole body be pure and clear, for your friend hates all wrinkles and spots; so he

will have pleasure in your beauty and will praise you and say, "How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is your love than wine, and the smell of your ointments than all spices. Your lips, O, my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue," Cant. 4:10,11.

Rejoice, O, you bride of the Lord! For your beloved is fairer than all the children of men, "The chiefest among ten thousand, his head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and as black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves, by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips, like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with beryl; his belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold. His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely," Cant. 5:10-16. Cry out and say, "Hearken, O, daughter, and consider and incline your ear; forget also your own people, and your father's house, so shall the king greatly desire your beauty," Psm. 45:10,11.

Draw near, O, you queen, O, you well-prepared and fairest of all women; bow your neck with Esther, under his powerful sceptre; hear his word and fear his judgment; acknowledge his great love, for he has greatly humbled himself towards us. "Your birth and your nativity is of the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite, and as for your nativity, in the day you were born, your navel cord was not cut, neither were you washed in water to supple you; you were not salted at all, nor swaddled at all," Eze. 16:3,4. You were polluted in your blood, behold, so despised were your souls, as the prophet lamented. But he has pitied you, promised you life, nourished you and clothed your shame, purified you from your uncleanness, wiped off your blood, anointed you with balsam, clothed you with spiritual clothes; he has adorned you with bracelets, earrings, and

a beautiful crown, and has taken you for his bride, and made an everlasting covenant with you; he has fed you with oil, honey and wheaten bread; he has led you to the chamber of his love, and kissed you with the mouth of his peace.

How lovely and gracious a bridegroom and king is he, who has chosen his miserable, impure, unesteemed, yes, unchaste servant, to such an exalted station, and has called her to be such a glorious queen, and has spared no labor, pains nor costs, till he has made her the fairest, purest, most worthy and precious among women.

Arise, make haste, adorn and dress yourselves, extol and praise him who has created you, and called you to such a high honor through the word of his grace.

The winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land; there is nothing more which can harm or hinder, for hell, sin, the devil, death, the world, flesh, fire and sword, are already overcome by all the children of God, through Christ! All they know is Christ Jesus, their seeking is the pure apostolic doctrine and the pious, unblameable life, which is from God.

Praise be to the Most High, who has silenced the falsehoods, for the truth sounds in every street. Antichrist sinks to shame, and Christ rises to higher honor, yes, the unfruitful, cold winter has disappeared, and the fruitful pleasant spring has come, the lovely fair flowers shoot forth and vegetate, in every place; the voice of the turtledove is heard. The wholesome, holy word, the word of repentance, the word of grace and eternal peace, is testified with word, writings, life and death, in many countries.

“The fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell; arise, my love, my fair one, and come away,” Cant. 2:13. Faith assumes verdure, love blooms, the sun softens, and the truth is published and testified to, which

remained fruitless for so many years; although you must, for a short time, bear the heat of the sun, yet you so well know that the kingdom of glory, in eternal joy, is promised and prepared for you.

Rejoice and watch; you are black but comely, you are as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. “Awake, O, north wind, and come, you south; blow upon my garden, that the spices of it may flow out,” Cant. 4:16. Do not fear, little flock, for it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom, not the perishing kingdoms of Assyria, Media, Macedonia, nor of Rome, but the kingdom of the saints, the kingdom of the great King; the kingdom of David, the kingdom of grace and eternal peace, which shall never more perish, but shall abide and stand forever. Therefore, hear him and be obedient, that you are not thrust out with the haughty, disobedient Vashti, but stay with the pious Esther, live in endless glory, before the true Ahasuerus, Christ, and abide with him forever.

Arise, you daughter of Zion, and observe what is promised to you. O, Jerusalem, although you, as a comfortless one, sit for a while, and must bear all manner of storms and hail, your helper will arrive in time, who brings forth your righteousness as the morning, and is your shelter from the wind and storm. For He who loves you has said, “Behold, I will lay your stones with fair colors, and lay your foundations with sapphires, and I will make your windows of agates and your gates of carbuncles and all your borders of pleasant stones, and all your children shall be taught by Jehovah; and great shall be the peace of your children. In righteousness shall you be established; you shall be far from oppression,” Isa. 54:11-14.

Behold, your wall stands firmly upon twelve foundations, your gates are of pearls, the city is of pure gold, the river of living waters, proceeding from the thrones of God and the lamb, is in the midst of your way, and the tree of life is on either side, and its

leaves serve to heal the nation. Happy and holy is he who has part in this city.

Therefore, so purify yourselves, you who seek the Lord, circumcise the foreskin of your hearts, for the holy city may be inhabited by no uncircumcised person, the golden streets are trodden by no unclean feet; the unclean do not drink of the pure waters; the fruit of life shall never be eaten by any of the ungodly, for “Left out are fornicators and murderers and idol worshippers and the unclean and sorcerers and all seers and workers of lies.” Rev. 22:15 (CHCP translation from the Aramaic).

Be all minded like Christ Jesus. Be earnest to hold the union of the Spirit through the covenant of peace; you are all one temple, house, city, mountain, body and church in Christ Jesus.

Place your candle upon a candlestick, build your city upon a high mountain; live unblamably, behave in all things consistent with Christianity, fear God in all your ways, praise him in all your works; for great is the grace which has appeared. Prove yourselves in all things, as those who are born by God; shun all false doctrine; do not repay evil with evil, but return the evil with good; pray without ceasing; in patience possess your souls; judge all your thoughts, words, and lives, after the thoughts, words, and life of Christ, so shall you in eternity never again be deceived.

Walk worthily after the calling by which you are called. Let the tyrannical, blaspheming, upbraiding, and furious, hate the Lord and his word, they persecute not you, but Christ Jesus, to whom they are inimical. They will be judged in their time, and, if they do not repent, will be repaid again in their own bosoms.

Strive and wrestle valiantly, in order that the crown is not taken from you. Fly to the mountain of the covert of Christ Jesus. Gird yourselves with the weapons of righteousness, declare God’s word with freedom, neither shrink nor give way. God is your

conductor; be faithful unto death, so shall you inherit the crown of life.

Whosoever overcomes will be clothed with white clothing, and his name shall not be erased from the book of life. Although we appear to the unwise, to die and depart from the right way, our souls are, nevertheless, in hope and peace, Wis. 3:2.

“It is a faithful saying,” says Paul, “for if we are dead with him (Christ), we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us,” 2 Tim. 2:11,12. Therefore, fear your God from the heart, watch and pray and commend to him your affairs, as Jeremiah did. He has chosen you to be his loving bride, children, and members; called you to the kingdom of his grace, and the inheritance of his glory, and has bought you with the immaculate blood of Christ Jesus.

Peace be with you, the Spirit, power and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with all my fellow laborers, believers, brothers and sisters. Until eternal life, Amen.

CONCLUSION OF THIS BOOK.

Behold, dear sirs, friends and brethren, here we have briefly pointed out and declared upon what foundation and Scriptures we are built, what we seek and have in view, and how we rebuke, with the word of the Lord, all abominable sects and ungodliness of the whole world, both with the greatest and the smallest, without any respect of persons, and we point out to every one, the wholesome, pure truth. The god-fearing may read and judge. But I have not done this in order that the cross of Christ may be

avoided, in no way, for I know and am persuaded that Christ can never be at peace with Belial,* the truth must be hated; and even if Christ himself should speak from heaven, [like what happened at Mount Sinai,] still would neither Scripture nor godliness, neither Christ nor apostle, neither prophet nor saints, neither lives nor property, be regarded by [many] men. All those who rebuke, in pure, upright zeal, the haughty, avaricious, proud, idolatrous, blood-thirsty world, and who seek their happiness and eternal welfare with all the heart must suffer and be oppressed.

You must, said Christ, be hated by all men for my name's sake. Through much tribulation you must enter into the kingdom of God. Christ himself so suffered and then entered into his glory.

Therefore, I have done this that the precious, pure truth might be revealed; that here and there some might be won; the right way pointed out to the blind; the hungry fed with the word of God; the erring directed to Christ, the shepherd; the ignorant taught; the kingdom of God extended; and his holy name magnified and praised, this, together with our innocence, shall be a witness on the day of judgment to all blood-thirsty tyrants, and all deceivers, false prophets, and all hardened and impenitent, that to them the truth had been testified. But if will you not hear, then your sins are upon you; I have declared unto you according to my small gifts, God's Spirit, word, foundation, ordinance and will, and have pointed out to you [the Way of] righteousness. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear, and whoever has understanding, let him understand.

* [CHCoG: This was: "that the lamb with the wolf, the dove with the kite, and Christ with Belial, can never be at peace." But the first two examples were at peace before the fall, and will be again after Christ restores the Kingdom of God on earth. But now? No, they cannot be at peace, nor can we ever be at peace with Satan's ministers.]

I testify my Savior openly; I acknowledge him, and do not dissemble. If you do not repent and are not born by God, in your spirit, belief, life and worship, and do not become one with Christ, then the sentence of condemnation on your poor souls is already prepared and finished.

All who teach you otherwise than we have here taught and testified to you from the Scriptures, deceive you. This is the narrow way through which we all must walk, and must enter the strait gate, if we would be happy. Here is excepted neither emperor nor king, duke nor count, knight nor nobleman, doctor nor licentiate, rich nor poor, man nor woman. Whoever boasts that he is a christian, they must walk as Christ walked. "If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ he is not his." "Whosoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God," 2 John 1:9. "He that commits sin is of the devil," 1 John 3:8. Here neither baptism, Lord's Supper, confession, nor absolution will avail anything. These and other Scriptures stand immoveable, and judge all those who live outside the Spirit and word of Christ, and whose thoughts are upon earthly and carnal things. These words shall never be overthrown, perverted nor weakened, by angel or devil.

Will you say, with refractory Israel: "We will not hear the word which you have preached to us in the name of the Lord. We will do as our forefathers, our kings and princes have done from former years till the present time."? So I answer with holy Jeremiah and say, Although you have pleasure in lies, and do such abominations, Jehovah has taken your wickedness to heart, and has sent you one hard punishment after another, as hunger, pestilence, storms, grief, misery and the consuming, devouring sword, so your land is turned to a waste, to amazement and a curse, as one evidently may see in many places, because you perform strange worship; despise Jehovah your God; cast his word aside; shed innocent blood; walk according to your

wantonness; sin against God, and do not walk according to his law, ordinance and commands, as the mouth of the Lord has commanded you.

Again, as the unprofitable and rebellious world are warned and rebuked against their will, the prophets and the true servants of God are judged and destroyed by the princes and magistracy, as seditious mutinists, and are persecuted by the priests and common people as deceivers and heretics. Therefore, we have made up our minds to both teach and suffer, expecting that we will fare no better in this matter than they did, but we say with Ezekiel that when this shall come to pass, then you shall find that the honest, pure word of the Lord had been taught to you.

The merciful, gracious Father, through his loving Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord, grant to you all, the gift and grace of his Holy Spirit, that you may hear and read these our christian labors and service of true love, with such hearts that you may strive for, confess, believe, and follow after the genuine truth, with all your soul, and be eternally saved, Amen.

Dear, worthy lords, grant to your poor servants, that we may fear the Lord from the heart, and preach the word of God, and do right. This we pray you for Jesus' sake. O Lord! Father of all grace, open the eyes of the blind, that they may see your way, word, truth and will, and walk in it with faithful hearts, Amen.

MENNO SIMON.



**THE TRUE CHRISTIAN FAITH,
WHICH CONVERTS, CHANGES, MAKES
PIOUS, SINCERE, NEW, PEACEFUL, JOYFUL
AND BLESSED THE HUMAN HEART;
WITH ITS NATURAL PROPERTIES, NATURE,
OPERATIONS AND POWERS.
CAREFULLY REVISED, AND MORE FORMALLY
PRESENTED, IN THE YEAR 1566.
BY
MENNO SIMON.**

*“He that believes in me (said Christ) though he were
dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and
believes in me shall never die,” John 11:25,26.*

*For no other foundation can any man lay than what is
laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 8:11.*

ELKHART, INDIANA:
PUBLISHED BY JOHN F. FUNK AND BROTHER.
1871.

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

We wish all the chosen children of God, our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, an increase of faith, grace, peace and spiritual joy, perfect righteousness and eternal life, all of which is from God, our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, who loves us, and washed us from our sins in his blood. To him be praise, honor, glory, kingdom, power and majesty, from eternity to eternity, Amen.

CHOSEN, beloved children, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, although, O, God! We are so unwisely prevented by this irrational, blind world, from preaching the true gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to every one verbally; and although the cruel, bloody tyranny encouraged by our useless, wicked priests and preachers is used so unrestrainedly against Christ and his word (for these poor children seek and love dross more than gold, chaff more than wheat, lies more than truth, and darkness more than light), yet shall God's only invincible truth, which always triumphs, through the Holy Spirit, in the true children of God, bear its crown; notwithstanding that it is stung so miserably in the heel by the conquered serpent and his seed, the proud despisers, liars and blood-shedders, that it can scarcely stand in obedience to its Lord Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding their raving, this envious, bloody seed and serpent must, with bruised head, and quite powerless, remain under its sway, for through the power of the Spirit, and the gospel truth in Christ Jesus he is wholly overcome.

Since this old, crooked serpent, which was from the beginning, proudly and falsely opposed to God, and was a cruel murderer, is put under the feet of Christ and his church, and has endured and seen his lying seed destroyed and trampled under foot, through the revealed truth, therefore, does he gnash his teeth

in furious rage, and breathe out his accursed, infernal breath of heresy through his prophets and preachers. He casts out of his mouth the terrible streams of tyranny through the rulers and the mighty of the earth, after the glorious church (woman), pregnant with the word of the Lord, with a view to exterminate and destroy her seed. But God be eternally praised, who has protected her against the red dragon, and has prepared her a place in the wilderness.

Since, then, for reasons assigned, I cannot teach publicly, nevertheless, I will serve you by writing, as long as the Lord will permit me, and I live. I will serve you with my small talents, which the gracious Father has granted me through his Son, Christ Jesus, out of the abundant treasury of his heavenly riches. I say with Paul, Not with the wisdom of man, not with words of wisdom to serve you, for I possess and know them not. I let those seek them who are eager after them. My boasting is, with Paul, only to know Christ, and him crucified; for to know him is eternal life. Therefore God cannot endow us with better wisdom than with this, although it is foolishness to the world; for truth is more precious than gold and silver; than all pearls and precious stones; there is nothing under heaven to be compared to her. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retains her.

Yes, beloved brothers, every one who is thus rightly taught by God in this wisdom (for she is the wisdom of the saints), may glory, by the grace given to him, over all graduated doctors, theologians, jurists, orators and poets, although he could neither write nor speak, and were he the most helpless upon earth. But all those who are not instructed in this wisdom from God, though they were as glorious as Solomon, as victorious as Alexander, as rich as Croesus, as strong as Hercules, as learned as Plato, as subtle as Aristotle, as eloquent as Demosthenes and Cicero, and

as well skilled in languages as Mithridates; yes, so greatly experienced that his like was not to be found from the beginning, nevertheless, he is a fool in the eyes of the Lord; this must be confessed and acknowledged.

With this wisdom, I say, so much as the gracious Father, the Giver of every perfect gift, has given me through his Son, Jesus Christ, I desire to serve not only our brothers and sisters, but the whole world, with all my heart, that all the hungry and thirsty souls may be clothed from above, and be satisfied with this celestial wisdom, who desire to live according to the will of the Lord; those souls which he created to his honor, and purchased with the blood of his Son, that they may learn to know God through his Son and word, in spirit, who says, "Do not let the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, do not let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am Jehovah, who exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says Jehovah," Jer. 9:23,24.

O, dear children, you who are born of the word of the Lord through the Spirit, reflect rightly upon these things in your hearts, how incomprehensibly great the heavenly bounty and grace are, which have appeared to us, through Christ, and have been given to us from the Father, that he has so graciously bestowed upon us, grievous sinners, in our most abominable blindness, the glorious and divine gift of his wisdom; yes, when we knew neither God nor Christ, were strangers to the life that is from God, children of wrath and of eternal death, did not know the word of peace, and strayed like sheep who knew no shepherd; that he has so graciously bestowed upon us this great treasure, the true knowledge of the kingdom of God; the treasure which lies buried in the field he showed us by his Spirit, and made known to us the mystery of his good will, and the true regenerating signification

of his holy gospel, which cannot be taught in colleges, cannot be purchased, is not to be brought from foreign lands, nor can it be merited by anything. He has opened to us with the key of his word and Spirit, the saving truth, and has closed it to all emperors, kings, lords, princes, the wise and the learned, before the whole world; that he redeemed us from the power of darkness, and, according to his will and good pleasure, led us into the kingdom of his dear Son. Yes, he has made us kings and priests, that we are to be a chosen and holy people; a people to serve him in love, and to be his own, that we are to publish his power and virtue, because he has called us out of darkness to his marvelous light, as Peter says: O, great grace and love!

Most beloved brothers, always rejoice in the Lord. Again, I say, with Paul, rejoice that the great King, Jesus Christ, who has all power in heaven and on earth, has manifested such grace towards you that he has called you poor, unesteemed children to such high honor. You who are the reproach and disgrace of the whole world, he has made you kings and priests. Kings, I say, who have been anointed with the oil of grace, through the Holy Spirit, crowned with the crown of honor, clothed with the garment of righteousness, and governed by Christ, your King; not with the weapons of death, such as firearms, spears, swords, horses, riders and servants, as the kings of this world do, but with the invincible and eternal sceptre of the power of God, namely, with the sharp-edged sword of the holy word, which will victoriously triumph by virtue of your unconquerable faith, over gold, silver, cities, countries, lords, princes, flesh, blood, banners, banishment, swords, stakes, water, fire, hunger, thirst, nakedness, hell, sin, law, fear, devil and death. You will be perfect in life and death, and secure from all your enemies, both visible and invisible, who would deprive and rob you of the promised kingdom, through the advice and seed of the old serpent. The dominion and government of the spiritual king are spiritual,

therefore, they cannot be fatally hurt or conquered by tyranny, false doctrine, or evil lusts; for they can do all things through Christ, who strengthens them, who also is their helper and redeemer, whose shield and sword is their glory.

Again, you are also priests anointed by God, not with the external oil of Aaron and his sons, nor with the perishable blood of oxen and sheep; nor with the splendid garments of gold, silk and precious stones as the law required; but anointed, sprinkled and affected with the oil of the Holy Spirit, with the blood of Christ, and clothed with the garment of righteousness, ordained and called by God, not to slay the creatures daily, and offer them upon altars, in outward temples of stone, as Moses commanded the priests in the law; but you are to slay human beings all your lives, with the sword of the divine word (understand this spiritually), together with your own refractory flesh and blood, that you teach and reprove them, and yourselves, with the Spirit and word of the Lord, that you and they [must] die to your unrighteousness and evil lusts, destroy them, and thus offer in your spiritual house or temple, not made with hands, upon the only and eternal altar of our reconciliation, Jesus Christ.

Besides, you are not such priests who, of their own righteousness, offer bread and wine for the sins and transgressions of the common people, and for the souls of the deceased, neither are you to sing nor read mass, nor worship the golden, silver, wooden and stone images, nor serve nor burn incense to them as the poor, ignorant priests of the world do. You are holy priests, who purify and sanctify your own bodies daily, and in time of need voluntarily offer them as a sweet smelling sacrifice, for the truth's sake, together with your ardent prayers and joyful thanksgiving, out of a believing, converted, pure heart; for such offerings are well pleasing to the Lord.

Would to God that all who are called priests were changed into such priests. Ah! How much innocent blood would be

spared, how gloriously the truth would be spread, and what a noble Christian world this would be!

Say, beloved brothers, who can fully comprehend *this* grace, or relate these benefits? Again, formerly, we all strayed as lost sheep, which have no shepherd; we walked according to the lusts of our evil flesh, even as they all do, who do not know the way of the Father. We were unbelievers in divine things, blind and without understanding, full of bruises and putrifying sores from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, and by nature, children of wrath like others. But blessed be the Lord, now we are washed, now we are sanctified, now we are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. 6:11. In short, we are converted to the true Shepherd and preserver of our souls, Jesus Christ, who pastures us in the rich pastures of his truth, feeds us with the bread of his word, sustains us with the tree of life, and refreshes us with the water of his Spirit. Who can comprehend and relate this grace?

Besides this, when we were yet ungodly and enemies, he did not punish us as he did the angels that sinned, nor like the first depraved world, nor like Sodom and Gomorrah, nor like those who worshipped the calf, nor like those in the day of provocation, nor like the seditious and adulterers, nor like those in the wilderness, who acted contrary to his will and word, for he destroyed all of them. No, he saved us through his great mercy, led us by his right hand, drew us by his goodness, renewed us by his word, begat us by the Holy Spirit, and enlightened us by the clear light of his truth; that we by his grace renounced the world, flesh, devil and all manner of evil, willingly entered upon the path of peace and submitted to the easy yoke of his gospel. It appears to me, this may properly be called grace.

Most beloved children, take heed. Since the gracious Father has dealt so marvelously with us according to his great mercy, and manifested his love toward us without our merits, it is right

and becoming that we also love, fear, praise and honor such a benevolent Lord and merciful Father, with all our powers serve him, and be obedient to him in all our weakness.

Since he has manifested toward us afflicted sinners, such unspeakable love and grace, as said, which love and grace cannot be rightly seen and understood, with the blind eyes and the ignorant reason of the flesh, but must be seen and understood with the inward eyes of the mind, and through the anointing of the Holy Spirit; that is with a sincere, sure, immoveable, confident, vigorous, unfeigned and pure faith; such as the Scriptures teach.

Such an unfeigned faith being needed, and clearly finding in the word of the Lord that the aim of true Christianity concerning the new birth or creature requires true repentance, dying unto sin, a new life, true righteousness, obedience, salvation and eternal life. This lies in a sincere, active faith, according to all Scripture, as may be seen and read in many passages. Therefore I have, through the grace of the Lord, undertaken to prove to all lovers of eternal truth, by divine testimony from the word of the Lord, the true doctrine that avails before God, and the promises in the Scriptures. It must agree with the gospel of Christ and the doctrines of the apostles, so all those who see, read or hear our writings may thoroughly know that the stubborn, fruitless faith of this world is vain and dead, and is eternally accursed by God. Its fruits are vain hypocrisy, commands of men, idolatry, and false service. It regenerates none, it is earthly and carnally minded, hating and persecuting the truth; for this faith knows neither Christ nor his word, as may be evidently seen through the whole world. Only God's faith has true power and fruit, regenerates the heart, converts and renews, as the Scriptures say, "The just shall live by faith," Hab. 2:4.*

* [CHCoG: I felt compelled to edit this section to make it more accessible to most readers by removing unnecessary details and

It is all in vain to boast of faith where the godly, new fruits and works of faith are not.

I therefore exhort all my god-fearing readers in the Lord, and entreat all that they would impress those things on their souls, and write them on the tablets of their hearts, that our holy and christian faith is not a dead or superannuated speculation, as the world thinks, nor is it only verbal boasting, as we find it among the great and tolerated sects. It is an active gift and power of God, a living, heavenly inspiration in a melted, open heart, or conscience which firmly believes and lays hold upon, and acknowledges the whole word of God (the threatening law, as well as the consoling gospel), to be right and true, by which the heart is pierced and moved through the Holy Spirit with a peculiar, regenerative, renewing, vivifying power. It first produces the fear of God, for it knows the judgment and wrath of the Lord over all transgressions and sins which are committed against his will and word. The heart dreads, fears, and is astonished before God, and therefore dares not do, counsel, or permit anything which it acknowledges, through the word and in the Spirit that God, the righteous judge, hates and forbids.

This faith also produces the love of God by which we love him; for it acknowledges from the testimony of the holy Scriptures, the unsearchably great riches of grace, with which our merciful, good Father, through Christ, has so graciously endowed us. Therefore we love in return our loving God, awakened by the manifest beneficence of the aforesaid grace, and are thus voluntarily urged, through the active power of love (resulting from such unfeigned faith), to obey all the commands of God, even as Christ says, "If a man loves me, he will keep my words," John 14:23.

Behold, this is the only faith which has the promise in Scripture of salvation and eternal life, through Christ, the only and first begotten Son of God. To him be praise, honor and glory, from eternity to eternity, Amen.

We see that if any one wishes to build a good house, that first a solid foundation is laid, so that it will sustain the heavy superstructure; so the work, commenced at such great expense, will not collapse and be abandoned. Thus it must be with all true christians; they must have, in their hearts, such a sure and solid foundation that they may stand unshaken in the building of their faith, against all the raging tempests, rains and floods, which will try them not a little, so that they may successfully accomplish, by the help of the Lord, their undertaken work and building; so that they will not again depart from the right road, to the everlasting shame and injury of their poor souls. As Paul says, "If any man draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him," Heb. 10:38.

Faithful brethren, take heed: This precious cornerstone, our ground and foundation in Zion is Jesus Christ, prepared for us by the Father, and upon him we have to build our faith. All who are founded upon this ground will not be consumed by the fire of tribulation; for they are living stones in the temple of the Lord. They are like gold, silver and precious stones, and can never be prevailed against by the gates of hell, such as false doctrine, flesh, blood, world, sin, devil, water, fire, sword, or by any other means, though so sorely tried; for they are founded upon Christ, confirmed in the faith and assured in the word through the Holy Spirit. They are not to be turned away from the pure and wholesome doctrine of Christ by all the furious and bloody Neros under the heavens, with all their cruel tyranny; they are not to be diverted from an unblameable and pious life, which is from God, as we have seen in many places for more than twenty years past. They are as immoveable as Mount Zion, as firm pillars, brave soldiers, and as pious, valiant witnesses of Christ; they have

fought till death, and do daily fight for the word and truth of the Lord (God be eternally praised). I speak of those who have the Spirit and word of the Lord.

Yes, that [living] stone lies firm in their hearts, and is so sealed by faith in them that in their greatest need they regard neither father nor mother, wife nor child, money nor possessions, life nor death; for they are constrained by veneration to God in their hearts, as Christ says, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven,” Matt. 10:32,33. They are not to speak a false word, even to escape the hands of the blood-thirsty and the dangers of death; as may be seen.

But I fear, yes, indeed it is found to be the case that the greater part of all those who call these poor innocent sheep accursed heretics; who betray, catch, banish, take their lives and possessions, are not ashamed, nor tremble before their God, who hates all lies. They will use, for the sake of a stiver, yes for no, and no for yes, and yet dare boast of Christ and call themselves after his name. If they are such liars and so unfaithful in small things, what they would do in greater things, where life and possessions are required, as is the case with these poor sheep, may be easily imagined.

O, reader, reflect. If the old, crooked serpent, with all his deception, falsehood and lies lived in their christian hearts, as is the case with their persecutors, their goods would not be plundered, and their blood would not be shed. And they would not only conceal the truth, but they would, with all the children of the devil, hate and oppose it. All who are born of the truth hate lies. Again, all who are born of lies hate the truth. If they hate the truth, how can they speak it? Especially when life and possessions are at stake. If our rulers and judges wish to be assured of this difference, let them call some of their most highly

renowned monks, in their profession, caps, &c., and their most accomplished priests in their terms and masses, and let them be as severely tested as you do these in their faith. Then we will see what will become of all their professions, caps, terms and masses. But as the common proverb is: The wolf escapes, but the lamb has to suffer.

All those who are born into the truth, and have Christ and his Spirit dwelling in their hearts, during their lives and in death, in them we find nothing but the simple, plain truth of Christ, by which they are born unto righteousness and are converted. Yet, however piously and unblamably they live, our lying, adulterous, lewd, idolatrous, drunken priests and monks (who openly rob God of his glory, and maliciously murder those whom Christ purchased with his precious blood), slander them before the whole world, betray and bring them to the stocks and posts, because they are urged through the manifest truth, through their strong faith and through the Spirit and fear of the Lord, to renounce their leaven, vain, false doctrine and idolatrous sacraments, and with all their hearts, to live according to the will of God. O Lord! Thus they abuse those who seek and fear You with all their hearts.

Say, beloved lords, when shall this cruel, disgraceful murdering, bloody seed be prevented by you from continuing in their Judas like conduct? When will you turn your backs to their deceiving lies, and turn your faces to Christ? When shall the innocent blood be wiped from your deadly and avenging sword, and it again be put into the sheath? When will you hear and fear God, more than you do kings and priests? When shall the abominations of anti-christ be rooted out of your heart, and instead of it, the gentle doctrine of Christ be planted in it? When will you be satisfied with taking pious and unblameable lives, and be satiated with the blood of innocent saints? When shall Christ Jesus, with his word, Spirit and life, through faith, be conceived

in you, and indeed be born in you? I fear never. For you are earthly and carnally minded, the eyes of your understanding are darkened, that you desire the world rather than heaven; lies rather than truth; sin rather than righteousness; the honor and praise of man rather than that of God.

Yes, beloved lords, why say so much? With you it is the same as with the priests and preachers, who, through the instruction of Scripture, know the truth in part; but since they love their cross fleeing body more than God, they preach and teach only so far as the mandates and resolutions of the pope and princes permit and allow, so that they do not incur the displeasure of the world, and be deprived of their worldly honor, and their easy life. It is the same case with you, my dear lords. Though many of you well know that the teaching, ceremonies, divine service and life of your priests and preachers are untrue, deceiving, idolatrous, false and carnal, and that ours are the doctrine and ceremonies of the Lord, according to Scripture, you hold to them to retain the friendship of the emperor, and your incomes. You, without mercy, are guilty of blood of Christ Jesus's innocent lambs when the mandates are enforced, while the ringleaders, all of them rogues and thieves, who deserve torture and shame, are rewarded for their crimes. And yet you say: The emperor's mandates judge you.

Beloved lords beware; the hour is fast approaching that the Almighty [Jehovah], the great, and terrible God, the impartial, righteous Judge, will judge and sentence all our doings; then you will see too late, whom you have persecuted and pierced. Therefore, awaken in time, fear God, remember him, and reform, while it is yet called today.

I entreat you, my reader, do not be displeased that I have digressed so far; for it was not done without a cause. But now, we will continue in the Lord, in the thing we have undertaken, and treat and teach as much of it as the merciful Father will grant

us grace and aid to do, that we may modestly show to all the god-fearing, who seek the truth from their hearts, the difference between faith and unbelief; the fruits of faith and of unbelief, and that they may grow in the true christian faith, while the gracious Father, out of the abundance of his glory, makes them strong in the inner man, by power, through the Spirit, and till Christ dwells in their hearts, that they may be rooted and grounded in love, may begin to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height of the abundant love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God. And besides, that they may know that it is all hatred and lying which the scribes teach and cast up, touching our faith concerning the sword, sedition, polygamy, &c. I speak of that which I and my beloved brothers preach and teach, verbally and by writing, publicly and privately, to all the well disposed.

Cordially, beloved brothers, when we can, with spiritual eyes, rightly see into their impure, abominable doctrine of faith, with all its abominable unbelief and blind evil life, resulting from those who boast themselves to be christians, then we may with propriety be astonished, yes, and grieved at their great blindness and fatal errors. For however inhuman and rude, they call it the holy christian faith.

THE PAPISTIC BELIEF.

It is true, the papists teach and believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he offered up his flesh, and shed his blood for us. But they say that if we would be partakers of it, we must adhere to and obey the pope and his church, go to mass, receive

the holy water, perform pilgrimages, call upon the mother of the Lord and the departed saints, confess at least twice a year, receive papistic absolution, have our children baptized, and commemorate their holy days. The priests must vow chastity; the bread in the mass must be called the flesh, and the wine, the blood of Christ; besides all their other idolatry and abominations, which are daily practiced by them.

And all this is called, by these poor, ignorant people, the most holy christian faith, and the institutions of the holy christian church. In truth, it is nothing but mere human opinion, self-chosen righteousness, seductive hypocrisy, manifest deception of the soul, ungodly, indecent bodily nourishment and gain for lazy priests, an accursed abomination, an incensing of God, a disgraceful blasphemy, an unworthy despising of the blood of Christ, a self-devised undertaking, and a disobedient contumacy to the divine word. In short, it is false, offensive worship and open idolatry, of which Jesus Christ (to whom the Father points us) has not left or commanded us a single letter of all these things.

It is not sufficient for them that they practice such abominations; they also despise as vain and useless all the true fruits of faith commanded by God himself: the sincere, pure love and fear of God, the love and service of our neighbor, the true sacraments and divine service, &c. They revile them as damnable and heretical, and persecute and exterminate any who believe Christ's words. I think this may properly be called a sect.

THE LUTHERAN BELIEF.

The Lutherans teach and believe that we are saved by faith alone, without any regard to works. They maintain this doctrine as firmly as though works were not at all necessary. Yes, that *faith* is of such a nature that no work can be suffered or allowed beside it. And, therefore, the highly important, zealous, and earnest epistle of James (because he reproves such a frivolous, vain doctrine and faith), had to be esteemed and considered as straw. O, presumption! If the doctrine is straw, then also the chosen apostle, the faithful servant and witness of Christ, who wrote and taught it must have been a man of straw; this is as clear as the meridian sun. For the doctrine shows the character of the man.

Let every one take heed how and what Luther teaches; for with this same doctrine they have led the reckless and ignorant, great and small, citizens and the common people; into such a fruitless, wild life, and have so much unbridled them that we would scarcely find such an ungodly and abominable life among the Turks and Tartars, as we see among them. Their open deeds bear testimony; for the excessive eating and drinking; the superfluous pomp and splendor, the whoring, lying, cheating, cursing, swearing by the wounds, sacraments and sufferings of the Lord, the shedding of blood, fighting, &c., which exist among many of them, and, alas, have neither measure nor bounds. In many carnal things, both the teachers and disciples are the same, as may be seen. I well know what I write, and what I have heard and seen, I testify, and I know that I testify the truth.

If any one simply says with them, Ah! What dishonest knaves and villains these desperate priests and monks are!, they wish them the venereal or some other disease. The ungodly pope with his shorn crew, they say, have deceived us long enough with purgatory, confession and fasting; we now eat as we have hunger;

fish or flesh, as we desire; for every creature of God is good, says Paul, and is not to be rejected. But what follows they do not want to understand or know; namely, to (live as) the believing, who know the truth and enjoy it in moderation with thanksgiving.

They further say how shamefully they have deceived us poor people, for they have robbed us of the blood of the Lord,* and directed us to their mummery and to their enchanting works. God be praised, we now know that all our works avail nothing, for the blood and death of Christ alone must blot out, and pay for our sins. They begin to sing a psalm: *Der Strick ist entzwei und wir sind frei*, &c., i.e. The cord is cut asunder and we are at liberty, while the smell of beer and wine issues from their drunken mouths and noses. Any one who can but read this *distich*, even if he lives ever so carnally, is a good evangelical man, and a fine brother.

And should some one come, who would, in true and sincere love, admonish or reprove them, and direct them to Jesus Christ, to his doctrine, sacraments and unblameable example, and show that it does not become a christian to carouse and drink, and to revile and curse, &c., he must from that hour hear that he is a legalist (*Werkheiliger*), one who would take heaven by storm, or a factionist, a fanatic or hypocrite, a defamer of the sacrament, or an anabaptist.

Behold! Thus God, the righteous Lord, allows these to err and go astray in their hearts, who rely upon the precious death and the most holy flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, together with his saving and reverent word, in their sensual lusts and wantonness, and make it an occasion for their unclean and sinful flesh. It appears to me this may truly be called a liberal and free sect.

* [CHCoG: At that time, the priests would not give the cup to the people. It was reserved for the priests and monks.]

THE BELIEF OF THE ENGLISH ZWINGLIANS.

The English Zwinglians* believe and confess that there are two sons in Christ Jesus, the one is God's son, without mother, and *impassive*; and the other is the son of Mary, or the son of man, without father, and *passive*. And in this *passive* son of Mary, the *impassive* Son of God dwelt; so that the son of Mary, who was crucified, and died for us, was not the son of God. This was acknowledged by one of their principal teachers, called Martin Micron, also by one Harman Von Ronsen (if I recollect his name rightly), before me, two or three times in a large assembly, in the year 1554.

Further, the said Micron, when I questioned him in relation to the *aura seminis* of the woman, concerning which we had not a few words, acknowledged and said: I have to confess that a woman has no seminal functions but a flux of catamenial fluid to the uterus. See, before God, it is the truth that I write. He also wrote in a book, printed in England; these words, touching the coagulating of the fluids in the uterus. If the fluids thus changed, as the book says, and as he confesses that a woman has only catamenial fluids in the uterus, as said; then, it is evident that they believe (if they agree with him) that their Savior is not God's first

* [CHCoG: It seems that this refers to some continental Zwinglians, including Marten Micronius, who spent a few years in England, but returned to the continent when papal persecution restarted in England under Queen Mary.]

and only begotten Son, but the mere result of a vitiated state of the uterine fluids.*

John A'Lasco also writes that Christ partook of no other flesh than that which was subject to sin and death, in order that he might be tempted. He states in the same book, "If he is holy, why was he sentenced in the Father's judgment, for the sake of sin?" This I cannot otherwise understand, before God, than that he believes that the man, Christ Jesus, was a sinful Christ and guilty of death. Read his defence made against me, of the Incarnation; there you will find his ground.

O, God, watch over all true hearts, that they may never believe such intolerably great abominations. It makes me shudder, and I am astonished in my heart, yes, I am ashamed in my soul that I must make mention of it; for it is too offensive. But since they defame and slander us daily before all men, both verbally and by writing, what a very detestable foundation and doctrine we have of Christ (since we confess, with the Scripture that he was the first and only begotten Son of God, who died for us), and they present these abominable things to the poor, simple people, as said, and deceive them so miserably thereby. For this reason, I am constrained in my conscience, to the honor of God, and to the warning of all god-fearing souls, to notice this and present it to the reader, whose mind is held captive by them, to reflect upon; for I do not know how we could believe more cruelly and abominably of Christ, teach, feel, think or speak of, than to say, It was not the Son of God who died for us, but it was

* [CHCoG: At this time microscopes had not been invented, and there was no detailed knowledge of sperm, eggs, etc. But even then, Menno was correctly shocked that these Zwinglians could teach that Christ was the result of an activated menstrual flow. Zwingli was himself one of the first Protestants to begin drowning Anabaptists, as a mockery of their biblical baptisms.]

the result of a vitiated catemenial fluid; a man of sin and death, &c.

And though they may gainsay and deny this, and say that I wrote this gratuitously concerning them, it is true; it happened repeatedly, and before many pious hearts; they may deny it, but it will be found true in the day of the righteous judgment, before the eyes of the Eternal and great majesty, as I have written it. O, an abominable sect!

TRUE CHRISTIAN BELIEF.

We teach and believe, and this by virtue and power of the whole Scriptures, that the whole Christ Jesus from above and below, inwardly and outwardly, visibly and invisibly, is God's first and only begotten Son, the unsearchable, eternal Word, by which all things are created, the first born of every creature; that he became a true man in Mary, the immaculate virgin, through the almighty, eternal Father, eternal Spirit and power, beyond the comprehension and knowledge of men; sent and given unto us out of pure mercy and grace, from the Father; the express image of the invisible God, and the brightness of his glory. We teach and believe that the first and only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, is our only and everlasting Messiah, prophet, teacher and high priest, who has fulfilled the required and commanded law for all his believers, inasmuch as they could not fulfil it on account of the weakness of their flesh; who taught us the good will and pleasure of his Father, and went before us as an unblameable pattern, and freely offered himself upon the cross for our sins, as a sweet smelling sacrifice to the Father. Through

whom we all, who sincerely believe this, have received the forgiveness of our sins, grace, favor, mercy, liberty, peace, life eternal, a reconciled Father and free access to God, in the Spirit; and this all through his merits, righteousness, intercession and blood, and not through our own works. Behold, this is the true summary of our belief concerning Christ, our Savior, the Son of God.

All who can believe this, as certain and true, are sealed, through the word of God, in their spirit, are inwardly changed, receive the fear and love of God, and bring forth, out of their faith, righteousness, fruit, power, an unblameable life and a new being; as Paul says, “With the heart, man believes unto righteousness.” Through faith, says Peter, God purifies our hearts. And thus follow the fruits of righteousness out of an upright, unfeigned, pious, Christian faith. Observe this well.

All those who sincerely believe the righteous judgment of God and his eternal wrath over all sin and wickedness, and do not doubt in spirit consider the fallen angels; they look at the first, depraved world, at Sodom and Gomorrah, and upon disobedient, refractory Israel. They take particular notice how God humbled his innocent Son, who knew no sin, and in whose mouth guile was not found; how he was humbled, and made the most miserable among men because of our sins. Yes, he was so beaten and tortured that while extended on the cross, he piteously complained to his Father saying, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Matt. 27:45.

All who truly believe this will certainly flee from all unrighteousness, as they would from the fangs of a serpent; they turn away from all sins, and dread them more than a burning fire, or a piercing sword, for their whole mind and conscience testify to them that if they knowingly and wilfully sin against the law and word of God, and do not receive Christ in a pure and good conscience, live according to the flesh, and despise the inviting

voice of God, that they will fall under the dreadful, eternal sentence and wrath of God.

This the pious and aged Eleazar believed, who was well versed in the law, 2 Mac. 6:18, and the god-fearing, virtuous mother, with her seven sons, 2 Mac. 7:1, the three faithful young men in the fiery furnace, the beloved Daniel, and the fair, virtuous Susanna, the honorable pattern of all pious women, Daniel 13. They would rather endure for a season the wrath and fury of tyrants, than sin, and thus bring upon themselves the eternal anger and wrath of God. The righteous, say the Scriptures, live by faith. For the true evangelical faith, which makes the heart sincere and pious before God, moves, changes, urges and constrains a man, so that he will always hate the evil, and willingly do the things which are right and just; even as it is unnecessary to admonish or warn a man of understanding not to cut his own throat, or drink poison, or thrust himself from a high tower, or run into deep water; for he well knows if he did so, he could not escape death. It should also be unnecessary for us to admonish or warn those who sincerely believe that the wages of sin is death, that drunkards, liars, fornicators, whore-mongers, adulterers, avaricious, idolators, blasphemers of God, envious, blood-shedders, perjurers, thieves and similar sinners, shall not inherit the kingdom of Christ, and therefore they should not get drunk, nor commit fornication, &c. The divine fear, which is part of such a faith, warns, exhorts, reproves, urges and deters them, so that they will never more consent to such carnal, ungodly works, much less do them. For their faith, which is sealed by the Spirit [dwelling within them] through the word, teaches them that the end of it is death.

We must thus believe with the heart, as Paul says; we must so adhere to the word as to receive and impress it upon our hearts that we may never turn or be diverted from it, but that faith be more and more rooted in our hearts, that through the virtue of it,

we may fear God with all our powers, and do sincere penance. Sincere, unfeigned fears drive out sin, for it is impossible to be justified without the fear of God.

Here observe, what an excellent, pleasing fruit of faith the fear of the Lord is; it is a power which expels the sins of believers; buries, slays, destroys and makes sin nought, this is the first part of true repentance, as we are taught and admonished by the baptism of believers. “The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments; his praise endures for ever,” Psm. 111:10.

Further, all who comprehend with a sincere, unwavering, believing heart, the great solicitude and ardent care of God for us (here I speak of him according to the manner of man), and his unbounded kindness, mercy and love, as paternally manifested toward us through Christ Jesus, that he did not spare his eternal Son, with whom he created the heavens and the earth, the seas and the fullness of it, his incomparable, eternal Word, power and wisdom, but for our sakes, gave him over, humbled him, suffered him to endure hunger and thirst, was derided, taken, mocked, his holy face spit upon, scourged, crowned with a crown of thorns, condemned, crucified and slain, all so that we, through his sickness and stripes, might be healed, through his poverty, might become rich, through his being despised, obtain glory; through his cursing, obtain blessing; through his punishment, receive grace: through his blood, the remission of sin; through his offering, be reconciled, and through his death, might obtain eternal life. He also created every living creature for our use, and made them subject to us. He serves and provides us with winter and summer, heat and cold, night and day, rain and dearth; to us he sent his holy apostles with his holy word, endowed us with his Spirit, enlightens, governs, admonishes, reproves and comforts us. He has given us the necessary shelter and food to supply our wants, and in the midst of a perverted lion-like generation, he has

kept and preserved us by his grace, &c. I say, again, he who believes this with all his heart, apprehends and lays hold of it, can never be [persuaded to turn back,] neither by angel nor devil, neither by life nor death. No, he must love this gracious Father, from his inmost heart, who has manifested such great love and mercy towards us grievous sinners; yes, praise, honor, thank, serve, and obey him, all the days of his life.

For this is the greatest delight and joy of believers, that they in their weakness may walk and live according to the will and word of the Lord, and where the unfeigned, pure love of God dwells, there without fail, must also be the voluntary, ready service of that love, namely, the keeping of his commands. Solomon says, "They that put their trust in him shall understand the truth, and such as are faithful in love shall abide with him," Wis. 3:9. And this is what Paul says, "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which works by love," Gal. 5:6.

That love is of such an effective power and nature, may be very plainly seen in natural love; we need not admonish rational parents to provide their children with necessary food and clothing, for natural love will admonish them to this. And thus with husband and wife, who sincerely love each other with conjugal love; they think it no displeasure willingly to serve each other and be fellow helpers, as it becomes them, being one flesh. And so is also the nature and property of holy, divine love, for all those who by faith are one with the Father and his Son, Christ Jesus, in love and spirit, through the true and genuine knowledge of the aforementioned favor, need not be admonished that they should serve the Lord, seek the kingdom of God, use baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the ordinance of the Scriptures, constrain their heart and tongue, reflect upon the law and will of God with all earnestness, hear Christ and follow him, and that they should not love gold and silver, money and possessions, wife

and children, health and life above Christ and his word. For the effectual nature of the ardent love of God, which is of a pure heart and good conscience, through unfeigned faith urges and constrains, moves and operates so much in their hearts that they stand prepared with body, soul, possessions and blood, to do what he commands them, and do not do that which he prohibits. This we may see (God be praised) in great plainness and power, and hear daily of many pious hearts.

And it is hereby evident, if we would love God and walk in obedience to his commands, we should believe, and have a special regard to his favors, and with our heart adhere closely to the word of his promise, as said; for that love which is sincere is a very precious fruit, it is a branch and plant of faith from which the other part of true repentance flows, namely, the unblameable new life, represented to us by baptism, as related above, b the fear of the Lord; without which love, all eloquence, all tongues, all knowledge and understanding, all boastings of faith, learning, miracles, prophesying, alms, persecution, cross and suffering, are vain before God; yes, unfruitful and dead.

Every one that loves is born by God, and knows him, for God is love, 1 John 4:7, such a one does all things according to the nature and word of the Lord, for it is the fulfilling of the law, obedience to his commands, the bond of perfection and peace, and it is prefigured by the splendid girdle of Aaron and his sons.

Love, says Solomon, is as strong as death; jealousy is as cruel as the grave; the coals of it are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame; many waters cannot quench love, yes, so firm and strong and ardent is love that it surpasses every thing, conquers and consumes what is opposed to Christ and his word, be it world or flesh, tyrant or devil, sin or death, or whatever we may think of or name; and this is all through the power and Spirit of Jesus Christ from whom it originates.

Moses preceded with fear, then came Christ with love. First the terrific law, and afterwards the consoling gospel; first wrath in the feelings of our consciences, afterwards grace; first uneasiness of pain, then peace; first tribulation, then joy. In short, first the letter which kills, then the Spirit which quickens.

Behold, my reader, such a faith is the true christian faith, which praises, honors, magnifies and extols God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through filial fear and fruitful love, for by it we know the good will of the Father towards us through Christ. By it, we know that all the promises to the fathers, the waiting of the patriarchs, the whole law, and all the prophesies of the prophets, are fulfilled *in* Christ, *by* Christ, and *through* Christ. That Christ is our King, Prince, Lord, Messiah, the promised David,* the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the strong Giant, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, God's almighty, unsearchable, eternal Word and Wisdom, the first born of every creature, the Light of the world, the Sun of righteousness, the true Vine, the Well of life, the true Door and Shepherd of the sheep, the true Foundation, and the precious Cornerstone in Zion, the right Way, the Truth and Life, the promised Prophet, our Master and Teacher, our Redeemer, Savior, Friend and Bridegroom. In short, our only and eternal Mediator, Advocate, High priest, Propitiator and Intercessor, our Head and Brother.

And since we know all this by faith, therefore, I say, we also observe his word rightly, hear his voice, and implicitly follow his example, and counsel, and depart from ungodliness; the heart is changed, the mind is renewed, and with Moses we rely upon the future promises, as though they were in sight, and patiently wait for them with pious Abraham, till he, with all the chosen, shall in

* Jer. 23:5; Rev. 5:5; Isa. 9:5; John 1:1; Col. 1:15; John 12:35; John 15:1 & 10:2; 1 Cor. 3:11; Isa. 28:16; John 14:6; Deut. 18:18; John 3:2 & 15:5; Tit. 2:12; John 3:29; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 1:22.

reality inherit them. “Now faith,” says Paul, “is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” Heb. 11:1. He says, further, But hope that is seen is not hope. God, says Christ himself, is a Spirit; his word, grace, and the promise of the New Testament; his kingdom and government are [yet] spiritual; and thus we have to believe all things through an upright, pure, and sure faith, with a candid heart, and judge and see with spiritual eyes. But we may well say with Paul, “All men do not have faith,” 2 Thes. 3:2.

Therefore, all those who stop their ears to the threatening, punishing and death-dealing law, and will not fear God, reject, and do not desire the gracious gospel of Christ. They shut their eyes to the light of righteousness, and will neither see nor walk in the true way, harden their hearts, and will not acknowledge the just judgment of the wrath and displeasure of God, his mercy and favor and his unbounded grace. They are unbelievers; for they reject Christ Jesus, run haughtily into perverse ways; they choose for themselves a righteousness and means of salvation contrary to the word of God; the wisdom of the Lord they esteem foolishness; his truth as lies; his gospel as delusion; the virtuous, christian life as madness; and the true use of his sacraments, as heresy. Open idolatry, commands of men, superstition and offensively ornamented lies are their greatest consolation and true worship; their belly is their God; they love the world more than heaven; all their delight is in covetousness, avarice, pride, pomp, gold, silver, money and possessions; in buying and selling. They cheat and deal treacherously; their common life is drinking, gambling, cursing, swearing, hatred, strife and fighting; they follow the flesh in its lusts; they defame and seek the calamity of their neighbor, his dishonor, disgrace and shame. In short, they say, with the fool, in their hearts, “There is no God,” Psm. 14:1.

Although they boast of God with the mouth, praise his name with their lips, bow their knees outwardly before him, and say

that they are redeemed with the death and blood of Christ; it is nevertheless vain hypocrisy, for they do it only from habit, and feignedly, and not inwardly through faith, in power and truth. They are those of whom it is written, "They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him; being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate," Tit. 1:16. And this, because they do not believe Christ and his word, their end is death, as he says, "He that does not believe shall be damned," yes, is already condemned.

It is true what Paul says, "Without faith it is impossible to please him (God); for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him," Heb. 11:6. O, for an open heart! For profound understanding! Yes, if we rightly examine these words, we have reason to be astonished at the wisdom and understanding of Paul. For if we rightly reflect upon the matter, we must ever confess before the Lord, who tries our minds and hearts, that we never believed it with the heart, that God is, and hence, we have led a vain, ungodly life. For it cannot be otherwise; if any one believes with all his heart that God is, he will also believe that his word is true, that the wages of sin are death, that all things are open to his eyes, and that there is nothing concealed before him. And more, that we must give an account of all our thoughts, words and deeds, before his judgment seat. Believing all this, we then begin to be astonished before such an omniscient and righteous Judge, yes, to fear and tremble greatly.

In the second place, all who believe with the heart that God is, they also believe that he is true, and therefore, none can be saved contrary to his word; for he is the God of truth, and in him there are no lies. His uttered word abides, it can neither be bent nor broken; those who thus believe begin to fear his righteous judgment; they cast behind them all their false patchwork, all false promises, all the bolsters and cushions of the false prophets,

and they seek the Lord who has bought them. They are abased in their own eyes; for their heart is humbled. They sigh, weep, pray, lament, knock, and call at the throne of grace, till they are heard and encouraged by the word of his peace, comforted with the promise of his grace, and anointed with the Holy Spirit.

In the third place, all who believe that God exists, also believe that he is gracious and merciful, that he has bestowed and sent us his only Son, that he taught us the right way, fulfilled the law for us, reconciled us to the Father, and redeemed us by his blood and bitter death; has conquered hell, the devil, sin and death, and obtained for us grace, favor, mercy, and eternal life, &c., and therefore, the sorrowful, afflicted hearts, which saw through the terrible, threatening law nothing but the wrath of God and eternal death, are again revived. They become candid, peaceable, and joyful in the Holy Spirit, are of a joyful disposition, and are thus made to belong to their Head and Savior, are united and made one with Him, ingrafted through the Spirit of God and pure, unfeigned love, that they are of one heart, one soul and spirit with him; they think, speak and live in their weakness as he has taught and commanded them in his word. They renounce and avoid all false doctrine, unbelief, false sacraments, and all idolatry; put off the spotted garment of sin, which is the evil perverted life, and is of the flesh. They seek the doctrines and sacraments commanded to them by Christ; that divine service which is taught in the Scriptures, and that pious and unblameable life which is from God. For by faith they are changed in the inner man, converted and renewed, because they have a sealed and assured conscience, which bears witness to them that God exists, that he is righteous and true, gracious and of abundant mercy. And therefore they desire, seek and do nothing, either inwardly or outwardly, but that which they know, through the word, that Christ Jesus, with his holy apostles, has commanded and taught them.

Behold, my brethren, here you have now the real properties and nature of a true christian faith, and what great mystery, signification, spirit and power are contained summarily in these words, *He must believe that God exists*. “Whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life,” John 3:15; “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” Mark 16:16; “Whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed,” Rom. 10:11, and like passages. For it will always be the case, where there is true christian faith, there also will be a dying to sin, a new creature, true repentance, a sincere, regenerated and unblameable christian. One does no longer live according to the lusts of sin, but according to the will of him who purchased us with his blood, drew us by his Spirit, and regenerated us by his word, namely, Christ Jesus.

But where there is only nominal faith, and no righteousness, or change, or new and penitent life, there is nothing but unbelief, hypocrisy and lies. No matter how much one may speak or dispute about the Scriptures, this rule will remain firm, and can never be broken. *“If you live after the flesh, you shall die,”* Rom. 8:13. All therefore, who live in pomp and splendor, in excessive eating and drinking, adultery, fornication, avarice, hatred, envy, lasciviousness, defrauding and such sins; all who defame the Lord’s holy and high name, word, will, and also his community, slander and traduce their neighbor; deprive him of his honor, name, welfare, body and goods; and all who curse and swear by the Lord’s sufferings, wounds, sacraments, cross and death, are unbelieving heathens, and not believing christians. This is as clear as the light of day, for their fruits testify before the whole world that they are not the true olive tree and vine from which we may pluck or gather the true, ripe fruits; for they comfort themselves with the doctrines and commands of men, use a strange baptism, Lord’s supper and divine worship, which Christ has not taught; seek the remission of their sins by foreign means;

such as holy waters, masses, auricular confessions, pilgrimages, &c., walk in a perverted, crooked path, do not believe Christ and his word, which all must confess who have only natural discernment and understanding. All who acknowledge Christ to be the Son of God, and his word as the truth, acknowledge that his commands are eternal life, and that they seek no other worship, word, sacraments, or means of reconciliation, nor another way of life than that which Christ, God's own Son, presented and taught to them by the word of his truth.

Hence it is evident that where sincere and true faith is, which avails before God, which is a gift from him, and comes from hearing the holy word, through the blossoming tree of life, full of all manner of precious fruits of righteousness, such as the fear and love of God, mercy, friendship, chastity, temperance, humility, candor, truth, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, &c., there is a sincere, evangelical, pious faith; there also are the sincere, gospel fruits of an evangelical nature.

I say gospel fruit, for the strange fruit, such as infant baptism, masses, matins, vespers, caps, palms, crosses, chapels, altars, bells, &c., do not know the gospel, for they are neither commanded by God, nor by Jesus Christ, his Son, nor by the apostles and prophets. Therefore, they are abominations and not believing fruits, even as the golden calf was with Israel, the worship of Baal, the high places, altars and churches, and the crime of making their children pass through the fire.

The true evangelical faith looks upon, and has respect for the doctrine, ceremonies, commands, prohibitions, and unblameable examples of Christ alone, and strives to conform to this with all its powers, even as fire in its nature can produce nothing but combustion and flame; the sun, nothing but light and heat; the water causes moisture, and a good tree brings good fruit after its natural properties; and thus upright, evangelical faith produces true evangelical fruit, and that after its true, good, evangelical

nature; yes, even as an honest, virtuous bride, by the virtue and the nature of natural love, is ever ready to hear and obey the voice of her bridegroom; and from a sincere, pious disposition, favor and love which she has for and towards him, will ever so conduct herself, before her most faithful friend and beloved husband, whom she respects and loves with all her heart, that for his sake she voluntarily endures what ever may befall her; even also it is with a sincere, regenerated believer, who has been joined to Christ, by grace through faith. He has become one with Christ through this ardent love, so he is ever willing and prepared to do his bidding and will, to endure all things for the sake of the holy name of Jesus, in evil as well as in good report. Eager to endure all things that may befall him at any time, be it joy or tribulation, satiation or hunger, refreshing or thirst, honor or dishonor, in good or bad report, in prison or at liberty, in exile or at home, ease or discomfort, life or death. Such a soul partakes of her bridegroom's nature and disposition, is pious in heart and thought; true in words and well seasoned; all her ways are righteousness, devoutness; wise as the serpent; harmless as the dove; a genuinely pious disposition, fidelity, zeal, peace, fervent prayer, an unblameable conduct, a sincere, pure, brotherly love, and a voluntary obedience to Christ and his holy word; for the righteous live by faith, as we shall incontrovertibly and plainly show, by the grace of God, in the following examples, recorded and testified to in the holy Scriptures, Amen.

NOAH'S FAITH.

The holy Scriptures testify concerning Noah, the son of Lamech, that he found grace before the Lord, because he was a

righteous man, unwavering and perfect in his generation. Peter calls him a preacher of righteousness. High and glorious is the testimony which is given in the Scriptures concerning this man.

When all the world was depraved before God, and the face of all the earth was full of wickedness, the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and they took themselves wives of all whom they chose, and would not allow themselves to be reproved by the Spirit of God. Then Jehovah spoke, I will yet give them respite, for a hundred and twenty years.* He also gave Noah a command to make a ship or ark, by which he and his household might be saved from the coming flood, for Lord Jehovah was about to destroy the whole world with water. Noah believed the word of the Lord with all his heart, and kept it in his mind, as if he saw it before him with his eyes. He commenced building as he had been commanded, for he believed with his whole heart that the threatened punishment would come. And when the appointed year was completed, and the disobedient, wicked world did not repent, the word of the Lord must be accomplished. Noah went into the ark with all the clean and unclean creatures as the Lord commanded him.† The same day that he entered the ark, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and it rained forty days and forty nights, till all the high mountains upon the

* [CHCoG: It is likely that this also means that God would reduce human life spans to a maximum of 120 years, which within a few generations after the Flood became the case.]

† [This was long before Moses. Indeed, God's Instructions go all the way back to Abel, who knew to sacrifice and offer a clean animal, specifically a first-born lamb, to God, even though he was a vegetarian. Gen 4:4. It is also probable that this sacrifice was made on the Passover, and clearly was foreshadowing both the Exodus and Christ's death. This also explains God's great displeasure with Cain's substitution.]

face of the whole earth were covered; fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and all creatures upon the earth that had in them the breath of life, as men, birds, beasts and worms were destroyed. Noah and his family, together with the animals which were with him in the ark, were preserved in the ark by the power and grace of Almighty God, in whom Noah trusted with all his heart.

Through faith, says Paul, Noah honored God, and prepared the ark for the salvation of his house, according to the divine command, though no flood had yet seen, through which he condemned the world, and became an inheritor of the righteousness which is by faith.

Oh! lovely example! O, glorious pattern of a sure and firm faith. For, as he believed his God, so was he upright and unwavering. He believed the threatened punishment firmly, as if he saw it before his eyes, and therefore he labored so many years, and, through the eternal Spirit of Christ, he warned the unbelieving, disobedient spirits, or men led captive by sin, to repent and reform. He feared the word of Jehovah, and did not doubt that it would happen as the Lord had spoken. He well knew that the word of the Lord was powerful, as the prophet said, "O Lord, you spoke from the beginning of the creation, and said thus, Let heaven and earth be made; and your word was a perfect work," 2 Esdras 6:38.

And when he had preached and built forty, eighty or a hundred years (the Scriptures do not say how long he built and taught), he did not become weak in faith by the long delay, for he well knew that the punishment of God would come upon the unconverted, because he had formerly told him so, and that he and his [family] would be preserved through the mercy and grace of him who promised, for he is the God of truth, and no lie is found in him.

Jehovah God warned the pious Noah, and said, “The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth,” Gen. 6:13. So also has he, through his own blessed Son, through his holy prophets and apostles, with his holy word, truthfully warned us and said, If you do not repent, are not born by God, do not believe in Christ, do not walk in his commandments, and do not reform your wicked lives, but serve strange Gods, be haughty, proud, ambitious, lustful, blood-thirsty, malicious, unjust, idle, earthly, fleshly, and devilish, you will die in your sins. You shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, but shall be condemned, inherit extreme woe and pain, and be cast into the fiery pool, with all the accursed [and there suffer the second, eternal death], and [thus] have no part nor communion in the kingdom of Christ.

My readers, take heed. If we, with the upright and godly Noah, observe the faithful warnings of Christ and his Holy Spirit, and believe with our whole heart; believe the word of God to be true and immutable, that the threatened punishment will come in its time, even if it might be delayed a thousand years. I advise that every one watch, for all who die in their sins receive their punishment, for the time of grace is then expired. We should undoubtedly fear and tremble to the inmost of our souls, at the wrath and punishment threatened in the Scriptures to all the impenitent, which will be eternal in its duration.* We should pray to God for grace, clothe ourselves in sackcloth and mourning garments, truly repent, reform our wicked life, follow after righteousness, and with our new and spiritual Noah, Christ Jesus, enter into the new and spiritual ark, which is his church; always being careful and fearful that the deluge of the coming wrath of

* [CHCoG: As noted earlier, the punishment is eternal: it is the second death, from which there can be no resurrection! But the punishing finishes when they die. But the rewarding, our second life; its joy continues for ever.]

God will not unexpectedly overtake us with all the unbelieving and impenitent, who acknowledge neither God nor Christ, neither Spirit nor word, as it overtook the corrupt antediluvian world. Yes, we should sincerely watch for the coming of our Lord, and give heed to the time of grace, preserve our wedding garment, and have oil in our lamps, that our house be not unseasonably broken through, and we, with the guest who had not on a wedding garment, be cast forth from the Lord's wedding, into outer darkness.

But alas, if we do not believe the threats, punishments, wrath and judgments of the Lord, and have little regard for the examples of Scripture, therefore, we say with the mockers, Beloved, where is the promise of his coming? All things continue as they were from the beginning since the fathers fell asleep. 2 Pet. 3:4. If so, it will, I fear, happen with us as it did with the unbelievers and disobedient who were overtaken with sudden destruction in the time of Noah and Lot, as one may plainly see and read concerning the coming of the Lord, Matt. 24 & Luke 17. If we do not believe the threats, judgments, and wrath of the Lord, but disregard them, therefore we lead such a reckless, unbridled life, follow the lusts of the flesh, eat, drink, build, sow, reap and marry without any fear or care, and avariciously hoard up gold, silver and possessions, and haughtily say in our hearts there is peace and liberty, till swift destruction shall overtake us.

Again, let every one look well and watch. The messenger, with his peremptory summons, is already at the door, who will say, Render an account; you may be no longer steward. But if we, with the unwavering and pious Noah, firmly believe the coming eternal wrath and punishment, and also the glorious promises through Christ, to all true Children of God, we would, undoubtedly, not be found so inattentive, drowsy and indifferent, but with full earnestness and without delay, rise from our abominable sin, separate ourselves from our grievous errors, and

shun wickedness as we would a hungry, roaring lion, or a blood-thirsty enemy; we should also watch with open eyes all our days, lest the Master of the house overtake us when we sleep and disregard us. Let us not strike our fellow servants; neither eat nor drink with gormandizers, so he may not give us our portion and lot with the hypocrites. Concerning this watching, read Matt. 24; Mark 13:37.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

Abraham, the highly renowned patriarch, who had not his equal in honor, as Sirach writes, believed God and trusted upon his word with his whole heart, and thus manifested obedience and power as the result of his faith. Jehovah commanded him and said, "Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and you shall be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you, and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed," Gen. 12:1-3. When he heard the command, he believed his God and did not consult the ease of his body nor his natural reason, but renounced both, and did not strive nor dispute with God, in whom he trusted and by whose command he went forth. He did not desire to know before hand into what land he should go. He believed his God with his whole heart, he was obedient and went forth at that hour, together with Sarai, his wife, not knowing where he should go. He reposed firmly and surely upon the promise of God, who would not deceive nor betray him, for he well knew that he was a God who

was true and firm in all his words, and that he would bring him into such a country as he had promised him.

Behold, how upright and perfect, how plain, obedient, and full of confidence is true christian faith, as may be seen in this patriarch. Compare your faith and its fruits with Abraham's faith and its fruits, and I presume you will find that you have never yet become his faithful seed and children; for it is likely that you are stubborn and unbelieving, so fleshly and earthly minded that you would not give a clay house, a poor bed, a cow or a horse, nor would you endure a hard word for the sake of the word of the Lord and his testimony; and I doubt whether you would forsake father or mother, or the land of your birth, for the sake of your faith, and like Abraham, travel with wife and children to an unknown land. Cursed unbelief keeps the whole world from the truth; for many of you say, We well know that you have the truth, but what does it avail? We are poor and full of years, we can no longer labor or earn; we have a house full of children and cannot earn our bread in other lands; we fear, also, that the Lord may not have such a care for us as he had for Abraham. Others, we say, have much wealth, or we are young in years, and may live long, yet father and mother hinder us. The wife says, my husband opposes me; the husband says, my wife is against me, and similar unbelieving fleshly excuses and cares. They never take to heart, nor understand that Christ has richly promised you, that if you abide by his word, you shall receive all the necessities of the earth, such as food, clothing, and shelter. "I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," Psm. 37:25.

Faithful readers, observe, if we had a firm faith and a sure confidence, like this godly man, and dare trust from our heart upon the living God, O, how little should we trouble ourselves with such heathenish cares, concerning dwelling, eating, drinking, and clothing, for we well know that Christ, God's own

Son, has promised that if we seek the kingdom of heaven, and his righteousness, and turn our hearts to some honest labor, he will not forsake us for all eternity, but will supply all our necessities, for he cares for us.

Secondly, observe his faith when a message came to Abraham, that Lot, his brother's son, was taken from Sodom by Chedorlaomer, the king of Elam, and his confederate kings, Abraham rose up with three hundred and eighteen of his servants and followed after the aforementioned kings; he overtook them in the night and slew them and retook all their goods, together with Lot, the prisoners and their wives, Gen. 14:16.

