

AN
EXPLANATION
OF
Christian Baptism
IN THE WATER,
FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

IN WHAT MANNER IT WAS COMMANDED BY CHRIST JESUS, AND HOW
IT WAS TAUGHT AND PRACTICED BY HIS HOLY APOSTLES.

BY
MENNO SIMON.

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

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MENNO SIMON'S SALUTATION.

READ and consider carefully the words which I speak, ye learned, who appear to be distinguished in mind and doctrine above others. I have added this my little German work for the celebration of the rite of Baptism. For I am not well able to promote this cause in Latin, and if able, am unwilling that this, my labor, should perish in the hands of the few, but desire that it may become known to every christian and yield the greater advantage. That there are, in this work, no interpolations of Scripture, nor satires, nor falsehoods, judge for yourselves. Moreover I know it is not the spirit of a christian to lead in any way deceitfully, especially in an affair so serious. Indeed the christian does not know deceit. It becomes the evangelical teacher to set before himself nothing except these most illustrious precepts of the evangelist—such as faith, charity, patience, life, gentleness, peace, mildness, truth, moderation, and finally to so live that no one is able with justice to thrust against him any taint of baseness, that he may teach not only by word, but also by example, following the teachings of Paul who says, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway,” 1 Cor. 9: 27. And elsewhere, “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers,”

“they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ,” 1 Pet. 2: 12; 3: 16. For in the midst of these things it behooves one to repress such ignorance and stupidities, lest that saying of the Savior be turned against us which says, “Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye,” Luke 6: 42. For how can I induce others to become christians when I myself am not a christian.

Read therefore, and if any thing be found in this work that has not the flavor of evangelical purity and spirit, I am confounded, not you. For I have written from a sense of pious affection, not that I may injure any one, but for the benefit of all men. Nevertheless, such are my thanks from you for this my kindness toward you, that I know it is not enough except I, with my sanctified Leader, having indeed received Christ as my reward, endure all evil, ignominy and tortures. No wonder. They indeed do not spare me while I seek the truth and declare openly the offered sacrifice, when almost all teachers of righteousness, who were from the beginning, have yielded to death in the same way. This is indeed gratitude, when the world displays its subjection to God. Would that in very truth they were christians who persuade themselves that they are christians. May grace abound with all the diligent through our Lord Jesus Christ, with sincerity.

P R E F A C E.

BELoved readers, in our first publication of the writings concerning Baptism, we have, with christian truth, satisfied the desire of every pious christian. Yet, there are some light minded, rebellious, contentious and carnal persons who, without cause and Scripture, and in every respect without the fear of God, teach, write, admonish and cry out against us, with partial hearts, saying, "It is heresy and deceit; for it is written and taught adverse to the learned, and against the doctrine of the holy, christian church." Although I had not intended to reply to such perverse, rebellious, disobedient and contentious persons, according to the word of the Lord, Matt. 7, but solely to write to the humble, meek, God-fearing and penitent. For the wise will hear wisdom; will love it and become wiser; but the fool will hear folly, praise it, persist and die in it—yet to such contenders and gainsayers, who speak so hard against the word of God, I would ask two questions; and request them to examine and ponder them well, and return a discreet and becoming reply to me. In the first place: What are properly heretics and deceivers? Secondly, Who are they that admonish and teach against the doctrine of the holy church? If they answer these questions fairly they must themselves pronounce the sentence, that with us *the upright* truth of Jesus Christ is found and not with them; on the contrary, that all manner of heresy, deceit and false doctrine are abundantly taught and practiced by them, and not by us. Which of the two parties, then, are heretics and imposters, I will leave to the judgment of the reader. For *hereticus* means: one who sorts out, one who chooses, one who gleans. *Quia heresis Grece ab electione vocatur, inquit Beda super acta Apostolorum*, one who selects such as

will suit his own opinion. If these, then, are truly heretics, who, according to their own meaning, without Scripture, form themselves a faith, then I truly do not know where to find more miserable and more deplorable heretics than those who ever combat, upbraid, betray and persecute us, poor, scattered and rejected christians, as damnable heretics. For there is no worse, or more abominable heresy under heaven than is found among our gainsayers and contenders; while they so shamefully change and garble the word and the perfect ordinance and institution of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, as to baptize such things which God has neither commanded nor ordained to be baptized, namely: The little, unconscious children and bells; and do not baptize those whom God has commanded to be baptized, namely: Those who believe, while they worship and honor a mouthful of bread and a drink of wine as the Son of God; while they ascribe to themselves, without the word of God, the power over the living and the dead; and while they place in Christ's stead a sinful man, a child of perdition, whose natural pride, pomp, greed, cruelty, uncleanness and idolatry are beyond description, 2 Thess. 2: 4.

Truly, I do not know how a worse heresy could be invented. Notwithstanding these miserable men cruelly cry against us, *Heretics, heretics, drown them, slay and burn them*. And this for no other reason than that we teach, according to the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, the new life, Baptism on the confession of faith, the Supper as representing both a holy and unblamable church; because we rebuke all false doctrine, idolatry and the accursed carnal life; and point alone to the blessed Christ Jesus, and to no other means of salvation, neither in heaven nor on earth.

If this is heresy, beloved reader, then, indeed, the true Being is not in Christ; then he is not the true way, the truth, and the life, John 14: 6. Be not frightened by their upbraiding and slandering; for from the beginning it has been the case that the unbelieving, hate, slander and persecute the believing; the wicked, the good; the unrighteous, the righteous; the carnal, the spiritual; the heretics, the christians. It was the case with Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob and with the false prophets and the true prophets; as Christ Jesus has told us before, namely: "Ye will be hated of all nations, for my name's sake," Matt. 24: 9. If they were the true disciples of Christ Jesus as they boast themselves to be, they would persecute, betray or murder no body for the sake of their faith; but with Christ Jesus, they would diligently seek to reclaim that which was lost, Matt. 18: 11, if we were lost, as they claim. If they were the bride of Christ, they would not be spiteful, cruel and blood thirsty, but meek, mild and merciful, yea be thus minded as is the good and faithful bridegroom, Christ Jesus. But they plainly manifest themselves, by their works, not to be the bride of Jesus Christ, but rather to be the bride of him, who, from the beginning was a murderer, that is, the devil, Jn. 8: 44.

If they were the body of Christ, they would not crucify and persecute any one for the sake of the truth of the Lord, but would themselves, with Christ Jesus, and his church, be crucified and persecuted for the sake thereof, Matt. 5: 11; Jn. 16: 1, 2; 2 Tim. 3: 12. For the innocent lamb does not kill, but from the beginning it was killed. Behold, kind readers, what miserable, bloody, tyrannical and murderous heretics our gainsayers, opponents and persecutors are found to be before God, in all their teachings, admonitions, instructions, life and tyranny. But this they do not acknowledge. For it would not do to acknowledge this. If they did, how could they then crucify and persecute the chosen children of God, the children of the kingdom and promise, the brethren and sisters of Jesus Christ, the angels of peace, and the children of the eternal, imperishable life?

But now their minds are so obscured, their eyes are so bedimmed, their ears are so closed up that they cannot understand; for their evil-doing and wickedness have obscured and blinded them. The table of the divine word is to them "a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense," Rom. 11: 9. The righteous judgment and awful wrath is come upon them, because they so industriously seek falsehood, and so obstinately combat and reject the lovely truth of Jesus Christ.

Christ Jesus says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled," Matt. 5: 6. But these hunger and thirst after unrighteousness, with which they, according to Paul, are abundantly filled, 2 Thess. 2: 12.

Christ Jesus says, "Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened," Luke 11: 9. But these seek diligently, night and day, not after the right way, but after the wrong; hoping yet to find something, either in the word or in our lives, which may be so twisted, bent or applied as to trample upon and nullify, the right, evangelical truth, even as if the eternal Truth, the blessed Jesus had spoken and taught with two tongues; and if they can find any errors in our walk, as there often are (for we are all of the sinful, failing flesh of Adam); then the evangelical truth is all deceit, as if we had no help from God but only human aid. Inasmuch as they so assiduously seek after unrighteousness and delight in falsehood, therefore God smites them with such great blindness that they can neither comprehend nor judge of the teachings of God; yet they desire to clothe their cause, however shameful it is, in the garment of the Scriptures, that they may, under this scriptural, holy appearance, the better deceive the foolish, ignorant populace that desire to be deceived and seduced. And thus they remain, both teacher and disciple, in the service of their perishable flesh which they have chosen as their God, Phil. 3: 18; Rom. 16: 17.

Again, kind reader, they cry and foam with rage against us, saying that we write against all the doctors, and also against the teachings of the holy christian church.

I affectionately and freely admit and acknowledge that we write against the greater part of the doctors or the learned men. For whenever or wherever they write, admonish and teach contrary to the word, ordinances, statutes and institutions of Jesus Christ, we do not consider their famous names and have nothing to do with their human philosophy. But if they teach rightly we do not contradict nor write against them.

I trust, by the most merciful grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the oldest, most pious, most upright, truest and most able doctors of the church of Jesus Christ, who were long before all other doctors, are received and believed by me and my beloved brethren, in every word and doctrine. These are, Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David, Christ Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James and Jude. If any body can show me a word in all my writing that I have taught or written contrary to the doctrine of these doctors, then I am willing to be abashed, instructed and taught better; but I trust that it can never be truthfully done. If I should write and teach against these pious, unblamable doctors, then my writing and teaching would be against the teachings and admonitions of the christian body, community or holy church.

I acknowledge and know well that I admonish, teach, instruct and write contrary to the instructions and teachings of some communities and churches, in regard to some articles, such as the Papists, Lutherans, and the corrupted sects; but not contrary to the teachings of the holy, christian church. May the merciful Father, whose divine will I industriously seek to obey, save me from teaching, instructing and writing contrary to the doctrine of the holy church; for else woe would be unto my soul forever.

Lest you be ensnared by the word *holy church*, you shall learn and know from the word of God that the holy, christian church is no collection of unbelievers, carnal or willful sinners; notwithstanding they falsely claim to be of Christ Jesus, and think themselves to be the true, christian church. No, kind readers, no. They are not all

Abraham's seed who are born of Abraham, "But the children of the promise are counted for the seed," Rom. 9: 8. Thus, also, the holy, christian church must be a spiritual seed, an assembly of the righteous, and a community of the saints; which church is begotten of God, of the living seed of the divine word, and not of the teachings, institutions, and fictions of man. Yea, they are those who are regenerated, renewed and converted; who hear, believe, and fulfill all the commandments and will of God; who "have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts;" who "are all one in Christ Jesus." "Joint heirs with Christ," and heavenly and spiritually minded with him, Gal. 5: 24; 3: 28; Rom. 8: 17.

These are the holy, christian church, the community of God, the body and the bride of Christ, whom he hath trusted, cleansed and sanctified; but "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." This holy, christian church has a spiritual Prince over her who rules her with the unbroken rod of his divine word; a Master, or Teacher who teaches the commandments of eternal life; and a Bridegroom whose voice she is ever ready to hear, that is, Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 6: 11; Rom. 8: 8; Ps. 2: 9; Jn. 6: 68; 3: 29.

If, now, I contend against his scepter, trample upon his commandments and teach or write aught against his heavenly doctrine, then I teach and write against the doctrine of the holy, christian church. For this holy, christian church has but one doctrine which is fruitful and godly, which is the limpid, pure and unmixed word of God, the lovely gospel of the grace of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15; 1 Pet. 1: 25. All teachings and decrees which do not accord with the doctrine of Christ, are but teachings and commandments of men, be they teachings and opinions of doctors, decrees of popes, councils or any thing else; they are doctrines of the devil, and are accursed, Matt. 15: 9; 1 Tim. 4: 1; Gal. 1: 8, 9. Since we write and teach nothing but the pure, heavenly word, and the perfect ordinances of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ and of his apostles; therefore we do not teach and write against the teachings of the holy church, but we sustain them.

Beloved readers, let the light minded run

their course to the end, which is certain death. They will nevermore concede the truth, however powerfully they are vanquished, but they will ever delight in hatred, upbraiding, discord and disputation and never be satisfied, because they will not go into the strait way of the Spirit; taught of Jesus Christ and his holy apostles; notwithstanding they want to be considered the children and the church of God, without obedience. Not so kind readers. Ever remember that there is no holy church of Christ other than the assembly of the righteous, and the church of the saints, which ever acts in harmony with the word and ordinances of the Lord, and to no other doctrine. She neither will nor can accept any other doctrine or ordinances in divine matters, forever.

Because, beloved brethren, the divine ordinance of baptism in the water has thus been destroyed for many centuries, and as a strange baptism has been practiced, contrary to the true doctrine of the holy, christian church, namely, contrary to the word of God, from which evil custom so much false doctrine, disbelief and fruitless, carnal life have resulted—therefore I have again clearly pointed out from the holy gospel, how we should practice the true, scriptural, christian baptism; that the hearts and faith of the wise may be affirmed and assured, and the mouths of the fools may be stopped, and that God may have the glory in his holy word. Read and see if we have not rightly taught and written according to

the meaning of Jesus Christ. And because the whole, wide world so shamefully blaspheme and oppose the word of God, and despise his commandments and ceremonies as useless, saying, What good can water do us? never considering that the kingdom of God and the will of God do not consist in external ceremonies, but in the willing obedience to the word of God—therefore we have, in the following writings, so extensively shown from the holy Scriptures, who should be baptized, according to the word of God, namely, the believing, or the regenerated, Mark 16: 16; Jn. 3: 5; Tit. 3: 5.

Besides we have also shown how very weak, useless and groundless all the arguments of the world are, by which they defend infant baptism, that the beforementioned despisers of God may know and understand that they are not baptized according to the evangelical commandment of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. From which it follows that they are not in obedience to the divine word, and if they are not in the obedience which has the promise (I speak of those of understanding minds), then they cannot inherit nor obtain the promise, so long as they do not believe the word of God, and obediently fulfill it in all respects. Let every one beware, and save his own soul; for our God is a consuming fire.

May the merciful Father, through his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, grant you all a true knowledge, and his affectionate grace for your edification, Amen.



CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

HEAR ye, O, illustrious, noble, wise lords and princes! Hear ye all judges of the land, where the sword of God is given to the destruction of the evil doers, to the protection of the good, and to the punishment of the wicked! Hear, ye wise and intelligent, you, who think that you bear the vessels of the Lord! Hear ye, all people, of whatever state, condition, trade or class, who call yourselves christians, and who boast of his bitter death and precious blood! Rom. 13: 1; Tit. 3: 4; 1 Peter 2: 13, 14.

Since we, for the sake of baptism, are so miserably profaned, slandered and persecuted by all mankind, and as we are ever suspicioned by the ungodly sects (who are to you very shameful, perilous and abominable, as may be plainly seen); therefore we say and testify in Christ Jesus, before God, before his holy angels, before you, and before the whole world, that we are solely urged by a God fearing faith which we have in the word of God, to baptize and to be baptized, as the only means; nor will it be found otherwise neither in this life, nor in death, nor in the last judgment of God.

Beloved, we verily seek nothing in this baptism other than to obey our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, who has taught and commanded us this with his own blessed mouth, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16. Consider, once, we pray you, that we cannot possibly seek carnal profit in this our actions; neither gold, nor silver, nor honor, nor ease, nor long life on earth. For you may plainly see that we are made a prey to the world on account of it. But we are urged solely by the love of God, by an upright, fruitful faith, which faith industriously examines all the words of Christ, giving ourselves in willing obedience to God; knowing to a certainty that if we oppose, and do not

obey that which our Lord has commanded, we can never receive nor inherit the heavenly blessing and divine promise. For through obedience every thing is received, as has been mentioned in the preface, Matt. 3: 6; Acts 19: 18; 2: 38; 9: 6; 10: 48; 16: 30.

How could Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, together with all the beloved fathers and patriarchs, have obtained the consoling promise of God, if they had not done, be it ever so little, that which God had commanded them through his holy word? But they heard the word of God; firmly believed and obeyed it; and therefore they became joint heirs of righteousness, Heb. 11: 8.

On the contrary, however, all those who did not obey God, undoubtedly, must have borne the punishment of the Lord, as did Adam and Eve; Nadab and Abihu; Korah, Dathan and Abiram; as Saul; as the man of God who reproved Jeroboam the king, for his idolatry, and was deceived by the old prophet in Bethel, and other instances, which may be read of in Moses and other scriptural writings, Gen. 3: 17; Lev. 10: 2; Num. 16: 32; 1 Sam. 15: 23.

Since we are so pitifully opposed by all mankind in our doctrine and practice of the christian baptism, and since they do not realize that their opposition tends to eternal death, for they oppose Christ and his word; therefore I will again briefly show them and all persons, from the word of God who shall read, see or hear these my writings, how wonderfully, powerfully, nay, how incontrovertibly this our doctrine and practice are contained and founded on the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, although we have fully shown and proven this before, in our writings on baptism.

Most beloved, there are necessarily three reasons why our faith accepts this baptism under such a heavy cross and anxiety.

