

A
REPLY TO A PUBLICATION



OF

GELLIUS FABER,

MINISTER AT EMDEN,

WHICH HE PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1552
(IF I MISTAKE NOT), TO SLANDER THE PIOUS CHILDREN
OF GOD, AND TO EMBITTER THEIR CROSS; TO ENSNARE AND DECEIVE
THE THOUGHTLESS, AND TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE THEM
IN THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND CORRUPTION.

BY

MENNO SIMON.

Duo opposita (inquit Philosophus) juxta se posita, magis elucunt.

(Two facts set opposite to each other, says the philosopher, become the more apparent.)



*Complete works of
Munno Simon.*

SECOND PART.



ELKHART, INDIANA:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN F. FUNK AND BROTHER.

1871.

May God, our heavenly Father, through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, graciously grant spiritual enlightenment and salutary understanding to all the pious and unprejudiced readers of this work, of whatever class, who sincerely seek the Lord and his saving truth, Amen.

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

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

JOHN F. FUNK & BROTHER,

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

P R E F A C E.

PAUL writes to Timothy, and says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away," 2 Tim. 3: 1—5.

Further he says, "I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables," 2 Tim. 4: 1—4.

Again Daniel says, "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation," Dan. 12: 1.

Beloved reader, if you will pay close attention to the seeking, teaching and conduct of the preachers of the present day, and to the deplorable condition of the common people, you will be convinced that the teachers of whom Paul speaks are here, in great numbers and that the abominable time has arrived. O reader, take heed! It is such a time now, that if Sodom was flourishing as of old, it would compare as pious and righteous with the present, miserable world. Yet, through the just punishment and wrath of God, Sodom was turned into ashes and suffered the vengeance of eternal fire.

"Behold," says the prophet, "this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, Pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, was in her, and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy; and they were haughty and committed abomination before me; therefore I took them away as I saw good," Ezek. 16: 49, 50.

But now the world lives as if they were merely born to ungodliness and sensuality; and as if God was a dreamer and his word a fable. Say, beloved, is it not so? My kind reader, is it not so? Where is he who sincerely fears God and seeks after the truth? Wherever we turn we see nothing but unrighteousness, idolatry, deceit and despising of God. And all this is decked with the holy name, word, death and blood of Christ; besides, with human weakness and with false freedom, to avoid offence, O Lord! as if Christ were the Redeemer of all the impenitent and Mediator of all perverse sinners. No, my reader, no; this is not the case. Beware! Paul says, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," Rom. 8: 13.

Inasmuch, then, that the world is so corrupted, on every hand, that it has become a double Sodom, nay a confused Babel or benighted Egypt, under the pretense and name of christian churches; and since the great and merciful God has, in these latter days of unrighteousness, again revealed unto some the precious word of his divine grace in a pure, christian understanding, and placed it as a clear light amidst the darkness, wherewith he yet in everlasting love will assemble unto himself, before the dark day, an obedient and willing church through the revelation of his holy word and the enlightenment of his eternal Spirit; and since he has chosen them as his own peculiar people from the assembly of anti-christ,

through true repentance and a virtuous walk (although in weakness), under the cross of Christ, together with a salutary use of the sacramental signs according to the ordinance of Christ and his apostles and through a free, unfeigned confession of faith in the precious blood of Christ; therefore all the gates of hell arise and rave, so that, alas, true christians can find but little rest upon earth, as may be seen.

The rulers banish and persecute them; drag them into prisons and dungeons, torture and rob them, and in many places deprive them of their manhood, possessions and even life.

This perverse and reckless people ever call us anabaptists; heap one shameful lie upon another; point at us with the finger of scorn, as if we so behaved that fire and sword were too merciful a punishment for our bodies, and eternal hell-fire too merciful a punishment for our souls.

The preachers and the learned "are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily," as the prophet says, Ps. 73: 8, although we testify by so many tribulations that we, in our poor weakness, sincerely desire to fear and follow the Lord, and that we seek and desire peace with all mankind; yet, we are infamously slandered; we are accused, everywhere, before lords and rulers of cities and countries, that we are ungodly sects and anabaptists; that we are seducing the populace; conspire to raise mutiny and rebellion; and are falsely accused of other criminal intentions; that they may thus obscure and obstruct the precious word of God, the word of true repentance; the joyous gospel of grace; the true and powerful faith in Christ Jesus; the pious, unblamable life, required by the Scriptures; and destroy the glorious kingdom of Christ, and his righteousness; lest their cause and unfaithfulness be made manifest to the world; as may be educed from their fruits; and that on the other hand, the corrupt kingdom of anti-christ, the kingdom of this world, may be preserved uninterruptedly and maintained without shame unto the end, in falsehood, impenitance, open idolatry, a carnal, easy life and in unrighteousness, according to the desires of the old serpent.

