

THE REASON

MENNO SIMON

DOES NOT CEASE

TEACHING AND WRITING.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

“Preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine,” 2 Tim. 4 : 2.

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

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THE REASON WHY MENNO SIMON DOES NOT CEASE TEACHING AND WRITING.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; and the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory," Isa. 62: 1, 2.

I am well aware, most beloved readers, that we are, on account of our teaching and writing, cursed, envied, hated, slandered, persecuted and condemned to death, by innumerable persons of both high and low stations in life. As roaring lions they gnash their teeth at us. Lords, princes, learned and ignorant people, no matter of what station in life, exercise their tyranny over us, as may at all times be seen; not solely upon us, but also upon all those who accept and fulfill, by their works, this our doctrine, with believing, faithful, obedient and resigned hearts. Not that we claim it to be our doctrine, understand, but it is the eternal, heavenly and unchangeable doctrine of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, which he himself has carried from high heaven, from the bosom of his Father, to earth with his own blessed mouth which cannot lie; which he has taught, and proclaimed to the world by his faithful witnesses, the holy apostles, which he had chosen for that purpose. Whosoever does not believe that our doctrine is the pure, undefiled and saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, may piously examine the rest of the plain Scriptures of the New Testament and he will come to the conclusion and acknowledge that it is the pure doctrine, testimony and Spirit of Christ Jesus, however much his reluctant, lazy, rebellious, refractory, selfish and disobedient flesh may oppose, frighten, tremble and be awe-stricken

thereat. Yet, however incontrovertible our cause appears, so much so that it can not be controverted or refuted by the Scriptures, still it must be persecuted by this ignorant, blind world as an abominable crime and treated as heresy. The prophet says, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing," Hosea 8: 12.

O, worthy, beloved reader, if you would consider and realize how earnestly the righteous God ever enforces his holy word, and how terribly his wrath has ever been enkindled against those who did not abide firm in his divine word, you would, without doubt, in case you are not within the word of God, tremble, and be frightened in your inmost soul before God, on account of your disobedience! Did you never read that the parents of all mankind, Adam and Eve, who were, by the power of the divine Word created by God himself and punished by him on account of their disobedience; banished from paradise; subjected to manual labor; that the earth was accursed in them, and that all their daughters must suffer and give birth to their children in perilous travail and excruciating pain; not to mention that they would be subject to eternal death, if the new Man of grace, the blessed Christ Jesus, had not, by grace, prevented this? Why was it? For no other reason than that they did not abide in the true word of the living God, but lived according to their lusts, contrary to the word of God, trusting in the deceit of the lying serpent rather than in the warning of the true God, who, by grace, had created them, wise, righteous and incorrupt, and placed them as lords of all creatures, Gen. 2: 26.

Again, do you not know that all the creat-

ures under the heaven, both rational and irrational, were destroyed by water, through the righteous judgment of God, except those that were in the ark with Noah, because they became corrupt and lived according to their lusts, and in my opinion, because they did not acknowledge the Spirit of the Lord, as their judge? Gen. 6; 7; 8. O do consider these things, and doubtlessly, you will hereafter sincerely fear your God, and ever abide in his holy word!

Besides, you must have often heard, and perchance read for yourselves about Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 18; 20; 19: 4; Er and Onan, Gen. 38: 7—9; the idolaters, Ex. 32: 5; the man who gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day, Num. 15: 32—36; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Num. 16; about the murmurers, Num. 21: 5; Zimri and the other adulterers, Num. 25: 14, 15; Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10: 2; those who hid the forbidden things, Joshua 7; King Saul, 1 Sam. 15: 17—22; Jeroboam, Manasseh and the other kings, priests and prophets who did not abide in the true worship and in obedience to the divine word, which was given through Moses, but taught and practiced either more or less or something quite different from the law of the Lord; how terribly and in how many different ways they and their followers were punished and smitten by God, who desires to have his will obeyed. Some suddenly died; some were pierced with the sword, Ex. 32: 27; Num. 25: 5; some were stoned to death, Num. 15: 36; Josh. 7: 25; some were swallowed up by the earth, Num. 16: 32; some were bitten by serpents; Num. 21: 6; some were hanged, Num. 25: 4; some were consumed by the fire, Lev. 10: 2; Saul's kingdom was taken from him, 1 Kings 15: 28; and put to death with the sword; the house of Jeroboam and Ahab were taken from the earth; the eyes of Zedechias were put out; Manasseh was captured; and all Israel was in exile in foreign countries, as in Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt as recorded in Chronicles, Kings, and the prophets. I repeat, why was it? Solely because they did not abide in the law of their God, but either by their own choice or else out of disrespect for the law, transgressed it, establishing without the command of God, images, temples and al-

tars, in many countries and cities, Jer. 2; Hosea 10; in many mountains and under large trees, Hosea 4: 13; notwithstanding, as may be seen by the writings of many prophets, that Moses so strenuously commanded them as also was commanded their fathers, thus, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it," Deut. 12: 32. At another place, that on all those who do not abide by the works of the covenant, which are written in the Book, all the plagues will come, and on the contrary, all the blessings will be to all those who abide thereby, Deut. 28: 58, 59. The children of Israel did not always abide by the express, commanding word of him who had, by his powerful hand, brought them out of the land of Egypt; but suffered themselves to be misled by ungodly princes and false prophets, and chose for themselves, without the divine commandment, places for divine worship; carved for themselves images and built themselves temples. All this by their own choice, and not by divine command; besides, they committed all manner of idolatry. This the Holy Spirit, in divers Scriptures, has called shameful whoredom, perjury, accursed idolatry and despising the Lord. The prophet says, "Woe unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me; though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me," Hosea 7: 13.

As Israel deviated from the law of their God, and committed themselves to the service of Baal, not being content with the law, doctrine and service which God had commanded them through Moses, which Baal with his altars they however erected to the service of the living God, as it appears; so God in his grace and paternal love which he bore to Israel for the sake of their fathers, again sent his faithful servants, the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elias, Ezekiel, and others, who sharply reprov'd, in behalf of God, the degenerated princes, false prophets and the miserable, confused people; and again returned them to the true worship and ceremonies of the law which God had commanded, and which they had forsaken.

Besides, they prophesied famine, pestilence, failures, drought, war, conflagration, robbery, imprisonment and destruction, as plagues on account of their sins and disobedience. And also concerning the divine grace, salvation, deliverance, peace, mercy, and the eternal glory, which in the latter days will so gloriously appear unto all the world through Christ Jesus our Lord, who is the only promised prophet, Deut. 18: 15. The truly anointed of the Lord; the spiritual King David, Ezek. 37: 24; who establishes his kingdom by right and righteousness, Isa. 9: 7; the true Shepherd who leads us into the pastures of eternal life, Ezek. 34: 14; whose name is Emmanuel, that is, God with us, Isa. 7: 14; Matt. 1: 23; and the Lord who makes us righteous, who shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, Luke 1: 33; and this was the peculiar work of the holy prophets who were graciously sent of God the Lord, to the carnal Israel. But what did it avail, dear reader? They preached both mildly and harshly, punishment and grace, judgment and mercy; yet it was all in vain, as God plainly proclaimed by these same prophets, saying, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts," Isa. 65: 2.

Again, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying." "Obey my voice. Yet they obeyed not, nor inclined their ear, but walked every one in the imagination of their evil hearts: therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant which I commanded them to do; but they did them not," Jer. 11: 6, 7, 8. Again, "O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom and Israel is defiled; they will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord," Hosea 5. Again, at another place, "The Lord has testified against Israel and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments, and my statutes, according to all the law, which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants, the prophets. Notwithstanding

they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God," 2 Kings 17: 13, 14. Again, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother; and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor, and let none of you imagine evil against his brother, in your heart; but they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit by the former prophets; therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts," Zech. 7: 9—12.

Yea, most beloved reader, they have so stopped their ears and so hardened their hearts that they would not only not hear, but all of them, as a general rule, and particularly most of the kings, princes, prophets and priests, wittingly thirsted after the innocent blood of the true witnesses of God, who, by an inextinguishable fire of love fraternally reprovéd them of their sins, called them to repent and turn to God, and they proclaimed and taught the way of the Lord in righteousness.