First, because of the divine commandment of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, which can never be broken. Secondly, because of the teaching of the holy apostles. Thirdly, because of the practice of these same apostles. And first of the commandment: After Christ Jesus had risen from the power of death and was going to ascend to his heavenly Father, he thus commanded his disciples, saying, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matt. 28: 19. Again, at another place, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," Mark 16: 15, 16. While, now, Jesus Christ, the eternal wisdom who cannot err, the eternal truth who cannot lie, has commanded this, namely, that we shall first preach the gospel, from the hearing of which comes faith, Rom. 10, and that we shall baptize those who believe, who will or who can, now, explain this divine commandment otherwise, or make it of more value than the eternal, wise, perfect, blessed Christ Jesus, has made and commanded it?

Brethren, it was not allowed to apply one single word of the Mosaic ceremonies different from what they were contained in the law. For the Almighty God will not that we should follow our own inclinations with regard to the ceremonies which he has commanded us, but alone desires us to observe his good will and pleasure; for that purpose he has commanded them. In the outward ceremonies alone God finds no pleasure; but he has commanded them because he requires of us faithful obedience. His wrath has often come on those who practiced his ceremonies differently from the commandment, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu and many others. For he will, yea, he will that we should not follow our own opinion, but that we should hear, believe and obey his holy voice, Jer. 7: 5—7.

If God would have his ceremonies under the law (which were numerous, and in one respect attended with trouble and expense, and which he commanded not through Christ, his Son, but through his servant Moses), kept thus strictly and unchanged until the time of Christ; how much more so

will he have the few ceremonies of the New Testament kept strictly and unchanged, which are but two in number, being baptism and the Supper, which he has commanded, not through his servant but through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and which are neither attended with trouble nor expense.

Consider how troublesome and expensive it was to the Israelites to travel a long distance over hill and dale, to appear two or three times a year before the Lord, at Jerusalem, with their offerings of bullocks, rams, goats and tenths, which they were bound to offer of all their goods, to the Lord. But the christian ceremonies of the New Testament, baptism and Supper, which are commanded us of God, are not at all attended with trouble or expense; although the meaning or representation of these ceremonies to true believers, is attended with great vexation to the flesh. This however is not caused by the ceremonies themselves, but alone through the faith which leads us to these ceremonies, out of love and obedience to the divine word. Most beloved, since the ordinance of Jesus Christ is unchangeable and the only one that is acceptable to the Father; and since he has commanded that we shall first preach the gospel and then baptize those who believe; it follows that all those who baptize and are baptized, without the teaching of the gospel and without faith, baptize and are baptized on their own opinion, without the doctrine and the ordinance of Jesus Christ, and therefore it is idolatry, useless and vain. For had Israel circumcised their females because it was not expressly forbidden, they would yet have circumcised without the ordinance of God, for he had commanded that the males were to be circumcised, Gen. 17: 10. The same it is in this instance. If we baptize the unconscious children, although Scripture has not expressly forbidden it, just as it was not forbidden to circumcise the females, we yet baptize without the ordinance of Jesus Christ; for he commanded to baptize those who should hear and believe his holy gospel, Gen. 17: 10; Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16; Acts 2: 38; 9: 18; 10: 48; 16: 33.

It avails nothing that some say that these

words of Matthew and Mark extend the holy church to the Gentiles, and that thereby the baptism of infants is not excluded. Beloved reader, it is true by this commandment the holy church is also extended to the Gentiles, to the fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures which long before had seen this through the Spirit, as Paul proves, Rom. 15. Yet the word stands firmly with regard to both Jews and Gentiles, namely, whosoever believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. Faith is before baptism. For faith is the beginning of all righteousness which avails before God, from which faith, baptism is the result as a sign and token of obedience. If the children, then, have faith, their baptism is not forbidden by the alleged words of Matthew and Mark.

Again, neither does it avail any thing that some allege and say, that the resurrection of the dead was not expressly written in the books of Moses, yet it was implied as Christ Jesus proved to the Sadducees from Exod. 3: 6, namely: I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. As in these words of Moses the resurrection is not expressed, yet it is implied, as God is no God of the dead but of the living, as Christ teaches, Matt. 22: 32; thus they say, infant baptism is not expressed in the gospel, yet it is implied. To this we reply: That the resurrection of the dead is no outward ceremony which God has commanded us to do; but it is something which God himself will accomplish in us by his Almighty power, therefore it is an invisible consolation in the hearts of all believers, which is comprehended by faith alone. But the baptism of unconscious children is an outward ceremony. If, then, it is an ordinance and word of God which has the promise, it must be plainly expressed in the Scriptures. If not, it cannot be called a ceremony of Christ.

Thirdly, neither does it avail that some allege and say, "Although the believing women have no express word of invitation to the Lord's Supper, neither were they at the celebration of the last Supper of the Lord, yet they are, for good reasons, admitted to the Supper, and it is the same with unconscious children. Although there is no express command for their baptism,

neither were they baptized of the Lord nor of his disciples so far as we can learn from the Scriptures; yet they are, for good reasons, admitted to baptism, the same as the believing women are admitted to the Supper."

Kind reader, this is a very crafty argument to deceive the simple and ignorant, for it savors highly of subtlety, but is not at all according to the example of Jesus Christ. Because the Holy Supper represents the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of our neighbors; both of which are known and practiced by the believing women as well as the believing men. If, then, the unconscious children have that which is represented by baptism, namely, death unto sin, the new life, Rom. 6: 4; the new birth, Jn. 3, the putting on of Christ, Gal. 3: 27, the moving, quickening Spirit by which we are baptized into the body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12: 13, and a good conscience, 1 Pet. 3: 16, as have the believing women of what is represented in the Holy Supper, then they should be baptized for the same reason that believing women are admitted to the Supper; but it neither will nor can ever be found in unconscious children.

Fourthly, it avails nothing that some allege from Ecclesiasticus 1: 14, that "To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and it was created with the faithful in the womb," and will be with the chosen women. If then, they say, "The fear of the Lord is created with the believing in the mother's womb, which fear is a fruit of faith, and as the fruit can not be before the tree, therefore the children from their mother's womb have a fruitful faith; if they have faith, then their baptism cannot be hindered according to the Scriptures." Not so, beloved reader, but judge every thing according to the word of God and his Spirit. For I do not doubt but that you will confess that the faith which avails with God, is a gift of God, from whence all righteousness proceeds, comes by the hearing of the divine word. If, now, it comes by hearing the divine word, as Paul teaches, how will it be found in unconscious children; for it is plain that they can not be taught, admonished or instructed, nay, they are more senseless and helpless at their birth than

the irrational creatures; so unconscious that they cannot be taught any thing about carnal things, until their hearing, comprehension and understanding have commenced to develop themselves. If they cannot be made to understand any thing visible, how can they, then, prematurely, that is, before they can comprehend things, be taught and instructed in invisible, celestial matters of the Spirit?

Secondly, you know and acknowledge that where there is a true faith there is the true knowledge of the difference between good and evil; the fear of God, the love of God and also of our neighbor, and the obedience to God and the desire after righteousness. It can not be otherwise than that a good tree bringeth forth good fruit. Faith works all manner of righteousness, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith," and "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Matt. 7: 18; Rom. 1: 17; Heb. 11: 1.

Say, dear reader, If faith ever begets good fruits, all manner of righteousness is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen—what fruits and righteousness do our little children beget, which are evidence of faith, and what do they hope for, and seek after but eating, drinking, laughter, crying, warmth, play, &c., as has been the nature of children from the beginning. Besides, they often show the growth of the evil, Adamic seed; and as they advance in youth they manifest it still more; but the fruits of faith, or of the new birth they do not show, as may be plainly observed, and if you do not observe it by daily experience, then believe the word of God, which will never deceive you. Thus Moses says, "Your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil," &c., Deut. 1: 39. They had no knowledge between good and evil, as it appears—where, then, is their faith which has the knowledge between good and evil?

Thirdly, you will acknowledge that all righteousness comes by faith as our controverters themselves allege and adduce in their opposition, Rom. 4: 5. Without faith there is no godly righteousness; therefore Paul says to the Hebrews (speaking of those of understanding years), that "Without

faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. 11: 6. Inasmuch as the children, then, have no faith by which they can realize what God is and that he is a rewarder of both good and evil, as they plainly show by their fruits—therefore they have not the fear of God, and consequently they have nothing upon which they should be baptized, yet they have the promise of everlasting life, out of pure grace. This is all that the Scriptures accord to them, and all that the word of God says of them, as will be shown below.

Inasmuch, then, as faith must be first and afterwards the righteous fruits which come by faith—such as the fear of God, the love of God, &c., which fruits do not appear in unconscious children, as has been often said; therefore we must presume that Ecclesiasticus does not teach that the fear of God is not in little children immediately after conception; but we are taught here that the fear of God is to the believing in the womb, that it will be given them in due time; because his eyes of fire, those eyes which from the beginning to the end foresaw all things; foresaw when they were yet in their mother's womb, that they in time would hear his holy voice, truly believe, and through faith fear God; and become righteous before him; for true faith cannot be without its fruits, as has been often proven.

If then, faith were in the little, unconscious children from conception, as our opponents say, it would be a fruitless faith, for they do not bring forth fruits; and therefore their preaching in this regard is in vain. For, if that were the case, faith would come by the creation, or conception, of the believing, and not by the preaching of the divine word. Not so, beloved reader. This is a sure, eternal, imperishable and an enduring rule of the divine truth, to fulfill all righteousness, namely: First, the true preaching of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ. Secondly, a desire to hear and understand. Thirdly, to cordially believe this gospel and to fulfill it in fruit. This being the case, it follows that the little, unconscious children have no faith, for they can not understand and learn. If they have no faith, they cannot have the fear of God. Therefore

our opponents cannot prove the justice of baptizing little, unconscious children, from this passage of Ecclesiasticus; but they must wait according to God's word until they can understand the holy gospel of grace, and sincerely confess it; then it is time, no matter how young or old they are, to receive christian baptism, as the infallible word of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ has taught and commanded all true believers, in his holy gospel, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16. If they die before maturity, that is in childhood, before they have come to years of understanding and before they have faith, then they die under the promise of God, and that by no other means than the precious promise of grace, given through Christ Jesus, Luke 18: 16; and if they become of understanding minds and have faith, they should then be baptized. But if they do not accept or believe the word when they shall have arrived at the years of understanding, no matter whether they are baptized or not, they will be damned, as Christ himself teaches, Mark 16: 16.

I know that there are a great many who will ask, "Why I, unlearned man, am not satisfied in regard to this matter with the doctrine of Martin Luther and other renowned doctors, who are versed in the Scriptures and many tongues and sciences—who teach, and particularly Luther, that faith lies dormant in little children the same as in a sleeping believer?"

To this I answer: In the first place, if there were such a dormant faith in little children (which, however, is nothing but invention), then it would not be proper to baptize such children so long as they would not verbally confess it and show it by their fruits. For the holy apostles did not baptize any believers while they were asleep, as we have shown in our former writings.

Secondly, I acknowledge and confess from my inmost heart, before you, and the whole world, that they and many others are well gifted with learning, eloquence, subtlety, languages and science, and that I, poor, ignorant man, am in comparison to them, as a fly is to an elephant; therefore I am heartily ashamed to write and speak against them, with my dull pen and awkward speech. Yet every reader should know

that however learned the beforementioned philosophers are, and however ignorant I am, yet our opinions avail the same with God and before him, for, without the command of the holy Scripture, nothing righteous can be done and nothing pleasing to God can be practiced, let him be whosoever he may. The holy Scriptures do not refer us to them nor to any other learned person, but to Christ Jesus, alone. Whenever such highly renowned men, by their subtle acuteness and artful philosophy try to take from us and garble the plain ordinances of Jesus Christ and of his apostles, we must, surely, consider their doctrine, in that respect, as doctrine of men and false; for Christ Jesus is not under them, but above them. Neither has he received his holy doctrine from them, but from his wise Father, Jn. 7: 24; 8: 26; 12: 46; 16: 13.

Since they, by their philosophy, assert that there is a dormant, unfruitful faith in unconscious children, evidently against all Scripture and truth, and that the children should be baptized upon such human phantasy; now, judge for yourselves, you who oppose me, which of the two I would better do—hear the holy word and ordinance of Christ Jesus, to whom the Father, together with all the prophets, have pointed me, or hear the learned, who, against his holy word and ordinance, would have me follow *their* opinion, which they have formed by garbling the Scriptures. Eradicate from your carnal hearts all partisanship and contention so that you can fairly judge of spiritual matters. God grant that all the learned and those that are taught of them, may acknowledge and teach truth, and fulfill it in their works, Amen.

Inasmuch as Christ Jesus has commanded his holy apostles that they should first teach the holy gospel of grace and then baptize those who should believe: we are, for the same reasons, urged by the love of God, to teach this christian baptism according to the word of God, and afterwards obediently receive it, and, by the grace of the Lord, to save it, to the honor of God, both in life and death; notwithstanding all the world opposes us.

TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES CONCERNING BAPTISM IN THE WATER.

Again, we are urged by the pure, chaste teaching of the holy apostles thus diligently to teach and receive this christian baptism: First, because it is written, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter," "Men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," Acts 2: 37, 38.

Most beloved, bear in mind, now and all the days of your lives, not only concerning baptism, but concerning all doctrine you may hear, lest you be deceived by false teaching, namely, as all the true prophets of God, who were between Moses and Christ, conformed their teaching to the doctrine of Moses, so the holy apostles, also, conformed their teaching to the doctrine of Christ Jesus, as he had commanded them, saying, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28: 20.

Therefore consider and ponder well that which shall be taught you, by the grace of the Lord, from the word of God, and you will clearly perceive from these words of Peter, how the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, concerning the new birth, should be understood thus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God," Jn. 3: 5. Beloved brethren, the new birth came to pass through the word of God. When this word was taught on the day of Pentecost, by Peter at Jerusalem, the multitudes heard it from his mouth and from the mouth of the other apostles; their hearts were pierced, for, by faith, they accepted these words, and therefore they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The same as Christ said to Nicodemus, when he first taught of the

birth from above, saying, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Behold, my chosen brethren! how harmonious are both master and disciples in their teachings, namely: First, the birth from above by which we become children of God. Secondly, the water by which the obedience of the children of God is shown. Thirdly, the communion of the Holy Ghost by which we are assured in our hearts of the grace of God, of the remission of sins, and of everlasting life through Christ Jesus our Lord, Jn. 1: 14; 3: 2.

Inasmuch as the holy Peter, who is the apostle of God, a true witness, sent by Jesus Christ with the word of everlasting life, enlightened and taught by the Holy Ghost, has thus taught and commanded us, namely, that we shall suffer ourselves to be baptized upon the confession of faith according to the command of the Lord, Mark 16: 16; in the name of Christ for the remission of sin, therefore we must receive this baptism the same as is commanded us in the Holy Scriptures, or else we cannot obtain remission of sins nor the Holy Ghost. For who has ever received remission of sins, contrary to the word of God? Surely, it is impossible that we can rob God of the remission of sins and of his Holy Ghost. If we, then, desire the remission of our sins and the Holy Ghost, we must do and fulfill all that which God, the Almighty Father has taught and commanded us through Christ Jesus his beloved Son, and through his holy apostles, in all spiritual matters.

Here it avails nothing that some teach and say, contrary to the holy Scripture, "That the little children are born of Adam, with a sinful or wicked nature, and that therefore they should be washed of their inherent guilt and sin, by baptism." To teach and believe thus, my brethren, is first, a fearful idolatry, and abominable blasphemy against the blood of Christ. There is no remedy, in heaven nor on earth, for our sins, whether they are inherent or

worldly, but the blood of Christ alone, as we have often shown in our first writings, 1 Pet. 1: 19; 1 Jn. 1: 7; Eph. 1: 7. If we ascribe the remission of sins to baptism and not to the blood of Christ, then we mould a golden calf and place it in the stead of Christ. For if we could be washed or cleansed by baptism, then Christ Jesus and his merits would be of none effect; otherwise we must admit that there are two means for the remission of sin which is not, nor ever can be; first, baptism; second, the blood of Christ. For the most holy and most precious blood of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ must and shall have the praise, as has been so clearly prophesied and testified of all the true prophets and apostles, throughout the Scriptures.

The believing receive remission of sins not *through* baptism, but *in* baptism, in this manner: as they now, sincerely believe the lovely gospel of Jesus Christ which has been preached and taught to them, which is the glad tidings of grace, namely, of the remission of sin, of grace, of peace, of favor, of mercy and of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, so they become of a new mind, deny themselves, bitterly lament their old, corrupted life, and look diligently to the word of the Lord, who has shown them such great love; to fulfill all that which he has taught and commanded them in his holy gospel, trusting firmly in the word of grace, in the remission of their sins through the precious blood and through the merits of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ.

They therefore receive the holy baptism as a token of obedience which proceeds from faith, as proof, before God and his church, that they firmly believe in the remission of their sins through Christ Jesus, as was preached and taught them from the word of God; therefore they receive remission of their sins in baptism, as the lovely promise of grace proclaims and represents; the same as the literal Israelites received remission of their sins by their offerings. For in case that we only sought outward baptism and trusted in the literal practice, and would yet continue in our old, corrupted walk, then indeed, all would be in vain, the same as it was in such case, a vain offering, amongst the ungodly and carnal Isra-

elites. For the Lord of lords so often complained through his holy prophets, that their offering was not pleasing to him, that it was nothing but a corrupt abomination and stench, before his holy eyes; inasmuch that they despised the law, love and the commandments of God, and lived according to the lusts of their flesh, Isa. 66: 4, 5; and other passages.