Behold thus works the "prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," as Paul says, Eph. 2: 2; as may, alas, be plainly seen in the case of Gellius Faber, if we well consider his writings, slanders, bitter, offensive words, his false accusations, his vain boasting and gross garbling, and judge them according to the Spirit and word of the Lord.

Notwithstanding that it is well known to many thousands of honest and reasonable people (as I suppose) that we seek nothing else upon earth but that we may in our weakness, willingly walk in the footsteps of Christ, in obedience to his word; that we may again light the extinguished lamp of truth, may call many unto righteousness, and that we may save our souls by the assistance and grace of the Lord, on which account we, poor ones everywhere, must endure so much tribulation, misery, anxiety, cross and persecution: nevertheless, the above mentioned Gellius, who in this case should be our assistant and fosterer (for he claims to be a servant of the holy word), still increases our anxiety and sore persecution, and the hatred and bitterness against us, by his unscriptural arguments and hostility to our foundation and doctrine, by his covert, malicious complaints to the magistracy, and by his infamous slanders which he publishes, through his writings, to the world, to the dishonor of God and his holy word; to the disgrace of all the pious; to the confirmation of his own condemnation, and to the deceiving of the simple. Therefore, no well-disposed person will think hard of me, that I, by an open reply, in accordance with the Spirit and word of my Lord, defend, to the best of my ability, the honor of God, the salvation of my brethren, the foundation of my faith and the praise of Christ, my Lord, whose service I entered, unworthily, by his grace and calling, according to his divine will.

I trust, too, with the gracious help of God, that I shall be able to do this so powerfully and clearly, with so many plain reasons and Scriptures, that not only the theologians but also all reasonable and impartial readers and hearers will, by the grace of God, clearly understand that he and the

preachers of his class, support deceiving lies; and that we, through the grace of God, support the sure foundation of truth. I, herewith, humbly beseech and faithfully admonish all my readers, friends and enemies, that they will attentively read, assiduously examine and judge according to Scripture this my forced reply and defense, not with partiality, not drowsily and spitefully but with care and impartiality. This matter is of like importance to us all, namely, the the praise of God, and of Christ, and the salvation of our poor souls. Let none imagine that he is not accepted.

There is but one road and gate that leads to life, which is a strait road, Matt. 7: 13, also, but one doctrine. If we wish to enter with Christ into the kingdom of his glory, we must all walk the strait way and enter in at the narrow gate and be obedient to his word; of this let every one be aware.

Since, then, it is evident that Gellius, and the learned, base their doctrines, sacraments, &c., mainly upon human wisdom, garbled Scriptures, upon ideas and opinions; and that we base ours upon God's word; that he and his followers walk upon the broad road, and that our followers walk upon the strait road; that he is not persecuted, but does persecute by his writings;

and, on the other hand, that we are persecuted and do not retaliate; therefore, all right-minded persons must admit that the truth and the true church is not with them, but with us; for it is an infallible rule as proven by the word of God and the example of all the pious, that where the true church is, there also are and necessarily must be the saving doctrine, true sacraments, unfeigned love, a pious, godly life and the excommunication or separation of the impenitent and perverse, according to the word of God; as may be clearly educed, by the grace of God, from the following replication.

I would, therefore, earnestly pray all the pious, for God's sake, that they would assist me by their ardent prayers to the Most High, that he will bestow upon me, a poor, weak man, together with my beloved brethren and faithful servants in the Lord, the gift of his grace and the power of his wisdom; so that we may silence all opponents, by virtue of true doctrine and an unblamable walk, and thus maintain to the end, the house of our God, in pure, godly zeal and christian love, to the honor and praise of his great name, to whom be praise and the eternal kingdom, Amen.



REPLY TO A PUBLICATION

OF

GELLIUS FABER.

Pure and clear is wisdom; strong and powerful is truth; simple and desirable is righteousness; happy is he who possesses them, for his heart rejoices in the Lord, his mouth speaks what is right, and his feet are upon the way of peace.

IN THE first place, Gellius adduces the saying of Christ, as a warning to all his readers, where he speaks, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," Matt. 7 : 15.

Answer. If the reader can rightly distinguish, according to the Spirit and word of God, between the nature of the sheep and the wolves, and understands what this sheep's clothing means, with which the ravening wolves are covered, then the saying would, undoubtedly, not be applied to us, but to our opponents; for in what kind of clothing he here appears, with which he keeps the simple in darkness and binds their souls to damnation, will be plainly and clearly shown, through the grace of God, to all the pious and godly readers, in the following reply, if they compare it with his writing.