Thus the mad, blind world has thanked and rewarded the faithful servants of God, the true prophets and true teachers of the divine truth, who sincerely seek their salvation, by upbraiding, imprisoning, beating, banishing and slaying them. For the obdurate, ignorant, whoring, refractory people will not be reprovéd as may be read in the fourth chapter of Hosea, and of the men of Anathoth to Jeremiah, saying, "Prophesy not in the name of the Lord that thou die not by our hand," Jer. 11: 21; and "As for the word which thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee," Jer. 44: 13.

The selfish and lustful teachers will not suffer themselves to be reprovéd or admonished; they boast of their wisdom, and say, "We are supported by the Holy Scriptures: although all that the scribes say and teach is falsehood."

Above all, the proud, carnal, worldly, idolatrous and tyrannical princes, who do

not acknowledge God, I speak of the evil princes, who do not want to be right in all their mandates, projects and undertakings, however much they may be at variance with God and his blessed word; as if the Almighty Father, the Creator of all things, who holds heaven and earth in his hands, who rules all things by the word of his power, had given them the privilege not only to command, rule and administer according to their will in temporal government, but also in the celestial kingdom of Jesus Christ. O no, beloved, no. This is not the intention of God; but it is an abomination in his blessed sight when mortal man substitutes himself in his stead. And when he raised up and sent his beloved servants, the prophets who, fraternally reprov'd and admonish'd all the princes, prophets, priests and common people from the mouth of God; the princes destroy'd them as seditious persons, and the learned and common people as deceivers and heretics; as was the case with Zechariah, the son of Berechiah; with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Uriah, Kiriathaim and others, as may be read in history.

However ravenously the princes and the learned tyrannized and opposed the law and its followers, yet the law and word of God remained immutable until Christ Jesus; so that every one who desired to be saved had to regulate and conform himself according to the law and his conscience, if he would see the dawn of day. For God is an eternal God and his will can never be changed and diverted by man. In this case neither prince nor learned man can avail. God alone, has dominion over man; he will keep them in all eternity.

Therefore all things which they instituted and practiced as holy worship without the command of God, or against it (notwithstanding it was in honor of the living God who had so gloriously led their fathers and them from the land of Egypt), was nothing less than open idolatry, spiritual whoredom, perfidy, degeneracy, blasphemy and an awful abomination, as we have above briefly shown the reader from the prophetic Scriptures. God is a God who does not need our aid and offerings, because he has made all things. Mine, he says, are the

cattle, upon a thousand hills. What then can I offer? He will take no other sacrifices than those alone which are commanded in his holy word, as Samuel spake unto Saul, "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice." The Lord God of Israel spake through Jeremiah, saying, "Obey my voice, and do them, according to all which I commanded you, so shall ye be my people, and I will be your God," Jer. 11: 4; 2 Cor. 6: 17.

All those, beloved reader, who sought a different way of salvation than the one which God had commanded, either did not esteem God as wise enough to teach the right way; or else that he would deceive them by his word. They despised the commanding voice of their God; they honored and exalted their own opinions and deceiving wisdom far above the wisdom of God; and they transgressed the precious covenant which God, by mere grace and mercy, had entered into with them and their fathers; for the most shameful obduracy, and the worst disesteem of God, is not to abide by his divine word, as the Scriptures say, They transgress the covenant, as did Adam, and thereby they despise and abhor me.

O, had Israel acknowledged the most glorious promise of grace which was given them and their fathers in regard to the promise of the seed, land, kingdom and glory! And had they considered the beneficences of God, so abundantly shown to them and their fathers, in miraculously leading them from the land of Egypt, and letting them pass through the Red Sea, Ex. 14: 22; that "He went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire," Ex. 13: 21; that he gave them bread from heaven, Ex. 16: 4; that he gave them to drink from the rock, Ex. 17: 6; that their clothes nor their shoes did not wax old, Deut. 29: 5; that he scattered the giants from before them; that he led them into the promised land overflowing with milk and honey; that he gave to them the strongly fortified cities and well built houses full of gold and silver, which they had not built; that he gave them the vineyards they had not planted, Deut. 6: 11; that he gave them these not for their righteousness' sake, but by grace, and because

he would fulfill his promise which he had sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Yea he gave it as a permanent possession, if they should abide by his holy word and should walk in his divine commands, statutes and righteousness, as Moses the faithful servant had, in divers instances, taught and commanded. Besides, that he gave them corn, oil, wine, peace, freedom, religion, and fame above all the people round about; for there was no people under all the heavens which was like unto them, Deut. 4. He led them by the hand, as a young child; carried them in his blessed arms; and girded himself round about them as a lancer, as Jeremiah says; raising up among them his righteous men and prophets who spake unto them the words of the Lord, fraternally reproving all disobedient transgressors, and mildly consoling the pious hearts with the gracious promise of both temporal and eternal life.

O, had the children of Israel sincerely realized all these favors and many others, they would never have deviated so shamefully from the word, law, will and commandments of God their Savior and Deliverer, who in every respect treated them with such a paternal spirit. But because they did not acknowledge the gracious beneficences which the Lord showed unto them, and because they did not fear the righteous judgments against them, therefore the wicked, blind flesh and the adulterous spirit of idolatry has so misled them, so estranged them from God, and made them so drunk and mad that they acted worse than the Gentiles which were before them, whom God had, on account of their sinfulness, rejected and scattered, as the holy prophets in divers Scriptures show and proclaim.

O, fearful wrath of God! We can never escape it. If we do not desire grace, light, truth, righteousness, salvation, true religion, life, the kingdom, blessing and God himself, we must, by his righteous judgment, doubtlessly, inherit disgrace, darkness, falsehood, unrighteousness and idolatry, and hereafter eternal damnation, death, hell, malediction, and the devil himself.

Sincerely beloved readers, God knows that I love you with pure love in Christ Jesus. Inasmuch as I find in proof of many

Scriptures how severely God has, from the beginning of the creation, ever punished all transgression of his divine word and disobedience thereto, as every intelligent reader may clearly understand from the history of Israel; and as I clearly see that the whole world, from east to west, from south to north, in the course of time, has been misled by ignorant teachers and preachers, who seek nothing but carnality, aided by unfaithful lords and princes, and that they have lost their faith in and knowledge of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, the ever blessed Savior, his holy gospel and sacraments, true religion and the pious, unblamable life which is of God; and as they are falsely led, under the name of Christ, to put faith in a man of proud, unclean, idolatrous and ungodly flesh, in useless fables, doctrines and human commandments; in an idolatrous baptism and supper; in images, wood, stone, gold, silver, water, bread and wine; in a shameful idolatry; in mere vain, false and useless promises, so that it has gone so far among those who boast of the name of Christ, that there is nothing left them, neither in regard to faith, love, sacraments, nor in their life of which it can be truthfully said that it comports to the life and doctrine of Christ, judge for yourselves whether or not I speak the truth; and although some of them, to-day, boast of the holy gospel of Christ, yet there is nothing preached but that is useless and vain, and this no stronger than the temporal lords and princes allow them to do; and, as the princes are, so are the preachers; and, as the preachers are, so are the people; and as by this we are asked to abandon Christ and his holy apostles and humble them in their doctrine and believe and adhere to the princes and the learned, if we do not want to be tortured or burned, at their hands, or be murdered by some other tyrannical means; as if the preachers were sent by the princes, and not of Christ—therefore, for the sake of the chosen of Zion and of Jerusalem, I can no longer hold my tongue, but must tell the truth; that their righteousness may go forth as a light, and their salvation burn as a torch; and that thus all mankind may acknowledge the righteousness of the Lord, and all

tongues, generations and people confess his glory; although I have sometimes, with Jeremiah, thought not to teach any more in the name of the Lord, because so many thirst after my blood. Yet, I can no longer hold my tongue; for I am, with the prophet, very much troubled at heart; my heart trembles in my bosom; all my joints shake and quake, with the idea that the whole world, lords, princes, learned and ignorant people, males and females, bond and free, are so widely estranged from Christ Jesus, from evangelical truth and from life eternal.

When I think to find a magistrate who fears God, rightly performs his office and uses his sword, I verily find, as a general thing, nothing but a winebibbing Lucifer, Antioch, or Nero: for they place themselves in Christ's stead so that their decrees must be respected above the word of God. Whosoever does not regulate himself according to their contents: does not serve Baal; maintains the ceremonies of Christ and fulfills the word of God in fruits, must be taken and suffer as a rogue, his property be confiscated, and the poor, innocent orphans who have now lost their faithful parents because of the testimony of the Lord, must be cast out and find their way begging through the land. But the idolaters, deceivers of souls, whoremongers, knaves, adulterers, fornicators, blasphemers, perjurers, drunkards and like transgressors, are not persecuted, but can live at liberty and peace, under their protection, I do not here speak of the good magistrates, who are few; but of the evil ones, which are numerous. Besides, we have their unseasonable pomp, pride, greed, uncleanness, lying, robbing, stealing, burning, hatred, envy, avarice and idolatry. Yet they want to be called christian princes and gracious lords. O, Lord! Of what little benefit will these hypocritical, lying titles and false boasting be to them before Christ, when he shall appear!