Here the faithful patriarch manifested his love, the result of faith, and did not fear the power of the four kings. He trusted in the living God, he did not seek his own safety, nor the safety of his servants, but willingly risked all, in order that he might rescue his oppressed kinsman from the hands of his enemies, as an example for all the spiritual children of Abraham, that they should so love their brethren, who are born of the incorruptible seed of the holy divine word, and not only assist them with money and goods, but also in an evangelical manner, risk and give their lives for them in time of need. I say in an evangelical manner; for the aid of the sword is forbidden to all true christians. According to the New Testament, true believers should meekly suffer, and not fight and combat with swords and firearms. But if we wish to save or gain our neighbor's soul, by the help of the Spirit and word of our Lord, or if we see our brethren in need or peril, and persecuted for the sake of the word of the Lord, then we should not close our doors to them, but receive them in our houses, share with them our food, aid, comfort and assist them in their tribulations, &c. In such cases, we should risk our lives for our brethren, even if we know beforehand that it could be at the cost of our lives. This example we have in Christ, who for our

sakes, did not spare himself, but willingly yielded his life that we, through him, might live.

In the third place, observe that to Abraham the promise was given, that his seed should be as numerous as the stars of heaven; that they should be strangers in another land that was not theirs, and that they should be oppressed and compelled to serve four hundred years, &c. When this promise was made, he believed this, and his belief was reckoned to him for righteousness. He waited with patience, and it was fulfilled in its time; he did not murmur, nor dispute with God, because his seed should suffer so greatly for so many years. It is an admonition to all true christians, that they should cleave to the word of the Lord with all their heart, and should hold firmly to his promise; for God cannot forget or break his word; heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall stand and abide forever. All who shall trust in it, to them it shall be reckoned as righteousness, as it was to Abraham. Through faith he saw the promise from afar; he saw it, and comforted himself with this. In like manner also with us, the promise of the future, eternal life, is given through Christ, and we are informed that for his name's sake, we must suffer much from this perverted and wicked generation. This promise is seen from afar, and all who sincerely believe it and comfort themselves with this, will doubtlessly receive it in due time, however hard and long they may be persecuted and tormented by the evil Egyptian race. For, although the children of Abraham were grieved with much sorrow and pain for some hundreds of years, yet did the Lord, according to his promise, lead them forth victoriously, and gave them the land of promise; and thus it will be with us if we do not doubt the promises, but receive them with a firm faith, as Abraham did, and through faith walk in all the commandments of God, possess our souls in patience and honor, fear, love, thank and serve Jehovah. However lamentably we are persecuted here, oppressed, smitten, robbed and murdered by the hellish Pharaoh,

and his fierce, unmerciful servants, or burned at the stake, or drowned in the water, yet the day of our salvation shall arrive, and all our tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and we shall be arrayed in the white silken robes of righteousness, and with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, follow the Lamb, and sit down in the kingdom of God and possess the precious, pleasant land of eternal peace. Praise God, you who suffer for Christ's sake and raise your heads, for the time is near when you shall hear, *Come you blessed*, and you shall rejoice with him forever.

In the fourth place, observe that Abraham received a command from God, that he and also his male children when eight days old, should be circumcised, with all his servants, those who were born in his house, and those who were bought, and this should be a covenant sign between God and him. He was not disobedient to God, nor yet displeased with him, neither did he complain nor murmur against him on account of the great pain and smarting he should suffer in his old age, by performing such a dishonorable and ridiculous ceremony, by which he could neither praise God, nor help or serve his neighbor. But he heard and believed the word of the Lord, and humbly and submissively followed it without delay. He well knew that unless he would believe the word of God, he could obtain no grace, no blessing, no promise, for only the obedient obtain the promise.

Here again the simple, plain submission and willing obedience of Abraham's faith are made manifest by its fruits; for if he had followed flesh and blood, and reasoned with himself, he undoubtedly would not have obeyed, but he would have entered into an argument with God, and said, No, Lord, it shall not be so, for this sign will profit me nothing, for You are not praised by it nor is my neighbor served. All the heathen who do not know your great name will mock at it as foolishness, from the very nature of the ceremony. O, no! He did not speak against Jehovah,

but he believed and acted, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.

This is for the encouragement of all the pious, that they should believe and submissively follow the word of the Lord, however heretical and ridiculous it may appear to them, not murmuring against the Lord why he so commanded it; but it is enough that they know that he has commanded, and in what manner he has commanded.

Again, it shames all haughty despisers and unbelieving mockers, who so presumptuously open their blasphemous, wicked mouths against Christ, and say, 'What can baptism profit us, or why does God demand so much water? It is enough, if we are inwardly pious men, regard the commands of love, and lead a pious, virtuous life,' and similar hypocritical words; for these poor miserable hypocrites do not understand that when the inward man, of which they boast, has become upright through faith and is pious in God, through the grace, word, and Spirit of the Lord, that he does not dare depart one hair's breadth from the word and ways of the Lord, but does willingly all things whatsoever the Lord has commanded him, let it be what it will.

It is very manifest that Christ Jesus has commanded water baptism upon the confession of our faith, and that he received it himself, Matt. 3:16. The holy apostles did not teach nor practice otherwise; their signification and effect were not otherwise, and so many glorious promises depend on them, as may plainly be seen and read, Mark 16:15 (understand me rightly), not by virtue of the wrought sign itself, but that we receive Christ, in whom the Father gave the promise through faith, and are ready to live according to his word. Say, beloved, how shall one obtain the accompanying promise if he does not do what is commanded? But what does it avail all who do not believe the Lord's word, who would rather have money, goods, body and life, than Christ? They are earthly and fleshly minded, they strive against Christ,

disobey the Scriptures, dispute and say, What can water benefit us? But if they believed the word of the Lord from the heart, as Abraham did, and were new and changed men in Christ Jesus, through the power of the same faith, they would love their enemies, do good for evil, pray for those by whom they are persecuted, be ready to forsake possessions and all that they have and are for the glory of the Lord, and for the necessary service of their neighbor. They would not reject the cross of the Lord, but flesh and blood would be put to death; they would fear God and his judgments, and love him for his kindness; they would undoubtedly not murmur and dispute, but stand prepared, like Abraham, to seal their faith by its fruits; they would receive the commanded baptism, surrender themselves to all obedience, and according to their weakness, walk as the Lord commands, teaches and enjoins upon all true Christians.

Since they do not believe Christ and his word, they neither fear nor love him; therefore they reject, upbraid and blaspheme his holy doctrine, Spirit, commandments, prohibitions, ordinances and usages as deceiving heresy, and obedience to him as an open abomination. O, reader, beware! Lord Jehovah is a God who adheres to his word; he brought calamity upon Adam and Eve and their posterity on account of the forbidden fruit. For a small transgression Uzzah was punished with death, 2 Sam. 6:7. On account of one transgression, the faithful Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land. Whoever did not receive the bloody sign of circumcision, was to be cut off from among the people. Therefore, it must be plainly understood that his word and will must be obeyed, otherwise we cannot be saved, for he is the God who has made heaven and earth and the fullness of it; the Almighty, terrible God, who lives forever in his majesty and glory; the Lord and Ruler over all. Woe to him who speaks against him and despises his word and will. The works of such a one testify that he does not believe in Christ, and whosoever does

not believe, as Christ himself declares, is condemned already. Therefore, it is all in vain to excuse ourselves or seek evasion. How any one who is so unbelieving and rebellious that he refuses to God to wash in water, can conform himself to love his enemies, put to death the flesh to the service of his neighbor, and to take up the cross of Christ. I will leave the serious reader to reflect upon this, in the fear of God.

I know for certain that all their disputation, pretensions and evasions are nothing but fig leaves, and their lives, nothing but hypocrisy.

In the fifth place, observe when the Lord had spoken to Abraham, that at the end of the year he would return, and that Sarah, his wife, would have a son, whom he should call Isaac, and that he would make his eternal covenant with him and his seed after him; though he was nearly a hundred years old, and Sarah ninety, nevertheless, he did not doubt. He did not think upon, or regard his own frailty and the barrenness of Sarah, but firm and strong in faith, he trusted upon the promise of his God, and praised him for his grace; for he knew that God was able to perform that which he had promised. Therefore, from this same Abraham, because he believed the word of the Lord, descended as many as the sand which is upon the sea shore or the stars of heaven, Gen. 22:17.

Behold, most beloved, how an upright, unfeigned christian faith regards God as almighty and true; it knows that he can and will do all that he has promised, and therefore, Abraham looked not upon the frailty and age of himself and Sarah. He did not doubt the promised words, but believed without wavering, for he knew well that the same God who created heaven and earth, and the fullness of it through his word, who stretched the heavens abroad, and set an established bound to the stormy, raging sea, whose word sustains the earth in the midst of the water, who rules all with the word of his strength, and gives life to the dead, could

undoubtedly, when he chose, render that fruitful which before was barren.

Since such a promise was given to him by God, he did not doubt, but hoped for that which, in nature, was not to be expected. Through faith in God, he received that which was promised to him, namely his son Isaac through the aged and barren Sarah. So in like manner it is spiritually with us; if we believe, with our whole heart, the promised word of grace, which is the gospel of peace, by which the redemption from our sins through the blood [and death] of Lord Jesus is made known; so will also our dead conscience flourish and live; we shall receive the spiritual Isaac, Christ Jesus, with the eternal blessing, and bring forth fruit. Christ said, My mother and my brethren are those who hear the word and will of God, and do accordingly; but whosoever does not believe this Isaac, does not receive Christ, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

In the sixth place, observe how severely the Lord tried the faith of Abraham, when he said, “Now take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains of which I will tell you,” Gen. 22:2. Abraham heard the word of Jehovah and was obedient. He took his son with him and went to the place which the Lord had commanded him; and when he came there, Isaac said, Father, behold here is fire and wood, but where is the lamb that shall be offered? Abraham answered his son, and said, “My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.”

O, my most beloved, reflect! Observe the conduct and conversation of Abraham and his son Isaac. I suppose reason will teach you how full of trouble and grief the mind of the father was on account of his beloved son, for Abraham was flesh and blood as we are. That son, who was born to him in his old age through the promise and gift of God, his only son born of a free woman,

the desire, the joy and the peace of his heart, the staff of his age, through whom he received the comforting promise must be slain and burned with fire.

How hard and sorely he was tried, yet did he not oppose God with a single word, nor contend and say, Why have you given me a son, since he must die? Neither did he reprove the Lord, by saying that he had falsified his promise, for it was through Isaac that the promise was made, but he trusted in his God with his whole heart; he laid aside all reasoning and wisdom, and followed neither sense nor flesh. He would not spare his beloved son for the Lord's sake. He loved his God more than his child, and therefore he did not refuse to offer him willingly as a burnt offering to Him from whom he received him. He bound him and lifted him upon the wood, and raised his hand and knife to slay him; he hoped that God would raise him from the dead. He was about to obey the command which he had received, when an angel spoke from Heaven, saying, "Do not lay your hand upon the lad, neither do any thing unto him; for now I know that you fear God; seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me," Gen. 22:12. And thus the obedient, faithful Abraham received his son as a type of the resurrection. The word of James is true, "Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God," James 2:23.

Beloved children, we must always stand confounded before God, when we compare our little, weak faith and its fruit with the faith of Abraham. He did not refuse to travel into an unknown country, as soon as he was commanded. He was a man full of peace, and did not seek his own interest. He released Lot out of the hands of his enemies. He believed the promise concerning the promised land and seed. He did not murmur on account of the long time nor of the oppression of his seed. He suffered himself to be circumcised in advanced age. He believed the Lord's promise concerning Isaac, and taught all his servants and

children that they should follow the way of Jehovah, and do that which was right. He was willing to offer Isaac as the Lord had commanded him. This may truly be called faith.

So entirely was this pious man dead to himself that he denied all his lusts, his will and mind, and loved his God alone. He trusted, feared, loved and honored his God, with all his soul and heart, and walked according to his commandments, as is evidenced by his fruits, as may be observed and understood from many passages of Scripture. But what kind of faith do our false, boasting christians possess, who allow themselves to think that they are the seed of Abraham? I will let their fruits be the judge; for they covet and hoard, curse and swear, lie and cheat; they are haughty and proud, eat and drink intemperately, commit fornication and adultery, fight, rob, steal, take usury, and are full of idolatry and wickedness. Those who have a little light refuse to remove from one village to another, or from one city to another, for the word and truth of the Lord; they seek their own interests, and esteem brotherly love but lightly; they are earthly minded, and flee from the cross of Christ; they do not regard the promise and goodness of the Lord; they do not fear his coming judgment and punishment; they love the creature more than the Creator; his name be blessed forever, Amen.

In short, I do not know what it is, in which they do not serve themselves, nor act contrary to the command of God. They boast, notwithstanding, that they are the children of Abraham, and have his promise. Ah no! My friends, your prophets have led you astray, and your false hopes deceive you; as true as the Lord lives, if you do not believe his word, from your whole heart, nor through the power of the same faith, walk in his ways, do not bring forth the christian fruits of righteousness, and do not follow in the footsteps of this pious patriarch; you are not his seed and children, neither have you his faith nor his promise. But all who receive Christ in their hearts through faith and adhere strictly to

his word and obey it, are the spiritual children of Abraham, and fellow heirs of his promise, for they are reckoned his seed.

FAITH AND FIDELITY OF MOSES.

Moses, a servant and messenger of God, was also found faithful, vigorous, living and active in his faith. He was called by the Lord to lead Israel out of Egypt. He did not exalt himself to the high station of a prince, but humbled himself before God with all his heart, and said, Send, Lord, whom you will, but what am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and lead forth Israel? Then Moses said to Jehovah, "O, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." Exo. 4:10. He refused so long that the Lord was angry. With fear and trembling, he at last took upon himself the commanded duty, and surrendered himself to his God, whom he [was learning to] trust.

He went willingly before the fierce Pharaoh, and showed great wonders and power before him and all his servants. He ransomed the people through the outstretched arm and strong hand of God. He divided the Red Sea and passed with Israel, unharmed, through the depths, Exo. 14:21,22. He received the tables of stone on which were written the commandments of Jehovah. He caused bread to rain from heaven, and water to flow from the flinty rock.* He prepared the tents and the ark of the testimony, as he was directed upon the mountains. He ordained

* [CHCoG: Actually Jesus Christ did all these things, Moses merely performed the actions he was told to do in faith that they would result in what God promised him. 1 Cor. 10:4]

the figurative priesthood, with all the duties, offerings, sanctifications, apparel, &c., according to the command of the Lord.

He went with the people, pitched the tents, and took them up again at the command of the Lord. He gave them the commands and statutes of Jehovah. He stood as a faithful mediator between God and the people when they had sinned, and he turned the wrath from Israel. He punished idolaters, whore-mongers and the rebellious. He slew Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. The Lord was with him in all his ways.

By faith, says Paul, "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward; by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them," Heb. 11:24-28.

Kind reader, respect the word of the Lord, for when we look spiritually upon such holy examples and contrast them with the insupportable pride, haughtiness, avarice, idolatry, disobedience and unfaithfulness of the prince of the world, and with the blind, mad unbelief of the common people, then we must acknowledge that they are far from the obedience and active faith of Moses. Yes, they are unbelieving heathens, and not Christians.

Moses believed his God and acted rightly in all his transactions. He was kind, and solicitous for the welfare of the people under his care, as he was commanded. He was the meekest of men; he served neither for gift nor reward, but obeyed the voice and word of the Lord; was faithful in all his house, and faithfully prosecuted his duties in the fear of the Lord. He

faithfully commanded out of the mouth of God, and in upright love, faithfully admonished the people that they and their descendants, from generation to generation, should hear and be obedient to the voice of Lord Jehovah, God of their fathers, and should follow no other customs, commandments, righteousness or worship, than that which he had taught or commanded them, till the new prophet, the teacher of righteousness, the blessed seed of Abraham, Christ Jesus, should come.

But if we would go to our rulers, princes, lords, bishops, priests, monks and preachers, and all those who boast of the name and faith of Christ; if we would rightly measure their faith and obedience with the word of the Lord, which is the true standard, and should find some who sincerely seek Christ from the heart, fear, love, believe and trust him; who teach and practice rightly the ordinances, commands, sacraments and true worship of God; who conform their whole lives both inwardly and outwardly, according to the word and example of the Lord; and who, in love, execute the service which is enjoined on them, as this faithful Moses has done in all his transactions, I fear they are so few that we should have to go far and search long to find them, and if there are still some, they must be, alas, given as a prey to the blood-thirsty, and bear the cross of the Lord.

I testify to you the truth in Christ, and do not lie. All who do not hear the voice of Christ do not believe his holy word, do not follow his pure unblameable life from their whole heart, in all humility, patience, meekness, obedience and love; do not have the working and living faith of Moses, but are, by the contents of his doctrines, already judged. O, reader, beware! Neither money, name, nor boasting will avail you, but your faith and deeds, if you wish to be saved, and not be condemned.

FAITH OF CALEB AND JOSHUA.

Joshua and Caleb, through faith, passed over Jordan and entered the promised land. “Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, “Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many; whether the land they dwell in is good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds; whether the land is rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land.” Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes.” Num. 13:17-20.

They went up and viewed the land, even as Moses had commanded them by the mouth of the Lord, and after forty days they came to Moses and Aaron, and to the whole congregation in the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh, carrying with them grapes, pomegranates and figs, saying, “We came unto the land where you sent us, and surely it flows with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Moreover, we saw the children of Anak there.” And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, “Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” But the men that went up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.” And they brought an evil report of the land which they had searched out to the children of Israel, saying, “The land through which we have gone to search, it is a land that eats up its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature; and there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight,” Num. 13:27-33.

“And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried; and the people wept that night, and all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole congregation said unto them, ‘Would to God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would to God we had died in the wilderness, and why has Jehovah brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Was it not better for us to return into Egypt?’ And they said one to another, ‘Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.’ Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes; and they spoke unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying ‘the land which we passed through to search, it is an exceeding good land. If Jehovah delights in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us; a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against Jehovah, neither fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us; their defence has departed from them, and Jehovah is with us; do not fear them.’ But all the congregation said to stone them with stones,” Num. 14:1-10.

Behold, dear reader, it is because these two faithful men believed the word and promise of God with all their hearts, that they trusted firmly in his Almighty power, paternal mercy and great works, as if they had already obtained them. They saw the heinous unbelief and heard the bitter murmuring of their brethren, and that they thereby detracted from the Almighty’s Majesty, as if he were not able to fulfil his promises unto them, and that he had deceived them by his enticing words. Therefore they were very sorrowful and sad, and rent their clothes, as has been said. And thus they were the only two persons of the six hundred thousand men that came with Moses out of Egypt, who entered into the promised land. All the rest died in the wilderness during the time of forty years, and they did not reach the promised land, because

they did not believe in Jehovah, the Almighty God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who with such unheard of signs and wonders, had led them through the Red Sea, and so graciously upheld and guarded them in the wilderness.

Thus, alas, it is with some at the present day. They have spied the pleasant land, have seen and tasted its precious fruits, have been enlightened by the word of the Lord, have tasted the heavenly gifts, have partaken of the Holy Spirit, have tasted of the sweet word of God, and the power of the world to come, and have beheld the grace of the Lord, but they do not consult God, but their own sinful, disobedient, evil flesh, which always seeks its own pleasure, and will not willingly bear the cross of the Lord. They behold with carnal eyes, and see that so many powerful tyrants and fenced cities are arrayed against them, that they have to pass a howling wilderness, and must ascend many high mountains; that they must give as a prey, honor, money, possessions, wife, children, body and life; hence they murmur against Moses and Aaron, and seek to stone Joshua and Caleb. They cause their poor teachers and leaders, who with true love direct them to the word and examples of Christ, and preach the pure truth, such intolerable suffering. They backbite and defame them beyond measure, and choose for themselves, here and there, a captain, false prophet or teacher, who, with fair words and under the appearance of good, would lead them back into Egypt. They prefer temporal to eternal things, they fear perishing man more than the immortal, eternal God, the Lord and Creator of the world. With unbelieving, carnal Israel, they say in their hearts, We are not strong enough to go up against this great and strong people, and are not able to obey the doctrine, ordinances and example of Christ, for all the world is against us, all lords and princes persecute us, the preachers and priests upbraid and defame us, and we must become a byword and a derision to all the world. We are much too weak to bear such great misery:

therefore they want to transfer it to the Lord. Thus you think and err, for your unbelieving, carnal hearts have so blinded you that you do not know the righteous judgment of God, you do not hope that a holy life shall be rewarded, and do not esteem the honor of an unblameable soul.

Dear reader, take warning, for as true as the Lord lives, I tell you that all those who thus cast aside the word of the Lord, again become unbelieving in God, and become so earthly and carnal minded that they fear those whom they ought not to fear; and do not fear those whom they should fear; who think more of the perishable creations, such as home, lands, gold, silver, wife, children, body and life, than of the everlasting God and his eternal kingdom, and have a greater desire to enjoy in peace, for a season, the dark Egypt of this ungodly world, than to inherit the pleasant fruitful land and live in endless peace with God. Such shall all fall in the wilderness, and unless they repent, shall never enter into his rest, Heb. 4:1.

But those who, with Joshua and Caleb, hold firmly to the word of the Lord; who firmly believe in Christ, as the Scriptures direct; who are firmly assured in their hearts by the Holy Spirit that God will not fail in a single word, but that he will fulfil, in its time, all that he has promised; who are not prevailed on by the gates of hell; who do not allow themselves to be deceived by the subtle lies and philosophy of the learned; who are not frightened by the tyranny of the blood-thirsty; who are not vanquished by carnal lusts; nor enchanted by the fine appearance of false prophets, but walk humbly in the King's highway; who follow Christ, their Shepherd and Leader, and judge all their ways by his Spirit, word, and unblameable example; who turn not aside, neither to the right hand, nor to the left. Behold, they are those who will victoriously enter the spiritual, promised land, the everlasting rest and peace, God's eternal kingdom and glory, with all the saints and believers, and through grace, eternally inherit it

with Christ, as Joshua and Caleb inherited the figurative land through faith, and with their children inherited it. O, children, believe. "All things," says Christ, "are possible to him that believes," Mark 9:23.

BELIEF OF THE PIOUS KING JOSIAH.

Josiah, an illustrious and pious king in all his works, did that which was pleasing to the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David, and did not depart from them, neither to the right hand nor to the left. And when he was yet a child he began to seek the God of David, his father. And in the eighteenth year of his age he sent Shaphan, his scribe, to Hilkiah the high priest, that money might be given to those who worked at the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah said to Shaphan, I have found the book of the Law in the house of Jehovah, and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan and he brought it to the king. And when the king heard the words of the law, which were written in the book, he rent his clothes, as one who feared his God. He believed the word of the Lord, and feared the coming wrath which he threatened in the book which was found. He then commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, and Shaphan saying, "Go, inquire of Jehovah for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found, for great is the wrath of Jehovah that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us," 2 Kings 22:13.

So they went to Huldah, a prophetess, the wife of Shallum, and asked her as Josiah had commanded them; the woman

answered them, “Thus says Jehovah God of Israel, Tell the man who has sent you unto me, Thus says Jehovah, behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of it, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read, because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods that they might provoke me to anger, with all the works of their hands; therefore, my wrath shall be kindled against this place and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah, which sent you to inquire of Jehovah, thus shall you say to him, Thus says Jehovah God of Israel, as touching the words which you have heard, because your heart was tender, and you have humbled yourself before Jehovah, when you heard what I spoke against this place and against the inhabitants of it, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and have rent your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says Jehovah. Behold, therefore I will gather you unto your fathers, and you shall be gathered into your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place, and they brought the king word again.

“When now the king heard these words, he sent and gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of Jehovah, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets, and all the people both small and great, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant, which was found in the house of Jehovah. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before Jehovah to walk after Jehovah and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes with all their heart, and all their soul to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant,” 2 Kings 22:15-20 and 23:1-3. And Josiah caused all who were to be found in Israel to serve Jehovah, and they did not depart from him as long as Josiah lived.

Here, dear reader, observe what kind of faith Josiah had, and what the fruits of it were. He heard the word of Jehovah, and believed it. He rent his clothes, inquired of the Lord and renewed the covenant because he heard what God had commanded in the same book; that they should not do according to their own thoughts; that they should not follow after strange gods, nor the abominations of the Canaanites and the other heathens which were dispersed before them, but they should serve Jehovah alone and cleave to him, and keep his commands as he directed them. He was strong in Jehovah, resolved in a manly spirit, and acted valiantly in all his doings, for he believed and trusted God with all his strength; and with earnest zeal, he tore down all that his forefathers and former kings, out of their own imaginings and choice, had brought in and established as holy service.

He burned all the vessels of Baal and tore down all the groves, high places and altars in the land of Judea and Samaria. He defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom. He destroyed the horses of the sun, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. He broke down the altar of Bethel and offered the idolatrous priests and their dead bones upon them, as the man of God had proclaimed before times. He destroyed all that was opposed to the law of God. He kept the Passover of Jehovah as it was written in the book of the covenant, in such a glorious manner as no judge or king had kept it before. He also put away all sooth-sayers and wizards, images, idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that they might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah, the High priest, found in the house of Jehovah, and there was no king like unto him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart and all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him, 2 Kings 23:24, 25.

Hear now, O, you great princes and kings, and all those who allow themselves to think that they are faithful lords and christian princes, my admonition is to you! Have you any fear of God? Any love to Christ or his blessed word? Or is there yet any sincerity of nature with you who have understanding? Then you know that you are not gods from heaven; but poor dying men of the impure, guilty seed of Adam. Humble yourselves under the Almighty hand of God, and compare Josiah's faith and works with your faith and works, in order that you may know how far you are from the Spirit and word of Christ, and that you bear nothing else than a mere, idle, vain, empty name.

Whilst Josiah was yet a child, and young in years, he feared God, and manifested a mature mind and understanding in all his works; but you, my dear lords, fear neither God nor the devil. Cursed unbelief is your mother, and unrighteousness your sister. In divine things you are blind, deaf and dumb; yes, during your whole lives, you are as destitute of understanding as children.

Josiah was eight years old when he was made king, and in the eighth year of his reign, he began to seek the God of his father David; but your seeking, from the cradle on, is solely for pomp and splendor, haughtiness of heart, wantonness, riding; sporting, killing, enlargement of your dominions, increase of patronage and treasure, fighting, warring, taxing and usury; to afflict the destitute and poor; to domineer one over another, and to live, with all your might, and openly, according to the lusts of the flesh. The open deed testifies that I write the truth.

Josiah began, in the twelfth year of his reign, to purify Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, groves, idolatry and molten images, but you build them in every city, village, street and alley; upon every high mountain and in every deep valley, and whoever would admonish you with the Spirit and word of Christ must be a heretic and must tread the press of affliction.

Josiah was solicitous for the house of the Lord, and appointed and paid artificers to labor at it. But you break down, and by your vindictive mandates, tyranny and the sword, oppose the house and dwelling of Christ, which is his church, which he has sanctified by his Spirit, cleansed by his blood, and adorned by the word, ordinances and sacraments of his Father. You prevent it from being rebuilt in its apostolic clearness, and from becoming perfect in its doctrines, sacraments and conduct, according to the command of Christ and his holy word.

Josiah expelled all sooth-sayers and wizards. He sacrificed the idolatrous priests upon their idolatrous altars, and burned their dead bones, &c., but the bones of the man of God from Judah, and of the prophets of Samaria, he did not burn. But you sustain and cherish, as shepherds of the flocks of Christ and keepers of your souls, false prophets and deceiving priests; the greater part of whom are open drunkards, libertines and idolaters, full of all unrighteousness, covetous in heart, whose belly is their god, blind watchmen, and dumb dogs, who dishonor God, and destroy poor miserable souls. You have them in preference in your courts and give them the highest seats at your tables. They are honored with high names and great titles, and are greeted by every one as doctors, lords and masters. You present them with splendid dwellings, great rents and possessions, and say, They who serve the gospel must live by the gospel; although they do nothing but place soft pillows and cushions under you, and preach according to the itching of your ears. But the true, pious teachers and faithful servants of Christ, who sincerely seek your salvation and that of the whole world, who direct you to Christ, who rightly use his sacraments and ordinances, who desire to lead you and all men on the right way, and who walk unblamably, they must without mercy or christian modesty be persecuted by you, sentenced to [death by] fire and water, and must bear mockery and shame before all the world.

Josiah made a covenant with the Lord, and with all the elders, priests, prophets and common people, that they should serve Jehovah as long as they lived, &c. But you have made your covenant with anti-christ and with all your preachers, priests, monk, judges and rulers, that the perverted, broad way should be pursued, the doctrines and institutions of men should be taught, followed and observed, instead of the true service of God. To the people, doctrine, commands, Spirit, Supper, life and separation of Christ, you give no place, and whoever acts or speaks contrary to your abominations must lose his possessions or his life.

Josiah heard the word of the Lord and became contrite in heart; he rent his clothes and wept before Jehovah; he feared the coming wrath, because they and their forefathers had rejected the word of God. But you, my dear lords, are so hardened and blinded, so bound by your sins and lusts of the flesh through cursed unbelief; so enchanted by the false prophets that we cannot, in the least, move your impenitent, hardened hearts, neither by the threatening law of the Lord, nor by his fierce wrath, and terrible judgement; neither by the devouring flames of hell and eternal death, nor by the peaceful gospel of grace, neither by the precious blood of Christ, nor by the pious, unblameable life of all the saints, who with their simple yes and no are daily murdered before your eyes as innocent sheep, on account of their faith and piety. It is time that you awake, and take notice how you and we, with our forefathers; have so abundantly merited the righteous punishment and wrath of God. May the merciful Lord grant you eyes that you may see.

Josiah turned to Jehovah with his whole heart, soul and might, but you dare proudly disregard the God who has created you, deny the Lord who has purchased you, and turn yourselves to dumb idols, to wood, stone, gold and silver images, to water, bread and wine, to the unprofitable doctrines and commandments of men, yes, to open abominations and idolatry, not observing that

it stands written, "Idolaters shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone," Rev. 21:8.

Behold, dear sirs, the above is true; it is manifest by your pride, whoredom, carnal life, and by the ruins of burnt countries and cities, the great number of churches, cloisters, priests and monks, matins, vespers, and every other false worship.

Besides, when we, on account of the multitude of our sins, are visited with pestilence, famine, war, and other dangerous evils and plagues, your only remedies, to appease the wrath of God, and quench the burning fire of his anger, are idolatrous masses, processions, as they are called, dead bones, images, crucifixes and banners. They, the papists I mean, bear these strange abominations, and follow after them with uncovered heads, folded hands, and burning wax candles, &c. Therefore, you do not turn aside the fierce wrath, but augment it more and more, for Jehovah will not give his divine honor to works of man's choice nor to any creature, neither does he accept any such masses, processions, crosses, images and abominations, nor regard them in his mind, as the prophet said.

Beloved sirs, repent. The statute book of Christ is entirely lost to you. Christ and his truth, sacraments, Spirit and life, you have never known nor possessed in the least degree. You serve strange gods, you hear, follow and use the doctrine, sacraments, ordinances and commands of anti-christ; you lead an unclean, ungodly and carnal life. O, sirs, take warning! Your sins have arisen to heaven.

Although it is so little regarded by you, God grant it may be otherwise. Yet this book of Christ, by the grace of God, has been found again by some. The pure, unadulterated truth has come to light through the pure, unmingled gospel, and is daily read in your ears, and explained before your eyes with a godly, virtuous life, with an open confession, and above all, with much of the

property and blood of the saints; yet your hearts continue so stony and hard that they cannot be converted or moved, neither by grace nor wrath; neither by adversity nor prosperity, as we have said. Behold, thus has the blindness of Sodom, the darkness of Egypt, the hardening of Pharaoh through the righteous judgment of God, come upon our kings, princes, lords and rulers.

Dear sirs, awake! And make haste, the trumpet is sounded, prepare yourselves! Your mortal sickness and cankering, filthy wounds are shown to you. I counsel you to allow yourselves to be helped. You possess neither Christ nor his word. Your controversy is against the Lamb and his chosen. Your way is in darkness, and leads to the abyss of hell. The wrath of the Lord has gone forth over you and your land, for you live more carnally and evil than can be imagined or described.

O, my dear sirs! Reform, repent, so that you may stand before God; cleanse your hands and hearts before the Lord; change your pride into humility, and your mirth and joy into sorrow; rend your hardened hearts, and your garments. Hear and seek Christ, and not anti-christ; implicitly obey Christ's Spirit, doctrine, sacraments, commands and infallible example, and not the vain doctrines and commandments of men, for they corrupt and profit not.

Put away from among you, all offence, abominations and idolatry, masses, altars, infant baptism, the idolatrous bread, or supper (I mean such as is used by the world), images, confessions, the wanton sodomy and unchastity of the papistic priests and monks; destroy and root up all accursed heathen disgrace; such as brothels, every species of gambling, open houses of drunkenness, together with idolatrous temples, high places, groves, churches and cloisters, which were so numerous built contrary to the Scriptures by our forefathers, through blindness and ignorance.

We call on all poor, deceiving teachers and false sects, great and small, who are against the Spirit, ordinances, word and life of Christ, to repent sincerely and help us to resist, not by violence, tyranny or sword; as, alas! it is the custom with you, but by the Spirit of Christ, with doctrine, exhortation and similar virtuous services and mild means, so that they may turn from evil, and hear and follow Christ.

Permit all faithful messengers and servants of God to preach Christ, to use his sacraments and ordinances according to the Scriptures, lead a penitent and unblameable life, and gather unto Christ a glorious church that they may, through the Spirit and grace of God, according to the Scriptures, win and bring unto Christ an unspotted, pure virgin.

Again I say, reform! You have erred and mocked God too long, and worshipped anti-christ instead of Christ too long; walked too long in the perverse and broad way of death. Awaken! It is yet today; behold, the true book of the law; the saving, pure gospel of Christ which was hid for so many centuries by the abominations of anti-christ is found.

Hear and read attentively, believe and observe it faithfully; it is the word of Jehovah God, which Jesus Christ, the first and only begotten Son of the Almighty Father, brought from heaven and taught to us. Bow to his righteous sceptre, fear, love, serve, honor and follow him with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your powers, as did the pious Josiah. For Jehovah our God is Lord of lords, and God of gods, a mighty and a terrible God, who does not regard person's rank, nor takes a reward.

Yes, beloved lords, Can you thus convert yourselves with all your hearts? Can you change your hearts and humble yourselves before God? Can you deny yourselves, seek and follow Christ and his righteousness? Will you renounce the world and flesh with all its lusts, as you have heard? Then you will become true,

spiritual kings, and priests; then you will possess your souls in peace, gain the victory and conquest over all the deadly enemies of your souls; you will live and die in grace. Then you may in truth, without any hypocrisy, be called christian kings and believing princes. The testimony of Peter to all christians, I say to *all* christians, is true, “You are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a peculiar people,” 1 Pet. 2:9.

But if you refuse this and remain what you are now, preferring perishing, temporal pleasures, joys and glory, to the imperishable, eternal joy and glory; I desire then that you would reflect upon what Sirach says, “Why are earth and ashes proud? He that is today a king, tomorrow shall die,” Sir. 10:9. Yes, what are they all, who are of Adam, but dust and ashes, a passing wind, a vapor, poor, miserable, mortal flesh, food for worms, yes men, and not God. Sirs, take warning, awake and reform yourselves! Our God is the Lord who will judge you. Once more, take warning.

Behold, my kind reader, here you have before you a few examples of true faith, as Noah and Abraham, before the giving of the law,* and Moses, Joshua, Caleb and Josiah, under the law, cited from Scripture, from whom you may learn how simple and plain, unfeigned, open and obedient, yes, how full of all kind of virtues and fruits a true faith has been from the beginning, as may be seen in Abel, Enoch, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Jephthah, Baruch, Gideon, Sampson, Rahab, Samuel, David, Ezekiel, Elijah, Helias and others. Now I will, by the grace of God, present you with a

* [CHCoG: Please understand that the heart of God’s Instructions are timeless. Abel knew to sacrifice a first-born lamb for Passover, Noah knew which were the clean and unclean animals, Abraham “listened to My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My instructions” Gen 26:5, Israel kept the seventh-day Sabbath on their way to Mt. Sinai. Exo 16:23-29. If there was no law, there would have been no sin. Rom 5:13.]

few examples from the New Testament, by which you may very clearly learn what an indescribable great power, fruit, spirit, life and energy, true, evangelical, christian faith in its real nature always includes. So that you will not, through a false notion, conform to this ignorant, unbelieving world, who boast and pretend that their fruitless, dead opinions and historical knowledge of Christ, is a sincere, evangelical faith.

FAITH OF THE CENTURION OF CAPERNAUM.

At the time when the Lord Jesus entered Capernaum, the servant of a centurion lay sick, whom he loved much. When he heard that Jesus was there, he had the consent of some of the elders of the Jews, and sent them with a request to Jesus that he would come to him and restore his sick servant, and Jesus went with them. And not being far from the house of the centurion, he sent some of his friends to him, who said, Lord, do not trouble yourself; for I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof (here notice his humility), and I did not think myself worthy personally to call and see you, but speak the word, and my child shall be healed. He acknowledged that all must bow to Christ and his word, and said, I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say unto one, Go, and he goes; and to another come, and he comes; and to my servant, do this, and he does it. As if he would say to Christ, Behold, Lord, I am but a man, and have to serve the councils at Rome, nevertheless, I have so much power over my servants that they must obey what I command them; but you, Lord, are such a Lord that all the mighty

have to bow to you, all that is in heaven above and on earth beneath must yield to you. If you but command sickness and death, they will have to obey you, and leave my child. And again, if you command health and life, they will have to return again. Therefore, it is not necessary that you should come into the house of your unworthy servant; Lord, only speak the word, and my child will again be restored. When Jesus heard these words, he was quite astonished, and said to the people that followed, Truly, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel, Matt. 8:5-13.

Behold, faithful reader, here you have the centurion as a living example, by which you may learn how a true christian faith humbles itself before God, and does not doubt his power, and how kindly and graciously he deals with his poor servants, be they male or female. The centurion was moved with compassion towards his poor servant, and had great concern for him, sparing no pains to trouble the elders of the Jews to send to Christ and entreat him to come and heal his sick servant. This is to the disgrace and shame of all false christians, and especially to many rich, some of whom are more severe on the poor servants and hirelings, and have less feeling for them, than they (with your leave) have for their domestic animals; for as soon as the servants sicken, so that they cannot perform all manner of drudgery, they are unmercifully turned out of doors, and sent to this or that asylum, or to their parents and friends, who sometimes, scarcely have a mouthful of bread or a bed in their houses. Others again have to get a substitute in their place, while sick, and pay him out of their own earned pittance; and if they in health even do fulfil their engagements with hard and severe labor, still, some, of these unmerciful, blood-thirsty tyrants mistreat these innocent ones, who have to watch when they sleep, labor when they rest, run when they command, stand when they sit, in such a manner, as to take the greater portion of their earnings, or scandalize them;

now, say they, a spoon is lost; anon a dish is broken; in short, they always speak evil of them and can never be pleased. Yes, some of them would feed them upon water or straw, and pay them with the whip and chaff, even as they do their laboring oxen and horses, if they were not afraid and ashamed of men, for they would not be ashamed before God, alas, whom they do not know. O, woe, unto such heathenish tyranny and unmerciful cruelty!

The centurion calls his servant *his child*, by which he manifests his paternal love and humility towards his poor servant: Though he was lord, and held in high honor, nevertheless, he did not exalt himself above his poor servant, for he well knew that one God created both of them, that they were born of one seed, and had one origin. But what conduct such heathen christians manifest towards their oppressed servants, their actions, alas, openly show!

How lamentably some of the poor children are despised by some of them. How many disgraceful words have some of them to hear, and how many sore stripes to endure. Their scolding and rash words continue from morning till night; some of them make their girls into prostitutes; yes, what shall I say more. These poor children are regarded by them, and especially by the rich, as the poor, despised donkey, by the magnificent, fat horse, and the filthy pebbles by the beautiful pearls. Ah! reader, it is all much worse than I can describe; it is indeed time that they would look into these things, and reflect more deeply upon love.

The centurion humbled himself before the Lord with all his heart, esteeming himself not worthy that Christ should come under his roof. But our haughty, proud heathens strut about with puffed up hearts and extended necks, high-minded, idle, and daring; one boasts of his family, another of his wealth, a third of his wisdom, a fourth of his skill and beauty, &c. But the innocent and meek Christ says, 'Learn from me; for I am meek and lowly

in heart,' and they falsely boast that they have his name, word, death and blood, yet they know it not.

The centurion believed that Christ was mighty and able, by his word, to do all that he desired; but this miserably benighted people esteem it not more than they do Lucian and Æsopian fables. Hence it is that they lead such an impenitent, carnal life, and use such idolatrous sacraments and false worship, and have departed so far from the true King's highway. Still, they could be the true, apostolic, and believing church of Christ; but even as Christ testified to the centurion that he had not found such faith in Israel; so we might, on the other hand, testify and say of this people that such a heedless, cruel, haughty, proud, and unmerciful unbelief is unknown among the heathen, and is not to be found with them, who never heard of the word of Christ. Behold, thus does the righteous Lord let those err and fall into blindness of heart, who so little regard his most holy word, who hate and thrust his fatherly grace, goodness, Spirit, knowledge and faith from them.

But it is not so with you, my most beloved. Take this sincere, pious centurion as an example; imitate him in his faith, love, humility and virtues, and be as solicitous for your servants as he was for his servants; teach, admonish and reprove them with a paternal spirit, as often as they err. Set them an unblameable example, in all righteousness and piety; have compassion with their severe labor; comfort them in their poverty; comfort them and grieve them not; supply them with their necessary wants, food and their earned hire, and do not curtail them. Protect them in all honorable things; do not rebuke them without cause, lest they become timid; do not drive them away from you, but let them unmolestedly serve out their time as agreed, lest the name of the Lord be blasphemed. Be at all times friendly towards them, and if they are weak and sick, assist and minister unto them; get others to serve in their place, without detriment to

them, till the Lord takes them hence, or restores them to health. Sympathize with them, and be merciful; assist them in all their needs; do not lift your hearts above them, nor despise them, for they are your brethren according to the flesh. In short, be so minded in love towards them as Christ Jesus is towards us. At all times remember that we also have a Lord in heaven, before whose judgment seat we must all appear and render on account of all our works.

But if they are wanton and obstinate, and will not hear your word and command, nor follow your admonition and counsel; would rule and not serve; waste their time and do not labor industriously; are unfaithful, rebellious and troublesome; roguishly ruin your family and children, &c.; then arrange with them to bring the matter, touching their wages, before two or three witnesses, so that the blame may not rest upon you, and the word of the Lord is not blasphemed. In such a case then, let them be dismissed, that your good conscience is not disturbed on their account, and your house and children do not become depraved. Yes, my brethren, you should do to your poor hirelings, even as you desire that it should be done to you, being called with them. This the law and the prophets teach.

FAITH OF ZACCHEUS, THE TAX COLLECTOR.

Luke says that “Jesus entered and passed through Jericho; and behold, there was a man, named Zaccheus, who was the chief among the tax collectors, and he was rich; and he sought to see Jesus, who he was, and could not for the crowd, because he was

of little stature; so he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree (or as some say, into a wild fig tree), to see him; for he was to pass that way; and when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said to him, ‘Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at your house,’ and he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully, and said unto the Lord, ‘Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I will restore him four fold; and Jesus said unto him, ‘This day has salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he is also a son of Abraham,’” Luke 19:1-9.

Paul says, For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our instruction; and though we know Zaccheus’ faith, fruit, mercy, love and true conversion, it avails us nothing, if we do not practice and come up to his faith, with its contrite, pious fruits. I therefore entreat all my readers who live openly in sin; all the wealthy, avaricious, unrighteous merchants and grocers, all financiers and bankers, all who love money; judges, lawyers, advocates, preachers, priests and monks, all drunken landlords, together with all those who deal in unlawful gain; I entreat all by the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that they would well consider, with an understanding heart, this history and narrative touching Zaccheus, in order that they may learn from it that they do not yet possess the right, true faith and that christianity which avails with God; and that they have nothing but a fruitless, vain boasting of Christ and of faith.

Zaccheus was chief of the tax collectors, and he received Christ joyfully in his house and heart. He believed and was renewed; he reformed his life, and departed from his former evil ways. That our open transgressors do not yet reform their old, ungodly lives, and that they do not desire Christ and his faith, however much they may boast, is as clear as the light of day.

Zaccheus was rich, and one half of his wealth he gave to the poor. But our rich people seek more and more, how they may increase their money and possessions, build their houses splendidly, and add farm to farm. They do not defend the cause of the poor and needy; are unmerciful, proud, avaricious and wanton; do not remember what is written concerning them, "Go now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you; your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered, and the rest of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as if it were fire," James 5:1-3. Neither do you reflect on what David says, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like the green bay tree; yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: Yes, I sought him, but he could not be found," Psm. 37:35,36. Ah! What a hard saying which the Lord uttered, "Woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation," Luke 6:24, and "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," Matt. 19:24.

Zaccheus said to the Lord, "If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I will restore to him four fold," but our miserably avaricious, never cease from defrauding their neighbor. For the whole broad world, both man and woman; are so greedy after unlawful, shameful gain that it cannot be imagined nor related.

Lords and princes daily invent new devices and practices that they may increase their dominions, interests, tolls and rents. They tag, shave, grasp and rob without any mercy or bounds; they draw the very marrow from the bones of the poor, and show by their actions that they are companions of those of whom it is written, "Your princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves," Isa. 1:23. O, that he knew Christ, would repent, cease to do evil, and would reflect more on love.

Judges, lawyers and advocates also seek all artifice to get unlawful gain; with few exceptions they all serve for gifts and money, for if they did not expect profit or gain, I am persuaded that burgomasters and judges would be few in the whole empire. For the sake of gain, they sit and judge, and they often encourage causes for the sake of a fee. Some of them pervert law and right for the sake of a gift, and do not reflect on what Jehoshaphat said to the judges, "Take heed what you do; for you judge not for man, but for Jehovah, who is with you in the judgment; therefore, now let the fear of Jehovah be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts," 2 Chr. 19:6,7.

Captains, knights, servants and similar bloody men, are ready to serve for the sake of gain, and swear with uplifted fingers that they will destroy cities and countries, take citizens and inhabitants, kill them and take their possessions from them, although they never harmed them, nor gave them any provocation. O, God! What execrated, ungodly abominations and traffic. And still it must be said that they protect the country and people, and that they assist in administering justice!

Priests, monks and preachers are equally bent upon unlawful gain. They are not shocked to make God's only and first begotten Son, his eternal, Almighty Word and Wisdom, the one and only everlasting foundation of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, with his holy apostles, to be open, false witnesses, heretics, and deceivers; for Christ says, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," Mark 16:16. But they say, He that believes and is baptized is a heretic, and shall be damned. Christ says, "But if you will enter into life, keep the commandments," Matt. 19:17. But they say, None can keep God's commandments.

Paul says, If you live according to the flesh you shall die; Rom. 8:13. Again, the unrighteous, drunkards, the avaricious, the haughty, the unchaste and similar, shall not inherit the kingdom of

God. 1 Cor. 6:9,10. But they say, We are poor sinners; who can always live as the Scriptures teach? Christ died for sinners, and similar consolations, by which they deny Christ and his word, and thus encourage the whole world, rich and poor, small and great, in their hardened and wicked life, that there are, alas, few who truly repent, or seek after God. They preach what the ignorant blind world desires, that they may quietly enjoy the reward of Balaam (their cloisters and stipends, I mean), that they may lead an epicurian life without care; for they, poor creatures, do not know that they are those of whom it is written, "Woe unto them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the rebellion of Korah," Jude 1:11, accursed people, 2 Pet. 2. O, my God, that they would beware!

The unrighteous merchants and grocers (I say the *unrighteous*, for I do not mean those who are righteous and pious), together with all those who deal avariciously and penuriously, are so bent upon accursed gain that they exclude God from their hearts. They censure what they should properly praise, and praise what they should censure; they lie and swear; use many vain words; adulterate their merchandise to cheat the people, and to take what is not their own; they sell, lend and take surety from the needy at exorbitant gain and usury, never seriously reflecting nor taking to heart that it stands written, "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter," 1 Thes. 4:6.

I would that they might more seriously lay to heart the doctrine of Sirach, "A merchant shall hardly keep himself from doing wrong; and a huckster shall not be freed from sin; many have sinned for a small matter, and he that seeks for abundance will turn his eyes away; as a nail sticks fast between the joinings of the stones, so does sin stick close between buying and selling.

Unless a man hold himself diligently in the fear of the Lord, his house shall soon be overthrown,” Eccl. 26:29; 27:1-3.

This I write as a warning to the god-fearing merchants and grocers, so that they will not imitate the ungodly, lest they be overcome by avarice, but be circumspect in dealing and beware of dangers.

Some are made thieves, some murderers, others jugglers, necromancers, some are whore-mongers, others gamblers, others are betrayers, others become executioners and tormentors, and also some persecutors and slayers of the pious, &c., and all this for the sake of accursed gain, by which they openly testify (because they walk in such a way and are so bent upon unlawful gain), that they are of the devil and not of God, that they do not have the faith and word of Christ, but in every respect are inimical and opposed to this.

Yes, kind reader, the whole world is so contaminated and involved in this accursed avarice, fraud, false practices and unbecoming gain, in this false traffic and merchandise, with this finance, usury, and self-interest that I scarcely know how it could be worse; yet they are still the priest’s and preacher’s christians, and are said to earn their bread honestly, and to do justice to all.

Ah! My reader, how different all this is from the faith, disposition and converted life of Zaccheus. For if they had the mind, faith and power of Zaccheus, which we must have, if we would ever be saved, it is my opinion that few lords and princes would continue in their violence and wanton lives; few riders (knights) and servants [would continue] in their ungodly service and deeds of blood; few judges, lawyers and advocates [would continue] in their courts and offices; few rich persons [would continue] in the unlawful use of their riches; few merchants and grocers [would continue] in their usurious and dangerous trade; and few preachers, priests and monks would continue in their

incomes, stipends and cloisters. There would soon be a different state of things; because it cannot be, but that the righteous live by faith. Yes, they would, with joyful heart, say with Zaccheus, The poor we willingly serve with our goods, and if we have defrauded any one, we will gladly satisfy him.

All who, like Zaccheus, rightly receive Jesus Christ in the house of their consciences; rightly receive the word of Christ as he did, and be also truly born through the word; are rightly influenced by the Spirit of Christ; and are of the same mind with him, it is impossible that they could defraud any one even of a farthing; for we see that the disposition and usage of all true believers is to injure none on earth; but, as much as in them is, to assist all; to defraud none, but to do justice to all. As Paul says, "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good; that he may have to give to him that needs," Eph. 4:28.

But why say much? For my part I do not know where to find the mighty and the rich; in what courts we can find judges, lawyers and advocates; and in what cities and countries, merchants and grocers; or what cloisters and churches we can look for preachers, priests and monks, who rightly believe and follow Christ; who, being regenerated, penitent and pious, desist from all improper practices, fraud, craftiness, robbery, and unlawful gain, and say with Zaccheus, Those whom we have defrauded we will repay fourfold. The prophet complains that every one, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to covetousness, Jer. 8:10.

Since then they are determined upon accursed, abominable avarice, and unlawful gain, and deal so rudely and plainly contrary to love, and none any where repent, hence, it is evident that they are not in the church of Christ, for the church of Christ is called his body and bride in the Scripture. If the church be his body, she must then be flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone;

and if she be his bride, she must be of his generation: be righteous, holy, meek, chaste, true, lovely, merciful; yes, hear and be obedient to his voice. Therefore, Christ cannot admit any other members into his church except those who are of one heart, spirit and soul with him, partakers of his Spirit; who are dead to all unrighteousness, bury the old evil life of sin, walk by faith, unblamably in love, receive the truth joyfully, and willingly serve their neighbor, as did this believing, regenerated and renewed Zaccheus.

He desired to see Christ, and received him with joy; he believed his word, and abandoned his ungodly life; he ministered to the poor, and reconciled those whom he had defrauded. In short, he proved himself to be a pious, sincere, regenerated child of God in all his actions; therefore he heard the peaceable, joyful word of divine grace, "This day has salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham," Luke 19:9.

Behold, worthy reader, those who believe, are penitent and renewed as Zaccheus was, and walk in love, belong to the church and body of the Lord, as Christ himself says, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." They are the living stones of the Lord's temple, and the true citizens of Jerusalem; in which neither sorcerers, nor whoremongers, nor murderers, nor idolaters, nor whosoever loves and makes a lie, have part. Yes, as long as Zaccheus was such a one, he was without; for such, says Paul, have neither lot nor part in the kingdom of God and of Christ.

But as soon as he believed the word of the Lord, through faith he repented and turned himself to love; from that hour he was entitled to citizenship with Christ himself; the path of life was opened to him, peace declared, salvation bestowed, and he was acknowledged and received as a joint heir of grace, and a child of God, as the Lord says, This day has salvation come to this house, &c. For as Christ is holy, so must also his children, brethren,

members, church and bride be holy; for it is written, Be holy, for I am holy, Lev. 11:45, 19:2 & 20:7, 1 Pet. 1:16.

THE MURDERER'S FAITH.

The evangelists teach that there were two malefactors crucified with Christ; the one on the right hand, and the other on the left. "Then one of the evil-doers who was impaled with Him blasphemed Him and he said, "If you are the Messiah, save yourself and also save us." But his companion rebuked him, and he said to him, "Are you not also afraid of God, for you are also condemned with Him? And we justly, because we are deserving to be repaid according to what we have done; but this One, nothing bad was done by Him." Then he said to Jeshua, "My Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." Jeshua said to him, "Truly, I say to you, that day you will be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:39-43.

Good reader, observe particularly what I write. When we critically view the confession of this evil doer, we are astonished at the great power, the good nature, the abundance of fruit, spiritual vision, energetic love and the free confession of his faith. It is evident that he had been an abandoned, ungodly reprobate, who neither knew nor feared God, but maliciously committed all manner of sins, robbed his neighbor of his goods and shed his blood. Matthew and Mark call him a murderer, and Luke calls him a malefactor. This appears to be the case, as he testifies himself that he had to die for crimes which he had committed.

Notwithstanding all this, as soon as this malefactor, extended on the cross between Jerusalem and Mount Calvary, heard in his

last distress, the word of God from the mouth of the Lord, it wrought in him so powerfully that his heart within him was touched and changed, which led him to seek, from that moment, the salvation of his fellowmen and rebuked his reviling companion, saying, Are you not afraid of God? He confessed his own sins and his maliciousness, saying, We are receiving according to our merits and works; and he acknowledged the condemned Jesus (who was cursed to die on the cross as one of the most abandoned malefactors by the chief priests, pharisees and scribes, and denied by the people and condemned to death), to be innocent, righteous, pure and without sin, saying, This one has done no evil. Besides this, he also sought grace and mercy from God's Son, although it appeared to human understanding that he was denied all mercy, and every favor both by God and man. For he was at this time the most rejected and despised of all men, as the prophet laments, Isa. 53:6, and the thief applied to none other, in heaven or upon earth, than to this poor, innocent, calumniated, banished and crucified Jesus; in full confidence drawing near to him, as the throne of divine grace, that he might obtain the remission of his sins, saying, "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

I think this may justly be called a true christian faith; and a truly worthy fruit of penitence and repentance; and it was nothing else to the Lord, but a refreshing of his thirsty soul, as a mollifying of his deep wounds, as a consolation of his sore distress, and as a comfort in his painful sufferings and cruel death. And he, in the same hour, heard the consoling, joyful word of divine grace and eternal peace from Jesus, namely, Do not fear, all your sins which you committed in your ignorance are covered, they shall never again be remembered, either by me or my Father. I pledge my innocent blood as security; therefore, be of good cheer, what you desire, you have already obtained: "I say to you that you shall be with me in Paradise."

Behold my reader, here you have, in the malefactor mentioned, a fair example of a sincere, christian faith, with its properties, disposition, nature, power and fruits. With this same murderer, many vain despisers comfort and flatter themselves in their sinful and impenitent lives, think and say to themselves, God is merciful; he knows that we are the children of Adam, if we do not live as the Scriptures teach, and as they would have us live, yet we hope, by the grace of God to be saved, as was this murderer. These poor creatures do not know that the thief will be a sore condemnation to them; because they hear the word of the Lord so often, and do not believe it, neither are they obedient to this. Ah reader! Do not thus mock God; I fear many will fail in their hopes in this matter.

Again, I say that all wilful despisers, who thus say and think in their hearts must be eternally convicted by this thief, and shall stand confounded, for as soon as he heard the gospel of grace, he received it in a pure conscience, through faith, and became penitent, regenerated and pious. And these hear it from year to year, see daily so many fair fruits, and that it is so gloriously testified by possessions and blood; nevertheless, they remain unbelievers and are hardened in sin; for they reject the inviting grace, they resist the operating Spirit, they condemn the preached word; they trample under foot the proffered gift, and say, where are the Scriptures by which we may comfort such unreasonable, shameful scorners, or promise and proclaim to them the grace and peace of the Lord?

I fear they are the sterile, unfruitful earth of which Paul speaks, which drinks in the rain of the holy, divine word that comes often upon it, and nevertheless, bears only thorns and thistles; are rejected and near unto cursing, which are to be burned. They are those of whom Solomon laments and says, "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? And the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge.

Because I have called and you refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but you have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes and when distress and anguish comes upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer," Prov. 1:22-28. But because they do not look for light, he will turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

The murderer believed as soon as he heard. O! That they would do so; and think upon what Paul said, "Today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the provocation," Heb. 3:15.

The murderer heard *only once and believed*, and these hear it so often, and yet they do not believe. He heard and was changed; but these hear and continue the same, and harden their hearts yet more and more.

He reproved his reviling companion, and admonished him that he should fear God; but these blaspheme and revile all the faithful who do so; and love those who hate the truth. He unreservedly confessed his sins and wickedness, without fear; but these, no matter however avaricious, drunken, proud, unchaste, unclean, envious and idolatrous they are, do not confess their transgressions and sins, and when called to repent and reform, they say, Yes, what have we done?

He acknowledged that Christ's kingdom was not earthly, for he said, *When you come into your kingdom*; but these have all their pleasures in gold and silver, in eating and drinking, in splendor and wantonness, and in the perishable, visible riches of the world; they do not regard the invisible, eternal riches, which Christ out of grace, has bestowed upon all his believers, and merited them by the shedding of his precious blood.

He confessed the poor, condemned, crucified Jesus before all the rulers, priests, Pharisees and before the people, and acknowledged him as his Savior and Lord; but these, alas! deny his Almighty Majesty, his heavenly origin and glory, and do not regard his judgment, Spirit, word, ordinances, commands, sacraments and promises, although he has seated himself as a triumphant and conquering prince, at the right hand of the Father, and has received all power, both in heaven and upon earth, in the eternal glory of the Father.

He sought mercy, favor and the forgiveness of his sins from Christ; but these seek it from their preachers, priests and monks through masses, confessions, absolution, bread and wine, holy water and similar superstitions and abominations.

Because he believed in Christ, he heard the pleasing words, *You shall be with me in Paradise*; but because they do not believe in Christ, these shall hear the dreadful, intolerable and awful sentence, *Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire*. Their faith was unlike his, as will also be their reward. Let all mockers take this to heart.

And thus, take notice: finally this penitent sinner will rise up against those who have comforted themselves with him in their sins, and incriminate and condemn them before the face of his Majesty. For they, having so often heard the sweet melody of the divine word, and were never grateful, nor ever learned or believed it with open and renewed hearts; while the murderer heard it but once, and immediately believed. Ah! Dear children, beware! Seek Christ while he may be found, and call on him while he is yet near, lest his anger go forth, and the fire of his fierce wrath consume you.

Do you think, O, perverted scorners, that you can receive or reject, faith, repentance, sorrow for sin, and the grace of God, at your pleasure? O, no! Holy Paul says, "Even as they did not like

to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind," Rom. 1:28. That sentence shall be passed upon all proud scorers. Children beware!

Notice this parable. There is a very rich potentate, emperor or king, whom I, through great ignorance, hated all my days. He had compassion upon me, and because I am such a poor man, he, through his faithful servants, tendered me not only his favor and friendship, but also a great sum of gold, many precious stones and gems, and all this out of love and compassion. But I am so ungrateful that I will not only not give meat and drink to the faithful servants of this kind prince, who loves me dearly, for these great favors; but I turn them out of doors with ignominy and disgrace, throw mud and stones at them, put them into prison and bonds, deprive them of property and life, take the proffered gifts, place them in a closet, and trample the servants under foot, &c. I inform the prince that I do not now desire his presents, but if he will, in the course of one or ten years offer them again, then I will perhaps, make up my mind and receive them and tender my thanks for the favors. Now, I will allow you all to judge, whether it would be right that such a prince should again offer his favor, since I treated him and his servants so perfidiously? Or whether he should not much more turn his favor into displeasure, and his love into wrath toward me, for my presumptuous tyranny, haughty rejection of his favors, and severely punish me? I think, you would award me his punishment and not his grace.

Thus it is with you, O, you scorers! The merciful Lord, whose riches and grace are immense, has graciously pitied us in these abominable last days, and had compassion on our great blindness and deadly poverty, although we hated his holy will from our infancy. Through his faithful servants, he freely offered us his beloved Son with his holy word, Spirit, merits, ordinances and example, tendered us his grace, peace and eternal life, kingdom, inheritance, joy and glory, together with the remission

of our sins; he dug about us and fostered us, all barren trees, for many years. He calls and teaches daily through his chosen, who willingly sacrifice possession and life as a testimony; he puts at variance the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the members of the family against one another, and friend against friend, &c. Some he suffers to be driven about into strange countries, in tribulation, in sorrow, in misery, in fear, in want, in vexation, in deserts, in mountains, in dens and in caves of the earth. He gives signs in the sun, moon, and the stars in heaven; in earthquakes, war, pestilence, new diseases, famine, and unheard of wonders upon the earth. As a hen gathers her chickens, he would gather us under the wings of his love; and as a faithful shepherd of his sheep, he would bring us to the right fold of his grace; bring us into the chamber of his covenant, and kiss us with the lips of his peace; wash us from all our uncleanness, and make us his bride; redeem us from the dominion of hell and death, and lead us into the kingdom of heaven, and of eternal life. In short, he would release us from the power of darkness and the devil, and receive us and make us holy, as his chosen children and heirs.

But, alas, in relation to you, it is altogether vain; as already said, his proffered grace and word you reject; you persecute and kill his faithful servants and ministers; you defame and blaspheme the unblameable, pious life, together with the confession of the saints; you scoff at his great signs, wonders and reproofs, and your faces are like those of the lecherous, and your hearts as hard as diamonds. You are neither ashamed, nor will you be converted; you say with perverted scorners, Depart from us, for we do not desire the knowledge of your ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit should we have, if we pray to him? Job 21:14,15.

Since you are so ungrateful to your God, yes, are altogether vain and insulting towards him who has shown to us, from the beginning, such great mercy that you entirely reject and disregard his paternal admonitions, chastisings, doctrines, commands, obedience to his holy word, and the innocent blood of his saints, together with all his great powers and miracles. Yes, you consider them as mere deception and heresy; you do not regard the day of grace; you inconsiderately trample under foot Christ and his holy Spirit, gospel, regenerations, faith, sacraments, death and blood, together with all his other spiritual riches and heavenly gifts. You do not fear, seek, love, honor thank nor serve the Almighty, immortal, and only God; and still hope that you will be saved with the murderer. I tell and warn you in sincere love, while it is yet today, that your hopes will not be realized, for when you think to find him, he will then hide himself from you; he will turn his fierce countenance upon you, as the Scriptures say, "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me," Prov. 1:28.

I therefore entreat and exhort my readers in general; to hear while you have ears, and see while you have eyes; understand while you have hearts; awaken and watch while you have time and space, lest your ears, eyes, hearts, and opportunities be taken from you, and you become deaf, blind, impenitent, hardened and perverted.

Friends, beware! Now it is today, yesterday is past; tomorrow is not promised us. Short is the time; behold, the judge is at the door, therefore do not delay to turn unto the Lord, and do not defer it from day to day; for his wrath will soon overtake you. Late repentance, says Augustine, is seldom true; but if true, it never is too late. Repent while you enjoy health, says he, that you may be certain.

Therefore, do as the thief or murderer did, for as soon as he heard, he believed.

You also: thus hear, and thus believe, for the eyes of the Lord are upon the faithful. The Savior says those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled; those who seek, shall find; those who ask, shall receive; those who knock, to them it shall be opened. But if you refuse, when he seeks to bestow his grace upon you, he will also refuse when you seek him, and would long to obtain his grace. "They that despise me," says Jehovah, "shall be lightly esteemed," 1 Sam. 2:30.

Therefore, seek while it is day, that you may find; ask, that you may receive; hear, that you may believe; believe, that you may do; and do, that you may live; for, from hearing, comes faith; out of faith, doctrine; on obedience, the fulfilment of the promise depends.

For this reason all things are imputed to faith in the Scriptures; such as true repentance, regeneration, sanctification of the heart; the righteousness which avails before God; the blessing of salvation and everlasting life; for faith is the source and cause of all good, as is fully related.

Seeing, then, that this is the true and proper ground of the Scriptures, as we have briefly explained, you will then have to confess that all wilful scorners are put to shame in their doings by the thief, and that he will be their accuser in the day of the Lord, as the Lord says of the Ninevites, and of the Queen of the South.

All who hear and believe the word of Christ, and are turned by the power of faith with all their hearts to Christ, acknowledge Christ openly by an unblameable, pious life before all the world, and confidently seek his grace and mercy, &c. To them he is a glorious comforter, a precious balm and liniment in their troubled and wounded consciences, by which they may see and know God's unbounded favor, mercy and love towards all truly penitent sinners, even if they have sinned ever so long and heinously. They by faith may satisfy their souls with him, and not doubt the

grace of God on account of their sinful lives in which they formerly walked; for the Lord did not withhold his grace, nor did he say, No, thief, your sins are too great and numerous, and you also have sinned too long. But as soon as he saw his new heart, and heard him confessing, he bestowed his grace upon the poor, distressed sinner, and forgave him all his sins, and said, *You shall be with me in Paradise; for he that believes in me has eternal life.* The prophet also says, If the wicked turns from his unrighteousness and does righteously, I will not remember his unrighteousness which he did. Eze 18:27,26, Isa 43:25.

FAITH OF THE SINFUL WOMAN.

Luke says, “Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil.” Luke 7:36-38.

Here we again learn, in the case of this sinner, what kind of a heart, disposition, fruit and life a sincere, true Christian faith produces. She was possessed by seven devils (if she was the woman called Mary Magdalene, whom the evangelists mention), and as it appears, lived according to the inclinations of her flesh, for she is called a sinner in the Scriptures, so long as the Lord had not called her out of darkness into light, from lies unto truth. As soon as she heard his word, she with eagerness received it in a

sincere and renewed heart, by which she, who was a great sinner, became a penitent and pious woman. Her unrighteous, carnal heart was so warmed and touched that her eyes streamed with tears, and she wet the feet of the Savior with them. She used her hair as a towel to wipe his feet; her avarice was quelled; she anointed his head and feet with precious ointment, which might have been sold for three hundred denarius; her proud heart was humbled; she did not seek the highest seat at the table, but she sat mournfully at the feet of the Lord, and heard his blessed word.