In the second place he adduces Paul and says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. 1 : 10.

Answer. If we well consider this saying, we will find that it admonishes all true christians not to live carnally nor to be sectarian; that the one shall not boast of this and another of that; but points us to the only and true Shepherd and Savior of our

souls, Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and in whose name we were baptized; all of which we, in our weakness, would gladly and earnestly do, by the grace and help of God, as our tribulation, misery, affliction, blood and death abundantly have testified in many different instances.

But Gellius so construes it as to keep his readers from the unity of the Spirit, word, house and body of Christ, and to keep them, through his deceitful doctrine, unscriptural infant-baptism, &c., in the unity of the spirit, word, house and body of anti-christ, and undisturbedly upon the broad way.

In the third place, Gellius has addressed his writing to a nobleman, as is generally customary with the learned; thinking, perhaps, that by this means, their aim will be the easier attained, through the favor and assistance of such high officials; something which the pious testimonies, prophets and teachers of God's truth and word, especially of the New Testament never desired and much less sought.

In the fourth place Gellius gives his two principal reasons why he has published his writing. The first is, he says, Because I see that these anabaptists are daily coming into this country, secretly, from the imperial dominion, where they do and can do the most damage, and not only sow here anew, their pernicious seed by hedge-preaching, but also by publications, writings and private letters, which we must stop and silence lest the unwary be deceived, and that we may yet redeem some of them who have not yet become slanderers, &c.

Answer. These very offensive words, like

anabaptists, secretly coming, hedge-preaching, pernicious seed, &c., alas, plainly show the disposition of the man who penned them. Yes, my readers, Gellius knows as well as I do, what Christ has commanded concerning baptism, and how the holy apostles practiced it. Again, that Paul rebaptized some who were baptized of John (although John's baptism was from Heaven) only, because they were not informed concerning the Holy Ghost; that the worthy martyr Cyprian and the African bishops, together with the council of Nice, did not acknowledge the baptism of heretics, as baptism, on account of their being outside of Christ's church, and without his Spirit and word.

Notwithstanding all this, we must be called anabaptists; never minding that we, in our infancy were baptized, not only without the Spirit, faith, word or divine ordinance, but also without all reason and understanding, with an open, anti-christian baptism, by such as he and the learned of his class themselves call anti-christians, apostates, heretics and deceivers who neither rightly understand God nor his word; who practice open idolatry; who bend their knees before wood and stone; who put their trust in idle doctrines and commands of men; who unrestrainedly walk according to the lusts of the flesh, and who worship and honor a creature of God, namely, a piece of bread, as the only and eternal Son of God.

Although we have before us as a pattern, Christ's plain word and the salutary doctrine and open practice of the apostles, besides, Paul and both the councils, as heard; yet, alas, there are no bounds to offensive words, such as anabaptists, &c., which Gellius uses against us.

We may not retaliate, Rom. 12: 19, else we might call them infant-baptists with more propriety than they call us anabaptists; for we have the whole Scriptures on our side, but they have not one word nor one example. But his saying that we do and can do most damage in the imperial dominion, shows, alas, his stupidity and blindness.

All Scriptures teach us that idolaters and carnally-minded shall die, and he well knows that in these countries, their (the world's), worship is nothing less than open

idolatry and gross abomination and that their life, as a general thing, is nothing but a reckless, impenitent and carnal life, as is the case at Emden and everywhere. Yet he dares to write that there they do most damage. And this he does for no other reason than because they (the pious) storm the kingdom of hell with the Lord's Spirit, word and power; rebuke open idolatry; teach the true worship; rightly confess Christ; and because they point out the true way to this perverse, impenitent and carnal generation. If this is damaging, as Gellius calls it, then the Scriptures which speak so over-much of an unblamable, pious life, have badly deceived us; this you must admit. O, what a wrong judgment.

Behold, thus does the god of this world blind such rebellious and contentious spirits, who so recklessly contend against the word of God and who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, Rom. 2: 8, that they become so obdurate and perverse that they call the glorious gain in Christ, attained through his grace, Spirit and power, a loss; and call good, evil, and evil, good; woe unto such, Isaiah 5: 20.