Again, when I think of finding true teachers, such as are sent of God, quickened by the Holy Spirit; who sincerely seek the salvation of their brethren; who are not earthly minded, but preach the saving, wholesome word of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, in purity of heart, and who are quite unblamable in their doctrine and life,

I find myself altogether mistaken. But instead, I find all over the world and among most of the sects, nothing but robbers of the glory of God, and murderers of souls; deceivers, blind watchmen, mute dogs, masters of sects who are carnally, earthly and devilishly minded; enemies of the cross; serving their bellies instead of serving God; false prophets, idolaters, vain talkers, liars, and wizards. If any person does not believe my words, let him prove their walk by the word of the Lord; let him compare their doctrine, sacraments, spirit, object, walk and life with the doctrine, sacraments, spirit, object, walk and life of Christ, and common sense will teach you, without, even the word of God, of whom they are sent; how, what and why they teach and what fruits their teachings bear.

In the third place, when I think of finding an unblamable church without spot and blemish, which serves the Lord with all its power and which conforms itself to his word—I verily find such an ungodly, abominable, corrupted and confused people; so carnal, idolatrous, whoring, cruel, ungodly, unbelieving, ignorant, blood-thirsty, unmerciful, drunken, pompous, luxurious, proud, avaricious, greedy, envious, adulterous, false, deceiving, sodomitic, refractory, disobedient, rebellious, vain, and so devilish, that a godfearing soul must stand dumbfounded and be ashamed thereat. Yet they claim to be the true bride, the believing church of Christ. O no, dear reader, no. Christ Jesus does not own such a bride or church. But his bride is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Eph. 5: 30; she conforms to him, Rom. 8: 29; is created after his image, Col. 3: 10; partakes of his nature, 2 Pet. 1: 4; is minded as he is, Phil. 2: 5; seeks nothing but heavenly things where Christ Jesus is, sitting at the right hand of his Father, Col. 3: 1; yea in God's church nothing is heard, seen or found but the true doctrine of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ and his holy apostles, according to the Holy Scripture. But in the beforementioned churches it is mostly doctrines, flatterings, comments, councils and commandments of men. Here is faith, truth, obedience, baptism of the believing, according to the word of God, true fraternal love, and

the service of our neighbors; yonder is unbelief, falsehood, disobedience, infant baptism without God's word, hatred, envy, tyranny, cruelty, shedding blood, quarreling, lawsuits, backbiting, cheating, stealing, robbing and murdering; here is teaching, admonition, consolation, reproof in righteousness—there, mere corruption, heresy, upbraiding and slandering; here, blessing, praise and thanksgiving—there, cursing and swearing by the suffering of the Lord, by his wounds, sacraments, flesh, blood and judgment; here, longsuffering—there, inflammable temper; here, humility—there, pride; here, mercy—there, mercilessness; here, true religion—there, idolatry; here, spirit and spiritual wisdom—there, flesh and foolishness; here is prayer in spirit and in truth—there, mockery with many powerless words; here is prayer for the Lord's truth—there the righteousness of the Lord is persecuted; here is faith in Christ—there, idolatrous ceremonies; in short, here is Christ and God—there, anti-christ and the devil. Yea, most beloved brethren, the pure, chaste and spotless bride of our Lord Jesus Christ (judge for yourselves) is quite different from this carnal, unclean, adulterous and shameful cause.

Verily, they are not the true church of Christ who merely boast of his name. But those are the true church of Christ, who were converted, who are born from above of God, who are of a regenerated mind and by the operation of the Holy Spirit from the hearing of the divine word have become children of God; who obey him, and live, unblamably in his holy commandments and according to his holy will, all their days, or after their calling.

Inasmuch as the worldly church is no such amiable, obedient bride, but has left her lawful husband, Christ, and follows after strange adulteries, as may be plainly seen, and all this through blindness, ignorance and the deceit of their teachings—therefore I seek to accomplish nothing by my writing and teaching, according to the talent God was pleased to give me, but to reclaim this adulterous bride, the erring church, from her adulterous actions and again to return her to her first husband, Christ Jesus, to whom she was so unfaith-

ful, notwithstanding he did her such great service, showing and declaring to all sects, nations and individuals who desire to read or hear our doctrine, writings and admonitions, not by flatterings and my own opinion, but by the express word of God, which alone avails, that there is no salvation on earth or in heaven otherwise than in Christ Jesus, that is, in his doctrine, faith, sacraments, obedience and walk. All doctrine which is contrary to his word or without his command, is vain, such as, in the papal church, purgatory, false promises, differences in places, in victuals and in days, pilgrimages, false sacrifices, &c. Again, in the German churches, the availability of infant baptism. Again, with the corrupted sects, the third David; the carnal kingdom; that every thing is clean to the clean, such as to show to idols outward honor and reverence, to baptize infants, polygamy, shameful confession, to make indecent show of person, not to believe in angels or the devil; that a more perfect doctrine will be proclaimed than was taught by Christ Jesus, Paul and the other apostles, and more like abominations.

Again, all the sacraments not comprised in the word of God, as the idolatrous baptism of infants, the false supper in a church which neither seeks, knows, fears nor loves its God; which believes that the bread is actual flesh and the wine actual blood; also, the confirmation, the holy oil, as they call it; again, all the services which are neither taught nor commanded by Christ nor his apostles, such as holy water, altars, images, masses, vigils, absolution, the invocation of the departed, monkhood, pilgrimages and the like abominations. Again, the private and public life which does not comport with the Spirit and life of Jesus Christ; such as unclean, vulgar thoughts, evil desires, unbecoming, shameful words; uncleanness, adultery, fornication, drinking to excess, hatred, envy, the shedding of blood contrary to the ordinance of God, avarice, pride, lying, cheating, backbiting, jesting, theft, usury, murder, swearing and fighting. All these matters and articles, such as doctrines, sacraments, worship and life, which are here noted, and others which are not, every reader can easily understand by the inward unction of God,

that they, not being comprised, expressed, nor commanded in his word and in the wholesome doctrine of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, but most of them being diametrically contrary to the Word, therefore we deem them, according to the sentence of the Holy Scriptures, as nothing else than false doctrine, deceit and fantasy; as false and garbled, idolatrous sacraments, as abominable idolatry, spiritual whoredom, degeneracy, and as carnal, earthly and deadly life, of which the Holy Spirit of God has so abundantly testified through Paul and John that those who commit these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Rom. 1: 22; 1 Cor. 6: 8; Gal. 5: 21; Eph. 3: 5; Rev. 22: 5.

For if the literal Israel was so severely punished and crushed by God, because they did not abide by the law, commandments, statutes and righteousnesses of their God, and because they did not hear and receive the reproof, admonition and teachings of their faithful prophets who spoke to them through the inspiration of God, but stoned them, put them to the sword, killed, upbraided and blasphemed them; following a worship to suit their own taste, as has been shown above—O, what must we, then, expect from God, if we do not abide by the wholesome doctrine of grace, by the right holy sacraments, by the works of love which are pleasing to God and by the pious, unblamable life which no Moses, prophet, angel, nor creature has taught us, but which the eternal Son of God, the eternal wisdom and truth, the eternal love and mercy, the blessed Christ Jesus has taught us by his own blessed mouth, by the command of his Almighty Father, which command is eternal and immutable, whose love for us is ineffable, who has confirmed it by virtue of miracles and at last sealed it with his precious blood; and has proclaimed the same to all the world by his faithful testimony, his holy apostles, in incomprehensible power of the Spirit; which doctrine is nothing else, nor will it ever be any thing else, than the precious gospel of peace, the glad tidings of grace, the remission of sin, the victory over death, hell and the devil; besides, grace, peace, freedom and admission to the Father; and all this out of love and grace

—not by works or merit of our own; but by means of Christ Jesus alone.