Secondly, we are not cleansed, in baptism, of our inherited sinful nature which is in our flesh, so that it is entirely destroyed in us, for it remains with us after baptism; but since the merciful Father, from whom are all good and perfect gifts, has graciously given us the most holy faith, so we manifest in the baptism we receive, that we desire to die unto the inherent, sinful nature, and destroy it, so that it will not any longer be master of our mortal bodies, Rom. 6: 12. Although such true believers are often overcome by sin, as John observes, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," 1 Jn. 3: 9.

Brethren, I repeat it, as the Israelites received remission of their sins, through the promise, with which were associated their offerings, when they offered with contrite hearts, not through the offering itself, for then it would be merit, but alone through the word of promise; for it is grace and not merit—so we receive remission of our sins, when we are true believers and are washed and cleansed in baptism, through the promise; not, I say, through the washing of water, for it is not merit, but through the promise, for it is grace, with which promise the Holy Spirit of God has associated the baptism of the believing, in the gospel, as Paul teaches, saying, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church," Eph. 5: 25—27.

Behold, most beloved, from this it is plain that we are not cleansed by the washing of water, but by the word of the Lord, as the holy Paul clearly teaches us in the before-mentioned words. Inasmuch as the little, unconscious children, by reason of their in-

capability of comprehending and understanding the preaching of the holy gospel, by which, alone, comes faith, Rom. 10: 17; by which faith, alone, God purifies our hearts, Acts 15: 9, and not by the outward baptism, as has been said before, and, inasmuch as the express command and word of God, which associates the promise with baptism, solely refers to those who are begotten of this same word and are thus cleansed in their hearts by faith, it therefore follows incontrovertibly therefrom, that these little children, notwithstanding that they are baptized under a false pretension and false explanation of the divine word, are not cleansed thereby, if they ever were unclean, which however is not the case. Why? Because the promise is not associated with their baptism. Therefore their baptism is not done according to the word; but in every respect contrary to the word. For the word requires faith, and they have no faith. Therefore their baptism is without doubt a baptism of their own choice, without God, without promise, yea, idolatrous, useless and in vain.

Whosoever now wants to oppose this, and does not want to believe the ordinance and word of God, let him take heed to what he does. For by infant baptism he nullifies the command of the Lord; tramples upon his precious blood (for he seeks righteousness in this baptism), and he establishes, contrary to the immutable ordinance of God, and of his own carnal choice, a false baptism which God never commanded. Therefore it neither is his holy will, as has been said above and as will be shown more extensively below.

Again the apostle Peter writes, As Noah, in his day, was saved in the ark from the waters of the deluge, so "even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. 3: 21.

By this passage of Peter, the baptism of the *believing* is again clearly affirmed and the baptism of infants nullified. For it is impossible that any one can have a good conscience but those, alone, who believe, and whose hearts are regenerated and converted; who acknowledge the divine word

which teaches that God the Almighty Father, whose enemies we were before, Rom. 5: 10, is now again reconciled through Christ Jesus, his beloved Son; that henceforth, through the merits of our beloved Lord, neither hell, devil, past sins, eternal death, nor the wrath of God will hurt or hinder us. All those who truly believe this, shall receive and obtain a joyous mind and good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ as Peter says; because he has so gloriously triumphed over all his enemies, visible and invisible, to our profit; and has again seated himself in heaven, at the right hand of his Father. Such, are first inwardly baptized with the Spirit and fire, according to the word of God, and are thus taught in their hearts by this Spirit, and are led in all divine truth, righteousness, obedience, and evangelical fruits and works. They are inwardly so enkindled with this fire of love, having become conscious, by the word of God, that such great grace, I repeat it, *grace*, has been bestowed on them through Christ Jesus, that they regard neither lords, princes, philosophers, learned men, councils, long usages, women, children, flesh, blood, decrees, nor any other threats; neither life nor death, but remain glad in Spirit, maintain, at the risk of home, not only the outward baptism, but also all the works of love and the fruits of righteousness, which the true mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ has taught and commanded us in his holy gospel, either himself or through his holy apostles.

Behold, beloved brethren, in this manner baptism saves us, as Peter teaches; not the outward literal baptism, but the inward, spiritual baptism, which as obedient children of God, has led us through the power of faith, to the outward literal baptism; for the outward, literal baptism is nothing more than obedience to the divine word, and thus it is a seal or proof of the righteousness from whence the true, fruitful faith comes; the same as was the literal circumcision to the believing and obedient Abraham, Rom. 4: 10, 11.

Since Christ Jesus has commanded that we should baptize the believing, Mark 16: 16—therefore holy Peter followed the commandment in his teachings; and has

taught baptism to be a work of faith, namely, the answer of a good conscience toward God, which answer none can experience but those alone who have faith. Inasmuch as there is but one literal baptism taught in Scripture, which baptism shows and is proof of the answer of a good conscience toward God, as Peter teaches, and thus by this Scripture of Peter, infant baptism is prohibited; for they cannot have this consciousness like the believing. Therefore take heed, kind reader, whosoever you are, lest you offend God. For all those who thus lamentably oppose this evangelical baptism of the believing, which baptism is so pointedly commanded of Jesus Christ, and is thus taught and practiced by his holy apostles, either by doctrine, word or sword, must confess and acknowledge that they were hitherto neither right believing, regenerated, obedient, nor inwardly baptized with the Spirit and fire. Again, let every one of you beware and take heed for it does not concern anything temporal, but it concerns your poor, naked souls which have been so dearly bought and delivered by such a precious treasure.

Beloved children in the Lord, however incontrovertibly our cause is confirmed and founded in the word of God, yet some are not ashamed, persistently and continually to write, talk, and slander against us; advising and exciting persecution, slaughter and blood-shed against us; in part I presume from ignorance, partly out of partiality, and because they are enemies of the cross of Christ and because they do not desire the lovely, spiritual life which is of God; and say, "Although infants have not the answer of a good conscience, as the believing have, yet this should be no cause of not administering baptism to them; but they ought to be baptized, that they may the better receive instruction in the word and commandments of God."

Most beloved brethren, when an idolatrous, refractory and disobedient person has not the word of God wherewith to defend his cause, he yet acutely invents something wherewith he can so beautify and adorn his invention and carnal righteousness with a semblance of divinity and holiness, that it seems quite right, just,

spiritual, holy, divine and unblamable in the sight of those who are not versed in spiritual matters of faith; and the more so because their unchristian hearts and carnal minds are prone to trust in outward works, yea, through their own choice and opinion, as I understand it. If I write wrongly, then rebuke me according to the word of God; for the greater part of them have always sought righteousness in wrought ceremonies, and not in Christ, as is evident from the fact that, as now, the unintelligent teachers and bishops in the days of the apostles, or soon after, commenced the practice of infant baptism, contrary to the command of God and the doctrine of the holy apostles, as may be readily perceived in the book of Tertullian, called "*Corona Milites*." He writes that among the ancients almost invariably the adults were baptized with the washing of regeneration. Understand me rightly brethren. Tertullian lived one hundred and eight years after Christ, some say one hundred and forty years. As early as in the days of these ancient writers, the true, evangelical baptism, which was commanded by Christ and taught and practiced by his holy apostles, had become degenerated with many, which baptism he clearly testifies that the ancients almost invariably practiced upon adults. If now, brethren, it were so that the ancients, who were before him, already baptized infants, as it appears, and to which we consent, because he says *almost invariably*; and in another place in the same book, as the Strasburgian philosophers write of him, he says, "That in the same fount or water-bath, both children and adults were baptized." Nevertheless, infant baptism was no apostolic institution nor practice, nor a divine command; for if Christ had commanded it, and the holy apostles had taught and practiced it, then the ancestors of Tertullian would not have baptized some infants, but all the infants of upright, believing parents, indiscriminately.

That it is no divine command nor apostolic institution, was well known and shown by the beloved, aged father, Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, who was a particular opponent of Arrius; for he, so long after the days of the apostles, did not bap-

tize the infants of his church, as may be plainly seen and understood from the Church History of Eusebins, Vol. 10, Chap. 14, translated by Ruffinis, on "The play of Children," by Anthanasius. Therefore the intelligent and learned Erasmus, of Rotterdam, as Sebastian Franck writes of him, who had perused and understood all the noteworthy writers of the world say, That the ancient fathers disputed about infant baptism, but never settled it.

Behold, kind reader, inasmuch as the ancients, from the beginning, were not unanimous in this matter; and inasmuch as they did not all practice infant baptism, as appears from Tertullian and Alexander; and as those who practiced infant baptism have ever sought righteousness therein, as may be seen by their writings—therefore we will not place our foundation upon that which is uncertain, but upon that which is certain, which is Christ's word. Neither will we seek our righteousness in the outward baptism nor in any other works, as does the world, but in Christ Jesus, as all the Scriptures teach us. Herewith we desire to present our cause to the consideration and judgment of all the world and let them tell whether they have ever read in the word of God, I say in the *word of God* or in his gospel, that Christ Jesus and his holy apostles taught two different baptisms in the water, namely, that one baptism should be administered to the believing, which baptism represents death unto sin, a new life, the answer of a good conscience toward God, and the washing of regeneration, Rom. 6: 12; Col. 2: 12; 1 Pet. 3: 21; Tit. 3: 5; and that the other baptism should be administered to infants, which signifies nothing only that they should be outwardly washed with water.

Brethren, judge rightly and do not deceive your souls. We know that they first say "That infants are cleansed of their inherent sins and that therefore their baptism is not in vain." To this we reply with the word of God: That such belief is abominable idolatry; for in this case the blood of Christ avails, and not the outward baptism, as has been shown above.

In the second place they say, "That thereby they are accepted into the covenant

of God." To this we reply again: That this is not because of baptism, but alone through the mild election of grace, Eph. 1: 6; for it is grace and not merit, Rom. 11: 6. >

In the third place they say, "That children should be baptized that they may the better be trained in the word of God and his commandments." To this we reply again: That we desire to know where such is expressed and written in the holy Scriptures. Give a discreet answer, we pray you, who assert infant baptism to be right, just and necessary, and who so lamentably slander and profane us on account of baptism, that we may no longer be deceived in our hearts; but that we may assuredly know by the word of God where to find this infant baptism. For however industriously we may search day and night, we yet find but one baptism in the water, pleasing to God, which is expressed and contained in his word, namely: Baptism on the confession of faith, commanded by Christ Jesus, taught and administered by his holy apostles, which is administered and received for the forgiveness and remission of sins in such a manner, as we have fully proven above by the words of Peter, Acts. 2: 38. But of this other baptism, that is, infant baptism, we find nothing.

< Because this infant baptism is nowhere commanded nor implied in the divine word, therefore we take issue with you and all the world, that we regard it not only as vain; but we believe and proclaim it as idolatrous, useless, and unavailable, not only by words merely, but at the cost of our lives, as has been proven by events in many countries of Germany. The reason is this, because it is administered without the word and commandment of God; because righteousness is sought therein; and because the true baptism of the believing must be so lamentably rejected and trampled upon, by the whole world, as an heretical baptism, as far as the name of Christ is mentioned. < Therefore, brethren, it is nothing but opinion and human righteousness, to teach, without the word of God, that infants should be baptized, that they may be the better trained in the word of God and his commandments; as we find to

the contrary that, although these parents have their infants baptized, they yet, from youth on, are trained by these same parents in this Adamic nature, in all manner of pride, pomp, avarice, vanity, lying, cursing, swearing, dancing, singing, foolishness, artfulness, hatred, enmity, revengefulness and to the accursed life of this world, the same, as from the beginning the heathen have done who never confessed God.

What profits such baptism as they have received? Is it not merely folly, deceit, mockery and shame in the sight of God? Certainly. Beware. There can be no greater hypocrisy, mockery or blasphemy in his sight. Inasmuch as, perhaps, the secret awfulness which is hidden in infant baptism, is not yet rightly understood by you—therefore I will briefly present the matter, that you may the better distinguish between truth and falsehood. I will present to you that which for many centuries, as all men may have seen, has been of daily occurrence and which, alas, yet occurs daily.

In the first place, we will imagine an extremely corrupted, ungodly, carnal knave who is yet called a priest, pastor, vicar or prebendary by the world. This same unchaste man, full of all manner of roguery and deceit, covers his condemnable knavery with such a pleasant semblance that none suspicion him, as does the ravening wolf in sheeps clothing, Matt. 7:5. His head is frequently shaven, perhaps, as proof that he wants thus violently to shave off and destroy all lusts and desires of his wicked, sinful flesh; he desires to walk in long robes, as Christ says, Luke 20:46, as if he were pious, holy and venerable; he daily reads his prayers with folded hands and uncovered head, as if he were very ardently inspired; he kneels and burns incense before stone and wooden blocks, which he calls Peter, Paul, Mary and the worthy crucifix of the Lord. I tell this verily without facetiousness, of which God is my witness. Judge now whether this is not the case.

Besides he buys a hundred wafers for a stiver, takes one at a time, consecrates it as he says, and that mentally, without saying a word, nods to it, worships, implores and eats it; and this same thing he believes

and teaches to be the true flesh and blood of our beloved Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Almighty and living God. Besides he must be so pure and chaste in his walk that he is not allowed to have a legitimate or wedded consort, although the Holy Scriptures allow it, but the Pope has forbidden it. All these and other abominations he calls and teaches to be the holy worship, and the most holy, christian faith. Such fruits are begotten and produced by this evil tree, by the faith that is within him; and after he has orderly, sumptuously and well performed his carnal holiness, he proves his inward holiness, by seeking the best female company, wine and beer; drinks, sings, dances, laughs, shouts, scolds, fights, curses, swears, boasts, plays, courts and defiles himself with his female servant, his neighbors daughter, or wife whose husband perhaps is at sea, or some other place, trying to earn a livelihood by the labor of his hands. Thus he lives in shameful adultery until, by the fruits thereof, it can no longer be concealed, when the blame is cast upon some one else, and the fruit (understand what I write), is disposed of, and by falsehood and deception their shame and adultery are concealed.

Behold, brethren, they of whom such illegitimate children are born, have been baptized in their infancy, claiming thereby to be christians; they boast of Jesus Christ and of his precious blood. But we may see by their fruits what kind of christians they are, and what kind of faith they have.

Therefore I tell you these things, O kind reader, that you may know in the first place, what kind of christian parents these are, what kind of faith they have, of whom some children are born who are, notwithstanding all this, carried to the baptism and are baptized on the faith of their hypocritical parents, and are therefore called christians. O, abominable mockery!

In the second place, I find at many places, throughout the world, numbers of vain and abandoned characters, some of them sanctified, others not, some claiming nobility, in a worldly sense, some of large means, some of mediocrity, some poor, in short, of all classes, who, in the same manner, live in all manner of debauchery, vanity, inebriety

and uncleanness, according to their shameful, inordinate lusts and devilish desires, and in all manner of fornication and adultery. They seduce all they can, notwithstanding they are baptized. And when they, by their recklessness, have succeeded in accomplishing the ruin of such simple and uncircumspect souls who are also born of Adam, and who are, perhaps, deceived by false promises and gifts, and led there-to by their accursed actions, then yet, it must be considered by those of their class as a great honor and respectability, as the prophet says. Yet, notwithstanding all this, these same persons alike carry the children who are thus illegitimately born of such profaners, rogues and abandoned women, to the baptism, that they may be called christians and be trained up in the same works and fruits as their adulterous parents, in whom and by whom they are conceived, and begotten in accursed and damnable adultery. O, unbelief!

In the third place, I find almost universally, both among men and women of whatever class or condition they are, noble, rich, poor, citizen or yeoman, who were baptized in infancy, and on that account are called christians, yet they lead such sinful lives that we can form no idea thereof. Their pride, unchastity, avarice, fraud in buying and selling, quarreling, hatred, unrighteousness, unmercifulness towards the tenant and the poor, their cursing, swearing, lying, cheating, pomp, debauchery, drinking, vanity, foolery, blood-thirstiness, cruelty, hypocrisy, tyranny, transgressions, idolatry and all manner of wickedness know no bounds.

If there are some who are not guilty of all the beforementioned vices, on account of their natural indisposition thereto, it must be admitted that there is not one in a thousand who industriously seeks and desires to walk according to the commandments of God, or to live according to his blessed will. Nor do they ask for the right way to eternal life that they may be saved; yet they must be called the right, christian church. Thus has God, the righteous judge, obscured the understanding and natural intellect of those who reject his holy word,

and who make and honor things of their own choice, as an idol.

Notwithstanding the heathenish life of both father and mother, yet their infants which are born of them must, without the word of God and merely out of their own choice, be conjured, blessed, rubbed with spittle, anointed, crucified and baptized, and after this has been done at the instance of their parents, although contrary to the commandment of God, they are called believing, christian people, no matter how ungodly, inhuman and devilish a life they lead; and are admitted and received into the church as full and proper members.