I would further say, that he also says, in other places that we are the only ones who obstruct them in their doctrine of impenitence and offensiveness, by our doctrine (which is not ours but the sound doctrine of Christ), and by our humble and unblamable walk which results from our doctrine through faith; and that we are thus the cause of their not being so highly esteemed as before and that they cannot continue in their ways, as they would like to do; therefore, perhaps, he complains that we do most *damage there*. But we say, It is because they serve the world under the semblance of the gospel, only from carnal motives; and flatter the rulers that they may aggrandize themselves with the property, church and cloister, which was intended (though wrongfully), as a sacrifice to the honor of God and that they may maintain the gospel of Christ by force of arms; because they flatter the people with the idea that Christ remitted our sins; that faith alone, avails; that they are poor, weak sinners who cannot keep the commandments of God, and other like idle consolations; so that every body lives ac-

ording to the lusts of his flesh, singing and crying, "The cord is loosed and we are free," and turn the grace of God into unrighteousness, as Jude says, 1:4; because they live in the old state of sinfulness, without any fear of God, as if they never in their lives heard one syllable of the word of the Lord, and as if God would not punish ungodliness and unrighteousness; therefore the just Lord who righteously judges all things, again takes from them the knowledge which they may have had, because of their ingratitude (for they only teach and proclaim the gospel of his grace according to the lusts of the flesh) and give it to those who will bring forth fruit, as Christ spoke to the Pharisee, Matt. 21:43.

Again, to the unreasonable and offensive word "secretly enter," I reply: Moses and Christ, the apostles and prophets, as also, natural reason unanimously teach us that we should receive, comfort, help, assist and serve the miserable, afflicted and needy stranger; and it is a fact well known to Gellius that these poor children whom he afflicts, have fled in unfeigned fear of their God to a foreign country for protection, with their weak women and little children, to escape the bloody tyrannical sword; not on account of crime or roguery, but on account of the testimony of God and their consciences; even as the pursued doves flee from the bird of prey; and that we, through the grace of God place ourselves under the protection of this or that merciful and kind-hearted ruler; and although they, for the sake of divine truth, are bereft of their native country, possessions and earthly comforts, yet they can, through God's grace, reasonably support themselves, as is promised in Scripture. If he were, in fact, what he boasts to be, namely, a preacher of the holy word, then his inmost soul would be moved to compassion towards these afflicted orphans and innocent hearts; he would be kind to them and assist them as much as is in his power; he would intercede for them before the magistracy, since he may observe in them such a moving spirit and ardent zeal, that they stake their possessions and blood to the praise of their God, as may be openly witnessed. But, now, this misery and sore affliction namely, the flight from the gaping

lion's mouth and from fire and sword, into more merciful countries, must be called by him "secretly entering." O, Lord!

What kind of a preacher and christian he is; how he acts according to love; and how he walks according to the word of the Lord in this respect, all reasonable persons who are not more than half blind may judge from these, his writings together with his daily cries of the same kind. To the slanderous sentence "sowing pernicious seed," I reply: Every seed bringeth forth fruit after its own kind, Gen. 1:11.

My dear reader take heed to what I write. God's word, on every hand, requires a pure heart, a new mind and a penitent, christian life, dead unto sin. John the Baptist says, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance," Jesus says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt. 3:8; 4:17. Again, I am come to call sinners to repentance, Matt. 9:13, and many other Scriptures of the kind might be adduced.

Inasmuch, then, that the Scriptures, on every hand, require of us true repentance, and that also the sacramental signs, as baptism and Holy Supper signify, represent and teach to all true christian believers a penitent, unblamable life; and since, according to the tenor of the Scriptures, no one can be a true christian without true repentance and that every kind of seed brings forth fruit after its own kind, as already said, namely, lies, children of lies, and truth, children of truth; and since it is a fact well known to many reasonable persons that God has, through us and our fellow-servants, in his great power and infinite grace, turned unto the true and living God, many a proud, avaricious, unchaste, cruel, lying, carnal and idolatrous heart and has so humbled, moved, renewed and changed them that they would rather die than act hypocritically, or willingly speak or countenance any falsehood against the well being of their neighbors, as is testified in our Netherlands by the precious blood of so many pious saints. And since the fruits of Gellius' seed, that is, his followers, remain so entirely impenitent in their lives and unchanged in their hearts that they live in pomp and splendor, go attired in silk

and velvet and are decked with gold and silver; live in all manner of unrighteousness, avarice, carousing, hatred and envy; in short, live according to the lusts of the flesh, and would, for the sake of a penny, falsely swear by the Lord or by their soul, &c.: therefore we will let all reasonable and intelligent persons judge who of us bring forth bad fruits, Gellius and his followers, or we and our followers. Whoever sincerely seeks and loves the truth, read and ponder.

O, dear Lord! thus thy holy and precious word, the word of thy grace, the word of thy love, by the power and grace of which we will live eternally with thee, is called by this man and by others also, deceit and pernicious seed; and their open lies, obvious error and unreasonable adulteration of Scripture, of which more will be said hereafter, is called the true doctrine of Christ and the holy word of God. If it be wilful slander and perverseness, then, alas, it is too bad. But if it be ignorant blindness or misconception, then, the gracious Father grant them eyes to see. This is my sincere wish, as the Lord knows.