Again, these are the sacraments which Christ Jesus has instituted and taught: First, the holy baptism of the believing, in which we bury our sinful flesh and take unto ourselves a new life, seal and confess our faith, testify to the new birth and good conscience; and thus we enter into the obedience of Jesus Christ, who has taught and commanded us thus himself and also in his Holy Spirit through his disciples. Secondly, the Holy Supper, in which is represented the death of the Lord, who died for us in his great love; and in which is represented true, brotherly love; and also the righteous, unblamable, christian life which must be lived inwardly and outwardly in full measure of death unto sin and unfeigned love, conformable to the word of God.

Behold, worthy reader, since the whole world, yea, all tongues, tribes and people have become degenerated, according to the righteous sentence of God, in the doctrines, sacraments and life which is pleasing to God, for they prefer falsehood to truth, unrighteousness to righteousness; as they have committed themselves to all manner of false teachings, false ceremonies and carnal life, so that we may consider them rather as brutes than human beings, rather as devils than christians, as every reasonable being can easily, even without the word of God, comprehend and understand; and as the learned and preachers, who, we should reasonably expect to reprove such things, themselves are committed to such false doctrine, unbelief and abominable idolatry and lead, even, a more beastly and infernal life—yea, as these learned people diligently lead and force all mankind to such idolatry, unbelief, transgression and accursed life, both by their teaching and example, as most of the learned have done from the beginning, as they are ever earthly, carnally and devilishly minded, and as they ever reject the spiritual and heavenly wisdom and will of Jesus Christ which tempers the carnal lusts, as a displeasure and inconvenience, Col. 3: 5; 1 Pet. 2: 11; Rom. 13: 14; therefore, since I clearly see this awful disesteem of the holy word of God, and the condemnation of innumerable thou-

sands of souls whom Christ Jesus has so dearly bought and ransomed by his precious blood, for outside of the obedience to the divine word there is no salvation, therefore I cannot be silent; for the honor and praise of my Lord and God are at stake, and it avails the salvation of a poor, erring brother—although, perchance, it may be at the risk of my life.

Who knows but that God, through me and through my beloved brethren who are and who shall be, has chosen and provided in his grace, that some of those who now unwittingly err, may yet acknowledge and confess the right way, doctrine, truth and life, and walk unblamably in Christ, before God and before all the world all the days of their lives. O, Lord, that it might be so, Amen.

Behold, most beloved reader, inasmuch as the Babylonian king, namely, the anti-christ, has, through his servants, that is, through the false prophets and teachers, demolished the disobedient Jerusalem, the temple of the Lord, and has thus imprisoned Israel these many years—therefore I and my brethren in the Lord desire nothing but that we may, to the honor of God, so labor at his fallen city, temple and imprisoned people, according to the talent received of him, that we may rebuild that which is demolished, repair that which is damaged and free those who are imprisoned, with the word of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the same as it was before the fall, that is, in freedom of the Spirit, on the doctrines, sacraments, ceremonies, love and life of Jesus Christ and of his holy apostles.

For this reason I am not ashamed to write down, publish and loudly proclaim my faith, doctrine, seeking and desire, before all mankind who will hear, no matter who they are. Yea, I doubt not but if those could see my inmost heart who now assiduously seek my life, they would change their hatred against me and my brethren, into love for us.

In the first place we desire, according to the word of God, that no bishop, pastor or teacher shall be admitted into the church of the Lord, to teach and administer the sacraments of the Lord, other than those who are comprised in the doctrine, ordinance

and life of our Lord Jesus Christ—unblamable in all things, 1 Tim. 3: 2; Tit. 1: 6; Lev. 21: 7; Ezek. 44: 21; for the word of the Lord is truth, Jn. 17: 17; it is Spirit and life, Jn. 6: 63; therefore they can not be administered by the carnal minded; by no children of death, nor by liars; but by the truthful, by the spiritual minded, and by those who rightly confess Christ Jesus; who surely feel the life eternal in their hearts, and who live unblamably before God and walk in Christ Jesus, so that they may truthfully say with Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ," 1 Cor. 11: 1.

In the second place we desire with ardent hearts, even at the cost of life and blood, that the holy gospel of Jesus Christ and his apostles, which alone is the true doctrine, and will remain so until Jesus Christ will reappear in the clouds, may be taught and preached through all the world, as the Lord Jesus Christ commanded his disciples at the last moments while he was on earth, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15.

In the third place we seek, teach and desire a true faith and christian life conformable to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles; for the doctrine of the preachers is all vain and useless if the word which is preached is not accepted by faith, Heb. 4: 2; and faith is vain, and dead before God when it does not work by love, Jas. 2: 20.

In the fourth place, we teach, seek and desire a right, christian baptism; first, with Spirit and fire, Luke 3: 16; afterward in the water, in obedience to faith; for thus has Christ Jesus commanded all the believing; and thus the holy apostles have taught and administered it, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15; Acts 2: 38; 9: 5; 16: 31; 10: 47.

In the fifth place, we teach, seek and desire such a Supper as Christ Jesus himself has instituted and administered, Matt. 26: 19; Mark 14: 22; Luke 22: 19; first, to a church which is outwardly without spot and blemish, that is, without any considerable transgression and wickedness; for the church can only judge as to the visible; but what is inwardly wicked and not outwardly apparent to the church, as the betraying of Judas, of that God is to judge,

for he alone tries the hearts and reins, and not the church. Secondly, in both forms, namely, bread and wine; thirdly, to the remembrance of the Lord's death. Fourthly, as a renewal and proof of brotherly love, as this supper was also called amongst the ancients, a brotherly supper, as Tertullian writes.

In the sixth place we seek and desire that all strange ceremonies and manners of worship which are without the word of God, or instituted contrary thereto and tend to abominable idolatry, such as holy water, oral confession, infant baptism, masses, matins, vespers, images, altars, false promises and the like ceremonies, may be abolished, not by force of arms, but peaceably by the word of God, that the poor, ignorant populace may no longer be deceived by such vain works which are nothing short of idolatry; but that they may put their faith in the living God and in the merits of our ever blessed Lord Jesus Christ and that they may cordially walk in his divine commandments, not varying to the right or the left; for in him is life everlasting, Jn. 12: 50, and in none other.

In the seventh place we seek, desire, teach and preach, that all magistrates, emperors, kings, dukes, counts, barons, mayors, knights and other officers may be so taught and trained by the Spirit and word of God, that they may sincerely seek, honor, fear and serve Christ Jesus, the true head of all lords and potentates: that they may rightly administer their office, and use the sword given them of God, in his fear and in brotherly love, to the praise of God, to the protection of the good and to the punishment of the evil, according to the intent of the word of God, Rom. 13: 3; 1 Pet. 2: 13; as did the men of God, as Moses, Joshua, David, Ezekiel, Josiah and others. Read also Deut. 17: 2, 3, and you will clearly understand what God has commanded all magistrates to do.

Besides, we teach the true love and fear of God, the true love of our neighbor, to aid and assist all mankind and to injure none; to crucify the flesh and its lusts; to circumcise the heart, mouth and the whole body with the knife of the divine word, of all unclean thoughts, unbecoming words

and actions. Now consider whether these things are not the will of God, the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, the true ministering of the sacraments and the true life which is of God; although all the gates of hell may willfully oppose them.

Behold, dear brethren, against these doctrines, sacraments and life no imperial decrees, no papal bulls, no councils of the learned, no long usage, no human philosophy, no Origen, Augustine, Luther, Bucer, prison, banishment or murder can prevail; for it is the eternal, imperishable word of God; it is, I repeat, the *eternal word of God*, and will remain immutable forever. *Etiamsi rumpantur illa cœdro.* Whosoever yet opposes and wars against these things, either at heart, verbally or by the sword, does not war against flesh and blood, that is, against man, but he wars against the Lamb, against him who has all power, and who by a word created heaven and earth and the fullness thereof. Nay, against him who lifts up his hand and says, "I live forever," Deut. 32: 40.