O, Lord, Father, how very broad, easy and pleasing to the flesh is the entrance into this miserable, carnal church; for it is all as said, no matter who, or what, or how he is, it is all right, if he has but been sworn before a fountain, and washed and baptized in it by an idolater. But how wonderfully narrow, O Lord, is thy way, and how very strait is the gate which leadeth into thy poor and holy church. Yea, so narrow that on its posts are stripped off gold and possessions, flesh and blood and all the lusts and inclinations of those who desire and sincerely seek to enter in at this narrow gate; and thus, by thy grace, to rest and remain forever in thy holy church, Matt. 7: 13.

Behold, kind readers, I have referred to this in this manner, first, that you may the better conceive and understand what kind of christians, those are, what kind of faith they have, and what kind of life they lead, to whom infant baptism has been administered and who now have it administered to their children, that the true, divine knowledge may multiply in you, that you may rightly comprehend, by the word of God, what abominable mockery and hypocrisy infant baptism is before the Almighty God; and that there is no other fruitful, pleasing and available baptism before God, than alone the baptism which is administered and received according to the command of Christ, Mark 16: 16; namely, the baptism upon the confession of faith, as has been frequently remarked. Secondly, I must refer you, in the same manner, to how wonderfully far the custom of the godfathers,

who lift the child upon the basin and answer their confession of faith, is different from the Spirit, commandment and word of Christ, that by all these facts, falsehood, unbelief, abuse, and satanic imposture may appear to you and be demolished; and that, on the other hand, truth, faith, the right practice and the divine will may be made known and acted upon.

Inasmuch as Christ commanded that the baptized should first believe, Mark 16: 16, before baptism should be administered, Acts 8: 38, and as the world well knew that infants had no faith; and as they, notwithstanding this, would have unconscious infants baptized, as human righteousness ever has looked upon, profaned, persecuted, despised and rejected the righteousness of God as useless, imperfect and foolish; therefore the ninth or tenth pope, named Higinus, without any commandment of God, hit upon a happy idea, with which the world has hitherto been well satisfied, and by means of which they baptized their infants, and those who feared God more, and therefore understood the word of God better, were for the greater part thereby excommunicated as heretics. This means was this: That some should be chosen from the church, whom they called godfathers, who should lift the children up to the fountain, to be baptized, and who should care for and answer to the faith of the child. Most beloved reader, it is true this matter has a fine appearance and show, but is not in accordance with Christ's Spirit and meaning because the practice of godfathers is a human institution, as history plainly shows; therefore I am at a loss to know why it is that all the learned of the upper and eastern countries yet have this practice of godfathers, since they have so bravely and incessantly written, taught and battled with the word of God, against all human institutions and teachings; for nowhere in the divine word are we taught the practice of such godfathers, in any manner whatever; but every where ⁱⁿ the Scriptures where baptism is spoken of, it is shown in very plain characters that the baptized must believe for themselves, must confess it verbally and by their works, and thus desire and receive baptism as a commandment of God, Mark 16: 16,

Acts 2: 38; 8: 36; 10: 48; 16: 33; and other passages.

Again, if it were even so that the practice of godfathers was in accordance to the word of God or the commandment of Christ, which however is not so, O, how extensively and closely, and with what great care we would have to search, in city and country, for a suitable person to discharge the duties of such an office. For, How can one blind man lead another? How can one fool make another wise? How can one poor person be surety for another? Understand what I write. In the same manner one unbelieving person can be no surety for the faith of another; "For every man shall bear his own burden," Gal. 6: 5. Neither can he teach nor advocate the faith of another so long as he himself has no true, christian faith; for whatever I am to teach another I must understand myself; and prayer must be the prayer of faith, Jas. 5: 16, in Spirit and in truth, Jn. 4: 24.

As the unbelieving cannot be surety, before God, for the faith of another, nor teach him faith, nor advocate it, even if the practice of godfathers were founded on the ordinance of God, which however it is not, so it must be acknowledged and admitted, that the practice of godfathers in infant baptism is entirely vain, useless and unavailable. I will leave every intelligent christian to judge what faith there is in the godfathers.

I know that I will be asked if there are no right, believing godfathers, who with good consciences, hold the infants to the basin? To this I briefly answer: No. For, in the first place, it is human righteousness, contrary to the word of God, and without the ordinance of Christ; and therefore it can not be practiced with a good conscience. In the second place I admit that there are godfathers who are honorable and virtuous; but, truly, I do not know that they are truly believing; for if they were true believers it would be impossible that they could ever be led to practice such abominable shame with infants, without the word of Christ. For there is no word to be found in all the apostolic Scriptures which in any manner teaches and commands us such a thing; not to say any thing about the impurity,

avarice, pomp, ignorance concerning divine matters, idolatry, foolishness, vanity, refractoriness against God and his blessed word, and of the accursed, carnal life of most of those who are called to this office by the church, that the faith of the parents and of the godfathers alike, upon which they baptize these infants and through which they are thought to acquire faith themselves, may go over on them; as we have too often seen that the one adulterous knave calls upon the other; one drunkard on the other; or one proud person upon the other. By their works they show plainly that it is not of God; but that it is deceit, devilish hypocrisy, human righteousness, blasphemy, mockery, destruction of the ordinances of Christ, and, in every respect contrary to the blessed word of God.

Behold, worthy brethren, in the course of time they have thus subtly converted and changed the heavenly doctrine, and lovely ordinance of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ into such unclean mocking, abuse and shameful practice. O, Lord, Father of grace, that this fearful and abominable snare and imposture to our miserable souls, might once be destroyed, Amen.

In the third place, as we have first shown you the faith and life of the parents; second, the command, faith and life of the godfathers, we will now show you who those are whose office it is to baptize these infants and thus to make christian people out of them, and will point you, faithful reader, to your own pastor, vicar, prebendary or chaplain, as you call them. Yea to all the priests round about you; that you may closely scrutinize them according to the word of God, and see if there is one amongst all of them, I say *one*, however many there may be, who is called of an unblamable, christian church, who is moved by the Holy Spirit, and who is unblamable in both doctrine and life. O, brother, not one, no, not one, however far you may travel, and however industriously you may search. Their calling is of the dragon and of the beast. They have nothing which forces them to this office, but, solely, their lazy, greedy, avaricious, proud and gluttonous flesh. Their teaching for the greater part, is merely

spiritual enchantment of the bottomless pit and a cause for shedding innocent blood. Besides, their daily walk is so shameful, unclean, sodomic, adulterous, lustful, greedy, avaricious, backbiting, envious, unmerciful, treacherous, ambitious, blind, ungodly, fearful and so abominable that all reasonable men, the angels of God and the heavens must be astounded and ashamed thereat.

Say, kind reader, is it not so? Have you, ever found greater pride, avarice, gluttony, adultery, fornication, spitefulness, hypocrisy, mockery and shame than is found amongst them? I am aware that they are not all alike unchaste and shameful in their daily walk; yet there is not one amongst them, however finely he appears before the world, but his worship and life is of the flesh—of the devil; contrary to God and his blessed word.

Worthy, beloved brethren, he who knoweth all things, knows that I do not write this with hatred or with bad intentions. Therefore, judge for yourselves all things according to the word of God, and according to your rational, natural understanding; as you may daily perceive these things amongst them. You will without doubt acknowledge that I have discovered and presented to you nothing but the truth, out of love for your salvation. Say, have I done wrong to discover and present unto you the wiles of a thief or murderer? Pluck from your eyes this accursed and abominable blindness, and look to the truth of your Lord; root all unbelief from your obscured hearts, and believe the word of God. Behold, the holy apostle Paul says, “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 no not to eat.” A proof that, although they call themselves brethren or christians, they are not in the church of Christ on account of their disreputable life. For the church of Christ is holy, pure and unblamable. In another place he teaches that such shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Rom. 1: 32; 1 Cor. 5: 11; Gal. 5: 22; Eph. 5: 6.

Now if they are not in the church of Christ, and if they cannot inherit the king-

dom of God, tell me what things divine, or christian can then be served or practiced by them in the house of the Lord, that is, in the church of Christ? Notwithstanding that we should not keep the company of such, nor eat with them, and notwithstanding they have not the promise of salvation according to Paul, on account of their unbelief and their terrible, wicked, beastly life, yet the world is so blinded by them and so estranged from God that they look upon, honor and accept them as true shepherds, teachers and pastors who have power from God to do anything they please while they only make their pretensions under the false cover of christianity and of the holy, christian church, as they call it. O, blindness!

These are they, O ye men, who yet this day are allowed to mislead the whole world by their false doctrine, and to uselessly bless, conjure and baptize infants, without the word or command of God, notwithstanding that the most holy gospel of Jesus Christ opposes and rebukes such things.

As these spiritual fathers or teachers are, so also are their children who are begotten of them, that is, those whom they teach and baptize as they plainly prove and verify by their fruits.

Behold, brethren, by no other means than by these beforementioned teachers and infant baptists, the church of Christ is converted into such a work of hypocrisy, shame, mockery, deceit, degeneration, knavery and prostitution. O, misery of misery!

Now you have presented to you, first, the parents of whom the children are born, with their unbelief and carnal life; secondly, the papal godfathers, together with their abuse, unbelief and evil fruits, who lift the children to the basin for baptism, and answer their confession. Thirdly, the teachers, or baptizers together with their sending, calling, doctrine, idolatry, unbelief, and ungodly works, who baptize the infants, and, as they call it, cleanse and wash them of their inherent sins; all of which parties, namely, parents, godfathers and baptizers, themselves feel in their hearts neither knowledge, faith, truth, love, fear of God, gospel, christian fruits, obedience, remission of sins, peace of mind, prayer, promise, God, Christ, Spirit, nor eternal

life; but are only nominal christians. These deliberately claim to make a christian out of a child just taken from the mother's womb, which can neither stand, walk, hear, speak, nor comprehend; which for lack of understanding, is as the irrational animals; which cannot distinguish between good and evil; without the word and without faith—by no other means than by crucifixes, breathing, salt, oil, crisma, candles, clothing, useless questions and answers, blessings, conjuring, baptizing, offering, and such like abominations, and when this noisy, idolatrous hypocrisy has been practiced upon the infants, then they are christian people, as the nurses tell the mother after these things have been performed, saying, we have received from you a heathen but a christian we return and deliver to you again.

The next thing in order, is setting the table. Victuals and drink are prepared, the neighbors and friends partake thereof, and the parents are well satisfied with their baptized infant. And from that hour it is trained in all manner of foolishness, unbelief, vanity, sin, shame, wickedness, idolatry and all manner of carnal and devilish works; in a manner, that no knowledge, faith, fear, and love of God, evangelical truth and life can ever take root in it. And should anything occur that something christian-like would spring up in it, then it will have to suffer much and bear the cross of Christ. I repeat it, because of this baptism it is henceforth considered a christian person, no matter how it acts. Behold, beloved brethren, they call this the holy church of to-day, and in this manner one of these christians begets the other, until the world is full of them.

Honored reader, understand rightly what I have written unto you, for I have treated so extensively of this matter that you may be convinced of what a secret, hidden snare and what a terrible, fearful idol, infant baptism is against God; and how very useless and idolatrous it is to teach that infants should be baptized that they may be the better trained in the word and commandments of God. Thus human doctrine ever puts on a fine and holy air, but in fact it is,

verily nothing but hypocrisy, falsehood and a deadly venom.

<Those who do not depend on this anti-christian, infant baptism, but practice the true, christian baptism which was commanded of Christ Jesus and taught and practiced by his holy apostles, take care of the salvation of their children. Therefore they train them in the fear of God by teaching, admonishing and chastising them, and with an example of an unblamable life, that when they become of mature years, they may hear, believe and accept the most holy gospel of Jesus Christ, and receive the holy, christian baptism, as Jesus and his holy apostles have taught all the believing of God, in divers places of the New Testament.

In the third place, Paul, also, teaches us so, saying, "Know ye not, 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 like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life," Rom. 6: 3, 4.

Here the baptism of the believing is again undeniably confirmed, and infant baptism is made void. For as Christ Jesus commanded that we should baptize the believing, Mark 16: 16, so, also, it is evident from these words of Paul that baptism represents and signifies something which none can realize but those, alone, who are believing, namely, it represents death unto sin or a burying of the old life, and a resurrection into newness of life.

Since Paul says, This christian baptism is such a death unto sin, and a raising up into a new life, therefore they must confess and admit that none can die unto, and bury his shameful lusts and desires, his inordinate, carnal, ungodly life; and that none can raise up into a pious, unblamable, godly life but those, alone who, as obedient children of God, are taught and regenerated by the word of the Lord; which spiritual death, burial and resurrection are represented in holy baptism. At another place Paul calls it the spiritual circumcision, saying, "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of

Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead," Col. 2: 11, 12.

Inasmuch as it clearly appears that the believing alone die unto their sins, and bury them, and, with Christ, enter into, and are raised up into the new, godly life; and as little children cannot do this because they have no faith by which God operates in his children, therefore it must be acknowledged and admitted, whether they are willing or not, that infant baptism is not commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ, nor taught or implied in the apostolic doctrine.

Kind reader, it is sometimes alleged that other apostles also left Scripture behind them; which Scriptures Pope Gelasius has selected, and that perhaps infant baptism was expressed and implied in them.

Beloved reader, if our opponents build their cause upon the selected Scriptures of the apostles and have no certainty therefrom, but only presuming that infant baptism may have been expressed therein, we would discreetly answer, and ask, first, since they refer to the apostolic Scriptures which we do not have, we would like to know of them what these apostles have taught and commanded concerning infant baptism?

Secondly, as they seek to establish their doctrine by uncertain Scriptures which they do not have, and that only on presumption, they show thereby that they are unable to verify their doctrine at all by the apostolic Scriptures which we now have.

Thirdly, we say that we should not teach and practice the ceremonies of the Lord, namely: The holy baptism, upon presumption and adventure, but on certainties.

Fourthly, we say that the apostles have all written, taught and preached in one spirit. <Inasmuch as Christ Jesus has commanded baptism on the confession of faith, Mark 16: 16, and as Peter, Paul and Philip taught and practiced, according to the commandment of Christ, the baptism of the believing, and not of infants, therefore you may surely deduce therefrom that it was not taught and practiced differently by the other apostles whose Scriptures we do not

have; even if they had written and published six hundred volumes. For if infant baptism was an apostolic institution it would appear so in their Scriptures. Nor would Tertullian, who lived not long after the days of the apostles, have written, that among his ancestors, almost invariably adults were baptized, as has been said above. Also would Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, have baptized the infants of his church; and the ancients would not have disputed about it, as all those who feared God would act according to the Scriptures and not deviate therefrom; for what God-fearing person would dare to despise, oppose, or in any manner contradict an apostolic institution or practice?

Those who did not rightly confess Christ, but sought their righteousness and placed their trust in outward ceremonies, got the upper hand of the world; and therefore it was not necessary that this infant baptism should be confirmed by any papal decree or council, as it gradually and of its own accord stole its way into all classes, nations and tongues and took its full sway; for the whole church, after the demise of the apostles, through the ignorant teachings of the bishops, gradually degenerated from the trust in Jesus Christ to the trust in outward ceremonies, as may be plainly seen.

Again, brethren, however plain this passage of Paul, Rom. 6, applies to the believing, yet the learned of this barren world have inverted and explained it as confirming and asserting infant baptism, saying, *That infants should be baptized that they may become partakers of the death and holy blood of Christ Jesus; and that when they become of mature age, they may die unto sin and walk righteously before God.*

My beloved children in Christ Jesus, if it would do thus to bend, twist and garble, of our own choice, and carnal fancy, the plain truth and will of God and the most holy and glorious gospel of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, then verily, I do not see why we could not so adorn and beautify almost any abomination or idolatry as to give it a good appearance in the sight of the ignorant. No, most beloved, no. The eternal, omnipotent, and saving word of God, must be taught, explained and understood ac-

cording to the true meaning of the Holy Spirit. For they baptize before that which is represented by it (namely, faith,) is found in us. This is no more sensible than to place the cart before the horse, to sow before we have plowed, to build before we have the lumber at hand, or to seal the letter before it is written. Would this not be ridiculed by all the world as foolishness? Yes, certainly. Therefore the Holy Spirit of God did not *imply* infant baptism in this beforementioned Scripture of Paul. Yet they are partakers of the death and blood of Christ by the precious promise which was graciously given of God through Christ Jesus our Lord, and not through baptism, Luke 18:16.¹ But this passage of Paul speaks and teaches of those who, in their baptism, through their new birth from above and through their fruitful, operating faith, have died unto and buried their old, sinful life, as Christ Jesus once died in his flesh and was buried. For whosoever thus died with Christ, is already justified of his sins, and is thus victoriously raised up, with Christ, from the power of sin, to the praise of the Lord, in a new, just, godly, and unblamable life, which is by no other means than through God's word alone, which is accepted and believed by them through faith, as has been alleged above, and is written "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead," Col. 2:11, 12.

O, beloved brethren, open the eyes of your hearts and understanding and take heed; for he who will not willfully battle against his God, or his holy word, certainly, can not mistake these plain words of Paul. Yet Henry Bullenger and many others, on the strength of this epistle to the Colossians, have taught baptism to have taken the literal place of the Israelitic circumcision, although without a good reason and without the Scriptures, yet not without a good deal of blasphemy and vituperation. For what reason they have done so, I do not know; perhaps because Paul has so

closely placed together and so intimately connected both the spiritual circumcision and the baptism of the believing or upright christians.