Again, he writes, "that we sow anew our pernicious seed, not only by hedge-preaching, but also by publications, letters &c. To this I reply with holy David: We believe, therefore we speak, and must suffer tribulation. For since God, the merciful Father, has given us, poor creatures, the Spirit of faith and bestowed upon us the Spirit of his love from on high, through his Son Jesus Christ, and has besprinkled our hearts with the heavenly dew of his love, has opened unto us the seven seals of the book of his knowledge; has disclosed unto us the mystery of his divine word and pleasure; has awakened us from the dead and given us life, a new heart, mind and disposition, and has nourished us with the bread of life, so that we, through his grace, have found the beautiful pearl, the precious treasure and eternal peace, which we could not possibly acquire through the deceiving doctrine, subtle sophistry and false consolations of the learned; therefore we would teach, proclaim and imprint on the hearts of all mankind, to the best of our ability, this manifest grace of his great love toward

us, that they may enjoy with us the same joy and renewal of spirit, and know and taste with all saints how sweet, good and kind the Lord is to whom we have turned.

We preach, therefore, as much as is in our power, both day and night, in houses and in the open air, in forests and in wildernesses, hither and thither, in this and in foreign lands, in prisons and in dungeons, in water and in fire, on the scaffold and on the wheel, before lords and princes, orally and by writings at the risk of possessions and blood, life and death; as we have done these many years; and are not ashamed of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Rom. 1:16: for we are a living fruit, and strongly feel the moving power in our hearts, as may be seen in many instances by the commendable submissiveness and willing sacrifices of our faithful brethren and joint-heirs in Christ Jesus.

We would save all mankind from the jaws of hell; deliver them from the chains of their sins, and by the gracious help of God, win them to Christ by the gospel of his peace; for this is the true nature of the love which is of God.

He then accuses us of preaching at night, and says in another place "That we secretly enter into cities and towns, from fear of the cross; that we sit with closed doors to treat with the simple; not to convert them to true christianity but to convert them to anabaptism," &c. To which I reply in the first place: It is true that we sometimes have to serve the Lord and preach his word at night (in the dead of night), but I fear that Gellius and the learned are the principal cause of this. For they have so embittered and still embitter all lords, princes, rulers and magistrates against us by their fiendish, unmerited upbraiding, slandering and defaming that we cannot, alas, so much move them, with Scripture, supplications, tears, misery, tribulation, loss of possessions, blood or life, that we can safely go about, verbally to defend the word of God, before these open enemies of the cross of Christ and of wholesome truth; but we must (understand, we teachers) everywhere conceal ourselves in shops and retired places to escape the persecutors and blood-thirsty, if we do not wish to be, at once, torn up and devoured

by the terrible beasts which arise from the sea.

Beloved readers, observe well what I write. Gellius accuses us of "preaching at night." It was in the year 1543, if my memory serves me right, that a decree was read throughout West Friesland, "That criminals and even manslayers were promised pardon, imperial grace, freedom of country (in those times banishing was in vogue), and besides one hundred carl-guilders, if they would betray me and deliver me into the hands of the executioner."

About the year 1539, a husbandman, who was a very pious man, named Tjaert Reyn-dertz, was seized in my stead, because, out of pity and compassion, he concealed me in his house while I was hotly pursued; and was a few days thereafter, put on the wheel, after a free confession of faith, as a valiant soldier of Christ, after the example of his Lord; although his enemies, even, acknowledged that he was an unblamable, pious man.

Also, in 1546, at a place where they boasted of the word, four houses were at once confiscated, because the owner had rented one of them for a short time, to my sick wife and little ones; although the neighbors were not aware of their presence.

What decrees have been issued against some of us, and what rewards have been offered for our apprehension, in different dominions and cities; what imperial mandates and Roman condemnations have been resolved against us; and how we are treated on every hand, is well known to Gellius and to the preachers of his class. That they are the very cause and the authors of these things, I unreservedly write and testify without fear. Behold, thus they hate all those who rightly teach God's word.

Notwithstanding this, Gellius and others are not ashamed to say, "That we, out of fear of the cross, secretly enter cities and towns, sit with closed doors," &c., as if we were stones, and blocks of wood, which neither do nor can fear any deathly evils; while he and his, well know that the chosen men of God, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron, besides the prophets and apostles, nay, even Christ himself, so feared to die that they sometimes took to flight.