When the Pharisee saw this, he murmured; Christ said to him, “Simon, do you see this woman? I entered into your house, you gave me no water for my feet; but she has washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. You gave me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil; but this woman has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I say unto you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven the same loves little. And he said unto her, Your sins are forgiven; your faith has saved you; go in peace,” Luke 7:44-48, 50.

Beloved reader, take notice that all the proud, haughty, avaricious, carnal and adulterous people who call themselves Christians, but who are by no means such, testify by their disposition, heart, mind and walk that they hate and are inimical to Christ, are shamed and reproved by this regenerated, penitent sinner in all their actions; for through her faith she changed her proud, haughty and obdurate heart into a humble, contrite and broken one.

They say that they believe, and yet there are no limits nor bounds to their accursed wantonness, foolish pomp, show of silks, velvet, costly clothes, gold rings, chains, silver belts, pins, buttons, curiously adorned shirts, handkerchiefs, collars, veils, aprons, velvet shoes, slippers and similar foolish finery; never

regarding that the enlightened apostles, Peter and Paul have, in plain and express words, forbidden this to all christian women. If this is forbidden to women, how much more then should men abstain from it, who are the leaders and heads of their women. Notwithstanding all this, they still want to be called the christian church.

Every one makes an ostentatious display; yes, sometimes it goes beyond his ability to pay. One is desirous to excel another in foppery, or at least to be equal with him. And this does not reflect what is written, "Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he that does the will of God abides for ever," 1 John 2:15-17.

Again, I say, this sinful woman believed, and from that moment she was freed from her disgraceful sins, for the unclean devils were cast out, as you have heard. But what abominable, disgraceful unchastity, adultery and fornication is practiced among many men and women who boast that they believe, in many cities and countries, is best known to him before whose eyes all things are open; and, alas, it is not wholly concealed before men. It is manifest that the world is full of lasciviousness, adulterers, fornicators, sodomites, buggerers, bastards and illegitimate children, and, alas, it has come so far that they live at peace and liberty, notwithstanding that God commanded through Moses that both the adulterer and adulteress should die, Deu. 22:22; and that there should be neither whores nor whore-mongers in Israel. The illegitimate children, even to the tenth generation, were not to be admitted into the congregation of the Lord. And further, It was the express command and ordinance of God that if any one in Israel had intercourse with a virgin, who

was not betrothed or engaged, he was compelled to marry her, if her father consented, and was not to put her away all his days, because he had humbled her, Exo. 22:16.

Ah! Reader, reflect upon what the last command contains. They all boast, however lascivious they are, that they are spiritual Israelites, that they have the truth, and are baptized in the name of Christ, and yet they are not ashamed to reduce their poor, weak sisters, who are comprised with them in the same faith, baptism, holy Supper and worship, to poor, deluded and degraded strumpets, against all Scripture and christian love; although God's own word, and the quoted command tell them, that if they have lain with them, they must marry them and never forsake them. If they would more seriously reflect upon these things, many a disgraced one would be saved of her shame, whereas now, many a child is so unmercifully disgraced and many a girl and virgin bereaved of her honor and virtue.

I write you the truth in Christ, you may believe it if you will. If you are a christian, or would be one, and have seduced even one poor child with your subtle attempts and pretences, and if you would not lose your soul, you will have to marry her and not forsake her, nor cast her from you; for you have humbled her, as heard. Behold, this is the Lord's own word and law. All, therefore, who knowingly despise this law of God, and reject the disgraced and marry another, will have to confess before God that the *first one* is his wife, and not the *last one*. O, you violators of female chastity, reflect upon these things and learn wisdom.

If you would say that this command has reference only to Israel and not to the christian, I would then ask you in the first place, whether you consider yourself to be a christian or not? If you say *no*, then do all you can, and look for the judgment threatened to all who are out of Christ. But if you say *yes*, then the matter is already decided, that she must be your wife. For a christian must not live with a sister in such a manner as to make

her a prostitute. O, no! The Scriptures teach that christians are members of Christ, and not whores and profligates. I hope this blunt language will be understood.

In the second place I ask, Which of the two people should be the more holy and virtuous, the literal or the spiritual? If you say the literal, then you have exalted Moses with his people and service above Christ, which thing is evidently opposed to all Scripture. But if you say the spiritual, then the matter is again decided that she must be your wife. The literal must not make his sister to be a prostitute, much less the spiritual, which is the Lord's own body, brother, sister, generation and bride.

In the third place, I ask, Whether the command, You shall love your neighbor as yourself, is not given to the christians as well as to Israel? If you say *no* you have denied the whole New Testament, which teaches and earnestly insists upon the love of our neighbor. But if you say *yes*, then I say for the third time that she must be your legitimate wife. Because you did, contrary to the command of love, so abominably disgrace and humble her, therefore, the Scriptures teach that you are to restore her to honor, and that you shall take her to be your wife. Let every one see to it, the commands of love will ever remain. Blessed are they who take heed to them and observe them in fear.

In the fourth place I ask, Whether there is any one who, with a good conscience, can transgress and break the command of God? If you say *yes*, then you deny the Scriptures, which teach that we shall walk in the ways of the Lord and keep his commandments. But if you say *no*, then I tell you the fourth time that she is, and must be your wife; for it is the command of God, firmly based upon love, that if you have lain with a virgin, you should marry her and never forsake her, as heard.

Behold, my reader, here you are more than plainly taught what the word of the Lord teaches in regard to this matter. And if

you continue so ungodly as to transgress the command of the Lord by disgracing one, and marrying another, you may read the consequences in 1 Cor. 6:9,10, unless you sincerely repent.

This I write, by no means, to encourage him who has, in days gone by, ignorantly done so, to leave the wife whom he afterward married, and take in her stead the disgraced one; not at all, for I do not doubt but that the merciful Father will graciously overlook the errors of those who have ignorantly done so, and who will henceforth fear, and willingly obey his commands. But I write this, that every one should guard himself against such disgrace, and reflect more profoundly upon the command of the Lord and of love, and observe how Christ is so wholly neglected by the world; for, alas, they are generally influenced by their accursed lusts, whether they are lords, princes, priests, monks, noble or ignoble, citizens or peasants; with few exceptions, they are so much inflamed that they follow this unbecoming, devilish disgrace of accursed lechery, like the dog pursues the hare. They are, says Jeremiah 5:8, as fed horses in the morning, every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. There is nothing that can deter or prevent them from this accursed abomination, neither natural honor, nor Moses, with all his threatenings, neither the prophets, nor Christ Jesus himself, nor the apostles, neither heaven nor the angels; yes, neither hell nor devil; neither life nor death; if they can only satisfy their unchaste, disgraceful lust, then all is well with them.

They are wholly bent upon this; some they seduce with fair words, others by false promises and gifts, some by giving them wine to drink; by dancing, and songs of levity, some by courteous flattery, by amorous tenderness, and similar artifice; yes, some deceive by their affected sighings and weepings, so that they can only accomplish their ungodly designs, and gratify their lusts, then all is right, and they rejoice. But they do thereby incense Almighty God, transgress his holy word, disgrace their neighbor,

do violence to the law of love, defile the marriage bed, violate virgins, have illegitimate children and destroy their poor souls eternally; about all this they care nothing. They say, this is our portion and our lot and nothing else.

I, therefore, say with Moses, cursed be they by God, who do works of iniquity; and all the people shall say, Amen. And with Job, that hell will consume them, as drouth and heat consume the snow waters; with Paul, that God will judge them; and with John, their part is in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the eternal (second) death. Ah! That these poor people would take heed, believe and observe the words of the Lord.

In the second place, I write this; that every one might awaken, sincerely repent, and weep over his past disgraceful conduct before God, lest he cast him off eternally; but be gracious to him for the sake of the blood of his Son; and no more defile the bed of his neighbor, nor disgrace virgins, but live in all honor, each with his own wife; that the unmarried keep free from lechery, and if he cannot restrain himself, let him seek a pious wife in the fear of God. And he that has transgressed, and has not taken another, that he honor the disgraced one, and according to christian love and the word of God, extricate her from her degraded state; thus teaching their children, and children's children, from generation to generation, even as Tobias did his Son, saying, Beware of all whoredom, my son, and do not take a strange woman, but keep to your own wife.

“Do you not know,” says Paul, “that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid,” 1 Cor. 6:15. Again, he says, “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (body) in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the gentiles which do not know God, for God has not called us

unto uncleanness, but unto holiness,” 1 Thes. 4:3-7. Yes, good reader, true believers have to lead an honorable and chaste life; that not as much as adultery, lechery, and unchastity be privately or openly mentioned among them; if any one among them, only mention it, it is an abomination, for thus it becomes the saints to live.

As we find many wicked men who shamefully seduce poor, simple hearts; so on the other hand we find impudent women and girls, who are often the first cause that such disgrace is sought and sometimes practiced upon them. Although many are not guilty of the deed, nevertheless they are not guiltless, in that they make so free with other men and associates in open triflings, singing, dancing, drinking, kissing, courting, flirting, and similar vanity and abominations, by which they kindle the fire of base passions, which continue till consumed, as may be seen.

O, how properly Sirach admonishes us, when he says, “Do not meet with a harlot, lest you fall into her snares; use not much the company of a woman that is a singer, lest you be taken with her attempts; gaze not on a maid, that you do not fall by those things that are precious in her; do not give your soul unto harlots, that you do not lose your inheritance; do not look round about you in the streets of the city, neither wander in the solitary places of it; turn your eye away from a beautiful woman, and do not look upon another’s beauty; for many have been deceived by the beauty of a woman; for herewith love is kindled as a fire. Do not sit at all with another man’s wife, nor sit down with her in your arms, and do not spend your money with her at the wine; lest your heart incline unto her, and so through your desire, you fall into destruction,” Sir. 9:3-9.

Were it now so, that the aforementioned married and unmarried women were true believers, even as was the sinful woman, they would then also fear the Lord, they would abandon all vanity and ungodly actions, and lay snares for none, nor give

any occasion for evil. Yes, they would walk honorably and modestly; avoid all manner of pride and superfluity, and make, or desire no other clothes than those necessary and comfortable for their daily labor. They would not frequent the idolatrous temple and idle banquets, for which occasions this pompous show is generally gotten up.

The repentant woman adorned her soul and not her outward appearance, for she believed; but these adorn their bodies, and not their souls, for they do not believe.

The repentant woman sighed and wept, was afraid of the wrath and judgment of the Lord, for she saw that she had done wrong, and sinned; but these laugh and sing, dance and prance about, and do not see their enormous misdeeds and great sins, and therefore, they do not fear the wrath and judgment of the Lord.

She was compassionate and merciful; anointed the head and the feet of the Lord, and found the true worship; but these are unmerciful and cruel, and know of no other worship than to go to the chapel to receive holy water; to offer tapers and wax candles to blind blocks and images; to offer masses and vespers; to call upon the departed saints for help; to confess once or twice a year to their idolatrous, drunken, lascivious priests; to receive their bread of abomination and absolution, and similar superstitions and delusions.

The repentant woman sought the company of the righteous; but these seek the company of the unrighteous. They visit each other to talk all manner of foolishness; to injure their neighbor's reputation; to defame and backbite; to speak disgracefully of one another, speak of costly furniture, houses, goods and handsome companions, men and fine clothing. In short, their works openly show that they do not have the faith of the repentant woman, and belong not to the congregation of the righteous.

The repentant woman sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his holy words; but these hear teachers who can tickle their ears, and preach to please them. In short, why need I say much? It is, O, God! So corrupted that we find the whole world filled with foolish men and women, I mean spiritually deaf ears and unenlightened hearts. The blind are leading the blind, and they will all fall into the pit of eternal death, unless they are enlightened, if we believe it to be true what the mouth of the Lord has taught us; for their doctrine, sacraments, and worship are altogether false; their unbelief and carnality prevail every where.

Behold, reader, here take notice, how vastly this repentant woman differs after conversion in her faith and conduct, from the faith and conduct of the world. They are like that sinful woman before her conversion, but not after her conversion. Whether such are believers, I will leave the sensible reader to reflect upon this with the Spirit and word of the Lord.

I know for a certainty that a proud, haughty, avaricious, selfish, unchaste, lecherous, wrangling, envious, disobedient, idolatrous, false, lying, unfaithful, thievish, defaming, backbiting, blood-thirsty, unmerciful and revengeful man, whosoever he may be, is no christian, even if he was baptized one hundred times, and attended the Lord's Supper daily; for it is not the sacraments, or the signs, such as *baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, but a sincere, christian faith, with its unblameable, pious fruits, represented by the sacraments, that makes a true christian and has the promise of life.

Here, neither masses, holy water, holy days, rosaries, auricular confession nor absolution avail; only a believing, contrite, broken heart, spirit and mind, a penitent, changed, new heart, a pious life, dead unto sin, according to the truth will avail. Such was the confession and repentance of this sinful woman, and she also heard immediately, *Your sins are forgiven, your faith has saved you, go in peace.*

But the abominable auricular confession, which is so highly esteemed by the world, is nothing but hypocrisy, human righteousness and superstition, open delusion of unbelievers, a false hope for the impenitent sinner, and a subtle invention for gain by the avaricious priests, by which they set aside true confession and repentance, and comfort and encourage the world in their reckless, ungodly life.

But if you would rightly confess and repent, and receive true absolution from God, then approach him with a believing, penitent, regenerated heart and with a sorrowing, broken, distressed mind. Quit sinning, do justice to your neighbor, love, aid, serve, reprove and comfort him, and if you have sinned against him, or deceived him, acknowledge it to him and reconcile with him. Behold, this is the only true confession and penance which is taught in the word of God. The Lord grant that you may rightly understand, and perform this confession and repentance.

I, therefore, entreat and desire all women, through the mercy of the Lord, to take this repentant, sorrowing woman as a pattern and follow her faith. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and reprove your avarice, pride, obscenity and all manner of evil. Let all your thoughts be pure, and let your words be circumspect and seasoned. And whatsoever you do, do that in the name and fear of the Lord Jesus, and do not adorn yourselves with gold, silver, costly pearls, and embroidered hair; but dress yourselves in such apparel as becomes women professing godliness, and which is serviceable. Be obedient to your husbands in all reasonable things, so that those who do not believe may be gained by your upright, pious conduct without saying a word, as Peter says.

Remain within your houses and gates, except when you have something of importance to do, such as attending to your temporal concerns, to administer to the needy, to hear the word of the Lord, or to attend upon his holy sacraments, &c. Attend

faithfully to your charge, to your children, house and domestics, and to all that is commanded of you, and walk in all things like the sinful woman did after her conversion; that you may be true daughters of Sarah, believing women, sisters of Christ, and joint heirs of a future life, 1 Pet. 3:6; then you shall hear the gracious words, *Your sins are forgiven, your faith has saved you, go in peace.*

FAITH OF THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

Matthew writes that Jesus was in the land of Gennesaret, and says, “Then Jesus went from there and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, you son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil; but he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she cries after us; but he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not right to take the children’s bread and to cast it to the dogs; and she said, True, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table. Then Jesus answered and said to her, *Woman, your faith is great; let it be unto you even as you will.* And her daughter was made whole from that very hour,” Matt. 15:21-28.

Here you again have a fine example and pattern of a sincere, christian faith; for when this woman perceived how powerfully Jesus preached grace, and hearing besides that he could do what he desired, that he manifested love and mercy, and that he sent

none away comfortless, she unhesitatingly approached him, not doubting his grace, mercy, love and power, although she was not heard at the first or second request. She was importunate both in her faith and prayer, with such a desire that she might partake of the spiritual crumb of his mercy, and obtain relief for her poor daughter. Yes, she manifested such a faith, constancy, humility and piety, that the Lord said to her, "*Woman, your faith is great; let it be unto you even as you will.*"

Faithful reader, observe; were we with spiritual eyes rightly to look upon this woman's faith and fruits, we would be aptly taught by her, especially in two particulars:

For as soon as she heard that the Lord taught pure mercy, grace, repentance and reformation, preached the kingdom of God, raised the dead, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the cripples walk, the leprous clean, healed the sick, and cast out unclean spirits; that he reproved the scribes, pharisees and the common people for their unbelief, perverseness, blind hypocrisy and carnal lives, and testified that he was the prophet and Messiah, promised in the law and the prophets, by which his fame spread abroad through all Judea and the adjacent countries; hearing all this, her tender heart and mind were so turned to him through such testimonies, miracles, doctrines and deeds of love, that she did not doubt his mercy, power, goodness and grace. She therefore went to him with a sincere desire, in sure and true faith, trusting with all her heart that he would not deny her humble prayer, but that he would graciously hear and grant it; and she also obtained what she desired.

She heard and believed; she saw and confessed. But many insane people imagine that they are christians, but who are, according to my understanding, greater disbelievers, blinder, more hardened and worse than Turks, Tartars, or any of the heathens. Their works testify that I write the truth; and they cannot be moved to hear or obey the truth by godly means and

services; neither by doctrine nor exhortation, neither by the unblameable lives nor the innocent blood of saints, which is daily shed before their eyes, as has been mentioned before, when we treated of the *faith of the murderer*.

The movement and doctrine of the holy divine word, we have had in Germany a number of years, and have it yet daily more abundantly, in such power and clearness that they may plainly see that it is the finger and work of the Lord. For the haughty are humbled, the avaricious are made kind, the drunkards become sober, the unchaste made pure, &c., and do not dare indulge in a single thought, or word, or act contrary to the will, word and Spirit of the Lord. They receive it with such an affection that they do not fear to forsake father, mother, husband, wife, children and possessions, no, they willingly suffer death on account of it. For many of them are burned, drowned, killed with the sword, apprehended, exiled, and their property confiscated; yet all this avails nothing with these obdurate people. If it is but reported (when an innocent sheep has been slaughtered), that he was an anabaptist, it is sufficient; they never inquire what he professed and what scriptural grounds he had; what his conduct and life were, whether he injured any one, or not. Neither do they reflect that it must be a special power and work which restrains one wholly from drunkenness, lasciviousness, pomp and pride, from all vanity, abominable lying, carnal life and from all idolatry; and constrains him to all sobriety, chastity, meekness, piety, truth, and the true worship, on account of which, we have to hear all manner of disgrace, and to endure persecution and misery, and so often endure the loss of life, as you may see.

If a thief is led to the gallows or a murderer is broken upon the wheel, or if a malefactor is punished with death every one inquires what he has done. He is not sentenced by the judges as long as they do not understand fully the ground and truth of his evil deed; but if an innocent, contrite christian, whom the

gracious Lord has rescued from the evil, ungodly ways of sin, and placed in the way of his peace, is accused by the priests and preachers, and placed before the judges, they deem him unworthy of an impartial examination in relation to what reasons or Scriptures move him, so that he will not hear their priests and preachers, nor have his children baptized, nor attend their service, nor longer eat and drink with them, and serve the devil. Nor do they desire to know why he reformed his life and received the baptism of Christ, or what urges him that he willingly suffers or even would die for his faith. They only ask, *Is he baptized?* If he answers in the affirmative, the sentence is fixed, that he must die.

All who see or hear such miracles of Almighty God, that such poor, unlearned men, yes, sometimes, poor, feeble women, or girls, are so fortified in God that they fear neither judge nor executioner; that neither fire nor water, neither halter nor sword, neither life nor death can deter them from their faith. These persecutors do not inquire what they did, whether they are traitors to their country or city, whether they have taken the property of others, or disgraced some one's daughter or wife; or whether they did any thing, not in accordance with the word of God, with common honesty and natural probity. O, no! So much discretion and love are not to be found. If they only have the word of the Lord, and believe it and fully obey his commands and ordinances, and gladly regulate their poor, weak lives by the truth; then they are called rebels by the lords; heretics by the learned; and are adjudged by the common people as well deserving such cruel punishments and disgraceful death. Behold, thus has the murderous, blood-thirsty devil deceived the whole world through his priests and preachers. Yes, I fear there is scarcely one to be found among a hundred thousand who will lay to heart such a strong faith, obedience, frankness, power, great suffering and ignominious death, so that he would once reflect upon his abominable unbelief, disgraceful wickedness and presumptuous,

carnal life, or doubt the doctrine of his teachers, sacraments, their lives and worship. How truly did the prophet say; “The righteous perishes and no man lays it to heart,” Isa. 57:1. There cannot be found beneath the wide canopy of heaven, a more hardened unbelief, more perverse, scornful, obdurate wickedness, more accursed madness, more execrated ungodliness, or a worse state of things than that which is related.

If there is a report of war and warriors, the whole land is in dismay, great and small, citizens and peasants; defensive armor is provided; they watch and make ready for defense as much as possible. Or if they hear of famine or pestilence, then all tremble, who have come to years of understanding. And, if on the contrary, there is a time of tranquillity, peace, prosperity, and wealth, then all who hear it, rejoice. But *now*, the trumpets of the Lord Jesus Christ are blowing, and the drums are beating; warning us to tender love through all his apostles and prophets, to shun the crafty wiles and subtle assaults of Satan, and that all who follow and are obedient to him must die. However, but few are to be found who put on the armor of God; but few who are guarding against the secret encroachments of Satan, and preparing to resist him. Both men and women voluntarily run into his hands and eagerly do the things which delight him; and those who do not, have to await great tribulation and much misery.

Besides, it is manifest that the abominable pestilence of false doctrine will destroy the whole world. The bread of life, which is provided for all the spiritual hungry, is very scarce, in consequence of the envious cry and false writings of the serpent’s preachers; and alas, there are few who weep and sigh on this account.

The eternal grace, mercy, favor, glory, kingdom and joy of Christ are offered unto us. But our ears have waxed dull; our hearts become hardened, and our perverted wickedness, do not

desire them. But this pious woman did not do so; she heard, believed, saw his miracles and confessed his power; and therefore, prayed with confidence and obtained what she desired, for she believed Christ with all her heart and did not doubt his grace.

In the second place, she admonishes all pious parents that they should be solicitous for the salvation of their children, because she so faithfully entreated for her demoniac daughter, not desisting till she was heard. For it cannot be otherwise, that if I am a true christian, all my work before God and my neighbor, are works of love, *for God* (by whose word a christian is born), says John, *is love*. That the Father and those who are born of him, are alike, of one mind and heart; is as clear as daylight.

If I seek the praise of the Lord with all my heart, and desire the salvation of my neighbors, many of whom I have never seen; how much more should I desire the salvation of my children, whom God gave me, who are out of my loins, and are naturally my flesh and blood? So that the mighty Lord may be praised and be eternally honored by them.

What I write, I consider unquestionably true. I write it from a true testimony of my own conscience, as before Almighty God, before whom I am, that all true, believing parents are thus minded towards their children, that they would far sooner see them set in a dungeon for the sake of the word of the Lord and his testimony, than be with the deceiving priests, in their idolatrous churches, or with drunken, erroneous interpreters in taverns, or in company with scorners, who despise the name of the Lord, and hate his holy word.

Sooner by far would they see them, for the sake of the truth of the Lord, bound hands and feet, and dragged before lords and princes, than to see them marry rich persons who do not fear God, neither walk in the ways of the Lord, but pass away time in

splendor, with music, in excessive drinking, dancing and singing; sooner by far would they see them scourged from head to feet, for the sake of the glory and holy name of the Lord, than to see them adorn themselves with silks, velvets, gold, silver, costly, striped and fashionable clothes, and similar vanity, pomp and haughtiness. Yes, far sooner would they see them exiled, burned at the stake, drowned, or placed on the wheel, for righteousness' sake; than see them live out of God, in all earthly and carnal lusts, than to be emperors and kings, and then be damned.

Woe to all, yes, woe to all those who are not solicitous for the salvation of their children. If I so love their bodies that I overlook their sins; if I do not punish the transgressions of the young with the rod, and reprove the aged with words; if I do not teach them the ways of the Lord; if I do not set them an unblameable example; if I do not direct them at all times to Christ and his word, ordinances, commands and example, and do not seek their salvation with all my heart and soul, then I will not escape my punishment, for in the day of the Lord, their souls, blood, damnation and death will be required at my hands, as a dumb and blind watchman.

Christianity plainly teaches us that all christian parents should be as sharp, saturating salt, a shining light, and as unblameable, faithful teachers in their houses. The high priest, Eli, was punished because he did not zealously reprove his children.

If I see my neighbor's ox or ass go astray, I must bring him to the owner, or keep him safe, as Moses teaches. If it becomes me to do thus with another's animal, how much more solicitous should I be for the souls of my children, who are so readily misled by the youthful flesh, in which no good dwells.

If I see my neighbor's ox or ass fallen in a pit, or meet him on the way lying under the weight of a burden, I must not leave him

till he is extricated. How much more should I be solicitous for my children, whom I have before me, that they do not lie under the burden of their sins; and if they are not earnestly reproved and instructed in grace, they will fall into the infernal abyss of eternal death.

Again, if I see my neighbor's house on fire, and his goods perishing, it is reasonable that I should exert myself to put out the fire, and if possible, to save the goods; but it is much more reasonable that I extinguish the fire of base desires in my child with the water of the divine word, and preserve, as much as is in my power, the heavenly goods.

The Holy Scriptures teach that God purifies the heart by faith; that faith comes by hearing; and by faith we are justified. Therefore, let every one take heed, who truly loves his children, that he rightly and purely instruct them, as soon as they can hear and understand the word of the Lord; that he lead them in the ways of truth, and that he zealously watch over all their doings, that they may from youth, learn to know the Lord their God, fear, love, honor, thank and serve him; so that the inborn nature of sin may not rule in them nor conquer them, to the everlasting shame of their poor souls.

Moses taught Israel saying, "These words which I command you this day, shall be in your heart, and you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up, and you shall bind them for a sign up on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes, and you shall write them upon the posts of your house and of your gates;" "that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which Jehovah swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth," Deu. 6:6-9; 11:21.

In another place he says, “And it shall be when your son asks you in time to come saying, What is this? That you shall say unto him, By strength of hand, Jehovah brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage,” Exo. 13:14.

Joshua commanded Israel, according to the command of the Lord, and said unto the twelve men, “Pass over before the ark of Jehovah your God into the midst of Jordan, and every man of you take up a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What do you mean by these stones? Then, you shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of Jehovah; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever,” Joshua 4:5-7.

Behold, dear reader, thus the Israelites were obliged to teach their children from youth, and to acquaint them with all the blessings and miracles of the Lord, which had been bestowed on them and their fathers, so that they might fear, love and serve the Lord all their days, and thus receive the blessing, and escape the curse which was included in the law.

In like manner with us, if we rightly confess Christ, if we believe his word, and if we and our children desire to obtain the happy fields and pleasant land, and eternally inherit the grace which he has promised his children; therefore, let us not neglect it, but lay it well to heart that we teach our children rightly in the word, and instruct them in relation to his righteous judgments, so that they will learn to fear the Lord with all their heart, and turn from evil.

Let us also keep before them God’s unbounded mercy; love, and services of his grace, so that they may love him and walk in his statutes. Let us imprint on their hearts, Jesus Christ, our only

and eternal Savior, with his Holy Spirit, word and example, so that they may rightly know him and follow in his footsteps. And let us set them an example in all wisdom, righteousness and truth; with a pious and virtuous life, so that they may through such discreet admonition and unblameable example of their pious parents, be instructed in the kingdom of God and trained to all manner of good.

For all who have such a faith as this woman had, and see that the end of sin is death, will not cease to sigh and lament to God that he would, in mercy, assist their poor children to so resist the impure spirit of the devil that he may not lead them captive at his evil will, to the eternal shame and disgrace of their poor souls.

But that they may, from their youth, rightly learn to know the immortal, eternal God and Father through Jesus Christ his beloved Son, and in truth serve and submit to his cross; and recount all the mighty works and miracles of Jehovah our God, the great mercy, grace, favor and love of the Almighty Father, his blessed word, will, ordinance and life, with all the merits, power and fruit of the death and blood of Christ his blessed Son; also the munificence, wisdom, truth and the gifts of his eternal and Holy Spirit, this to their children, and children's children, and all their descendants, till the Lord Jesus Christ appears in the glorious majesty of his heavenly Father in the clouds of heaven, [and] to the final judging, and where every one will be rewarded according to his works, be they good or evil, 2 Cor. 5:10.

Behold, worthy reader, thus it behooves true christians to teach, admonish, reprove, and correct their children, to set them an example in all righteousness, raise them in the fear of the Lord, be solicitous for their poor souls, lest they through their negligence, depart from the true path, die in their sins and finally perish in their unbelief.

The Lord spoke of Abraham and said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment,” Gen. 18:17-19.

Pious Tobit taught his son and said, My son, obey your father, serve the Lord in truth and be just, and this teach to your children, that they give alms, always fear God, love him, and confide in him with all their heart.

And when they attain the age of maturity, and do not have the power to refrain (but he that has, him I would advise with Paul, that he use it to the Lord), do not let them marry those out of Christ and his church, be they noble, rich, or handsome, as do the proud, avaricious and unchaste of this world; but let them marry those who fear, love, seek, honor, follow and serve the Lord with their whole heart; be they noble or ignoble, rich or poor, comely or uncomely, for they are holy and children of saints, and therefore, it is of the Lord, and must be done in his name.

Let every one beware and do right, lest the wrath and fearful judgments of God be inflicted upon him on account of his lewdness and evil desires, even as the judgments in the days of Noah and Lot were inflicted, Gen. 7 & 19.

But, alas! How few there are who take this to heart, and sincerely seek the salvation of their children. If they can but provide for them temporally, then their desires are gratified. The priests’ ordinances, and church services alone are their faith, hope, and the foundation of their salvation; they neither know nor seek any other.

Their whole life from beginning to end is contrary to the word of Christ. For as soon as they are born they are carried to the idolatrous, false bath (baptism); the holy name of the Lord is

mispronounced over them; they are raised in all vanity and blindness, in pomp and splendor, in open idolatry and false worship, and in the ignorant, unrestrained life of the world.

In and out of their houses they hear and see nothing but unrighteousness, malice, lying, defrauding, cursing, swearing, infidelity, avarice, quarrelling, fighting, intoxication, whoring, and all manner of disgrace. They never learn to know Christ and his word, but they hate the truth and persecute righteousness. In short, they show by their actions that they are full of the evil, unclean spirit, and are led by his will, as may be seen.

For as your spirit is, so must also your fruits be. If the Spirit of Christ is in you, which is holy and pure, then also your whole life and fruit are pure and holy. Again, if the spirit of the evil one is in you, then all your ways and fruits will be evil and impure. This is incontrovertible.

Therefore, says Paul, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Rom. 8:14. Again, those who are led by the spirit of the evil one are the sons of the devil. Dear reader, reflect well upon this. Yes, if these poor people had but a spark of the Spirit of the Lord, they would a thousand times sooner be seethed in boiling oil, and burned with fire, than hear and see such foolishness, ungodliness and wantonness in their children, much less would they teach them or set them an example in such things. For it is incontrovertible, according to the power of the Scriptures, if they do not become partakers of Christ, that their end will be eternal death.

Therefore, all you who fear the Lord, love your children with divine love, seek their salvation with all your hearts, even as Abraham, Tobit, and the Maccabean mother did. If they transgress, reprove them sharply; if they err, exhort them parentally; if they are childlike, bear them patiently; if they are of good understanding, instruct them as christians; dedicate them to

the Lord from youth; watch over their souls as long as they are under your care; so that you will not lose your salvation on their account. Pray without ceasing, like this pious woman did, that the Lord may grant them his grace, that they may resist the devil, subdue their natural depravity by the Spirit and help of the Lord, and walk from their youth up before God and his church, in all righteousness, truth and wisdom, in a firm and sure faith, in unfeigned love and living hope, in an honorable and holy life, unblameable and without offence, abounding in the fruits of faith, unto eternal life, Amen.

In addition to all the aforementioned examples, the diligent reader may also, with a pious and good conscience (mind) seriously reflect upon the faith of the immaculate, glorious mother Mary, of Matthew, of the aged Simeon and Hannah; also of the blind man (Luke 1; Matt. 9; Luke 2:15,18; Mark 10), and others like them. I trust that he will, by the help and grace of God, fully understand how simple, plain, unfeigned, pious, righteous, forbearing, ardent, peaceable, joyous, merciful, amiable, ameliorating, modest, moral, humble, zealous, unblameable and pious a true, regenerating, christian faith is inwardly in power, before God, and outwardly in fruits, before one's neighbor.

Yes, even as a good, fruitful tree, of its own accord, without any compulsion, always brings forth its own good fruits, so also a true christian faith must bring forth its own good fruits. For it is infallible, the righteous must live by faith.

If Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and Samuel, with all the patriarchs and prophets believed the word of the Lord, which was declared to them by angels, or were found so faithful in it, how much more should we believe and be faithful to that word which the Prince of angels, God's only begotten Son, the true witness and Teacher of righteousness, Christ Jesus, who came

from the high heavens, from his Father's bosom, brought down and taught on earth.

It will not suffice to say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he fulfilled the law for us, that he paid for our sins with his blood, and made reconciliation with the Father, by his offering and death; neither will it suffice to only believe that his gospel is true, his word is right, the wages of sin is death, and that grace is eternal life; but the heart must rightly comprehend it, and the mind must be resolved upon it, otherwise it will not justify. Paul says, "With the heart man believes unto righteousness," Rom. 10:10.

All who believe with their whole hearts that Christ Jesus is the righteous Branch of David, the righteous, wise King; the true, promised Prophet; the right Way and Truth, and our only Propitiator, Intercessor, Mediator and High Priest, Jer. 22:5, also believe that all his words are immutable and true; and his offering sufficient and perfect. They, therefore, obey his word, walk in his commands, bow to his sceptre and pacify their consciences by his grace, reconciliation, merits, offering, promises, death and blood. They believe and acknowledge that if they neglect his word and will, and presumptuously transgress his commands, and live according to the flesh, that God will require it at their hands and punish them with the fire of his wrath through his eternal righteous judgment. For if those who wilfully transgressed the Mosaic law were to die without mercy, upon the testimony of two or three witnesses, how much worse then will those be punished, who trample under foot the Son of God; who esteem the pure blood of the New Testament as impure, and profane the Holy Spirit of grace? Heb. 10:28.

Yes, kind reader, if we truly believed, and acknowledged it from the inmost of our souls, it would so move our hearts, and enkindle them with the fear and love of the Lord, that although all the tyrants that ever were would rise in all their dread torture, and

blood shedding, and stand before us, they would not in the least deter or hinder us from the word and way of the Lord. Besides, all our impure, carnal thoughts, unseasoned words, and useless, ungodly works would soon die, as Sirach says, “The fear of the Lord drives away sins,” Eccl.1:21; and it is impossible, without the fear of the Lord, to become right.

Seeing then, it is very evident that a sincere, christian faith acknowledges God in his righteousness, and therefore fears his judgment, and thus through fear buries sin and dies to it, as more than once related, and that nevertheless, you live in all avarice, unchastity, drunkenness, wrath, lewdness, blindness, idolatry, and all manner of wickedness, tell us, beloved, where is your faith and word of God of which you boast so much? Do you not know that it is written; “If you live after the flesh you shall die?” Or do you think that you can trifle with God as with a man? Do not be deceived, says Paul, God will not be mocked. Gal. 6:7.

Ah! Reader, take heed, I tell you the truth in Christ, Beware! If you do not repent with all your heart and seek God through Christ, and you do not hear, believe and fear him, but remain earthly and carnal, and walk after the lusts of your flesh, your sentence is already pronounced, and it will be *death*. As Christ himself says, I judge no man, but the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. John 12:48.

I, therefore, faithfully admonish you, as before God, even as I admonish my own soul, divest yourselves immediately of false doctrine, of all unbelief, idolatry and earthly, disgraceful lives, in which, alas! you have hitherto walked, lest the wrath of God overtake you while you sleep in your sins.

Awaken! He is still merciful, seek and receive the true doctrine, true faith, true sacraments, the true service, and lead a godly life, as the Scriptures teach, “Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily,

and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of Jehovah shall be your reward," Isa. 58:8.

Further, I say, If you truly believed and rightly understood that you became, through Adam's disobedience, children of the devil, of wrath, and of eternal death, subjected to the righteous curse and judgment of God, and that now all obstacles and all your sins are taken away and reconciled through the precious blood of Christ; so that you are called from wrath into grace, from cursings to blessings, and out of death to life (not to mention the favors which are daily shown you), then your hearts would sprout forth as the sweet-scented, blooming violet, full of pure love. Yes, [you would] flow as the living fountain, from which flow forth the refreshing sweet waters of righteousness, and you would, with holy Paul, say from the bottom of your soul, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Since it can never be, if I am in the bonds of perfection with him, and love him with a pure heart, a good conscience and unfeigned faith, that anything can turn me away or separate me from him. Rom. 8:35-39. For it is my own desire and highest joy that I hear and speak of his word, and in my weakness, walk as he commanded and taught through his Son, should it even cost money and possessions, flesh or blood, his will be done.

Behold, dear reader, since then it is manifest in the Holy Scriptures that the true Christian, with faith through the fear of God, dies to sin, and through love does the things of righteousness, though in weakness, I therefore let you judge whether those believe from the heart, who with the mouth say, that the blood of Christ is the propitiatory sacrifice of their sin, and nevertheless seek and follow up all kinds of idolatry, such as infant baptism, holy water, absolution, auricular confession, masses, gold, silver, and wooden images, wafers, stone churches, and the drunken adultery of the priests. Ah! how well it would be for them to reflect.

I say, as true as the Lord lives, there will eternally be found no other remedy for our sins, whether in heaven or upon earth; neither works, merits nor sacraments, even though they are used according to the Scriptures; neither cross, tribulation, angels, men, nor any other means will avail, but alone the immaculate, crimson blood of the Lamb of God (Christ), which was, out of pure grace, mercy and love, shed for the remission of our sins, Mark 14:24.

Hence, it is incontrovertible that all those who use such strange, idolatrous means for sin, do not belong to the believing, grateful church of Christ. Therefore, I will present you with a few passages from the gospel and writings of the apostles, and set them before your eyes as a clear mirror, in which you may view yourselves, and see whether you are believing Christians.

Thus teaches the word of the Lord, “Truly, truly, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3. And again, “Truly I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Mat. 18:3.

Prove yourselves with this; if you are born of the pure seed of the holy word, then the nature of the seed must be in you; and if you have become like little children, then there is no more pride, unchastity, avarice, hatred and envy in you; for the innocent children know nothing of such sins. But if you continue to live in old Adam, and not in Christ, and walk after the base, impure desires of your flesh, then you practically prove that you are not born by God, and do not have his faith.

The word of the Lord teaches again, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Mark 16:15. Here, prove to yourselves again, He that believes and is rightly baptized, truly repents, circumcises his heart, dies to sin, rises in Christ to a new life, &c.

But if you remain impenitent and your heart is uncircumcised, not dead to sin, but live out[side] of Christ and his word, then this is indeed your witness, that you are disbelievers and do not have the baptism of Christ. Again does the word of the Lord teach, "If you will enter life, keep the commandments." Mat. 19:17. For in Christ, says Paul, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails, but the keeping of the commands of God. And this is his command, "You shall love Jehovah your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself," Deut. 6:5, Mark 12:30.

Hereby, prove yourselves again; If you love God, you will keep his commandments and you will do to your neighbor as you would have him do to you; but if you despise his word, do not follow his ordinances in doctrine, baptism, Holy Supper, and separation, and if you do not walk according to his holy, godly commands; but instead lie to, cheat and betray your neighbor; if you take your neighbor's life, disgrace his wife, daughters or servants, and treat him perfidiously; if you mislead the poor, blind souls from the true way and obedience of the Lord, be it through persecution or false doctrine, and thus bereave them of the eternal kingdom, and lead them to hell, then it is more than clear that you hate the commands of the Lord and do not have his faith.

Again, the word of the Lord teaches, "Enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many which go in that way; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life; and there be few that find it," Matt. 7:13. At another place it is written, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Mat. 16:24. "He that loves father and mother, man or wife, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me." Mat. 10:37.

Here prove yourselves again. Have you such a spirit, such frankness and faith that you, in time of need, are ready to forsake father, mother and your all, for the sake of God's word and his testimony; to take upon yourself the cross of Christ; to deny yourself in all things; to enter with Christ, upon the way of suffering, and thus enter, with the poor small flock, at the narrow, strait gate? If so, then may the Lord strengthen you. But if you live unto yourselves; reject the cross of Christ, and love father, mother, wife, children, property or life more than Christ; walk on the broad way with the multitude and enter the wide gate, then the mouth of the Lord gives testimony that you are disbelievers and that your end is damnation.

Again, says the word of the Lord, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts," Gal. 5:24. For those who live after the flesh, such as adulterers, whoremongers, incontinent, avaricious, drunkards, gamblers, thieves, hateful, haughty, defamers, blood-thirsty or idolaters shall die.

Prove yourselves again. If your lusts do not reign in you, if you do not walk in any of these and similar carnal ways, which have been mentioned, but if you can smother them and trample them under foot through faith, then thank God, fight piously, watch and pray. But if you satiate your lusts, and walk in the impure ways of your flesh, then reform yourselves; for then it is evident that you are not yet penitent, believing christians, but impenitent, carnal heathens.

Again, the word of the Lord teaches, "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we be clothed with? For after all these things the gentiles seek; but you are to seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," Matt. 6:31.

Here prove yourselves again. If you believe that the strong and mighty God, who nourished Israel forty years with bread from heaven and with water from the rock, and kept their clothes from being worn out; and fed Elijah by a raven, will not forsake you in your distress, but will provide for you by his grace; this is a true evidence that you have the word of the Lord. But if, through your cares, you are induced or constrained, so you neglect the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and seek temporal rather than eternal things, and are so much concerned as if God had more concern for the flowers and fowls than for you and your children, do not boast that you believe the promise and word of the Lord.

Again, the word of the Lord teaches, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but so the world might be saved through him. He that believes in him is not condemned; but he that does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God,” John 3:16-18.

Here prove yourselves the seventh time. If you sincerely believe these words of Christ with your whole heart, that the Almighty, Eternal Father so loved you and the whole human family that he sent his unsearchable, Almighty, eternal Word, Wisdom, Truth and Son, by whom he created the heavens, earth, the sea and the fullness of it, and his eternal glory, into this vale of misery; that he let him become a poor, grieved, miserable man; that he let him, for the sake of all our sins, suffer hunger and thirst; permitted him to be slandered, apprehended, crowned with thorns, scourged, crucified and killed; then it cannot fail that your old carnal mind must become a regenerated, spiritual mind; your thoughts must become chaste and pure; your words must become

discreet and well seasoned and your whole life pious and unblameable.

Instantly you should awaken, walk in the right way, keep aloof from all abomination and idolatry, forsake false prophets, preachers and priests; and seek the true teachers, sacraments and divine service; for a true, sincere, Christian faith cannot be idle; but it changes, renews, purifies, sanctifies and justifies more and more. It makes you joyous and glad, for by faith it knows that hell, devil, sin and death, are conquered through Christ, and that grace, mercy, and redemption from sin, and eternal life, are acquired through him. In full confidence, the possessor of true christian faith approaches the Father in the name of Christ, receives the Holy Spirit, becomes partaker of the divine nature, and is renewed after the image of him who created him, lives by the virtue of Christ, which is in him; all his ways are righteousness, godliness, honesty, chastity, truth, wisdom, goodness, benevolence, light, love and joy.

He sanctifies his body and heart as a habitation and temple of Christ and the Holy Spirit; he hates all that is against God and his word. He honors, praises and thanks God with a sincere heart; and there is nothing to deter him, neither judgment, wrath, hell, devil, sin nor eternal death. For he knows that Christ is his Intercessor, Mediator and Propitiator. He acknowledges with holy Paul that "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. 8:1. The Spirit of the Lord assures him that he is a child of God, and a joint heir of Christ; he, therefore wholly dedicates himself to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who called him through grace, drew him by his Spirit, enlightened him by his word, and purchased him with his blood.

Behold, this is the nature of living faith, which has such an urgent, cogent power, spirit, fear, energy and life; which avails with God and has the promise in the Scriptures. Happy he who

has such a faith and will salutarily retain it to the end. I repeat it, prove yourselves, whether you are in the faith; in Christ or out of Christ; penitent or impenitent. For in the mirror presented, you may view the whole face of your conscience and life, if you but believe that the word of the Lord is true and right. Here notice how the true christian faith, through grace, is the only living fountain from whence flows, not only the penitent, new life, but also obedience to the evangelical ceremonies, such as baptism and the Lord's supper. They will have to come and follow, not as those compelled through the law, for the rod of the oppressor is broken, but voluntarily; through the free will and submissive spirit of love, which is of a christian nature, and is ready for all good works and obedience to the holy divine word.

For all the truly regenerated and spiritual conform in all things to the word and ordinances of the Lord; not because they think to merit the propitiation of their sins and eternal life; by no means; in this matter they depend upon nothing except the true promise of the merciful Father, graciously given to all believers through the blood and merits of Christ, which blood is, and ever will be the only eternal medium of our reconciliation, and not works, baptism or Lord's supper, as said above.

For if our reconciliation depended upon works and ceremonies, then it would not be grace, and the merits and fruits of the blood of Christ would be void. O, no! It is grace, and will be grace to all eternity; all that the merciful Father is doing or has done for us grievous sinners through his beloved Son and Holy Spirit is grace. Hence it is that they hear the voice of the Lord, believe his word, and therefore they should willingly observe and perform (although in weakness), the representation of both signs, under water, and bread and wine, set forth in obedience. For a truly believing christian is thus minded that he will not do otherwise than that which the word of the Lord enjoins and

teaches; for he knows that all presumption and disobedience are like sins of witchcraft, and the end of it is death.

Yes, good reader, the true christian belief, as the Scriptures require, is so lively, active and powerful with all those who have rightly received it through the grace of the Lord that they do not fear to forsake father, mother, wife, children, money and possessions for the word and testimony of the Lord; to suffer all manner of scorn, disgrace, fatigue, hardship and prison, and finally to have their poor, weak bodies, which are so fearful of suffering, burned at the stake, as may be frequently seen in the pious children and witnesses of Christ Jesus, especially in these our Netherlands.

Alas! How many did I know before, and know the greater part of them now, both men and women, men and maid-servants (would to God that they be increased to many hundred thousands), who, from the inmost of their souls, seek Christ and his word, and lead, in all meekness, a pious, unblameable life before God and man; sincere and holy in doctrine, full of the fear and love of God, ready to help one another, merciful, compassionate, meek, sober, chaste, neither refractory nor seditious; but quiet and peaceable, obedient to the magistracy in all things not contrary to God. And many of them have, nevertheless, for a number of years, not slept in their beds, and even do not now; for they are so much hated by the world that they have been persecuted, betrayed, taken, exiled and slain like highwaymen, thieves and murderers, and that without mercy; and for no other reason than that they, out of true fear of God, do not dare take part in the abominable, carnal life, and with the accursed, disgraceful idolatry of this blind world; neither dare they hear nor acknowledge the unchaste, drunken, lecherous priests and deceiving blind preachers, as the true apostles and teachers of God. They do not dare receive the bread with the avaricious, envious, proud, drunkards, whores and rogues, from

their hands, nor carry their children to their anti-christian washing and baptism, but seek such preachers and teachers, and also such a baptism, supper, church and life, which are in accordance with the Scriptures, that they may stand according to the word of the Lord.

Behold, before God, I write the truth, indeed they are such a people, if I otherwise know them rightly, hypocrites excepted, who, in the flesh, weep more than they laugh, mourn more than they are joyful, give rather than receive; who are ready not only to sacrifice possessions, and their all, but also body and life for the praise of the Lord, and to the necessary service of their neighbor, according to the command of the Scripture, as much as it is in them. No matter how much the poor children are harassed, they are still so much strengthened in God that they can neither be moved nor deterred. They possess their souls with patience, waiting for the joy which is promised. Truly, said Christ, "You will be hated by all men for my name's sake," Matt. 24:9.

Since it is evident from all this that the true evangelical faith is of such a nature, and is the only means and tree, which through the grace of God, bears and propagates all manner of good fruit; therefore, it is considered in Scripture as the most precious and greatest work. All things are ascribed to faith, such as miracles, and the power to become the children of God, and be justified; be blessed and saved; purified and sanctified; and have eternal life, as we have related when treating of the *Malefactor's faith*.

Not, dear reader, that we believe that faith merits this on account of its worth; by no means; but because the pleasure of God through his word, has given his promise through true faith; then it must also by virtue of that word follow faith. For the Scriptures plainly teach that all things, visible and invisible, must hear, yield, serve and follow the powerful word of God, as when he said, Let there be heaven and earth. Heaven and earth sprang

into existence at these words. For God's word, says Esdras, is his perfect work. God also says to Israel, If you shall listen diligently unto the voice of Jehovah your God, all these blessings shall come upon you; but if you will not listen, the curse shall be upon you; Deu. 11:26-28 and it also happened, as it was told to Israel, "For God," says Balaam, "is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent." Num. 23:19. For these reasons the promise must follow true faith, or else it cannot be denied that God, who is a God of truth, must be untrue and faithless. O, no! All that he wills must be done; what he promises must be fulfilled, and not otherwise than he has promised, for he alone is true, and we are all liars," Rom. 3. Paul says, "If we do not believe, yet he abides faithful; he cannot deny himself."

Since faith so firmly acknowledges that God cannot break his promise, but must keep it, because he is the truth and cannot lie, therefore he makes his children free, joyful, and glad in spirit; though they are confined in prisons and bonds, have to suffer by water and fire; in chains and at the stake; for they are assured in the spirit, through faith, that God will not withdraw his promise, but will fulfil it in due time; for they believe in Christ in whom the promises are sealed, and through him also acknowledge his grace, word and will; notwithstanding that they, in former times, lived so ungodly, and walked according to the flesh.

They hope with faithful Abraham, where nothing is to be hoped, and wait for things invisible, as though they saw them, and with full confidence adhere to the assurance, truth, faithfulness and power of the heavenly promise, which is made to us by the infallible, true mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, without any previous work or merit, through the gracious choice and will of his merciful Father in his true word. And this regenerating, justifying, converting, penitent, active and confident faith, which comes from the Father of light, by hearing his holy

word, is the only faith that avails with God, and which has the assurance of the promise of grace in the word through the Holy Spirit; besides this, the Holy Scriptures know of no other faith.

Before now, I have read in some books, which they have written, that there is but *one good work* which saves us, namely, FAITH, and but *one sin* which will damn us, namely, UNBELIEF. This I will leave as it is, and not find fault with it; for where there is a sincere, true *faith*, there are also all manner of sincere, good fruits. On the other hand, where there is *unbelief*, there are also all manner of evil fruits; therefore, salvation is properly ascribed to *faith*, and damnation to *unbelief*.

Faithful reader, pay attention. Since we plainly perceive that the whole world; Papists, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Davidists, libertines, &c., walk the broad road of sin, and lead a carnal, vain life, and do not abide by the pure, salutary, perfect doctrine, sacrament and unblameable, pure example of Christ; therefore they are themselves witnesses that they reject the corner stone, Jesus Christ, and do not believe his word and truth, though a few of them write much of faith and speak of the Scriptures. Say, beloved, did you ever read in the Scriptures, or did you ever hear that a truly believing, regenerated christian, after repentance and conversion, remained proud, avaricious, unchaste, greedy, hateful, tyrannical and idolatrous, and continued to live after the base desires of the flesh? You must say *no!* If you speak of Peter and David, you must observe how short or how long a time their fall lasted, and what penance they did: Turn yourselves to the east or west, south or north, and you will find ungodly, vain, pompous, foolish actions and conduct, with all those who boast of faith, so that we shall have to say with Christ and John, they are, with few exceptions, of the devil and not of God. For the devil, from the beginning, was proud and haughty, so are they; he was a liar, so are they; he was a falsifier of the word of the Lord, so are they; he was disputatious against God, so are they; in short, he is

a revengeful murderer, an abominable, blood-thirsty tyrant, so are many of them. The way in which they use those who seek Christ sincerely and believe, fear, follow, serve and call on him, has been more than once fully related.

Yes, alas, they are so wrathful and enraged at them that they will scarcely call them by their right names, but they call them anabaptists, fanatics, rioters, factionists, hedge preachers, deceivers, heretics, new monks, knaves and miscreants, even though they seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness with all their hearts, which God knows, who tries the minds and hearts of men, and they wish no evil to any one upon earth.

This they all do through the ignorant defaming by the envious, inhuman, lying, crying and writing of their learned priests and preachers, who ever since the blasphemous beast of anti-christ ascended his kingdom and glory, have always been the true cause of the tyrannical shedding of innocent blood in the past and present; for they are those who instigate the magistracy to murder, and the thoughtless, reckless people to defame and blaspheme, and, I fear that they will continue to be the cause till the end.

Nevertheless, the chosen are to awaken, repent and obey the voice of the Lord; for idolatrous, blood-thirsty, confused Babel shall sink, and be desolated; and fair Jerusalem, the city of peace, shall increase, and through the power of Almighty God must be built up in glory. Of this all rejoice, who are called to the marriage of the Lamb, and whose names are written in the BOOK of LIFE with God. Here is the understanding, wisdom, faith and patience of the saints; let him that has understanding observe that the word of the Lord is true. Blessed are they who are ready to meet the Lamb when he returns.

Behold, such a faithless, impenitent, tyrannical, idolatrous, refractory, disobedient, blind, carnal people they are, who

imagine that they are the believing church, and the lawful bride of Christ. These poor children do not observe that all under heaven is spoiled, even as the prophet complains that “there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood touches blood,” Hos. 4:1,2. The world, says John, lies in wickedness. If we come to the lords and princes, there we find such pride, arrogance, pomp and wantonness, such banqueting, eating and drinking to excess, with some such adultery and whoredom, and such unreasonable, blind idolatry, and with many, such unmerciful, raging tyranny that they are in truth more like proud Nebuchadnezzar, drunken Belshazzar, and Nabal, and blood thirsty, vain Antioch, Nero, and Maximinus, than christian, believing lords and kind princes. If we come to the judges and rulers, to each in his station, with some we find only violence and injustice, with some nothing but avarice and astonishing practices; they steal honestly and rob honorably; pass sentence for gain and gifts; honor the high and despise the poor, do not do justice to the poor widow, orphan and the oppressed stranger, execute their office and power with rigor, and not fraternally; serve princes and not God, as the prophet Micah laments, What the prince desires, the judge does, so that he will again reward him. Mic. 7:3. Alas! Where shall we find one who loves God with all their heart, hates avarice, seeks the truth, who will defend the god-fearing, and do him justice?

If we come to the priests or monks, there we find such insatiable avarice that they offer and sell prayers, psalms, matins, vespers, masses, sermons, baptism, Lord’s Supper, absolution, and all their church services, together with their own souls. They take rents and gold from the deceased, will go six or ten miles, from one place to another for a guilder; where they find the most milk, wool and meat, there they prefer to be among the sheep. They like to be flattered and honored by the world; allow

themselves to be called doctors, lords, masters, abbots, provosts, priors, fathers, guardians, commanders and presidents; like to wear long garments; seek to be greeted at the market, and take the first seats at the table and in the church, as Christ said of the scribes and pharisees in Mark 12:39. Besides this, the greater part of them live in such whoredom and sodomy that the angels are astonished and blush; they defile one woman after another, also one virgin after another; they defraud and corrupt the whole world, both temporally and spiritually. They have all their joy in a temporal, carnal life; and study by day and by night how they may pamper their proud, idle, lazy flesh and eat and drink, saying, as it is written, "Come you, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant," Isa. 56:12. They betray the faithful, pious hearts, who with all their powers seek Christ and eternal life. They warn every one against the truth and its followers, and cry, Hear us, we are your teachers and pastors, we will pledge our souls for you in the judgment of God; and thus encourage the malicious, lest they be converted from their wickedness. Promising liberty to others, they are themselves servants of corruption. I do not know how they could make it worse; nevertheless, those unblushing, abominable men, who according to the law of Moses would have been stoned, and who according to the Scriptures must be eternally cursed and condemned unless they repent, alas, are called the pastors and teachers of this poor, rude people. Behold, thus the world is corrupted.

If we come to the preachers, who boast of the word, we will find that some are open liars, others drunken sots, some usurers, some wanton and gay, some defamers and slanderers, others persecutors and betrayers of the innocent. How some of them live, how they came to get their wives, and what kind of wives they have, this I will commit to the Lord and to themselves. They

teach secretly that there are *two sons* in Christ, the Son of God, and the son of Mary, and that he who died for our sins was not the Son of God; they also teach and practice a baptism which is not commanded in the Scriptures, and a supper, in which they consider the *bread* is the *body*, and the *wine* is the *blood* of Christ. They have and hold no other BAN, than the gallows and the wheel; lead an unconcerned, easy life; they live in mere flattery, deceit and the booty of anti-christ, and preach just as much as the worldly, carnal magistracy desire to hear; and promise peace to the poor impenitent, although there is no peace.

If we come to the common people, we find such an unbecoming, carnal, blind, uncircumcised horde that we are astonished; they know neither God nor his word. If nature teaches anything reasonable, that is all their piety; but of the Spirit, word, ordinances, will and life they indeed know but very little. In short, it has come so far in the world that we may lament and say with the holy prophet, “Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek in its broad places, and see now, and know if you can find a man, if there be any that executes judgment, that seeks the truth,” Jer. 6:1.

Not one stone has remained upon another; all is desolated which Christ and his faithful messengers taught us of faith, love, baptism, Supper, reconciliation, sin, repentance, regeneration, separation, teachers, deacons and of true, divine service. Nevertheless, they are called the church of Christ by their blind priests and preachers, even as if Christ and the Father were to be satisfied with names, bread, wine and water. O, no! The chosen of God are the church of Christ, his saints and beloved, who washed their clothes in the blood of the Lamb, who are born by God, influenced by the Spirit of Christ; who are in Christ and he in them, who hear and believe his word, who follow him in their weakness, walk in his footsteps and in his commandments, with all patience and humility, hate the evil, and love the good,

earnestly desiring to apprehend Christ as they are apprehended by him, for all who are in Christ are new creatures, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, and members of his body. How you and the rest of mankind conform to this, I will leave you and all reasonable readers to reflect upon, in the fear of God, both according to your understanding, and according to the Scriptures.

Since, then, all things are desolated through the righteous wrath and judgment of God, because (as Paul says) they delighted in unrighteousness and lies, by the false prophets and ravening wolves, so that nothing salutary has remained according to the true sense and ground of Christ and his holy apostles, and since we find nothing in the whole world, among all the great sects, only vain boastings, mere names, false doctrine, false sacraments, vain unbelief and an impenitent, carnal life, and this under the name and semblance of Christ and his holy church. Therefore, I am constrained by true christian love; to make known the power and ground of the holy Scriptures, according to my small gift, given to me by God, and through this to show which is the *true christian faith*, having the promise; namely; the faith which changes man from evil into good, to a divine nature, both inwardly and outwardly, and makes him holy, righteous, obedient, new, pious, peaceable and joyful; in order that all good, pious hearts, who desire to walk in the right way, but who are hindered from there by their blind priests and preachers, may read or hear this, my faithful EXPOSITION and INSTRUCTION, and that they may thereby be instructed in the truth; that the indifferent and drowsy may be awakened, and that all hypocrites may be ashamed and reform; and that all those who love God sincerely may be more instructed and taught in the faith, if they do by any means acknowledge this as the sure FOUNDATION of God, as it is, and will be, for ever. Lord, grant that many may read and understand it, and thus receive and obey it, that they may sincerely repent and be saved, Amen.

And since I do it out of a sincere heart, and do not labor with any other view, of which the great God Jehovah, the Searcher of the hearts and minds of men is my witness, than that I may teach repentance to the ignorant, rude world, which does not know Christ, lead them to Christ and his doctrine, sacraments and example, that many might be saved. And as we plainly see, there are many profligates who have reformed their sinful, carnal lives, and commenced an upright, penitent, pious life in the fear of the Lord; then it is gross ingratitude, yes, hardened, ungodly tyranny, to hate me and my faithful coworkers so enviously, and recompense us so shamefully, who manifest such great fidelity and love towards them in our manifold sufferings and trials.

But thus they treated all the prophets and faithful servants of God from the beginning, who preached to them the word and will of the Lord with great fidelity, reprov'd their sins, sought their salvation till death, with all their powers, with many tears, watchings, prayers, labors, cares and sorrows. Therefore, it is not strange, and no wonder, that they will treat us so; for Christ says, "For so they persecuted the prophets, which were before you," Matt. 5:12.

I hereby entreat and desire, through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, all my readers and hearers in general, of whatever name, office, station and condition, that you be pleased neither to defame nor to reject my labor, if you have read it impartially, heard it rightly and understood it. Therefore, separate the doctrine, sacraments and life of Christ from the doctrine, sacraments and life of the priests and preachers; separate faith and unbelief, spirit and flesh, righteousness and unrighteousness. Seek after the truth, strive zealously for your salvation, believe that God is true, that he will reward the good and punish the evil, that his word is, and will for ever remain truth. Fear his judgment, love his bounties; then you shall know, by the grace of the Lord, that the aforementioned is the true Christian faith,

which avails before God, and has the promise in the Scriptures, as we have so abundantly testified and shown to you by the word of God, and with such strong and incontrovertible reasons, Scriptures and examples, without deceit and fraud, as it were before, in Christ Jesus.

May the Almighty, eternal, merciful God and Father, through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, lead you all, one with another, into his holy, divine knowledge and evangelical truth, and make your faith so fruitful and active that you may, with sincere, new hearts, patiently submit to his cross in every trial and affliction, and that you may walk with unfeigned love, be peaceable and joyful in spirit, as the unblameable, pious children of God, before the Lord and his church all the days of your lives, and ultimately obtain the promise of grace, the end of your faith, and the salvation of your souls, Amen.

CONCLUSION.

Beloved reader, here you have my FOUNDATION AND DOCTRINE OF FAITH, with its *properties, power, operation and fruits*. I therefore entreat you all, if you appreciate Christ and your own salvation, suppress your perverted minds, do not be enraged and embittered, should you find any thing contrary to the usages of our forefathers, standing usages, or philosophic writings and the cry of the learned; but first prove it rightly, and scrutinize it well with Christ and the word, spirit, life and example of his holy apostles, and learn whether it is, or is not, the true content, meaning, doctrine and sense of the whole Scriptures. If it is, you will have to give up the unscriptural usage, and the

deceptive cry of the learned, and hold only to the word of the Lord if you would be saved. Therefore, let your heart be impartial, and your judgment sincerely after truth; for the Almighty God and Lord, before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, will not and cannot yield to any of the learned, or to longstanding usages or customs; for he is Lord, and we are his servants. We must *follow him*, for he does not follow us. Reader, lay it to heart.

Likewise, if you find that we preach our doctrine rightly, do not respect the dignity of any man, fear no man's tyranny, nor yield to the learned. If we, in true, sincere love, faithfully teach, admonish and reprove all who do amiss, without respect to persons, with the Holy Spirit, word, example and ordinance of the Lord in all things; then I entreat you again that you would be pleased not to attribute this to spiritual pride, but to well-meant frankness and christian simplicity. I desire that you would all walk rightly, so that you may be saved, on account of which I have to endure not a little tribulation. I do not refuse to become as a fool before all the world, so that I may make many wise in Christ, and with the Holy Spirit and the powerful word of the Lord, lead them to wisdom and to the saints; and I well know that Christ and his apostles, and the prophets, were guilty of the same foolishness, and were of the same mind with me in this matter.

If I reprove, they reprove more; if I threaten with the wrath of the Lord, they do it so much more. Were they on that account carnal and proud? Far from it! Yes, my reader, had not the dark smoke of men-pleasing preachers, the accursed, false doctrine of the dreadful, abominable locusts out of the abyss risen up; but had sincere reproving, the true, pure doctrine, the scriptural usage of the holy sacraments, and the separating of the impenitent, without respect to person, continued in the world, the pleasing sun would never have lost his splendor, nor would the church have lapsed into such a grieved and deadly condition. Therefore,

I esteem it with Paul, to be unimportant to be judged by men in this matter. For I know that I mean it well, do right and reprove only with the truth, so that they may be converted.

May the true heavenly Light, Jesus Christ, be eternally blessed, and enlighten all dark, benighted hearts with the clear and lucid ray of his Holy Spirit and eternal truth, that they may view, in unfeigned, pure faith, the eternal brightness of Christ, to the praise and honor of his great name, and to the salvation of many souls, Amen.



OF THE NEW BIRTH.

A FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINE FROM THE WORD OF THE LORD.

**Exhorting All Who Are Called After The Name Of
Christ, To The Heavenly Birth And The New
Creature, Without Which, None Who Have Come To
The Years Of Understanding, Are Or Can Be A True
Christian.**

Diligently Revised And Enlarged

By

MENNO SIMON.

A. D. 1556.

HEAR my words, all people, and understand them. All you who imagine that you are Christians, and presumptuously boast of the grace, merits, flesh, blood, cross, kingdom and death of the Lord, notwithstanding we find among you neither Christian faith, brotherly love, repentance, the right use of the sacraments of Christ, the pure doctrine, nor the unblameable, godly life, which is from God, and to which the Scriptures admonish us. Neither do we find the true, divine service, evangelical disposition, nor obedience; but throughout, nothing else than abominable, dark unbelief, a lewd, carnal life, false doctrine, false, self-devised sacraments, a devilish heart and mind, an accursed, heathenish idolatry under the name of Christ, blind, blood-thirsty tyranny, envious and furious revengefulness against all the children of God. Yes, this is open obstinacy, disobedience and rejection of

the words of Christ and of his Holy Spirit, as may be very plainly perceived and seen throughout the world.

In order that you may comfort yourselves no longer with lying and vain hopes, contrary to all Scriptures, to your eternal damnation, and do not glory in vain, in the aforementioned riches and glory of the children of God, namely of the kingdom, grace, merits, flesh, blood, cross, death and promises of Christ, &c., which do not yet pertain to you, because you are yet altogether earthly, carnally and devilishly minded, reject Christ, and do not keep to his Spirit, word and example, without which no one can be a christian. Therefore I have undertaken, through the merciful grace of the Lord, as much as is in my power, to inform you briefly, by the infallible, powerful, saving word of the holy gospel of Christ, and from the pure doctrine of his holy apostles, in this my epistle, who they are, or who they are not, that are endowed through the grace of God, and to whom pertain these gifts, merits and promises of Christ.

Tell me, most beloved, where or when did you read in the Scriptures, which is the true witness of the Holy Spirit and the plummet of our consciences, that the unbelieving, disobedient, carnal adulterer, whore-monger, drunkard, avaricious, idolatrous or pompous had a single promise of the kingdom of Christ and his church, yes, any part or communion in his merits, death and blood? I tell you the truth, nowhere do we read it in the Scriptures, nor will we ever; but thus it is written by Paul, "For if you live after the flesh you shall die." Adulterers, whore-mongers, buggers, effeminate, unclean, idolaters, drunkards, proud, avaricious, betrayers of the innocent, and blood-shedders, thieves, murderers, backbiters, perjurers, sorcerers, liars, unmerciful, the disobedient to God and Christ (if they do not repent) will not inherit the kingdom of God. Yes, their portion will be in the fiery lake which burns with fire and brimstone;

which is the second death, Rom. 8:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:1-8; Rev. 20:6 to 21:8.

Behold, worthy reader, this is God's irrevocable sentence and judgment upon all who live after the flesh, whoever they be, emperor or king, duke or earl, knight or squire, noble or ignoble, priest or monk, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, male or female, bond or free. All who live after the flesh must forever remain under the just sentence of eternal death from God, otherwise the whole Scriptures are untrue.