O, Lord, thy divine, blessed word is ever garbled into a shelter for all manner of false doctrine, heresy and wrong doing, so that the Bible is called by some the book of heresy! Notwithstanding their opposition and subtle lying and philosophizing, the eternal truth of God shall obtain and triumph in the chosen children of God who sincerely desire and seek the same.

I repeat it that I am heartily ashamed to write or speak one single word against such highly renowned and learned men. But what will we do? It will never do to be robbed, by these learned men, of God's eternal truth which leads to eternal life, and which was so plainly taught us by Jesus Christ our Lord, and by his holy apostles. For, verily, I find nowhere that we should follow and obey such learned men rather than Christ and his holy apostles. If it should be said that they are wise and pious, I say that Christ is the most wise and pious; and if it be said that they are versed in many tongues and sciences, I rejoin, briefly, that the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ is not bound by tongues and science. Therefore the most holy and invincible truth of God must be defended and maintained by us, not only against them, but against all the gates of hell, by the most holy word of God, in so far as God has bestowed on us grace, mercy and knowledge.

For this reason I will refer all my readers to Col. 2: 12, and would humbly beseech them to judge impartially whether we find in this or any other divine Scriptures that the *circumcision of the Israelites was the prototype of infant baptism*. It is incontrovertible that Paul, in this passage and also in Rom. 2: 29, taught that the literal circumcision was a figure of the spiritual circumcision and not of infant baptism, which circumcision cannot be applied to any but the believing as may be plainly inferred from the figurative, literal practice; for the literal circumcision was to be performed with *stone knives on the foreskin,

Josh. 5: 2, 3; Gen. 17: 23. This spiritual Rock is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 10: 4, the knife with which the believing are circumcised is his holy word. Brethren, understand it well. If we wish to remain with believing, circumcised Abraham in the covenant with God—into which covenant we are all graciously accepted, young and old, male and female, through Christ Jesus and not through any sign—then our earthly, carnal birth which is of the earthly, carnal Adam, must be circumcised with this same, stone knife, which is Christ Jesus and his holy word. Therefore examine the beforementioned words of Paul to the Colossians, and judge whether they are spoken in regard to the believing or to unconscious infants. Say, who is it that is circumcised by the circumcision of Christ? Is it not the believing? Who is it that has put off the body of sin by the circumcision of Christ? Is it not the believing? Who is it that is buried in baptism with Christ? Is it not the believing? Who is it that is raised up into a new life by the faith of the operation of God? Is it not the believing? Yea, they are those who hear the word of God and believe it; and not the little infants. Never.

Kind reader, since the infant baptizers seek to prove their cause by the circumcision of Abraham and by his promise, therefore observe and ponder how unreasonably they make this assertion; and observe and ponder also on that which will be briefly taught and presented by us, from Scriptural truth.

In the first place, as we said before, we are all accepted into the covenant with God, not by any signs but by grace, and have obtained the promise by it, if we accept them by faith and walk according to the will of the giver; as Abraham was accepted of God by grace, from amongst the nations, and was made glad with the promise of grace; for he accepted it by faith, and walked according to the will of him who had accepted him as the Scriptures say, He believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness, Gen. 15: 6; Rom. 4: 3; Gal. 3: 6; Jas. 2: 23.

To all those who are thus, by faith, graciously accepted of God into the covenant of peace with Abraham, God has given his ceremonies and figurative signs. Not that

*German translation of the Bible.

they should thereby be justified (for if it were by the signs it would not be grace, Rom. 11: 6), but that they should be justified by faith; be children of God, children of the promise, &c., that they should show their obedience to the commandments of God who has graciously called, accepted and consoled them by his promise. For those that are obedient unto God, are his friends, Jn. 15.

Behold, brethren, this is one reason why God commanded his ceremonies, as is plainly shown in the case of Abraham; for Abraham was already in the covenant with God, before he was circumcised; as Paul shows, that his faith was already counted for righteousness when he was yet uncircumcised; and because he was in the covenant with God, justified by faith therefore God commanded him the circumcision, in itself a useless and dishonorable ceremony. First, it was in itself quite useless, because it did not benefit any neighbor. Secondly, dishonorable, for it is performed upon the most dishonorable member of the body. And it was commanded him that the believing father, Abraham, should deny himself and not live according to his own desires, but according to the will of him, alone, who, by grace, had accepted him and chosen him from among the nations; and thus he sealed, by this performance, which was dishonorable in itself, that his faith was true and fruitful before God. Why these ceremonies were again commanded, will be shown hereafter, if God please.

Behold, kind reader, in this manner Abraham was circumcised, and thus we are baptized; because it is thus commanded by God. Whosoever disobeys and opposes the voice of the Lord commanding these ceremonies, and despises the performance of them because of their uselessness and triflingness, not observing that it was commanded by God, excludes himself from the precious covenant of grace, by his disobedience; neither does he prove his faith to be fruitful and living, but on the contrary he proves that it is unfruitful and dead before God. For he hears not the voice of his Lord nor lives in accordance therewith, but despises it as powerless, vain and useless. Therefore observe and know that we

are not accepted into the covenant by an outward sign, but alone by grace through Christ Jesus. And because we are in the covenant by grace, therefore he has given and commanded us his signs, that we shall perform them upon those on whom he has commanded them to be performed, namely, upon the faithful; for if it were possible that we could come into the covenant with God by any signs or ceremonies, then the merits of Christ were vain, and grace was ended. No, brethren, no. Abraham was already chosen, accepted and justified by God, through faith, before he was circumcised; and because he was faithful, and justified through faith, therefore the circumcision was commanded him of God that he should thereby seal his faith. Again, as Abraham and all his seed born of Isaac, together with others, were already included in the covenant with God, women as well as men, and as the promise was given to both sexes, yet it was not commanded that the females should be circumcised, but the males.

Observe well, beloved reader, had they obtained the covenant with God by the sign and not by grace, then the females must have been excluded and without the promise. Not so, it was by grace, it is by grace, and it ever will be by grace. If they had been disobedient to the word of God, and not circumcised their males on the appointed day; or if they had done differently from the commandment of God, and circumcised their females, then they would have had to bear the punishment of their disobedience in their children, Gen. 17: 14, excluded them from the covenant with the Lord, and not have obtained the gift of his grace. For God, the Almighty Father, whose voice, will and commandment all creatures, both in heaven and earth, should obey, will have the commanded ceremonies performed as it pleases him and as he has commanded them to be performed, for therefore he has commanded them. If we do not perform them or perform them differently, we have, by our disobedience, neither covenant nor promise. This is the right, scriptural meaning of Abraham's covenant, circumcision and promise. Whosoever teaches you differently deceives your soul; for he points

you to merits and works, and not to Christ Jesus through whom alone are received the eternal covenant of peace and promise of grace, given of God.

O brethren, brethren, how long will you oppose the Holy Ghost! Give the word of God its due praise, and observe that little infants are not buried with Christ in baptism; nor are raised into newness of life; for if they did die, and were buried in baptism, then sin would be so destroyed in them that it would never more vanquish their spirit. Inasmuch as sin, after their baptism, so powerfully, and so abundantly flourishes in them as they begin to come to understanding, as may be plainly seen, therefore the infant baptizers must acknowledge and confess that they bury the children alive, which should not be; or else that they baptize them all without faith, and contrary to the ordinance of Christ, therefore useless and vain.

For this reason, learn once, beloved reader, that infant baptism is not of God nor through him. But whosoever rightly acknowledges the love of God for himself through Christ Jesus and is baptized upon his own faith through true love of God, according to the doctrine of Christ, Peter, Paul and Philip, is rightly circumcised in his heart with the circumcision of Christ, as Paul teaches; he is buried with Christ Jesus; he has died unto sin, and is again raised up by a fruitful faith with Jesus Christ in a new life, Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 12.

In opposition to this, the infant baptizers have still another point, saying, *Because Paul, in this passage, has not forbidden infant baptism, therefore it is right.* To this we reply by asking: Whether infant baptism is commanded in this or any other Scripture? They must own the truth and answer, no. If it is not commanded of God, then it is not his ordinance, and therefore it has no promise. Again, if it is not commanded of God, then it is not his ordinance; if it is not his ordinance, then it has no promise; and if it has no promise, it is doubtlessly useless and vain.

Again, we ask them, Where in the word of God it is expressly forbidden to baptize bells? They must own the truth and answer, *nowhere.* If it is, then, not expressly

forbidden to baptize bells, is therefore bell-baptism just and right? Not at all.

Thirdly, Israel was not forbidden to circumcise the females. Now, would it have been right if they had circumcised their females? Far from it. For the Scriptures commanded that the males should be circumcised therefore they considered that it was forbidden to circumcise their females.

In the same manner Christ Jesus commands us to baptize the believing, and that which is represented by baptism is only found in the believing, as may be plainly seen from Peter and Paul, therefore we infer that infant baptism is sufficiently forbidden; for they have no faith and do not understand the representation of baptism which comes by faith. >

I repeat it, If the infant baptists assert that by this Scripture of Paul, infant baptism is not forbidden, and that therefore it is right, that it is not expressly forbidden in the holy Scriptures to bless (as they call it), holy water, candles, palms, goblets and robes; to hold mass, and other ceremonies; yet we pointedly say that it is wrong. First, because trust is put in it. Secondly, because it is done without the ordinance of God, for he has not commanded us a word thereof; and there is no ordinance in which his holy, blessed word is not expressed and implied either in spirit or letter.

Since Christ Jesus has commanded baptism upon the confession of faith, Mark 16: 16; since the apostles have thus taught and practiced it, and as the meaning of baptism Rom. 6: 3; Col. 2: 12; Tit. 3: 5; Gal. 3: 27; 1 Cor. 12: 13; 1 Pet. 3: 21, cannot be applicable but to the believing, therefore it is sufficiently forbidden by this divine ordinance, to baptize infants; for there is no faith in them nor do they understand the meaning thereof; notwithstanding that infant baptism commenced soon after the time of the apostles, or perhaps yet in their time, and thus it has been practiced many centuries; for length of time can not prevail against the word of God, as we have sufficiently shown the pious, god-fearing reader, above.

Fourthly, Thus says the holy apostle Paul, "The kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works

of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit. 3: 4, 5.

Most beloved brethren, if we rightly and thoroughly examine this passage of Paul, with spiritual eyes, and weigh it with the Scriptures, then the infant baptizers, by force of the Scriptures, must acknowledge that the christian baptism which is commanded by God, pertains alone to the believing, according to the commandment of Christ, Mark 16: 16, and not to those who are naturally unable to hear, speak and understand, namely, infants; for it is a washing of regeneration as holy Paul has taught and testified to by the above words.

My worthy, kind brethren, because the holy, christian baptism is a washing of regeneration, according to the doctrine of Paul, therefore none can be washed therewith, to the pleasure and will of God, but those alone who are regenerated through the word of God; for we are not regenerated because of baptism, as may be perceived in the infants who have been baptized; but we are baptized because we are regenerated by faith in God's word, as regeneration is not the result of baptism, but baptism the result of regeneration. This cannot well be controverted by any man, by force of the Scriptures. Therefore all should be shamed by this passage of Paul, let them be ever so learned; the learned, who so shamefully teach and make the unsuspecting populace believe that infants are regenerated by baptism. Beloved reader, such teaching and belief is, verily, nothing but fraud and deceit. For if the infants were regenerated, as the learned say, then their whole course would be humility, longsuffering, mercy, pure and chaste love, true faith, certain knowledge, sure hope, obedience to God, spiritual joy, inward peace, and an unblamable life; for these are the true and natural fruits of the new, heavenly birth; but what fruits are found in infants every intelligent reader may judge from every day experience.

Do you think, most beloved, that the new birth consists in nothing but in that which the miserable world hitherto has thought that it consists in, namely, baptism? or in the

expression, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? No, worthy brother, no. The new birth consists, verily, not in water nor in words; but it is the heavenly, living and quickening power of God in our hearts, which comes from God, and which, by the preaching of the divine word, if we accept it by faith, quickens, renews, pierces and converts our hearts, so that we are changed and converted from unbelief into faith, from unrighteousness into righteousness, from evil into good, from carnality into spirituality, from the earthly into the heavenly, from the wicked nature of Adam into the good nature of Jesus Christ; and of such Paul spoke in the alleged Scripture.

Behold, those who are of such a nature are the truly regenerated children of God; those are the beloved brethren and sisters of Jesus Christ, who are born with him from above of one Father, namely, of God, Jn. 1: 13; Heb. 2: 13. And these regenerated are those to whom, alone, he has taught and commanded the holy, christian baptism, as a seal of faith, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15, by which they receive remission of sin; Acts 2: 38, and not the unconscious infants, as has been frequently shown above, from the word of God. Therefore the holy apostle Paul teaches us by this Scripture that God sanctifies the regenerated by the baptism of regeneration; because they are regenerated by the word of God, they deny themselves by the power of their regeneration and have obediently taken upon themselves all that which God, the Almighty Father, in his holy word, has taught and commanded his chosen children, through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and through all his true servants and messengers. Therefore I repeat that the baptism by which God sanctifies us, belongs to the believing or regenerated, as Paul teaches. And in this manner: First, there must be the preaching of the gospel of Christ, Matt. 28: 19; Secondly, The hearing of the divine word, Rom. 10: 17; thirdly, faith, by hearing the word, Rom. 10: 17; fourthly, there must be the new birth, by faith; fifthly, baptism, by the new birth, Tit. 3: 5, in obedience to God's word, and, lastly, the promise follows.

If we do not desire willfully to oppose the

Holy Ghost and reject the grace of God, it is impossible to believe that a true faith can be without regeneration and obedience, and that this obedience can be without the promise. For the eternal truth, the blessed Jesus Christ, will never fail nor deceive us in his holy word; and it is he who taught this: First, to preach the holy gospel, saying, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature*; therefrom follows faith, saying, *And whosoever shall believe*; from faith follows baptism, saying, *And be baptized*; and from these follows the promise, saying, *Shall be saved*, Mark 16.

Inasmuch as the ordinance of Jesus Christ thus reads, and as the one follows from the other, therefore Paul here teaches us that God sanctifies us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; for in case true faith and obedience be separated from each other, as is sometimes the case, such as grieving the Holy Ghost and sinning against him, then such faith does not profit us; for it has no promise, on account of disobedience and is, besides, useless and dead before God, Jas. 2.

To all those, who, of their own choice, and contrary to the Scriptures, assert the regeneration of infants, because they were baptized, notwithstanding there are no fruits in them, as may be plainly seen, I reply: First, that he does not know what the new birth is. Secondly, with the same propriety and reasonability, bells are baptized. God in his word has no more commanded the one than the other, for according to their nature, there is as little faith and fruits in the one as there are in the other. O, Lord! when will this awful abomination once cease to be practiced. When will those who now call themselves christians be christians? Yea, when will the blessed Lord Jesus Christ be acknowledged as wise, true and perfect in his holy word? I fear, never. The false teaching, unbelief and opinion is esteemed and loved by these miserable, carnal men, far above the same doctrine of Jesus Christ and his holy apostles. Notwithstanding we say in Christ Jesus, let them baptize their infants as much as they will, let them teach it as long and as strong as they will, and let them assert

it on the strength of the garbled Scriptures, of learned men, and of long usage—yet it is all vain and useless before God; for the regeneration of infants cannot be maintained by virtue of the word of God.

Chosen brethren, let them freely cry out against us, let them adduce all doctors, learned and famous men who have lived centuries ago, let them console themselves with long usage, even from the apostles' time; yet where there is no new birth there can be no baptism administered in accordance with the commandment of Jesus, for baptism is the washing of regeneration, Tit. 3; which regeneration none have but the believing, alone, as we have shown our readers before.

Therefore I would admonish all my beloved readers in the Lord, not to heed the philosophy of the learned, nor to look at the long usage, but to the plain and unmixed word of God, and you will surely find by this Scripture of Paul, and others, that, according to the commandment of Christ, the christian baptism should be administered to none but those who, by grace have become believing and regenerated through the word of God. As long as baptism is administered to infants, it is no washing of regeneration. For the new birth is of the word of God, as has been often said, which word infants cannot hear and understand; therefore they cannot be born again as long as they are minded as a child. All that which the Father has not planted should be plucked from the heart by the word of God, Matt. 15. God's word shall stand forever, and according to the divine word, every pious christian shall and must build the structure of his faith, if his work shall be pleasing before God; and should not build it according to his own pleasure. For God, the Almighty Father, who rules all things by his word, will not be honored by human doctrine and commandments, Matt. 15: 9; Mark 7: 7; Col. 2: 22; Jer. 29: 8.

In the fifth place holy Paul teaches us saying, For ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," Gal. 3: 27; Rom. 6: 3.

My beloved children in Christ Jesus, you

are aware that all the world, by their blind and foolish unbelief, have hitherto whored with outward works and ceremonies. Yet you should not do likewise. But you should know that the righteousness which avails before God, consists not in any ceremonies and outward works, but solely in a true, pious and fruitful faith and in nothing else, in this manner. For the faith which comes by the word of God cannot be without fruit only in those who sin against the Holy Ghost, as said above, but it leads into all manner of righteousness, it willingly submits itself in all obedience and it cheerfully complies not only with baptism, but with all the words and ceremonies which God, the gracious Father, through his blessed Son, has so clearly taught and commanded in his holy gospel.