As this is the true doctrine of Jesus Christ which alone leads to life eternal, and as there is no other true doctrine beside; therefore I might be asked by the reader why it is that so very few men sincerely believe and fulfill it in works? In my opinion there are four reasons for this. First, because all lords, preachers and common people are carnal and earthly minded; therefore they cannot admit the lovely doctrine of the Holy Ghost, the doctrine of eternal peace. Secondly, because they are drunk and full of the enchanting wine of the Babylonian whore, exceedingly rich and not in want of any thing, Rev. 17: 2; 3: 17. Thirdly, because they do not fear the awful judgment and fearful wrath of God against all disobedience and transgression, yea, so utterly disregard the word of God, as if the Holy Ghost was merely jesting, when threatening temporal or eternal punishment. Fourthly, because they do not acknowledge the great beneficence of God toward them in Christ Jesus; for in case they did acknowledge the works of divine love toward them, namely, that God has created heaven and earth and the fullness thereof for their benefit; that he formed them after his own

image from the dust of earth; placed them at the head of all creation; gave them gold, silver, land, house and home and all the necessaries of life; gave them his divine word; first, the law of nature, then Moses and the prophets, and afterward his only begotten Son, his wisdom, his power, Christ Jesus, who has taught them the will of his Father in great clearness; opened heaven and closed hell; vanquished death, sin and the devil for them; fulfilled the cumbersome, threatening law on the cross, and acquired for them grace, favor, mercy, peace, freedom, deliverance, remission of sins and eternal life with the Father, if they in truth believe, seek and desire it, besides calling them daily to repentance, regeneration and the glory of the chosen children of God; desiring to draw them forth from the darkness of the world and deliver them into the kingdom of his beloved Son; not letting his righteous judgment come on them as it did on Sodom and Gomorrah; giving them day and night, sun and moon, rain and drought; again, blessing them with wisdom and understanding, wife, children, cattle and fruits; if they did cordially acknowledge these rich gifts of his abundant grace, then all the tyrants under heaven would not separate them from the doctrine, love, sacraments, life and confession of Jesus Christ even if it were possible that they could testify to and assert it by a thousand deaths. Yea, they would say with the apostle Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Rom. 8: 35.

But because they do not acknowledge the God of all grace in his divine word, judgments and beneficences; and do neither acknowledge the Spirit, power, will and life which was in Christ Jesus whom we should follow, according to the word of God; therefore they so wrongfully oppose and persecute the heavenly doctrine of Jesus Christ, and diligently follow, teach and protect all manner of falsehood, deceit, fraud and idolatry. Again I repeat, If they rightly acknowledged and believed the paternal heart, mind and love, protection, favor, will, solicitude and affection of the Al-

mighty God in Christ Jesus, they would doubtlessly accept and cordially fulfill his blessed word and admonition; but as they do not rightly acknowledge Christ Jesus and his Father—the Savior said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil," Jn. 3: 16—19.

Take heed, O ye miserable, erring men! For here the eternal wisdom of the blessed Christ Jesus has expressed, why you do not believe his precious word, and do not fulfill his divine will, because you prefer the damnable darkness to the saving light. Yea, I repeat, that if you sincerely accepted and believed the divine goodness, mercy, and the ineffable love of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ toward you, namely, that by his ardent love he became an humble mortal man for you; came down from high heaven into these lower parts of the earth, taught and preached unto you the eternal kingdom of God, performed miracles, prayed, suffered tribulation, anxiety, apprehension and prison; that he was beaten, mocked, derided, spit upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, drenched with gall and vinegar, blasphemed, crucified and that he died and was buried for you; was again raised up, ascended to heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father; and that by his precious blood he became your faithful Servant, Reconciler, Deliverer, Mediator and Advocate; that by love he sent to you and the whole world, his faithful servants, the holy apostles, with the word of grace—if you believe all this, you would, doubtlessly, love *him* who has shown you such great love and grace without any merit on your part; and if you would return the love with which he has loved you and yet loves you, you would, verily, not tire of seeking and following him, so that you

might live unblamably according to his blessed will, and walk all your life in his divine commandments, as he himself says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me," Jn. 14: 21.

Behold, most beloved reader, thus true faith or true knowledge begets love, and love begets obedience to the commandments of God. Therefore Christ Jesus says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." Again at another place, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death into life," Jn. 5: 24. For true evangelical faith is of such a nature that it cannot lay dormant; but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love; it dies unto flesh and blood; destroys all forbidden lusts and desires; cordially seeks, serves and fears God; clothes the naked; feeds the hungry; consoles the afflicted; shelters the miserable; aids and consoles all the oppressed; returns good for evil; serves those that injure it; prays for those that persecute it; teaches, admonishes and reproves with the Word of the Lord; seeks that which is lost; binds up that which is wounded; heals that which is diseased and saves that which is sound. The persecution, suffering and anxiety which befalls it for the sake of the truth of the Lord, is to it a glorious joy and consolation.

All those who have a faith as is here mentioned, namely, a faith that makes desirous to walk in the commandments of the Lord, to do the will of the Lord, and which shows itself in all righteousness, love and obedience, also acknowledge that the word and will of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ is true wisdom, truth and life, yea, unchangeable and immutable until Christ Jesus shall reappear in the clouds of heaven at the judgment day; they do not scoff at God's word as if it were a vapor, as do the ignorant world, saying, "What can water avail me?" but they will diligently try to obey the word of Jesus Christ in every particular, even at the risk of death according to the flesh.

Behold, beloved brethren, I speak frankly with a certain and sure conviction not by

any revelation or heavenly inspiration, but by the express, definite word of the Lord, and from my inmost heart I am convinced that this doctrine is not our doctrine, but the doctrine of him who sent us, that is Christ Jesus. All those who are desirous of doing his will, will acknowledge that this doctrine is of God; and that we do not preach our own opinion, dreamings, and visions. But those who do not fear God; do not believe on Christ Jesus; who trample upon his word, and do not do his will; who love darkness rather than light; by those, all evangelical truth must be called damnable heresy and considered and treated as deadly treason. Notwithstanding all this, the word of God shall remain unbroken until the judgment day.

Woe unto such! For in them are lost the abundant gifts of grace, the heavenly word of peace, the mild admonitions, the hard and bitter labor, the precious treasure, which is the precious blood and bitter death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, woe, woe unto them! For it can never be that we can be saved without faith, love and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. I speak of those of understanding age. Paul says, "Without faith it is impossible to please him (God)," Heb. 11: 6. "He that believeth not is condemned," Jn. 3: 18.

As the literal law of Moses could not, at any time, be changed by the tyranny of princes, the acuteness of the learned, or by the madness of the common people; and as there could be nothing added to, nor taken from it, it had to remain unchanged until the coming of Christ. Yea, as all who did not abide by this law were the children of the wrath and of death; so, also, it is today. If all the deceased apostles should be raised up and should teach us differently from what they did at the time of their ministration; and besides these, Moses and the prophets, all the angels of heaven and as many eloquent and miraculous prophets as we have hairs on our heads; and if besides these, all the princes should roar like devouring lions and ravening wolves, and if every learned tongue should cut as a razor, it would yet be impossible that those could be saved who do not abide by the wholesome doctrine, sacraments, obedience

and life of Jesus Christ. Yea they are the children of wrath, the curse and of death eternal, as Christ himself says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," Matt. 7: 21. At another place he says, "If ye continue in my word then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," Jn. 8: 31, 32. From this follows the opposite, beloved brethren, namely, that if we do not abide in Christ's word, we cannot be his disciples; that we do not acknowledge the truth; and if we do not acknowledge the truth how can we then be made free thereby? And if we are not freed by truth, woe unto us that we were ever born; for then we are yet in sin, under the curse, wrath, children of hell, of the devil and of eternal death. O, misery, misery! Fear with all your heart, faithful reader! For this will never be found otherwise.

If the bloodthirsty, tyrannical lords and princes had, from the beginning, acknowledged this, and would now acknowledge it, namely, that the word is eternal and will remain unchangeable and that it cannot be changed by the most exalted of men, never would they thus have opposed and murdered the professors of the divine word.

If the Roman bishop and his learned fellows had taken this matter to heart, he would never have taken from Italy her emperor, and from Christ Jesus the spiritual reign. But he would, doubtlessly, have bidden adieu to his worldly glory, pomp, luxury, idolatry, false doctrine, easy life, garbled sacraments, sodomitic uncleanness, councils, statutes and decrees and would have contented himself with the immutable, heavenly doctrine of the only, true Shepherd, Teacher and Bishop of our souls, Christ Jesus.