Therefore, the poor, ignorant people are comforted in vain with masses, matins, vespers, confessions, pilgrimages and holy water, and what is more, with [counterfeits of] Christ's grace, death and blood. The word stands firm, "For if you live after the flesh you shall die; for to be carnally minded is death." Rom. 8:6. Therefore, I advise and entreat you all in general, to hear Christ Jesus, who is sent to us as a witness of the truth from heaven; for thus says he, "Truly I say unto you, Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mat. 18:3. At another place, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. Again, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5.

Faithful reader, take heed; these words are not invented or instituted by man, nor are they the resolution of any council; but they are the infallible, precious words which the Son of God, Christ Jesus, brought to us from the mouth of his Father, and declared unto pious Nicodemus, the scribe, with a double affirmation. That word is powerful and clear, and has not only reference to Nicodemus, but to all the children of Adam who have come to the years of maturity. But alas, it is so obscured by the offensive, leavenous mire of human commands, statutes and glossaries that scarcely one or two is found in a thousand who

have the true sense and understanding of the heavenly birth, and much less do they have the active nature, power, properties and fruits of it. Yes, they have brought it so far through their philosophy, wisdom and self-chosen holiness that the eternally blessed Wisdom of God, Christ Jesus, is banished as a poor, senseless fool, and put out of the house of his honor, which is his church, along with his Holy Spirit, word, baptism, Supper, divine worship, separation and unblameable example. The man of sin, the son of perdition, is placed there in his stead, with his abominable doctrine, idolatrous infant baptism and supper, with his unclean purifications and promises, with his churches, convents, priests, monks, masses, matins, vespers, holy water, images, pilgrimages, purgatory, vigils, confessions, absolutions, &c.; all of which, in short, are nothing but the doctrines and commands of men. They are raised up contrary to the Scriptures, an accursed idolatry and abomination, an open denial of the Lord's death and offering, a despising of the New Testament and of the covenant which was sealed by the innocent blood of the Lamb, a destroying and desolation of the saving ordinances of Christ, of his doctrine, baptism, Supper, life and separation, abundantly testified in the Scriptures, which ordinance he taught in this world with incontrovertible clearness and power according to the command of his Father, and left it to his children in his word, and no other can be established that will stand eternally before him.

In short, writers and the learned have corrupted every thing so much through their councils, decrees and statutes, with all the tyranny and violence of the great, that there is scarcely an entire article left of all that Christ and his holy apostles taught. All the aforementioned abominations, together with the ungodly, carnal life of the whole world, I call on as witnesses. Nevertheless, they called theirs the holy christian church; and he that admonishes them in sincere, pure love, with the Spirit and word of the Lord,

must be an accursed anabaptist and heretic. I tell you again, they claim to be the christian church, but it is evident from all their actions that they are not christians; but carnal, proud, avaricious, lascivious, lewd, drunken, idolatrous, blind heathens; and what is worse, some of them are unmerciful, murderous, ferocious, revengeful and blood-thirsty fiends; many of their works are done according to the will of the devil. We may with propriety complain of this matter; for the righteous judgment has come upon them, that they are unconvertible and that little of a salutary kind remains with them.

O! How miserably is the fair vineyard desolated, and how lamentably are its branches withered. Its walls are broken down, the destroying foxes have destroyed the grapes, the clouds are dry and give no rain; there is neither pruner nor knife at hand; and if there is one, he must be devoured by the dragon or slain by the apocalyptical woman, drunk with blood. O, merciful, gracious Father, how long will this great misery endure? Our rulers are like voracious lions and bears. Our fathers are our betrayers. Our leaders are our deceivers. And those who feign to be our pastors are thieves and murderers of our souls. Well may we sigh and lament from the inmost of our hearts; for our house is left unto us desolate. For that which was once the church and kingdom of Christ, is now, alas! The church and kingdom of anti-christ, and for no other reason than because they ungratefully rejected the word of grace, and will not have the Lord Jesus Christ rule over them, with the righteous sceptre of his holy word and Spirit. Nevertheless, these poor, blind people hope to obtain the grace and promises of God through their infant baptism, masses, confession and similar superstitious ceremonies and idolatries, which they call the true, divine service, and use it as a remedy for their sins. Ah! no, most beloved, no; for Solomon says, "The hope of the ungodly is like dust that is blown away with the wind." I have said it once, and repeat it, from the mouth of the

Lord, who can neither lie nor deceive, “Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” Matt. 18:3; John 3:3.

My beloved reader, take heed to the word of the Lord, and come to know the true God. I warn you faithfully to take heed; he will not save you, nor pardon your sins, nor show you his mercy and grace, except according to his word, namely, If you repent, if you believe, if you are born of him, if you do what he has commanded, and walk even as he walked. 1 John 2:6. For if he would save unjustified, carnal men, without regeneration, faith and repentance, he did not teach us the truth; but he is the truth, and there is no lie in him. Therefore, I tell you again that you cannot be reconciled with all your masses, matins, vespers, ceremonies, sacraments, councils, statutes and commands under the whole heavens, together with all the popes and their adherents from the beginning; for I warn you, they are abominations and not reconciliations. Christ says, “In vain do they honor me,” because they teach the commandments of men.” Mat. 15:9. But if you, by any means, wish to be saved, your earthly, carnal, ungodly life must be reformed; for the Scriptures teach nothing except true repentance and reformation, and present to us admonitions, threatenings, reprovings, miracles, examples, ceremonies and sacraments; and if you do not repent, there is nothing in heaven or on earth that can save you; for without true repentance, we are comforted in vain. The prophet says, “O, my people, they which lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths,” Isa. 3:12. We must be born from above must be changed and renewed in our hearts, transplanted from the unrighteous and evil nature of Adam into the true and good nature of Christ, or we can never be saved by any means, whether human or divine. Wherever true repentance and the new creature are not (I speak of adults), man must be eternally lost; this is

incontrovertibly clear. Upon this every one may confidently rely, who does not wish to deceive his soul.

That regeneration of which we write, from which comes the penitent, pious life and having the promise, comes alone from the word of the Lord, if it is rightly taught, and if rightly understood and received in the heart by faith through the Holy Spirit. The first birth of man is out of the first, earthly Adam, and therefore its nature is earthly and Adamic, that is carnal-minded, unbelieving, disobedient and blind in divine things, deaf and foolish, whose end, if not renewed by the word, will be damnation and eternal death. If you would, therefore, have your inbred, evil nature reformed, and be set free from eternal death and damnation, so that you may obtain what is promised to all true christians, you must be born again. For the regenerated are in grace, and have the promise, as you have heard. They, therefore, lead a penitent and new life, for they are renewed in Christ, and have received a new heart and spirit. Before, they were earthly, carnally minded, but now heavenly, spiritually minded; before, unrighteous, now righteous; before, evil, now good. And no longer live after the old, depraved nature of the first, earthly Adam but after the new, sincere nature of the new and heavenly Adam, Christ Jesus; as Paul says, "Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me." Gal. 2:20. Their poor, weak life they renew daily, more and more, and that after the image of him who created them; their minds are after the mind of Christ, they gladly walk as he walked; crucify and put to death their flesh with its evil lusts; bury their sin with baptism in the Lord's death, and rise with him to a new life; circumcise their hearts with the word of the Lord, and are baptized with the Holy Spirit into the spotless, holy body of Christ, as obedient members and fellow heirs of his church, according to the true ordinance and word of the Lord. They put on Christ and manifest his Spirit, nature and power in all their fruits; fear God with all their heart,

and seek, in all their thoughts, words and works, nothing but the praise of God and the salvation of their beloved brethren. They do not know hatred and vengeance, for they love those who hate them; do good to those who spitefully use them, and pray for those who persecute them. They hate and resist avarice, pride, unchastity, pomp, drunkenness, fornication, adultery, hatred, envy, backbiting, lying, defrauding, quarreling, blood-shedding and idolatry, all impure, carnal works, and forsake the world with all its lusts; meditate upon the law of the Lord by day and by night; rejoice at the good, and are grieved at the evil; evil they do not repay with evil, but with good. They do not seek *self*, nor their own good, but what is good for their neighbors, both as to body and soul; feed the hungry, and give drink to the thirsty; entertain the needy, release prisoners, visit the sick, comfort the fainthearted, admonish the erring, and are ready, after their master's example, to give their lives for their brethren. Again, their thoughts are pure and chaste, their words are true and seasoned with salt; with them *yes* is *yes*, and *no* is *no*, and their works are done in the fear of the Lord. Their hearts are heavenly and new; their minds, peaceful and joyful; they seek righteousness with all their powers. In short, they are so assured in their faith through the Spirit and word of God that they will valiantly overcome, by virtue of their faith, all blood-thirsty, cruel tyrants, with all their tortures, punishment, exiling, plunder, stocks, stakes, executioners, tormentors and counsel; and out of a pure zeal, with an innocent, pure, simple *yes* and *no*, are willing to die. The glory of Christ, the sweetness of the word, and the salvation of souls are dearer to them than any thing under heaven.

Behold, worthy reader, all those who are born by God with Christ, who thus conform their weak life to the gospel, are thus converted, and follow the example of Christ, hear and believe his holy words, follow his commands, which he, in plain words commanded us in the holy Scriptures. They form the holy

christian church which has the promise; the true children of God, brothers and sisters of Christ; for they are born with him from one Father, and of the new Eve, the pure, chaste bride. They are flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone, the spiritual house of Israel, the spiritual city, Jerusalem, the temple and Mount Zion, the spiritual ark of the Lord, in which are hidden the true bread of heaven, Christ Jesus and his blessed word, the green, blossoming rod of faith, and the spiritual tables of stone, with the commands of the Lord written on them; they are the spiritual seed of Abraham, children of the promise, confederates of the covenant of God, and partakers of the heavenly blessings.

These regenerated people have a spiritual king over them, who rules them by the unbroken sceptre of his mouth, namely, with his Holy Spirit and Word, he clothes them with the garment of righteousness, of pure white silk; he refreshes them with the living water of his Holy Spirit, and feeds them with the bread of life. His name is Christ Jesus. They are the children of peace, who have beaten their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and do not know war. They give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's, Isa. 2:4; Matt. 22:21. Their sword is the sword of the Spirit, which they hold in a good conscience through the Holy Spirit. Their marriage is that of one man and one woman, according to the ordinance of God. Their kingdom is the kingdom of grace, here in hope, and after this in eternal life, Eph. 6:17; Matt. 19:5; 25:1.

Their citizenship is in heaven; and they use the creatures below, such as eating, drinking, clothing and dwelling with thanksgiving, and that to the necessary wants of their own lives, and to the free service of their neighbor, according to the word of Jehovah, Isa. 58:7. Their doctrine is the unadulterated word of God, testified through Moses and the prophets, through Christ and the apostles, upon which they build their faith, and save their souls; and every thing that is contrary to this, they consider

accursed. They use and administer their baptism on the confession of their faith, according to the command of the Lord, and the doctrines and usages of the apostles, Mark 16:16.

The Lord's Supper they celebrate in remembrance of the favors and death of their Lord, and in reminding one another of true and brotherly love.

The *ban* extends to all the proud scorers, great and small, rich and poor, without any respect to person, who heard and obeyed the word for a season, but have fallen off again, and teach or live offensively. [They cannot return to] the house of the Lord, till they again sincerely repent.

They sigh and lament daily over their poor, displeasing, evil flesh, over the manifold errors and faults of their weak lives. They war [against sin] inwardly and outwardly without ceasing. They seek and call the Most High: fight and struggle against the devil, world and flesh during their lives, and press on towards the prize of the high calling, that they may obtain it. And they prove by their actions that they believe the word of the Lord; that they know and have Christ in power; that they are born by God and have him as their Father.

Behold, worthy reader, as I said before; so I say again. These are the christians who have the promise, and are assured by the Spirit of God, to whom they are given and bestowed in Christ Jesus, with all his merits righteousness, intercessions, word, cross, suffering, flesh, blood, death, resurrection, kingdom, and all his possessions, and all this without merit; given out of pure grace from God. But what kind of doctrine, faith, life, regeneration, baptism, supper, ban and divine service sectarian churches have, of whatever name; and what kind of reward is promised them in the Scriptures, I will let the reasonable person meditate upon, with the aid of the Spirit and word of the Lord.

Here I would call on all the high and mighty lords, princes and rulers, all under the canopy of heaven, also on all the popes, cardinals, bishops, the wise and learned, who from the beginning perverted and darkened the Scriptures, to show us one single word in the *whole Bible*, I say in the Bible (for we do not regard human fables and lies), that an unbelieving, refractory, carnal man, without true repentance and regeneration, *ever was* or *ever will be* saved, simply because he boasts of faith and the death of Christ, or has heard the masses and service of the priests, as the whole world does; if so, they shall have gained the point. But this has never been from the beginning, and never will be to the end of time; if such vile men could be saved without repentance and regeneration, by hearing masses, and confessing, as they, poor children, without the warrant of the Scripture, hope, then we might truly say that their means were stronger (though they are idolatrous), than the word of the Lord. But the word knows no mass, it says, "Except you repent, you shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3. Then would also Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, have been false witnesses, and have miserably deceived us poor sheep, because they directed us upon such a narrow path.

Ah no! Friends, no! Beware, I tell you, God will not deceive you. For he says through the prophet Malachi, "I am Jehovah, I do not change." 3:6. All that he has testified to us in his holy word through his prophets, through Christ and his apostles, is his eternal, immutable will; on this we may all rely if we do not wish to deceive our souls. In short, all else is vain counsel and advice. True repentance and the birth from above must take place; we must believe Christ and his word, and we must abide by his Spirit, ordinance and example willingly, or eternal misery must be our portion. This is incontrovertible.

Therefore, I admonish and entreat you, as those whom my soul loves, repent! Repent!! Do not delay; "The axe is laid unto

the root of the trees; therefore, every tree which does not bring forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire,” Matt. 3:10. Watch over your poor souls that have been bought with a precious price, and be no longer comforted with open lies, nor be fed upon chaff; for behold, I tell you, there is nothing under heaven that can, or will, stand before God, but the new creature, “and faith which works by love,” and “keeping the commandments of God.” Gal. 5:6, Mat. 19:17, 1 Cor. 7:19.

My faithful reader, do not believe me, but only believe the word, to which, by the grace of God, I directed you with my small talents; for as true as the Lord lives, all who teach otherwise than we have shown from the word of the Lord, whosoever they be, are prophets who deceive you, who place pillows under your arms, and cushions under your heads; who whitewash the wall with delusions, and speak peace to the wicked, but not from the mouth of our Lord. For as certain as it is that the penitent and regenerated are the true christians, who have obtained God’s truth, the true light, pardon of their sins, and the sure promise of eternal life, so it is also certain that the sensual and impenitent are false christians, and have serpentine lies, darkness, propensity for sin, and the certain promise of eternal death. This is the truth, and will be found so in eternity before Almighty God; of this his word is to me a true witness; and I am confidently assured of it through his grace.

Now, perhaps, some may answer: Our belief is that Christ is the Son of God, that his word is truth, and that he purchased us with his death and blood, and that we were regenerated in baptism, and received the Holy Spirit, therefore, we are the true church and congregation of Christ.

We reply: If your faith is as you say, why do you not do the things which he has commanded you to do in his word? His command is REFORM. BE CONVERTED. KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS. Now it is evident that you are becoming

worse daily; that *unrighteousness* is your father, and *wickedness* is your mother, and the express command of the Lord is foolishness and derision to you. Since you will not do as he commands, or would have you do, but act as you choose, it proves sufficiently that you do not truly believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, although you say so. Nor do you believe that his word is truth; for faith and its fruits are inseparable, this you will all have to confess by the grace of God. O, you poor, blind men! Be silent and blush! Let Christ Jesus with his Spirit and word be your teacher and example, your way and your mirror. Do you think it is enough to only to acknowledge Christ according to the flesh? Or if you just *say* that you believe in him and are baptized; that you are then christians, and that you are purchased with the blood and death of Christ? Ah no! I have told you often, and tell you again, you must be born through God; in your life you must be so converted and changed that you become new creatures in Christ, that Christ must be in you, and you in Christ, or you can never be christians, for, "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature," 2 Cor. 5:17.

If you believe rightly in Christ, as you boast, then manifest it by your lives. Show that you believe; for "The just shall live by faith," as the Scriptures say. That this is all true has been fully testified and shown by the works of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Caleb, Samuel, David, Matthias, Zaccheus, Magdalene, Paul, and all the pious children of God, who were from the beginning and to this day. But how you conduct yourselves in your faith, and how you are minded may be plainly seen by your excessive lies, fraud, avarice, hoarding, cursing, swearing, pride and wantonness; for your heart burns in unrighteousness; you fear neither God nor his word; nevertheless, you boast that you believe in Christ, have his word, and that you are christians, &c. I repeat it; *Reform*, or hold your peace and be ashamed.

Further, you imagine that you were regenerated in your baptism and received the Holy Spirit. Faithful reader, remember that if it even had been so unto you as you say, you will have to acknowledge that your regeneration then took place without hearing the word, without the faith and knowledge of Christ, and without all knowledge and understanding. Besides, your aforementioned birth and the received Spirit are altogether without operation, wisdom, power and fruit; yes, they are vain and dead in you. That you live neither after the Spirit nor in the power of the new birth is evident from your gross avarice, drunkenness, pride, and idolatrous, carnal lives; of which all those baptized among you are my witnesses. Yes, my friends, if you were born by God in your baptism, and had received the Holy Spirit, as your comforters persuade and assure you, then it could not be otherwise than that the new, spiritual life and its fruits would also be manifest, as it was the case with the saints from the beginning, and is yet. It is clear that the regenerated do not presumptuously live in sin, but through faith, in true repentance, by baptism, are buried into the death of Christ, and also arise with him to a new life, and those who have the Spirit of the Lord also bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. That you do not bury your sins, but serve them in full power, and also do not bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, is daily testified by your vain, carnal and abominable lives. My friends, out of true love I warn, admonish and entreat you: awaken and observe what the word of the Lord teaches; for the Spirit of the Lord will not dwell in a wicked soul, nor in a body subjected to sin.

In the second place, I say, if you are rightly baptized according to the word of the Lord, as you imagine, then you have put on Christ, and no longer live after Adam's inbred, evil nature, but after the regenerated, good nature of Christ. But since this is not the case with you, and you are yet altogether carnal and earthly, as is evident from all your fruits, therefore it is clear that

you are not really regenerated and baptized christians, but still are impenitent, carnal pagans, for your works are chiefly done after a heathen will, as we may see and hear. Once more, I say, awaken and hear what the word of the Lord says, "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness," Rom. 8:10.

In the third place, I tell you, if you are rightly baptized according to the word of the Lord, then you are members and joint heirs of the body of Christ, and have the evidence of a good conscience before God. Inasmuch as a body is never divided in itself, nor hates its members, or does them harm, but one member serves and assists another; and since it is evident, and is indeed found to be so with you that you unmercifully persecute, murder and exterminate the chosen members of Christ, who should be your own flesh and blood, whom he purchased by his death, regenerated by his word, endued with his Spirit, and has chosen as his own peculiar people. Besides this, they have a regenerated, new and good conscience, seek no help nor comfort from human institutions, but solely adhere with a pure faith to the grace, righteousness, prayer, merits, death and blood of the Lord; while you depend upon and comfort yourselves with the masses, confession, absolution, holy water, bread, wine, oil and the vigils of the priests and monks; so the works themselves testify that you are not serviceable members of the before mentioned body, but are much more destroyers and defilers; that you have not a firm, joyful, peaceable and good conscience, but a wavering, damning, restless and evil conscience before God. For we see that all these above named superstitions and false worship, which all regenerated, pious and good consciences esteem as abominations, are your chief support and comfort, because you neither have Christ nor know him. My friends, beware, you are miserably deceived by your comforters. The spirit of prophesy says, "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things, says

the first and the last, which was dead and is alive; I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not; but are the synagogue of satan,” Rev. 2:8,9. Well may it be said at the present time to all the great and specious sects; I know the great defamations, and see the wicked lives of those who say they are regenerated, baptized christians, and are not, but are in satan’s synagogue; for I do not see how they could do worse.

But if we come to the rulers and potentates, there we find nothing but haughtiness and pride, splendor, dancing, whoring, pleasure riding, sporting, stabbing, killing, warring, destroying cities and countries, and living according to the lusts of the flesh.

If we come to the subordinate officers and judges, there we find insatiable avarice, treachery and roguery, cunning devices to defraud the helpless and God-fearing (I do not mean the good and pious); they seek gifts and presents; the rights of the righteous they pervert, and willingly accept gifts to shed innocent blood; they persecute the truth; they reject what is right and good; the fear of God is not before their eyes.

If we come to the divines, whether preachers, priests or monks, there we find such an idle, lazy, wanton and carnal life, such corrupted, anti-christian doctrine and misunderstanding of the Scriptures; such hatred, envy, defaming, betraying, lying and uproar against all the pious, that I would be ashamed to mention it before the virtuous and honest. The common people are as stubborn as a stubborn heifer, as the prophet laments, Hos. 4:16. They lie, cheat, curse and swear by the wounds and sacraments of the Lord, by his judgment, hand, power, suffering, death and blood. I am ashamed that I have to think of these scandalous abominations. They gamble, drink and quarrel. In short, neither their superfluous, wicked lives, nor their great folly can be prevented: yet it is said that the mentioned lords, judges, learned and common people are the truly regenerated church and baptized congregation of Christ. May the merciful Lord graciously

preserve all his chosen children from such a [false] regeneration, baptism and church, for all eternity.

I testify to you the truth in Christ Jesus, take heed, if you will. Jesus Christ has not endured such openly impenitent, carnal sinners in his holy city, kingdom and church, and he will never endure them, this you may believe.

O, Almighty Jehovah, how miserably your holy and paternal will, and your adorably great name are derided, and how little is your saving, precious word esteemed. Yes, what an abominable, idolatrous, carnal, revengeful and blood-thirsty devil is made out to be your beloved Son; for they cover all their abominations, sins and disgraces with his blessed, holy name, word, death and blood.

Be ashamed, O, you heedless, perverted men, be ashamed, I say, before God and his angels, that you are so rebellious and refractory; that you live so rudely, and yet dare say that you are the rightly regenerated congregation and baptized church of Christ. Often have I told you, and tell you again that all who are born by God, rightly baptized with the Spirit, fire and water, as the Scriptures teach, are of a heavenly and divine mind; their sins they bury, and now lead a penitent, pious, virtuous life according to the word of the Lord. They show the nature and power of Christ which dwells in them by word and work; they bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and subdue the works of the flesh; they are useful members of the body of Christ, and labor according to the gift received. In short, they are fruitful branches of the true vine, and their fruits abide to eternal life, John 15.

But since it is manifest in you, that you show the reverse in all your fruits, and we do see in your whole lives, that it is but world and flesh with you, therefore, it is clear that your boasting of the new birth, spirit, baptism, congregation and church is not the truth; but vanity, lies and falsehood.

The holy Scriptures and our common belief, teach us that the holy christian church is an assembly of the righteous, and a congregation of saints; and he that can see but partially into the Scriptures must confess that your church and assembly are a church and assembly of the unrighteous, lascivious, impenitent, sensual and sodomites; yes, of the blood-thirsty wolves, lions, bears, basilisks, serpents, and fiery, flying dragons.

Ah, friends, lift your heads, and open your eyes! O, you bewitched! Look over the whole world, what life they lead who have received the same baptism with you; who practice the same sacraments and worship, who indulge in the same boasting in the death and blood of the Lord, and say that they are the church and people of Christ. For it is clearer than midday that many of you are so insane, so influenced by the spirit of the devil, that you hate, envy, bite and devour one another; so that you wholly destroy principalities, cities, castles and citadels with your accursed fightings and uproar; human blood you shed like water; deprive the poor citizen and peasant (those of your own faith) of body and possessions by burning, robbing, plundering, catching, imposition, torturing, yes, even those who have never harmed you, nor given you a rash word. In truth, I do not know how the infernal leviathan could be more devilish and cruel than you or your members who imagine that they are the church of Christ. God preserve us! You disgrace families, you persecute the pious and god-fearing; you encourage open brothels, tippling houses, boxing schools, gaming boards, and similar disgraces, idolatrous houses and images, with all false service and the like, without measure and bounds. I will not touch upon your intolerable, blasphemous cursing and swearing, lying, defrauding, drunkenness, whoring, pomp, splendor, &c. What more I should say, I will forbear; for it strikes me that none can be found under the broad canopy of heaven, who can minutely relate the gross abominations, wicked acts, abuses and scandals of your fellow

believers in infant baptism; a righteous person must be astounded at those great sins. O, dear Lord, strengthen us! Yes, whosoever does not rightly understand that you are not born from above, but are baptized contrary to all Scripture, and that all your boasting of the forgiveness of sins, of the mercy, grace, merits, flesh, blood, cross, death, church, kingdom and eternal promise of God is vain, and without the Scriptures, and must be, we may say, an irrational man.

Ah, readers! How little you think upon the word of the Lord, which is so highly recommended to you; and how little you regard your poor souls, which are bought with such a precious price, and are eternally to live with God in heaven, or to be dead forever with the devil in hell. Do you think, my friends, that the Lord is a dreamer, or his word a fable? Ah, no! Not a letter will fall to the ground of all that he spoke. It is high time that you should reflect that God's promise of grace is not given to the unregenerated and impenitent, but to the regenerated and penitent. Let every one take warning and trust no longer in lies, believing that he is baptized and regenerated, nor trust in long standing usages, nor upon papistic decretals, nor imperial mandates, nor upon the wisdom and glossaries of the learned, nor upon the good opinion of any man, council, institution or wisdom. God says through the prophet, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isa 46:10. The word of God is eternal. Neither princes, nor power, nor the commands of men with all their imperial edicts will constitute faith, neither can a soul be saved by them. Only the heavenly counsel we must hear and follow that which Jesus Christ, God's first and only begotten Son himself brought from heaven, and taught from the mouth of his Father, and confirmed by signs and wonders, and finally sealed it with his crimson blood. This counsel stands, and can never be changed or prevailed against by the gates of hell. By this counsel we are, in common, taught that we must hear Christ,

believe in him, follow his footsteps, repent, be born from above, become as little children, not in understanding but in malice, be of the same mind with Christ, walk as he did, deny ourselves, take up his cross and follow him; and that if we love father, mother, children or life more than him, we are not worthy of him, nor are we his disciples. Again, that adulterers, whore-mongers, murderers, drunkards, idolaters and similar sinners shall not inherit the kingdom of God. That we do not love the world and the things in it, nor conform to the world; that we, through faith, are to die unto our evil flesh, and conquer the devil; that we are to lead an upright, unblameable, pious life through faith in all things, and act according to the will of the Lord. Again, that we are to baptize upon faith and not without it, celebrate the Lord's Holy Supper in a sincerely penitent communion, I mean so far as man can judge. That we practice exclusion or the ban according to the Scriptures. That we are to fear, serve and love the Lord with all the heart, and walk in his commands, and that we are to assist, comfort and serve our neighbor as much as in us is, and similar doctrine and instruction.

Behold, worthy reader, here you have in part the immutable, eternal counsel of God, which was sealed in the councils of his Majesty, and besides this, he recognizes no other. Blessed are they who receive this with a firm faith, and conform to this according to their abilities, in all weakness; that is live according to the Spirit, word, ordinance, command, prohibition and unblameable example of Christ. On the contrary, cursed are they who despise, reject, curse, hate, defame, mock, persecute, destroy, and cast it from them, and comfort themselves with human power, institutions and fables. For they deny the Lord who bought them, reject the gospel of peace; and do not believe that Jesus Christ is their Messiah, Savior, High Priest and Prophet. Ah! How well for them if they had never been born. May the Lord mercifully grant them converted and renewed

hearts, that they may repent and be eternally saved, if it be possible.

I will now close the matter and direct the well-meaning reader to the Scriptures; since the whole world, with few exceptions, is built upon human doctrine, lies, invented fables; perverted glossaries, vain idolatry and false service, by which the people of the world comfort themselves and boast of what they neither have nor are. Therefore have I briefly, according to my few talents, in sincere, faithful love, shown you in this epistle, who, according to the unadulterated word, are the truly regenerated and baptized christians that have the promise, and who are not such; so that all who truly hunger and thirst, and who are zealous for God, may be rightly satisfied with the truth unto eternal salvation, and no longer follow deceit to their eternal condemnation. Yes, so all who stand before the eyes of the Lord, with their poor, miserable souls, may be benefited, become whole and be saved. The Lord strengthen you, believe God's infallible word, reform your sinful lives, pray with confidence and be obedient to the gospel of Christ, that you may receive the eternal promise, to your eternal joy and salvation with all the saints, which God the merciful Father has promised to all his beloved children through Christ Jesus. Grace be with all who seek Christ and eternal life with all their heart, Amen. If you will allow Jesus Christ, with his eternal Spirit and word to be judge, then you will learn that the sure Foundation of truth has been shown.



AN EXHORTATION TO THE DISPERSED AND UNKNOWN CHILDREN OF GOD.

To all the chosen children of God, dispersed here and there, to the sanctified in Christ Jesus, unknown to me in the flesh, my beloved brethren and fellow believers in the faith, to you be the kingdom and your portion of the grace and peace of Christ.

Sincerely beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, I inform you with great joy that some praiseworthy brethren have written and informed me that the merciful, faithful Father has endued you with the heavenly gift of his divine knowledge, and enlightened you with his Holy Spirit, that your faith works by love, your hope is lively, and your union among each other is christian-like, that your peace is pleasant, and that the church of the Lord is increased and extended daily in great power and glory through the grace of God. For which I thank his paternal kindness with joyful heart, and I pray for his grace inasmuch as he has called you to the fellowship of his beloved Son, and to the imperishable, eternal kingdom of his glory through his holy gospel, that he may now and henceforth preserve you with the great power of his divine arm, in your faith, love, doctrine, truth and life, without any offence till the end.

He who has called you is faithful, and he will undoubtedly do it, if you only continue to be ardent in prayer, and unwavering in your undertaking, never become sleepy nor slothful, nor at last return again, as did refractory, disobedient Israel to the flesh pots of Egypt. May the Lord eternally and graciously preserve us. Since you are called to such a high and glorious grace, as related, and we undoubtedly know our weak, vile flesh, and the sinful

nature which we possess from Adam which makes our whole heart and life unclean, and besides we learn from the Scriptures that our opponent, the devil, goes about like a roaring lion, having rest neither day nor night, but always seeking that he might devour us; therefore I exhort you as my fellow combatants against the evil flesh, and the tents of death, that you may strictly watch inwardly and outwardly over yourselves, that you circumcise, teach, purify and sanctify your hearts with the Spirit of God. Exhort and reprove one another; curb your thoughts; subdue and extinguish your impure evil lusts in the fear of the Lord; for blessed are the pure in heart; walk worthy of Jesus and his gospel to which you have come. Whatever God has commanded, do it without murmuring; act so that none may truthfully complain of you; be sincere children of God, unblameable in this crooked and perverse generation, and shine as beautiful, clear, torch-lights in the midst of a dark night in this evil world.

Take the Lord Jesus Christ as an example, and follow his footsteps; walk as he walked, for Moses did this and all the prophets preach this. For this end did the Son of God come down from heaven; he sent out the holy apostles, and instituted baptism and the Lord's Supper as the mouth of the Lord commanded, that we may thereby be admonished to awaken, to repent and lead an unblameable, pious life in all righteousness. "Be holy; for I am holy," says Jehovah. Peter says, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light," 1 Peter 1:16; 2:9. You are guests called to the table of the Lord, and have come to the marriage of the Lamb; you are his chosen friends and bride, therefore, hear his voice willingly, and whatever is pleasing to him, do cheerfully. Adorn yourselves with the shining garment of white linen; be faithful unto death, and beware of all strange

gods. Dedicate yourselves wholly unto the Lord, that he may be your Lord and bridegroom, and teach, reprove, govern and lead you with his Holy Spirit and word, and have his perfect work in you; for you are in his grace, and through his grace you are accepted by him; espoused unto him, bought with his precious blood, reconciled to the Father, sanctified as priests and kings, and made heirs of his eternal kingdom. Therefore it is proper and right that we should be grateful to such a kind Lord, for such generous gifts; hear him, lay his word to heart and do what is well pleasing to him.

Beloved children; do not fear, but be comforted in the Lord; for he is such a faithful, pious King, to whom you have sworn and bowed your knees, that not the least of his promises shall fail you; he will be our shield and great reward, therefore, doubt nor stagger not; for it is but a small thing that we endure the heat of the sun, tribulation, fear, sorrow, temptation, robbing, persecution, prison and death for a short time. The messenger is now at the door, who shall say to us, "Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;" Mat. 25:34. Thus will our mourning and temporary pain be changed into ceaseless joy; these tyrants, with their bloody mandates, will come to an end, and all our persecutors, avengers, executioners and torturers will cease. We will follow the Lamb, adorned in white garments, with palms in our hands and crowns upon our heads; neither torment nor pain, nor pangs of death will harm us; but we will forever exalt, praise and thank, in inexpressible joy and glory, the Lamb who sits upon the throne.

Behold, my children, all the truly believing, pious hearts comfort themselves with this approaching change, by which they possess their souls with patience; well knowing that their reward in heaven is great, and that on the other hand, all the ungodly shall have their portion in the eternal, unquenchable fire, under the intolerable, dreadful sentence of God, in the abyss of hell, if

they do not convert and repent with all their hearts. Woe! Woe! To these wretched people, for it was an evil day in which they were born!! — My children be cheerful in Christ, and do not despair, for so long as we desire God sincerely, seek, fear, love, honor and serve him, and with an upright, pure zeal walk in the truth, neither the world, flesh, tyranny, devil, sin, hell, nor death shall hinder us; but the victory which is gained by a firm faith in the blood of Christ, will, through the grace of God, be on our side, and this through the Spirit of Christ which abides in us. David says, “By my God I have leaped over a wall,” Psm. 18:29. Paul says, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.” Phil. 4:13. Christ says, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;” John 16:33 and thus will they overcome, who will abide in Christ, as we may not only see in the prophets and apostles, but also in many pious hearts at the present day, in great power and clearness.

I have nothing particular any more to write; therefore, beware that you walk wisely and circumspectly; preserve your wedding garment; have oil at all times in your lamps, lest the Lord meet you in an undue time, find you unprepared and naked, and close the door on you, or cast you into outer darkness.

With unfeigned true, brotherly love, and out of a pure heart, love each other sincerely, as those who are regenerated, not of corrupt but of incorruptible seed, out of the word of the living God, which will abide forever; for love is of God and of a divine nature, and does right before God and man, is long-suffering, compassionate, peaceable, and gives offence to none. In short, it is unblameable and brings forth christian fruit; it is the spiritual girdle of Aaron and his sons; the girdle of perfection and the fair bond of peace. O, how completely happy is he who is girded with this bond, for he is born by God, he is in God and God is in him. John 14:20. Yes, where this love is, there we find the true,

sincere and pious christian. Therefore, take care of this bond, for if you lose it you will lose Christ Jesus and eternal life.

Beware of false doctrine, of all discord, strife and dissension, and without wavering, adhere to the Spirit, word and example of Christ if you would not be deceived; for every spirit which is not satisfied with the Spirit, word and example of Christ, and will not conform to this is not of God, but is the spirit of anti-christ, which would rob you again, and all the pious, of the precious light of revealed truth, which graciously appeared to us, poor children, in these abominable days, and would again lead you on the crooked paths of death, under the semblance of the Scriptures.

My children in Christ, be warned. Out of true brotherly love, I write to you. The merciful, gracious God grant that you may read, hear, and understand it, with such hearts that it may bring much fruit among you, and that your fruits may abide in eternal life. Pray for your poor, unknown brother, who loves you in truth. He that continues towards perfection to the end, shall be saved. The saving power and fruits of the crimson blood of Christ be with you, and with all my chosen brothers and sisters to eternity, Amen.



**A CONSOLING ADMONITION
CONCERNING THE
SUFFERINGS, OPPRESSIONS
AND
Persecutions of the Saints
FOR THE
WORD OF GOD AND HIS TESTIMONY.
BY
MENNO SIMON.**

“Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you,” Matt. 5:15.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 8:11.

PREFACE.

I, MENNO SIMON, sincerely desire that all the true children of God may obtain grace and peace, a perfect understanding of the Lord, a firm mind in all temptations, from God our heavenly Father, through his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the power of his Holy Spirit, to our edification and salvation, Amen.

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, since the all-merciful God and Father, through his boundless grace and

goodness, has again, in these last times of unbelief, abominations and idolatry, in this terrible, wanton, ruthless, perverted and blood-thirsty world, revealed before the eyes of the consciences of some, his blessed, only, and eternal Son, Jesus Christ, who was unknown [to most] for so many centuries; since he has again opened the book of the divine declarations and eternal truth, which had been [almost] closed for many centuries.* Some of those who lay dead, not for four days only, as Lazarus did, according to the flesh, but for twenty or thirty years, yes, who all their lives slumbered in the spiritual death of sin and all ungodliness, have awakened from the foul grave of unbelief and unrighteousness, and have been called to a new, unblameable life. Through the preaching of his word, in the power of his Holy Spirit, he continues to call the poor, miserable, starving sheep out of the hands of the faithless shepherds, and out of the clutches of the ravening wolves. He leads them out of the dry, unfruitful pastures of man's doctrine and commands, to the green, fat pastures upon the mount of Israel, and places them under the power and protection of their only and eternal shepherd, Jesus Christ, who, through his precious, crimson blood has purified and purchased them for his own; therefore, the gates of hell foam and rage. Herod with the whole city is above measure frightened and enraged, because he has heard from the wise men, who are taught by God, that the King of the Jews is born. The great dragon, the old, crooked serpent, who was cast from heaven, whose head and power has been bruised and broken by the promised seed of the woman, is overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and, on account of the word of his testimony, burns with anger. He knows well that his time is short, and therefore he carries on his works and tyranny through his children and servants, the unbelievers, with great wrath and fierceness, against those who have been sprinkled

* [CHCoG: As detailed in [*The Bloody Theatre*](#), and prophesied in Scripture, there have always been some who knew Christ and walked in the truth.]

with the blood of the Lamb. Annas and Caiaphas, with all the scribes, counsel to slay Christ. Judas and all false apostles and teachers betray and deliver him up. Herod, with all his lords and princes, scorn and, mock him. The people cry out, Crucify him! Crucify him!! Pilate, and all those who bear the sword, sentence him to stocks, fire, sword and water. The servants seize, spit upon, scourge, crown and crucify him. The soldier pierces his side, the others mock, blaspheme and upbraid him. Who is there that does not persecute, crucify and dishonor with heart, word or deed, the poor, innocent, peaceful, defenceless Lamb? Yes, in the ungodly Cain has the bloody, murderous tyranny taken its origin, and has fully shown its artfulness, properties, fruit and nature to the pious, godly Abel.

Inasmuch, then, as the Lamb and its chosen members, from the beginning, have been persecuted and slain by the malice of the creatures of the conquered serpent, and inasmuch (according to Scriptures) as this persecution will not cease so long as there are righteous and unrighteous people on earth; and as in our days, especially, the cross of Christ, on every hand (as it was in the days of our ancestors), is laid upon all God-fearing children, who are inwardly born again from the powerful seed of the holy word; therefore I cannot neglect to admonish my beloved brothers and sisters, fellow-believers and fellow-sufferers with the word of the Lord, concerning the suffering, cross and persecution of the saints, which is abundantly related in the Scriptures, and was abundantly visited upon our fathers, both in the Old and New Testaments, and also upon many pious witnesses of our own days; that they may, according to the example of our fathers, fearlessly and valiantly continue the undertaken contest, in all constancy, patience, strength, courage and valor, through the power of their faith in Christ Jesus; and that they may thus receive the promised crown. For this purpose may the Father of every good and perfect gift through his beloved Son Jesus Christ,

our Lord, grant us the riches of his grace, in the power of his Holy Spirit, Amen.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

“BLESSED are they (said Christ) who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.” Mat. 5:10.

I know well, worthy brothers and sisters in the Lord, that the true laborers and servants of the Lord, have each one planted and watered according to the gifts which they have received. They have caused you to be born again by the living word of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, and they have built in a godly manner upon Christ, the firm and immoveable corner stone. They have taught you the word, will and ordinances of God according to his good pleasure; have united you in love as a willing, obedient, pure bride to your bridegroom, Christ Jesus. That they have in full earnestness, shown you the narrow, much scorned way; have preached the cross, and have pointed out and admonished you in regard to the pains and costs of this godly building, for it can never be otherwise, as you well know, than that all who would hear, follow and enter through the right door, Christ Jesus, and would walk upon the highway to eternal life in the light of Christ must first deny themselves, and all they are, with their whole heart. They must, in all misery, ignominy and trouble, take upon themselves the pressing cross, and must follow the rejected, outcast, bleeding and crucified Christ, as he himself said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.” Mat. 16:24. Yes, all who do not stand

prepared to take up this grievous life of the cross and trouble, and do not love Christ more than their father and mother, son, daughter, husband or wife, houses, land, money, goods and life, cannot be Christ's disciples.

My faithful brethren this is a true and sure word; for the eternal truth, Christ Jesus, has in many places of the Scriptures, pointed out and testified this in great clearness; "Behold," he says, "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore, be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the gentiles," Matt. 10:16-18.

Again, "Brother shall deliver up his brother to death, and the father his child; and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death, and you shall be hated by all men for my name's sake," Matt. 10:21,22.

Again, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household," Matt. 10:24,25.

Again, "He that loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. He that finds his life shall lose it, and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it," Matt. 10:37-39.

Again, "Then they shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and you shall be hated by all nations for my name's sake," Matt. 24:9.

Again, “They shall put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time comes that whosoever kills you will think that he does God a service,” John 16:2.

Again, “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.” “If we are dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him,” Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:12; 2:11,12.

Yes, the Scriptures abound with exhortations, examples and histories of the troubles, sorrows, miseries, proscriptions, upbraidings, reproachings, deceivings, imprisonments, plunderings, ignominious death and crosses of the saints.

Since from the beginning of the world, true righteousness, devotion and piety, are thus miserably hated, persecuted, and cast out, as it has been abundantly shown in the case of the pious fathers, and as may be seen, and found in these last times, as we have said, I deem it necessary to show from the word of the Lord, to our youthful, weak, and untried brothers and sisters, who such persons are that persecute us, and inflict upon us this trouble and sorrow; why they do so and how they maintain their tyranny and bloody deeds. And also, what profit we receive from the cross, and what is promised to those, who, through the power of faith, overcome all temptations and extremities, and maintain the conflict through Christ Jesus, in order that they, through such counsels, may be ready and prepared for all trials. They must put on the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, with the shield of faith, and be girded with the sharp, piercing sword of the Spirit in all humility, meekness and patience, with ardent prayers and sighs to the Lord, in order that when any swift, unseen uproar shall arise against us, it shall not fall upon us unawares. Thus an unexpected storm shall not cast down our house, the heat of the sun shall not scorch the growing plant, the heat and power of the fire shall not consume the erected works,

and that we will not be drawn off and frightened into a deadly apostasy by their threats, uproar and tyranny. Therefore, my beloved, read and understand this in all love, for our Lord knows that out of pure love, I have written this for the benefit of my dear brethren, according to my received gifts, Eph. 6; 1 Thes. 5.

In the first place, dear brethren, I esteem it to be very necessary that all the godly, and strivers under the cross of Christ, who seek for encouragement in their crosses and sufferings, which they endure for the sake of the testimony of God and their consciences, to consider carefully and earnestly, who and what they are that so madly persecute, oppress and afflict them; of what disposition and nature they are; upon what way they walk, and from what father, according to the Spirit, they are born. All who carefully observe them, and try them by the Scriptures, will find, according to my opinion, that they are not Christians, but are an unbelieving, fleshly, earthly, wanton, blind, hardened, lying, idolatrous, perverted, malicious, revengeful, unmerciful and murderous people. A people, who by their actions and fruits, show that they neither know Christ nor his Father, although they so highly praise his holy name with their mouth, and extol it with their lips. They tread in slippery, crooked and perverted paths; who do not display Christian love and peace; who bathe their hearts and hands in blood; their disposition is to seize and kill. They are children and co-partners of him who, from the beginning, was a murderer and a liar, of whom the whole Scriptures testify that they shall forever bear, the intolerable curse and malediction of the righteous judgment of God, and [die in] the devouring flames of hell, unless they awake from the deep, deadly sleep of their sins, sincerely repent, believe the joyous Gospel of Jesus Christ, and put on Christ, and thus show by their whole lives and actions that they seek the true God with all their might, and that they fear and love him, be they emperors, kings, doctors, licentiates, citizens, peasants, man or woman. For with

God, says Paul, there is no respect of persons, and whosoever commits sin, he shall bear it. Rom 2:11, Eze 18:20

Worthy and faithful brethren in the Lord, observe what a blind, naked, poor, miserable and unwise people they are in divine things, who so bitterly persecute and destroy you without mercy, on account of your faith. Therefore, it becomes all the true and chosen children of God, however severely they may be dealt with and contradicted by these people, not to be angry with them, but to sincerely pity them, and sigh sorely over their poor souls, with all meekness and ardency, after the example of Christ and Stephen, to pray about their raging, cursed folly and blindness, for they do not know what they do. Who knows but God may give them eyes and hearts, that they may see and know their blindness and unbelief; see what an impure life they lead, what kind of people they persecute, and whom they have pierced.

O, my beloved brethren, I observe and consider well upon our own former lives; we have all, in former times, served their Lord and were attired in the same habit, as has been said. But what we now are, we are not by ourselves, but by God, by grace through Christ Jesus. The mighty God, who lives forever, according to his great mercy, has called us out of our accursed darkness into his marvellous light. His ears are not stopped, nor his hand shortened; he can undoubtedly hear and help them as he helped us. If they never repent, but continue with impenitent, perverted hearts, in all ungodliness, blood, wantonness and tyranny, till they die, we know what the Scriptures testify concerning them; that they shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven; but their part shall be in the fiery lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and the fire will be everlasting, Rev. 21:8.

Every one, then, who reflects that his persecutors are so wholly blind and destitute of understanding, concerning what the Spirit directs, as said above, and that their lot shall be like that of the angels of the bottomless pit, the intolerable wrath of God,

death and hell, which shall last forever,* and the sufferings which we have to endure from them for the testimony of Jesus, are but temporary and momentary, will through grace, by this means, preserve his heart pure from all wrath, malice and retaliation towards them, and will ardently pray for them. He will commend his affairs to God in all humility, long-suffering, and peace, will preserve his spirit unbroken, amid prisons, fire and water.

Again, I deem it a soft and mild salve, and a cooling to our miseries and grief, if we but reflect upon the reason why our persecutors so malevolently hate us, and so relentlessly destroy our name, property, reputation, welfare and lives, which is because the grace of God, through Christ, has enlightened us; because we have believed the preached Gospel, and have ceased from our blind, ruthless life and deadly works. It is because we desire, in our weakness, to follow in the fear and love of God, after the righteousness of faith which is required by God, and in obedience to the holy word; because we acknowledge the ever blessed Jesus alone as our Redeemer, Mediator, Intercessor, spiritual King, Example, Shepherd, infallible Teacher and Master. It is because we judge and prove all spirits, doctrines, councils, ordinances, statutes and ceremonies as far as regards spirit and faith, with the Spirit, doctrine, ordinances, commands and ceremonies of Christ, and thus esteem the commands and ceremonies of men, which are contrary to the commands and ceremonies of God, not only as vain and useless, but also as accursed and idolatrous, according to the Scriptures. It is because we regard and honor God more than man, we hold in exaltation his high, holy, true and precious word; because we, according to

* [CHCoG: Indeed, the punishment of Satan and his fallen angels shall be ongoing, but unrepentant humans shall be burnt up like chaff, and destroyed body and soul in the Lake of Fire. Mat. 10:28, Luke 3:17, Rev 20:10 & 21:8. Remember, only Christ's disciples will be given eternal life. John 10:28.]

the Scriptures, do not listen to the unclean, unsound, idolatrous, deceiving and blood-thirsty preachers; because we admonish and set an example in all love, as far as we are able, to the whole world, with the word and sacraments of God, and with humble, meek lives, though in weakness, according to our abilities; and we rebuke and shame (though always for their good), their deceiving doctrine, idolatrous sacrament and their wanton, earthly, fleshly life. In short, because we, in good faith, point them to the sure and infallible truth of God, to the true light and to the highway of eternal life, and thus warn and alarm them, as much as we can, with doctrine and life, against the wrath of God and eternal death.

Behold, my faithful brethren, it is for the reasons enumerated here that the world lies, writes, calls, preaches, and is so malicious towards all the pious; they burn with such inhuman rage, as may be seen, that the ravening, fierce wolves and roaring lions, when compared with them, cease to be wolves and lions, but seem to be like tame deer or innocent lambs. They are so moved by the inflamed, blood-thirsty spirit of their father that they regard neither the law of God and Christ, which is love, nor reason and discretion, nor the inwardly written law of nature, by which an honest man should reasonably, according to the good pleasure of God, meet, bear, admonish and serve another in all love. Yes, often times the natural father delivers his son up to death, and the son his father; the mother her daughter, and the daughter her mother; and one brother delivers another on account of his faith, as said.

Behold, thus haughtily and maliciously, they assume, without any awe or fear, the court of God and the office of the Holy Spirit. They banish Christ Jesus, the head of all princes and powers, who has all might in heaven and upon earth, from the throne of his divine majesty; and judge with their iron sword, after their own blind opinions and carnal desires, the chosen, god-

fearing, pious hearts, enlightened in God through Jesus Christ, over whom no literal sword should ever judge, for they are spiritual, and from their inmost soul are zealous for God and his holy word, even till death.

Behold, so malicious and haughty is human reason, and so revengeful and envious is satanic hatred that they do not fear to strive against the Most High, and pierce Christ Jesus with their murderous, deadly sword, and persecute with all their power, the Holy Spirit, gifts, word and truth of God, and all that he commands and will have us do.

O, that God would grant that the blind watchmen of this world, I mean the preachers and theologians, may sound their horns to a right tone and at a proper time, or that they would let them hang on the walls, in order that they may not with this, tyrannically call out the deadly, murder cry, nor longer deceive the carnal, blind world, nor instigate the rulers and magistracy to the destruction and murdering of the saints, like hounds pursuing the roe. O, that God would grant that the poor, common people would sicken of their leaven and husks; yes, of their spiritual stealing and murdering; also that all rulers and magistrates would tear the bridle from their mouths, and cast their instigators from their backs, and not allow themselves to be thus driven like dumb beasts, and then, according to my opinion, it would be well for their poor souls before God. Still, I fear that the lying, murderous serpent will continue its envious bitings; and the striving woman, the new Eve, and her children must endure, to the end, in all patience and long-suffering, its daily bites and stings in the heel.

Since I have here pointed out to you, in a few words, the spirit and nature of those who destroy you and seek your property and life, and the principal, urging reasons which impel them to do so; I will now present to my brethren, some histories and examples from the holy Scriptures, for the comfort and encouragement of all the miserable, afflicted, and troubled hearts

who suffer oppression, and misery in the flesh for righteousness' sake, in which histories and examples these things may be clearly found and traced.

In the first place, Eve, the mother of us all, brought forth her two sons, Cain and Abel. Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. In process of time it came to pass, says Moses, that Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruits of the field, and Abel brought one from the first of his flock. Jehovah regarded Abel and his sacrifice but he did not look favourably upon Cain and his gift. Therefore Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell through great wrath, even as the ungodly always are envious of the pious, because the Lord regards the pious and loves their sacrifices. Cain spoke deceitfully to his pious, humble brother Abel, who did not know the malicious, bloody heart of his brother, saying, Let us go out, and when they were in the field, Cain's hot, envious spirit could no longer be restrained, and his blood-thirsty, revengeful spirit could not be hid. That which lays concealed in the heart must break out in the actions; he arose against his innocent brother and in his fierce wrath slew him. Why did he do this? Because Cain was of the evil one and his works were evil, and his brother's works were righteous.*

It seems to me, dear brethren, that this is a fair example and a good reference; for the righteous always have been off-scourings and a prey to the unrighteous, and so will they continue to be, as the Scriptures sufficiently testify, and as daily experience plainly teaches.

* [CHCoG: But why did Jehovah reject Cain's offering, which was likely the very best of his garden produce? Almost certainly because this was effectively a Passover offering, and God had told them the offering **must be** a first-born male lamb. Cain instead offered what HE thought should be acceptable, thus directly disobeying God.]

Again, God blessed the patriarch Isaac, and gave him two sons. The elder was Esau, and the younger, Jacob. Esau was a husbandman and hunter, and had great pleasure in the chase. Once, as he came home much fatigued, he sold his birthright to Jacob, his brother, for some food, Gen. 25:33.

After this it came to pass that Jacob, through the artifice and deception of his mother, obtained the blessing of his father Isaac by assuming the name and appearance of Esau. This result was the intention and will of God, to remember the literal synagogue and the church of Christ, according to his word to Rebecca, while she was yet pregnant; namely, "Two nations are in your womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from your bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger," Gen. 25:23.

When Esau became aware of this, he wept bitterly and said, Rightly is he called Jacob, for he has supplanted me twice. Esau sought the blessing, but did not obtain it, for God willed it otherwise, as said above.*

Esau became very angry with his brother Jacob, on account of the blessing with which his father had blessed him. His malicious, bitter fierceness broke forth, and he said, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother." Gen. 27:41. Then Jacob had to flee from his dear father and mother before his wrathful brother. He fled to a distant country, and became a servant for twenty years in the house of Laban, who did not deal with him according to equity and love. He dared not again enter the land of his birth, till Jehovah said unto him, "Return unto the land of your fathers, and to your kindred; and I will be with you," Gen. 31:3.

* [CHCoG: Though their lies did fulfil parts of God's plan, it is certain that what they did was NOT how Jehovah was planning to go about all of this, and they caused much unnecessary hatred.]

My dear brethren, observe; as the patriarch Jacob, on account of his external birthright and blessing, was hated and persecuted by his carnal, fierce brother, Esau, thus also it is at the present day, with all those who, after the Spirit, are called after the name of Jacob, namely, true Christians, that in the power of the Holy Spirit through the medium of faith, tread upon the devil, world, flesh, and blood.* We obtain the birthrights which are written in heaven, and are blessed through our true Isaac, Christ Jesus, with spiritual blessings in heavenly things, to eternal glory. We are maliciously hated and persecuted to death by our carnal and licentious brethren; we must flee from one land to another, from one city to another, with great misery, hunger and distress; in prison, in bonds, with hunger, strips, water, fire and sword, all the days of our lives, as may be seen.

Thus the fleshly Esau tyrannizes the spiritual Jacob, on account of the spiritual birthright and blessing, although they were both born from the same father, Adam, and from the one mother Eve, and are created after the image of God.

Thirdly, Saul, the first king of Israel, on account of his thoughts and disobedience, was rejected by the Lord; and David, the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, according to the command of God, was taken from the sheep and anointed by Samuel in his place, yet he did not assume the government during the life of Saul. The Lord was with David, and strengthened his hands. He did great works in the name of Jehovah; he released the stolen sheep out of the mouth of the lion and bear; he slew the terrible, great Goliath and he killed two hundred of the uncircumcised Philistines. He acted in all things prudently, rightly and valiantly; for the Lord was with him. When Saul returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, the women of all the cities of Israel

* [CHCoG: But unlike Jacob, we do not, and cannot, inherit these blessings by deception, nor by excluding another. And therefore, unlike Jacob and Esau, we are hated without a just cause.]

came to meet the king, singing and rejoicing with all manner of stringed instruments, and tambours, speaking joyfully one to another, Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands. This enraged Saul sorely, and he said, They have given David ten thousand and me but a thousand! What else can he want but the kingdom? 1 Sam. 18:8. From that day forth David had no favor with Saul, for Saul sought his life secretly and openly, with great assiduity and craft; although Saul well knew the piety of David and that Jehovah was with him; yet his heart burned with such ill-will, envy, revenge and blood-thirstiness that when David escaped, the good Abimelech and the priests of Jehovah were put to death and the whole city, Nob, was laid in ruins for David's sake, 1 Sam. 22.

He regarded neither the piety, kindness, fidelity nor well-doing of David towards him and all Israel, nor the grace, works and will of God, but became unmindful and drunken in his wrath and envy, so that the enemies and betrayers of David, such as Doeg the Edomite and the Ziphitea were highly regarded and honored by him, but the peacemakers, and those who advised for good, like his son Jonathan, were hated by him, and held in suspicion. In short, David had to flee, and for some years fly from one land to another, from one wilderness to another, and from one mountain to another, till Saul was overcome by the Philistines upon Mount Gilboa, when through vain despair and fear, he thrust the sword, which he had borne against the righteous and innocent, into his heart, and thus took his own life.

Thus the Almighty Lord and Potentate of all things punishes the haughty, blood-thirsty tyrants, each one in his time, who bear the sword of their office against God and his chosen, as may be seen of Saul, Pharaoh, Antiochus, Ahab, Jezebel, Herod and others. On the other hand, he can guard his chosen, and help them out of all their difficulties, how hard soever they may be pressed. This he has shown in the deliverance of Israel when he

led them through the Red Sea, and in preserving David, Hellas, Elisha, Daniel in the Lion's den, and the three young men in the fiery furnace, and in many other instances.

Here again we have a clear example in the case of Saul and David, how the proud, reckless, self-willed and carnal princes every where, although they wish to be called christian princes and gracious lords, act and behave towards the true David, Christ Jesus, and all his saints, whom he has anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit; who have power from above with him, in and through him to overcome the fearful, infernal bear, lion and Goliath, hell, sin, death, devil, malediction and wrath. They can have peace nowhere, with this evilly disposed Saul, howsoever innocent, god-fearing, and pious they may be. Neither innocence nor piety, praying nor tears, word nor Christ, avail. As in the case of David, every thing is perverted and construed for the worst. This has ever been the case, and according to my opinion, will remain so to the end.

Still my brethren, do not fear, for all your persecutors and enemies will become old like a garment, however mighty, glorious and great they may be esteemed. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness of it is as the flower of the field." But you shall flourish and increase in God, and your fruit shall never more decay, for the kingdom of Jerusalem is given to you, and the glorious Lord Jehovah will have honor in you, though Saul rages, and will give to you the eternal kingdom, which he has prepared and set apart everlastingly for you, and all the chosen, Isa. 40:6, 2 Pet. 1:11.

Fourthly, Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, a priest of the priests of Anathoth, was sanctified from his mother's womb, and was chosen by God to be a prophet and a seer from his youth. He rebuked Judah and Benjamin on account of their disobedience, stubbornness, transgressions, false worship, idolatry and bloodshed, with the mouth and law of God. He taught repentance

and reformation, prophesied of the promised Messiah, whom he called the Branch and Root of David. He preached the coming punishment and wrath of God, namely, the captivity and destruction of the kings, the destruction of the city and temple, and the captivity of the people for seventy years. Jer. 25:11,12.

And his prophecies, faithful warnings, visions and rebukes from the mouth of Jehovah, became to him as sharp, piercing thorns; they cast his word and admonitions aside, and would not hear them. The pious prophet and true servant of God became regarded as their betrayer, a factionist and heretic. The word of Jehovah was to them as a daily mockery. He was oftentimes imprisoned and scourged, and thrown into a foul pit. They counselled concerning his death. He was so pressed with the cross that he once resolved in his heart to preach no more in the name of Jehovah. Yes, he cursed the day of his birth, and the man who brought the message to his father that a man child was born. Jer. 20:15. Thus this worthy man of God had to bear the heavy cross for many years, for the sake of the word and truth of the Lord. He had to yield his ear to all reproaches, and his back to scourging, till the floods of trouble burst upon the hardened, rebellious, unbelieving people, but alas! They saw too late that Jeremiah was a right messenger, and a true prophet of God. Besides all this he had to close his life in Egypt, being stoned to death as a reward for his ardent love and difficult, bitter work.

My dear brethren in the Lord, here I will end the narratives from the Old Testament, for time will not suffice to relate them all. The pious Joseph was grievously hated by his brethren, and was cast by them into a pit and again drawn out, and sold to the Ishmaelites, and was complained against as a perfidious adulterer by the unchaste wife of his lord. Though he was innocent, yet he suffered his lord's wrath, imprisonment and bonds. Also the highly renowned, evangelical prophet, Isaiah, under the bloody and idolatrous tyrant Manasseh, was sawn asunder, as the

historian mentions. The spiritual prophet, Ezekiel, was stoned by those who remained of Dan and Gad. Urijah of Kirjath jearim, was slain with the sword by Jehoiakim the king of Judah. Zacharias the son of Barachias, was stoned between the temple and the altar. The great wonder-doing prophet Elijah, had to retreat before the blood-thirsty, idolatrous Jezebel; the three youths, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were cast into the glowing furnace, and Daniel into the lion's den. The venerable, pious, old Eleazar, and his worthy, pious wife, with their seven sons, were inhumanly and barbarously treated by the terrible Antiochus, being tortured, martyred and destroyed.

Behold brethren, every christian should be aware that this is the only reward and crown of this world, with which they reward and honor all true servants of God, who present to them in pure love, the kingdom, word, and will of God; who call them to repentance and reformation; who have rendered many kindnesses, services and favors; direct them to salvation, righteousness, truth, piety and love; who are the golden candlesticks in the tabernacle of the Lord, and flourish and blossom as the fruitful olive tree in the house of God. All who reflect on these and similar histories and narratives of the pious men of God, will undoubtedly not despond, but in all their miseries, crosses and sufferings will stand through the grace of God, and abide unwavering to the end, [rejoicing in the joy to come].

Since I have now presented some histories out of the holy Scriptures, by which it is plainly seen that the truly righteousness every where have suffered, and have been destroyed, under the law and before the law of Moses; therefore, I will now, through the grace of God, present some examples out of the New Testament, by which all may learn, and acknowledge with Paul, that, "All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," 2 Tim. 3:12.

First, John the Baptist, a man sent by God, as the Evangelist testifies; a burning and shining light, as Christ says, and of whom Isaiah had prophesied a long time before, saying, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of Jehovah, make his paths straight,” Isa 40:3, Matt. 3:3, whom Malachi called the messenger of the Lord, whose birth, greatness, holiness, office, doctrines and works were announced by Gabriel, the heavenly messenger, to Zacharias, his father. John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb. Luke 1. He preached repentance to all Judea, pointed out CHRIST, the Savior of the world, and said, “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” John 1:29. Of him the Son of God himself gave testimony that he was no wavering reed, that he was not clothed in soft raiment, that he was greater than a prophet, that he was the promised Elijah, that he came in the way of righteousness, and among all that were born of women, there had not arisen a greater than he. He was also held by the people as a prophet, yet did some say, “He has a devil,” Mat. 11:18. Yes, Herod, the king, cast him into prison as a profligate vagrant, and after some days, this holy man of God was beheaded by the executioner as a shameful transgressor, on account of his rebuking Herod’s adultery with his brother’s wife, and his head was given to a vain, haughty, dancing maid, and her unchaste, adulterous mother, to be shown and presented to the drunken, useless and ungodly guests of Herod, on a charger, as a present and banquet dessert. Matt. 14.

O Lord! How lamentably and grievously the righteous are destroyed on account of their piety, by this abominable, bloody, murderous world, and no one takes it to heart. Yes, they are so dealt with that it appears before the eyes of the unwise as if the godly were an offence and an abomination, and were banished and cursed by God, and that they might neither hope for, nor find, to all eternity, comfort or grace from God. O, no! Our Lord be

blessed; although their lives may appear to the foolish world to be but idle frenzy, and their end to be without honor, yet we know that they are the people and children of Jehovah, and the apple of his eye, that their blood and death are dear to him; that after a little suffering and trouble they shall be recompensed with good; that theirs is the kingdom of heaven; that they will not be touched with the pains of eternal death, Wis. 3, Rev. 20:6, but their precious souls shall be in eternal rest and peace. Yes, my brethren, every christian may trust and rejoice in the Lord in all his trials and in all his need.

Again, Stephen, one of the crowned by God, was a man full of faith, power and the Holy Spirit, who did great signs and wonders among the people, as Luke writes, and was endued by God with such wisdom and spirit, according to the promises of Christ, that his enemies, namely, the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, &c., were silenced, and stood abashed before him. As they saw this, the spirit of their fathers displayed itself, as it had done from the beginning; consuming envy must use its artifices. Stephen must be lead away; as they have rejected justice and equity, they employed the men of Belial to contradict the pious Stephen and say, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God; and that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us; thus have the lies of the serpent overcome justice. Their counsel was to exterminate the saint. His own enemies saw his countenance, as the countenance of an angel of God. He spoke the word of the Lord without fear, rebuked their false trust in the law and the temple, and testified of Jesus Christ in great power, of whom Moses and all the prophets prophesied. At length he grew very warm and ardent in his speech to the multitude, because they had ungratefully rejected the merciful visitation of God to his preferred race. O, you stiffnecked! he said, and you uncircumcised in heart and ears, you

always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so also do you. Which of the prophets have your fathers not persecuted? They have slain them which showed beforehand of the coming of the just One, of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law through the dispositions of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these reproofing and sharp words they could no longer endure it, for they were cut to the heart, and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," Acts 7:51-56. Then they called aloud and stopped their ears, and as they could not longer endure the blasphemous words with which the wicked heretic (as they considered him), boasted and with which he gave such honor to Christ; they rushed upon him with one accord and with great vehemence and wrath, cast him out of the city, and stoned him, while Saul watched over their clothing. Stephen called out, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. He kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, after the example of his master on the cross, "Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge, for they do not know what they do," Acts 7. Thus the pious martyr fell asleep in the Lord, and received the crown of life which God has promised to all those who fear, love and seek him from the heart, with all sincerity.

O, God-fearing reader, observe and learn from such examples that all those who believe the word of the Lord with true hearts, who become partakers of the Holy Spirit, who are clothed with power from on high, out of whose mouth flow grace and wisdom, who shame the world and rebuke sin must, with Stephen, be cast out of the city and stoned.

Dear brethren, pray ardently and prepare yourselves. Through much misery and trouble you must enter into the

kingdom of heaven. Here is the patience and faith of the saints. O, my brethren, watch.

Again, Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, a chosen vessel, a champion of the holy word, an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, who was not called by men, but by God himself, from heaven to the service of the gospel, was powerful and zealous in his teaching, and unblameable in his life. He labored more than all the other apostles, cast out devils in the name of the Lord, awakened the dead Eutychus again to life, restored health to the sick, shook off the serpent without receiving an injury; as a true prophet, he foretold many things which were to come to pass in the last times, was taken up into the third heaven and to the paradise of God, and saw such a vision of which no man might with propriety speak. He was an infallible leader in all righteousness, holiness, piety and virtue, who sought and loved not himself, but God and his neighbor from his whole heart. He had nothing by which to justify himself; he regarded all gain as loss, that he might win Christ alone; yes, he did not dare speak of any thing, but what Christ had wrought through him. It did not avail how holy, unblameable, zealous, high called, powerful or how devout he was. Yet he must, with Simon, the Cyrenian, help to bear the cross of Christ; for as soon as he was called from heaven, taught and baptized by Ananias, had left his tyranny, and preached Christ in Damascus, he had to be let down over the wall in a basket to escape the snares of the blood-thirsty.