In the second place, I say, that so long as I, poor weak man, have served the pious with my small talent, I have taught more, by far, in day-time than at night. The Lord is my witness that I write the truth. Yet we must be upbraided by these perverse people as night and hedge-preachers, as if the word of God could not be taught any where but in their houses of abomination (who know not the Scriptures), and as if God was not a God of the night as well as of the day. O, perverseness.

Say, reader, was not the night pure unto faithful Moses, and all Israel to eat the passover? Exodus 12: 3—8. Did Christ think it wrong to exhort Nicodemus at night? John 3: 2. Did he not partake, with his disciples, of the Holy Supper, at night, just before his suffering, Matt. 26: 26; Luke 22: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 23. Did not the church assemble at night, when Peter was delivered from the hands of the tyrant by the aid of an angel, out of fear of Herod and the Jews? Acts 12: 7. Did not holy Paul at night preach the word in an upper chamber at Troas, and break the Lord's bread with the disciples, just before his leaving? Acts 20: 7. Did not the saints of the primitive church sometimes meet at night to break the Lord's bread and drink the holy cup? for which they were suspected and had to hear and bear many hard names. Does not Hilarius write, that the apostles met in halls and retired places, and that they traveled through many countries and nations, by water and by land, against the prohibitions and decrees of the rulers.

Behold, my readers, whether that which was allowable and free to Moses, Israel, Christ, the apostles and to the primitive churches, namely, the service and preaching of the word of God at night, is free to us or not, especially in these critical times of tyranny, we will let the intelligent reader judge according to Scripture, in the fear of his God.

O Lord! thus they (the world) seek causes, encumbrances and complaints to offend thy poor children more and more and to burden them with the cross, that they may persecute and kill them, in semblance of justice; for they are an obstacle to their works and a smarting to their eyes.

In the third place I say, that I have heretofore twice offered publicly to treat with them on Scripture, under safe conduct, before twenty or thirty witnesses or before a full meeting. But what kind of answer I received, their message, which I yet possess, testifies. Afterwards, in the memorable times of bishop Herman, Elector of Ceulen, at their own request, I offered this same thing again to the learned men of Bon, but my offer was rejected, on account of these kind gentlemen being dissuaded by John A'Lasco and A. H.; by their accusing me of three falsehoods, such as I never thought of and much less said or advised, and which I, for good reasons will not now touch upon, for all of which I have the testimony of a manuscript of a preacher, named Henricus. But what their intentions were, in regard to this matter, I will leave to him who knows all things. Also, the preachers of Wesel, in the land of Kleef, pretended that they would furnish me safe conduct and treat with me, &c.; but when I signified my willingness, in writing, I received an answer that they would let the executioner treat with me; and other tyrannical and unchristian words.

I will yet speak of what I asked in my "Foundation;" in the "Preface to the Twenty-fifth Psalm," many years ago; also in my "Excuse," in the "Supplication to the Magistracy," and also in my "Message to the Learned and Preachers of the German Nations," who boast of the word, concerning a free Treatise on Scripture, published in the year 1552. And I am still willing and prepared, at all times, so long as breath remains in me, or my intellect does not fail me, and so long as I can sit on a wagon or lay in a ship, to appear before Gellius, or anybody else, verbally to defend the foundation of our faith and to testify to the truth of Jesus Christ, if I can do so in safety, in good, christian faith and in sincerity of heart, to the praise of our God, to the extension of his church, to the promulgation of his holy word and to the salvation of our neighbors. This is the main desire of my heart, that I may preach and promulgate his great, adorable name, teach his word, seek his gain and honor and ex-

alt and defend his praise, to the best of my humble ability.

Since it is manifest that the world is, unjustly, so embittered against us, that we are, alas, not suffered to be heard or seen; and that many an innocent, pious sheep, who is not a teacher, is sent hither and thither to be slaughtered by the sword, water or fire, without any mercy; and that we, miserable teachers, are not allowed to live in safety, any where under the broad canopy of heaven, not even in a pig-sty (so to speak), if known; but that we, through open mandates, are already judged before we are delivered, and condemned before we are seized; something which never, as far as we know, transpired since the apostolic times; therefore, I pray all my readers, for God's sake, that they will, in the fear of God, thoughtfully consider what gross injustice Gellius and his followers have done us, by the use of such wrong and bitter words, as *night-preaching, hedge-preaching, conspiracy, secretly entering, &c.*, when we neither can nor dare do otherwise, as is well known. Besides, we have on our side Moses and Christ, the apostles and also the example of the primitive church; who served the Lord at night as well as in day time, as has been already heard; and we are also prepared, at all times, to render an account of our faith and to defend the truth; if we can do so in good, christian faith, without deceit and shedding of blood, as has been already said.