Therefore true faith is the fullness of righteousness, Rom. 3 and 6; yea, it is the true begetter of all christian virtues; and by reason of this, the word of God ascribes to it righteousness, Rom. 3: 23, the blessing, salvation, and life everlasting, Jn. 3: 36; 17: 4, and does not ascribe these to ceremonies. If ceremonies *are* commanded by him, it is not because of these ceremonies, but it is because of the faith which compels us to observe these ceremonies for they are commanded of God. Therefore you should know, kind reader, that when the ceremonies in God's word are coupled with the promise, as the Israelitic offerings in the law, and baptism under the gospel, then it is not because of ceremonies, but it is by virtue of faith, which obediently and in love fulfills not alone the commanded ceremonies, but also all that which God has commanded, as has been said above.

For this reason holy Paul taught the Galatians that they were become the children of God through faith and not by baptism, saying, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." And again, because they were the children of God by faith, they showed obedience to his word, and therefore Paul said unto them, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Therefore the principal thing is in faith, and not in ceremonies. But this godly, fruitful faith, in which all consists, together with its chris-

tian fruits, is not known to many, and for that reason they ever seek their righteousness in outward ceremonies, yea, also in the most useless ceremonies of human invention which are neither taught nor commanded of God, as they have shown, these many centuries, in baptizing infants. Read what we told you above about the parents, godfathers and baptizers and you will see that all the world is led into a false trust by infant baptism; has become estranged from God, and is blinded in regard to all christian matters. And to give their false pretensions a beautiful, holy and divine appearance, they mutilate and twist the precious word of God to suit them, as they fully show in this case; for, by this Scripture of Paul, and other garbled Scriptures, they have fooled and deceived the poor, ignorant people these many years; teaching them that infants put on Christ in baptism, plainly showing by such doctrine that they do not know what regeneration is, nor what it is to put on Christ Jesus.

Most beloved brethren, verily it is the nature of all heretics to tear a fragment from the holy Scriptures and thereby to prove their chosen worship; never observing what is written before or after, by which we may ascertain the right meaning, as in this instance they have so plainly shown. For this sentence: "as many of you as are baptized have put on Christ," they pick out to give their infant baptism an appearance; but the foregoing sentence: "Ye are all the children of God because you believed on Christ Jesus," from which, as we have shown above, all the rest must follow, that they seem not to have noticed; and thus they seek merit in ceremonies and not through faith in Jesus Christ.

Besides, inasmuch as they are not clothed with Christ nor have put him on, either actively or passively, and have not tested his heavenly, spiritual nature and Spirit, because they are carnally minded—therefore they do not understand, however much they write and teach, what it means to put on Christ Jesus, I repeat, either actively or passively.

That we may convince all gainsayers of the word of the Lord, and that we may neither stumble nor err in these words,

therefore I would refer all my readers to holy Paul. He shows who they are that put on Christ, and what fruits they manifest, by which we may know that they have put on Christ, thus saying, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness," Rom. 8: 10; 6: 5.

Kind reader, however dexterously the scribes and infant baptizers may controvert under a false semblance of the divine word, yet none can deny that Christ dwells in those who have put on Christ. Since the truly baptized put on Christ Jesus, he is in them; and if he is in them then the body is dead unto sin and the spirit is life because of righteousness; this being the case, I again call on all reasonable persons to judge impartially for themselves, whether it is found in truly believing persons, or in infants? If they say, in the believing, their judgment is right; for Christ Jesus dwells in the hearts of the believing, Eph. 3: 17. But if they say in infants, then I would again ask by what means we may find this out, inasmuch as in these infants the death unto sin and the spiritual life are not shown nor found? For all of them, from infancy, so long as they do not believe the word of God, notwithstanding their baptism, are not alone prone to evil, but also to disobedience, as daily experience openly shows in all those baptized of this world.

Therefore I conclude from this Scripture of Paul, and say, If the infant baptists remain constant in their opinion and belief, that by their baptism, infants put on Christ, that they must come to the conclusion by virtue of the word of God, that Christ Jesus is unbelieving, proud, ambitious, envious, vain, drunk, adulterous, refractory and disobedient to the word of God; for whosoever has put on Christ Jesus does not live himself, but Christ lives in him. If they, then, have put on Christ by their baptism, as they claim, and as, according to Paul, Christ lives in them and rules their actions, so it must follow that Christ is vain and useless in them, or that their accursed works are begotten of Christ, for they yet live in all manner of carnality and ungodliness, and it therefore follows that they have not put on Christ.

No, verily, no. For Christ Jesus cannot be without fruits; but whosoever has put on the humble, long-suffering, merciful, amiable, peaceable, sober, chaste and obedient Christ, in such an one the beforementioned accursed works are not found; for whosoever has put on Christ, is dead unto sin and lives in righteousness, Rom. 8; is led by the Holy Spirit, born with Jesus, from above, of the Father; and therefore he lives according to the will of the Father, and cannot sin because he is born of God, 1 Jn. 3: 9; 5: 18.

Inasmuch as all those who are baptized without faith, prove the contrary by their life and do not manifest the nature and virtues of Christ whom they have put on, as they falsely claim; but they manifest in their whole walk the nature and vices of the flesh and of Satan; therefore it proves clearly that they have not put on Christ who is from heaven; but that they have put on the devil, who is from hell; for it is he who actuates and leads them at will, as may be plainly seen; as all their thoughts and works of the flesh and of Satan are natural, inherent fruits which are found all over the world, in all men; no matter of what state, trade, condition, class or sect they are.

Beloved reader, you will acknowledge that every tree brings forth fruits after its own kind, and that by the fruit we may know the tree, Matt. 7: 20; 12: 33. Therefore it can not fail but that where Christ Jesus is, there are the good fruits of life everlasting; but where the devil is, there are the wicked fruits of eternal death. Yea, whosoever has put on Christ, in him the works of the devil are not found. On the contrary, where the devil is, there Christ is not; the one must give place to the other; for they are two princes so very different that it is impossible for them to dwell in one heart, or for the two to be conceived and included in one human heart, Matt. 6: 24; Eph. 2: 2.

For this reason I would admonish all God fearing christians in the Lord to ponder well upon these words of Paul, and to understand them according to the divine truth, and you will plainly see that Paul taught by this Scripture just what Christ had commanded, Mark 16: 16. The believ-

ing, alone, put on Christ Jesus in their baptism, and they alone bring forth true fruits, and not the infants, as we have here, and also in our first writings sufficiently proven to all the pious and true believers.

Most beloved brethren, let the infant baptizers, to their own condemnation, thus scornfully ridicule such plain Scriptures, and let them subtly garble and twist them as much as they please, yet this Scripture will ever remain unbroken by them; it will remain so firm and binding that they will stumble thereon, be shamed thereby and will have to stand back, notwithstanding all their flattering. If they would but rightly look into the matter and then judge according to the word of God, what it means according to Paul, what it implies, to put on Christ, whether spoken in the active or in the passive (for all those who are not content with the active may apply the passive to Rom. 13, although it is in the active by Paul, according to the translation of Erasmus), they would soon perceive that it makes no difference in this matter whether it is used in the active or in the passive. But what will it benefit? If the learned have nothing wherewith to obscure the truth they garble things before the ignorant, simple populace, by strange tongues, false explanations, lies, and high-sounding philosophical reasons. O how justly Christ Jesus said unto the Pharisees, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in," Matt. 23: 13.

In the sixth place, Paul teaches, saying, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit," 1 Cor. 12: 13.

By these words of Paul the baptism of the believing is again plainly taught and confirmed, and, on the other hand, the anti-christian, infant baptism is rejected and made of none effect, because God, the merciful Father, in his holy gospel, points us to faith, alone, through Jesus Christ, and to the new birth. Because the believing or regenerated act rightly before God, and diligently seek

and fulfill his holy will according to the grace they have received—therefore we must forcibly acknowledge that we cannot be led to this godly gift of faith and of regeneration, otherwise than by the word of God, through his Holy Spirit. All writing, reading, and teaching is in vain, when the Holy Spirit of God, the true Teacher of all righteousness, does not quicken, pierce and turn the hearts of the disciples or hearers, by the only means for this purpose given of God, which is his word.

Since we are baptized by one Spirit into one body, according to the teaching of Paul, and since this same Spirit must quicken and turn the hearts by the word of God—therefore it incontrovertibly follows that none should be baptized but those alone whose hearts are quickened and turned by this Spirit through the word of God.

All those, then, who hear the holy gospel of Jesus Christ and sincerely believe it and are thus inwardly quickened and pierced by the Holy Spirit (let them be of whatever nation or sex), are baptized by this quickening Spirit into one holy, spiritual body, of which Christ is the head, that is into the church. And thus Paul has taught by this Scripture in conformity to the command of Christ, Mark 16: 16.

Beloved reader, as those should be baptized who are urged by faith and forced by the Spirit, as Paul teaches, so I will again leave it to your judgment who they are that are led and impelled by this Spirit. Whether they are the believing or whether they are the infants? If you say the believing, your answer is right. For the believing die unto their flesh, lusts and desires, Gal. 5: 24; they put off the old man and all his works, Eph. 4: 23; seek Christ Jesus in purity of heart; bring forth the precious fruits of the Spirit which is in them, and show outwardly and inwardly in all their actions that they are taught, led and impelled by this Holy Spirit, Gal. 5: 18; Rom. 8: 14. But if you answer, *the infants*, then I would ask you, Where are their spiritual fruits? As nothing appears in a child but their childish actions, as we said above. Yet they are baptized and called christians, without doctrine, faith and commandment, from which follows that in all the baptized

of the world nothing is found but abominable blindness, idolatry, hypocrisy, evil thoughts, vain words, madness against the truth, disobedience, blasphemy, trickery and a very wicked life contrary to God and his blessed word.

I am aware, brethren, that children have *spiritum vitalem*, that is, the *spirit by which they live*, which God breathed into Adam and into all flesh that they might live, Gen. 2: 7; Acts 17: 25. But they have not the *Spiritum justificantum, aut innovantem*, that is, the *spirit which sanctifies or regenerates*. For if the latter spirit was in them it would surely be manifested in the fruits, as it is impossible that the Holy Spirit of God, which of itself is awake, living and fruitful, and by which all true christians are justified, taught, led and urged, should be idle, dormant, and fruitless in those in whom it dwells. Let the infant baptists controvert this as much as they please, no matter whether they are old, learned, or of high renown, yet it will never be proven by the word of God, that the Holy Spirit of God is ever idle, useless and without fruits. I am aware that one may stumble, notwithstanding he has the Spirit of God, as is shown in the case of the pride, adultery, and manslaughter of David; the hypocrisy of Peter, and the quarrel of Paul and Barnabas; they will not long continue therein, but will be immediately admonished to repentance, either by the kind admonition of the brethren or by the Spirit. For it is impossible that those, in whom is the spirit of love and the fear of God, can long continue in a shameful sin and transgression. If the baptized infants, now, have the Holy Spirit, as the infant baptists affirm, then they must admit that it is a dead, unfruitful and powerless spirit which can beget neither faith, love, fear of God, obedience, nor any evangelical, divine righteousness, in these children.

Because they have, of their own choice, contrary to all scriptural truth, and by their own righteousness, taught infant baptism—therefore they subtly seek to clothe and adorn it with a garbled form of the divine word, that the adulterous, enchanting wine which is in the goblet of the Babylonian whore, may be swallowed as a good and

pure wine, Saying: “That infants should be baptized that they may be the better trained in the word and commandments of God; cleansed of their inherent sins; buried in the death of Christ; regenerated and put on Christ Jesus, yea, baptized into the body of Jesus Christ and thus become partakers of the Holy Spirit.” Which teaching is, verily, nothing but open deceit, lies, garbling of the Scriptures and a deception of satan. For in all the baptized of the world we find the very contrary in their fruits, all through their lives, as every intelligent christian may plainly observe.

Most beloved brethren in the Lord, never let such shameful and abominable lies find place in your hearts, but examine all things rightly and according to the word of God, that you may rightly understand all evangelical truth. For thus to ornament infant baptism with the virtues which only belong to the baptism of the believing, is just as reasonable as it is to clothe an ape in purple and silk, as the common saying of the learned implies, which reads, *Simia semper manet simia, etiamsi induatur purpura*; which means: *an ape is an ape though he be clothed in purple*. In the same manner infant baptism will remain a stench and abomination before God, however finely it be ornamented with garbled Scriptures, by the learned; for an infant, so long as it is in its infancy, will remain ignorant, simple and of childish mind, notwithstanding it be baptized a hundred times and its baptism be still more subtly asserted by six times a hundred garbled Scriptures; as it is plain to all intelligent persons that with infants are found neither doctrine, faith, spirit, fruits nor idea of God's commandment; and that therefore they should not be baptized; that is, if we believe that the word of God is true and will ever remain true, as we have abundantly proven in our first writings concerning baptism, as also in this.

O, kind reader! Verily, if it were not that this bitter, cancerous, lime spittle of false doctrine and long usage had so deeply eaten into the eyes of your hearts, you would acknowledge at once that this large church, in its young days, was not embodied into the pure, chaste, god-serving, and

unblamable body of Jesus Christ, by the office of a clean and christian spirit, but rather into the adulterous, idolatrous and blamable body of anti-christ, by an unclean and anti-christian spirit.

For if it were the case that they were incorporated into the most holy body of Jesus Christ, as they persistently boast, they should prove by their works that they are serviceable, and fruitful members of that body into which they are incorporated. For we plainly see that there is no member of the human body created but for some use and purpose, be it ever so small and trifling; but it is in its way profitable and useful to the body to which it belongs. But how useful the beforementioned infants are to the body of Christ Jesus will be perceived by all those taught of the spirit.

From this it incontrovertibly follows, that if they are the body of Christ, as they claim, and that Christ is the head of his church, that Christ is the head of the unbelieving, the avaricious, perjurious, gamblers, drunkards, adulterers, fornicators, Sodomites, thieves, murderers, liars, idolaters, disobedient, blood-thirsty, traitors, tyrants, proud, and of all rogues and knaves. For where is there one in the whole church of those who were baptized in infancy, that walks unblamably in all the commandments of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, and who, either inwardly or openly, is not guilty before God, in some or many of the beforementioned crimes. O no, kind reader, no. The most holy and glorious body of Jesus Christ is wonderfully far different from such a cruel, ungodly, refractory, disobedient, carnal, bloody and idolatrous body.

Most beloved brethren, since they plainly are such transgressors, blasphemers, and willful sinners, judge for yourselves from these and other scriptural reasons, what kind of a body they are; by whose doctrine, commandment and practice; by what Spirit they were and are yet daily incorporated into this very horrible body; yea, such a body that has neither gospel, faith, christian baptism, supper, nor christian life; and therefore neither God, prayer, promise nor eternal life; but only false doctrine, false faith, false sacraments, false promise,

ungodly life and eternal death. O, Lord, save all thy beloved children from such an abominable, bloody body.

But in the most holy body of Jesus Christ is a true and orderly state of things according to the word of God, as the true doctrine, faith, baptism, supper, love, life, worship and true excommunication; and therefore also grace, favor, mercy, remission of sins, prayer, God's promise and eternal life. Behold, brethren, where these are, there also, is the true body of Jesus Christ, of which Christ Jesus is the head. They are the true brethren of Jesus Christ who with him are born of God the Father; the spiritual Mount Zion which will never be moved; the spiritual house of Israel which is wisely ruled by Christ Jesus our only King, according to the Spirit, with the unbroken scepter of his divine word; the spiritual Jerusalem in which the great King, the blessed Christ Jesus has placed the glorious, king-ly throne of his honor; the spiritual temple of the Lord in which his holy name is sincerely glorified; the spiritual ark of the covenant with his heavenly bread; blooming, red and stone tables upon which the throne of mercy, the blessed Christ Jesus is found under the two cherubims of his testaments according to his promise. Yea, the lovely bride of Jesus Christ; flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, Eph. 5:30; which he placed in his chamber, Cant. 1:4, and kissed with the mouth of his eternal peace, Col. 1; Eph. 1. Therefore no one can be a profitable member in this most holy, glorious and pure body of Christ, who is not believing, regenerated, converted, changed and renewed; who is not amiable, mild, meek, obedient, merciful, chaste, sober, humble, forbearing, peaceable, just, constant, and who are heavenly and spiritually minded with Christ; for it is impossible, according to Scripture, that Christ Jesus will or can be a Prince or head of those who do not conform themselves to him, that is, of those who do not sincerely seek, hear, believe and serve him; but rather trample upon, blaspheme and resist him.