He was often imprisoned; thrice scourged with rods, stoned once, in Ephesus he was cast to wild beasts, and at last, after inconceivable and innumerable pains and journeys from one land to another, after enduring much from nakedness, cold, heat, thirst, hunger, labor, watchings, dangers and anguish, he was seized by the Jews at Jerusalem and scourged; they accused him before the judges, swore to take his life, and secured him in Cesarea. After his appeal to Caesar, he arrived with much danger and shipwreck

at Rome, where he was brought before the emperor, and at last, under Nero, the most blood-thirsty of tyrants, was put to death by the sword. He offered up his soul and surrendered his life.

In a similar manner were the apostles imprisoned and scourged in Jerusalem; the church was dispersed and persecuted, and James was put to death with the sword under Herod. All who desire to become acquainted with other narratives besides those here noticed, from the Holy Scriptures, can read the church history by Eusebius, there will they find similar inhuman abominations, tyranny, unmercifulness and envious falsehoods against the innocent. Besides this, they will find such extraordinarily strange inventions to torture, martyr, kill, root out and murder christians, that a natural man, to say nothing of a spiritual one, must in his heart, be awe-stricken and sickened.*

* As a further illustration of this subject the following extracts from Eusebius and others, concerning the humility and meekness of the believing Martyrs of that day (Eus. B. V. C. 3), is given.

“They followed Christ Jesus in all humility, although they were oft made martyrs. However they did not call themselves MARTYRS nor consented that others should call them such, but when even one of us called them MARTYRS they reproved us severely, saying, That this name properly belonged to Christ, who alone was the true and faithful Martyr and witness of the truth, the first born from the dead and the RESTORER of eternal life. Or that this name could only appropriately be given to those, who after laying off a testimony had departed this life and gone to God. But we (they say), as humble, poor people, wish alone to adhere undeviatingly to the confession, and therefore, they entreated the other brethren with tears, that they would pray to God that they might obtain the witness of a MARTYR (full confession), and they were so humble, though in truth they were MARTYRS, still they avoided the honor of the name. But among the heathens they acted with all constancy, showed great magnanimity, by scorning the offered insults, and through patience, suffered. For among the brethren they were meek, among persecutors brave, a terror to the refractory, subject

My most beloved brethren in Christ Jesus, be of good cheer and trust in our Lord, you who willingly submit to the cross of Christ. You may see and observe from the Scriptures, in the above examples from the Old and New Testaments, how all pious men and children of God, the righteous and prophets, apostles and true witnesses of Christ, yes, Christ himself, as we shall yet hear, have gone through this lonesome wilderness, through this

to Christ, opposing the devil; they humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God, by which they are now exalted; they favored all, they accused none, relieved all, bound none; prayed for those who persecuted them, as did Stephen, saying, "Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge." The devil opposed them powerfully, because they, out of great love in Christ Jesus, restored the fallen, whom the devil would soon have devoured. They entreated God to give them grace and constancy, lest they might depart from the church and become a prey to the devil.

They preferred peace before every thing else, and commanded us to maintain peace. They were martyred without cause and were conscious that they made no discord among the brethren and no grief to the church; but they admonished assiduously, that we should, by all means, maintain and preserve peace, and cherish love, which is the bond of union.

These things we mentioned for the benefit of the reader, because they have been recommended by worthy and beloved men. And on account of those who deal so haughtily with the brethren, and when the pious err through weakness, they have no compassion upon them, as if Christ should have no mercy on them. We will further relate what we found in the beforementioned book. There was one among the number apprehended for Christ's sake, called Alcibiades, who led a strict, zealous life; he would use no sustenance except bread and water; and as he was determined to live thus abstemious in prison, it was made known to Allalas, that Alcibiades did wrong, because he would not rightly use the creations of God, lest he might cause others to take offence at them. But when Alcibiades was informed of the matter, he then enjoyed all things with thanksgiving, for there was a spirit which

narrow, ignominious and bloody way of misery, crosses and sufferings to the true promised land, and to eternal glory.

Yes, this is and remains the only narrow and straight way, and door through which we must all enter, neither can we ever desire in any other way to enter with the saints into eternal life, rest and peace. As Christ himself said, Whosoever will follow after me

taught him and persuaded him to obey.

Afterwards, Montanus, Alcibiades and Theodotius were regarded by many in the land of Phrygia as prophets, for in those days many favors were granted to some of the churches through the gift of the Holy Spirit, so they believed that the gift of prophecy was imparted. And when great contention arose among the brethren, the churches in France again issued their sentence, with all discipline, reverence and the true exposition of the faith, and brought forward the epistles of the martyrs, who among them ended their lives, which they wrote in their prisons to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia.

The whole Bible, especially the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, speaks of the great crosses, tribulation, the martyrdom and deaths of the believers. Here we read of inhuman, cruel torturing, such as was neither heard before nor since. Boiling water and oil were poured upon their naked bodies; they were placed upon red hot gridirons and roasted there; their members were pierced through with sharp pointed instruments, they were scourged, and red hot irons were applied to their limbs; sharp thorns were thrust into their posterior and privates; other indignities were offered not to be mentioned; hot pitch was thrown into their faces; their eyes were bored out with pointed irons; they were beaten from head to foot with clubs; they were dragged through the streets by their feet; they were suspended and their flesh torn from them with pincers, that their bodies were all raw; then vinegar, salt and lime were mixed and poured upon them; they were then rolled about upon thorns, potsherds, broken glass and other sharp instruments, then the tortured body was placed upon a gridiron, and roasted lingeringly to protract the pain, rolling the mangled body backward and forward upon the gridiron till the spirit was given up.

must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me; therefore, dear brethren, you who have sought, feared and loved the Lord must suffer and bear much from this wicked and idolatrous race. Do not fear those who take your earthly goods from you; for Christ and heaven they cannot take from you, nor those who kill the body, for they cannot kill your soul, but fear him who has the power to destroy both soul and body eternally in the Lake of Fire.

They were cast before beasts of prey, such as lions, bears, and leopards; and before infuriated bulls; and after repeated torments, were again cast into prison, and after a short time tortured anew, which was repeated often, as we read of Maturo, Sanato, Allalo and others; and above all the amiable Blandina, whom they tortured six different ways; she may properly be called the pattern of martyrs. Others died in prison on account of their excruciating pains; some were starved to death; some women they hung up by the feet and suffocated with offensive smoke; flayed them, led them about on camels, and tore them to pieces with tongs; cast them into privies; their bones were broken, and they were cast into clefts of rocks; their heads were bruised so much till the brain ran down upon the earth; cut off their sinews and veins, then thrust them down precipices; they were first severely tortured, butchered like swine and then cast into the sea; their abdomen cut open and barley strewn in, and in this condition left to be devoured by hogs; yes, some of the tyrants, for fierce anger, ate pieces of their livers; they watched day and night, lest their remains would be taken and buried!

They were smeared over with honey and lard, and suspended in baskets in the air for the flies, wasps and bees to eat; women and virgins were stripped stark naked, and while thus exposed, suspended by one leg, forcing the head down and leaving them in this position for one day; they cut off their breasts, horrible! horrible to relate!! They poured melted lead into their secrets; forced red hot spears in! applied red hot iron; sturdy trees they bent down and tied each leg first to a tree, and then let them spring up again, and thus tore the women; took sharp splinters of pine wood, forced them under the nails of their hands, and then set them on fire; melted lead they poured down their backs. Twenty sharp pointed pieces were forced under the nails of one

Yes, my brethren, if you would be the people and disciples of the Lord, you must also bear the cross of Christ; this is, without doubt, the truth.

Again, we have set forth to the kind reader, several excellent histories out of the Scriptures, in which are represented the tyrannical mind, the envious heart, the wolfish rage, the murdering deeds of this miserable, brutal, murderous and blood-thirsty world, against the righteous. We shall now, through the grace of God, notice for a short time, not only how the servants, of whom we have spoken, suffered but also how the Lord and Prince himself had to endure much, to again enter into his glory.

The apostles abundantly testify that the Lamb of God, the ever blessed Christ Jesus, the true Head of all true believers, had not only suffered from the beginning, as said above, but that he had to suffer in the flesh in their times, although he was the conqueror of the serpent, as was promised to Adam and Eve; a blessing and benediction to all people, the true Shiloh, Messiah and Emmanuel, the true seed of David, the Lord who justifies us, the Prince of Peace, and the true Son of the Almighty and living God, whom all the righteous and true prophets desired.

Benjamin, of Persia; this was not enough; they forced a sharp rugged tube into his urethra—and this was repeatedly done; after this a rod full of thorns was taken and forced into his posterior, till the valiant man gave up his spirit. It is impossible, nay, incredible, with a few words to describe the unheard of cruelties and tortures which were practiced; besides these, other modes of torturing were invented, and he that succeeded in inventing the most cruel mode was highly honored. The number that were slain like beasts was so great that even the executioners became fatigued and their swords became dull.

One king in Persia, as history relates, had sixteen thousand slain. But the more the christians were opposed, the more their numbers increased, so powerfully did Christ reign in them, that the heathen themselves said, "*The christian blood is a true seed, &c.*"

When he had become a man, according to the promise of the fathers, he preached repentance and regeneration in the full power of the Spirit, in all love, righteousness, peace, humility and obedience; also the rigid, terrible judgment of God over the impenitent; and also the eternal kingdom, grace, mercy, the sincere favor and love of his heavenly Father over the penitent. He was himself that Word, fulfilling all righteousness, blessed by God forever, the infallible Example, the eternal Wisdom, Love and Truth, the brightness of the divine glory, the express image of his Father, after whom the first man was created. He understood, according to the inner man, the eternal power of God, as the Almighty Word of God through whom all things were created, are governed, and in whom all things stand. He knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; he is the true light of eternal life, and by the darkness which is in the world, he is hated, blasphemed, rejected, despised, and trampled upon as the most degraded of men. The King of kings, the Lord of lords, became poorer than the foxes or the birds; for he had nowhere to rest his blessed head. On the day of his birth, there was no room in the inn; the manger was his couch. Even shortly after his birth, his parents had to flee with him to the land of Egypt.

Although during his ministry he made the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the leprous clean, the palsied and feeble sound, cast out devils, restored the dead, twice he fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, and showed to them the works and service of pure love, and although none could rebuke him in his word or his life, yet their blood-thirsty, envious hearts were so enraged at him that they desired that the wicked murderer Barabbas, who was sentenced to death by the law, should live, and that Life himself, the Creator and Upholder of all creatures, should die. His pure, sinless body was scourged and abused, his glorious countenance and head of all honor is disfigured with blood, spit and thorns. They also mocked him with a ludicrous

garment, so that even the heathen judge, Pilate, pitying, said, "Behold the man!" Yes, worthy brethren, it avails nothing, no pain, torture, nor misery was enough; they would not be satisfied until he was taken away and condemned to the most shameful death, extended upon the cross [stake], his hands and feet nailed to the wood, and his side pierced with a spear. He was crucified as a prince and leader of the vicious, and reckoned among the murderers. Thus they rewarded him for his incomprehensibly great love and beneficence, and in his great, bitter thirst, in the last hour of his sufferings, he could not obtain a drop of water, but they gave him vinegar and gall. In short, they treated him so viciously that he cried, while extended upon the cross, with a loud voice to his Father, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Mark 15:34. He also laments through the prophet, "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised by the people." Psm. 22:6. He might well sigh and lament with Jeremiah or Jerusalem, and say, "All you who pass, behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Lam 1:12. Thus he, who was rich, for our sakes became poor; the everlasting Glory was dishonored, eternal Righteousness was persecuted, eternal Truth was blasphemed, everlasting Happiness was rejected, everlasting Blessing was cursed, and the everlasting Life was made to suffer a shameful death.

Most beloved brethren in the Lord, observe well, if the laborers have not spared their Lord's Son, but have cast him out of the vineyard and have slain him, how much more shall they destroy the servants. "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Matt. 10:25. Christ said, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." And further, "If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you," for the disciple is not greater than his master, nor the servant than his lord; but it is enough for the disciple to be like his master, and the

servant to be like his lord; and other like passages may be found in Scripture.

I hope, worthy brethren, that from these examples, the pious may have learned and fully understood what kind of a people it always has been, from what father they are born, and by what spirit they are moved, who from the beginning till the present day, have rejected and persecuted Christ, the lovely, peaceful, innocent and obedient Lamb and his saints; who have plundered, contradicted, imprisoned, tortured, crucified, stoned, beheaded, drowned, roasted, strangled, slain and murdered them. And according to my understanding of the word of the Lord, this tyranny shall not cease till the rejected, murdered and crucified Christ Jesus, with all his saints, shall appear in the clouds as an almighty Potentate, Conqueror and glorious King, before all the tribes and people, at the last judgment [or at His Return].

Inasmuch as the fearful tyranny of this blind world, always has been and is yet practiced upon the children of God, and as said, will probably always be practiced; and since, no other way leads, nor can lead through the narrow door to life, than only this stony and thorny way of the cross (I mean according to the flesh; for according to the spirit it is broad and easy), as the Scriptures testify. Therefore, have your feet shod with the gospel of peace, with the precious promises of God, with the pure knowledge of Christ, with the denial of yourselves, with the patience and faith of the saints and with the sure hope of the kingdom of God. Thus the hard stones and the sharp, stinging thorns of persecution through which all the pious are tempted, do not terrify you and lead you upon the broad, easy way of the flesh. Lay aside all obstacles and besetting sins, the cursed works of darkness, avarice, unnecessary cares, love of home, goods, gold, silver, pomp and splendor; all things which are perishable, drunkenness, superfluity, idolatry, vanity, carnal and improper words, and all manner of wickedness, that you may not be overcome and thus

led off the only narrow highway, and onto crooked and dark byways. As, alas, may be frequently seen in our days.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, take our crucified Jesus as your example, and also all the righteous apostles and prophets of God, and learn through them, how they all entered at this strait gate and forsook their all. They prepared their hearts and were endued and drawn by God, so they knew, sought, loved and desired nothing else than everlasting, heavenly blessings, the unchangeable things, God and everlasting life. Thus they were grounded in ardent love, and became firm and immovable, so that they could not be frightened from the love of Christ, neither by life nor death, angel, prince, potentate, hunger, sword, martyrdom, pain nor ease. Their thoughts, words, acts, sufferings, life and death, were Christ's. They did not seek their kingdom and rest upon earth, for they were spiritually and heavenly minded. All their fruit was righteousness, light and truth. Their whole lives were pure love, chastity, humility, obedience and peace. The perishable, wicked world with all its evil works, was to them an offence and abomination. They loved their God with all their soul, and therefore, they rebuked all that was against his holy will, honor and word. They loved their neighbors as themselves, and therefore, they admonished and rebuked them in love, served them, pointed out and taught them God's pure will, word and truth, and sought their salvation with all their power, with great loss of life, goods and reputation, therefore has the foolish, envious, unthankful world, which swims in blood, so grievously hated, persecuted and rewarded them with death.

My dear brethren, it was not only the prophets, apostles and those of former times, to whom those things happened, which the Scriptures relate, but we have in these times witnessed the like with our own eyes. How many pious children of God have we known in the space of a few years, and we yet know some, the

Lord be praised, who sought Jesus Christ and the eternal, unchangeable life, and continue so to seek, who fear God from their inmost soul, whose hearts burn with the word and love of the Lord, out of their mouths flowed power, spirit and wisdom. Their whole life was repentance and piety; they hated, shunned and rebuked all ungodliness. None could reprove their conduct with the word of God; they were opposed to the idle, fleshly, ungodly life of this world, as they yet are, and by the grace of God will continue to be. They do not listen to the deceiving prophets, do not confide their precious souls to the care of the spiritual thieves and murderers, neither serve nor honor wooden, stone and silver gods, and do not use their unscriptural, earthly sacraments, &c. In short, because they heard, believed, feared, served and loved the true and living God, therefore, did the lying serpent open its mouth and spew out so many false, slanderous, yes, inhuman lies, into the face of the pious, and has, from the seat of its pestilences, defamed and depicted them in such horrible colors and shape through their blind disciples, that they have become the curse and offense of the whole world; so that all the people close their mouths and ears, and flee from them in horror; yes, every one, who can slander and defame the poor, god-fearing christians, is the favorite preacher and esteemed teacher of the world.

No lie is so gross and disgraceful that they do not dare bring it against the godly. At one time they accuse and upbraid us, as though we wished to invade cities and countries; they say that we will injure the whole world; now that we are adulterers, again, thieves and murderers; now, that we say there is no repentance left to the sinner; again, that we have rejected Christ and the Testament. In short, whosoever does not defame and upbraid the godly is not considered by the world as a christian! O Lord, how pure and free are all the saints in heart and conscience before God, from all these and similar lies and slanders.

All these unchristian, infernal lies are not enough for the world, but they who know Christ, and would gladly live according to his word must endure something harder; they must meet with severer persecution, as we may witness with our own eyes, for how many pious children of God, have they within a few years deprived of their homes and possessions, for the testimony of God and their conscience sake; how many have they betrayed, driven out of city and country, and put them to the stocks and torture; their poor orphans and children are left naked in the streets; some they have hanged, some they punished with inhuman tyranny, afterwards choked them with cords on stocks and pillars; some they roasted and burned alive; some with their own reeking bowels in their hands, powerfully confessed the word of God; some they slew with the sword and gave them as food to the fowls of the air; some they cast to the wild beasts, some have their houses torn down, some have been cast into the muddy bogs, some have had their feet cut off, one of whom I have seen and conversed with; others wander about here and there in hunger, affliction, mountains, deserts, holes and caves of the earth, as Paul says. They must fly with their wives and little children from one country to another, from one city to another. They are hated, abused, slandered and contradicted by all men, and spoken against in the pulpit and the councils; they have deprived them of food, driven them forth in the cold winter, and point at them with the finger of scorn, yes, whoever can wrong a poor, oppressed christian, supposes he has done God some service, as Christ says in John 16:2.

Observe, dear brethren, how far the whole world is from God and his word, how swift their feet are to shed blood, how maliciously they hate the light, and how bitterly they persecute, defame and destroy the eternal, saving truth, the immaculate gospel of Jesus Christ, the pious, godly life of the saints. This is not only done by the papists and Turks, but also by those who

boast of the holy word; who at first preached much concerning faith, that it was the gift of God, and that it must not be forced with the iron sword, but with the word, into the hearts of men, for it is a willing assent of the heart.

But the learned, within the last few years, have suppressed this doctrine, and as it appears to me, have effaced it from their books, for lately they draw unto their carnal doctrine the lords, princes, cities and countries. They preach the contrary from that which they did formerly, as is evident from their writings. By their seditious writings and preachings they deliver into the hands of executioners many pious hearts, who gainsay, reprove and admonish them, by the clear word of God, and point out to them the true ground of the gospel, which is powerful, active faith, which works by love, a penitent, new life, obedience to God and Christ, and the true, evangelical ordinances of baptism, Lord's Supper and Separation, as Christ himself instituted and commanded, and his holy apostles practiced and taught.

Yes, all who do this out of pure love must be accursed as anabaptists, factionists, deceivers and heretics, all the pious may expect this. Nevertheless all of them; lords, princes, preachers, scribes and common people, be they Papists, Lutherans, or Zwinglians, wish to be called the christian community and holy church; and never take notice of their ungodly, impure and impenitent lives, that they are altogether earthly, carnal, and contrary to the word of God. There are some whose hands are stained and reeking with the blood of christians, and all their doings are diametrically opposed to the Spirit, word, and example of Christ.

O! That these poor, blind, hardened ones would lay this well to heart, and examine carefully the nature and spirit of true christianity. They would be ashamed before God, and sincerely lament that they so miserably abuse his glorious name, blessed word, divine grace, and his crimson, precious blood, of which

they vainly boast, and thus make the name of Christ as a cover to all their wickedness and disgrace.

For a truly believing christian is one that is born by God according to the Spirit, has become a new creature in Christ, crucified his flesh with its lusts, and hates all ungodliness and sin. All his fruits are righteousness, patience, truth, obedience, humility, chastity, love, and peace; he is influenced by the Spirit of the Lord, and his delight is in his law; he meditates on them by day and by night. All his words are seasoned by grace, he sincerely strives for the life which is from God, and fears him with all his soul. In short, according to the grace received, he is of one mind with Christ.

Could these miserable people only see that a christian is thus minded, as related, that he is such an amiable and peaceable creature and child of God; and if they had the grace, they also would be thus minded. If they were christians as they boast, they would then hate none, but would be hated, would contradict none, but would be contradicted, would prejudice none, but be prejudged, would betray none, but be betrayed, would rob none, but be robbed, would not murder, but be murdered, would not devour the lamb, but be torn by wolves, not ensnare the dove, but be taken by the falconer and devoured.

If our persecutors are christians, as they imagine, Why are they then not of God and born of his word? Why are they yet the old, accursed creature, and live according to the lusts of the flesh? Why are they influenced by the spirit of the devil? Why have they fixed their thoughts and affections upon perishable and temporal things, and are concerned with this day and night? Why are they guilty of talking of all manner of unchastity, vanity, lying, cursing and swearing? Why do they not fear God and his word? Why are they like the old, deceitful serpent, and obedient to him? Why are they still like terrible, ravenous beasts and birds

of prey, instead of innocent lambs and doves, as the Scriptures teach?

Ah! Dear brethren, let them boast as they will, Christ Jesus does not know such wicked and blood-thirsty christians. He only knows those having his Spirit, who sincerely believe and are obedient to him; are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; are meek, humble, pious, holy and pure of heart; confess Christ Jesus in word and deed before this wicked world; deny themselves and take up the cross and follow him, and say with holy Paul, “Who shall separate us from the love of God?” They glory in nothing but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which they are dead to the world and the world unto them. All who are thus minded are the anointed of God, saints and christians, and not the impenitent, carnal, blood-thirsty boasters. Every one may be mindful that this is true, else the whole Scriptures are false.

It appears to me, dear brethren, that the pious reader may fully understand from what has been said, what kind of people these are, who so shamefully tread you with their feet; strike, slander, and deprive you of life and property, and also the reason why they do so, namely, on account of your infallible testimony of God and your consciences. Even as all from the beginning, who sought, feared and loved God, walked according to his divine word and will, reprov'd and admonished the confused and erring world, for their good, and were ever considered as offscourings and heretics.

We will now proceed in the name of the Lord, and show with few words, what a feeble and unbecoming excuse our persecutors advance, which before God is as stubble and sulphur before a fire, by which they think to excuse themselves, that they are doing right to slander and molest the pious; all sinners seek some excuse, and no matter how disgracefully soever any one conducts himself, he wishes not to be considered as wicked, but as a righteous, pious and true christian!

In the first place, our persecutors accuse us as seditious, even as those of Munster are, and that we are not obedient to the magistracy.

To which we reply, in the first place: That the Munsterites were seditious, and in many things acted contrary to the word of God. But we do not agree with them. We are wholly opposed to these seditious abominations, such as resisting the king, seeking earthly power, taking up the sword, polygamy, acting the hypocrite with the world and similar guilt and disapprove of them; we neither eat, drink, nor have any communion with those who do such things, according to the doctrine of Christ and Paul, unless they renounce their errors and become sound in the saving doctrine of Christ.

As the Papists and Lutherans are not a little divided, so we are more divided in our views from the Munsterites and other sects which sprang from them. That this is the truth, we have shown by our writings, life, and oral testimony, before lords, princes and the whole world; and it has been testified by the blood of many pious christians, which flowed like water, in many countries, for many years, to the present time.

But we cannot help that the world will not believe this. Nevertheless, we testify that our hearts and consciences are pure and free before God, of all sedition, hatred, vengeance and thirst for blood; and we strive earnestly to live as much as possible, in peace with all men, according to the doctrine of Paul, and if it is not possible for us to keep peace with them, still we do not desire to avenge ourselves, but we will commit it to him, who says, "To me belongs vengeance and recompense," Deu. 32:35. And we commit to him alone all our concerns, as Jeremiah and all the pious did from the beginning.

In the second place, we reply: Why do they so indiscreetly accuse us of such sedition, since we are wholly innocent and

clear, and since they pay no attention to their own bloody, murdering uproar, which they, alas! commit without bounds? O Lord! How many principalities, cities and countries have they destroyed, how many houses have they fired, how many hundred thousand have they murdered, how many poor peasants, who were peaceable and innocent of sedition, have they robbed of their possessions and destroyed their goods? How many women and virgins have they disgraced? What brutal and inhuman tyranny did they commit and continue daily to practice? All this they do not notice, yes, they say that all is right and well done. Ah! How well does this accord with the doctrine, nature and Spirit of Christ, or with the disposition of innocent children, whom christians must resemble. Is this malice, or like defenceless lambs and innocent doves, to which the Scriptures direct us? If the temporal magistracy do not have the disposition and Spirit of Christ, then all must acknowledge that they are not christians.

I am well aware that these tyrants, who boast of themselves as christians, justify their abominable warring, uproar and shedding of blood, by referring us to Moses, Joshua, &c., but do not reflect that Moses and his successors, with their iron sword, have served their day, and that Christ has now given us a new command and another sword. I do not speak of the sword of the judge, for that is quite different; but I speak respecting war and sedition. They do not reflect that they bear the sword of war, contrary to the gospel, and against their own brethren, namely, their brethren in the faith, who have received the same baptism, and have broken the same bread with them, and are thus members of the same body. Again, what a strange, bloody uproar the Lutherans have made for several years, to introduce their doctrine. I will leave to them to reflect upon that; yet we have, although innocent, been called the seditious heretics and they claim to be the pious, peaceable christians! Behold, thus

lamentably is their understanding of this world darkened. Well then, let them deal with us as they think proper, and the merciful, gracious Father will preserve us from such abominable disturbances as the Munsterites have caused, and which, alas! are yet in vogue among the supposed christians; for we have, by the manifest grace of God, beaten our “swords into plough shares, and our spears into pruning hooks;” and we shall sit under the true Vine, Christ, under the Prince of everlasting peace, and will never take part in bloody wars.

In the third place, we reply: That we know and use no other sword than that which Christ himself brought down from heaven, and which the apostles used with power and Spirit; which proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, the sword of the Spirit, which is “sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing assunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Heb. 4:12. With this sword and no other, we desire to destroy the kingdom of the devil, reprove all wickedness, preach righteousness, raise the father against the son, the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, &c. In such a way, even as Jesus Christ, the holy apostles and the prophets did in this world. I do not here mean the prophets, Elijah and Samuel, understand me rightly, who also used the sword; but I mean the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Amos, &c., who only reprov'd with doctrine, and not otherwise.

That is the sword we bear; and we will lay it down for none, neither for emperor, king, nor other authorities. Peter says, “We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29. We must serve, to his praise, him who committed us, whether we chance to live or die, as it may please God.

That the world is now ascribing to us this uproar as a reward for the pure love which we have manifested toward them, we

must endure, as did our forefathers. "Are you not he," said Ahab to Elijah, "that troubles Israel?" The prophet answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but you and your father's house." 1 Ki. 18:17,18. Jeremiah, on account of his faithful warning and salutary admonition, was regarded by them as a mutineer, rebel and heretic; Christ Jesus was crucified; Paul and the apostles were cast into prison as deceivers and rebellious, and finally had to suffer martyrdom. If the world could pass a true sentence, they would well perceive that Christ and his followers were not tumultuous towards the world, but the world towards them; and also that we do not rise against any one, but that the whole world is in uproar, tyranny and raving against us, as may be seen.

Again, it is not true that we are opposed to the magistracy in the things to which they are ordained by God; understand me, in lawful things, such as giving toll, tribute, paying taxes, &c. But that they are to rule and lord over our consciences, contrary to the Spirit of Christ, as they please, we do not consent to this, but we will sacrifice possessions and life, rather than knowingly sin against Jesus Christ and his holy word, for any man's sake, whether he be emperor or king.

That we are right in this respect, the Scriptures abundantly testify; and therefore, with pious Susanna, we wish rather to obey God than man, and thus fall into the hands of men, rather than into the hands of God. May the gracious Father, through his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, grant to this deaf, blind world, ears to hear, and eyes to see, that they may be converted and be eternally saved.

In the second place we are, without cause, maliciously accused that we are stubborn, selfish and unconverted persons, who will by no means allow ourselves to be taught or instructed.

To which we reply, first: If this accusation even were true, it is still very unbecoming for our persecutors to exterminate or

harm us, because they would be, or boast themselves to be christians, for the punishment of the wicked will be eternal, as the Scriptures testify.

Not all men, says Paul, have faith, but it is a gift from God. Now if it is a gift, it can not be enforced by worldly power, nor by sword, but it must be by means of the pure doctrine of the holy word, in conjunction with the ardent prayer of humility, and be apprehended by the grace of God through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, it is not the will of the Householder that the tares be rooted up until the time of harvest; as is clearly evinced in the Scriptural parable. Mat. 13:24-30.

Now, if our persecutors were christians, as they suppose, and if they considered the word of the Lord as true, why do they not hear and follow the word and commandment of Christ? Why do they root up the tares before the time? Why are they not afraid, lest they root up the good wheat, and not the tares? Why do they arrogate to themselves the duty of the angels, who, at the proper time, shall bind the tares in bundles, and cast them into the furnace of everlasting fire?

Since, by our belief or unbelief, unbelief it must ever be, if their assertions are true, we injure no man upon earth. Therefore, justice demands that they should commit us with our belief or unbelief to the Lord alone, and his judgment, who, in the fullness of time, will judge all things in righteousness, and that they should not, like savage pagans, pursue us with the sword of destruction. The true disposition of a pious and sincere christian is to lead poor, wandering sinners to repentance, and not to destroy them, as these men do. In regard to all those who evince a contrary spirit, it is an easy matter for any intelligent christian, to show from the Scriptures of what father they are children.

Again, we reply: That we are prepared, in every way, even unto death, for the reception of all sound doctrine, admonition,

instruction, and chastening in righteousness; we spare no labor, pains, nor expense, if we can only obtain faithful stewards to dispense bread to us in proper season; for our souls hunger after the living bread, and our spirits thirst for the living water. All who are rightly qualified to break the former, and pour out the latter, we desire to hear with devoted hearts, and to live in obedience to their doctrine.

But we will have nothing to do with the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the lies and deceivings of false prophets, the stealing and outrages of thieves and murderers; let what may happen by divine permission. Thank God, we have tasted the heavenly bread, hence, we have become heartily tired of the leaven and husks of the learned; we have drunk the pure water, the impure we leave for them; we have received the truth and rejected lies; the light has shined upon us, there is no more place for darkness. In short, we have found Christ, the true Messiah, his saving word, his pure ordinance, and his holy and unblameable life, according to the gift of grace within us, and as a consequence, have turned away from anti-christ, with the confident hope that we will never more observe, or make use of his ordinance of infant baptism, and idolatrous supper, nor ever be reconciled to his odious, carnal, ungodly life.

If in this matter we do wrong, and transgress in the presence of God and his church, as they imagine, then the fathers and the Scriptures must have miserably betrayed us. But no; the word of God is truth, and the truth shall abide forever, even though the whole world be offended.

And because we do not dare again take part in their false doctrine, pretended sacraments, idolatry, false worship, and in their shameful, wicked, and ungodly life; because by the Spirit of God, the evidence of the Scriptures, and by the witness of our own consciences we have turned away from such; therefore we

must be called stubborn, selfish, obstinate, and, alas! Must be to all men heretics, spoils and derision.

I hope, beloved brethren, that such absurd accusations may never dismay the hearts of the pious, nor render them faint, inasmuch as they are entirely destitute of foundation; whilst we, on the contrary, have the whole Scripture, together with prophets, apostles, saints, and yes, Christ Jesus himself; all of whom in truth and righteousness, remained steadfast and immovable, even unto death, in their opposition to all false doctrine, torture and tyranny, and did not, in a single point, agree with their ungodly deeds or consent to them, neither in heart, speech, nor behavior.

Ought we then to reject the heavenly light, and embrace the darkness of condemnation? Forsake eternal truth, and everlasting life? Follow after lies, and pursue death, for the sake of a little perishable wealth, and the enjoyment of temporal life for half an hour? If so, it would be better for us if we had never been born. From a contingency so dreadful, it is our firm hope that God, by his boundless love, will forever preserve and protect us.

In the third place we answer: That we sincerely detest and abhor such teaching and conversion as our persecutors would make use of, in order to instruct and convert us; for their end is death, according to the testimony of the whole Scriptures. The reason is that their doctrine is false and deceptive, their sacraments are idolatrous and contrary to the word of God; their worship is sheer idolatry, and their whole life is earthly, carnal, and contrary to the word of God; as may be seen in James 3:15. Yes, they are a people of whom we may justly testify as they do of us, namely, this is a stiff-necked, seditious, unconverted people, whose hearts are harder than diamond, a people who do not know their God, as the prophet speaks of Israel, saying, "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not consider [Me]," Isa. 1:3.

Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward, "They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they did not speak aright; no man repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rushes into the battle. Yes, the stork in the heaven knows her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people do not know the judgment of Jehovah," Jer. 8:5-7. And more passages of a similar nature.

Like John the Baptist, one might well rebuke them, and say, Bring forth fruits appropriate for repentance, and do not say that you are christians, as the Pharisees said they had Abraham for their father; for such perverse, carnal christians, God does not know. The axe is laid unto the root of the tree, therefore, every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Mat. 7:19. Paul says, Neither drunkards, covetous, envious, proud, idolaters, adulterers nor fornicators shall inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:9,10. Hence, in the spirit of commiseration, we may aptly say to our persecutors, who are still such; Reform, for alas! lords, princes, rulers, learned, unlearned, citizens, countrymen, man and woman, all, on every hand, have become degenerate, walking in the accursed fruits of profanity and ungodliness; they reject God and his word; they grieve the Holy Spirit; they persecute the righteous and pious. The fear and love of God are an abomination to them; yet to such as walk in the way of truth, die unto flesh and blood, are heavenly and spiritually minded, and with sincerity of heart seek Christ Jesus and the imperishable everlasting life; they say, Reform, be instructed, and use similar expressions, just as if we had the lies and they the truth; although according to the gift imparted to us,

we love and seek the Lord sincerely; but what they do, I leave to any intelligent christian to decide.

Moreover, even they themselves demonstrate that the fruits and ardent charity of our members far exceed that of theirs. Nevertheless, we have to be looked upon as deceived, selfish, obstinate, and unconverted heretics, as they consider themselves the real, spiritually anointed christians, the truly legitimate children of God.

Now, dear brethren, judge by this how puerile and nonsensical is the excuse of the world with regard to their tyrannical proceedings, and how indiscreetly and childishly we are accused by them. O! It is our heart's desire that all our persecutors may receive grace unto repentance from the Lord; for it is high time that they awake, and turn unto him.

Again, our persecutors bring in an excuse, saying it is right that we should be persecuted, for by us many men are deplorably misled and brought to destruction.

To this we reply: That if the case is examined, and sentence passed upon it according to the flesh, it does appear that many are miserably deceived by us, for all those who follow our doctrine, faith, life, and confession, in obedience and power, must bring into jeopardy all which they have received from God; character, reputation, land, house, gold, silver, father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, yes, life itself. The finger of scorn will generally be pointed at them; they shall be trampled under foot, hated by all men, slandered and calumniated, betrayed, and delivered up unto death; gallows, racks, offensive pools, stocks and swords, as also hunger, thirst, want, toil, affliction, distress, anxiety, nakedness, sorrow, buffeting, bonds and imprisonment must be their portion and recompense here upon earth; no man may administer unto or befriend them, except at the risk of their person and property; the father may not receive and assist the son,

nor the son the father. In short, they are looked upon by the world as unworthy of heaven, or even earth. Moreover, they show all the pomp, splendor, gluttony, intoxication, carnal life, &c., which the world delights in, and makes use of, as much as their means will allow; and against this they teach humility, soberness, and a humble, despised life, in the fear of the Lord, which the world hates and rejects. It is therefore no wonder, in my opinion, that the erring, blind world who neither have the Holy Spirit nor know it, as Christ says, who seek, understand, and judge only earthly things, should regard, consider, and detest such a life, as the result of imposture and deception.

But those who are taught by God, who have risen with Christ to newness of life, are made partakers of the Holy Spirit, are spiritually minded, who look upon and judge all things by the Spirit, they do not consider it as imposture and deception, but esteem it above all gold, silver, knowledge, wisdom, riches, honor, parade and ostentation; yes, above all that is named under heaven; for they know from their hearts that this is the only doctrine that leads to immortality and everlasting life; they do not look at the things which are transitory, but at things which are imperishable. They provide and prepare a treasure and inheritance that abides in heaven, but earthly treasure they do not esteem; they seek the wisdom which is eternal, being therefore regarded by the whole world as fools; they adorn themselves with the inner garment of righteousness, despising the outer moth-eaten garment of pride. They strive for that kingdom and crown of glory which will abide forever, and the earthly kingdom with its glory, they leave to such as take delight in them.

Hence, dearly beloved, it is absolutely necessary to judge all things spiritually; for the world is come to such a state that the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ and his Holy apostles is esteemed heresy. To preach Christ Jesus, his Spirit and life, his unadulterated word, will and ordinance, and to turn the people

from ungodliness to piety is considered as imposition and deception. Behold, how blind and ignorant, in divine things, are our persecutors who so miserably oppress, persecute and destroy us for the sake of the truth. Yes, my brethren, here is the patience and faith of the saints; all, who in their hearts experience this (as here related), will possess their souls in patience, let the opposition be ever so great, and will pray for their enemies with all the ardor of the power that is in them.

In the fourth place, our persecutors accuse us with great bitterness, because we separate ourselves from their doctrine, sacraments, church service, and from a carnal life, and in such things we dare have nothing to do with them. They say that in this thing, we condemn them and banish them to hell.

To this we reply, in the first place: The reason why we can never, by word or deed, consent to their preachers, sacraments, church service, and impure, carnal life nor allow them, is that they are openly opposed to God and his word. Their preachers serve when they are not sent; their doctrine is false, deceptive and contrary to the saving doctrine of truth; their life is in every respect, blamable; they preach for filthy lucre's sake; they act the hypocrite for the world, to flatter its desires; the foundation of their faith and religion is emperor, king, prince and potentate; what they command, they teach; and what they forbid, that they leave untouched. Their infant baptism is unfounded in Scripture; their supper is idolatrous and impure, and administered and received by the impure; their church service is contrary to the doctrine of the apostles; and for the most part so carnal and ungodly is the ordinary tenor of their life that every child of God must be exceedingly amazed and astonished at it.

Seeing then that their doctrine, sacrament, church service and life are, in fact, so palpably opposed to the word of God, how could we again intermingle and enter into familiarity with them in such heinous abominations? That we separate ourselves from

them is the express word and will of God. For, says Paul, “What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has he that believes with an infidel? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and do not touch the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Almighty Lord,” 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

These words of Paul are plain and intelligible, and it is therefore utterly impossible that those who have, through the beneficence of God, received from on high, the true Light, Christ Jesus, unfeigned righteousness, pure, effective faith, have become a fit and worthy temple of the Lord, are under the influence of the Holy Spirit, are chosen and adopted as the children of God, that such should again have fellowship with darkness, Belial, unrighteousness, infidels and idolaters; for you, through the grace of God, are convinced that their doctrine, sacraments, church service and life, are fundamentally false, and if you have a true zeal for God; count all these things but dross, that with Paul, you may win Christ. According to Scripture; you must abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good; have washed your robes in the blood of the Lamb, and have conformed in all your thoughts, words and actions, to the touchstone of the holy word, and example of Christ. Then how can you have communion with them, and say amen to their abominations? We cannot serve two masters at once; we cannot at the same time hold communion with Christ and the devil; we cannot be the children and servants of God and also of satan. If we love that which is good, we must

abhor that which is evil; if we embrace the truth, we must forsake lies; and such passages and Scriptures there are many.

Now, forasmuch as we thus separate ourselves from them, and testify by word and deed, even unto death, that their works are evil; therefore they are filled with the most inhuman rancor and indignation, and say from their heart, as all the ungodly have done from the beginning, "Let us lie in wait for the righteous; because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings; he upbraids us with our offending the law, and objects to our infamy, the transgressions of our education," &c. He exposes our secret designs and cunning devices. "He is grievous unto us even to behold; for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion. We are esteemed by him as counterfeits; he abstains from our ways as from filthiness; he pronounces the end of the just to be blessed." "Let us condemn him with a shameful death," Wis. 2:12,15,16, 20.

Here, my dearly beloved brethren, the Holy Spirit has given a faithful delineation of our persecutors; for our actual confession, that is to say, our separation from them is the sole reason why the blind, blood-thirsty world, frantic with rage, tyrannizes over us with so much cruelty; and why we must bear and suffer so much; as Peter also says. They think it more strange that you do not run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. No, for this reason, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel, Eleazar, the mother with the seven sons, Christ Jesus and all the pious had to bear the cross and die; because they earnestly reprov'd the world in its doctrine, ceremonies and conduct, and opposed them unto death.

This is, even unto this day, the only and principal reason, and in reality there is no other, notwithstanding our persecutors allege many, as we have shown, why we must be considered by the world as anabaptists, heretics, knaves, deceivers and movers of sedition, and be regarded as fit subjects for persecution. But,

thank God, we know the real reason for our suffering; we know also that he who called us to this grace, and in whom we put our trust, will successfully plead our cause, and will faithfully stand by and deliver his poor, oppressed children, in every time of need, to the advancement of his eternal praise and everlasting glory.

Although our persecutors assert that our separation from them is the result of pure obstinacy and caprice, yet their declaration is false and unjust in the presence of God, who knows the hearts of all men; because our separation has no other foundation nor design than this, that we desired, in our weakness, to observe with all our heart the word of God, and keep his commandments; and that we might, in real charity, and in fact, show to the whole world that they lie in wickedness, and are strangers to God and his word, to the end that they may, in due time, awake and turn from iniquity. For how can they, in truth, teach others generosity, chastity, humility, and every virtue, if they themselves are abandoned to avarice, lewdness and pride, and addicted to every vice? It would be the height of folly for a person to point out the right way to others, warning them of robbers and murderers, while he would take a winding, unfrequented road and voluntarily offer himself an easy prey to thieves and robbers. My brethren may reflect upon what I mean.

It is not sufficient for a sincere christian merely to speak the truth; but he must also demonstrate in power that which he speaks, conforming himself thereunto, or he shall hear, with the Pharisees, You say, and do not; and also as Paul, in writing to the Romans, says of the Jews, “You that preach a man should not steal, do you steal? You that say a man should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you commit sacrilege? You that make your boast in the law, through breaking the law, do you dishonor God?” Rom. 2:21-23.

In short, a Christian teaches and acts; professes and practices; believes and obeys; directs and advances; his heart, word and

deed are in unison. If not he is a hypocrite, and not a christian; as, alas! There are numbers in our day, who boast highly of knowledge and wisdom, though in power they are vain and unfruitful.

Again, we reply: That our persecutors do violently and unjustly accuse us of condemning them to hell. Ah no! Far be it from us to condemn any man under heaven before his time, let him be ever so wicked. For we are well aware that the Scriptures say, "Condemn not, and you shall be not condemned." Luke 6:37. There is one who, in the fullness of time, will judge every man according to his works, namely, he to whom the Father has committed all judgment. Whosoever usurps his judgment shall not go unpunished. Moreover, we do not know the measure of grace the sinner may be made partaker of before death; therefore we are clear and innocent before God, of condemning others. Nevertheless, we are permitted to judge and speak by the word of God as follows: If a miser does not abandon his avaricious principles; a whore-monger, his lewdness; a drunkard, his intoxication; an idolater, his worshipping of strange gods, and by a pious, penitent life, turn to the true and living God with sorrow and anguish of heart, in the operative faith of Jesus Christ, he is no christian, nor shall he inherit the kingdom of God. If the sentence is thus passed, it is not we that judge, but the Scriptures; as Christ says, "He that rejects me, and does not receive my words, has one that judges him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," John 12:48. We are well assured that God neither does, nor will, save any man contrary to his word; for he is truth, and cannot lie. Where there is no faith, no newness of mind, there is no repentance nor sorrow of heart, &c. Upon such, alas! Christ Jesus has already passed sentence, saying, "If you do not believe that I am he, you shall die in your sins;" "Except you repent you shall all likewise perish," John 8:24, Luke 13:3,5 and more similar expressions.

Brethren, we therefore judge no man with our word before the time, as you well know; but we commit that unto Jesus Christ and his word, who will judge them in due season; we do not condemn them by our separation, as they complain; but we teach and admonish them by word and work, with all diligence and fidelity, that they might cease from evil, follow that which is good, do righteousness, seek and fear God in a good conscience, lest they die in sin and unbelief, and abide forever [or suffer?] the wrath and judgement of God. Nevertheless, the pure charity and faithful service of the pious are ascribed to bad motives, and construed to their disgrace.

In the fifth place, many cover their tyranny and shedding of blood with a thin fig-leaf, and say, We do not judge you, but the emperor's mandate judges you.

To this we reply: If our persecutors are christians, and have the knowledge of Christ, as they suppose, we earnestly desire in the spirit of humanity, for God's sake, that they would draw a comparison between the emperor and Christ, and observe with attention, whether the emperor and Christ are of one spirit; whether he walks as Christ taught his disciples; also, that they would compare the mandate of the emperor with the gospel of Christ. If they discover that the emperor does not agree with Christ in spirit and life; and that his mandate, after which they frame their conduct, is contrary to the gospel, then they must acknowledge that the emperor is not a christian, and that his mandate is proscribed and accursed in the presence of God.

It is the most lamentable blindness that they fear and honor the poor, earthly emperor more than Christ Jesus, and his blood-thirsty, malicious mandate more than God's gospel of love. Yet they desire to be considered christians. O! That the emperor and his subjects were christians! This is our most earnest desire. Then a great deal of innocent blood would be spared, which is now spilled like water, contrary to all Scripture and charity.

Say now, all who are guilty of innocent blood, and who palliate your conduct with the mandate of the emperor, where have you read a single passage in the whole life of Christ which authorizes men to shed blood and punish with the sword for the sake of their faith? Where have the apostles once taught or countenanced such a practice? Should not the cause of the Spirit (understand faith) be reserved unto the judgment of the Spirit? Why do you and the emperor place yourselves in God's stead, judging things which you do not understand, neither are they commanded to you? Do you not consider what befell Pharaoh, Antiochus, Herod, and many others, because they did not fear the Most High, and vented their wrath against his people? Consider, O, you tyrants and blood-thirsty! The emperor is not the head of Christ, but Christ is the head of the emperor; the emperor shall not judge and govern Christ, but Christ, the emperor. Dear men, how can you be so arrogant and so rebellious against him who created you? Do you consider the Scriptures as mockery and as destitute of truth? Or do you hope that your life will remain forever, and that it will never run out? Stand in awe of Him who locks up the heavens and the earth in the palm of his hand, who sends forth the lightning, gives wings to the tempest, and shakes the foundations of the mountains, who rules all things with the power of his word, at whose name every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and to whom every tongue shall confess that he is the Lord. As soon as he calls, you must appear at his tribunal (his summons is peremptory), no matter who you are, where you be, or what your pretensions; there will be no equivocation, no counsel, no excuse; when he calls, you must be there to give an account. You may be no longer steward; yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be, even if his throne is exalted unto heaven, and his dominion extends to the ends of the earth, yet in a short time, he shall be sought, and shall not be found.

Therefore, beloved brethren and children in the Lord, be of good cheer, and full of consolation in Christ Jesus; for all who persecute you shall be as grass; and all their power and glory as the flower of the field. Therefore, do not be afraid of perishable, mortal man, but fear the Lord who has chosen you; for all the children of men shall wither as the grass, vanish as the mist, and wax old as a garment; but you shall abide forever, as the Scripture testifies, and your souls shall enjoy everlasting life.

Yes, beloved brothers, the longed-for day of your visitation is at hand, in which you shall stand with great power against those who have afflicted you, and exacted your sweat and toil, no, your blood and life; then shall all our persecutors be as ashes under the soles of our feet; and [they shall] know, but too late, that emperor, king, duke, prince, crown, sceptre, majesty, power, sword and mandate, are but earth, dust, wind and smoke.

With this day, all afflicted and oppressed Christians, who now labor under the cross of Christ, console themselves, in the firm hope of a future life, and commit all tyrants with their heathenish mandates unto God and his judgments; they remain firmly attached unto Christ Jesus and his holy word, and conform thereunto, their whole doctrine, faith, sacraments and life, never paying respect to any other doctrine or mandate; even as the Father commanded from heaven, and as Christ Jesus with his holy apostles taught in all clearness, leaving it as a legacy unto all pious, god-fearing children.

I suppose, beloved brethren, it is sufficiently evident that the apology of tyrants, in which they allege the justice and right of their outrageous murders, is perfectly futile and barbarous; and that their accusation against us has no foundation or truth; is diametrically opposed to Christ and his word, even contrary to the principles of love and equity. May the Father of mercies grant unto all who suffer for his truth's sake, a sound understanding of

his word and truth, and a freedom of mind in all temptations, Amen.

We will now, by the grace of God, show, in a few words, how greatly it serves for our good that our flesh is afflicted and tempted with many crosses and tribulations here upon earth.

Beloved brethren, when we consider the weakness of our sinful nature, and how prone we all are to evil from our youth; that in our flesh dwells no good thing, and that we have drunk iniquity and ungodliness like water, as Eliphaz the Temanite, said to Job. And have, at all times, although we seek and fear God, an affection for the things of time and sense. The gracious God and Father, who, through his eternal love, is always greatly concerned for his children, has prepared, and left in his house, an excellent remedy for this, namely, the oppressive cross of Christ; so that we, who in unbounded mercy are received through Christ Jesus, to the glory of the Father, believing in pureness of heart on Christ Jesus, and love him in our weakness, may, through the aforesaid cross, through much affliction, oppression, anxiety, apprehension, bonds, robbery &c., forsake all the transitory delights and enjoyments of earth, die unto the world and the flesh, love God alone, set our affection on things above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God, as Peter also says, "Forasmuch, then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God," 1 Pet. 4:1, 2.

It appears to me utterly impossible, beloved brethren, that they who voluntarily submit to the word and will of God; who are willing and prepared to support the word in all things, on which account they are constantly persecuted, afflicted, slandered, imprisoned; robbed and put to death, should turn again and set their affection upon carnal pleasures, and the vain and sinful desires of the world. For of what value are money and

possessions to us, if we but believe that we have in heaven a better treasure; that temporal riches can neither render us happy, nor afford us relief, and that we do not know how soon they may be taken from us by robbers? Or why should we gratify the lusts of the flesh, when we look for, and expect nothing else every instant, than to be apprehended by the officers, and be treated by the executioners after this manner; to be racked, tortured, drowned, burned and assassinated? Moreover, how can the world afford us any enjoyment, seeing we are looked upon by the whole world as deceivers, heretics, scorners and fools?

Forasmuch as eternal Wisdom recognizes an extreme weakness, and since earthly ease, peace, and prosperity have so great a tendency to ruin and undo us before our God, and to render us careless, refractory, lukewarm and drowsy, he has appointed his cross as an awakening rod for the use of all his followers, by which, as a faithful Father, he restrains, awakes and excites the children of his love; as Solomon says, "My son, do not despise the chastening of Jehovah; neither be weary of his correction; for whom Jehovah loves he corrects, even as a father the son in whom he delights," Prov. 3:11,12. "If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father does not chasten? But if you are without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then you are bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they truly for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness," Heb. 12:7, 10.

Behold, brethren, these words of the apostle are, beyond measure, gracious, and replete with consolation unto all those who have to bear the cross of Christ; for as a well-disposed and faithful earthly father who loves his children, desiring to teach

and instruct them that which is best, does sometimes, out of pure paternal love, sharply admonish, chasten and punish them with stripes, for the good of his dear children, not regarding the pain inflicted in the flesh, in order that they may not disregard their father's will, command and voice, but that they may gladly obey it and learn and practice modesty, piety and obedience; so does our heavenly Father oftentimes chasten his elect children with his paternal rod, that they may hear and obey him in his holy word, will and commandment; practice piety and every moral virtue; fear God with sincerity of heart; not unite nor familiarize themselves with the world; no longer live unto flesh and blood; and hereby, as obedient and chastened children of God, be finally made partakers of the promised kingdom and inheritance.

But if they refuse the rod of chastisement, reject the cross of Christ, and become, in contempt of their Father's kind chastening, the longer, the more abandoned and refractory; despise their Father's will and word; deal and act according to their own inclination, then they must at last be cast off and be considered as infamous bastards, and not as legitimate children.

Therefore, holy brethren, do not refuse the rod and correction of your kind Father, for its tendency is extremely beneficial, namely, that you lay aside every weight and the sins which so easily beset you, and in all things, without exception, fear, love, and obey your Father. Thus, is this rod of the cross of Christ pure love and benevolence, and not indignation and wrath; as may be perceived and evinced by the Spirit of God, and not by the dictates of the flesh.

For a similar reason did God oftentimes permit his people, Israel, to be chastised by the Philistines, Assyrians, Chaldeans, &c., when they forgot and rebelled against their God, in order that by such scourges and punishments, they might again seek their God, hear his law, cease from evil, and act uprightly in all things. Notwithstanding, the paternal punishment was for the

most part lost upon Israel, as the Prophet says. He has often reproved, but what did it avail? The rod does not amend the wicked children, says the Lord Jehovah.

“Behold, famine and plague, tribulation and anguish, are sent as scourges for amendment. But for all these things they shall not turn from their wickedness, nor be always mindful of your scourges,” 2 Esdras 16:19, 20.

Again, “You have stricken them, but they have not grieved; you have consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return,” Jer. 5:3.

The above cited words of the prophet show plainly why the Israelites were so often punished and stricken by the Lord, namely, that they might turn themselves from iniquity. Yet often in vain, as the prophets lament and declare in the above words.

Beloved brethren, let this serve you as an admonition, that you will not be like disobedient and hardhearted Israel, but that you willingly submit yourselves to the chastening of your merciful Father, reflecting upon that which is written, “When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world,” 1 Cor. 11:32.

Therefore, dearly beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, do not reject the chastening and instruction of your affectionate Father, but receive, with abundant joy, the exhortation of his sincere affection, giving thanks that through his paternal favor, he has chosen you in Christ Jesus, as the children of his love, taught and called you by the word of his power, enlightened you with the Holy Spirit, that through the salutary influence of the cross of Christ, you may restore to health your poor, weak, mortal flesh, which is subject to so many loathsome, infectious diseases of concupiscence, and wean it entirely from the pleasures and enjoyments of the world; that you may be made partakers of the

cross of Christ, and rendered conformable unto his death, and, by this means, attain unto the resurrection of the dead; as Paul, in a certain place instructs, saying, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," 2 Cor. 4:8,10. But we who live surrender ourselves daily unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus might also be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Behold, for this reason, he teaches, admonishes, rebukes, threatens and chastises us, that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; die entirely unto the world, flesh and the devil; and seek our treasure, portion and inheritance in heaven alone. Love and believe the true, living and eternal God, looking in patience for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, serving him in righteousness and godliness all the days of our life.

And for the same reason James says, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing," James 1:2, 4, for as gold, in passing through the fire, is severed from the dross and becomes more and more refined, so the susceptible man of God is subdued, purified, and refined, in the fiery furnace of affliction, that he may enhance the everlasting praise and glory of Christ and the Father, and may out of a pure heart, without hinderance, fear, love, honor, thank, and serve the same eternal God.

And this is the word that is written in the book of Wisdom, namely, "Having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly

rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As gold in the furnace has he tried them, and received them as burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation, they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign forever,” Wis. 3:5,8.

Beloved brethren, may you be, therefore, full of consolation in the Lord, and willingly bear your tribulation as pious soldiers of Christ, that you may please him who has called and chosen you as soldiers. Paul says, “And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.” 2 Tim. 2:5. Conduct yourselves, therefore, valiantly in the strife, and you shall gain favor in the eyes of your King; but if you become intimidated, throw down your arms, and forsake the combat, you shall receive no crown; for Christ says, “He that endures to the end shall be saved.”

I fear that some may be found among our young and inexperienced brethren, who allow themselves to be perplexed by these fleeting thoughts: Therefore why does the way of the wicked prosper? And why do the righteous suffer much tribulation? Yes, it appears in the eyes of the imprudent as if the ungodly were born to prosper; for they grow and increase like a blossoming branch. They marry and are given in marriage; they sow, plant, and gather the grain into barns; they hoard money in their chests; their dwellings are magnificent and filled with costly things; they deck themselves with gold and silver, with silk and velvet; they nourish their hearts as in a day of slaughter; their fields and meadows flourish luxuriantly; their cattle are healthy and prolific; their children are merry, gay and vigorous in their sight; they play upon the organ, the tambour, the viol and the lute; they sing and leap for joy, and say to their souls, Rejoice, and be gay while life endures.

Their preachers confirm and console them, and their worship is a pleasure exceeding all pleasures. In short, it would appear as if they were loved and blessed by God with a peculiar love, and that the righteous are accursed and hated by God with a peculiar hatred; for they are like a slender shrub in a barren soil; like a poor frightened owl that is persecuted by all other birds; like a pelican of the wilderness; and as a sparrow alone under the housetop, Psm. 102. All who look upon them, mock them; all who know them, despise them. There is no kingdom, principality, city, nor country, large enough to endure and tolerate a poor, rejected Christian. All who abuse, slander, and injure them, think they do God a service.

Brethren, were we to speak, or judge after the manner of men, we would doubtless complain with holy Jeremiah, Jer. 12:1, and say, "You are righteous, O, Jehovah, when I plead with you; yet, let me talk with you of your judgments. Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Again, "Why do you look upon them that deal treacherously, and hold your tongue when the wicked devours the man that is more righteous than he?" Hab.1:13, and Esdras, Are they of Babylon better than they of Zion? Asaph's feet were almost gone, his steps had well near slipped, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, and observed the opposition and tribulation of the righteous, Psm. 73.

I counsel and admonish all who have to contend with such thoughts, that they direct their hearts and eyes unto the word of the Lord, and observe with attention that which is written concerning the end and issue of both, and first of the ungodly. Job says 21:13, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave." Again, "Do not fret yourself," says David, Psm. 37:1, 2, "because of evil doers, neither be envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." Again, "If

you live according to the flesh,” says Paul, “you shall die;” Rom. 8:13. “To be carnally minded is death,” and many similar passages.

But respecting the end of the righteous, it is written, “The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction; but they are in peace,” Wis. 3:1-3. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but Jehovah delivers him out of them all,” Psm. 34:19. Again, “Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven,” Matt. 5:11,12. Again, “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that do not know God, and that do not obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired by all them that believe,” 2 Thes. 1:6-10. Yes, all who truly read, believe, and understand the Scriptures, and have a correct perception of the vast dissimilarity in the end and issue of both, will not envy them their short-lived prosperity, joy, and felicity, but will, by the grace of God, be prepared for, and find consolation in their own cross, tribulation and affliction.

Moreover, brethren, we are well aware that the cross appears to the flesh as grievous, harsh, and severe, and is not, in this life, looked upon as productive of joy, but much rather of sorrow; yet, since it contains within itself a source of profit and delight, in that it adds to the piety of the pious, separates them from the world and the flesh, makes them revere God and his word, as mentioned

above; and that it is also the Father's holy will that by it the sincere be approved, and the pretender exposed in his hypocrisy; therefore, all the true children of God are prepared through love, to do the will of the Father, rejoicing in it; as Paul says, Gal. 6:14, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Again, the apostles "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name," Acts 6:41.

For, inasmuch as we well know that the cross is a sting and vexation to our poor, weak flesh, as we may also find in the case of Job, Jeremiah, Elijah, and others. Yes, even Jesus Christ himself, earnestly desired that if it were possible, the cup might be removed from him. In an excess of agony he trembled, quaked, and sweat as it were great drops of blood, so that an angel appeared unto him from heaven, strengthening him. Therefore our best counsel is that in faith and humility of heart, we fly for refuge to our God, as all sincere bearers of the cross have done from the beginning, and seek, in full confidence, his grace, aid, assistance and consolation, for whom does he forsake that trusts in him? And who has called upon him that he did not hear? He is our God and Father, our Lord and King, our helper and protector, our strength and fortress, our consolation and refuge in the time of need; he is the horn of our salvation and our shadow at noonday. By my God, says David, have I leaped over a wall. If God is for us who can be against us? We can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us. Phil. 4:13. Commit your cause to him; he works in his saints that which is pleasing in his sight. Some he has rescued from the hands of tyrants, some he has preserved in the midst of fire; for others he has stopped the mouths of fierce and ravening lions; he has released some from prison and confinement, others have trampled the fear of death under their feet, and through the strength of their faith, have

triumphantly and victoriously conquered hunger, thirst, shame, derision, nakedness, stripes, imprisonment, anguish, and, in addition, the gallows, rack, massacre, torture, water, fire, life, death, &c.; for they were actuated by the constraining, effective influence of divine love, which converts the bitter into sweet, and the horrible into that which is greatly to be desired. “Love,” says Solomon, “is strong as death;” many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; all who possess it ought to say with Paul, “Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loves us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” Rom. 8:35-39.

Therefore, beloved brethren, bearers of the cross of the Lord, acknowledge your God; fear, love, believe, confide, and serve him, and that in the fullness of pureness of heart, according to the example of all saints, and of Christ Jesus, and the Father of mercies and of truth, in the excellency of his love, will not forsake you, but will care for you as the apple of his eye, will faithfully support you in every misfortune and extremity, will extend his hand, and guard and preserve you, in life or in death, as is pleasing in his sight, to the enhancement of his glory, and to the salvation of your own souls, for he is so kind and faithful that he will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able to endure, but will in his boundless mercy graciously make a way for you to escape, if you only remain steadfast in the belief of his word, and consider him as your faithful Father. 1 Cor. 10:13

Dear brethren, if in your trials and temptations, you exhibit such evidence as is related here; drinking with patience the cup of the Lord; bearing witness to Christ Jesus and his holy, inestimable

word, in action, and conversation; suffering yourselves, in perfect constancy, to be led as meek lambs to the slaughter, for his testimony's sake; then will the name of Jehovah be sanctified, and exalted with praise and abundant glory; the hope of the righteous shall be revealed; the kingdom of heaven spread abroad; the word of God acknowledged; and your poor, weak brethren and companions in the Lord, edified and confirmed by this, your plain dealing.

Yes, my brethren, in the manner related here, we are informed and instructed, even unto this day, by the offering and blood of Abel; by the faith and obedience of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the chastity of Joseph; the patience of Job and Tobit; the excellent and manly confession of Eleazer; the mother and her seven sons; the candor, constancy, and piety of all the pious before us; the pure, unspotted love, humility, peace, righteousness, and voluntary offering of Jesus Christ, that according to the promise of God, he was sent from heaven, in everlasting love, by God our heavenly Father, and descended upon earth as an infallible teacher, and as an everlasting example of all good.

My dearly beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, dispersed abroad in every land, for whom, out of pure, christian love and duty, I have composed and written this exhortation; I will now draw to a conclusion, and I entreat you, in all humility, that you consider well, in the first place, the nature of the people who so malevolently persecute you, spoiling your property, and destroying your lives.

Secondly, consider why they persecute and injure you. Thirdly, remember that all saints, as also Christ Jesus himself, have suffered and all the pious must suffer persecution; as may be seen. Fourthly, see how futile all their arguments are, with which they try to excuse themselves from their bloody deeds, accusing us, as though they did right, and we justly merited every kind of punishment and disgrace.

Fifthly, understand how profitable and advantageous to us the cross of Christ is, which, for the sake of the word of the Lord, we must take up and bear daily; how we should desire to hear, believe and obey Christ Jesus. Now, if you consider with discretion, according to the Scriptures, and reflect, in purity of heart, upon these five points, I do not have the least doubt that this exercise will afford you invincible strength, and an invulnerable armor and shield against all tribulation, persecution and distress.

Finally, I beseech and exhort you to consider with earnest diligence that which is promised to all the conquering soldiers of Christ Jesus in the world to come, namely, the everlasting, incorruptible kingdom, the crown of glory, and the life that will remain forever. Therefore, O, you people of God! Equip yourself and make ready for battle, not with external weapons and armor, as the blood-thirsty barbarous world, but with the firmness of confidence, the tranquillity of patience, and the vehement ardor of prayer.

There is no alternative, the combat of the cross must be maintained, and the wine-press of affliction must be trodden. O, you brothers and sisters of Christ, prepare yourself; the thorny crown must pierce your head; and the nails transfix your hands and feet; your person must be scourged, and your face spit upon. Gird yourself round about, and be prepared; for you must go forth with your Lord and Bridegroom without the city, bearing his reproach. On Golgotha you must offer up your sacrifice. Awake and pray, for your enemies are more numerous than the hairs of your head, or the sand of the sea. Though their hearts, hands, feet, and swords are exceedingly red, and stained with blood, do not be dismayed; for God is your leader. Your life on earth is an incessant warfare. Strive valiantly, and you shall receive the promised crown.

“To him that overcomes I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God,” and of the hidden and heavenly manna. Rev. 2:7.

Him that overcomes God will make a pillar in his temple, and will write upon him his name and the name of the new Jerusalem.

He that overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death. He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and his name shall not be blotted out of the book of life, but Christ Jesus will confess his name before his heavenly Father, and before his angels. Rev. 2:11 & 3:5

He that overcomes shall sit with Christ in his throne, even as Christ overcame, and has sat down with his Father on his throne, Rev. 3.

O, you soldier of God, prepare yourself and do not fear! You must tread the wine-press; you must go the narrow way, and enter in through the strait gate unto eternal life.

Jehovah is your strength, your refuge and consolation; Exo. 15:2 he is with you in prisons and bonds; he flies with you to foreign lands; he is with you in fire and in water; he will never leave you, nor forsake you; yes, he will come quickly, and his great reward shall be with him.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Do not be grieved that you are black; you are still comely and pleasing to the King.

As a rose, you must grow among thorns, and be stung with the prickles. Rejoice, for the King delights in your comeliness.

Though in his first appearance he was offered as an innocent Lamb, and did not open his mouth, yet the time shall come when he will appear in judgment as a triumphant Prince and a

victorious King. Then our persecutors will look upon him whom they pierced; then will they cry aloud and exclaim, You mountains, fall upon us; you hills, hide us. But you shall leap and dance in excessive joy like calves of the stall, Matt. 4. Joy and exultation will never forsake you; for your King, Bridegroom and Redeemer, Christ Jesus, will remain with you forever. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain," Rev. 21:4.

Praise, thanksgiving, and glory to God shall flow from your mouth in an everlasting stream. I repeat it, Strive, for the crown of glory is prepared; do not shrink, nor draw back; "For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not delay. The just shall live by faith: but if any man draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him," Heb. 10:37,38.

Take heed and watch, lest the fire of the cross consume you as wood, hay and stubble, and the rains and storms of persecution overthrow the house. Do not let the heat of the sun wither the cross, lest like the dog you turn again to that which you have ejected. Do not let your garments and your feet, which you have washed, become unclean, lest seven worse spirits enter you, and so the last error be worse than the first.

Therefore, beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, fear God with all your heart, and with all your souls, and seek him with all your powers. Watch night and day; knock before the throne of his mercy, that with his paternal hand he may support you under every affliction, succor you in trouble and distress, and graciously preserve you in his way, word and truth; that you may not dash your feet against a stone, and so failing in your profession and your life, be overcome and disgraced. May you preserve the treasure, intrusted to your care, pure and untarnished against that day, and thus obtain, with all the saints, the promised land, inheritance, kingdom, life and crown. May the Father of mercies

and of love, grant this unto you and us through his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of his eternal Holy Spirit, to his praise, and everlasting glory, Amen.