I say further: It is by far more praiseworthy to teach the genuine, saving truth, at night, in a secret corner, when we can not openly meet in day-time, than to proclaim, in day-time, deceiving lies and a powerless doctrine of impenitence, from the pulpit; as has, alas, been openly done these many years before the whole world; this must be acknowledged and admitted; for the disorderly state of affairs and the impenitent life of this generation testify to it.

At his saying, that we should be stopped and silenced, lest we deceive the unwary (single) as he calls them, I reply: A better and surer way than the one we have by the grace of God, nobody can point out; of this we are convinced from the inmost of our soul. For we acknowledge and feel that we

have the word of God. Nevertheless, we will always freely accept, and willingly follow the instruction of any pious person, who can, in the fear of God, convince us by the Spirit, word, example, commands, ordinances, prohibitions and usages of the Lord, and not by tyranny and violence, and point out any thing that would be more useful and better; to greater honor to God, or more to the edification of his church, than we have followed and confessed during several years of manifest truth, and to which we have unwaveringly testified in so exceedingly much anxiety, misery, tribulation and persecution. For all things in Christ's church that shall avail and stand before his throne must be judged by the Spirit, word, example, commands, ordinances, prohibitions and usages of the Lord. I trust that those who seek and sincerely fear the Lord, will agree with me in this respect.

But with this writing of Gellius he will, surely, not convince us; for it is full of brawling, profanity, defamation, false accusations, tyranny, sophistry, wrong explanations and false doctrines (if I am wrong, rebuke me); so that it does not silence the pious, as was his intention, but makes them still more active; and it will be the cause of strengthening salutary doctrine and truth, and thus be the cause of his loss where he intended to make gain. For I trust, when both our writings are compared one with another, that, through the grace of God, a glorious, clear light will be thrown on the church of Christ; while it will expose to the plain and humble whom he intends, by it, to dissuade from our doctrine what his own nature, works, writings and fruits are, and, by comparing them to Christ's plain word, Spirit, example, ordinances and usages prove to them how earthly and carnal-minded he and his are; how he exercises his profession; what he seeks; what are the fruits of his doctrine; what sacraments he uses; what ban he practices, and what kind of church he holds to, &c.

I would, therefore, faithfully admonish and pray him, not to undertake more than he can accomplish; and not to kick against the pricks, Acts 9: 5, for it will not avail him. But he should remember that many a learned man (not that I esteem learning,

if at all opposed to Christ), in past times as well as at present, has industriously tried it, as he now does; but what has been accomplished by it, the fruits openly testify. For some of them have become such zealots against us that they have made themselves guilty of innocent blood; they have grossly offended and condemned to the judgment of the devil, so many pious and faithful hearts, who, through fear and love of their God, dared not walk with them on the broad road; have, besides, written and contended so much for the unity of their churches, that they have brought the poor, reckless people to such a disorderly and wild state, that they, generally speaking, lead such a fruitless, impenitent life that it seems as if never prophetic or apostolic doctrine had been taught, and as if never Christ nor the holy Spirit had appeared on earth.

Had they, now, wisely, obediently and humbly comprehended, listened to and followed the word and ordinance of the Lord, the usage and example of the apostles; had they sincerely feared their God; had they not acted hypocritically with lords and princes, and the world in general; but taught the doctrine in true zeal without any respect of persons or favors; had they faithfully, unto death, rebuked the sins of all mankind, of high and low station alike, with doctrine and with life; had they unwaveringly served God and obediently proclaimed the gospel, in such a manner as to have assembled and built up unto the Lord a truly, penitent people, that is, a true church, according to the example of the apostles; had they not sought their own gain and ease; and had they also not abused and slandered the pious and godly, by their crying and writing; then the precious word, Christ's glorious gospel of grace never would have been profaned so lightly-mindedly; nor would this poor, unwary people have been degenerated into this wild and reckless state, as, alas, may now be witnessed in all parts of the world.

Thus, I fear, it will be with Gellius; for of what use his preaching and church-service have been these many years, toward bringing about a pious, penitent life in the fear of God, I will let the world judge by his disciples, who are the fruit of his seed.

O, that he would take heed, and not break God's holy and precious word; that he would not slander the pious and godly, who testify to it with their heart, mouth, life and death; that he would learn to know his own envious, impure and bitter heart; his deceiving, inconsistent and infamous doctrine, and his selfish, ambitious flesh; and would humble himself under the mighty hand of God, as the Scriptures teach us to do, for then he might yet be saved. But as it is, I fear that his brawling, slandering and condemning of all the pious; together with his seeking after improper gain, favor and honor of men and the desire of an easy, careless life, will so entirely close his heart and bewilder his senses, that he will not acknowledge or desire the glorious brightness of Christ, nor the wisdom which is of God. God grant that my apprehension be not realized, and that he may yet receive grace; this is my sincere wish toward him and all of our opponents, Amen.