As the whole burden of our salvation is included and comprised in Christ Jesus and his holy word, and in no one else, nor in any other doctrine—therefore I warn every godfearing soul, by the word of God, through nothing but brotherly love, not to be shaken and misled, either by the exalted position of man, or by old age, learning, eloquence, finely gotten up ceremonies,

dreams, prophecies, visions, signs and jugglery. For there can never be a wiser, truer, more diligent, more righteous, god-pleasing, unblamable, powerful, perfect, higher or holier Prophet than the ever blessed Christ Jesus. Every thing, too, has testified this of him, both in heaven and upon earth. In the first place God testified this to Adam; afterward to Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Zechariah, and to most of the prophets; to the angel Gabriel; to the angels at his birth; by the star of heaven; by the wise from the east; the learned at Jerusalem; John the Baptist. Again at his baptism by the Father and the Holy Ghost; afterward by the multitudes, the devils; by the healing, the raising up of the dead; by changing water into wine; commanding the storm to cease; by the loaves, fishes, fig-tree, and the children on palms-day; at his death; by the murderer; the firmament of heaven; the whole earth; the curtains of the temple; the stones; the deceased dead, and the centurion under the cross, Ps. 22: 7; Isa. 53: 5; Dan. 9: 25. Say, what is there that has not testified to Christ Jesus? Yea he is the one, as he himself says, who after his resurrection again ascended to heaven, to whom all power is given of the Father both in heaven and in earth, Matt. 28. Therefore it is just and right, yea it is absolutely required, if they do not want to be lost, that all magistrates bow themselves under his scepter; all reason and sagaciousness place themselves under his heavenly wisdom; all flesh lay at his blessed feet; and that every tongue confess that he is the Lord, to the honor and praise of his Father. Therefore I pray all godfearing readers in the Lord, by the merits of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be the kingdom, the praise and honor; not to consider me any higher than a mere, humble servant of Jesus Christ and as a dispenser of his mysteries, according to the faith given me of him. I, miserable sinner that I am, on account of my unclean, greedy, proud, vain, idolatrous and carnal life which I formerly led, and on account of my yet often sinning and transgressing before my God, who am not worthy to be the least servant in the house of my Lord! Yet, by his grace I am that I am.

Brethren, I tell you the truth and lie not. I am no Enoch, no Elias, I have no visions, am no prophet, who can teach and prophesy differently from what it is written in the word of God and whosoever tries to teach something else will soon miss the right way and be deceived in his learning. I trust that the merciful Father will keep me in his word so that I shall write or speak nothing but that which I can prove by Moses, the prophets, the evangelists or by other apostolic Scriptures and doctrines, explained in their true sense, Spirit and intent of Christ. Judge ye that are spiritually minded. Again, I have no visions nor angelic inspirations, neither do I desire such, lest I be thereby deceived. The word of Christ, alone, is sufficient for me. If I do not follow his testimony, then, verily, all that I do is useless. And even if I had such visions and inspirations, which is not the case, even then it would have to be conformable to the word and Spirit of Christ, or else it would be mere fantasy, deceit and satanic temptation. For Paul says, "Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith," Rom. 12: 6. Nor am I a third David, as some have falsely passed themselves and yet pass themselves for. There are but two Davids comprised in the word of God. The first, a literal and figurative, namely, the son of Jesse; and the second, the spiritual, the only begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus. Whosoever, now, passes himself for the third, is a falsifier and blasphemer. Let every soul take heed, lest he err in his faith.

According to my first birth I am nothing but unclean slime and dust of earth, conceived and born in sin from my mother's womb, and educated all my life in all manner of ignorance, sin and blindness, until the clear light of grace and knowledge appeared unto me from high heaven and which has given me such a heart, will and desire, that I willingly seek after that which is good, and strive, with holy Paul to "follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus," Phil. 3: 12.

O, most beloved reader, I repeat that I have formerly acted shamefully against God and my neighbors; and yet I do, sometimes think, speak and act recklessly, of

which however I sincerely repent. What am I that I should boast of, seek and teach any thing else than the ever blessed Christ Jesus alone, his word, sacraments, obedience and his god-pleasing, virtuous and unblamable life. He is the only one of whom it is written: That he was begotten of the Holy Ghost; that he knew no sin; that guile was not found in his mouth, that his doctrine, word, will, and commandments are life eternal, Matt. 1: 25; Luke 1: 31; 1 Pet. 2: 22; Isa. 53: 12.

Therefore take heed and save your soul. For thus every christian must be minded in regard to Christ Jesus, his Savior and in regard to his holy word; nor must he think himself more exalted, no matter what gifts he has received, if he would not rob Christ Jesus of his glory; and remain in a humble walk before God, in the right measure of his faith as becomes him in Christ. I advise all not to deceive themselves. Let spiritual pride, and vain boasting be far from you, "For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble," 1 Pet. 5: 5.

Inasmuch as I daily see the perils which have surrounded us from the beginning; and as so many souls are deceived by false prophesies, smooth words, seeming holiness, lying, jugglery, boasting and false promises of the anti-christians and the false prophets who are ever intent upon their own honor, fame and gain, under a semblance of God's word, as was the case with the popes of Rome, with John of Leyden, the Munsterites, and others—therefore I deem it essential and well, sincerely to warn and admonish all beloved readers in the Lord, not to accept my doctrine as the gospel of Jesus Christ until they have weighed it in the balance with the Spirit and word of God, that they may not place their faith in me, nor in any teacher or writer, but, solely in Christ Jesus. For if they should accept it for my sake, and should not first compare it with the word of the Lord, and should, thus depend upon me or any other man, and not upon Christ Jesus, they would be like unto the culpable Corinthians, whom Paul severely reprov'd because there were dissensions among them; some were of Paul, some of Apollos, and not all of Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 1. They would be like unto

those of whom it is written, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord," Jer. 17: 5.

If I should, by my teaching, gain disciples for myself and not for Christ Jesus, seeking my own gain, praise and honor, then, indeed, woe unto my soul! No brethren, no. The Lord be blessed I seek not that which Judas, Gallio and Theudas sought. By the grace of God I am not minded like those who, in their imagination soar above the clouds and want to be like unto the Most High; Acts 5: 37. But I repeat it. I am a poor, miserable sinner, who must daily fight with my flesh, the world and the devil, and daily seek the mercy of the Lord; and who, with holy Paul boasts of nothing but of Christ Jesus alone; and that he was crucified for us.

My writing and preaching is for nothing but for the sake of Christ Jesus; for I seek and desire nothing (this the Lord knows) but that the most glorious name, the divine will, and the glory of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ may be acknowledged throughout the world. I desire and seek sincere teachers, true doctrines, true faith, true sacraments, true worship and an unblamable life; for which I must pay with much tribulation, trouble, uneasiness, labor, watching, fear, anxiety, sorrow, envy, shame, heat and cold, and perhaps, at last by torture, yea by my blood and death. For my reward, according to the flesh, must be that of him who, from the beginning, in his great love, has sought the salvation of the world. I say with holy John the Baptist; Christ Jesus must increase, but I must decrease, Jn. 3: 30; he lives forever and ever, but I shall again return to the dust from whence I came, as all the children of men.

Therefore I beseech you again, by the grace of God, and for the salvation of your souls, that you may weigh my doctrine and the doctrine of all mankind, who have been from the times of the apostles, are now, and shall yet be, with the gospel balance of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of his holy apostles, lest you be deceived by me or by any other man, no matter whether he be a prince, learned or unlearned, holy in ap-

pearance, or miraculous. If it be the word of God which I teach, accept it in the name of the Lord, if ye would not be lost. But if it be human doctrine, then let it be accursed of God. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid (by the apostles) which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 3: 11.

No doctrine is profitable or serviceable to our salvation but the doctrine of Christ Jesus and his holy apostles, as he himself says, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28: 19.

All Scripture, both of the Old and New Testaments, rightly explained according to the intent of Christ Jesus and his holy apostles, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 2 Tim. 3: 16; but whatever is taught contrary to the Spirit and doctrine of Jesus is accursed of God, Gal. 1.

Inasmuch as there is but one corner stone laid of God, the Almighty Father, in the foundation of Zion, which is Christ Jesus, Isa. 28: 16; Rom. 9: 33; 1 Pet. 2: 6; upon whom alone we should build conformable to his word, and upon none other; and as the whole world, to the contrary, have built upon strange corner stones, such as popes, councils, doctors, doctrines and commandments of men; upon wrong practices of long standing, and still continue to build upon pretending prophets; and as they thus so shamefully reject the only, noble and finished corner stone, the ever blessed Christ Jesus—therefore I can not be restrained, but must warn all godfearing souls in the Lord, by my writings, wherever they shall be taken, read and heard, that from this moment they may awaken, if they desire to be saved (whether I live or die by so doing), and that they may without delay, enter upon the wholesome doctrine, sacraments, obedience and life of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ; for in him alone is life eternal, as has been frequently said above.