A
PLEASING MEDITATION
AND
Devout Contemplation
TOGETHER WITH
**CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES FOR A TROUBLED AND
ANXIOUS CONSCIENCE, WHICH IS OPPOSED BY THE
WORLD, FLESH, HELL, DEATH AND THE DEVIL.**

ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH PSALM
CALLED IN LATIN
Ad te levani annimam meam
EXPLAINED BY WAY OF SUPPLICATION.
BY
MENNO SIMON.

*“Blessed are you when men shall revile you, and persecute you,
and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake.
Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in
heaven; for they so persecuted the prophets which were before
you,” Matt. 5:11,12.*

*“In my distress I cried unto Jehovah, and he heard me. Deliver
my soul, O, Jehovah, from lying lips, and from a deceitful
tongue,” Psalm 120:1,2.*

*“For no man can lay another foundation than that which is laid,
which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 8:11.*

PREFACE.

It is evident, dear reader, that I am clandestinely slandered and contradicted by the envious; therefore I have, briefly and prayingly sought to express the feelings of my heart, my grounds, spirit, faith, doctrine, object, &c., after the tenor of the twenty-fourth psalm according to the Latin, and the twenty-fifth, according to the Hebrew. This is not in words of human wisdom, nor in great logic and rhetoric, but in a plain narration as dictated by my heart, to show the different dispositions of a true and of a false christian, together with all the grounds and hope of my faith; what I maintain concerning Christ Jesus, his doctrine, baptism, Holy Supper, ordinances, commands and prohibitions; my disposition towards lords, princes and all who are as yet in the darkness of unbelief and do not know the light of truth. I seek, and by the grace of God shall seek nothing upon earth but the unadulterated word of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this according to Scripture.

If I do err in some things, which I hope, by the grace of God, is not the case, I pray to every one, for the Lord's sake, that I may not be put to shame. If any one has more powerful writings and convincing truth, that he through brotherly exhortation and instruction would assist me, I desire with my heart to accept it, if he is right. Deal with me as the Spirit and word of Christ teach; if any one can convince me of an error by the Scriptures, and if I will not renounce it, but continue obstinate to the word of God and brotherly admonition, then practice upon me the tyranny of Nero, Diocletian, or Maxeritius, as an obdurate and ungodly heretic. For this I stand prepared, although this would be contrary to the usages and doctrines of the first church; for it is evident that they did not persecute on account of faith, much less did they kill them, but the erring and heretical they faithfully

admonished, and those who would not return were then excommunicated.

Afterwards, in the time of Arius, they exiled them. Ultimately the bloody tyranny of anti-christ generally prevailed. All had to suffer who did not agree with the Pope in his abominations. It is yet the case, which alas! May be plainly seen in many places.

Many who have neither seen nor heard me, call me a deceiving heretic. This must all be endured. I am no better than the pious fathers, who had to hear and suffer. Nevertheless, I feel disposed to give my life, if it would induce the world to rightly understand my seeking, faith and doctrine; for I assuredly know that I have the word of God. My reader, do not pervert what I write. I desire nothing else, before God, who created me, than to deal plainly, with a living voice, before every one, as one willing to be overcome by the Spirit of Christ, and to overcome [sin]; for my desire is that I and many with me will be saved; hence, it is unnecessary to use the sword against me. If I do not have the truth, I desire with all my heart to be instructed in it; but if I have, then you do not persecute me, but him who is the truth, Christ Jesus.

Again, I say, with the Spirit and word of Christ, I desire to overcome, or to be overcome; in this I appeal to all the world. But it is in vain, they will reject the truth, and maintain and defend lies with the sword; for it is the true disposition and manner of anti-christ to defame, slander, apprehend, torture, burn and murder, contrary to the Spirit and word of God. But our Lord will see and judge it.

I would, therefore, faithfully admonish the reader to zealously and earnestly strive after the kingdom of God, and examine this Psalms with assiduity; every word of it, with a submissive, humble heart. I hope he will find, through the grace

of God, that it is replete with consolation in persecution, and that it clearly points out the difference between a believer and an unbeliever.

May Jehovah God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant the reader a zealous, ardent heart, a sincere, active faith, unfeigned christian love, and obedience to his holy word through our Lord Christ Jesus, his beloved Son. To him be everlasting praise, Amen.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH PSALM

EXPLAINED BY WAY OF SUPPLICATION.

*1. To You, O Jehovah, I lift up my soul. O, my God, I trust in You; do not let me be ashamed.**

O, Jehovah, you that bear rule, Lord of heaven and earth, I call you my Lord, though I am not worthy to be called your servant; for from my youth I did not serve you, but your enemy, the devil; I served him diligently; nevertheless, I do not doubt your grace;, for I find in the word of your truth that you are a bountiful, rich Lord to all those who call upon you. Therefore, I call unto you, O Lord, hear me, hear me, O Lord! With full confidence and assurance, I lift up not my head or my hands as the hypocrites do in the synagogues, but my soul. I lifted up my heart, not to Abraham, for he never knew us, nor to Israel, for he never had knowledge of us, but to you alone, for you are our Lord and Father, you are our Redeemer, this is your name, from days of yore. Hence it is, dear Lord, that I trust in you, for I truly

* [CHCoG: This Psalm is from the CHCP translation of the Bible.]

know that you are a faithful God over all who trust in you. If I am in darkness, you are my light; if I am in prison, you are with me; if I am forsaken, you are my comfort; if I am in death, you are my life; if they curse me, you do bless; if they grieve me, you do comfort; if they will slay me, you will raise me up; and if I walk in the dark valley, you will ever be with me. It is right, O Lord, that I lift up my grieved and miserable soul to you, trust in your promise, and am not ashamed.

2. Do not let my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed.

O, Jehovah of hosts, Lord of lords, my flesh is weak; my misery and necessities are great. Nevertheless, I do not fear the sensual scoffing of my enemies; but I fear greatly, lest I deny your adorable and revered name, and depart from your truth, and that they will rejoice over my weakness and the transgression of your will, and mock me and say, Where is your God now? Where is your Christ? And that your divine honor will be thus reproached through me. O Lord, preserve me; keep me, O Lord! For my enemies are strong and many; yes, more numerous than the hairs of my head, and the spears of grass in the fields; my unclean flesh is never at rest. Satan encompasses me as a roaring lion, that he may devour me; the blood-thirsty, revengeful world is determined upon my life; they also hate, persecute, burn and murder those who seek your praise. Wretched man, I do not know where to go, misery, tribulation, fear and dread are on every side; strife within, and persecution without. I say with king Jehoshaphat, If I do not know where to go, I lift my eyes unto you, and depend only on your grace and mercy, as Abraham in Gerar, Jacob in Mesopotamia, Joseph in Egypt, Moses in Media, Israel in the wilderness, David in the mountains, Hezekiah in Jerusalem, the young men in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the lion's den; yes, all the pious fathers trusted in you, and were not made ashamed.

3. *Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.*

O Lord, you that bear rule, even as your merciful grace is over all who fear you, so also is your fierce wrath over all who despise you; who walk after their lusts, and dare to say with all fools, "There is no God;" we have made a covenant with death, and with hell an agreement; God does not know what we do; thick clouds are a covering to him, so he does not see the works of men; we will eat and drink, for tomorrow we die; for our life is short and full of trouble, and there is no consolation when we have gone from here. We will live in affluence, while we yet can and use the creatures as we desire; we will oppress the poor, defraud the righteous; we will condemn him with the most disgraceful death. O, dear Lord, thus does the world err, and live every where in the lusts of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and in the pride of life; it is mere deceit, unrighteousness and tyranny, wherever we turn. Few are they who fear your name. Paul says, "To be carnally minded is death;" the sentence is already passed; if we live according to the flesh we must die, so teach the Scriptures; if we do not repent there is nothing more certain than fierce anger. Therefore, dear Lord, you threaten, reprove, admonish and teach; perhaps they may yet repent, know the truth and be saved; they are the works of your hands, created after your image, and dearly bought; let them not be confounded like Cain, Sodom, Pharaoh and Antiochus, with all those who have transgressed without a cause.

4. *Show me Your ways, O, Jehovah; teach me Your paths.*

Jehovah of hosts, I know through the word of your grace that there is but one way which leads to life, which is strait and narrow for the flesh, beset with thorns and dangers all around, and is found by few, and still fewer walk in it; it is like a treasure hid in a field which none can find but he to whom it is shown by the Spirit. Dear Lord, there is no way but you alone; all who

walk through you will find the gates of life. There is another way which seems very pleasant to the flesh, which appears soft, smooth and broad, strewn with roses, pleasant and agreeable to the eye, but in the end it leads to death. On this way the whole world walks, unconcerned and without fear, and prefers things perishable to imperishable, evil to good, and darkness to the light of the world. They all walk on the perverse, broad and crooked way; they become faint in the way of unrighteousness, and do not know the way of the Lord. It is true, the way of error seems right in the eyes of fools, but I know through your Spirit and word that it is the certain road to the abyss of hell. Therefore, I entreat you, dear Lord, be merciful to me, a poor sinner; show me your path, and teach me your way; for your way is the right way, godly, pleasant, humble, chaste, full of peace and of all good, and will lead my soul to eternal life.

5. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.

O Lord! Lord! "My tears," says David, "have been my food day and night." My heart within me quakes, my strength forsakes me, and the light of my eyes is dim, and this on account of the innumerable dangers and snares which beset my soul. I am in constant fear lest I be led from the way of truth by misapprehension or through the deceit of satan. O, Lord, the subtlety of the learned is great; satan uses his wiles artfully; some teach [nothing] but the doctrine and commandments of men, which are fruitless and corrupt trees. Some cry only grace, spirit and Christ, and yet daily trample on your grace, grieve your Holy Spirit, and crucify your Son with their vain, carnal life, as is evident. Some who had before escaped Babylon, Egypt and Sodom, and taken upon them the yoke and cross of Christ, are again devoured by satan, and so deceived by the false prophets, [it is] as if they had never known your word and will. Yes, seven spirits, alas! All worse than the former, entered them, although

they cloak themselves under your word and ordinances, and pretend that it was your pleasure, word and will; although you never did think of it, much less did you desire it. On account of this I am much grieved and full of sorrow of heart, well knowing that your true word is not a deceiving lie, as they teach, but it is the truth which your infallible mouth taught here upon earth and in this grievous world. All who are of the truth hear your voice, as the voice of their only Shepherd, and the true Bridegroom; but from the voice of a stranger they flee, always fearing lest they might be deceived. Lord, remember your afflicted and poor servant; you are a Searcher of all hearts, you know me, and that I seek nothing but your will. Therefore, dear Lord, direct me to your truth, and teach me; for you are the God of my salvation; besides you I acknowledge none other; you only are my hope, my comfort, shield, defense and fortress upon which I depend with confidence, and wait upon it in fear, misery, tribulation and need.

6. Remember, O Jehovah, Your tender mercies and Your loving-kindnesses, for they have been from of old.

O, Jehovah of hosts, when I am buoyed up in the waters of your grace, I find that I cannot fathom or measure them, for your mercies are greater than all your other works. Who is it, dear Lord, that ever came to you with a pious heart that you did reject? Who ever sought you and did not find you? Who ever desired help from you and did not obtain it? Who ever prayed for your grace and did not receive it? And who ever called upon you that you did not hear? Yes, dear Lord, how many did you accept in grace, who, according to your strict justice, merited otherwise? Adam departed from you and believed the counsel of the serpent; he broke your covenant and was found a child of death before you; your paternal kindness did not reject him, but you did seek him graciously, you did call and reprove him, and his nudity you did cover with coats of skin, and so graciously comfort him with the promised seed. Paul, your chosen vessel, raved like a roaring

lion and a devouring wolf in your holy mountain, nevertheless, your grace shone around him in his blindness and illuminated him; you called him from heaven, and choose him as a holy apostle and as a servant of your house. I also, dear Lord, the greatest of all sinners, and the least among all the saints, am called your child or servant, though I have sinned against heaven and before you. Although I resisted your precious word and your holy will, with all my powers, before this with open eyes; and with full understanding I disputed, taught and lived after the ease of the flesh, and sought my own praise more than your righteousness, honor, word and truth. Nevertheless, your paternal grace did not forsake me, a wretched sinner; but received me in love, converted me to another mind, led me with your right hand and taught me by your Holy Spirit, till I voluntarily fought against the world, flesh and the devil; renounced all my pleasure, peace, glory, lust and the ease of the flesh, and willingly submitted to the pressing cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, that I may inherit the promised kingdom with all the valiant of God and the disciples of Christ. Again, I say, Your mercies are greater than all your other works; therefore, dear Lord assist me, stand by me, comfort me, a poor sinner. My soul is in great distress, and the dangers of hell surround me; help me, Lord, and preserve me, and do not be angry; remember, O Jehovah, your great mercies, of which all are made partakers who have graciously waited upon your holy name, and remember, O Lord, your tender mercies, and your loving kindness, for they have been of old.

7. *Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; according to Your mercy remember me, for Your goodness'sake, O Jehovah.*

O Lord, you that bear rule, "I was shaped in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me," I am of sinful flesh; Adam's corrupt seed has been sown in my heart, from which so much misery has grown up. I, a miserable sinner, did not know my

infirmities, so long as they were not manifested to me by the Spirit. I thought I was a christian; but when I saw rightly, I found myself without your word, altogether earthly, and carnal; my light was darkness, my truth was lies, my righteousness was sin, my worship was open idolatry, and my life [would end in] certain death. O, dear Lord, I did not know myself till I viewed myself through your word; then I learned to know, with Paul, my blindness, nakedness, uncleanness, depraved nature, and that nothing good dwelt in my flesh. I was full of wounds, bruises and putrefying sores from the sole of the foot even to the head. Ah, alas! My gold was dross; my wheat, chaff; all my services were deceit and lies. I walked before you in the flesh; my thoughts were carnal, my words and works were without the fear of God; my watching and sleeping were unclean; my prayer hypocrisy. In short, I did nothing without sin. O Lord, do not remember the sins of my youth, so often committed knowingly and unknowingly, nor my daily transgressions, of which I am guilty in my great weakness, but remember me according to your great goodness. I am blind, enlighten me; I am naked, clothe me; I am wounded, heal me; I am dead, raise me up! I know of no light, medicine, or life except you; accept me graciously, grant me your mercy, favor, faith, fullness, and your good will, O Lord.

8. *Good and upright is Jehovah; therefore He teaches sinners the Way.*

O, Jehovah of hosts, although I have walked so unrighteously before you from my youth, that I am ashamed to lift my eyes to you in heaven, nevertheless, I appear at your throne of grace; for I know that you are merciful and kind, and do not desire the death of the sinner, but that he repent and live. You sent forth your faithful servant, Moses, who gave Israel the law by the disposition of angels, also your servants and prophets who preached the way of repentance, and broke the bread of life for the people; they reproved sin earnestly; proclaimed your grace far

abroad, and taught the truth. Your sharp piercing word was in their mouth, their light shone as the golden lights; they were as flowering olive trees, as a sweet smell of costly perfumery, yes, as the fair mountain strewn with roses and lilies. Nevertheless, they did not desire them, but thrust them out furiously, derided, persecuted, and delivered them unto death. Still the wells of your mercy flowed; you sent your beloved Son, the dear pledge of your grace, who preached your word, fulfilled your righteousness, accomplished your will, bore our sins, blotted them out with his blood, and brought about reconciliation; conquered the devil, hell, sin and death, and obtained grace, mercy, favor and peace for all who truly believe on him. His command is eternal life. He sent out his messengers, ministers and apostles of peace, who spread this grace abroad through the whole world; who shone as bright, burning torches before all, that they might lead me and all erring sinners into the true way. O Lord, not unto me, but unto you be praise and honor; their words I love, their usages I observe; your Son, Christ Jesus, whom they preached to me, I believe. I seek his will and way; your abundant, great love I acknowledge, not through me, but through you, for you are good, and I am evil; you are true, and I am deceitful; you are righteous, and I am unrighteous. Instruct me, dear Lord, teach me in the right way; foster me, for I am of your pasture; take me into your care, under the shadow of your wings; protect me, for I am greatly tormented; I am poor, wretched, and grieved unto death.

9. The humble He guides in judgement, and the humble He teaches His Way.

O Lord, you that bear rule, your divine grace has shone around me, your word has taught me, your Holy Spirit has influenced me till I forsook the course of the ungodly, the way of sinners, the seat of scorners. I was ungodly, and carried the banner of unrighteousness for many years; I was a chief one in all

manner of folly; idle words, vanity, gambling, drinking, eating to excess were my daily pastime; the fear of God was not before my eyes. Besides, I was a lord and a prince in Babel; every one sought me; the world loved me and had my affections. I had the first place at feasts and in synagogues; I had the preference among all men; I was respected by the aged, and every one revered me; when I spoke, they were silent; when I nodded, they came; when I bid them depart, they went; what I desired, they did. My words prevailed in all things; the desire of my heart was granted; but as soon as I, with Solomon, saw that all was vanity, and with Paul, esteemed it all as nothing, I renounced the ungodliness of this world, and sought you and your kingdom which will abide in eternity. I have found everywhere the counterpart and reverse; before, I was honored, now I am dishonored; before, all was love, now hatred; before, I had friends, now they are my enemies; before, I was considered wise, now a fool; before, pious, now wicked; before, a christian, now a heretic; yes, I have become an abomination and evildoer to all. O Lord, comfort me, preserve your troubled servant; for I am exceedingly poor and wretched, my sins rise up against me, the whole world hates and mocks me; lords and princes persecute me, the learned curse and slander me, my dearest friends forsake me, and those who were near to me stand aloof; who will have mercy on me and receive me? Miserable am I, dear Lord; have mercy on me and receive me with honor; for there is none that can preserve me but you; therefore, I entreat you, my Lord, vouchsafe your ear to supplication; lead me by the right hand, lead me in the right way lest I stumble upon the dark mountains. I see that the children of men do neither teach nor do right; deceit and hypocrisy are in all flesh; the deceiving sects are great and many; every one avers his as if it were built upon a rock, yet they do not have your truth. Therefore, dear Lord, teach me your truth and do not cast me off from your presence, for I am miserable; I am in the midst of lions and bears, which seek to destroy my soul, and

thrust me from the way of truth. Lord, strengthen me, keep me in your way, for I assuredly know that it is the infallible truth and the sure way of peace.

10. All the paths of Jehovah are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.

O, Jehovah of hosts, they all boast of your grace and favor, although they, in all their works, prove themselves children of wrath; they lie, cheat, eat, drink, are guilty of adultery and fornication, they covet and hoard, curse and swear without bounds, and all this they cloak with your grace and the blood of Christ; every one sings lustily: the mercy of the Lord is great; Christ died for our sins; our doings are unjust, sinful and fruitless. It is true, dear Lord, in the true sense of the word, that they have no lot in you, their hope is vain, their labor is without fruit, and their works are useless. Yes, their hope is like thistledown before the winds; they will have no part in your kingdom, for they are still impenitent, and do not believe your truth. Alas! They do not know that your mercy is forever over those who fear you and keep your covenant. Your goodness, says David, is extended to the saints; your eyes are upon the righteous, and your ears are open to their cries; but your face is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. I am your friend if I do what you have commanded. John 15:14. It is true, dear Lord, that Christ was given to us, and died for us, yet not for such a purpose that we are to [continue] living according to our wicked lusts, and sinful will, but according to your good will, word and command. Lord, I know that you are no less righteous than good, that you hate the evil, and love the good; to the good you are kind, but to the wicked you will in due time appear as a righteous Judge. What did the pure blood of the everlasting covenant demand of Cain and Judas, because they despised your grace and excluded themselves from the merits of your Son? What does it profit Pilate, Herod, Annas, and Caiaphas to have seen your

fountain of grace, Jesus Christ; no, even touched him, and yet they condemned to the accursed death of the cross, the immaculate Lamb, the King of glory! But they who keep your covenant and preserve your testimony like Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob did, to them your ways are peace and joy; yes, altogether mercy, kindness and truth.

11. For Your Name's sake, O Jehovah, pardon my iniquity, for it is great.

O, Lord Jehovah! I pray to you with holy David, do not rebuke me in your anger, neither chasten me in your hot displeasure; for my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh; my sins have borne me down; there is no peace in my bones. From the bottom of my heart I humble myself with beloved Daniel. O, dear Lord! You great and terrible God! I have sinned, and done unjustly; before you I have been ungodly, I wandered from you, and did not walk in your commands and statutes; your preferred grace I rejected; your holy word I thrust from me; your beloved Son I crucified, I grieved your Holy Spirit, I acted unjustly in all my doings. Lord, the multitude of my sins frighten me; there is no evil but what I am guilty of. I was as envious as Cain; proud and unchaste as Sodom; unmerciful as Pharaoh; refractory as Korah; lascivious as Simri; disobedient as Saul; idolatrous as Jeroboam; hypocritical as Joab; haughty as Nebuchadnezzar; covetous as Balaam; drunken as Nabal; insolent as Sennacherib; blasphemous as Rabsaces; blood-thirsty as Herod; lying as Ananias. Yes, I say with king Manasseh that my sins are more numerous than the sands of the sea shore and the stars in the heavens; they trouble me by day and by night; nothing good dwells in my flesh. All that I [would] seek is unrighteousness and sin; that which I would not, that I seek and do; I, miserable man, do not know where to go; if I go into myself, I find great faults, impure desires, a vessel of sins; if I go to my neighbor, he has nothing to give me, so that

here nothing else avails but your word. The wages of sin, says Paul, is death; but your grace is eternal life. This grace I seek and desire; for this is the only ointment which can heal my soul; the sinful woman availed herself of this, Luke 7, as soon as she was sensible of her wants; David availed himself of this when he disgraced Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and slew him; great was his distress when he saw his wickedness and said, "I have sinned against Jehovah." He desired balm; "God!" said he, "according unto the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions, wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin," Psm. 51:1,2. In the same hour he heard the gracious word of the prophet, "Jehovah also has put away your sin." 2 Sam. 12:13. His troubled heart was quieted; he praised his name, proclaimed his mercy, and exalted his grace above all his works. O Lord! O, dear Lord! I am a grieving sinner, I have the same disease, I desire the same balm, and I desire help from you; I seek only comfort with you, Lord, for your holy name's sake. Help me, that I may eternally praise you. Wash me from all my sins, and be merciful to me in all my transgressions, for they are great.

12. Who is the man that fears Jehovah? He will teach him in the way He chooses.

O, Jehovah, you that bear rule, your path is the path of peace; blessed is he that walks in it; for we find mercy, love, righteousness, humility, obedience and patience in your* ways. You clothe the naked, feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, entertain the needy, reprove, threaten, comfort and admonish; are sober, honest, chaste and upright in all your ways. None [should] take offense at you, as your goings forth are to everlasting life, but there are few that find it. Yes, I fear dear Lord, that there are scarcely ten of a thousand that find your Way, scarcely five who cherish it. It continues as it was from the beginning, when there

* [CHCoG: Her in the original, perhaps referring to peace or wisdom?]

were but four upon earth; of whom the Scriptures testify that two were disobedient, and a third one slew his [righteous] brother. There were eight saved when the world was drowned, and one of them [soon after] mocked his father. In Sodom and Gomorrah, with the adjacent country, there were four righteous persons, yet one looked back and was changed into a pillar of salt. About six hundred thousand valiant men left Egypt, of whom only two entered the promised land; not, dear Lord, that all were damned who died on the way, but they did not, on account of their unbelief, inherit the promised Canaan. Thus also, dear Lord, is the everlasting land promised to us, if we walk in the way which you have chosen for us. But now they walk the crooked way of death; and even as those did not inherit the temporal, so also will these not inherit the everlasting Canaan [if they do not repent]. Lord, well may I sigh and say, Where is he who fears Jehovah? Where is he who has understanding? Where is he who seeks God? “They are all gone out of the way, they have together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; their feet are swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways, and they have not known the way of peace; there is no fear of God before their eyes,” Rom. 3:12-18. All that is among them is infidelity and lies; they despise and blaspheme your righteousness, yet they sing and speak much of your truth, and glory in the Lord, although there is not one ripe grape on their vine, nor any good fruit to be found with them. But those who fear you, O Lord, depart from all iniquity; for your fear, says Sirach, dispels sin, and is the beginning of wisdom. Your eyes are upon those who fear you, your Holy Spirit leads them, your gracious hand preserves them; they will not fear nor tremble; for you are their protector and shelter against intense heat. You pardoned their sins and rescued them; you enlighten them, make their souls glad, and give them grace, blessing and peace. He that

fears you walks uprightly in all his ways, for you teach him in the way that you have chosen.

13. His soul will dwell in goodness, and his seed will inherit the earth.

O Lord, Jehovah of hosts! Those who acknowledge you shall be blessed in the paradise of their God, upon Mount Zion, in the heavenly Jerusalem, in the church of the living God, in the assembly of the righteous whose names are written in heaven. They are released from hell, sin, the devil and death, and they serve before you in peace and joy of heart through life. They repose without fear, for you are their strength and shield. They rest under the shadow of your wings, for they are yours. They do not fear, for you warm them with the beams of your love; they do not hunger, for you feed them with the bread of life; they do not thirst, for you give them the waters of your Holy Spirit to drink; they do not want, for you are their treasure and their kingdom. They dwell in the house of your peace, in the tabernacles of righteousness, and in sure peace. They have pleasure in your law, and speak of your word day and night, amongst all the people. They wash their souls in the clear waters of your truth. They view their consciences in the clear mirror of your wisdom; their thoughts are upright, their words are words of grace, seasoned with salt. Their works are faithful and true. The light of their piety shines around them; what they seek they find; what they desire they obtain; their souls dwell in the fullness of your goodness; the dew of your grace has sprinkled upon them; the soil of their consciences bears wine and oil without measure, and although they must endure in their flesh for a time, much misery, suffering and trouble, yet they know well that the way of the cross is the way of life. They are not ashamed of the way of the cross and the weapons of the Lord. They patiently go with Christ to the conflict, and contend valiantly, till they have reached the boundary of life, and have received the crown. Nothing can

hinder them, since they have become partakers of your Spirit, and have tasted of your sweetness. They neither waver nor turn aside; their house stands firmly upon a rock; they are as the pillars of the holy temple; they have eaten of your hidden manna. O Lord, to you be praise! Your fear abides continually before their eyes. They walk in your way, therefore their souls shall be blessed, and their seed, if born of the Holy Spirit and word, will enjoy the land of everlasting life, wherein you, and your chosen, shall reign in endless glory.

14. The counsel of Jehovah is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.

O Lord Jehovah, the thoughts of my heart terrify me, and my heart trembles within me; because, with Ezra, I perceive that so many are born in vain. What shall I say, dear Lord? Shall I say that you have ordained the wicked to wickedness, as some have said? Be that far from me, for I know, O Lord, that you are eternally good, and that nothing wicked can be found in you. We are the works of your hand, created in Christ Jesus for good works that we should walk in them. Water, fire, life and death, have you left to our choice. You do not want the death of the sinner, but that he should repent and live. You are the eternal light, therefore you hate all darkness; you do not desire that any should perish, but that all repent, come to the knowledge of your truth, and be happy.

O, dear Lord, so grievously have they blasphemed your unspeakably great goodness, eternal mercy, and almighty Majesty, that they, O, gracious God, Creator of all things, have made you to be as a cruel devil, by saying that you are the source of all evil, you who are the Father of days and of lights. It is plain that evil cannot flow from good, darkness from light, nor death from life; yet they must attribute their stubborn hearts and carnal minds to be your will, in order that they may continue upon the broad way, and have a cover for their sins; and this is

because they do not acknowledge your divine goodness, nor their own inbred wickedness. O Lord Jehovah, you have loved us with an eternal love, you have chosen us before the foundation of the world, that we should be unblameable, and holy before you in love, not regarding what we find written by the faithful Paul concerning Esau, Pharaoh and Israel; he has done all this for us, for the best, in order that we should give the honor to your name, and not to ourselves. What do we miserable sinners have of which we may boast? What do we have that we have not received from you? All that we have is from your fullness. For this, all who know your word thank you. O, dear Lord, the mystery of your holy word is not revealed to the rich, the honorable, or the wise, but to the poor, simple children. Yes, Father, said Christ, such was your good pleasure. Psalm 51 says, You will look upon the miserable, and those who are of a broken spirit, and who fear your word. Therefore, dear Lord, we miserable sinners pray to you to lead us in your truth; to teach us your mysteries; to enable us to rightly know the power of your covenant, that you are ours, and we are yours; that covenant which you have made with us in Christ, without any merit on our part. For your mystery will be found with those who fear you and those to whom you have made your covenant known.

15. My eyes are ever toward Jehovah, for He will pluck my feet out of the net.

O Lord! You who bear rule! I say with the prophet, If you should mark iniquity, who could stand? I, a miserable, great sinner, have, with the full lust of my heart, turned to all folly, to gold, silver, pride, haughtiness, to strange and forbidden flesh. I have turned my eyes to open idolatry, to wood and stone, and have served them many years, upon high mountains and under green trees, as the prophet said. My idolatry was according to the number of my days. I have bowed my knee before the graven and molten images, and said, Save me, for you are my God. I

sought sight from the blind, life from the dead, and help from those who could not preserve themselves from dust, corruption, thieves and worms. Yes, I have said to a weak, perishable creation that grew out of the earth, was broken in a mill, baked by the fire, chewed with my teeth, and consumed by my stomach, to a mouthful of bread: You have released me; as Israel said to the golden calf, "These are your gods, O, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt," Exo. 22:4. O, God! Thus have I, a miserable sinner, courted the whore of Babylon for many years, for I supposed that she was modest, honest and chaste; a queen of righteousness, who was glorious, holy and acceptable before your eyes, for I saw her adorned with purple and scarlet, with gold and precious stones, and pearls, a golden cup in her hand, powerful over all kings upon earth. Therefore, I did not know that she was so very loathsome and polluted; that there was in such a splendid cup so much abomination; that she was such an unblushing, impudent whore and murderess; that she deceived the world, persecuted the chosen, and drank the blood of the saints. But now I have seen her abominations, and I quake, because I left you, the living Well, for so long, and comforted myself with useless pools that can give no water; that I gave your honor to images and other creations; and worshipped the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. This happened, in part through the deceitfulness of my eyes, because I was bewitched in my heart, by the goodly appearance of the woman. But now, dear Lord, my eyes are constantly directed unto you, till you hear me; they are directed to your mercy seat, I obtain grace and mercy from you, for you alone are he who can help me in the time of my temptation, and pluck my feet out of the net of sin.

16. Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, for I am unique and afflicted.

O, Jehovah of hosts, I do not hide my sins and transgressions from you, but unreservedly acknowledge that I spent my former

days after the will of the heathen, and walked with them in all manner of ungodly lusts, pride, wantonness, in [excessive] eating and drinking, and in abominable, blind idolatry. I did all that pleased my wicked flesh, I was a child of wrath, even as others. I held your holy name in derision; your word was as a fable to me; in reliance upon your grace, I did all manner of evil; I was as a whitewashed sepulchre; outwardly in behavior, I was moral, chaste and mild, there was none that reproved my conduct, but inwardly I was full of dead men's bones, stench and worms; my platter was clean on the outside, but within, was full of rapine and lust. What I did privately is a scandal to mention, all my thoughts were unclean, vain, proud, ambitious and ungodly; my heart was full of disaffection, hatred, envy, vengeance and dislike; my thoughts were bent upon all manner of wickedness. I sinned without bounds; I neither feared God, devil, law, gospel, heaven nor hell; there was nothing that could deter me; I neither regarded you nor your word; my course was onward to all wickedness; I sought nothing but the friendship and love of this world. I did not commit adultery, fornication, and similar other abominable sins before men, only because I feared to lose their favor and my reputation, and not because I feared you; yet, my vanity, merriment, drunkenness, sinful lusts, open sins, weakness, pride and idolatry were called the true worship. Yes, all my transactions, private and public, were not concealed before your eyes. Thus did I, a grievous sinner, spend my days, and did not, O, God of grace, acknowledge you as my God, Creator and Redeemer, till your Holy Spirit taught me through your word, made known to me your will, and gave me a partial knowledge of your mysteries. Now I know how dishonorably I have walked before you, not otherwise than if I had spit in your face, treated you with indignity and derided you as foolish. Lord Jehovah, have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted; my sins are great and many; my conscience troubles me; my thoughts cause me to quake; my heart laments and sighs, because I have sinned

so heinously before you; my sins have separated me from you, hid your countenance from me, and excited your wrath. I have become a prey and brand of the burning pool, although the longer and more I was grieved, the more I was consoled by your word, for it teaches me concerning your mercy, grace and favor, and the remission of my sins through Christ, your beloved Son, our Lord, not regarding that I neither knew nor feared you. This promise pacifies and gladdens me; it leads me, with the sinful woman, to your blessed feet, with full confidence and clear conscience, well knowing that you will not cast off from you your returning son, although I have spent your paternal inheritance and possessions dishonorably, with harlots and rogues, in a strange country, and devoured it in my unrighteousness. My God, turn the pleasing countenance of your peace unto me, for I have sinned before heaven and in your sight; lay your hand of grace upon me; have mercy upon me, a poor sinner; for I am desolate and afflicted.

17. The troubles of my heart have enlarged; oh, bring me out of my distresses!

O Lord Jehovah, my heart weeps and sighs, my conscience quakes and trembles, my soul is as a grieved mother deprived of her only child, and cannot be comforted, since I, an ungodly sinner, neither sincerely sought, acknowledged nor appreciated your godly love and paternal kindness. I have lived more disgracefully than the irrational creatures, for they, in eating, drinking and other things do not go beyond their instinct, and do not transgress the laws of nature; but I have lived more uselessly, sinfully, intemperately and unrighteously against the laws of nature, than even my ungodly flesh naturally desired. I was conscious that the desires of my flesh were death; your Spirit warned me of my evil doing; yet, my flesh suppressed all warning. I was in all things a servant of sin, and sworn unto unrighteousness. I drank down sin as water; my delight was in all manner of folly; I did not see the outstretched arm of your grace;

I did not hear your calling voice; I did not regard your inviting love. In short, I hated your knowledge, and I cast your fear behind me; and this is not all, dear Lord. I acted so lamentably in my ignorance that I daily find my righteousness was as filthy rags; when I think that I am going, I am falling; when I stand, I am down, and that when I am something, I am nothing. Therefore, Lord, preserve me, for the fear of my heart is very great; yes, greater than I can express it; I often am as a woman in travail, my countenance is changed pale; my hands are upon my loins on account of the trouble of my heart; the dangers of hell surround me, the fatness and marrow of my bones are dried up; for here neither money nor possessions, neither flesh nor blood avail, but my soul is at stake, eternal life or eternal death is the issue. I, therefore, pray, Forsake me not, dear Lord, but open the eyes of your mercy and behold my great burden, stand by me and deliver me from all my distress.

18. Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.

O Lord, you that bear rule, if the righteous call upon you, you receive them; you are near to those who are of a broken heart; you comfort those who are of a contrite spirit; the offering that is acceptable to you is a contrite spirit; a broken heart you do not despise. You sent forth your beloved Son, anointed with your Holy Spirit; to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, Luke 4:18; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes; the oil of joy for mourning; the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. He preached ransom to all who are heavy laden, and with faithful hearts come to him; he invites all the thirsty to the waters of life. He bore all our sins upon the cross in his own body; and our debt he blotted out by his

blood, even as Moses did before through types and shadows, when he sprinkled unclean Israel with the blood of oxen and rams, and with the ashes of the heifer; under the law nearly all things were purified by the shedding of blood, Num.19; Heb. 9. If the figurative blood had such virtue that it could purify the flesh to sanctification, how much more shall the blood of the beloved Son, who offered himself unspotted through the eternal Spirit, purify our consciences from dead works. O, ever living God, through the merits of your Son, and through the riches of your grace we receive the remission of our sins; yes, through his blood you did reconcile all upon earth and in heaven above. I, therefore, dear Lord, confess that I have or know of no [other] remedy for my sins, for neither works nor merits, neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper can avail, although all sincere christians use both as signs of your word, and hold them in respect. Only the precious blood of your beloved Son, which is bestowed upon me, has graciously redeemed me, a poor sinner, through grace and love, from my former walk. Therefore, our God of truth, with whom there is no lie, remember the words of your prophet, which he spoke in your name, namely, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die; all his transgressions that he has committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him," Eze. 18:21,22. O, my God, do not look upon me, but upon the everlasting Melchisedec, Christ Jesus, whom you have appointed high priest over your house, upon the blessed King of your righteousness, who has no beginning nor end of days, and is a high priest for ever. He did not honor himself, but is ordained by you, like Aaron, and who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayer and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that which he feared. For his sake hear me, for his sake accept me, for his sake be merciful to me, console your afflicted servant. I have no comfort, either in

heaven above nor upon earth, but in you alone. Have mercy upon me in my great distress; my unclean, sinful flesh afflicts me; my wicked nature wages war against me, and besides, for your word's sake, I have become an abomination, an outcast and a fable to all men. All who hear of me shake their heads at me; without and within I have no peace. I say again, my sins combat me, my soul is in tribulation and pain; therefore, dear Lord, I pray to you not for gold and silver, for they can profit me nothing in the day of vengeance, nor for long life, for they are always perverse, but this I desire alone of you, from my whole heart, that you would look upon me, a miserable sinner, with the gracious eyes of your mercy. In my affliction and pain, comfort me with your Holy Spirit, and forgive all my sins.

19. Consider my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me WITH CRUEL hatred.

O, Jehovah of hosts, when I was of the world, I spoke and did as the world, and the world did not hate me; but as soon as I had eaten the book that was shown to me, although it was in my mouth as sweet as honey, yet it made my belly bitter, for there was written in it lamentations, and mourning, and woe, Eze. 2:10. While I served the world I received my reward; all men spoke well of me, even as the fathers did of the false prophets. But now, though I love the world with a godly love, and have sought from my heart their welfare and happiness, and have rebuked, admonished, and instructed them with your word, pointing out to them Jesus Christ and him crucified, they have become unto me as a grievous cross, and as the gall of bitterness; so fiend-like is their hatred, that not only I myself, but all those who love me, showing me favor and mercy, must, in some places, look for imprisonment and death. O, blessed Lord! I am more despicable in their eyes than a notorious thief and murderer; I am like a lost sheep in the wilderness of the world, chased, tormented, and pursued unto death by ravenous wolves. Am I not like a person

without hope, forsaken and comfortless, like a ship in the depth of the ocean, destitute of mast, sail, and helm, tossed about by every wave and every tempest? My flesh had almost said, I am betrayed because I find the unrighteous, deceitful nation enjoying riches, honor and prosperity, and reposing in quietude and peace, while the godly must endure so much hunger, thirst, affliction, and violence. Their habitation is insecure, they must toil and labor for their bread; they are accursed, defamed, persecuted and hated by all men, as the filth of the world, and as an abomination. O, blessed Lord! My enemies are many and great, their heart roars like the furious lion, their words are as deadly arrows, their tongues are always against me. At one time I am reviled by them as a false seducer, at another reproached as an accursed heretic, although by your grace I possess nothing but unyielding truth. Thus I am their mortal enemy, because I instruct them in the way of righteousness. O Lord Jehovah! I am not ashamed of my doctrine before you and your angels, much less before this rebellious world; for I know assuredly that I teach your word; I have taught throughout a true repentance, a dying unto our sinful flesh, and the new life that comes from God. I have taught a true, sincere faith in you, and in your beloved Son, that it might be made powerful through love. I have taught Jesus Christ and him crucified, very God and very man, who, in an unsearchable, inexpressible, and indescribable manner, was born from you from eternity, your eternal Word and Wisdom, the brightness of your glory, and the express image of your person, and that in fullness of time, through the power of your Holy Spirit, he became, in the womb of the unspotted virgin, Mary, real flesh and blood, a visible, tangible, and mortal man, like unto Adam and his posterity in all things, yet without sin; born of the seed or lineage of Abraham and David, died and was buried, arose again, ascended into heaven, and thus became before you, our only and everlasting Advocate, Mediator, Intercessor, and Redeemer. If all the prophets, apostles, and evangelists have not taught this with

the greatest clearness from the beginning, I will gladly bear my shame and reproof. I have taught no other baptism, no other supper, no other ordinance than that sanctioned by the unerring word of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the declared example and usages of his holy apostles, to say nothing of the superabundant evidence of the historians and learned of both the primitive and the present church. Since I substantiate my doctrine by the evidence of your plain, ineffable word, and by the ordinance of your Son, who can reprove me, and show with the argument of truth that I am an imposter? Does not the whole Scripture teach that Christ is the truth, and shall abide forever? Is not the apostolic church the true christian church? We know that all human doctrines are chaff and froth, and that anti-christ has spoiled and corrupted the doctrine of Christ. Then why do they hate me, for out of pure zeal I teach and propound the doctrine of Christ and his apostles unadulterated? No one however, hates the opposers of anti-christ but those who are his members. Had I not the word of Christ, how cheerfully would I be taught it, for I seek it with fear and trembling; in this I can not be deceived. I have by grace, through the influence of your Holy Spirit, believed and accepted your holy truth as the sure word of your pleasure; it will, also, never deceive me. Let them write and vociferate, threaten, and dispute, boast, extirpate, persecute and destroy, as they please, still your word will triumph and the Lamb will gain the victory. Yes, I rest assured that with this my doctrine, which is your word, I shall, at the coming of Christ, judge and condemn, not only man, but also angels. And even if I and my beloved brethren were totally extirpated, and taken from the earth, yet your word would remain eternal truth. We are no better than our coworkers who preceded us. Yet the time will arrive when they shall exalt your power, and look, perhaps too late, upon him whom they have pierced. O Lord! With that cruel hatred they hate me! Whom have I slandered in a single expression? Whom have I curtailed a pennies worth? Whose gold, silver or cattle

have I desired? I have loved them with a pure love, even unto death; your word and will have I taught them, and with earnest diligence have I shown them, by your grace, the way that leads to felicity, therefore my enemies are many, and hate me with cruel hatred.

20. Oh, keep my soul, and deliver me; do not let me be ashamed, for I put my trust in You.

O Lord Jehovah! The word of Paul fills me with terror, where he says, "Let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. 10:12. "For if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself," Gal. 6:3. for the flesh, destitute of your Spirit, is perfectly blind in divine things, ignorant, entirely false and unjust, no, [lost in] sin and death, as I have remarked publicly in speaking of David and Peter, for though David was a great prophet, a man after your own heart, faithful in all your ways, yet when your Spirit departed from him, where were his chastity, love, humility, and the fear of his God? Did he not become an open adulterer, murderer, and boaster of his own glory, until your Spirit again enlightened him by the word of the prophet, and he acknowledged the deadly sins he had committed, how foolishly he had acted before you? In like manner as regards Peter; he acknowledged Christ, your beloved Son, not by flesh and blood, but by the Spirit of your grace, was called by Christ a stone and a rock, was ready to go with Christ into prison and to death. But when the trial came, your Spirit forsook him for a season; he could not bear the trifling expression of a maid, he denied Christ, and swore that he did not know him; but as soon as Christ looked upon him, and your Spirit returned, he acknowledged his fall; wept bitterly, and afterwards publicly preached the name of Jesus among all nations, paying no regard to his having been strictly forbidden to do so by imprisonment, stripes and menacing words. He frankly answered, "We ought to obey God rather than men." I beseech You, therefore, blessed

Lord, that you will keep my soul, which is bought with so dear a price, lest I turn from your truth; for though I may now think with Peter that I could give my life for You, and with Paul, that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor life, nor death, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from your love, yet I do not sufficiently know myself. All my trust is in You; I have not yet resisted unto blood, although I have drank a little of the cup of your affliction, yet I have not tasted the dregs; for when prisons and bonds are suffered, when life and death, fire and sword are threatened, then will the gold be separated from the wood, silver from the straw, and pearls from the stubble. Do not forsake me, therefore, gracious Lord, for trees of deepest root are torn up from the earth by the violence of the storm, and the lofty, firm mountains are rent asunder by the force of the earthquake. Had not Job and Jeremiah, men of your love, well near lost all patience in temptation, and murmured against your will? Suffer me not, therefore, gracious Lord, to be tempted above what I am able to bear, for you are true and faithful, lest my soul be ashamed. I do not pray for my flesh, being well aware that I must once suffer and die; but this alone I desire, that you strengthen me in my warfare; assist and preserve me, make a way for me to escape in temptation; deliver me, and do not let me be ashamed; for I put my trust in You.

21. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on you.

O, Jehovah of hosts! O, my God, when the husbandman had sown good seed in his field, his enemy came while he slept and sowed tares among the wheat, so that when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, satan came also among them, Job 1: wherever Jesus is, there will the devil be found near at hand, as alas, I have observed in my short time; your saving word, your gracious gospel, which is the proper food of my soul,

imparting to it the power of eternal life, which has been trampled upon for so many years by anti-christ as an idle tale, and a useless fabrication, is again received, believed, and acknowledged, in power, by some through the influence of your compassionate favor. The hellish lion or behemoth roars, now in excessive rage; it walks about seeking to devour them, has no rest, nor repose, knowing well that his kingdom and dominion must decline and be destroyed thereby. He makes use of all his cunning and subtlety, and transforms himself into an angel of light; those whom he has lost through your word he has allured again by false doctrine into his snare and net, and has changed the pure, salutary sense of the Scriptures, by means of false prophets and unskilful teachers, into a meaning entirely carnal, and completely calculated to mislead; has authorized the sword and destructive weapons, and excited a vindictive spirit against the whole world; moreover he has instituted open adultery under cover of the custom of the Jewish fathers; also established a literal king and kingdom, together with many other abuses, at which a sincere christian is astonished and confounded. But all which you have not planted shall come to nought. O Lord! Preserve me pure and upright in your truth, that I may neither believe, nor teach anything that is not in conformity with your holy will and word, with true faith, sincere love, real baptism and supper, a blameless life, a scriptural separation from such as cause offence in doctrine and in life. Preserve me, gracious Lord, from all error and heresy; preserve me as you have done heretofore in your mercy; grant that I and my beloved brethren may seek, love, and fear you with all our hearts, render obedience to the magistracy in all things not contrary to the word of God; for this, says Paul, is good, and acceptable in your sight; preserve us from the wiles of the devil who wants to teach us of another king after the spirit, beside the true King of Zion, Jesus Christ, who rules over your holy mountain with the iron sceptre of your word, is King of kings and Lord of lords, is set at your own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality

and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; under whose feet all things are put, who has all power in heaven and on earth, before whom every knee must bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of your great name. O, gracious Lord, let integrity and uprightness preserve me under your cross, that I may not deny you, and your holy word, in the time of temptation, nor conceal your divine truth and will under the mask of hypocrisy, lies, and obscure equivocal expressions, so that at the appearance of your dear Son, my Lord Jesus Christ, I may receive with all saints, the promised kingdom, inheritance, and reward which, with firm assurance and perfect confidence, we daily hope, and expect, as the consequence of your gracious promise.

22. Redeem Israel, God, out of all their troubles.

O, Jehovah of hosts, now that I have confessed my sins before you, prayed for my transgressions, praised your mercy, and desired your grace, I must, with David, beseech you on behalf of my brethren; for I observe Israel scattered abroad and going astray, like sheep without a shepherd, and the pleasant vineyard of the Lord is laid waste, and trodden down by all men. The chosen seed of Abraham, the house of Jacob, has again become a proper slave or bondservant in the grievous service of Pharaoh in Egypt; the royal line of Judah is carried away into Babylon, together with the holy vessels, which are so lamentably abused by Belshazzar and his concubines. Jerusalem, the personification of peace, which was likened to a dove, is changed into a barbarous gormandizer of innocent blood, and a rapacious lioness. She that was princess among the nations, the city of the great king, has become destitute of kings, citizens and walls, waste and solitary; the temple of Jehovah, the house of prayer, in which the true worship ought to be performed, has become a notorious nest of robbers, a den of lions, bears, wolves, basilisks,

dragons and serpents, a house of all idolaters; no, the unchaste bed of the adulteress Jezebel. The bride of Christ, the glorious Church, who was clothed in variegated raiment, and decked with divine ornaments, in honor of the king, is changed completely into a disgraceful harlot. The ark of Jehovah, the glory of Israel, is seized by the Philistines, and taken into the temple of Dagon. Why make a long lamentation? Judea is changed into Babylon, Canaan into Egypt, and Palestine into Sodom, and the King of glory, Christ Jesus, blessed forever, is daily esteemed as a simpleton, and despised as a fool. His holy apostles, the beloved witnesses of your truth, are treated as liars, and their doctrine to all men is cast aside; his knit or wrought garment, which the Scriptures were unwilling to have rent or divided, is torn into four or five pieces; anti-christ exercises authority and dominion in all countries by the preaching of lies; and your word is proscribed and rejected with violence.

If I travel east, west, north or south, I find in all places, nothing but vain obstinacy, perversion, blindness, avarice, pride, wantonness, rioting, drunkenness, pomp and splendor, strife, envying and ungodliness. I find (I repeat), violence, false doctrine and an impure, deceptive employment of your sacraments throughout the world. I find the influence of tyrants triumphing in the courts of all princes; that the learned speak like the beast, are ambitious, avaricious, gluttonous, earthly and carnally minded, and teach according to the lusts and desires of men. There are scarcely any who seek for truth, and if there are, they must bear your cross; therefore my cheeks are wet with tears day and night; my soul finds no comfort; neither bread nor drink is sweet to my taste. Like the prophet Micah, I may well go naked; make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls; for the wound of Israel is incurable. In sorrow, I may well lament with Esdras, and say, "Our sanctuary is laid waste, our altar broken down, our temple destroyed; our psaltery is laid on

the ground, our song is put to silence, our rejoicing is at an end; the light of our lamp is put out, the ark of our covenant is spoiled, our holy things are defiled, and the name that is called upon us is almost profaned. Our children are put to shame, our priests are burnt, our Levites are gone into captivity, our virgins are defiled, and our wives raped; our righteous men carried away, our little ones destroyed, our young men are brought in bondage, and our strong men are become weak; and which is the greatest of all, the seal of Zion has now lost her honor; for she is delivered into the hands of them that hate us," 2 Esd. 10:21-23.

Redeem Israel, O, God, out of his troubles! Look with the eye of your mercy, upon our great misery and distress, release us from the iron furnace of Egypt, bring us out of the land of the Chaldees, let the holy city be built again upon her own heap, having walls and gates; repair and rebuild your fallen temple, the stones of which are trampled upon in every street. Gather together your wandering sheep, receive your returning bride, who has behaved so perversely with strange lovers. O, God of Israel, create in us a pure heart that longs for your blessed word and will. Send forth faithful laborers into your harvest, who cut and gather the grain in due season; perfect the builders who lay for us a good foundation, that in the last days your house may be established, and appear above all the hills, that many people may go there and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths," Isa. 2:3; that we may walk before You, in peace and liberty of conscience, all the days of our lives, under a good government and blameless teachers, with a christian baptism, true Supper, godly life, and a just separation; that you may in power be eternally honored and praised in us, as in your beloved children through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom with you, O, Father, and your Holy Spirit, be praise and everlasting dominion, Amen.



A
Plain Instruction
FROM THE WORD OF GOD, CONCERNING THE
SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION,
AND THE
NEW OR HEAVENLY BIRTH.
BY
MENNO SIMON.

“Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection: on such the second death has no power,” Rev. 20:6.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid; which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.

THE SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION.

“Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light,” Eph. 6:14.

The Scriptures point out to us two resurrections: namely, a bodily resurrection from the dead at the last day, and a spiritual resurrection from sin and death, to a new life and a change of heart.

[CHCoG: Though this definition contains much truth, it is not scripturally accurate. Menno’s ‘bodily resurrection’ is in fact called the First Resurrection in Rev. 20:1 to 7, and it clearly occurs when Christ Returns to earth to **end** the Great Tribulation, imprison satan and **begin** the Thousand Years of Peace. And for us, it is not really a bodily resurrection, but the transformation of our physical flesh into a spiritual body. 1 Cor 15:52, 1 Thes. 4:13-17. Using the ‘a day for a thousand years’ concept, 2 Pet. 3:8 and a seven day ‘week’, the entire thousand years of peace is the last day,* and as it finishes, the actual last resurrection happens, which is for all the rest of the dead. Unlike those who will be transformed in the first resurrection, those in the latter resurrection will be raised in their physical bodies, and thus, if condemned, will die the second death when they are cast into the Lake of Fire. Rev 20:7 to 15. The general first resurrection at Christ’s Return has, of course, been preceded by the resurrection of Christ and some of the saints. Mat 27:52,53. Finally, though we are figuratively reborn from the dead when Christ comes into

* [CHCoG: Just as this is the beginning of the seventh ‘day’, the Day of Trumpets, which commemorates the day Christ will return, is the first day of the seventh month in God’s Calendar.]

our lives, and are symbolically reborn on baptism, there is NO scripture which actually calls these two essential and pivotal events resurrections, but rather regenerations. Titus 3:5. This article should really be called Spiritual Regeneration.]

That a man should die spiritually unto sin, be spiritually buried and rise again to a life of righteousness in God, is plainly taught in various parts of the Scriptures.

Paul also exhorted us to the same effect, “for you should put aside your former way of life: that old man who is corrupted by deceitful lusts, and you should be made new in the spirit of your minds, and you should put on the new man whom God has created in righteousness and in the purity of the Truth.” Eph. 4:22-24. “Put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him,” Col. 3:9,10. Put to death your earthly, &c. Before a resurrection from the dead can take place, the death of the body is necessary, and before death, sickness, pain and tribulation must precede, which have a tendency to make death still more bitter to the flesh. Likewise in a spiritual sense, there can be no resurrection from sin and death, unless this body of sin be first destroyed and buried, and has sensibly endured pain and the burden of sin: that is sorrowfulness of heart, remorse and a sincere repentance on account of sin, as is evidently shown in the Scriptures. David says, “O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your wrath, nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure! For Your arrows pierce me deeply, and Your hand presses me down. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your indignation, nor is there any health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are full of burning, and

there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the turmoil of my heart. Jehovah, all my desire is before You; and my sighing is not hidden from You. My heart pants, my strength fails me; as for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me." Psm. 38:1-10.

Endure sorrow and distress, according to James 4:9, "Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." Paul says, "You were made sorry after a godly manner," to repentance, "For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world works death;" seeing that you sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, what clearing of yourselves, yes what indignation, what fear, vehement desire, and revenge.

Behold, thus we have to die with Christ unto sin, if we would be made alive with him; for none can rejoice with Christ unless he first suffer with him; for this is a sure word. Paul says, "If we are dead with him, we shall also live with him, if we suffer, we shall also reign with him," 2 Cor. 2:11.

This resurrection includes the new creature, the spiritual birth and sanctification, without which none shall see the Lord. This Paul testifies in a few words, saying, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Again, "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new," and this is the first resurrection; "For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death," through putting to death the sinful nature of earthly Adam, with all his members and wicked lusts; we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," and know that our old man is crucified with him, that the sinful body is destroyed, and keep the true sabbath in Christ, by putting off the sinful body in the flesh, circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, which is done without hands, buried through baptism, in

which we have also risen with him through faith, which is the operation of God. We cease from all works of the flesh, are led by the Spirit, bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, henceforth, we do not serve sin. Let it suffice that we have spent our former days after the manner of the gentiles, when we walked in vanity, wantonness, drunkenness, eating and drinking, and in abominable idolatry, and that we spend the remainder of our days not after the lusts of men, but live according to the will of God, that we may say with Paul, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20; therefore, "He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. 5:15.

To have a more correct knowledge of this resurrection and regeneration, we must bear in mind that all creatures bring forth after their kind, and every creature partakes of the properties, propensities and dispositions of that which brought it forth, as Christ says, "That which is born of flesh, is flesh," and cannot see eternal life; and "that which is born of Spirit, is spirit." The Spirit is eternal life; that which is born of flesh, out of the earth through corruptible seed, is carnally minded, that is earthly, and speaks of earthly things, is desirous after earthly and perishable things; all his thoughts, feelings and desires are directed towards earthly, temporal, or visible things, such things as those of which it is born, or from which it proceeds. That which is born of flesh and blood is flesh and blood, and is carnally minded, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. Therefore, those who are carnal cannot please God; for such are altogether deaf, blind and ignorant in divine things. A carnal man cannot apprehend or comprehend divine things, for by nature he does not have that discernment; but on the contrary his mind is depraved; God is not

in his mind. A carnal man cannot understand spiritual things, for he is by nature a child of the devil, and is not spiritually minded, hence, he comprehends nothing spiritual; for by nature he is a stranger to God. He has nothing of a divine nature dwelling in him, nor has communion with God, but is much rather at enmity with him; he is unmerciful, unjust, unclean, not peaceable, impatient, disobedient, without understanding and unhappy. So are all men by nature according to their birth and origin after the flesh. This is the first or old Adam, and is comprised in the Scriptures in a single word; ungodly, that is without God, a stranger and destitute of the divine nature.

This is the nature and property of the earthly and devilish seed; for as the seed is, so is the fruit; for “whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap; for he that sows to his flesh, shall from the flesh reap corruption,” and bring forth fruit unto death. He sins like his father, of and through whose seed he is born, for he is the father of lies and sinned from the beginning, and did not abide in the truth. He, therefore, that sins, is of the devil, for sin is not from God, but from the devil, and he that sins has not seen God, nor known him; and we know that the son of God was made manifest to take away sins and destroy the works of the devil, and through his death deprive him of power, who had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For by the sin of one man all were made sinners. He that sins is the servant of sin: and does the will and works of him whose servant he is, and whose spirit leads him; for every one is a servant to him whom he serves, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness; for he that does unjustly shall receive according to his works. To them Paul speaks, that they should awaken from the sleep of sin and death, so that the second death shall have no power over them; saying, “Awake, you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light,” Eph. 5:14.

On the other hand, all those who are born and renewed from above are of God through the living word, and are also of the mind and disposition, and have the same propensity for good, as he has of whom they are born and begotten. What the nature of God and Christ is, we may readily learn from the sacred Scriptures; for Christ has expressly portrayed himself in his word; namely, his godly nature, which he would have us understand and follow;* for he is the true image of the invisible God, and conform unto him in his life and walk upon earth, as exemplified in words and works; that we, thereby, may become partakers of his nature in the Spirit. In the Scriptures Christ is every where represented to us as being humble, meek, merciful, just, holy, wise, spiritual, long-suffering, patient, peaceable, lovely, obedient, and good, as the perfection of all things; for in him there is sincerity. Behold, this is the image of God, or Christ in the Spirit, whose example we should follow till we become like it in nature, and evince it by our walk. All the regenerated children of God are thus minded, for they partake of the nature of him who has begotten them; and are as the others, comprised in one word, namely, Godly, or godly persons, having communion with him, are of one mind and disposition with him, and have the image of God in them, as the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, abundantly show, especially in the epistle of Paul to the Colossians, where he says, “Put off the old man with his deeds,” and, “put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;” “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of

* [CHCoG: This originally read: “his human nature, which he would have us understand, and follow; not according to his divine nature; for he is the true image of the invisible God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, who dwells in ineffable light whom none can approach or see, but that we follow him” I can find no scripture supporting this idea, nor can I understand it, and have edited it to what is consistent with the rest of what Menno writes and the Bible.]

mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. If any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so you also do; and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness; and let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which you also are called in one body; and be thankful,” Col. 3:9-15. “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,” “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” for Christ is the image of God to whom we must conform. “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.” Those, therefore, who have conformed to the image of Christ Jesus are the truly regenerated children of God, and have put off the old man, and put on the new which is created after God, in true righteousness and holiness.

When these have conformed to the image of God, have been born by God, and afterwards continue in God, they will not commit sin, for the seed of God remains in them; and they have overcome the world, are crucified to the world, and the world unto them; have put to death their flesh, and buried their sinful body with Christ in baptism, with their lusts and desires, and no longer serve sin unto unrighteousness, but much more righteousness unto salvation; for they have put on Christ, and are purified through the Holy Spirit, in their consciences, from dead works to serve the living God; bringing forth through the Spirit the fruits of the Spirit, whose end is everlasting life. For since they, as said above, have renounced the devil, flesh, and the world, and have quitted the service of sin, they have, as faithful servants, voluntarily obligated themselves to God with David, to live, henceforth, according to his blessed will all their days. On the other hand the devil and his adherents, the world and flesh, being very envious, are waging war against them, and are their deadly enemies. The regenerated have now become enemies of

sin and the devil, and have taken the field against all their enemies, with their Prince of life and faith, under the banner of the red cross, armed with the armor of God, and surrounded with angels of the Lord, always watching with great solicitude, lest they be overcome by their enemies, who never slumber, but go about like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour; and although they receive occasionally a wound, and are overtaken by their enemies, still their souls remain uninjured, and this wound is not unto [eternal] death; for they have the anointing of God. They have the true Samaritan and the true physician with them, who binds up and heals their wounds; for he has compassion over our weakness and sickness. Through his stripes and wounds we are made whole. Nor are they so thoroughly overcome that they will cast aside their weapons, and surrender themselves again, to become servants of sin, and to be ruled by it; but being encouraged anew by the Lord, and in the strength of his power, they persevere valiantly in battle, till they, through him, by whom they can do all things, have gloriously conquered their enemy, and say to him, "Death, where is your sting? O, grave, where is your victory?" And with Paul say, Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Jehovah," says Jeremiah, "is with me as a mighty, terrible one, therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail," Jer. 20:11. and say with David, "Blessed be Jehovah, my strength, who teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight," Psm. 144:1. and they are not moved till they have broken their enemies to pieces. "Blessed be Jehovah, who has not given us as a prey in their teeth; our soul is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are escaped" Psm. 124:6,7 from our enemies, and out of the hand of those who hate us. The Lord is a rewarder of them that diligently seek, love and serve him; as it is written, "Behold, Lord Jehovah comes, and his reward is with him;" Isa. 40:10. Yes, his reward and the gift of God are everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. For, if

you serve the Lord Jesus Christ, you will receive the reward of your inheritance, the crown of life, which God has promised those who love him.

As stated above, every creature has the nature and disposition of that of which it is born, therefore, we will speak a few words concerning the nature, properties and effects of the seed of the divine word, by which we are begotten in the image of God; for where this seed is sown upon good ground, into the heart of man, there it grows and produces its like in nature and property; it changes and renews the whole man, from the carnal into the spiritual, the earthly into the heavenly, it transforms from death unto life, from unbelief to belief, and makes man happy, for through this seed all nations upon the earth are blessed. Therefore, says James, "Therefore put away from you all abominations and the multitude of evils, and accept in humility the Word which is planted in our nature, which is able to save your souls." Jam. 1:21 It is also the pure, unadulterated milk, by which the new-born and young children of God are nurtured, till they attain to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The Word is also strong food for the perfect and aged in Christ Jesus. In short, this seed of the divine word is spiritual food, by which the whole inner man is ascertained, so that he does not faint and perish in this wild and desolate world, as all have to starve and faint who do not daily gather the bread of the divine word to satisfy their starving souls, for "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Therefore, he is blessed who hungers after this heavenly bread, and receives the ingrafted word; for it will bring forth after its nature, in due time, a hundred fold. For, says Jehovah, "as the heavy rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, for so will My word be that goes forth from My

mouth. It will not return to Me void, but it will accomplish what I please,” Isa. 55:10, 11.

Behold, this is the nature, property and effects of the seed of the word of God, by which man is renewed, regenerated, sanctified and saved through this incorruptible seed, namely, the living word of God which abides to eternity. He that is clothed with the same power from above, filled with the Holy Spirit, and thus united to God, may become a partaker of the divine nature, and be made conformable to the image of his Son, who is the first of the transformed. Those who rise with him from the sleep and death of sin, henceforth serve him not in the oldness of the letter, but in newness of the Spirit.

He that is sincere, and has this nature and disposition in his heart, has put on Christ Jesus, has become like unto him, has the image of God in his heart, is spiritually minded, and is led by the Holy Spirit in his spirit, from whose spiritual body, spiritual fruits are brought forth, as a well springing up unto eternal life. For they are regenerated through the word which was sown in their hearts, begotten by God, and born anew to bring forth fruit of everlasting life. They, therefore, as children [being] born by God, are like the Father, of one mind and disposition; have the divine nature of their Father, who has begotten them; whose thoughts are heavenly, whose words are truth, well seasoned, whose good works are holy, acceptable to God and man; for they are holy vessels of honor, useful and ready to every good work.

Even as Paul exhorts those who are born of the corruptible seed of flesh and blood, who are earthly, carnal, without understanding and blind in divine things, yes, children of wrath, that they should die unto sin, put to death and bury the lusts and desires of the flesh, and then rise by virtue of the heavenly seed from the sleep and death of sin, and be regenerated, and walk in newness of life, which is the first resurrection, saying, “Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you

light.” Eph. 5:14. So he also admonishes all regenerated children of God, who have been changed in mind and disposition through the eternal saving seed of God, who have been regenerated and are risen, that they should be godly, spiritually and heavenly minded, and strive for and desire heavenly, incorruptible things; and that their heart should be where their treasure is, and their conduct in heaven, as fellow saints of the house of God, telling them, “If then you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God; set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth; for you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory,” Col. 3:14. Here we have an account how the regenerated children of God who have risen with Christ from the dead, and now live with him, converse upon heavenly things, and appear to the world as not living, for their life is hid in God, as St. John says, “Now we are the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is,” 1 John 3:2.

With these and like words the Scriptures admonish the truly regenerated and those who have arisen, that they should take heed to their calling, and continue perfect in a new, godly walk, for if they have been made partakers of Christ, they should persevere to the end, lest they again depart from the living God through the deceitfulness of sin and an evil heart of unbelief. They should remain steadfast and perfect, as the chosen children of God, and inherit the kingdom of their Father, and reign in eternity* and rule over sin, death, devil and hell, and all the enemies of the kingdom, whom they overcome with Christ, as valiant men. Therefore, will they also sit with Christ at the table of the Lord, and eat the bread and drink the wine of the kingdom of heaven;

* [CHCoG: We are only promised that we shall rule under Christ during the Millennium. Rev. 20:4 & 6.]

even as Christ overcame, and sits with his Father in his kingdom which is prepared for them; as a city well fortified; free from all care of their enemies; in full rest, full of life and joy; for they will eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of Paradise; which pleasure garden is ever so close to the unregenerated, but who are still earthly and carnally minded, who still have by nature the veil and partition wall of sin before their hearts.

These are they who died with Christ unto sin, and have truly risen; they are the new-born, to whom the power is given to become the sons of God. They were redeemed out of all nations; have on the wedding garments for the marriage of the Lamb and have received the sign (TAU?) in their foreheads by which the servants of God are designated. These are the spiritual bride of Christ, his holy church, his spiritual body, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone. They will come to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, which will come down from heaven; will come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the church of the first born which is written in heaven, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. They will be fellow citizens in the household of God, who have put off the corruptible garment, and put on the incorruptible; have acknowledged the name of God, and kept his commandments, and the faith of Jesus; the true sheep of Christ, who hear his voice, and follow no other; the first fruits of his creatures, who have the Spirit and mind of Christ. Therefore, they know what the will of the Lord is; yes, the chosen generation, the spiritual and royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; who in times past were not a people, but now are the people of God, for God has compassion on them. These are the souls who were slain for the word of God and are under the altar.