But those who hear and believe the word of God, are, by the Holy Spirit which has taught, begotten and enlightened them, baptized into the body of Christ, on their

own faith, according to the commandment of Christ; for these are regenerated of the word of God; bury their sins and are raised up with Christ into new life; have a good conscience; receive remission of sins; put on Christ Jesus; become true members of the most holy body of Jesus Christ, which are fruitful, useful and serviceable according to their strength, 1 Cor. 12: 13; Rom. 6: 5; 1 Pet. 3: 21; Acts 2: 38; Gal. 3: 27. On all such are the affectionate eyes of the Lord, the heavenly blessing, and the merciful mind, protection and solicitude of the eternal Father; because they have sincerely and fully denied themselves, and have obediently followed the will of God to live according to the will of him who has graciously called them, Christ Jesus. Beloved reader, since infants have not this mind, and as the Holy Spirit does not operate, nor show itself to be in them, and since they cannot serve in the body of Christ as is required by the word of God, since it is plain to all intelligent persons, they should not be bap-

tized; for without the quickening Spirit of God, none should be baptized, as we have abundantly proven to all the pious children of God, from his word.

Therefore I conclude in regard to this matter of baptism, with these plain words: Inasmuch as Christ Jesus, the true Teacher, sent of the Father, has commanded us to baptize the believing, Mark 16: 16, and as the holy apostles have, in the above adduced Scriptures, so explained that which is represented by baptism as pertaining to none but the believing, and as infant baptism is no such baptism because it is evident that they have no faith nor its fruits, which faith and fruits are the true representation of baptism—therefore we are again necessarily forced by the word of the Lord, by faith and by the love of God, diligently to teach and receive the baptism of the believing, and to assert it to the praise of the Lord before lords, princes, and the whole world, at the risk of life and goods as true witnesses of Jesus Christ.

HOW THE HOLY APOSTLES PRACTICED BAPTISM IN THE WATER.

IN the third and last place we are forced to assert the christian baptism of the believing, even at the risk of life and blood for the reason, that the holy apostles of God baptized none but those alone who desired to be baptized, as Christ expressly and plainly commanded them, saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark 16: 15. This commandment the apostles received from the mouth of the Lord and have proclaimed the holy gospel, the glad tidings of grace, throughout the world, Rom. 10, and preached it to every creature which was under the heavens, Col. 1. They baptized all who accepted this gospel by faith, and no others as is shown and perceived in many Scriptures treating of the acts of the apostles; some of which Scriptures I shall place before the reader, by which all the rest of the Scriptures will be easily explained.

When Philip was led by the angel of the Lord, to the chariot of the eunuch, who was come from the land of Ethiopia, and read the gospel of Jesus Christ from Esaias the prophet, "Philip preached unto him Jesus and as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," Acts 8: 35—37.

My chosen, beloved brethren, If all the earth were full of learned orators or highly renowned doctors, and these were, by sharp subtlety and human philosophy, exalted as high as the stars; yet, by the grace of God, the word will never be wrung from us, namely this: That where there is no faith, no baptism should be administered, according to the word of God; or else we must admit, first, that the command of Christ

Jesus is wrong. Secondly, that the holy apostles have taught wrongfully; thirdly, that the holy Philip here asked wrongfully; fourthly, that the eunuch was concerned about this matter more than all the rest of humanity.

No, kind reader, no. But as Peter and Paul, together with all the pious witnesses of Christ always had their eyes fixed upon the commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ and did not act in opposition thereto, so also, the holy Philip, the true servant of God who preached and taught with the same spirit, would not baptize until the illustrious and famous man had sincerely confessed his faith; for it was thus commanded him of Christ Jesus, his true Master, our Redeemer and Savior, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15.

As the holy apostles required of those that were to be baptized, first, to make a confession of their faith before baptism, so I ask you, beloved reader, How can we require a confession of faith of infants before they are baptized, and who shall confess for them? If you should say the godfathers, then I would reply, that the godfathers were first gotten up by pope Higinus, as we have shown above. Inasmuch as Higinus is the getter up of them, and as infant baptism has been practiced ever since the time of the apostles as Origen and Augustine write, and as I believe, because those who do not rightly confess Christ, ever seek their righteousness in wrought ceremonies, notwithstanding it is no divine command nor apostolic usage, as may be particularly proven by the holy Scriptures, and also by Tertullian and Ruffinus and others—therefore I verily do not see who, by the faith of infants, has answered for them in their baptism which were baptized during the period between the apostles and pope Higinus, inasmuch as the godfathers were first gotten up by Higinus who was either the ninth or tenth pope, and as the infants which were before him had as little doctrine, hearing, voice or understanding as the children of the present day, as they plainly prove by their fruits.

Observe, kind reader, that all their doings with children, such as catechism, godfathers, baptism, crisma, and such like things, is

nothing but open hypocrisy, human righteousness, idolatry, useless fantasy and opinion.

Inasmuch as Christ Jesus has commanded but one baptism on the confession of faith, and as the apostles have taught and practiced it—therefore the infant baptists must consent and admit, by virtue of the word of God, that infant baptism is not by the commandment of Christ, not by the teaching and practice of the holy apostles, but by the doctrine of anti-christ and by the practice of his preachers.

I repeat that the holy apostles baptized none but those that desired it, or those who confessed the most holy faith either verbally or proved it by their walk, as did holy Peter; for although he was previously informed by a heavenly vision that he might go amongst the Gentiles to teach them the gospel, yet he refused to baptize the pious, noble and godly centurion and his consorts, so long as he did not see that the Holy Spirit was descended upon them, that they spoke with tongues, and glorified God. But when Peter plainly saw that they were truly believing and that the Spirit was descended on them, he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord," Acts 10: 47, 48.

Behold, kind reader, here you are plainly taught that Peter commanded that those only should be baptized who had received the Holy Ghost; who spoke with tongues and glorified God, which only pertains to the believing and not the unconscious infants. Thus the practice of Peter was in accordance with the commandment of Christ, Mark 16: 16. Therefore Peter did not command infant baptism; for the Holy Ghost does not operate in them, as may be plainly seen. This may also be understood from a passage of Paul; for he says, "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women," Acts 8: 12. Observe, nothing is said of infants.

Paul, a preacher and apostle, also baptized upon the confession of faith and truth.

He required faith before baptism to such perfection that he regarded the baptism of the holy John the baptist, as useless and vain among the disciples at Ephesus, because they knew not the Holy Ghost, saying, "Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied; and all the men were about twelve," Acts 19: 3—7.

Hear, most beloved readers; for I would here present to you and to all the world three points, which you should impartially consider and judge according to the word of God. First, Was the baptism of John not of God? I know you will give an affirmative reply. If now the baptism of John is of God, as it is indeed, and if Paul yet considered this baptism which was from above, as insufficient and imperfect in these disciples because they did not acknowledge the Holy Ghost, and as he, after preaching to them Christ, again baptized them with the baptism of Jesus Christ, as is mentioned in Luke, for what purpose must we consider the baptism of children that are naturally unable to understand the divine word, and therefore they acknowledge neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost; neither can they distinguish between truth and lies, righteousness and sinfulness, good and evil, right and wrong? Does not this prove infant baptism to be useless, vain and unfruitful? and as administered and received without the ordinance of God? and if we acknowledge this by the word of God through faith, is it therefore not necessary to be baptized with the baptism of Jesus Christ? as Christ has commanded and as Paul has administered to these disciples? I say, verily, if we do not, there is, according to the word of God, neither faith, regeneration, obedience, nor Spirit in us, and therefore no eternal life, as we have frequently shown above.

Let all the learned garble this invincible

Scripture and practice of Paul as subtly as they please, yet it will never be asserted by virtue of the word of God but that these disciples, notwithstanding that they were baptized with the baptism of John, were again baptized, after they were taught by Paul, with the baptism of Jesus Christ; because they knew not that there was a Holy Ghost; that is, if baptism is to be baptism according to the word of God. But, brethren, the preaching of the cross is ever opposed because it is to them that perish, foolishness, 1 Cor. 1: 18.

Again, judge for yourselves kind readers, since Christ Jesus himself and also the holy apostles, Peter, Paul and Philip, have commanded and taught no other baptism in all the Scriptures of the New Testament, but upon the confession or proof of faith, and as the whole world in opposition thereto, teaches and practices a different baptism, which is founded neither in the command of Jesus nor in the teaching and practice of the holy apostles, namely, infant baptism, and asserts it not by the word of God, but solely by the opinion and long usage of the learned; and forces it upon the world by the cruel, bloody sword; therefore judge, I say, which of the two we should follow. The divine truth of Christ Jesus, or the lies of the ungodly world? If you answer, *Christ*, your judgment is right; but the consequence according to the flesh, is anxiety, being robbed, apprehension, banishment, poverty, water, fire, sword, the wheel, shame, cross, suffering and temporal death; yet in the end eternal life. But if you answer, the *world*, then you verily judge wrongfully; notwithstanding, on the contrary according to the flesh, the consequence is honor, peace, ease, liberty, temporal life and such perishable advantages; yet the end is eternal death.

Thirdly and lastly, judge rightly whether the ordinance of Jesus Christ which he commanded into his church, and which the holy apostles learned and administered from his blessed mouth, can ever be changed and broken by human wisdom or excellency. If you answer in the affirmative, you must prove it by the divine and evangelical Scriptures or else we should not believe it. But if you answer in the negative, as it

should be, you must acknowledge that those, no matter who they are, whether they lived at the time of the apostles, and were even their disciples, who say that the apostles baptized infants, shamefully misrepresent the apostles and load falsehood upon them, yea, that they speak their own opinion and not the word of God, for the most holy apostles, the true witnesses of christian truth, never taught two different baptisms in the water; neither did they act contrary to the command and ordinance of Christ, nor administer it contrary to their own doctrine.

O, had the educated and learned men, Origen, Augustine, Jeronimus, Lactantius and others, not soared so high in their smartness and philosophy; and had they been satisfied with the clear, chaste, and plain doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and had they conformed their intelligence and subtle reasoning to the word of God, then the heavenly doctrine and unchangeable ordinance of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ would not have been subjected to such shame and change! And in particular has the great Origen, by his philosophy and self-conceit, so shamefully treated with the Holy Scripture that Martin Luther in his book called *Seruum Arbitrium*, calls him *Spercissimus scripturarum interpret*, that is: *The falsest explainer of the Scriptures*. And besides, it is annotated in the Lutheran New Testament, that this Origen is the great star which fell from heaven, burning like a lamp, and that his name is Wormwood, Rev. 8: 11. Therefore we will leave it to God who and what he is. Notwithstanding he has treated the word of God so shamefully and has erred so terribly, yet, because he pleases the world in regard to infant baptism—the holy doctrine of Christ Jesus and the apostles must stand back; and Origen is heeded, accepted and followed as a sure testimony to this idolatrous ceremony. O, abominable blindness! O, shameful foolishness! That we do not believe the sure word of our Lord Jesus Christ, the word of truth, and the true witnesses who were sent by him! but that we would rather follow, to the loss of our souls, those who teach to please us, notwithstanding it is plain from their writings that

they have so often stumbled and erred, and been mistaken in regard to the truth of Almighty God!

Therefore I beseech you all, beloved brethren in the Lord, by the grace of God to open your understanding, that you may be no longer deceived, and that you may perceive, you who are made uneasy by the writings of the learned, that all the writers, both ancient and modern, have ever sought righteousness in wrought ceremonies, which we should only seek in Christ Jesus. And again, that, because they have not the word of God on their side they do not follow the same path in regard to this matter, do not speak of one accord nor write unanimously. For as their writings show, some seek the *washing away of inherent sin*. Others teach that they should be baptized on account of their *faith*. Again, to train them in the *word and commandments of God*. Still others, to have them included into the *covenant with God*; and, again, to baptize them into the *church of Christ*. Behold, kind readers, thus each of the beforementioned writers follows his own course, and does not follow the same way. If they were supported by the word of God, in regard to this matter, they would all be unanimous. But because they have not the word of God—each one follows his own inclination, thinking that he can, under a scriptural appearance, palm off pernicious falsehood as being the truth. Yea, he tickles his vision so long with garbled Scriptures, that his mind becomes so obscured that he can no more conceive that he teaches, follows and administers accursed falsehood for the blessed truth of God.

Thus, most beloved children, because the learned have ever sought and yet seek righteousness in infant baptism, you can easily surmise that these infant baptists have, by that means, made this innovation. For with the ancients it was not the common practice, I say common, as may be deduced from Tertullian, Ruffin and others; but as appears, just after the demise of the apostles or perhaps yet in their times, they commenced to abuse the true, christian baptism, which solely belongs to the believing. As some of the Corinthians already in the time of Paul suffered themselves to be baptized for the dead, 1 Cor. 15: 29, so, also,

through the false doctrine and opinions of foolish bishops, the abominable serpent of infant baptism crept in, and was so confirmed by long usage that, at last, it was thought and accepted by all the world as an apostolic institution for the sake of righteousness which they all seek therein. Therefore you must acknowledge, beloved brethren, notwithstanding infant baptism is of old date, that it is still not by the command of Jesus Christ, and by the teaching and practice of the holy apostles; and is therefore idolatrous, useless and vain.

And because the true, christian baptism has such a great promise, namely, the remission of sins, and other promises, Acts 2: 38; Mark 16: 16; 1 Cor. 12: 13; 1 Pet. 3: 21; Eph. 4: 5, the pedo-baptists apply the same baptism to infants; never once observing that the beforementioned promises are solely to those who show obedience to the word of God; for Christ Jesus has so commanded it. Inasmuch as pedo-baptism is not commanded, therefore it is not required of children as obedience. For where there are no commandments there are no transgressions. Again, baptism is not commanded to infants, by God; and therefore they have no promise in their baptism, from which it follows that infant baptism is idolatrous, vain, useless and void, before God, as was said above; for God, the Lord, has no pleasure in the ceremonies, unless they are administered according to his divine and blessed word.

But the little children, and particularly those of christian seed, have a peculiar promise which was given them of God without any ceremony, but out of pure grace, through Christ Jesus our Lord, who says, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 19: 14; Mark 10: 14; Luke 18: 16. This promise makes glad and assures all the chosen saints of God, in regard to their children or infants; being assured that the true word of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ can never fail. Inasmuch as he has shown such great mercy towards the children that were brought to him, that he took them up in his arms, blessed them, laid his hands upon them, promised them the kingdom of heaven and has neither done nor command-

ed them any thing more; therefore they have in their hearts a sure and firm faith in the grace of God, concerning their beloved children, that they are children of the kingdom, of grace, of the promise and of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom alone be the glory; and not by any ceremony. Yea, by this same promise they are assured that their beloved children, so long as they are not of understanding years, are clean, holy, saved and pleasing unto God, be they alive or dead. Therefore they give thanks to the eternal Father through Jesus Christ our Lord, for his inexpressibly great love to their children, and train them in the love of God and in wisdom, by correcting, chastising, teaching and admonishing them, and by walking before them with an unblamable life until they may hear the word of God, believe it and fulfill it in their works. Then is the time, of whatever age they may be, that they should receive the christian baptism which Christ Jesus has commanded, in obedience to his word, to all christians; and which his apostles have thus practiced and taught.

Behold, brethren, if it should be said that we thus rob the children of the promise and of the grace of God, you will observe that they contradict us out of hatred and envy, and do not tell the truth. Say, who has the strongest ground and hope of the salvation of their children? Is it he who places his hopes upon an outward sign? or is it he who bases his hopes upon the promise of grace, given and promised of Christ Jesus? Still the evangelical truth must, in all respects, be blasphemed and belied by the ignorant and light minded. But, notwithstanding this, the just and impartial Judge, Christ Jesus, will some time pass the true sentence between them and us, although they do not fear it now. I am forced to think that then it will be acknowledged by many, too late, that they did not believe and follow the truth of Christ Jesus but the falsehood of anti-christ. Take heed and watch.

Again, it is sometimes, and very foolishly too, asserted by the pedo-baptists, "That the apostles baptized whole households, as the household of Cornelius, Acts 10: 48;

the household of Stephanus, 1 Cor. 1: 13; the household of Lydia, and of the jailer, Acts 16: 15, 33; from which, they say, it may be presumed that there were also small children among them." From this allegation, beloved brethren, they show, although not intentionally, that they can not produce Scriptures to prove infant baptism. For whenever we must follow (build on) presumption, there is evidently no proof of the assertion.

To such opponents I would reply, in plain language, thus: Three households, namely, of Cornelius, Stephanus and of the jailer, were all believing. Of the first household it is written, "There was a certain man in Cesarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band; a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always," Acts 10: 1, 2. If they all served and feared God, as Luke writes, then they were not baptized without faith, as is plainly shown in the same chapter; for Peter commanded that those should be baptized who had received the Holy Ghost, as they had who spoke with tongues and glorified God; which are all fruits of faith, as every intelligent person will admit.

Again, of the household of Stephanus it is written, "I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanus, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints); that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboreth," 1 Cor. 16: 15, 16. I repeat it to serve the saints is a work of faith. Since the house of Stephanus served the saints, as Paul writes, therefore they showed by their fruits that they had faith.

Again, of the house of the jailer it is written that Paul and Silas spake unto him and said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house; and they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he (the jailer) took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced believing in God with all his house,"

Acts 16: 31—34; or as Erasmus says, "He has rejoiced because he believed in God with all his house." Beloved reader, observe first, that they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. Secondly, he rejoiced with all his house. To hear the word is something which pertains to those of understanding minds, and spiritual rejoicing is a fruit of the believing or of the spiritual, Gal. 5: 18. Inasmuch as they all heard the word and rejoiced in God, therefore it incontrovertibly follows that the holy apostles did not baptize them without faith.