Beloved reader, verily, I can not but wonder at the obduracy, deafness and blindness of the world, inasmuch as they are not ashamed to bear the name of Christ, and to boast of his merits, blood and death, while nothing is found among them at all by which they prove the good will and nature

of Christ Jesus. O ye vain boasters, if you are the true christians in whom God is pleased, as you pretend, where then, is your christian baptism in which you have buried your sins and put on the new life? Where is your true Supper in which you proclaim the death of the Lord and show your brotherly love? Where is your love and fear of God? your love of your neighbors? Your humility of heart? Your mercifulness towards the needful? Your obedience to the commandments of God? Your new birth from above, from which results a new life which should be unblamable before God, and before all the world? Jas. 1:27. Where is the living, holy and pleasing sacrifice of your own body, which you should ever be ready to present for the sake of the Lord's truth? We find nothing amongst you but unbelief and its evil fruits; an anti-christian baptism, idolatrous supper; unclean love of flesh, unmercifulness, pride, avarice, disobedience in all divine matters, carnal birth, earthly mindedness, and the old blamable life, led according to the will of him who, from the beginning, was a proud, false, deceitful, cruel and bloody murderer.

We find amongst you no worship but only a self-begotten set of rites which are pleasing to the flesh, such as, bells, organs, singing, celebration, ornamented churches, beautiful images, differences in victuals and in days, false purification and promises, reading many psalms and pater nosters with the mouth and not spiritually, adulteration of the sacraments, and a destruction and garbling of all that which Christ Jesus has taught and commanded in his holy gospel. All of which are, verily, no works of regenerated christians; but rather the works of Satan or of the foolish, blind and ignorant flesh. For by these works neither the word nor righteousness of God is taught: no flesh is crucified; no neighbors are served; and above all they are not pleasing to God. Therefore they can not be considered, according to Scripture, services of God, but rather an abominable, fearful and terrible service of idols. For by such means the ignorant, trusting populace is led away from the true faith and trust in Christ Jesus and is led into a false trust in ceremonies, yea, in such cere-

monies as the eternal wisdom, the blessed Christ Jesus, has never commanded. By which ceremonies they plainly show that they believe at heart that Christ Jesus is imperfect, foolish, and unclean. For in case they believed him to be wise and perfect how could they thus shamefully adulterate, break, despise and garble his perfect, evangelical word and ordinances? And if they acknowledged him to be spotless why do they seek their salvation in such impure and strange means, and not in the only pure sacrifice, which is Christ Jesus?

But because true religion opposes your carnal mindedness, pride, avarice, uncleanness, vanity, ease and the lusts of your flesh, therefore you have chosen for yourselves a vain and strange religion by which you think to be saved, although you do not live according to the word and will of God. O, no, dear reader, no. I repeat it, if all creatures under the heavens were devouring swords, fire and water; if all men were cruel, horrible and bloody tyrants; and if the acuteness of the learned, ruled all the people, yet all would be vanity. If you would enter into life, you must be born again, Jn. 3:5, you must be regenerated and in malice you should be children, 1 Cor. 14:20; yea, you must keep the commandments which were taught and commanded of Jesus Christ, Matt. 18. Nothing can be devised as a substitute; for there will never be a way to salvation other than Christ Jesus.

It is too plain, and indiscreet blindness to think that we could be saved and at the same time be avaricious, spiteful, envious, proud, adulterous and idolatrous, as all the Scriptures too plainly show and teach that such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Did you ever find falsehood with God? I think not. Holy Paul says that God is one "that can not lie," Tit. 1:2. Christ Jesus says, "Thy word is truth," Jn. 17:17. If he be, then, a God that can not lie; and if his holy word be truth; O, ye miserable, then all is lost with you. For his doctrine and truth is, that the unbelieving, refractory, disobedient, avaricious, vain, lying, whoring, greedy, obdurate, idolatrous, adulterous, ambitious, bloodthirsty and carnal man shall not enter into

the kingdom of heaven; but his portion shall be "everlasting destruction," 1 Thess. 1: 9, eternal darkness and eternal death.

As you are such ungodly, obdurate and willful sinners, therefore you are, according to the word of Christ which can not lie, and according to the doctrine of the apostles who spoke in like Spirit, deprived of the glorious revelation of the children of God, and of the future life; and must remain forever, by the wrath of God, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21: 8.

And if you, notwithstanding this, trust to be saved while you do not sincerely repent of your old life, then, verily, your trust is vain. For by such trust you make God a liar, because you trust to acquire life contrary to his holy word.

What! Do ye think, O ye perverse, that we shall surprise, blind and bribe the Almighty, wise and just God? Do you think that the eternal truth shall become falsehood for your sake? No, beloved reader, no. Beware. The irrepensible sentence of God was passed, irpealably more than fifteen hundred years ago, namely: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," Rom. 8: 13. This word is sure and firm.

O world, world, that you thus despise as vain and useless, the calling and inviting voice of your God who is as faithful to you as a faithful Father to his beloved children! And that you speak in your hearts, with beautiful Tyrus, "I am of perfect beauty," Ezek. 27: 3; and with proud Babel, "I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children," Isa. 47: 8. Yea, although you now say, as do the ignorant, It is peace and freedom; yet I tell you, as Ezekiel said unto Tyrus, Thou art nothing; nothing wilt thou be forever; and as Isaiah said unto Babel, Thou shalt fall and not rise again; and with Paul, "That the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," and, "as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape," 1 Thess. 5: 2, 3; and although you may now, with Capernaum, be exalted unto heaven yet you will be brought down to hell, unlooked for, Matt. 11: 23. You eat, drink, dress, grab, hoard, and you act in all your transactions as if you would ever remain in this taber-

nacle of clay; and you never reflect that soon the word will be heard by all of us, "Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward."

The precious word of grace and of eternal peace, which is the most holy gospel of Jesus Christ, you account for nothing more than a fable, nay, as accursed heresy; for you drown, burn, persecute, and murder those who teach, admonish and reprove you by this word, and who by a strong power of the Spirit are sent to you of God, by grace; just as the mad synagogue of the Jews did; so that they did not only persecute and destroy the chosen children of God, the holy prophets, but also the only begotten Son of God himself; who by the ineffable love of the merciful Father was sent to them for their own, eternal salvation. What did they say? "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance," Matt. 21: 38.

How long will you continue in your damnable blindness, your refractory obduracy and your pernicious madness? Reflect upon the abundant, ineffable works of grace which Christ Jesus has shown you, and if his great love cannot move you to withdraw from your idolatry, disobedience and accursed life, then remember his rigid judgments which, from the beginning of the creation, came upon all those who did not abide in his blessed word and obedience, that you may by such fear, since you are not moved by his love, be drawn away from all evil.

Behold the weeping eyes, O, miserable world, and hear the tender voice of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, how he wept for obdurate Jerusalem, and said unto them, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes," Luke 19: 42. At another place, "Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth; from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the tem-

ple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," Matt. 23: 34—38.

O, sincerely beloved readers, in case you would rightly take to heart these words of Christ, your bones would become dry by fear; they would shake and tremble; for it is with you, even, as it was with Jerusalem and Judah. You willfully deny that Christ Jesus is your Lord. You do not desire the true knowledge of his ways. But you desire to do as all gentiles have done from the beginning, namely, worship wood, stone, gold, silver, bread, wine and the works of your own hands. Besides your earthly, carnal and corrupt life, which, so to speak, does not conform in the least to the word and will of him who, by grace, created you, to his honor.

Indeed, you have so entirely rejected Christ Jesus and cast him from you in mockery, that there is no doctrine, sacraments or any thing left you which conforms to his word; but you have instituted self-begotten doctrines, sacraments, ceremonies and commandments, as if Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son and Wisdom of the Almighty Father, were not the true Messenger. And all those who, about this damnable, deadly error, fraternally admonish and mildly reprove you and seek to return you to Christ Jesus and to his blessed word, must be taken and suffer as rebellious heretics, in all cities and countries.

Behold, kind reader, as you have ever been and yet are so unthankful for his paternal grace, God has shut out from you his mercy, and has brought his just judgment upon you so that there is neither right, godfearing truth, nor true teachers, nor deacons, nor gospel, nor faith, nor christian baptism, nor christian Supper, nor christian life, nor knowledge, nor truth, nor spiritual wisdom, nor judgment, nor ban, nor love, nor piety left upon earth. Thus the house of which Christ Jesus has spoken, is entirely destroyed and the well

prepared vineyard of the Lord is without fruit, and is become useless, as the prophet says, "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and he fenced it and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now, go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry," Isa. 5: 1—7.