In short, with them old things have passed away; behold all things have become new; but this is all from God, who has reconciled us unto himself through Jesus Christ; these are they

who will stand before the throne of God, with palms in their hands, and clothed in white, saying, “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power and might be unto our God forever and ever, Amen,” Rev. 7:12.

This is a short instruction concerning the spiritual resurrection or new birth, and the difference between the natural and spiritual; between the earthly and the heavenly; and how every one is disposed, inclined, and of what mind he is, according to his birth or origin, and that he is of the same disposition, of the same mind and of such a nature as that of which he is born, of that which generated him; for the natural man is not spiritual, nor is that which is born of flesh and blood. The spiritual birth is from God in heaven; and like produces like. As the natural man is, so are they who are naturally born. Such as God is, who is a Spirit and dwells in heaven, such also will be they who are spiritually born from heaven, who will far exceed those naturally born of flesh.

Here, as in a mirror, one may view and examine himself, and judge of what birth, mind, disposition, nature, life and conduct he is; for here a man, by taking a little pain, can judge and prove himself, for a man’s walk, word and actions, and the thoughts of his heart, all show what he is; for man knows himself best, and no one knows what is in man, but the spirit which is in him.

Again: therefore, all those who find on testing themselves, that they are not renewed and regenerated after their first birth according to the flesh, in mind, understanding, spirit and disposition, but are yet altogether carnally, earthly, worldly and devilishly minded from their depraved, inbred nature, and are still prone and willing to do all manner of evil, should humble themselves before God, with Jeremiah, (3:25) saying, Let us examine and prove our ways, and let us turn unto Jehovah, let us lift our hands and hearts to God in heaven, and say, We have sinned before heaven and in your sight, and have excited your

wrath; Let us weep and let our eyes run over with water, and say with David, “O, come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker,” Psm. 95:6 and entreat him that he would make the work of his hands glad, and renew us whom he created. Let us humbly entreat him for his Spirit, which is the great cause of all this, and say, Lord, send forth your Spirit, and they will be created, and you will renew the face of the earth, and thus they continue in prayer and in their desires to God, till they are clothed with the power of the Spirit from on high, converted and renewed in the spirit of their mind; and with astonishment say, This is the change wrought by the right hand of God, the most High, Psm. 104:30.

Also let those who, on examining themselves, find that they are born from above by the grace of God, and that they are new creatures in Christ, and have become a temple of God, take heed to themselves according to the counsel of the Scriptures, in order that, since they are washed, purified, regenerated and sanctified, they do not again defile themselves, and pollute the temple of God; for if any man defile the temple of God, God shall destroy him. They pray in the spirit with assured confidence to God, their Father, as did David: O, God, strengthen us and confirm in us that which you created in us! He will then hear in his holy temple, according to his promise, for he who has begun the good work in you is faithful, he will also perform it until the day of Jesus Christ’s Return. Peter says, “Give all diligence to add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity; for if these things be in you, and abound, you shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacks these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins; therefore instead, brethren, give diligence to make your

calling and election sure; for if you do these things, you shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

May the God of all grace, who will gather all his chosen in the last resurrection, into his kingdom, grant us such hearts, minds and dispositions, that we, through true faith, may die unto ourselves, deny and renounce ourselves, that we may have part in the first resurrection spoken of, which resurrection does not take place in the bodily resurrection from the dead, as will be the case in the other resurrection, at the last day, but this resurrection consists alone in dying unto, putting to death and burying the sinful body through putting off, and dying unto the old life, and to rise and be received into a new, divine conduct and pious life, Amen.

CONCLUSION

HERE, kind reader, you have a brief instruction of the first, or *Spiritual Resurrection from death or the sleep of sin*, also some inducements to awaken and arise, and henceforth to live a new, godly, pious, unblameable life, according to the example of Jesus Christ, as the Scriptures abundantly instruct us, and as is partially related here; for the Father himself, in heaven, directs us to Christ, and says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, you are to hear him." He says, You shall hear him. Moses also testifies of him, and says, "Jehovah, your God, will raise up unto you a prophet from the midst of you, of your brethren, like unto me; unto him you shall listen;" and "every

soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people,” Deu. 18: 15; Acts 3:23.

Thus we counsel and admonish all in general, of whatever name, rank, class or condition; that they would be pleased to take good heed to the word of the Lord, which we have here briefly presented, according to our limited gift; I hope, by the grace of God, that you will find nothing in it but the infallible truth of Jesus Christ, for we have not directed you to men, nor to the doctrine, nor commands of men, but alone to Jesus Christ, and to his holy word which be taught and left upon earth, and sealed it with his blood and death, and afterwards had it promulgated throughout the world, by his faithful witnesses and holy apostles.

Besides, we say that all doctrines, which do not agree with the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles, if ever so fair in appearance, they are accursed. For his word is the truth, and his command is eternal life, therefore, we kindly entreat you, from our inmost souls, that you be pleased to accept and read with an understanding heart, this our *Instruction concerning the Spiritual Resurrection and New Creature*, and compare and prove it with the doctrines of the apostles; if it does not agree with theirs, let it be accursed, “For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, Jesus Christ.”



A

Fundamental Doctrine,
OR AN ACCOUNT OF
Excommunication, Ban, Exclusion,
OR
SEPARATION FROM THE CHURCH
OF CHRIST;

ITS NATURE, POWERS, TO WHOM IT EXTENDS;
ITS REASONS, OBJECTS AND DESIGN, &c.—WHY IT
WAS TAUGHT AND PRACTICED BY THE APOSTLES,
AND COMMANDED THAT WE SHOULD PRACTICE IT.

FAITHFULLY COMPILED FROM SACRED
SCRIPTURES, FOR THE USE OF ALL LOVERS OF THE
DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL TRUTH, TO PROMOTE
CHRISTIAN PEACE WITHOUT RESPECT TO PARTY.

BY

MENNO SIMON.

*“Be of one mind—let nothing be done through strife or vain
glory,” Phil. 2:8.*

*“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid,
Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 8:11.*

PREFACE.

BROTHERS and sisters in Christ Jesus, it is known, and evident to all the true children of God, who are enlightened by his Holy Spirit, that human reason is so depraved in Adam, that it possesses but little light which can lead to godliness; yes, it has become so unfit, haughty, ignorant and blind that it would even attempt presumptuously to alter, bend, break, gainsay, judge and find fault with the word of Jehovah God; it will not yield to any spirit or gift and insists that it is right, and that all it does or says is God's word; by which the saving truth, and blessed love and peace often have to endure and suffer much injury, infamy and disgrace.

In the second place, it is also evident that the enchanting spirit of anti-christ has made the whole world so drunk with the cup of his abominations; has so rejected the doctrine of Christ and his holy apostles, sacraments, Spirit, life, ordinances, usages, example and the true worship, that but little of a salutary nature is left among men; hence it is difficult to restore what has been destroyed to its true order and proper usage, to that which the Lord had ordained.

In the third place, it is evident that the old master, satan, the arch enemy of God and our souls, is always about us, as a roaring lion, and seeks whom he may devour, as Peter says. He assails us in diverse ways; now with the unclean, wicked nature of our depraved flesh, and anon with some enchanting, false doctrine and fair words; and again, by persecution, a cross and fears; then with liberty and worldly life of the flesh; now with riches and abundance, then again with defects, wants and poverty. In short, he shoots his fiery darts constantly; they fly by day and by night, in secret and in public. He that does not zealously abide in the fear of God [and love of Christ] cannot withstand the manifold assaults of his temptations. Yes when we think the end is

attained, then we are assailed the most violently. Some are led to quarreling and wrangling under the semblance of truth; such are called by Paul, "Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth;" whose fruits are abominable envy, disgraceful defamation, slanderous words, unclean, perverted minds, a lamentable destruction of the holy peace of God, a grievous denial of pure, christian love, a hindrance of the saving doctrine, the fruitful mother of faction, and an easy way to ruin, as we have abundantly seen in the days of the revealed truth.

O, brethren, take warning! Again I say, beware and watch, for James says that such wisdom is not from above, but it is earthly, sensual, devilish; for the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. James 3:15-17. Yes, my brethren, where there is no peaceable, friendly, saving and impartial wisdom, there is nothing but forced appearance of good; powerless, impure and sinful prayer; an unsteady, wavering mind; a restless and troubled conscience, full of strife and dissension, no matter how much we may boast of the truth. The Lord grant that we may see this.

In the fourth place, it is evident that the community or church cannot continue in the saving doctrine and an unblameable and pious life without the proper use of the *Excommunication* or *Ban*. Just as a city without good police, laws and regulations, or a field without any inclosure, or a house without walls and doors fails, so also is a church which does not have the true apostolic *Exclusion* or *Ban*. Without it there would be an opening for all deceiving spirits, for all abominations, and for proud scorers, for all idolatrous and wanton, perverted sinners; yes, for all lewd debauchees, sodomites, adulterers and knaves, as is the case with all the great sects of the world, which call themselves, though improperly, the church of Christ. According to my opinion it is the distinguished usage, honor and prosperity of a sincere

community, if they with Christian discretion teach the true apostolic Separation, and observe it carefully in love, according to the ordinance of the holy, divine Scriptures. It is more than evident that if we had not with due zeal insisted upon it, we would be esteemed and called by every one, the members of the sect of Munster and all other perverted sects. But, thank God, since, in consequence of the proper use of excommunication, it is well known, among several thousand honorable, sincere persons, in different principalities, cities, and countries, that we are guiltless of, and free from all ungodly abominations and perverted sects, and that we also do make this known, unreservedly, to the whole world, not only by our doctrines and walk, but with our possessions and blood.

Observing that now the bright light of the holy gospel of Christ shines again in radiant splendor in these vexatious times of all anti-christian abominations; God's own and first begotten Son, Christ Jesus, is gloriously revealed, his good will and pleasure and holy word concerning faith, regeneration, repentance, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and the whole saving doctrine, life and ordinance, have again come to light through much seeking, prayer, reading, teaching and writing. Now that all things (God be praised for his grace) proceed according to the true, apostolic rule in the church, the kingdom of Christ rises in honor, and the kingdom of anti-christ is sinking. For this reason the arch enemy of our souls violently opposes and uses his old wiles and arts most subtly against it. He appears under the cloak of a christian. Understand me rightly; he proudly boasts of faith; upbraids, yes, rejects all the Babylonian deeds; is baptized; seats himself with the saints at the Lord's Supper; praises the lives of the pious; hears exhortations; gives alms; receives the poor; washes the saints' feet; says that Christ is the Son of God. In short, in appearance he is an unblameable, regenerated, penitent and true christian. But all the time, he watches where he may assail us

most easily and injure us the most; he pleasingly approaches the depraved and enchanted souls, some of whom, as is evident, as yet know little about the nature and disposition of the Holy Spirit. He presses them closely, for he knows how to skilfully defend his cause with the letter of the Scriptures; he speaks gently; whatever he does, he does as though out of pure fear of God, and love to the church, with the word and truth of the Lord. He commences as though in the anxiety of a distressed conscience, to argue and dispute, principally concerning the separation which he can not well tolerate and endure; here and there he raises pernicious questions and answers, by which he so influences and inflames the perverted and enchanted, that some of them, when they cannot stand before the power of the truth, from mere partisan spirit, leave the pleasant Jerusalem of peace and return again to unclean, blind Babel; or build up a sect of their own, as I have, with much sorrow, seen it to be the case two or three times. Behold, this is the pearl which the old deceiver seeks with his ire and wrangling; for whether we stay away from the idolatrous church or not, be baptized or not, it is immaterial to him; if he can only inflame our hearts with hatred and envy one towards another, corrupt our minds, mar our love, destroy our peace; if he can but sow discord, defamation, hatred, lies, enmity and backbiting, which generally arise from such disputes; if he can but do this, then he has accomplished what he sought. Ah! Dear brethren, beware, for it is more than clear that all those who do not have the meek, friendly, peaceable and affectionate Spirit of Christ, but are contentious, are not from God. May this be known to you.

Inasmuch then, that we know that he did from the beginning of the expounded gospel to the present moment, cause us much pain and sorrow of heart, with his cunning, unfruitful questions of contention, and other pernicious disputations, I do most affectionately and sincerely entreat all who would desire to walk

peaceably and quietly in the fear of God with a good conscience, before the Lord and his church, that they would all, before God in Christ Jesus, lay this sincerely to heart, how faithfully the Holy Spirit of Christ warns us concerning our unprofitable, foolish questions, answers, disputations, and quarrels, 1 Tim. 6; for the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of love and peace, and therefore, teaches it to all of his children, and writes it upon the tablets of our hearts with his gracious finger. Ah! Do reflect upon what we teach; and that his holy kingdom and word are a word and kingdom of peace, and not of strife; that his messengers and servants are messengers and servants of peace, in order that you, who call yourselves after his holy name, he who alone has graciously called you into his kingdom of peace through the word of his peace, may escape the snares of the devil, and that you may so conduct yourselves in all your ways after the will and pleasure of Christ, towards all men, and observe his holy word and ordinance, and defend it; that you may promote that true righteousness required of God, such as faith, love, repentance, regeneration, piety and peace with all other fruits of the Holy Spirit; gladden the hearts of all the sorrowful of heart, and the young and tender souls in Christ Jesus, and strengthen, console and encourage them in all their trials, need, temptations, tribulation and fear. Thus the most holy city and temple, which lay desolated for so many centuries, may again be rebuilt, and all its usages, ordinances and services restored to their primitive order. Yes, that the saving light of the true gospel of Christ may be spread among all nations, kindred and tongues, in its full splendor; and that the accursed, lying and anti-christian darkness may be dispelled.

Then observe that the powerful word of the Lord is more and more miraculously breaking forth, and that therefore, all true hearts would gladly see and have unanimity in this part of the Ban, by which they are sometimes so greatly troubled and

perplexed, as related, that they might all orderly proceed, observing one rule, according to the Scriptures as it becomes christians; and that I, an unworthy person, the weakest of all the saints, have been severely tried in this part by many, different spirits for twenty-two years, and have endured many an attack, by which others are not only taught by me, but I am also taught by others, the Giver of all good gifts be praised for all this. And also that I have acquired more knowledge in some things through length of time, and through many adventitious circumstances, examination and study; therefore, I was fraternally requested and besought by several pious hearts who would gladly see all things right, that before the close of my life, I would examine and revise the *Ground and meaning of the true apostolic Ban or Separation*, arrange it formally, and present it for examination to the elders and ministers of the church, and to all those desiring peace, so that if any one, after my departure, as I am now an old, feeble man, might cause any trouble, strife or dissension among the quiet and peaceable, under pretence that he heard this or that from me at any time, or might infer wrong views from some of my writings which have not yet been so fully explained by me *concerning husband and wife*, and of open, offensive, carnal sinners, as it is done here, in order that the brethren may refer them to my *conclusive ground*, after I shall have fallen asleep in God, and made my exit hence. Besides, that the pious, doubtful conscience may thereby be relieved, so that they may attain an assurance of confidence in their minds. To which request, although christian-like and just, I have undertaken to respond with diffidence, because I well know that they are not all brothers and sisters in truth and power who will read, hear and see it, but also others. And where the disposition is not friendly, nor love true, there the understanding is generally partial and the construction unjust, as I, alas, have often experienced in my days. Ah! That some of them would obtain grace. Besides, I know that the opinions, judgments, affections and minds are different; and

that the all prevailing truth and the fear, Spirit and anointing of the Lord, are not possessed by every one in their fullness. Therefore, I fear that all will not receive and follow this doctrine as the *True Ground of Truth*. O, that we all had the eyes of understanding, those of us who think we see, it would, according to my opinion, soon gain a strong hold with some.

Yet I confidently expect that those, who in the true fear of God, sincerely seek union and peace among the pious, and are anxious for the truth, will not despise and upbraid me for this, my solicitous and brotherly labor for the edification of holy peace, and explanation of eternal truth, accepted by me in true christian faith; but that they will accept it, and give the praise to God for his grace. It appears to me, although perhaps I may be in error, almost impossible to hit upon a more certain way according to truth, in which we may stand before God and man, than that which I have impartially, and according to my limited talents, pointed out and explained as before God in Christ Jesus, and which is according to the sacred Scriptures.

I do not serve the stiff-necked, haughty and perverse scorers, nor immovable bigots and wranglers, but I serve those who are of an impartial, new, christian mind, who allow themselves to be instructed, and are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and live in the fear of God and in pure love, who have received the Lord's holy word and truth in a pure mind; who implicitly follow it through the received anointing, and are free from all bitter, party spirit, vain honor, hatred and envy. With such we find the amiable spirit of peace, sincere and pious disposition, an unleavened, pure heart and conduct, and therefore, also an upright and pure understanding, and an incorrupt, saving ground and exposition, and they live no more unto their selfish flesh, but unto Christ and their neighbors. They resist none, are humble, are opposed to all unscriptural contention and strife, readily acknowledge their short comings wherein they have erred;

reconcile their neighbors whom they had grieved, regarding neither honor nor dishonor; heap fiery coals upon the heads of their adversaries; walk unblamably, in order that they may awaken them again unto truth with love, lead them from the way of error, bring them unto Christ, and save them eternally. Behold, these are they, I say, whom I serve with my writings; for they have Christ in power with his Spirit, word and love, and thus with him, and in him they have TRUE CHRISTIANITY, which will stand before God, which is a useful, cheering, peaceable and joyful thing. Ah, children, be admonished; learn rightly to know the subtlety of the devil, and beware of discord. May our merciful Father grant unto us the wise Spirit of his grace, Amen.



EXPLANATION**OF THE****TRUE APOSTOLIC SEPARATION OR
EXCOMMUNICATION.**

I. What is meant by Separation or Excommunication?
Sincerely faithful children in the Lord, whom I love in truth, since I have undertaken, in paternal fidelity, this very critical task, for the benefit of you and all the pious generally, I say a critical task, for I am well aware that it has caused much grief among the humble for some time; and I fear that all is not over yet. I, therefore, entreat you all in general, both the afflicted and unafflicted, by the bloody wounds of Jesus, all of you, who with me bow your knees before the Almighty, great God, I exhort you by the righteous judgment, which he will hold at his future coming in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire, with his mighty angels, that you would be pleased to judge this, my work, impartially, and with a pure heart of peace. Read article after article, no, every word, with sincere, christian discretion, in impartial, true love, according to the rule and foundation of truth; and, in the first place, well observe what Excommunication of the church of Christ is in power, which was left and taught to us in the word by the Lord's holy apostles, so that you despise none ignorantly, nor say with scorners, Let them freely excommunicate; their excommunication is not dangerous, and similar unguarded expressions. I tell the truth in Christ, and do not lie, that I would sooner allow myself to be cut into pieces, till the day of judgment, if it were possible, than to allow myself to be excommunicated, according to the Scriptures, by the servants of the Lord, from his church. O, brethren, beware!

All that was cursed in Israel according to the ordinances of the law, whether man or beast, had to die, and the accursed goods had to be burnt with fire. This was a dreadful and severe curse. But in the kingdom and government of Christ, if we rightly view it in its true character; if repentance does not follow, it is still more dreadful; it is not now a bodily extermination or the death of our flesh, as Moses' curse or excommunication was, nor is it an exclusion from a temple or synagogue, even as is the excommunication of the Jews or of the world; but it is a true declaration of the eternal death of the soul, made through the sincere servants of Christ, against all offending, carnal sinners, and stubborn wranglers; a delivering over to satan; yes, a common renouncing, excommunicating or separating from the congregation, church, body and kingdom of Christ, and that in the name of Christ, with the binding efficacy of his Holy Spirit and powerful word.

Since, then, this is such a dreadful and severe anathema, as related, then may every one see well to it, that he walk and conduct himself so before God and his church, as not to be eternally smitten with such a curse, either by Christ or his church, that he must be an excommunicant put out of the holy congregation, body, city, temple, church, kingdom and house of Christ. For all who are out of the congregation and church of Christ must be in that of anti-christ; this is incontrovertible. And what the award of such will be, if they will not repent, may be plainly read in Rom. 1:32; 6:23; Gal. 5:21; Rev. 21:8. Ah! Children, beware; be careful with all your powers; watch assiduously; pray fervently and be prepared; for God's judgments are terrible; "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10:31.

2. *Over whom this Apostolic Excommunication is to be used.* We find many places in the holy Scriptures where the truly believing church is the spiritual body, bride, camp, city and

temple of Jesus Christ, our only spiritual Head, Bridegroom, King and High Priest, prefigured by the literal Eve, Rebecca, and the camp, city and temple of Israel. In the political dominion of Israel, no leper, none that had an issue, nor those who were defiled by the dead, were suffered to come into camp as long as they were not healed and purified according to the law; none were allowed to ease themselves within the camp; neither an uncircumcised nor an unclean person was allowed to eat of the passover. All those (here observe well Israel's Ban) had to die without mercy, on the testimony of two or three witnesses; who despised the word of Jehovah and set aside his commandments, those who were guilty of abomination in Israel, and who served strange gods. For, says Moses, they were to be a holy people to Jehovah. Num. 5:2; Exo. 12:48; Deu. 17:6; Exo. 19:6.

And thus it is in the Christian dispensation; for his church is a congregation of saints, or an assembly of the righteous, even as the Nicean fathers some centuries ago, did confess with us; and, as Adam had but one Eve, who was flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Isaac had but one Rebecca, who was of his own family, and Christ but one body, which was heavenly and from heaven, and was perfect and holy in all its members; thus has he also, spiritually, but one Eve, but one new Rebecca, who is his spiritual body, spouse, church and bride, namely, the believers, the regenerated, meek, merciful, dead to sin, righteous, peaceable, amiable and obedient children in his kingdom and house of peace; pure, chaste virgins in the Spirit, holy souls, who are of his divine family, and holy flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone.

From which, according to the doctrine of the holy apostles, it is evident that the obstinate disturber or sectary who causes, contrary to the doctrine of godliness, offence and discord, and those who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ, who lead an

offensive life, or the over-curious, inquisitive and lazy,* who live at the expense of others, shall not be suffered in the holy house, camp, city, temple, church and body of Christ, which is the church; but that we, with one accord, should exclude and shun them, according to Scripture, for *our* salvation, and *their* reformation. Faithful children, be warned. Terrible is the word which John utters, “Whosoever transgresses, and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God,” 2 John 1:9. And in another place, “He that commits sin is of the devil,” 1 John 3:8.

3. *The reason why this Excommunication is commanded in the Scriptures.* John teaches and says that God is love. Since, then, as God is love, so does he also manifest the nature of that which he is, namely, love. That this is the truth may be readily perceived from the creation and preservation of all his creatures; the restoration of Adam and Eve; the preservation of Noah and

* [CHCoG: This last group is curious. The Bible clearly teaches that we are to work if we are able to, and we are not to be gossips and busybodies who interfere in other’s affairs. Exo 20:9, 2 Thes. 3:10-12. But banning people for being “over-curious and inquisitive” can be dangerous. Many of us have been put out of ‘mainline churches’ for wanting to see proof for their practices and teachings in the Bible. But should we be put out of Christ’s church for this? Indeed, we all know this verse: “These [Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *sought the scriptures daily*, whether those things were so.” Acts 17:11. Banning people for investigating the Biblical basis of our beliefs is a sure path to stagnation at best and corruption and depravity at worst. However, is likely that Menno meant the following, and in this direction he is utterly correct: “Take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship Jehovah your God in that way; for every abomination to Jehovah which He hates they have done to their gods.” Deut. 12:30-31. If this is so, it would have been better if Menno had clearly stated what he meant.]

his family from the flood with an ark; in blessing Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; in ransoming Israel from Egypt; in sending Moses and the prophets; and more especially in the holy incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; in his gracious, efficacious doctrine, miracles, prayers, weeping, cross, blood and death; also, in the effusion of his Holy Spirit, and sending forth his holy apostles.

Since it is evident that God is love, will be forever, and in the beginning manifested the glorious fruit of love towards his children, he now also does this by his exclusion or separation. It can be terrible and severe, and have such terrible consequences with the stubborn and unconverted sinners, as heard. Since he is the wise and omniscient God, who with his flaming eyes sees into the inmost recesses of the hearts and minds of men, who judges our ways and knows us best, he knows that we are his feeble creatures and what weak vessels we are. Yes, he knows that some of us can scarcely withstand a gentle breeze of deception, but allow ourselves to be led away immediately; or that we are soon polluted with the pernicious, abominable life of the wicked. For this reason he has, through his paternal love and great mercy, given us, his poor, weak children, this means of *Separation*, approved it by the Holy Spirit and word in the beginning, and commanded it to this end, that we should exclude the restless, stubborn wranglers and schismatists, together with the offensive, carnal and lewd, from his holy congregation, church and house of peace; and, according to the Scriptures, avoid and shun them till they repent, in order that they do not move us through fair words, in the confident hope we have in the truth of Christ, for their false doctrine eats as a cancer, 2 Tim. 2:17; nor that the abominable, with their impure, carnal life pervert us, nor give us a bad name among those without. This is the *first reason* why the Spirit of the Lord so earnestly commanded and taught Excommunication in his holy word. Whether this reason is not a special work of the

love of Christ, which is of great usefulness, service, power and fruit to all the pious, I will let all the faithful consider in the fear of God.

The other reason is that all those who again forsake the holy word and true way and go astray in the world, despise the holy covenant, make void their received baptism and the promise of righteousness; again hear the false prophets, love the world, walk the broad way of the flesh, or cause contention, schisms and sects and perverse things among the pious, may be deterred by means of this excommunication, and brought to repentance, seek union and peace, and thus be set free before the Lord and his church, from the satanic snares of their strife, or from their ungodly life. Behold, this is the other reason why the Spirit of the Lord so earnestly recommended and taught excommunication in his holy word. And whether this is not a special work of his love, and of like power, usefulness, service and fruit to the impious, if they will by any means observe it in fear, as the first is to the pious; upon this I will leave the faithful to reflect in the fear of God. Yes, whoever can rightly understand and see, in my opinion, the aforementioned reasons, according to the Scriptures, has already found the true ground of the holy excommunication.

Since we know, then, that our excommunication or separation is commanded to us in the Scriptures, for two such highly important reasons, as related, therefore, we have reason enough, if we rightly boast of the Christian name, to regularly teach the evident and direct command, doctrine and ordinance of the Lord and his holy apostles, as a highly useful and good work of great love; and to follow it obediently. Besides, it is also evident that those sin heinously against the word of the holy apostles, and their great love, and the fidelity and love of the church, and especially against their own souls, who call this useful, divine ordinance, in the perverseness of their sinful flesh, a contentious work of the devil, and thus trample it so shamefully under the

unhallowed feet of their impious calumny, into the mire. Haughty is that man who would rebuke his God, or gainsay and censure his word. Reflect upon that in which we have instructed you.

4. *The true Apostolic Excommunication has no respect to persons.* Undoubtedly, it is well known to us all, dear brethren, that it is so strongly and earnestly commanded in the Scriptures, no, it is one of the chief commands that we are to honor father and mother, and that all had to die, according to the law of Moses, who cursed and disobeyed them. And also that the bond of undefiled, honorable matrimony is so unchangeably bound in the kingdom and government of Christ, that neither man nor woman can forsake their spouse, and take another, understand rightly what Christ says, except it be for fornication, Matt. 19:9. And Paul also holds the same doctrine, that they shall be bound to each other, and that they are to live in union; that the man does not have power over his own body, nor the woman over hers, 1 Cor. 7:4.

Both these rules, the first in relation to parents, and the second in relation to wedlock, stand fast and unbroken, and can never be altered or infringed by any man, so long as we can, in God and with God, in a good conscience, observe and keep them, as the aforementioned rules require, without transgressing the holy word; but if this cannot be done thus, the spiritual must not, in that case, yield to the carnal, but the carnal must yield to the spiritual; this is incontrovertibly true.

I, therefore, entreat all the pious, for the Lord's sake, who are sanctified with us unto Christ Jesus through the Spirit of peace, and through faith in his precious blood, that they will impartially and spiritually examine these following grounds or reasons, which so urgently engage our attention, with God-fearing and understanding hearts, and learn that we should unreservedly proclaim this ground with christian discretion, to such of our

fellow-believers whose lot it may be, to be thus situated, from which God preserve them, and that we should inculcate it in faithful love to the salvation of their souls, without giving offence to the young and tender minds. All who fear God, I will let judge what we teach.

The first reason is that we truly know through the Spirit and word of God that the heavenly espousal between Christ and our souls is made by faith through his innocent death and precious blood, and must be voluntarily kept unbroken, in obedience to the only and everlasting bridegroom, and that therefore, a man shall not, for the sake of father, mother, son, daughter, husband or wife, in life or death, be disobedient to his word, in the smallest matter, or yield in the least; for our Lord will, shall and must alone be the God of our consciences, and the only Lord of our souls; and not our father, mother, husband or wife, as we may plainly see from Deu. 13:6.

The second reason is that the faithful apostles, John and Paul, implicitly teach us that we are to shun the apostates, lest they contaminate us with the impure, deceiving doctrine, and with their ungodly, carnal lives; that we do not partake of their unfruitful works, and for the reasons above assigned; and since we plainly see that none can sooner contaminate and pollute us than our own fathers, mothers, husbands, wives or children, if they are corrupted, and especially on account of the daily interaction with, and natural love for them, which of necessity is existing between them; and moreover, since husband and wife are one flesh, I scarcely know how they will escape the snares of death, if they do not especially observe the holy word and counsel of the Lord in this respect; for now they pray and sigh, and anon they rage and quarrel. Now they slander and defame, then they weep and lament. Ah! Children, take warning. Their tears are crocodile's tears, and their tongues are set on fire from hell, as James says. I forbear to mention that some of them run after

idolatry and false prophets, violently revile the holy word, sacraments and ordinances of Christ, and highly recommend the abominations of anti-christ. Besides, the conduct of some of them is nothing but sheer avarice, pride, wantonness, eating and drinking to excess; and how scandalously some of them live with their poor wives, especially when they are intoxicated, I will leave the Lord to judge. And that any one could live in the midst of such wanton, carnal, ungodly abominations, and not be hurt in his faith, love and anointing, and have interaction with such abominable unclean, adhesive pitch vessels, and not be polluted in his conscience, I will leave all who have an understanding of the holy word to reflect upon with the anointing of the Spirit.

The third reason is because Paul teaches us that we are to avoid the apostate, that he may be led to reflect upon and to repent of his wicked life or sectarian doctrine through the shame of such shunning. Knowing then, that this is the ground and object of the Holy Spirit, in regard to excommunication, therefore it is also proper, and according to the Scriptures, that we, in this matter, implicitly follow his divine counsel, love, doctrine, good will and earnest commands, and obediently follow him and observe it, in true love, towards our most beloved father, mother, husband, wife and children, rather than towards others, because, I say, they are our dearest friends; yes, our own flesh and bone, and we cannot by any other salutary means, lead them from evil, and again lead them in the way of the saints. Reflect upon what we teach you.

The fourth reason is because we certainly know that there is only one excommunication in the Scriptures, which does not only extend to the spiritual communion, such as the Lord's Supper, and the hand and kiss of peace; but it extends also to the bodily communion, such as eating, drinking, daily actions and conduct, 1 Cor. 5:10,11, and that if the father is to shun the son, or the son the father, the husband his wife, or the wife her husband, only in

the spiritual communion, and not in natural communion, in that event there would be two kinds of excommunications in the Scriptures; the one would only extend to the spiritual communion, and the other, both to the spiritual and natural communion; this is clear as daylight. Again, reflect upon what we teach you.

The fifth reason is because pious parents, as well as the church, consent and approve of the excommunication of the apostate children; and the pious children consent that the apostate parents should be excommunicated; and the husband consents that the apostate wife should be excommunicated, and the pious wife, that the apostate husband be excommunicated, and that they be severally dealt with according to the Scriptures; and if they would then afterwards shun them only in spiritual communion, they would make void their own sentence, which they in common with the church pronounced; and thus they would not seek the salvation of their dearest friends with that spiritual love and zeal with which the word and Spirit of the Lord command them, and they would still be in great danger of perdition. In order, unmolestedly to escape this, their excommunication has been commanded, taught and left on record in the word of the Lord, to every man, woman and child, without exception. Again, I say, reflect upon what we teach you.

The sixth reason is because I have known no less than three hundred married persons in my time who did not observe the ordinance, counsel, doctrine, will and command of the Lord and his apostles concerning shunning, and thus run together into perdition. We stand dismayed, O, God! at the thought that such an evil may in part be ascribed to our silence. We will, therefore, endeavor to so act, in the future, while the care of the church is unworthily entrusted to us, as to prevent, in a measure, all corruption and apostasy, according to apostolic doctrine and counsel; and freely, purely and fully teach and maintain the

ordinance of excommunication, as well between parents and children, husband and wife, as among others; to all our brethren, if circumstances require it, in order that we, in the first place, clear our own souls, and thus stand acquitted before God and his saints in the great day of Christ; and secondly, so that none can excuse himself and say, It was never told to me.

Behold, chosen brethren in the Lord, these are the important articles and principal reasons which urge us most that we willingly teach this doctrine, and put it into practice. Is there now a single individual under the canopy of heaven, learned or unlearned, young or old, without or among us, man or woman, who can truthfully teach us that the espousals of the spirit, made with Christ, through faith, should yield to human wedlock? Or that a husband cannot deceive or corrupt his wife, or a woman her husband? Or that a pious man is not bound according to the Scriptures, to promote the salvation of his unconverted wife, or the wife, of her unconverted husband? Or that there are two excommunications in the Scriptures; that the one only extends to the spiritual church, and the other both to the spiritual and temporal? Or that the pious husband does not dare vote with the church to exclude his impenitent wife, or the wife against the husband in excluding him? Or that there is an exception in the whole Scriptures of husband or wife, parents or children, in this respect? Or that spiritual love has to yield to conjugal love? If so, then we desire with all the heart to abandon this as our doctrine, and acknowledge our error, and with great zeal teach the contrary before the whole world, as is christian-like and right; for we regard neither slander, nor praise, honor, nor disgrace; but we have only regard for the honor of God and Christ, and the eternal salvation of your souls; on account of which, we are considered by many as the off-scourings and filth of the world.

But if this cannot be done, as it never can, then in the first place, my sincere prayer, and fraternal admonition, is to all who

might have erroneous views of this matter, that they would not improperly meddle through impure and perverted minds, by slandering the chief stone and the builders; nor that they would persuade any to disobey the word, or keep them in the dangers of apostacy and perdition, lest they make themselves guilty of other men's sins; but that they would give the good will and ordinance of the Lord, due honor and praise in this respect; pluck out the offending eye of their misunderstanding, and pass a sound judgment according to truth; avert sin from the church, and thus observe the incontrovertibly clear word, counsel and command of the Lord, with all the pious, and assist with all deliberation to maintain it.

Secondly, I entreat all who might be at all concerned about the slanders of the irrational, that they would view the matter impartially in a divine light, and consider that not only excommunication is hated by the world but also all the doings of Christ, such as the true evangelical baptism, Lord's Supper, life and the whole divine service. Yes, they are considered as an abomination, scandal and disgrace, and they, out of mere hatred of truth, are not ashamed to call all the pious accursed heretics, anabaptists, ringleaders, whores and knaves; and in many places they deprive them of possessions and life, as may be seen. However, the pious are so much honored by God that he acknowledges and adopts them as his chosen children, as his sons and daughters; as the apple of his eye; as his bride and spouse; and endues them with the gift of everlasting life. For there is nothing under the canopy of heaven that they love more than their God, as they fully testify and make known by their actions. And thus it is in this matter. For how can there be a greater love for God, and how can there be found a more praiseworthy confession, than where one is willing and ready, not only to give up his temporal goods, ease, honor and happiness, but also to shun his dearest friends upon earth in full health, out of sincere

regard to Christ, in obedience to his eternal and holy truth? No abominable slander nor disgrace becomes the pure knowledge of God nor the unfeigned obedience of his most holy word.

Thirdly, I entreat all dear brethren in general that they would always consider with wise and sober minds, to what end they bent their shoulders under the pleasing yoke of the living and Almighty God, so that they may act and walk in a becoming manner, in the most holy covenant of grace before Him and all mankind; and live and walk with their consorts in such piety, love, union and peace; and with such fidelity and care. Observe that hereafter in eternity, we will not hear of excommunication or exclusion; but of sincere, christian piety, delight and divine joy. Reflect upon these things which we teach you.

Fourthly, I entreat all, whose lot it should be at any time, to be afflicted with this sore punishment, that they would wisely examine themselves in the pure fear of God, that they would not seek the solicitous, selfish, lazy and idle flesh above Christ, nor cover it with fig leaves, lest the wrath of the Lord who hates all lies, hypocrisy and subtle roguery, punish them with blindness and perversion, and assign them their portion with hypocrites. But I would that they might, by virtue of true faith in Christ Jesus, valiantly overcome themselves, and obediently and fully observe what the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ has commanded and taught by his holy word in this regard. Ah! Let us reflect upon this.

Finally, I entreat elders, teachers, ministers and deacons, in the love of Christ, that they would not teach this whole matter carelessly and irrationally; but teach and inculcate it in the full fear of God, and with christian deliberation and paternal solicitude, in a true, apostolic manner; not too hastily, nor too slowly; not too rigidly nor too leniently; lest they see the a kid in its mother's milk; but that they take of the first green ears of their land, dry them by the heavenly fire of pure, unfeigned love, and

beat them into pieces in the mortar of the holy word, and pour upon them the oil of the Holy Spirit, which makes us willingly obedient unto Christ; pour upon them the sweet smelling frankincense of a sincere and firm faith from which all must result, to be a sweet savor to the Lord; and thus bring Him an acceptable offering in his holy temple. Lay to heart, in true love, the ground of my admonition.

5. *That we are to put away from the church the openly offensive, carnal sinners, and excommunicated by God, and thus direct them to true repentance with the Scriptures.* Before I proceed to explain this article, I would earnestly admonish the reader that about eighteen years ago I published an admonition in which I made no distinction of sin; but through my inexperience, directed them without discrimination to three different admonitions. I say inexperience; for to the best of my knowledge, I neither heard nor knew at that time, any thing of fornication, adultery, and suchlike, among the brethren; it appeared to me impossible that those who entered with us upon the paths of righteousness should have any desire or will to such gross abominations, and therefore, I did not earnestly reflect upon the matter. See, before God it is the truth which I write.

I likewise wrote a book in 1549, in reply to those who would only extend excommunication to the spiritual church, and who charged us on all sides with slanderous words, that we practiced a rigid, cruel, unmerciful and Pharisaic excommunication.

Finally, I wrote a few words against Gellius Faber; and to this day I have made no particular distinction of it, in my writings, nor could I have made it. This I acknowledge openly; for my information of it was too limited, so long as the matter was not disputed and did not again present itself to me for reconsideration. But now, having heard the ground of dispute, and having carefully weighed all the circumstances connected with it, in the balance of the holy, divine word, the six following

reasons have given me such a powerful assurance in the matter, the Helper of all distressed souls be praised for his grace, that we are to exclude from the holy church of the Lord, all offensively carnal sinners, such as fornicators, adulterers, drunkards, &c.; and that all these ought to be put to open shame and reproof, with their ungodly works, without previously admonishing them, by virtue of the holy, divine word; that they may be led to repentance, I say by virtue of the word, for, in the first place, it is evident, as Paul teaches that “neither fornicators nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God,” 1 Cor. 6:10, but that their portion will be eternal death in the lake of fire.

Since it is clear that the condemnation of God is already pronounced against them by his eternal Spirit and powerful word, both in heaven and upon the earth; that they have excluded themselves, and by their ungodly works, forsaken the church, that they are not as they were before, flesh of Christ’s flesh, and members of his holy body, but have become carnal and devilish; yes, as dogs and swine, and again servants of sin. Therefore we would, in fact, declare as void and unjust, the righteous judgment of the great and Almighty God, pronounced by his own Spirit and word through his holy apostles, against such abominable defilers, if we would still admonish those who are already the children of the devil, hold them as brethren, and salute them with the peace of the Lord, and treat such miserable wretches as the children of God, and joint heirs of Christ, at the mere promise to do better, without any evidence of true repentance. I desire that we might all impartially, and in the fear of God, reflect how such a great despising of Christ and his righteous judgment, could stand according to the Scriptures.

In the second place, it is evident that all those who are envious of us are assiduously bent upon finding but a mote in us,

because they so spitefully hate us for the truth's sake, in order that they may magnify it into a beam and defame us grossly. If we were to acknowledge such open, offensive disgrace, and receive as brethren such God-forsaken defilers, without evident fruits of sincere repentance, on a mere promise, which is, perhaps, more the result of shame and hypocrisy, than the fear of God, and break with them the peaceable, blessed bread of the Lord's Holy Supper, and thus by actions evince that they are joint members of our church; then we would, undoubtedly, expose the fair bride, honored in Christ, to all the ungodly as a disgrace and scoff to all our enemies. May the gracious Lord preserve us from this, that we may never think of it, much less do so. Take notice of this.

In the third place, it is evident that with these three admonitions concerning such gross, offensive abominations, we would make many great hypocrites; for I hear that there were some within a few years, who carried on their horrible roguery and infamy in secret, till time and circumstances could no longer conceal them. Yes, as I have understood, if some of them had not been detected by great wisdom, they would, I fear, have continued in their old course; but as soon as it was disclosed they began to wail and weep. Who could ever be so blinded that when he has disgraced his neighbor's wife, daughter or maid, or robbed him of his money, and being seized, spoken to and admonished, that he would not say, I am sorry that I did so. Since then that experience teaches us the longer the more [sin], as heard, therefore it is also proper and consistent with the Scriptures that we should not foster and countenance such shameless defilers, much less are we to cherish them in their ungodly actions and wicked career with false prophets, but direct them where the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures direct and place them, namely outside of the church; so that we do not derogate from the Lord's sentence, pronounced in his word, against such people, that the

community of grace, the unleavened lump of Christ, the anointed King and Priest of God, may continue to be agreeable and dignified. And also, that the transgressors may be brought to repent sincerely before God and the church, and may again present their offering and gift with a clean, pure, new conscience, as the truly sanctified saints of Christ, to the altar of reconciliation in his holy temple. Ah! Reflect upon what we teach.

In the fourth place, it is evident that Paul teaches us that we are to shun a heretic, after we have admonished him twice, if he will not amend, Tit. 3:10. Since we are not urged by the Holy Spirit to reprove a man more than twice, some of whom are outwardly yet quite pious. Perhaps some of them know no better, but suppose they are in the right. So why beloved, are we then to admonish those thrice, who are not ashamed to sin against God's powerful word, but also against the law of nature? Those who premeditatedly disgrace their neighbor's wife, daughter or maid? Those who frequent riotous taverns and houses of ill fame? Or those who are perfidious in their dealings? In short, all those are sentenced to eternal death, by the Spirit and word of the Lord, if they will not repent.

It would, according to my opinion, be very unbecoming, if we rightly reflect upon it, that we should run after those who are already condemned, to admonish them thrice before separation should take place; and though they do not regard the first and second admonition, that we should still hold them as brethren in the church till the third time; and that if they would even then evince that they were sorry, they should remain brethren. If not, then it should be told to them before the church, out of the word of God, that they have no more fellowship with Christ, but are

* [CHCoG: Isn't the 'law of nature' what animals do? That means NOTHING in comparison to God's Word. It is our corrupt 'human nature' that we are to overcome.]

accursed according to the Scriptures. All who are taught by God, I will let judge how such doctrine and conduct could stand the test of the justice and word of the Lord.

In the fifth place, it is evident, so far as I am able to judge, that holy Paul wrote by first epistle to the Corinthians with such a view, as related; for he says, “I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one do not even eat,” 1 Cor. 5:11. He does not even mention one admonition, much less two or three; but he says, “A little leaven leavens the whole lump,” which is undoubtedly true; for facts have more than satisfactorily proven how often the pious on their account, are considered rather as an offensive savor, who should otherwise be a sweet savor, were it not for those shameful members.

In the sixth place, it is evident that Paul did not only teach this doctrine; but also showed it by an open example to the unclean Corinthian who slept with his stepmother in a very unbecoming manner; for without any previous admonition he judged him according to his ungodly works, and excommunicated him, by the word and Spirit of the Lord, from the church, and delivered him unto satan, into whose hands he had already fallen through his unnatural, detestable incontinency, in order that through this severe sentence and open shame, he might put to death and bury his unclean, shameful flesh, with its carnal lusts, and that his soul might be saved in the day of the Lord, and was not received again before the term of a year or longer, as history informs us, till they saw that he sincerely repented, and feared lest he might be swallowed up with over much sorrow.

And it would, according to my opinion; be proper that we should not so soon again admit such carnal defilers, who have beyond measure defamed the holy word, and brought such great tribulation upon the pious with their ungodly, abominable

disgrace, though they may seemingly lament and promise much; but examine more closely the fruits of their repentance for some time; for it is not always repentance, though they say, We have sinned! but repentance is a converted, changed, pious and new heart, a broken and contrite spirit, from which flow the tears of sincerity, a candid confession, a true departure from the evil of our ways, an earnest and sincere hatred of sin, and an unblameable, pious, christian life; this is repentance that will stand before God. I entreat you to learn rightly to know both repentance and sin. Take heed to this.

Behold, faithful brethren, here you have my most important Scriptures, discourses and reasons which moved me more deeply to reflect upon this matter in the fear of God. I say again, as I did above, in speaking of the separation of husband and wife: If there is one under the canopy of heaven, let him be whomsoever he will, that can convince me with divine truth, that a secret or open fornicator, adulterer, drunkard, &c., is a member of the holy body of the Lord, until he has been admonished two or three times (observe this well); or that the sentence of the Holy Spirit pronounced by Paul, and through many other Scriptures, against such deadly abominations, depends upon the condition of two or three admonitions, or that we have no cause to fear that the pious would be exposed to ridicule and slander if we had no other evidence of repentance than a mere verbal promise; or that we may, by the power of keys, retain those whom God has already excluded by the word of his truth; or that it is consistent with the Scriptures that the church may, with the Holy Spirit and word of Christ, in such cases as mentioned, judge uncertainties, I mean without evident repentance, and retain and salute as brethren the hypocrites as well as the righteous; or that the church may also, truthfully, proclaim the grace, mercy and peace of God and everlasting life, by the authority of the Scriptures, to those who are under his displeasure, curse, wrath and sentence of eternal

death, on account of their deadly and wicked deeds; or that the abomination or sin which caused them to be excommunicated, does not lead them to death; or that the Spirit of grace through a sincere faith and true repentance, which avail with God, does not assure the transgressor more of the promise than the outward association with the church. If he can convince us of all this, we desire then cordially to follow him, and change and renounce our views.

But if this cannot be done, as it never can be, I therefore entreat all who are concerned, that they would not liken themselves unto vain comforts and false prophets, who strengthen the hands of the wicked, daub the wall with untempered mortar, and teach peace, peace, where there is no peace, Eze. 13:10, but that they would leave the sentence of the Lord which proceeds from his divine righteousness unbroken; and tear the deceptive bolsters and pillows from under the heads of the ungodly, and keep clean and pure the holy vineyard, city, house, temple, body and church of Christ, as much as in them lies, that they may build upon a sure foundation, and direct the impenitent sinners to repentance, as heard. Deal faithfully, reflect upon these things and learn wisdom.

6. *Of secret sinners, who are again inwardly admonished by the Holy Spirit and are sincerely and truly converted.* The full desire of my heart is that each one would so fear and know God as to say in spirit and truth with David, “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, you are there; If I make my bed in the grave, behold, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall your hand lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me; yes, the darkness does not hide me from you; but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to you;

for you have formed my organs; you have covered me in my mother's womb," Psm. 139:7-13. And with Isaiah, "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from Jehovah, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who sees us? And who knows us?" Isa. 29:15. Observe this denunciation, "Woe unto them," &c.

Chosen brethren, take heed; none under the canopy of heaven can so conceal himself that he cannot be seen by the flaming eyes of the Lord, or not be found by the avenging hand of his wrath in his wickedness. Yes, the least thought is not concealed in our hearts which is not open to the eyes of the Lord. I, therefore, warn all in general, that you with all your powers watch against sin, whether secret or open; if sin is not sincerely repented of, your portion will be eternal death. Let all the impenitent and heedless sinners reflect upon this.

This I write to all beloved brethren as a christian warning, that you may fear the Lord's sentence, both openly and privately, and carefully avoid sin. Though we may not be reproved or seen by men here, still we cannot escape the eyes and punishment of God! Ah! That we all understood this.

However, should it ever happen that any one should sin against God in private, from which may his power preserve us all, and should the spirit of grace, which works repentance, again operate upon his heart, and cause genuine repentance, of this we do not have to judge; for it is a matter between him and God. For it is evident that we do not seek our righteousness and salvation, the remission of our sins, satisfaction, reconciliation and eternal life in or through excommunication, but alone in the righteousness, intercession, merits, death and blood of Christ. There are but two objects and ends why the ban is commanded in the Scriptures, which can have no reference to such a one. Because, in the first place, his sins are private; hence no offence [to others] can follow. And secondly, because he is in deep

contrition and is penitent in life, he has no need of being brought to repentance [again]. Nor are we any where commanded by Christ to put him to open shame before the church. Reflect upon these things.

7. *What is the true sense of the passage in Matt. 18, where Christ says, If your brother shall trespass against you,* &c? Our only and eternal High Priest and Teacher Jesus Christ undoubtedly knew our poor, imperfect and feeble nature, that if we are not watchful, we would often fall into errors towards our neighbor, and therefore he teaches and says, “If your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone; if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother; but if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a tax collector.” Whereupon Peter asked him, “How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?” Jesus said unto him, “I do not say unto you, Until seven times; but until seventy times seven,” Matthew 18:15-17, 21, 22.

It is evident that these words of Christ teach, in the first place, that if any one should err or sin against you through negligence, infirmity, inconsiderateness, inexperience, or ignorance, that you should not, therefore, hate him in your heart; nor conceal or deliberately ignore at his transgression; but out of true, brotherly love admonish and reprove him, lest your brother fall into greater errors and perish; but by this means reclaim him, and, as Moses says, not make himself guilty for his sins. It is the nature and disposition of christians not to hate anyone on account of his infirmities, but they seek with all their hearts how they may lead such a one in the true way of love by instructing him; for a true christian knows nothing of hatred.

In the second place, those words teach us that he who has transgressed should receive the admonition of his brother in love and be again sincerely reconciled; as he teaches at another place, and says, "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you; leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother," Matt. 5:23,24. Here it is also the nature and disposition of the anointed, those who are born of the holy seed of divine love, that if they trespass against a brother, they have neither peace nor rest of conscience till they are again fully reconciled in Christ Jesus, and that without hypocrisy. For they are a seed and generation of peace, children of love, who manifest their christianity in full power; and testify by their deeds that they know God. But those who do not do so have the words of Jesus to judge them. Although the first transgression may not be of itself a sin unto death; in the course of time it would cause the transgressor, if he does not regard love, to become estranged and carnal. Therefore he should bear such severe punishment on account of his [unrepented] wickedness. For it is evident that he who despises his brother, rejects the affectionate admonition, acts against christian charity, despises the church of God, rejects the word of the Lord, would rather continue unreprieved in his transgression through his immovable stubbornness. He would rather walk in the crooked paths of the unrighteous; yes, sooner forsake the kingdom and people of Christ, than subdue his stubborn, proud flesh, and again be reconciled in love, according to the word of the Lord, with his brother against whom he transgressed. Paul rightly observes, "That to be carnally minded is death." Observe this.

In the third place, if the transgressing brother will sincerely receive the brotherly admonition of his offended brother in love, be humbly reconciled, and afterwards ceases transgressing, then in that case the offended brother will no more remember, but

sincerely forgive him, although he may have frequently sinned against him. Even as God, for Jesus' sake, forgives all of our sins, so must we also forgive our neighbor all his transgressions in Christ, which he has committed against us. And we should not under any circumstances indulge in hatred or vengeance against him, even if he never reforms. We have a true example in Christ, and in Stephen, his witness. And it is also the nature and disposition of all the anointed, who are born by God, that they possess their souls in peace and patience, to keep their conscience pure and uncorrupted, their prayer unhindered, their love perfect, their faith sound and true, their minds firm and unwavering, no matter how others behave towards them.

From all of which it is more than clear that these three several admonitions of which Christ speaks, first between him and you alone; secondly before witnesses and thirdly, before the church, do not extend to all offensive, carnal sinners, over whom the eternal sentence of death is already pronounced. It has reference only to the shortcomings between brother and brother, and that for the following seven reasons.

First, he says, "If your brother trespass against YOU," observe what he says; "AGAINST YOU," not AGAINST GOD; for all the sins he commits against you, you may forgive him, so far as it respects *you*; but not as it respects *God*.

Secondly, he says, "Tell him his fault between you and him alone." Observe, "between *you* and him *alone*." And I trust that all who understand the holy word will assent that an open transgression or sin requires no private admonition, but is to be publicly reproved.

Thirdly, he says, "That in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Observe that he says, "Two or three." And that an open transgression requires no [new]

witnesses, but is itself its own accuser and witness, is as clear as the meridian sun.

Fourthly, he says, “Then tell it unto the church,” observe, “unto the church.” And for us to tell an open, well known disgrace to them, which is already known, is quite useless, to this all must assent who have understanding.

Fifthly, he also says in Luke 17, “And if he trespass against you seven times in a day.” Observe, he says, “Trespass.” That any christian should commit a deadly sin against his brother seven times in a day, not to say seventy times seven, is [almost] impossible; much less against God.

Sixthly, he says, “And seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I repent.” Observe, he says, “Turn to you seven times in a day.” My opinion is that if any one were to come to us two or three times in a year, not to say daily, to pillage our chests or purses, or disgrace our wives, daughters or maids, and every time say, Ah, brother I repent, he would soon be told that he is a desperate rogue and an ungodly knave. Again, I say, Observe this.

Seventhly, he says, “You shall forgive him.” Observe, he says, “You shall forgive him.” And the Scriptures plainly teach that none can forgive sins (these are the ten thousand talents which were owing to the king), but God alone. And that we alone can pay the hundred pence that we owe our brother, as the Lord teaches in the parable with all plainness.

Behold, in this sense the Holy Scripture remains salutary unto us, and proceeds in its proper order when one brother trespasses against another, three admonitions are given before excommunication, Matt. 18:15-18, to a heretic two,* Tit. 3:10,

* [CHCoG: Menno here says ‘one *or* two’, but the Bible says ‘one *and* two’, meaning they are to be given admonitions twice before being excommunicated.]

and to an open, offensive, sensual sinner, who is already condemned by the word of God, none at all, 1 Cor. 6; 2 Cor. 13.

Do this impartially, and in love. Reflect upon what the Scriptures say without hypocrisy.

8. *That we are not to pervert the truth with David's sin, repentance and remission; but have to understand it rightly according to Scripture.* It is evident that abominable, carnal sins, such as fornication, adultery and the like, generally arise from blindness of heart; that they are committed premeditatedly. They are the result of unclean, inflamed passions and carnal lusts; notwithstanding the beginning of them may have taken their rise apparently from infirmity. Of this we have a true example in David. Although he was a man after God's own heart, and by virtue of his faith slew the giant, Goliath, whom all Israel dreaded, and rescued the lamb from the jaws of lions and bears, yet he was so captivated in his flesh by the sight of his eyes that he sinned greatly; for as soon as he consented, sin was committed, and his heart, which was before a temple of the Holy Spirit, was so blinded and bewitched that he, without any dread, fell into one deadly sin and wickedness after another. Yes, as it appears, he never once thought of the Lord who saved him from so many dangers, and called him to such distinguished honor, and endowed him with such a precious spirit. For when he was told that Bathsheba was with child by him, he sought to hide his flagrant act; he had Uriah called from the field and pretended as if he wished to consult him in relation to the war, and admonished him twice that he should go into his house. Why he did so is well understood. Afterwards he invited him to a feast, pretending as if he was sincere; so that he might make him drunk, and have him go into his wife and cover David's shame. But when he failed in all this, he gave this truly valiant man an ungodly, treacherous letter, that Joab should place him in such a point where the danger of being killed was greatest, so that he might be slain. 2 Sam. 11.

Behold, thus you see how one wicked act engendered another when he consented to the lusts of the eyes, and gave place to sin. Yes, he was blinded to such a degree in his inflamed flesh, and was so deeply involved in sin, that according to the rigor of the law, had he not himself wielded the sceptre, he would have been twofold guilty of the ban or curse of death; first, because he was an adulterer; secondly, because he was guilty of innocent blood.

He brazenly continued in his abominations till the prophet came to him, and through a parable, so wisely reprov'd him that he pronounced his own sentence as worthy of death. When he heard the word of the prophet who appealed powerfully to his heart, he was moved, sought for grace, and without delay turned to God with a broken heart, and bitterly wept over his great sin, and confessed to the Lord that he had sinned against him; prayed and sighed painfully, and said, "Have mercy upon me, O, God! according to your loving kindness, according unto the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions; wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." "Create in me a clean heart, O, God; and renew a right spirit within me; do not cast me away from your presence; and do not take your Holy Spirit from me," Psm. 51:1,2,10,11. On account of which he was again comforted of the prophet, who said unto him, "Jehovah also has put away your sin; you shall not die." Nevertheless, he had to endure a severe punishment on account of it, for, said Nathan, "Therefore the sword shall never depart from your house; because you have despised me;" and the Lord said, "Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them unto your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun;" because you have despised me. Observe, he says, "Because you have despised me," 2 Sam. 12.

And behold, thus the wantonness of David resulted in greatly despising God, and it was a grievous sin unto him. True are the

words of James, “Then when lust has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it has finished, brings forth death,” Jas. 1:15.

Thus it is in the new state of things in Christ; for since we are not to punish the abominable, carnal transgressors with fire, stone or sword, as upright Israel did of old, but only by excommunication, as is well known to all who are taught by God; therefore, it behooves us to consign those with their wicked deeds, where the Scriptures direct them, namely, into death, and to the wrath of God, as holy Nathan did blood-guilty and adulterous David. They will then, under such a dread, severe sentence, which, according to the Scripture is pronounced upon them by exclusion, in true love, by the grace of God, go within their hearts, and are provoked, like penitent David, to true repentance. Yes, that we may evidently see by all their words, works, and whole life in truth, that the gracious Father has again received and endued them with his Spirit, and pardoned their sins. Then, and not till then, understand well what I say, have we the same word of promise by which we can again comfort them and proclaim to them the grace of the Lord, namely, “Jehovah also has put away your sin, you shall not die;” “your sins are forgiven, go and sin no more;” for a truly penitent person should not be left unconsolated by God or man, as that is impossible. O, reflect on what has been quoted.

Thus it becomes us to rightly divide the Scriptures, that we do not make the sin, repentance and remission of David as an example of encouragement to the rash, blind world, that we do not receive, as brethren, the offensive, carnal sinners, namely, those who are banished by God, at a mere promise to reform; but they should show such repentance that the church may be satisfied of their sincerity. For we must not build upon uncertainties, and comfort in vain, but like Nathan, comfort when we see true repentance, if we would not wish to flatter lying sinners, and derogate from the judgment of God, as heard.

9. *Of the inconsiderate backsliding, and immediate recovery of Peter.* Dearly beloved brethren, beware. We have shown and explained to you that the abominable, carnal sins generally arise from the sudden enkindling of the passions, and so it can happen that sins may be committed through infirmities. Of this we have a true example in Peter; for when the Lord said to him, “Simon, Simon, behold satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith will not fail; and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.” To which he replied with much assurance: “Although all shall be offended, yet I will not.” “Lord, I am ready to go with you, both into prison and to death.” Luke 22:31-33.

Peter was for venturing all with his Master, as he said; but as soon as he stood alone, he could not endure a single question put to him by a maid; he openly denied Christ, although the evening previous he said that he would die with him. Yes, he was so alarmed and frightened that he began to curse, and to swear that he did not know Christ.

O God! There lay the upright, bold Peter, the firm rock, broken. Although he had been taught by the heavenly Father and honored by Christ, the beloved Son of God, with the promise of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, nevertheless, he could not endure even such a faint blow. Behold, thus man is nothing, poor, miserable, sick and impotent, especially in so great need, if he is not strengthened by the Spirit of God. But what was it? Peter had to learn what a man is, who depends upon his own strength, and not in the full fear of God, upon Christ and his grace. Besides he learned how to be compassionate and merciful towards his poor, fallen brother, who would again be heartily converted and rise without hypocrisy from his fall.

It appears to me that this may justly be called an unexpectedly precipitate error in Peter. For he entertained not a single thought before, that he would deny his Lord and Savior.

And he also rose in that very hour, went out and wept bitterly, and after the third day he was again comforted with the gospel by the holy angels of the Lord.

Observe, brethren, how Paul teaches, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken” (observe, he says overtaken), “in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering yourself, lest you also be tempted,” Gal. 6:3.

Chosen brethren in the Lord, I would then most affectionately entreat you by the words of Paul and the fall of Peter, and admonish you faithfully in Christ Jesus, that you would by all means, discriminate, by the spirit of wisdom, between backsliding and remaining in that condition. For if any one continues in a sin upon which eternal death depends, he is already condemned by the Scriptures. But if any one falls into it unwarily, of him the prophet says, “Shall they fall and not arise?” And as Paul says, “Restore such a one.” It is, therefore, just and right that we be truly circumspect; that we do not depress too much a poor, brokenhearted sinner, who would willingly be restored and rescued from his deplorable condition. We must, in christian meekness, offer him the hand of charity, lift him up and help him to bear his burden as much as we can, and as far as our consciences and the word of God permit. Ah! Take heed, do not be too rash in such a case, lest you may also be tempted or overcome, as Paul says. Let holy Peter be an admonition to you, in order that you will not lose yourselves in your proud minds. “For if a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself,” Gal. 6:3. In short, “Let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall,” 1 Cor. 10:12. For the snares are more numerous than we are aware; those who would wish to escape them must be dead to sin, regenerated and true christians, be constant in prayer, be circumspect, watch assiduously, and must be led and influenced by the Holy Spirit, or else they are already in the snare of death. Ah! Let us reflect upon this.

Let every one examine himself fully, whether he has not sinned before God since his conversion, and became a faulty vessel. He that may think he is free, let him cast the first [figurative] stone. But he that does not find himself altogether free, let him, with Peter, strengthen his weak brother, who, perhaps, has not sinned half so heinously.

Since it is manifest that to *fall*, and to *remain* in that condition, and *presumptuously* to sin, are different. Therefore, I will leave such sins, on account of which the people of the Lord are grieved, if such should be the case, to the spirit, anointing, deliberation, fear of God and love of the church, to look into with wisdom and understanding. If they deem it deserving excommunication, let them judge as the Scriptures teach. If they consider it not in that light, but only as a sin, unwarily committed, that they then restore the sinner or transgressor with a spirit of meekness and love. This is my admonition with the faithful apostle, father, teacher and predecessor, the apostle Paul, to all the pious. These words are full of power and spirit, “Considering yourself, lest you also be tempted.”

10. How should we understand, according to the Scriptures, the saying of James, “If any of you do err from the truth,” &c., Jas. 5:19. In the first place, the rational law of nature [or love] teaches us that if one sees the house or goods of his neighbor on fire, or sees his neighbor sick, or his wife, his children or his cattle needing assistance, he must willingly render him aid, and extend his hand to his neighbor in time of need.

Again, Moses says, “You shall not see your brother’s ox or his sheep go astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall in any case bring them unto your brother,” Deu. 22:1.

Thirdly, Christ says, “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in

the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it,” Luke 15:4.

Observe then, how the law of Moses and of Christ, teaches us such great love and discretion, not towards men alone, but towards our temporal goods, and to our creatures, so it is proper that we, who are born of the holy seed of love, should seek for the soul of our neighbor, whose feet we see upon the way of sin, which leads to death. Thus James says, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins,” James 5:19, 20.

Here we would entreat all pious hearts, for Jesus’ sake, that they would make a distinction between those who ignorantly err, and those who willingly go in the way of death, in order that the word of James be not construed so as to become a false comfort and support to wanton and benighted sinners; for it is clear that they are already condemned to death by the Scriptures, as we frequently have observed. But when any of our Father’s little ones, Christ’s sheep, err and begin to turn their ears to false doctrine, which is adorned with fair words, who allow themselves, through their lusts, to be led from the truth, and set their feet upon the broad way again, and bow their hearts to covetousness, pride, haughtiness, &c., and entertain inordinate desires for the property, wives, daughters, maids or the ungodly, vain company of their neighbors, become old and weak in their faith, dislike the truth and err grievously, and yet suppose that they go upon the right way, such erring ones, we should not allow to be lost, but should seek them with all our power and might, not with two admonitions only, as is done with heretics, Tit. 3, nor three times, as is the case in a dissension between brother and brother, Matt. 18, but as often as the Lord gives spirit and grace, till they again conform, in all things to the truth, depart from their

errors, and enter upon the right way, or till they become as ravening, biting dogs or unclean swine. Yes; my brethren, whoever can, with the truth, reclaim such a poor, erring sinner, lead him from the way of error, and bring him back to the fold of Christ, rescues his soul from death, and covers a multitude of sins, with which, alas, he was already too much stained. From whom? From men, or from God? Not from men, but from God; for it is impossible to hide from men that which they see, and which happens before them; as adultery, fornication, murder, open idolatry, drunkenness, &c. The idolatry of Aaron, with the golden calf, the misconduct of David with Uriah and Bathsheba, and the denial of Peter are examples. For although they repented, and their sins were covered from the sight of God, yet they were manifest to the whole world as admonitions and warnings, and as examples of his grace over all who truly repent; of this covering of sin, David spoke, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom Jehovah does not impute iniquity," Psm. 32:1,2.

I will now leave to the godly for reflection, whether these words of James as here expounded, are not salutary; for those worthy of exclusion would be excluded, the erring be sought, love would exert its full power, the penitent would be rescued from death. Both their open and secret sins would be covered before God, and all would proceed according to the Scriptures. In true love observe what is the mind of the holy word.

11. How the latter part of the twelfth, and the beginning of the thirteenth chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, are to be understood. We find by Paul's epistle to the Corinthians that there were many parties and sects among that people. Some boasted that they were of Cephas, others of Paul, and others again, of Apollo. On this account, Paul reprov'd them in love, and admonished them to be one in Christ. He writes also in the eleventh chapter of the same epistle, "When you come together in

the church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it, for there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” There were also some among them who said there was no resurrection, 1 Cor. 11:18, 19; 15:12; therefore, he also feared that when he came, he would not find them as he desired, nor that they would find him as they desired; lest more dissension than union, more malice than love, more wrath than meekness, more strife than peace, more whispering than rebuking of wickedness, more pride than humility, more tumult than quiet, should be found among many. Such is commonly the condition where the high and proud of heart, who neither know nor love the peaceful, humble Spirit of Christ, are highly esteemed, and have attained authority over the plain, simple people, ones who regard the adornment of words more than spirit and power. This I write in upright, undissembled love, without regard to party. God grant us grace to enable us to perceive it.

Again, we find that there were some impenitent amongst them: such were selfish, covetous, contentious, fornicators, incontinent and unchaste. Therefore he feared that when he came, he would have great sorrow on account of those who had already sinned before, and not repented of their lewdness and unchastity. For it is manifest that lewdness at that time was so prevalent among the gentiles that the holy apostles admonished and counseled the brethren among the heathen, in a common council, as may be seen from Acts 15; Rom. 1; 1 Cor. 5, 6, 7.