In the fourth place, in regard to the house of Lydia, I reply: Because the world tries to establish their cause on presumption, therefore we would say first, that presumption ought not to establish faith; and if it were so that it could avail before God, then still the presumption in the case of the house of Lydia would not be in favor of the world but against it; because it is the custom in the Holy Scriptures and also with the world, that a house is named after the man and not after the woman, so long as the husband lives, because the husband is the lord of his wife and household. As in this case the house is named after the woman, and as there is no mention made of the man, therefore it follows that she, at the time, was not married. If she was a young woman or widow, as appears, then the presumption of the world is contradictory; and it is probable that she had no children and still more probable, that she had no infants, since she at that time had no husband.

Again, we would further say in reference to this Scripture, that if it were that Lydia had infants, they would not be counted among the baptized of the house. For Christ commanded that the believing should be baptized and the holy apostles taught and practiced such baptism; from which it may be safely deduced that when the holy Scriptures speak of houses being baptized, or houses being subverted that it has reference to those of understanding years, who may be taught or subverted, as Paul shows in another Scripture, that some "subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake," Tit. 1: 11.

If you take the term *whole houses* as applying also to infants; and as whole houses were subverted, as Paul says, then it would follow that infants were subverted by false doctrine. No, beloved reader, no. An infant without understanding can be neither taught nor subverted; therefore they are not counted in the number of baptized, or those who were subverted, of which the Scriptures speak. But the Holy Scripture teaches and admonishes, both by words and sacraments, as they are called, those alone who have ears to hear and minds to understand, as we have frequently shown above.

If any one would like to have more information about the ceremony of baptism and about the objections made to it, let him read our first treatise on baptism which we published; and by the grace of the Lord, he will be enlightened upon the subject from the word of God.

Brethren, I conclude this treatise on baptism in the water in these words: Inasmuch as God, the merciful Father, has graciously sent into this miserable, blind and erring world his chosen, beloved Son, Christ Jesus, who has taught us the holy will of his Father, in great clearness; and as he has, in his great love, offered up his precious and most holy flesh and blood for us, and as to him the eternal Father has not only pointed us through his holy prophets, but also from high heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him," Matt. 17: 5; therefore we say and testify that we should hear this Christ Jesus; that we should believe in him and follow him in all things which he has taught and commanded us; and that we should also hear and follow his holy apostles who by his own divine command were sent out with the most precious word of grace, namely, with the holy gospel—or else we have neither God, promise, nor eternal life, as is plain and intelligible to all mankind, from the New Testament.

As this Christ Jesus has given us this express and incontrovertible command in this wise: First to teach the gospel and then to baptize those who believe, and those that are thus baptized shall be saved, Mark 16: 16; Matt. 28: 19; Acts 19: 5; 2: 38; 10: 48;

16: 33. And as the holy apostles have taught and used no other baptism than baptism on faith, according to the command of Christ, as shown and proven by many reasons from Acts 2: 8; 10: 16; 19; Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2; 1 Cor. 12: 13; Tit. 3: 5; 1 Pet. 3: 21; therefore we again declare before you, before all the world and before God, that we are prompted by nothing but by the fear of God, being so taught by his word, thus to teach this christian baptism, and thus to receive it upon the confession of faith, for the remission of sins, Acts 2: 38, as said before, and are thus baptized with the washing of water, by the word, Eph. 5: 26; and by a Holy Spirit which quickens our hearts, into one body, 1 Cor. 12: 13; of which body Christ Jesus is the head, Col. 1: 18; Eph. 1: 22. Nor do we know of any other baptism, of which God is a witness, than this alone; of which, by the grace of God, we have so much taught and written.

I herewith beseech you, kind reader, not to do like the angry, blind and bloody world, who condemn everything from an envious, rebellious, refractory and raving heart before they have thoroughly perused and understood it; who reject all good, christian doctrine and usage; sometimes because of fashion, again, because of the cross, and sometimes because of the plainness of the person. Do not thus; but judge this and all our writings according to the Spirit and holy word of the Lord, and you will plainly see whether we have written and taught you truth or falsehood; whether we teach two baptisms or one; whether we seek to save your souls or destroy them; whether we seek the praise and honor of the Lord, or his dishonor. For I trust, by the grace of God, if you are desirous of your own salvation, and if you peruse what we have written and judge it with a spiritual judgment, that you will find nothing in it but the teaching which is of God; the eternal, heavenly, true and saving will of God, and the very strait way of truth which the ever blessed Jesus Christ and his apostles have, in the most holy gospel taught and shown all mankind.

Take heed, ye illustrious, noble and pious lords! Take heed ye judges and keepers of the law, against whom your cruel,

bloody sword is sometimes sharpened and drawn. I tell you in Christ Jesus that we seek nothing but what we have here told you, as you may clearly see by many, namely, that there is not a false syllable nor deceitful word heard from their mouths or found in them, and these are forced and led by you to the sword, fire and water, as poor, innocent sheep to the slaughter. And if you should point me to the abominable actions of the corrupted sects, and say that you must therefore oppose baptism, by the sword, that such ungodly doings may be averted and hindered; then I would again reply, first: Christian baptism belongs not to corrupted sects; but it is the word of God. Secondly, the holy, christian baptism does not cause mutiny nor shameful actions; but it is caused by the false teachers and false prophets who boast themselves to be baptized christians, and yet, before God, are not such. Thirdly, there is nothing under heaven at which I am more alarmed than I am at the ungodly actions of the false, corrupted sects. They frighten me more than death; for I know that all men must once die, Heb. 9: 27. More than the tyrannical sword; for if they take my body, it is all they can do, Matt. 10: 28. More than Satan; for I have vanquished him through Christ. But in case the terrible doctrine of the corrupted sects adhered to me, then I would verily, be lost; eternal woe would be to my poor soul. Therefore I would rather die the temporal death (that he knows who knows all things) than to eat, drink, commune, greet or converse with such, if I knew that they would not be helped by my conversation or admonition; for it is forbidden in the word of Christ to keep the company of such, Matt. 7: 15; 1 Cor. 5: 11; 2 Thess. 3: 14; Phil. 3. And, by the grace of God, I know to a certainty, that they are not in the house of the Lord, in the church of the living God and in the body of Jesus Christ. Therefore I say, if you find in me or in my teachings, which is the word of God, or among those who are taught by me or by my brethren, any thieving, murdering, perjury, mutiny, rebellion or any other criminal acts, as were formerly, and are yet found among the corrupted sects—then punish all

of us; as we would be culpable if this were the case. I repeat, if we are disobedient to God in religious matters, we are willing to be instructed and corrected by the word of God: for we mean diligently to do and fulfill his most holy will. Or if we are not obedient unto the emperor in matters belonging to him as he is called and ordained of God, I say in matters belonging to him, then we will willingly submit to such punishment as you may inflict upon us. But if we sincerely fear and seek our Lord and God, as I trust we do, and if we are obedient unto the emperor in temporal matters, as we should be according to the word of God, Matt. 22: 21; Rom. 13: 7; 1 Pet. 2: 13; Tit. 3: 1, and are yet to suffer and be persecuted and crucified for the sake of the truth of the Lord—then we should consider that “the disciple is not above his master nor the servant above 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. Yet you should know and acknowledge, O ye beloved, noble, illustrious, pious lords, ye judges and keepers of the law, that as often as you take, condemn and put to the sword such people, that you put your tyrannical sword into the blessed flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you break the bones of his holy body; for they are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Eph. 5: 30; they are his chosen, beloved brethren and sisters, who are with him, born from above, of one Father, Jn. 1: 13; they are his sincerely beloved children who are born of the seed of his holy word; they are his holy, spotless and pure bride whom he, in his great love has wedded as his consort. Why? Because they have, by the operation of their faith, and led by the Holy Spirit, cordially committed themselves to the service of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, and do not live any more according to their lusts, but agreeably to the will of God, alone, according to the direction of his holy, blessed word. Yea, they would rather surrender every thing which they possess, and suffer envy, slander, scourging, persecution, anxiety, famine, thirst, nakedness, cold, heat, poverty, imprisonment, banishment, water, fire, sword or any other punishment than to forsake the gospel of

grace and the confession of God and be separated from the love of Christ Jesus, Rom. 8: 35. But they will never accept the vain doctrine and commandments of men.

Therefore we pray you, as our beloved and gracious rulers according to the flesh, by the grace of God, to consider and realize, if there is any reasonableness about you, in what great anxiety and suspense we poor, miserable people are placed. For if we abandon Christ Jesus and his holy word, we fall into the wrath of God; and if we remain firm in his holy word, we are put to your cruel sword. O, Lord! if it were true that this large church were thy holy church, bride and body, as they boast it to be, then we might truthfully assert that thou art the prince, bridegroom and head of an abominable, detestable band of murderers, who thirst after the innocent blood of those who sincerely seek, fear, love and serve God. For the ignorant, blind people go about like a backsliding heifer, as the prophet says, seeking nothing but the persecution, imprisonment and destruction of God's saints and children.

All the priests and monks, who seek and fear nothing but their gluttonous, greedy belly, and their avaricious, pompous flesh, do nothing but upbraid, slander, lie and persecute; the judges and magistrates, who seek to live of the bloody labor of the miserable; take them and deliver them into the hands of the tyrants, that they may become favorites of the rulers, as the prophet says, Mic. 7; "The prince asketh and the judge asketh for a reward." The lords and keepers of the law, as a body, are after nothing but the favor and friendship of their prince to whom they are sworn; after authority, good wages and aggrandizement. They are those who torture, banish, confiscate and murder, as the prophet says, "Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow," Zeph. 3: 3. At another place, "Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves, ravening the prey to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain," Ezek. 22: 27. O, how just was the revelation of holy John, when he saw that the Babylonian woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and with the

blood of the martyrs of Jesus, Rev. 17: 6.

O, beloved lords and judges of the land, observe once, how all the righteous, the prophets, Christ Jesus himself, together with his holy apostles and servants, have been treated from the beginning; and to day *you* still treat those thus, who in purity of heart seek the truth and life eternal. Therefore we must run the risk; for in case you do not fear God, and do not sheathe your murderous sword against Christ Jesus and against his holy church, then we esteem it of less consequence to fall in the hands of worldly princes and judges, than to fall into the hands of God. I repeat it, take heed, awake, and be converted, that the innocent blood of the pious children of God, which calls for vengeance in heaven, may never more be found on your hands.

Take heed, also, ye wise and learned and ye common people! For such a people are they and such is their doctrine and faith whom you daily ridicule and mock as fools; whom you slander as heretics and deceivers; and whom you take and deliver, and murder in your hearts, as thieves, murderers and criminals. Yet, God's word shall never be broken, 1 Pet. 1: 24; Jas. 1: 10; Ps. 90: 6. O ye miserable people, what will become of you! that you are not ashamed daily to mock and ridicule the blessed Christ Jesus; to trample upon him and thus ravingly tear to pieces his most holy and glorious body, notwithstanding you boast of his divinity, word, death, grace, mercy and blood.

Say, beloved, if you are the church of Christ, why are you not obedient unto him? If you are the body of Christ why destroy its holy members? If you are the children of God why trample upon your brethren? If you are the servants of Christ, why not do the things he has commanded? If you are the bride of Christ why not hear his holy voice? If you are the truly regenerated where are, then, the fruits? If you are the true disciples of Christ, where is your love? If you are the true christians where are your christian ordinances of baptism, Supper, deacons, ban and life as commanded in his word? If you are the truly baptized ones of Christ where is your faith, your

new birth, your death unto sin, your unblamable life, your good conscience, your christian body into which you were baptized, and your Christ whom you have put on?

O beloved brethren, error has been rampant long enough! Christ Jesus will be no longer mocked as a fool. I tell you as truly as the Lord lives, that so long as you are thus earthly, carnally and devilishly-minded; so long as you oppose God and his holy word; so long as you live without the fear of God, according to the lusts of your flesh, so long you are not the true church of Christ, even if it were that you were using the true sacraments, which, however is far from being so. Beloved brethren, First our hearts must be cleansed and afterward our outward actions will show; or else it is hypocrisy before the eyes of God. I repeat it, so long as you live thus ungodly, as you have done hitherto, Christ Jesus was, verily, born in vain, died in vain, arose and ascended in vain. He is no Lord, Deliverer or Savior of the willful, obdurate, unrepenting and disobedient sinners, but he is a Lord, Deliverer and Savior of those who willingly hear his divine word; who sincerely renounce evil, and walk diligently according to his holy commandments, all the days of their lives.

May God, the gracious Father, who lives in mercy forever, grant you all true knowl-

edge to comprehend all divine truth; and a heart, mind and will to fulfill that which you now confess by faith from the word of God, through Christ Jesus our beloved Lord. To him be the honor, praise, kingdom, power and glory forever and ever, Amen.

Let the bride of Christ rejoice.

HEREIN, reader, you have most devoutly what the mode of God's baptism, which perished through the long degeneracy of the ages, in the church ought to be, being restored whole by the unspeakable gift of God. Therefore let the writers oppose as they please; let the learned oppose by their shrewdness as they know how; let all the world under the heavens oppose in every way in which they are able, this is the only mode of baptism which Christ Jesus himself instituted and the apostles taught and practiced.

The invincible truth will ever abide, although powerfully opposed by many. He who reads the teachings of christianity and considers well, will welcome this divine truth, of Christ, though for many ages lost, and now thus made to appear, because it is not without merit by its favor toward us.

May the reader give thanks to the infinitely great and good God.

Mayest thou be well, be humble, read, obtain, believe and live, and may the Lord be with thee.

A LETTER OF CAUTION ON DISCORD.

To the brethren in Groeningen, and the country thereabout, copied and sent by the faithful brother John Aertsen. Receive it in love.

Grace and Peace: Since, beloved brethren, it is known to all churches, that in the southern countries, great trouble exists in regard to the divinity of Christ, and the Holy Spirit, whereby much unbelief, discord and division have been caused in some bodies, to the great affliction of all the saints; and, since it sometimes happens that this one or that one, who comes from those countries, is affected thereby and causes trouble with some—therefore love

has constrained me to write the following to the churches, and for these reasons:

First, that the unaffected and sound hearts may beware of such frightful disputations and incomprehensible murmurings, lest their hearts, to their eternal loss, drown in such bottomless profoundness, and become forever ashamed before their God.

Secondly, that all those who ignorantly and unwittingly err and are bound in their consciences, and yet fear God, and walk

under the cross, may be saved and freed, through this our service and christian warning, to the eternal praise and glory of God, and to the joy of all the saints. I have written it to all my beloved brethren and fellows out of sincere love and compassion. If but one afflicted, wavering, doubting soul could be helped thereby, I would esteem it the dearest thing under heaven. My children, beware of all discord and division, that ye may thrive and multiply in Christ Jesus. Avoid all those who disturb you and excite you to disunion; all those who

would institute something novel and peculiar whereby they might weaken and destroy the christian, evangelical love, peace and unity. O, my sincerely beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord! Consider diligently that which I write to you, that God the heavenly Father with his blessed Son Christ Jesus, and with his Holy Spirit, may retain their divine honor. Peace be with you.

Note. To write with my own hand such long writings and send them to each particular church, I can not do.

MENNO SIMON.

ANOTHER LETTER.

My very faithful brother in Christ, grace and peace with thee.

Chosen brethren in the Lord, I have nothing particular to write to you, but that I wish you would write to me how far the choosing of the brethren in Waterhorne and of Lebe Pieters has progressed. Not that I desire to impede the choosing of Lebe; but I would have been glad to have had a conversation with him, before his entering upon the office of bishop; for my soul is troubled about that which passed between us last year.

O, brother Rein, that I could speak with you half a day, and make known to you a little of my affliction, sorrow and sadness, and also of my great solicitude which I yet bear for the future of the church; what an ameliorating, pleasing application that would be to my sorrowful soul! As it is I must bear it all myself. If the omnipotent God had not preserved me last year, as well as now, I would already have been deprived of my mind; for there is nothing upon earth which my heart loves more than it does the church; and yet I must live to see this sad affliction upon her. I think much, yet I write and say but little. Help me pray that I may find refreshment, and may yet see a gracious result, with all afflicted souls.

Brethren, beware of discord; foster love and unity with sincerity; accompany the peaceful; make use of few words, and in

every respect show yourselves to be children of God. O, chosen brethren! Come and unite your ardent prayers for me in my great affliction. I pray you for Jesus' sake, let my affliction be buried with you; but if you should speak about it to any one, then know with whom you speak. If all hearts were pure, all tongues seasoned with salt, and all the mistakes of last year were honestly and truly acknowledged, how soon would I be found a cheerful man. Now, now the Lord will be my Comforter. May the poor church be saved! O brethren, let us pray! I trust that you will not be offended at the writing in my last, to a private brother, concerning the sixty dollars annually. I took the liberty of so writing, for I do need it annually. The merciful Lord will send them to me. He knows where. Greet the pious with the peace of the Lord. My daughters greet you. The God of all grace be with you most beloved brother, and with all the pious, forever, Amen.

If something should be sent to my assistance, send it the first opportunity; for slaughtering time will soon be at hand and I have little wherewith to buy. O, brethren, do not think hard of it; it is necessity which compels me to do so.

Your unworthy and affectionate brother,
MENNO SIMON.

September 1st.