Behold, dear brethren, as this judgment came first upon Israel, so it also has come upon us. For all flesh has corrupted his way, from the lowest to the highest. The heavens are iron, and earth is metal. There are found in the vineyard of the Lord no dew, no moisture nor ripe fruits; there is no digger, no pruner nor tender. Every where it is accursed; the walls and hedges are trampled down; it is laid waste to be trampled upon by all men; strangers have dominion thereof. The Gentiles have entered into the sanctuary, and have soiled the temple of the Lord. Our princes are to us devouring lions; our fathers are our betrayers; our pastors are our deceivers; our shepherds are our wolves; our watchmen are the thieves and murderers of our souls. We find nothing but thistles and thorns: it is all plundered and robbed; it is all torn up and broken down wherever we turn.

And all this on account of our sinfulness; this we must confess before our God.

Yea, dearest reader, compare our transgressions with those of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities which God has destroyed on account of their sinfulness, and see how far they stand above us yet. For if we will rightly look into the matter we can conceive of no sinfulness greater than that of our time; no matter how great a sin it is, as pride, avarice, fornication, adultery, idolatry, backbiting, hatred, envy, greediness, treason, murder, disobedience to God, refractoriness, lying, stealing, hypocrisy or any other ungodliness, as may be plainly seen.

Besides, flesh is accounted Spirit; falsehood, truth; sinfulness, righteousness; and Satan is accounted as Christ, by this miserable, blind, erring world. Anti-christ is seated in the temple of God. Pharaoh arms himself against Israel. The powerful miracles and the beseeching voice of the Lord are neither seen nor heeded. Thus has this abominable darkness covered the whole land of Egypt. I repeat, thus the fearful judgment of God is come upon us because of our sinfulness, as the prophet says, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth; they trust in vanity and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace.

Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us. We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon-day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves; we look for judgment but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them: In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity can not enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor," Isa. 59: 2—16.

Most beloved, thus has God, the just judge, sent his fearful judgment into this wicked world, although you do not feel it. For inasmuch as you trample upon the Son of God, deem the blood of the New Testament as unclean, grieve the Holy Spirit of grace—therefore you are under the terrible judgment and have fallen into the hands of the living God, so that you prefer falsehood to truth, obscurity to light, death to life; and therefore God has sent you error, and deprived you of his holy word, faith, knowledge and truth, so that you have, in this world, neither light nor way, nor spiritual wisdom, nor prayer, nor God, nor Christ, nor promise, nor righteousness, nor peace, nor conscientious freedom, nor inward joy nor hope; notwithstanding you so highly boast of the name, mercy, merits, death and blood of the Lord. For since you say that you acknowledge God, and yet do not honor and thank him as God, therefore he has suffered you to be deceived by your sensual thoughts, and your foolish heart is become obscured, 1 Jn. 1: 6; Jn. 1: 10; Rev.

22: 15; Jn. 9: 31; Eph. 4: 18; Rom. 1: 18, 22. Besides, you deem it but mockery to acknowledge God, therefore God has delivered you to a perverse mind, to do the things you should not do; "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers; backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful," Rom. 1: 29—31.

Behold, beloved reader, thus mysteriously God punishes by his righteous judgment. For God, the Mighty Lord visits this world in many different ways, on account of the sinfulness thereof. As with bondage, war, bloodshed, drought, famine, pestilence and many other diseases; at which plagues and chastisements the world is horror-stricken. But above all, the most terrible wrath of God is his depriving us of his divine word. For the first mentioned plagues, such as pestilence, famine, sword, &c., only punish us according to the flesh, and are chastisements for our correction, as the prophet says, which he inflicts that his children may learn wisdom; but when he deprives us of his word, then all is lost. For if we have not the word, we verily, have nothing but unbelief, blindness, error, disobedience, conceit, acrimony, an unclean, foolish and adulterous spirit, and eternal death. But how few, yea, how *very few* are horror-stricken at these plagues, however abundantly they have come upon them.

If we should desire to put out a man's eyes, cut off his ears, take his life or take from him the inheritance of his natural father, would not such an one use all his reason, wit and wisdom to prevent such pain, shame, danger, and damage? And to-day the whole world have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, life and yet are dead; and, above all, bereft of the eternal inheritance of the merciful Father, but do not mind it. O, if they acknowledged their own misfortune how diligently they would seek him who gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and true wisdom to the unlearned, which is Christ Jesus, Ps. 94: 9.

But the finely attired woman has so enchanted you, and the whoring spirit of the spiritual whoredom has so kept you under its wings, that I fear, indeed, that your abominable unbelief, obscurity, blindness, falsehood and madness will never more be taken from your hearts, but that the wrath of God will remain upon you to the end; so that in this earthly life you will err, without any piety, from one unclean thing to another until the time that we shall be placed before the just judge, where every one shall receive his reward according to his works. Then, when too late, your blind eyes will be opened amidst sighs and unavailing remorse, acknowledging that you have not walked in the ways of righteousness to life eternal, but in the dark ways to death eternal. O misery, where will you then hide yourselves from the wrath of God? Then you will cry in terror: Ye mountains fall upon us and ye hills cover us, Rev. 6: 16. For then there can not be found a place of prayer, of mercy, nor of repentance for the sinner. But the awful sentence of the just God against all the wicked, unbelieving, willful and disobedient sinners will then be pronounced, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. 25: 41. O, how well it would be for such if they had never been born.

Therefore I will not cease, while I live, to teach and admonish both verbally and by writing, so far as God, the merciful Father, by his ineffable kindness, is giving me knowledge, spirit, grace and wisdom, to all those that seek the truth; that they may awaken while it is yet time and seek the Lord while he may yet be found, and call upon him while he is near, that their righteousness may go forth as a light and their salvation burn like a torch; which consists in nothing but casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armor of light, which is to renounce all false doctrine, sacraments, false religion and the unbecoming, dishonest, carnal life, and again to enter into the divine doctrine, the evangelical sacraments, the services and works of love and the sincere, christian life, as it was taught, instituted and practiced by Christ Jesus, our only Deliverer and Shepherd

himself, according to the will of his Father, Isa. 55: 6; 62: 2; Rom. 13: 12.

Thus I labor and strive, according to the small talent given me of God, of which God is my witness, after nothing else than that the Day-star, the blessed Christ Jesus, the ever shining Light may arise in your hearts and enlighten you in all divine truth, knowledge, spiritual understanding and wisdom, unto life eternal. Amen, 2 Pet. 1: 19.

Most beloved reader, herewith I beseech you all, whether you be lord, prince, learned or unlearned, to peruse these and all my writings, with the fear of God in your hearts, and I have no doubt but you will clearly find that our doctrine, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his holy apostles, does not tend to mutiny, discord, treason and rebellion; but rather, yea surely, to true, christian love, unity and peace. For Christ Jesus whom we preach, is the true Prince of eternal peace, and not of discord, Isa. 9. Say, whom have we curtailed? Whom have we injured? We sincerely seek nothing but that we may save all mankind. Not only at the cost of our chattels, shelter, gold, silver, and labor, but also (understand it in an spiritual sense) at the cost of our life-blood.

Verily, verily, I say, If all lords and princes and their subjects who boast of the name of Christ, would acknowledge the beforementioned doctrine of Jesus Christ as right and true, and were minded as the doctrine, life and Spirit of Christ require, then it would not be necessary to fortify cities

and towns; to keep cavalry and infantry, nor to manufacture deadly weapons such as guns, swords and spears. I do not here speak of the sword of justice which is given as a punishment to the wicked and protection of the good. But it would be as the prophet says, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree," Isa. 2: 4; Micah 4: 3, 4. For it is impossible that those who have committed themselves to the doctrine, life, body and church of Jesus Christ and remain therein, should seek or desire any thing but divine love, peace and unity; to suppress all evil, and protect all good, as becomes us in Christ Jesus. But we do not abet the false prophets of the corrupted sects which in many actions transgress the doctrine, rule and measure of Christ.

Herewith we commend you to the Lord. O, faithful readers. And now judge for yourselves according to the word of the Lord, whether or not I have, by his grace pointed out to you the truth of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. Grace, peace, mercy, true knowledge and life eternal be to all who, in truth, love Christ Jesus, Amen. Do not hide the praise of God. But let it be read, and heard by all who diligently seek and desire it.

Beloved brethren, do not deviate from the doctrine and life of Christ.