It is evident that at that time, some were very little concerned about the lewdness and dissensions, which were so prevalent that the apostolic excommunication was not very rigidly enforced. This may be seen from Paul’s own words, and reproving, to wit, “You are puffed up,” &c., 1 Cor. 5:2.

Through their heedless disobedience, they permitted the good and evil to exist among them, so that the faithful man of God

upbraided them sharply, saying, "This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I told you before, and tell you beforehand, as if I were present the second time; and being absent now, I write to them which up to this time have sinned, and to all others, that if I come again, I will not spare," 2 Cor. 13:1,2. These hard words of Paul testify clearly that in that time, although such wicked persons as fornicators, unchaste, sectarians, &c., were held in communion, yet they did not regard his writings concerning the Ban; for it is plain if the historian rightly testifies, that some years had passed away before Paul made his last journey to them, and it is against all Scripture and reason to suppose that they, in the mean time, admitted these persons with Paul's consent. It is manifest that he rebuked all iniquity both with word and writing, and directed to the ban, as had been related, yet the foul leaven which was against the holy, divine word, and which disgraced the church, they did not put away. He wrote and expressed his meaning by these words, that all those who oftentimes had sinned and had not repented, and those who sinned more recently, that if he would come the second time, that if he should find one or the other, testified to by two or three witnesses that they have been guilty of ungodliness, that he would not then spare him. Observe this.

It is also manifest that he did not write this rebuke privately to this one or that one, but openly to a whole church, in a common epistle, that the disobedient might be rebuked, as we, unworthily, at times write, and teach the word of the Lord, and there is not a syllable which tells us to admonish such once, twice or thrice, but to reprove them in round terms; that if he came, he would make known to them their merited punishment. His words are firm and immovable, that we shall not eat or have fellowship with fornicators, idolators, &c. O! Reflect upon what the Scriptures say, 1 Cor. 5.

12. It is our duty to pass the sentence and judgment of Christ without blame, according to the Scriptures, and to make use of his keys in a proper manner. Chosen brethren in the Lord, because I have seen in my day much ignorance and misapprehension displayed by many in regard to this point, some of whom, in my humble opinion, were too rigorous, while others were too lenient and remiss, in consequence of which some of our members have been affected, alas! with no little sorrow. And as I have now faithfully explained the true apostolic excommunication, in pure, unadulterated love without partiality, therefore, I am further impelled by the same love to offer a few remarks upon the keys and their appurtenant use, inasmuch as they pertain to the excommunication; so that no one, misled by ignorance, may with anti-christ presumptuously place himself in Christ's seat, nor follow and execute his own judgment, design and resolution, but those of Christ, his Lord, and the doctrine, ordinance and commandment of the holy apostles, without any regard to the flesh, party or self-wisdom, lest he should reject him whom God saves by his grace, and retain him whom he in his righteousness rejects; for to him alone pertains the right of binding and loosing, as we shall hear more fully in the sequel. Therefore, consider our quotations.

It is to be observed, in the first place, that there are two heavenly keys, namely, the key of binding, and the key of loosing; even as our Lord said to Peter, "I will give to you the key of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," Matt. 16:19. At another time, and after his resurrection from the dead, he spoke in a similar manner to his disciples, "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose soever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins you retain, they are retained," John 20:22, 23.

In the second place, we must observe that the key of binding is nothing else than the word and righteousness of God, the directing, demanding, constraining, terrifying and condemning law of the Lord, by and through which all are locked up under the curse, sin, death, and the wrath of God, who do not by faith receive Christ, the only and everlasting means of grace, hear his voice and follow and obey his will.

Again, On the other hand, the key of loosing is the abundantly cheering and delightful word of grace, the pardoning, consoling and unbinding gospel of peace, by and through which all those are delivered from the curse, sin, death and the wrath of God, who, with regenerated, new, converted, voluntary, rejoicing and believing hearts, receive Christ in power and with a firm confidence in his innocent blood and death, do fear, love, hear, follow and obey him.

In the third place, it is to be observed that this binding key of Christ is given to his ministers and people for this purpose, namely, that by and through it they shall, in the power of the Spirit, represent unto all earthly, carnal, obdurate and impenitent persons, their great sins, unrighteousness, blindness and wickedness, together with God's righteous wrath, judgment, punishment, hell and everlasting death, and thus render them contrite, dismayed, humble, broken, penitent, dejected and sorrowful of heart before God, and little in their own eyes. Therefore, it is compared in its power and virtues to the rod of the oppressor, a hard hammer, the north wind, a sorrowful singing, and sharp detergent wine, Isa. 9:4; Jer. 23:29; Cant. 4:16.

Again, on the contrary, the key of loosing is given to the end that with it the ministers and people of God may direct such contrite, troubled, dejected, sorrowful and broken hearts, as before mentioned, which are enabled, by the first key, to feel and see the deep, mortal wounds, their great defects and the profound fascination in which they were held to the spiritual, brazen

serpent; [are now led] to the throne of grace; to the open fountain of David; to the merciful, compassionate High Priest, our only and eternal Offering of reconciliation, Christ Jesus; and thus heal their dangerous, malignant and deadly abscesses, stripes and the venomous wound of the infernal serpent. It is, therefore, likened in strength and virtue to the cheering olive branch of Noah's dove; the balm of Gilead; the voice of truth; the south wind; the joyful pipe; and sweet, soothing oil, Gen. 8:11; Jer. 8:22; Cant. 4:16; Luke 10:34.

In the fourth place, it must be observed that these keys are given to us from heaven, by him who created heaven, earth and the sea with the fullness of them, the eternal power, word and wisdom of the Almighty Father; the King of all glory, and our only and everlasting Redeemer, Intercessor, Bridegroom, Prophet and Teacher, Christ Jesus. We must, therefore, with the greatest propriety, be careful in regard to the ban, with fear and trembling, and not be influenced by flesh and blood, hatred or love, favor or disfavor, enmity or friendship, strife, dissension or partiality; but should execute it in the fear of the Lord, as the earnest, heavenly command, word, and will of our Savior; in an upright, clear conscience without respect of persons. For without doubt they are precious keys, since they are given to us from heaven, as a present from such an illustrious friend. Ah! Allow yourselves to be told.

In the fifth place, it is to be observed that these keys are given to, and bestowed upon none but those who are anointed by the Holy Spirit, even as Christ says, "Receive the Holy Spirit," &c. From this it is evident that they must be a believing, true, penitent, sober, chaste, humble, upright, friendly, obedient, devout, peaceful, and spiritual people. Observe a people dead unto sin, a regenerated people, who sit with the apostles in the seat of righteousness, and pronounce with them the righteous judgment of the Lord, against all stiff-necked, ungodly sinners,

and teach, admonish, chastise, punish, and, in real power, judge or bind with the word and Spirit of the Lord, the unbelieving, impenitent, earthly-minded, drunken, adulterous, lecherous, unchaste, proud, haughty, unrighteous, perverse, disobedient, quarrelsome, carnal sinners. For it is evident that a carnal man cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God; but they that are spiritual examine and judge all things aright, yet they themselves are judged by no man. Yes, my brethren, it is utterly impossible for one carnal-minded man, or for one quarrelsome person to teach, instruct or chasten another correctly through the Spirit of Christ, or in the power of his word justly to separate him from his church according to the will of God. For their fruits plainly testify that they are both impenitent, destitute of the Spirit, nature, and disposition of Christ, and are subject to death and the curse.

Therefore, fear God, and know how or what you judge. For if one should sentence a ban deserving person, such as a fornicator, drunkard, or any other carnal transgressor, to excommunication, while he himself was wrathful, avaricious, proud, haughty, uplifted, ambitious, unchaste, lying, quarrelsome, impure, envious or false-hearted, and would secretly continue in his wickedness, then, according to Paul, he would sentence his own soul, for he says, “You are inexcusable, O, man whosoever you are that judges: for in what you judge another you condemn yourself,” Rom. 2:1.

I therefore counsel and admonish all the pious generally, who sit in judgment upon a sinner that is to be excommunicated, that they previously examine well their own conscience, heart and mind, and see whether they have the Spirit of Christ, whether they sit in the apostles seat, and also whether they do it out of pure fear of God, in obedience to his word, and out of sincere love to the brethren or out of flesh and blood through hypocrisy, and to the will of men. For if they do not have the Spirit of

Christ, do not sit in the seat of the apostles and carry the keys of heaven, their judgment can not be from God, and will tear down more than build up. It is even in reality nothing but a sore judgment against their own souls. But if they have the Spirit of Christ, sit in the apostles seat and make use of the keys of heaven, their judgment will doubtless be righteous, will agree as the judgment of Christ, and they will not by any means make themselves guilty in passing judgment against the transgressor. Those who are born of Christ may judge what I advance.

In the sixth place, it is to be observed that these keys must not be made use of except in the name of Him who committed them to us, and by his power, that is with his Spirit and word, for He alone is the King and Prince of his church, the Shepherd, Teacher and Master of our souls, before whose sceptre we must all bow, and whose voice we must hear, if we would wish to be saved, as has been heard.

Since he is both the Ruler and the Giver of this, and both the binding and loosing are in his hand, and must therefore be done in his name, with his Spirit and word alone, therefore we may well take heed, lest through our profaneness, inclination or foolish purpose, we loose those whom he himself has bound in heaven, or bind those whom he himself has loosed in heaven, even as the sin of perdition and the man of sin, together with all his deceiving and impure prophets, O, God, have done for many centuries. O, Children take heed.

As far as concerns the key of binding of this evangelic ban, it is clear that when an open fornicator or adulterer is convicted by two or three witnesses, or an abuser of himself, or an idolater, or a drunkard, or envious, or a perverse, self-willed disputer, or an impenitent, deceitful, lazy, fastidious and idle glutton, or a blasphemer, thief, robber or murderer, is brought before the church, they have the judging word of the Scriptures, by which they may separate and exclude him, and announce to him by the

Spirit of Christ, that he is no longer a member of the body of Christ, has no more promise, but that he shall endure everlasting death, and fail [to enter] the kingdom of grace. In short, that his final part and lot, unless he sincerely repents, shall be the burning lake of fire, with the devil. For his works show plainly that he is of the wicked one.

Behold, such are those over whom the first key has power. For the righteous judgment of God, and his firm, binding word take hold of them, since they again forsake Christ; despise his holy word and covenant; live according to the flesh; stir up strife and dissention; break the bond of love; separate the pious; disquiet those of a gentle, peaceable disposition; introduce and establish offences and slanders, as the evident fact has frequently taught and as is known to many others, alas! as well as to myself. Ah me! What a severe stroke he receives who is bound by the people of God with this dreadful key; and punished by his righteous Spirit, with this dreadful curse. O, Father, grant them your grace.

The same thing applies to the key of loosing in this use of the ban. For if a poor, proscribed sinner humbles himself again before his God, is heart-broken and penitent, groans and weeps bitterly, experiences heartfelt sorrow for his sins and an earnest longing for the truth, hates the perverse paths of the ungodly and walks again in the path of the pious; in short, if he conducts himself so in his whole life that we cannot perceive any thing in him but that the Spirit of the Lord has again anointed him, and received him into his grace, and would have him included in the number of the Lord's people; they have then the cheering word of promise. They may again bring him to the altar of the Lord, sprinkle him with the spiritual hyssop of God, announce to him the grace of Christ, and receive him again as a beloved brother in Christ Jesus and greet him with the salutation of his holy peace. For, says the prophet, "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked

should die? says Lord Jehovah, and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" Eze. 18:23.

As it is manifest and established that Jesus Christ alone has the key of David, who unlocks heaven for the true penitent, unties the knot of unrighteousness and forgives and remits their sins; and again, as it is he who closes heaven against the impenitent, carnal sinners, binds them under his judgment and retains their sins, and we are nothing more than heralds, ministers and messengers in his name, and can make it neither longer nor shorter, narrower nor wider than taught to us by his Spirit, and commanded us in his word. Therefore it is evident that they greatly err, who, in the pride of their ignorance, allow themselves to think that they have power to retain or remit the sins of any man, or who with perverse, inconsiderate minds dare separate or excommunicate any one out of carnal motives, hatred or bitterness, and not purely and solely through the Spirit and word of Christ. Or on the other hand, retain him through natural affection, friendship or partiality, contrary to the word of God and comfort him with uncertainties in his sins, winking at them; for with such, after the example of the false prophets, they strengthen the hands of the ungodly, since they retain them, and appear to approve of their life, though without true repentance they shall not live. Ah! Brethren beware.

I would, therefore, brothers and sisters, in the love of Christ, have you all faithfully admonished in God, that no one attempt, in this weighty, important and spiritual matter, to act higher or lower, severer or milder than the word and Spirit require, whether it be with the binding of the first key in righteousness unto eternal death, or with the loosing of the second key in grace unto eternal life; lest, by passing an unscriptural judgment, he offend against God and his neighbor, and so be constrained to undergo the punishment of his pride, along with the angel of the bottomless pit. Observe this!

Ah! Most beloved brethren, to what an amazing extent, in my opinion, is that man taught of God, who is able in this thing to keep on the true, royal highway, so he can properly employ the entrusted keys in devout, heavenly wisdom, and correctly pass and impose his Lord's judgment with a sure, sealed conscience in true, apostolic measure, for the edification of all the pious. Let all who are born from God, who are impartial and pure in heart, reflect, with the anointing of their spirit, upon the grounds of my writing and admonition.

CONCLUSION AND EXHORTATION TO ALL THE PIOUS.

BEHOLD, beloved brethren, with much trouble, pains and anxiety, I have now, in the infirmity of my declining years, added another small gift to the treasury of the Lord, not the price of a dog, nor the hire of a harlot, which was forbidden to Israel; but of the abundant benediction of my God, namely, from the settled principles of his truth. Though it is not to be compared in value or worth with the gold, silver, metal, silk, or precious stones of the offering, yet, if it be reckoned with the rams' skins, goats' hair, and shittim wood, I have already attained my wish. For my prayer and desire before God and his church is that the living building of the heavenly tabernacles may advance with the greatest speed to the attainment of their intended splendor and magnificence. For this cause, I have suffered not a little hardship, affliction, sadness, poverty and reproach, so that I hope I may boast in my weakness with all the pious of God, apostles and

prophets, yes, with Christ Jesus himself, that the zeal of the Lord's house has eaten me up.

I would, therefore, earnestly desire all the pious, who, with a pure, unadulterated conscience, have drunk the water of love out of the fountain of God, that they do not despise this gift, but that with candid and discerning minds, they examine, as in the presence of God in Christ Jesus, its nature, principles, vigor, cogency and virtuous tendency; and having thus passed a sound, impartial judgment upon it, that you leave it unbroken in all its parts. For it is my valedictory which I now offer, as I take my leave of you all in this part of the ban and retire to rest.

In this I have not sought the acquirement of human favor or honor, the indulgence of flesh, or the promotion of party purposes, but I have illustrated the principles of truth, confirmed the holy ordinance of the apostles, rendered due praise to the justice and mercy of God and assigning to each its part. I have added nothing new, nor varied in the least from its principles in my plan, except that in consequence of much conversation with the pious, and meditation upon certain writings, as also on account of great dangers, actual occurrences, and heinous abominations, and in order to put a stop in some measure to all offensive, disgraceful actions, I have more deeply considered the excluding sentence of the flagrant, carnal sinner, and, in this way, placed it upon a more certain basis, as may be seen.

As we are well convinced that the depth of satan is to some but partially known and manifest, and that as a consequence he does great injury by means of his subtle, pernicious wrangling and disputation, as may be seen. Therefore, my first earnest request unto all who are named after the name of Christ, is that they would reflect soberly, judiciously and discreetly upon the nature, character, heart, mind, Spirit and disposition of Christ, and consider that all which he has commanded, left and taught his followers, is nothing but pure righteousness, truth, patience, love

and peace. Also, that they bow their knees before him, and have received the token of his most holy covenant; that they should bury their former sinful life in his death; circumcise their hearts with his sharp word and Spirit; follow him, walk in all his ways, and be one with him in both the inward and the outward man, as taught in Scripture; also, that they reflect upon the high promise, and follow his word and will in power and in truth. For he is such a God that he does not take pleasure in outward shadows, ceremonies, types, bread, wine, water, and nominal service, but in spirit, deed and truth.

My second request is that they would, on the other hand, consider the nature, character, heart, spirit, mind, and work of satan, that he is from the beginning a shrewd, cunning deceiver, an impudent, wanton liar, a revengeful murderer, a malicious envier of the honor and truth of God; a falsifier of his Holy Word, and a deadly enemy of pious souls. He is seditious, factious, unruly, schismatic, envious, perverse, and destitute of love; incapable of conceiving and bringing forth any thing but hatred, backbiting, lies, deception, jealousy, impurity of heart, vice and shame, and all in a semblance of the truth. In *semblance of the truth*, I repeat, for although he is the infernal satan, beelzebub, belial, leviathan, the angel of the bottomless pit, the prince of darkness, the old serpent, and the very devil himself, yet it is manifest; notwithstanding that he has the power of transforming himself into an angel of light, as Paul informs us. 2 Cor. 11:14.

There is nothing of an external nature oppressive or vexatious to him, if he can only gain possession of the citadel of our hearts, and expel from there Christ's nature, disposition, Spirit and power. If he can do this he has already won the prize of his craftiness. Yes, even if a man was baptized by Peter or Paul himself, had received the bread of the Holy Supper from the hand of the Lord and would nevermore take part in papistic idolatry, yet if he retained but one of the fruits of the devil, whether hatred,

or party spirit, envy, bitterness, avarice, revengefulness, pride, unchastity, or any other vice, we must declare with the Scripture that his spirit is devilish, and his life hypocrisy. For it is very evident that the whole man must be regenerated, sincere, unsophisticated, spiritually minded, godly, holy, devout, united and subject to Christ; as James says, “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,” James 2:10.

Yes, worthy brethren, those who are so far taught by God that they are able to well and truly distinguish between Christ and the devil, in relation to their nature, disposition, doctrine, and works, and thereby perceive that the disposition of Christ is productive of life, and the disposition of the devil is productive of death, shall, and will undoubtedly, separate and depart entirely from all vain and unprofitable disputation, schism, separation, contention, dissension, sedition, and sectarianism, and also from all deadly abominations, sins, and shameful actions; of this I am fully convinced by the grace of God.

My third request is that they would all, with candor and sincerity of heart, meditate upon the glorious and illustrious names with which they are honored in the Scriptures, namely, Children of God, saints and beloved of God, chosen by God, regenerated seed and children of Abraham, seed of peace, plants and scions of righteousness, fruitful grafts of Christ, members of the body of Christ, flesh and bone, mothers, sisters, brothers, disciples, guests, friends, sons, daughters, maiden, virgin, bride and spouse of Christ, His holy vineyard, camp, city, Jerusalem, temple, ark, house, abode, chosen people, citizens of heaven, living stones, companions of the saints, apostles and prophets, household of God, kings and priests, doves, sheep, the light of the world and the salt of the earth, &c., to the end that by such meditation, their conduct inwardly and outwardly, privately and publicly, may be such in all their ways, words, and works, before

God, in the presence of the church, and before the whole world that they may, by grace, with the pious, walk worthily of all such glorious names, in love, peace and harmony. And by his paternal bounty, [they may] forever escape the severe curse of excommunication, and not be with the goats to the left hand and hear the stern sentence, Depart from me, you cursed, but be with the sheep to the right hand [and hear] the cheering words, Come you blessed, and do not be numbered with those who are bound by the ban of the word, in the power from God, and styled in Scripture as a cursed, ungodly race, cursed children, children of wrath and of the devil, servants of sin and perdition, mockers, revilers, wicked, carnal, perverse, unrighteous, ungodly, stiff-necked sinners, dogs and swine, for whom are reserved woe, torment, the lake of fire and eternal death. O, brethren take heed!

My fourth request is to all those to whom the charge of the word of the Lord is committed, who are fellow laborers with me in the ministry, that in all their actions, they so conduct themselves before God and his church that no man can in truth censure or speak evil of them. Be sincere ministers of Christ; faithful and true in all things; men full of the Holy Spirit, born of the incorruptible seed of God; encompassed with heavenly light; transplanted into the good disposition of Christ; partakers of his grace; taught and anointed by God; having their minds upon eternal things; hating their own fame, vain-glory and impure, carnal lusts; lowly and little in their own eyes; of a meek and gentle spirit; compassionate, merciful, paternal, long-suffering, friendly, humble, chaste, given to hospitality, submissive, mild, courteous and peaceful. [They must be] well versed in sound doctrine; seeking and acting in accordance with the good nature, disposition, character, heart, mind and example of Christ; confirmed in spirit, blameless shepherds, taking oversight of the flock of God, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre's sake, nor for the sake of their own bellies, but of a ready

mind; neither as being lords nor rulers, but being examples to the church of Christ, that in consequence of their faithful ministry they may run in fullness of joy upon the mountain of the Lord without fear or shame, and escape unharmed from the mouths of fierce, ravenous wolves.

Yes, my brethren, if we could all proceed according to this rule in unity of spirit, unaccompanied by the destructive foxes, how soon would the bride of the lamb shine forth in costly and variegated apparel, adorned in white and glittering robes, splendid bracelets, earrings and necklaces (understand [this is] the beauty and ornament of her virtues), and with the brilliancy of her appearance, excite the admiration of the whole world; whereas now, in consequence of deceitful workers, cunning wranglers and sowers of dissension, she must sit, at times, in rags and tatters, and, oh God! be the scorn and derision of multitudes.

The anguish of my soul is oftentimes so great that I am unable to write; God omnipotent, strengthen me. And this, because I see that the house of the Lord has to endure so many offences, not only from without, but, alas! From within also. O, men! Men! Arm yourselves! For the words of Paul are true, that the ministry of the New Testament is not a ministry of the letter, but of the Spirit. Its duties, therefore, cannot be truly discharged to the glory of God by the proud, the arrogant, the ambitious, or the self-willed, who wish to perform every thing after their own mind, humor and inclination, for they pull down more than they build up, and do more injury than they do good. This is a necessary consequence, inasmuch as according to the tenor of the doctrine of Paul, this ministration is neither the depth of wisdom nor eloquence, nor a dead letter, with which they are generally replete, but it is God, Spirit, truth, power and life, of which they are entirely destitute. O, take heed.

Arm yourselves, I repeat; for true teachers are called in Scripture the angels of the Lord and valiant soldiers; be therefore

manly; keep the commandments of God; hold fast and do not waver. They are called watchmen and trumpeters; blow your trumpet to the right sound; watch over the city of God; watch wisely, I say, and neither slumber nor sleep. Spiritual pillars they are styled; O, be steadfast in the truth; bear your burden willingly, do not waver, neither be faint. Messengers of peace they are called. Ah, brethren live up to and justify your name, walk in peace, maintain and do not break it. They are called bishops and overseers; O, take great care of the flock of Christ; take great care of them, I say, and see that you neither destroy nor neglect them. Shepherds they are called; O, keep and feed the lambs of Christ, and do not leave them to pine away. They are styled teachers; make known the word and truth of Christ; publish it abroad and do not conceal it. They are styled spiritual nurses and fathers; O, nourish and cherish your young children; do not vex them, neither cast them away. They should be as the parent bird to her young; gather together the young and tender ones in Christ, and do not scatter them, nor hurt them. They are called the stewards of God; O, perfect the mystery of the name; do not abuse it, nor disgrace it. They are called the light of the world; O, shine and glitter in full glory, and do not conceal the brightness of your virtue. They are called the salt of the earth; O, let the salt penetrate through and through, and do not be ill-savored ministers in Christ's stead. Ah, brethren, serve, but do not rule; let no man glory in any gift, I beseech you. We are receivers, not givers of grace, it is not of ourselves; observe, we are servants, and not lords. Ah brethren, bow down and submit. My chosen in love and truth, the joy and delight of my soul, so long as you stand fast in the Lord, abide in the way of peace and are faithful to your brethren. Walk worthy of the vocation unto which you are called; fear your God with all your heart; love the brethren; discharge faithfully the duties of your ministry; he is rich from whom you will receive your reward. Watch and pray. Pray, I say, and that with confidence, and so the Giver of every good and perfect gift

will not withdraw from you his grace, Spirit, love and wisdom. Do not doubt, neither be afraid. Let the glorious, typified breastplate of Aaron, Christ Jesus, decorated with its beautiful colors, its twelve pearls, its Urim and Thummim, be bound fast to the breast of your conscience, with the two golden chains of the two testaments, and with the two yellow laces of pure faith and unadulterated love; wash the feet of your affections, purify them in the spiritual laver, Christ Jesus, with the living water of his eternal and Holy Spirit, take of the blood of his unspotted offering, and in a true spirit, put it on the tip of your right ear, in order rightly to understand his word, and upon the thumb of your right hand, and upon the great toe of your right foot, in order to act and walk uprightly before him, and in the presence of his congregation. Have your spiritual mitres, girdles and garments made for glory and for beauty, that like verdant olive trees and luxuriant vines, and as burning torches and brilliant luminaries, in the firmament of the holy word, you may serve in fullness of glory, with all the faithful servants of Christ, day and night in his holy temple, to the glory of God and to the reformation of Israel; bring forth abundance of fruit, and when he shall appear with all his chosen saints, apostles and prophets, you shall receive in everlasting joy the promised reward. Sweet, gracious, and full of consolation is the word which the Lord utters, "Well done, you good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many; enter you into the joy of your Lord," Matt. 25:21. Ah brethren, from our hearts, let us be admonished, that we be faithful to Christ and his church.

Brothers and sisters, I will now, in the peace of Christ, commit you all with one accord into the hand of the King of peace, and I do, with Paul, entreat you from my heart. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil my joy, that you be like minded, having the same love, being of one

accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem one another better than themselves," Phil. 2:13. For you well know by whom and unto where we are called. Reflect upon this, so that no one may lose himself, on account of the shameful actions and abominations of another, nor destroy the good works of Christ, disturb the peaceable, grieve the pious, offend the weak, give excuse to the wanton, drive the wavering again to the world, bring reproach upon the word of the Lord and his church, bring revilers into repute, and encourage the blood-thirsty. We [must] be careful in all things to finish our course in Christ Jesus with joy, and magnify his holy name, refresh one another in the peace of Christ, strengthen our sick, weak members, and young brethren, reprove the disorderly, publish abroad the truth of the Lord, and show unto all men a blameless, christian example. To this end may the eternal God of omnipotence, grant us all, collectively and individually, the active spirit of his grace, with perfect obedience and love in Christ Jesus, our Lord, Amen. Ah, chosen children! God knows this is my final adieu to you all. Love the brethren, and beware of dissension.



A PLEASING

Instruction and Doctrine

HOW ALL PIOUS PARENTS, ACCORDING TO THE
SCRIPTURES,

ARE REQUIRED TO

**GOVERN, CORRECT AND EDUCATE
THEIR CHILDREN,**

IN A

PIOUS, VIRTUOUS AND GODLY LIFE.

BY

MENNO SIMON.

Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.” Prov. 23:13, 14.

“Correct your son, and he shall give you rest.” “The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother,” Prov. 29:17,15.

*“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1Cor. 3:11.**

* [CHCoG: Menno also used the following quotes from the Apocrypha (Doubtful writings). Sirach is not used in the New Covenant by either Jesus or his apostles. Though there may be some truth in the Apocrypha, they are not divinely inspired, and in this case, I believe these two quotes endorse an overly harsh and cold method of parenting: “Do you have children? Instruct them, and bow down their necks from

“Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not let your soul spare him for his crying,” Prov. 19:18.

PREFACE.

TO THE ELDERS in all churches, and chosen by God in Christ Jesus. My beloved brethren in the Lord, unto you be grace, peace and mercy from God, our Father, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the power and operation of the Holy Spirit, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. To whom be praise forever and ever, Amen.

My dearly beloved brethren in the Lord, we thank the Lord always for you in all our prayers, and pray without ceasing unto our kind Father, in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, that he would strengthen you with the gift of his Holy Spirit, that you may be filled with all knowledge, wisdom, discretion and power,

their youth. Do you have daughters? Have a care for their body, and do not show yourself cheerful towards them,” Sirach 7:23, 24.

“He that makes too much of his son shall bind up his wounds. Pamper your son, and he shall make you afraid; play with him, and he will bring you to heaviness. Do not laugh with him, lest you have sorrow with him, and lest you gnash your teeth in the end. Give him no liberty in his youth, and do not ignore his follies. Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat him on the sides while he is a child, lest he grow stubborn, and be disobedient unto you, and so bring sorrow to your heart,” Sirach 30:7-12.]

necessary to rightly oversee the church of Christ, and to dispense the word of God to sincere, pious souls, according to your gift and calling, and that you may walk worthy of the vocation you are called to and chosen by God and his holy church as shepherds and teachers, to the end that the saints may be kept firmly united by the common service, to the edification of the body of Christ. Take diligent care of your charge, and display a sincere concern for your flock, at all times earnestly exhort them to love and to do good works, like Paul; to the pure fear and love of the Lord; to a godly, unblameable conduct, in all humility, righteousness, love, peace, harmony, mercy, and obedience to the whole word of God. Caution them against all false doctrine, and against the sword of evil tongues; for if a man does not bridle his tongue, nor restrain it, his worship is vain and unprofitable. Also, that they take heed in their whole walk and conduct; circumcise their hearts; season their words, and perform all their actions in the fear of the Lord; that they may procure a good name for the gospel of Christ and his holy church; comply with his word and will, and thus attain unto salvation.

Beware of all innovations and strange doctrines not contained in the word of Christ and his apostles, nor conformable unto it. Show forth, at all times, Christ and his word. If any man introduce a doctrine differing from that taught by Christ and his word, let him be excommunicated. "For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the precious cornerstone in Zion, which shall abide forever. Hear, believe, trust, follow, hope and abide in him; press diligently after him, conforming yourselves unto his Spirit, word and life, and you shall neither deceive nor be deceived.

My dearly beloved brethren in the Lord, I beseech and admonish you, do not neglect the ministration of your brotherly love, but attend faithfully to this. Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you

overseers, to feed the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood. Again, all the elders and I, who am also an elder, exhort with Peter,” Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight of it, not by constraint, but willingly.” You who teach obedience, be yourselves obedient to the church of Christ in all things which are good and expedient; as examples for the flock. As Paul directed Titus, saying, “In all things showing yourself a pattern of good works; in doctrine, showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.” Also, “You are to watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of your ministry.” Do all in the fear of the Lord faithfully, and with obedient and perfect hearts, for you are made keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service of it, and for all that shall be done in it. Study, therefore, to show yourselves approved by God, obedient and blameless workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. My wish and desire therefore is that you be earnest in this, so that they who believe in God may be made zealous to excel in good works, which is good and profitable unto all men; instruct, reprove, rebuke, exhort and console, as occasion may require; and do not forsake the fraternal assembling of yourselves together, the meeting and ordinance of the Lord. Strengthen one another kindly with the word of the Lord, that you may increase in faith, love and righteousness, and come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

With this, dear brethren, I will commit you to Almighty God, with the earnest desire that you propound unto all the brethren this brief admonition, concerning the education of children, in order that every one may observe and comply with the same in the full sense, in the bringing up, teaching and instruction of his

children. The Lord Jesus Christ be with my beloved, yes, dearly beloved brethren throughout eternity, Amen.



THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

UNTO ALL ELDERS and joint-heirs in the faith of Christ, grace be unto you and peace from God, our heavenly Father, through his beloved Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, by the power and cooperation of his Holy Spirit, to his everlasting praise and glory, and to our edification and salvation, Amen.

You are aware, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, that we all, without exception, inherit from Adam an ill-disposed, evil and sinful flesh. Yes, all our desires from our youth are evil continually, as Moses writes; also, that we find nothing in ourselves, as the treasure of our first birth, but perfect blindness, unrighteousness, sin and death. If now the power of this innate disposition is to be diminished, suppressed and destroyed, it must be accomplished by the pure fear of the Lord, which proceeds from a true faith through the word of the Lord, and from a clear perception of the righteous judgment and terrible wrath of God, which will burn forever against all impenitent sinners. For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; it drives out sin and makes upright, pious children, as we learn from Jesus Sirach 12; Prov. 9. [CHCoG: Wisdom teaches us what sin is. It is the Spirit of God dwelling within us that gives us the strength to overcome sin. Rom. 8:2-11.]

Since, then, the merciful Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the great, Almighty Lord Jehovah, has encompassed us with the light of his grace, and through faith in Jesus Christ, has awakened us from iniquity and ungodliness to a life of righteousness; therefore, let us diligently follow the glorious example of the true love of Matthew, the tax collector, who was not satisfied with enjoying the heavenly calling and grace himself, but went and invited other tax collectors and sinners, that they might also be saved and obtain the same spirit, grace and mercy from the Lord, for such is the nature and disposition of Christ, Matt. 9.

Therefore trade among yourselves with the talent given to you from on high, and be sincerely compassionate to your unbelieving, blind parents, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, servants and neighbors. Do not conceal from them the gift, grace, word and will of God; for their feet are in the way of death; perhaps they may, at some time or other, extricate themselves from the snares of unrighteousness in which they are bound and entangled, and turn themselves to the Lord with all their hearts. My dear brethren, understand this as regards men of sense and discretion. Brethren in Christ, if we should see any such in danger of being drowned or burned, or in any danger that threatened their lives, and there was a prospect that we could render them assistance, would not our inmost souls be moved with compassion towards them, if perhaps we might afford them relief? Undoubtedly. And now we see with our own eyes, if we believe the Lord's word, that they are walking in the shadow of eternal death, are already committed to the grave, and liable to be devoured forever by the everlasting, unquenchable fire, unless from their hearts they turn unto Christ and his word, repent, and become regenerated, as the Scriptures teach. Therefore, consider seriously the heart-rending misery and wretchedness of their poor souls which will be cast into hell, and strive diligently and faithfully whether they may not yet, in some way, by your faithful

ministry of pure love, and by the direction and instruction of the divine word, be rescued and delivered from everlasting destruction, and be made partakers of eternal salvation. For genuine charity is of such a nature that it is constantly hungering and thirsting after the glory of God and the salvation of all men, even of those who are strangers to us according to the flesh.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, forasmuch as we are now constrained, by saving charity, with benevolence and sympathy, and know through the anointing of the Spirit and word of God, that the nature of man is completely corrupted in Adam, and is opposed from youth to the word of the Lord, therefore, let us be particularly vigilant and solicitous with regard to our own children, displaying unto them a greater degree of spiritual love than towards others; for they are the natural offspring of our flesh and blood, a serious and precious charge committed by God to our especial care. Be, therefore, particularly mindful that you instruct them from their youth in the way of the Lord, that they fear and love God, walk in all modesty and submission; that they be genteel, well-disposed, discreet, honor and obey their father and mother, using reasonable language, not lying, nor clamorous, not stubborn, nor self-willed; for such is not becoming the children of the saints, Deu. 6; Eph. 6. The world desire for their children that which is earthly and perishable, such as money, honor, fame and wealth. From infancy they train them up to vice, pride, haughtiness and idolatry. But with you, who are born by God, this is not the case; for it behooves you to seek something else for your children; namely, that which is heavenly and eternal, and hence it is your duty to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as Paul teaches, Eph. 6:1-4. Moses commanded Israel to teach their children the law and commandments of Jehovah, to talk of them when they sat down in their houses, and when they walked by the way, and when they lay down, and when they rose up. Now, since we are a chosen

generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that we should show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, Deu. 6:5-8; 1 Pet. 2:9; therefore it behooves us to show ourselves patterns and examples in all righteousness and blamelessness, and to appear unto the whole world as we are thereunto called. If we do not keep a strict eye upon our own children, but permit them to follow their evil inclination, corrupt nature and disposition, not correcting and chastising them according to the word of the Lord, we may with the greatest propriety lay our hands upon our mouths, and remain silent. For why should we teach those not of our household, when we take no pains to preserve our own families in the love and fear of God? Paul says, "If any does not provide for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," 1 Tim. 5:8.

My dearly beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, take heed that you do not ruin your children and train them in vice through carnal love, and thus give offence; lest in the day of judgment, their souls be required at your hands, and it happen unto you, on account of your children, as it did unto Eli, the high priest, who was chastened by the hand of the Almighty, on account of his sons, 1 Sam. 3:11-18; but diligently imitate the testimony declared by the angel of the Lord respecting pious Abraham: "I know him," says he, "that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment," Gen. 18:19. This is the chief and most important care of the godly, that their children may fear God, do good, and be saved; even as the God-fearing Tobias admonished his son's children, saying, My son, listen unto your father; serve the Lord in truth, and cleave unto him in equity; be mindful of him, and let not your will be set to sin or to transgress his commandments; teach this to your children that

they give alms, fear God all their days, and trust in him with their whole hearts.

My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, who sincerely love the word of the Lord, thus instruct your children from their youth up, and daily admonish them with the word of the Lord, setting a good example. Teach and admonish them, I say, in proportion to the development of their understanding; constrain and correct them with discretion and moderation, without anger or bitterness, Col. 3; lest they be discouraged; do not spare the rod, if reason and necessity require it, and reflect upon what is written. He that loves his son causes him to often feel the rod that he may have joy from him in the end. He that chastises his son shall have joy in him. "He that makes too much of his son shall bind up his wounds; and his bowels will be troubled at every cry." A horse unbroken becomes headstrong: and a child left to himself will be wilful. "Give him no liberty in his youth, and do not ignore his follies," Sirach 30:7, 11. Bow down his neck while he is young, lest he grow stubborn, and be disobedient to you, and so bring sorrow to your heart. Correct your son, and keep him from idleness, lest you be made ashamed on his account, Prov. 29.

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, if all parents who glory in the name of the Lord would deeply impress the words of Sirach upon their hearts, and inscribe them on the tablet of their souls, O, how virtuous, pious and devout would many children be raised, who now, alas! run wild and unrestrained, honoring neither their parents, nor the church and gospel of Christ. "An evil-nurtured son," says Sirach, "is the dishonor of his father;" again, says he, "Though they multiply, rejoice not in them, except the fear of God be with them; for one that is just is better than a thousand; and better it is to die without children than to have them that are ungodly," Sir. 22:3; 16:2, 3.

Beloved brethren, consider these words well, and revolve them in your minds. Necessity impels me to write; for some,

alas! live such lives with their children that one is constrained to write and reprove. I write and admonish you again: Take heed, lest the blood and condemnation of your children come upon you. If you love your children with a godly love, teach, admonish and instruct them in God, lest the word, blood and death of the Lord be made unto them of no effect, and his name and church be blasphemed by the unwise through them.

Beloved brethren in Christ, if you rightly know God and his word, and believe that the end of the righteous is everlasting life, and the end of the wicked is eternal death, endeavor to the utmost of your power to conduct your children in the way of life, and divert them from the way of death, as far as it lies in you. Pray to Almighty God for the gift of his grace, that in his great mercy, he may guide and preserve them in the right path through the directing influence of his Holy Spirit. Watch over their salvation as for your own souls. Teach, instruct, admonish, threaten, correct and chastise them, as circumstances require. Keep them away from naughty, wicked children, among whom they hear and learn nothing but lying, cursing, swearing, fighting and knavery. Have them instructed in reading and writing, bring them up to habits of industry, and let them learn such trades as are suitable, expedient and adapted to their age and constitution. If you do this, you shall live to see much honor and joy from your children. But if you do not do it, heaviness of heart shall consume you at last. For a child left to himself, without reproof, is not only the shame of his father, but he brings his mother to shame, Prov. 29.

This brief admonition I have written to my beloved, from motives of sincere love; and not without a reason; for in the course of my ministry, I have too frequently observed how disorderly, improperly, no, heathen-like, many persons conduct themselves towards their children. The absurd, senseless love of the flesh has such an influence over some, and they are so blinded by the natural affection for their children that they can neither

perceive nor observe any evil, error or defect in them, notwithstanding that they frequently abound in idle tricks and wantonness, are disobedient to their father and mother, murmur at them, collect and carry abroad lies, quarrel and fight with other children, and mock people as they pass by, crying and calling after them.

Brethren in Christ, to deliberately ignore, by reason of a blind, carnal love, these and similar disgraceful tricks of children, is a love not to be applauded, but much rather to be shunned and avoided; for it is earthly, sensual, devilish. And forasmuch as we ought to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the holy nation, the chosen generation, yes, the bride of Christ, it by no means becomes us, to have, or to bear such sensual love or preposterous affection, in any circumstances, towards our children; but it is our duty, as far as it lies in us, diligently and earnestly to instruct and govern our children and household, as well as ourselves, in conformity to the sincerity of godliness, a life of virtue, and the word of God.

With this, I will have delivered and preserved my soul in the presence of the Lord and his church, and I do desire, for the Lord's sake, that this epistle may be taken in good part, and read by the elders in the hearing of all the brethren, to the end that the innocent may take heed, and be circumspect, and those who are guilty of these missteps, errors and failings, may reform, and that without considering me as being officious, in regulating the concerns of their household. Also no! In the presence of God, I desire nothing in this, but that in all things you conform yourselves to the Scriptures, and to christian gravity, and that all the concerns of the Lord's church, may be conducted according to the divine will and ordinance. The Searcher of hearts and minds knows that I do not lie. I would, therefore, that you also accept and receive it in love; for in sincerity have I written it.

And now, beloved brothers and sisters, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, that your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved without spot, and blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he who called you. May the merciful Father, through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, strengthen you all with the precious gift of his Holy Spirit, Amen.



LETTERS WRITTEN BY MENNO SIMON.*

FIRST LETTER.

A Dissuasion to all the brothers and sisters in Christ, living at Amsterdam and there about, not to attend the papal worship; because they do not feed the hungry souls with the bread of the divine word, but with the leaven of human doctrine.

“You shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man,” Lev. 19:32.

“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. Phil. 4:9

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.

TO ALL the true children of God, and partakers of the Promise of the Kingdom of Christ, grace and peace be with you.

My beloved in Christ Jesus, I am troubled at heart for your sakes, inasmuch as I hear that you hunger and thirst after righteousness, and that there are so few carvers who rightly cut the bread of the divine word for the hungry consciences, and that

* The first two of these letters, in the complete works of Menno Simon, are found at the close of the volume, but as one of those to the brethren in Amsterdam has appeared at the close of both the English and German editions formerly published we give them both, together with two other of Menno's letters a place here. -THE PUBLISHERS.

there are so few shepherds who rightly pasture the sheep of Christ, and that there are so few masons to rightly adjust the living stones in the temple of the Lord; so few watchmen who rightly watch the city, the new Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet; that there are so few fathers to beget the children of God, and so few to nourish and feed these begotten ones, but that every thing is to the contrary. For those who truly serve in that capacity do not deny the bread, nor the children to whom it belongs. And had they the bread by which the soul lives, not so many children would famish, while they distribute the bread once or twice a week (understand, the bread necessary to support the body). Inasmuch as they give the eggs of cockatrices unto the people, therefore observe what the prophet says concerning them, "He that eats of their eggs dies," Isa. 59:5; John 6:58.

Again, concerning the shepherds who pass themselves for shepherds of Christ, who pasture the sheep for the sake of their own selves, as Eze. 34:8 says. You see how little they care for the sheep; they do not care whether they have pasture or not. If they only get the wool and milk they are satisfied. They pass themselves for shepherds, but they are deceivers; for they are widely different from the shepherds of which we read in Jeremiah 3:15, who are shepherds after his heart, whom the Holy Spirit has sent. But they do not have the love of Christ which Peter had, and therefore Christ has not commanded them to pasture his lambs. And if they are not commanded to do so, namely, if they are not sent, how can they then preach, inasmuch as they are not divine shepherds who lead the sheep into the green pastures of the divine word, but let them famish. They are not the shepherds who lead them to the refreshing waters, but they lead them to the stagnant pools which they have fouled with their feet, that is by their glazings and opinions, Eze. 34:19.

They also pass themselves for joiners who build the Lord's house; but they do not know Christ, the corner stone. They never

adjusted a stone in the house of the Lord, namely, of the living stones which are built into a spiritual building, which building is the church of God, Heb. 3:6. For wherever there are two or three stones together, cemented by the mortar of love, there they busy themselves to break them down, and to destroy them, as you may see verified in all countries and cities. O, how different are they from those of whom Paul says, "You are God's husbandry, you are God's building," and we are God's laborers, namely, such as should build the house of the Lord according to his word, 1 Cor. 3:9.

If they, then, are not builders, they must be those who break down. They also pretend to be the husbandmen who take care of the vineyard. How they take care of it, and protect it against all wild animals, I will leave every christian to consider for himself. How they seek the profit of the Lord of the vineyard, and how they give him the usury or honor, the Lord of the vineyard knows. He also knows how they scourge, rob, hunt, banish and kill his children, for no other cause than that they neither do nor dare consent to them, inasmuch as they see that they are not the true husbandmen, but destroyers, Matt. 10:17; 21:34.

Yet they pass themselves off as watchmen. If they are watchmen, they are blind watchmen and dumb dogs which cannot bark, Isa. 56:10. Hosea, the prophet, shows what they watch for, and how they blow the trumpet, Hosea 4. How far they are from the word of Jehovah, which says, "Son of man, I have made you a watchman," Eze. 3:17. "Lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression," Isa. 58:1.

They want to be fathers who bring forth the children of God and nourish them. But how can they beget children, when they have never rightly conceived? O, how different they are from the fathers of whom Paul speaks, "You have not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel," 1 Cor. 4:15; "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ

be formed in you," Gal. 4:19. Here observe who are the fathers of the true children. Now show me one child they have begotten, namely, one child which was born by God through the gospel. Paul also says, "I have fed you with milk," 1 Cor. 3:2, "even as a nurse cherishes her children," 1 Thes. 2:7.

Behold, sincerely beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, you will observe that you have few carvers who cut the sweet bread, but it is leaven which they give you; that they are not shepherds who pasture the sheep, but wolves that destroy them; that they are not builders that build the temple, but they break down that which was built; that they are not husbandmen who protect the vineyard of the Lord, and give him his rent, but they are false husbandmen which scourge, stone, torture and kill the servants, as you, alas, may plainly see; that they are not the watchmen who watch over the city of Jerusalem and warn her of the enemy, but they betray the citizens and kill them; that they are not fathers nor nurses, but they kill that which was begotten and nourished, as Pharaoh, king of Egypt, killed all the true Israelite boys which he could lay hold of. Therefore it is necessary to separate from them and to shun them, as we read in Matt. 7:15, "Beware of false prophets;" and Paul says, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," Col. 2:8.

The church of Christ is the bride of Christ, and he will not allow his bride to conceive but of the incorruptible seed, 1 Pet. 1:23. As Paul says, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ," 2 Cor. 11:2. Yes, Paul would have the bride, or church, so pure that if there were any who caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, they should be avoided. Yes, if they had any in the church that were drunkards, covetous, fornicators, idolatrous or proud, they should avoid them and not eat with

them, 1 Cor. 5:11. How, then, could they allow such men to preach? Yes, if they preached any other gospel than that which had been preached unto them, they should be accursed, Gal. 1:8.

To the Philippians Paul says, “Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the mutilation,” and says, “Brethren, be followers together with me, and mark them which walk so, as you have us for an example; for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things,” Phil. 3:2, 17, 19. Mark to what kind of people he refers.

The apostle would have the bride so pure that no dissension was allowed, no drunkards, covetous, idolaters, nor those that taught any other doctrine than he taught; and Christ himself says to the church, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly, they are ravening wolves, you shall know them by their fruits,” Matt. 7:15. Therefore I will leave all intelligent christians to judge what those do that say that they are at liberty to do as they do. Shall we, who claim to uphold the glory of God, grant it as a liberty to go where God is blasphemed, and his ordinances broken? Aaron was commanded to serve in the priest’s office. When Dathan and Abiram decided serve as such, why did the earth open its mouth and swallow them, if that was free to them? Num. 16:32. The children of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, decided to burn incense on their censers [without God’s consent]. If it were allowed now, to burn incense on their profane censers, then why were they burned? Lev. 10:1, 3.*

* [CHCoG: In this regard, Christ allows these false Christians -satan’s ministers- to live today to expose who will walk in the truth, and who prefers to walk in their comfortable lies.]

Read how the worshipers of the calf, the murmurers and the fornicators, all received their punishment, Exodus 32; Num. 21:5,6; 25:8,9. Yes, the man of God at Bethel, how free was it to him, when God had said unto him that he should not eat bread nor drink water in that place, when by the lies of the old prophet he did eat and drink contrary to God's command? It was so free that he had to die for it, 1 Kings 13.

There are very many Scriptures upon that point which I will leave for the sake of brevity. But I would [hope] that every christian should do as Christ teaches us, saying, "Search the Scriptures," John 5:39. Those of Berea searched the Scriptures daily, Acts 17:11.

If you search the Scriptures you will learn from them that if you would be a member of the holy body of Christ, you must follow the Head and obey him, John 3:36; 2 Thes. 1:8.

If he commands you to beware of false prophets, are you then at liberty either to do so or not? What kind of officers would you be if the emperor should issue a decree and the subjects disregard it (take it as a liberty), if you did not punish them for not regarding it?

Now, the chief Emperor (Christ), has issued a decree, which decree he has sealed with his blood, and in this decree it reads that we must be born again, repent, deny ourselves, take upon ourselves the cross, believe in Jesus Christ, and on our faith be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and obey his commandments, Matt. 28:19. We are to "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's;" to love the Lord with all our heart and with all our strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves; not to live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again; to "beware of false prophets," and to "abstain from all

appearance of evil,” Matt. 22:21; Luke 10:27; 2 Cor. 5:15; Matt. 7:15; 1 Thes. 5:22.

Now say, most beloved, which of these are we at liberty to do or not to do? Are we at liberty to be born again or not? Are we at liberty to deny ourselves, or to believe in Christ, or not? To be baptized, to give unto Caesar that which is due him, and unto God that which is his, to beware of false prophets, and to abstain from all appearance of evil or not? If we are at liberty to observe these or not, just as we see proper, why does the Lord Jesus then say at the conclusion, And teach them to keep my commandments? Matt. 28:19. If he has commanded it, he requires it to be obeyed. That which is free is neither commanded nor prohibited, as Paul says in regard to eating and the keeping of certain days, 1 Cor. 10:28. Yet he commands us to not offend the brethren by such liberty.

Now, beloved children, if you confess that Christ Jesus is the Son in his house, then let him be wise enough to rule; for he has bought this house with his blood, and has delivered the bondmen. Some he has made pastors and teachers, and Paul teaches us how they should be minded. If you go to the papistic teachers, whom you know beforehand as not being sent by Christ, and therefore bear no fruit, are you then being obedient unto the voice of the Lord? O, no, Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3; Rom. 10:15.

Since the Holy Spirit directs you to those that are unblameable, and yet you go to those that are blamable, both in doctrine and in life, even though Christ has commanded you to beware of such [liars], and yet you go to hear them, saying, I am at liberty, therefore judge for yourselves whether you are a child of God or not. And, if you say that you are at liberty, then I ask you, Who gave you this liberty? Paul says, “You are not your own, for you are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s,” 1 Cor. 6:19. By what means then can you obtain this liberty?

Christ Jesus has also commanded his church to baptize believers on the confession of their faith. If I do not believe him, do not allow myself to be baptized in accordance with God's word, and allow my little children to be baptized, against God's word, am I then obedient unto the voice of the Lord? Can I inherit the promise given to those who believe and obey?

Christ ordained in his church the Holy Supper, bread and wine, in remembrance of his death; now it is changed into Roman Catholic merchandise. Is a christian now allowed to keep the perplexing, papal day-meal, and neglect the Lord's Supper? Judge for yourselves, since Paul says, "You cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils," 1 Cor. 10:21. If we cannot partake of both, then we must neglect one or the other. O, beware of them!

Behold, beloved children, I have here given you some instruction according to the limited talents which the Lord has given me. Judge whether it would be becoming for a married woman to be with another man, even if it were but once a year. So, if you are the bride of the Lamb, then you are not allowed to conceive with any body but Christ, and his holy word. If you are the body of Christ, then you must have the Spirit of Christ; if you are baptized into the body by the Spirit, then you must be obedient unto the Head, which is Christ. If you are in the city, the New Jerusalem, whose citizens are of one mind, then you must be obedient unto the King of that great city, namely, unto Christ. If you are the branches, then you must bear fruit like unto that of the stock. If you are the vineyard of the Lord, then beware of the foxes. If you are the temple of the Lord, then you must be submissive unto your High Priest. If you are the ark of the covenant, then the tables of the covenant, which are written with the finger of God, namely, the commandments of God must be engraved in your hearts that all men may read that you are an epistle of Christ, 2 Cor. 3:2,3; Jer. 31:33.

O, beloved children, if the Lord would grant that we might verbally speak together, we trust that we could satisfy you on all points. Therefore you that fear God, separate yourselves from Babel and go to Jerusalem, and do not allow yourselves to be ensnared by such light-minded, artful words as, "I am at liberty." Likewise, the drunkard may drink to excess, the gambler may gamble, the whore-monger indulge in his carnal passions, but it is all sin. And so, you claim the liberty to hear false doctrine, or to allow infants to be baptized; yet it is against scripture, and therefore also sin.

I herewith commend my beloved children to the Lord. May the rich Word of his grace enlighten you with his pure knowledge and grant that you do his will in all things, that the fallen temple may again be built upon its true foundation and that we may obtain the end of our faith, which is the salvation of our souls, Amen.

MENNO SIMON.

November 14.

SECOND LETTER.

Second Epistle of Menno Simon. Being a consolation to his much beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, at and about Amsterdam, beseeching them to visit one another during the time of pestilence, and not to fear death, because it is but a passage into a better life.

“O, man, why are you joyful? What dust and shadow are you! Be proud, for your life lies buried in death!”

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.

MERCY, grace and peace be unto you. The Lord said unto Martha, “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet he shall live; and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die,” John 11:25. Chosen brothers and sisters in the Lord, whereas I hear that the fire of pestilence is raging about you, therefore I am constrained by the love I bear to you and to all the pious, as I am aware that all flesh is frightened of death, and that the death of friends is hard to our natural feelings. But I write to you who are overshadowed by the heavenly light and called into the communion of Christ, a short epistle of consolation, that you may now, and at all times diligently watch for the coming of the Lord, and prepare your whole life, heart, mind and actions for death. For Paul says, “It is appointed unto men to die once,” Heb. 9:27. Also Sirach says, “All flesh grows old as a garment; for the covenant from the beginning is, You shall die,” Sir. 14:17.

If we, with a new, regenerated and penitent soul, firmly adhere to Christ, truly believe his word, faithfully follow his footsteps, are governed by his Holy Spirit, and die unto the old, sinful life, no, in every manner, die unto the world, flesh, and devil; if we sincerely seek God’s kingdom, righteousness, word, will, truth, praise and honor, and walk inoffensively in his ways, then we shall live with, in, and through him for ever, John 11:25. We shall not be hurt by the second death, Rev. 2:11, notwithstanding that we were, in earlier times, dead in sins, as all the others, full of covetousness, unchastity, pride, hatred, envy, idolatry, and were, by nature, children of wrath, Eph. 2:3, for unto

the truly penitent and believing it is all forgiven through the death of Christ, it is requited by his blood, and reconciled by the only peace-offering—his innocent, bitter death. Paul says, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death,” Rom. 8:1,2. Therefore be of good cheer and grateful; praise him who has delivered you by the power of his word from the dominion of sin and death, and has thus called you to the inheritance of his glory by the Spirit of his grace. Again, I say, give him the praise, and that with a godly, pure conscience and with an unblameable, holy life in faith, wholesome, firm and unblemished in love, living in hope, and fervent in prayer, adorned with the raiment of righteousness, and girded with the beautiful girdle of perfection in the Spirit. Have oil in your lamps, be sober and awake, so that when the true Head, the glorious King and Bridegroom of our souls comes, he may not find you asleep, and that on account of your not being ready, he does not cast you into eternal darkness, and close the door upon you, and thus give you your part with the hypocrites. I repeat it, be sober and awake; labor while it is day, lest the dark night overtake you. O, Reflect on what is meant! Psm. 117:1,2; Rom. 15:11; Col. 3:14; 1 Pet. 5:8; John 12:35.

Beloved, faithful brethren, be strong in the Lord, of good cheer and consoled; for your whole life and death are in the hands of the Lord. Yes, all your hairs are numbered; and without him not one shall drop from your head; he knows the number of your days, though your life is measured as a hand breath. Therefore do not fear, but willingly serve each other in time of need. O, do not stop visiting the sick, for by this you shall be established in love, as Sirach 7:35 says. “And it is also the nature of true love, to lay down our lives for the brethren,” 1 John 3:16. Reflect on what I tell you; you are aware of one thing, that an obedient, virtuous

son, servant, or bride, does not fear the coming of the father, lord or bridegroom, but they long for their coming; "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear," 1 John 4:18. You are also aware that a fatigued laborer is desirous of rest, and an afflicted soul of consolation. And I have no doubt but my beloved children are sealed in God with a good conscience; that he is your Father, and you are his children; that Christ Jesus is your Lord, and you are his servants; that he is your bridegroom and you his bride; and that you, for the sake of his blessed name, will unfeignedly proclaim and teach it to the whole world for doctrine, instruction and reproof, that they may sincerely repent and be gained unto God. On this account you must suffer such excessive misery, trouble, privation and slander from the indolent, wicked generation, as may be noticed on every hand.

Therefore it is reasonable that we should not be afraid of death, which is but a rest from sin and the entrance into a better life, nor should we be sorrowing about our friends who have fallen asleep in God, as those do who do not expect the reward of the saints; but we should joyfully raise our heads, gird our loins with truth and be joyfully taken up to the heavenly Canaan thus, to be with our only and eternal (mark, eternal) Joshua, Christ Jesus, to take the promised inheritance, and thus be freed from the laborious, troublesome way of our hard pilgrimage, which we must lead through the rough desert of this wild world so long as we shall be here; and then we shall rejoice in everlasting peace, Eph. 6:14; Luke 22:29; Rev. 14:13.

O, chosen brothers and sisters! How gloriously are they gifted by God, who, in grace, are delivered from their body of sin, and from all perishable things, and are taken up into the holy tabernacle of peace, and called to the eternal, holy Sabbath-day!

The old crooked serpent shall no longer sting them in their heels; yes, no pain nor disease shall touch them, and the last enemy, which is death, is already overcome; their tears are dried,

and their souls are at sure rest and peace in the paradise of grace, in Abraham's bosom, under the altar of God, Rev. 6:9, on Mount Zion, delivered from their great tribulation, clothed in white robes, worshipping before the throne of God and the Lamb, waiting a little while until the number of their brethren shall be fulfilled, Rev. 6:11, to be fashioned like the glorious body of Christ, Phil. 3:21, to shine forth as the sun, and thus joyfully enter into the eternal wedding and feast which is prepared in heaven for all the chosen ones through the blood and death of Christ.

O, how holy and blessed are they who are called by Christ to this feast, and have come to it, clothed in unspotted, clean garments! O, sing the pleasing and joyous hallelujah in your hearts, and thank him who has given them all this by the Spirit of his love, in eternal grace, and who has chosen you to enjoy the same part with them!

Reflect and be consoled. Sincerely fear God, serve him in truth, uphold unity, love and peace; watch and pray; walk unblamably; fight your fight patiently; strive after the good; be friendly to one another; willingly submit to your elders and obey them, and remember them and me in your prayers. May the God of peace, our merciful Father, by his blessed Son, Christ Jesus, bless you now and at all times, unto more righteousness, in perfect love.

Your brother and lover of your souls in truth; at present enjoying tolerable health.

MENNO SIMON.

November 14.

The Complete Works of
THIRD LETTER.

An Epistle of Menno Simon, to the brethren at Franeker, province of Friesland, Netherlands.

“The love of God is true wisdom,”

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life,” John 3:16.

With a sorrowing and troubled heart I write to you, because a letter was handed to me, signed by five brethren in good standing, from which I learn that a violent dispute has arisen (God better it) amongst some of you, concerning the ban (excommunication). If I do not misunderstand, one party would [have it] that no transgression should be punished with excommunication until the transgressor should have been thrice admonished. I cannot agree with this doctrine. For there are some sins, for instance, murder, witchcraft, incendiariam,* theft and other like criminal deeds, which require summary punishment at the hands of the magistracy. If we were to admonish transgressors thrice in such cases, before they were punished, then the sweet bread of the church would be changed into sour leaven, and that before the whole world. Therefore act with discretion, and do not treat criminal matters, especially if they are public, the same as you would other carnal works which are not considered, by the world, as requiring disgraceful punishment.

The other party desires, if I understand the matter right, that all transgressions should be punished with excommunication,

* [CHCoG: Commonly arson, but in Menno’s time it also referred to inciting civil unrest and violence.]

without being first admonished at all; and that all penance should be outside of the church. That doctrine is, according to my humble understanding, erroneous and against the word of Christ, Paul and James. For avarice, pride, hatred, discord, defamation and quarreling are carnal things which work death, if not repented of, Gal. 5:19,20; James 3:16. However, they are not punished until after having been thrice admonished as the Scriptures command. I wish that it were taken into consideration, that as “the wages of sin is death,” so also, the repenting, converted heart brings forth life, as may be seen in the case of David, Peter, the murderer, Zaccheus and others.

I also understand that these same brethren are of the opinion that if some brother should secretly have transgressed in something or other, and, in sorrow of heart, should confess to one of his brethren that he had thus sinned against God, that this same brother should then tell it unto the church; and if he should fail to do so, then he should be punished with the transgressor. This opinion is not only absurd but it sounds in my ears as a terrible one. For it is clearly against all Scriptures and love, Matt. 18; Jas. 5:19, 20.

Excommunication was, in one respect, instituted for the purpose of repentance. Now, if repentance is shown, namely, the contrite, sorrowing heart, how can excommunication then be pronounced against such a one? O, my brethren, do not put this doctrine in force, for it will lead to sin, and not to reformation.

If we were to deal thus with poor, repenting sinners, whose transgressions were done in secret, how many would we keep from repentance through shame? God forbid that I should ever agree with, or act upon, such doctrine!

Lastly, I understand they hold that if any one, in his weakness, transgresses, and openly acknowledges his transgression, that they should consider him, then, as a worldling.

This, again, is an absurd doctrine; for, if the transgression was done through weakness, then, let us not be arrogant and too hard on the poor soul, lest we commit a worse fault.

Not the weak, but the corrupt members are to be cut off, lest they corrupt the others. Of such unscriptural doctrines and practices I want to be clear. I desire that excommunication be practiced in a sincere, paternal spirit, in faithful love, according to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, as I have abundantly declared in my writings, for over five years.

My chosen brethren, guard against innovations for which you have no certain, scriptural grounds. Do not be too severe nor too lenient. Let a paternal, compassionate, prudent and discreet heart, and the Lord's holy word, actuate you.

Follow my brotherly admonition in this respect, which has been acted upon for twenty-one years. I could give you no other and better advice. I feel constrained to write to you, for the above mentioned reasons. I have, in sincerity of heart, served my beloved brethren without any partiality, as becomes us in Christ. I was asked to give my grounds for my doctrine, which I am, at all times, willing and prepared to do; not to the pious only, but also to the whole world, as the word of the Lord commands me to do. I do not teach nor live by the faith of others, but by my own faith. O, that they were all of one mind with me! How paternally and discreetly would excommunication, then, be practiced, without all offense; while, now, it is sometimes practiced so offensively.

I beseech all the pious, for God's sake, to seek peace. And if you have offended each other in the least, purify your hearts and be reconciled [to each other] in Christ Jesus. Remember that you are the Lord's people, called unto peace, put under the cross, separated from the world and hated unto death. If you are baptized into one spirit, then fulfil my sincere desire, and be of

one mind with me in Christ. Build up and do not destroy. Instruct one another in love, and do not disrupt, so that divine peace be with all the children of God, and remain whole with us unto eternal life.

May the peaceful Spirit of Christ protect you all. May you be sound in doctrine, ardent in love, and without offense in life, to the edification of his church and to the praise of his holy name.

Your unworthy brother and servant,

MENNO SIMON.

November 13th, A.D. 1555.

FOURTH LETTER.

An Epistle of Menno Simon, to the church at Emden, East Friesland, Germany.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.

With a sorrowful heart I make known to the brethren that I receive one letter after another complaining of the excommunication, in regard to husband and wife; which causes great trouble with some, at which I am not at all surprised. For, from the commencement of my service, which is more than twenty years, I have feared this issue, which cannot be settled under such excitement as is, at present, found in the Netherlands. Dietrich Philip, our brother, and I counseled with the elders, in regard to this matter, as far back as 1547 and then it was resolved

that we should act, in this matter, according to circumstances; and it was again so resolved at Wismar, two years ago. Therefore we should admonish all according to the most definite and plain rules; but if we cannot thus convince, we should not force any one beyond what he conscientiously believes to be right, but bear with him in love and patience. I hope that every pious person is sufficiently instructed in the word of the Lord to know that if either a husband or a wife commit adultery, theft, witchcraft or any thing else that is criminal, that such criminal misbehavior is summarily punished at the hands of the magistracy; or, to know that in case one cannot undisturbedly live up to their faith, on account of their spouse, but is at all times combated with false doctrine, beaten and abused, and thus is sliding back in faith, through the obstacles of such fallen spouse, one should abandon such spouse if he would stand before God and the church and save his soul. But if he or she can live up to his or her faith, in all things, undisturbedly, and is not combated with false doctrine, then they are conscientiously bound to remain together undisturbedly; for they are one flesh and live together as husband and wife should live.

Since there are many dangers and offenses connected with this matter, to punish the souls thus bound with excommunication, who otherwise walk unblamably, in every respect, before God; and, since we all are flesh, therefore I pray that the merciful Lord may keep me from consenting to or teaching such doctrine. In view of this, my heart was filled with sorrow on hearing that a certain length of time was given to Swaantje Rutgers, in which to leave her husband; or that in case of her failure to leave him, she was to be excommunicated and delivered over to satan.

O, my chosen brethren, consider your actions well. What slanderous words you will put into the mouths of the slanderers! And what bad reports you will spread of the word of the Lord and

his church! How many grieved souls you will afflict! Yes, how many souls you will separate from the truth, and what dangers will beset you! We never dared follow such a doctrine, for we fear the consequences. O! That you would desist from it. How would I, an afflicted man, rejoice! My heart shall never consent to such indiscreet action, and say amen to such intentions.

I desire to teach, according to my humble talents, a gospel that builds up, and not one that breaks down. One that is acceptable, and not one that is offensive. I do not intend to encumber the service of God with something upsetting, for which I have no scriptural grounds. I can neither teach nor live by the faith of others. I must live by my own faith, as the Spirit of the Lord has taught me through his word.

Here you have my admonition. The Lord grant that you may follow it in all love, peace and unity. Do not be too hard nor yet too lenient. Excommunication is instituted for reformation and not for [encouraging] corruption. O, that all were of one mind with me in this matter. How discreetly would the ban be practiced in this respect. But, as it is, every one follows his own inclinations and imagines it [to be from the] Spirit and Scripture.

O Lord! Grant them your Spirit and wisdom, that they may see and judge rightly, “Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” Eph. 4:3. Beloved brethren, follow my advice, for God’s sake; for it will cause many souls to rejoice. The Spirit of wisdom be with you unto eternity, Amen.

Your unworthy brother,

MENNO SIMON.

November the 12th, A.D. 1556.



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