Gellius says further, that he has published his writing for the purpose of redeeming some of our followers, who have not yet become slanderers; and he says also, that some have been redeemed through their faithful services, who now, with united hearts and spirits adore, praise and thank their Lord and God, at the public meetings of the church of God and Christ (these are his words), because they have been delivered from death and damnation, and now feel a delight in Christ, and penitence and peace in their hearts.

Answer. If we, in true, christian zeal and unfeigned love, rebuke or reprove their false doctrine, deceiving, unscriptural sacraments and their reckless, carnal life, with the Spirit, word and life of Christ, and point them to the glorious example of the prophets, of the apostles, of Christ and of all the true servants of God, he calls us slanderers. From this it may be observed that our work of love is ever interpreted to the contrary. For if we write or speak mournfully, it is called sighing and groaning, if we reprove sharply, it is called brawling and slandering. If we pipe, they dance not; if we mourn, they lament not, as Christ says, Matt. 11: 17. It is wrongly spoken, whatever we say to the perverse. Although they commit abomination, yet they are not ashamed, neither do they blush, Jeremiah 8: 12.

If the reproof of open sin, in true, christian love, according to the word of God, is

slander, as Gellius calls it, then all the saints of God, the apostles and prophets, as also Jesus Christ himself were slanderers; this is incontrovertible; for they called the false prophets and preachers, false teachers, deceivers, dumb dogs, blind guides, hypocrites, thieves, murderers, wolves, cunning devisers, enemies of the cross, servants of their bellies, children of damnation, dry clouds, dead trees, locusts, &c., before the whole world. But no. To openly reprove deceit, transgressions, blasphemy of God or his word and sin in general is not slandering, as Gellius, through perverseness of heart, pronounces it against the innocent; but it is the fruit of the faithful love of those who would oppose evil and do good unto all. I will leave it to the judgment of all pious and reasonable persons, if he is not a profaner of the church, a brawler and a slanderer, and guilty of innocent blood, who calls the church of God a conspiracy; the regenerated children of God, apostatical anabaptists; the salutary doctrine of Christ, sectarianism and fanaticism; who slanders and condemns the baptism which Christ commanded, and the apostles taught and practiced, as being a heresy; and falsely maintains and practices on the poor, ignorant people, the baptism of anti-christ, with many high-sounding words and phrases? Who promises grace and peace to the proud, obdurate, avaricious, carnal and impenitent boaster, whom all Scriptures judge unto death; because he can, in appearance talk of the Scriptures, although without Spirit, power or change of heart; who, without just cause, maliciously slander, falsely suspicions, and unjustly condemns, the poor orphans and afflicted christians who sincerely seek and fear the Lord; and thus delivers them to the magistracy to be put in dungeons, and to the executioner to be killed.

But as to his boasting, that some of our brethren have again associated with them, and thus others may be yet redeemed by his writing, &c. I answer, in the first place: Christ says, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be

that find it," Matt. 7: 13, 14. My readers, observe that all who wish to leave the broad way and enter upon the narrow one, must enter in at the strait gate, must forsake themselves, take up the cross and follow Christ Jesus; must become regenerated christians, dead unto sin; must crucify their flesh and subdue their lusts; must give up, through the power of faith all visible and perishable things, as gold, silver, home and goods, nay, wife and children; together with all they are and have, for the victory of Christ, if circumstances and the honor of Christ require it; they must be prepared to endure disgrace, hunger, misery, pillage, persecution, bonds and death, for the sake of the testimony of God and their consciences, and must adhere to the word of God, by watching and praying; for all those who are yet laden with the burden of unrighteousness and an evil conscience, as with avarice, ungodly desires, the works of the flesh, &c.; or who feel at all doubtful concerning the word and promises of the Lord cannot enter in at the narrow way and strait gate. Let every one be aware of this.

In the second place I say, that the edification and faith of the true christians is tempted in many and various ways, as both Scriptures and experience clearly teach and testify. Now they are tempted by flesh and blood, which never is at rest, then by the lust of the world, and the lust of the eyes, which invitingly tempt the selfish flesh in which no good thing dwelleth, Rom. 7: 18. Again, by the cross and tribulation, which often press heavily; and lastly, by the flattering preaching of peace and the easy doctrine of the preachers who lustily cry, Peace, peace, as the prophet says, Jer. 8: 11, by means of which they console the timid in their faithlessness and disobedience to God, and make an easy way for those who would enjoy the world according to the lusts of the flesh. It is as Peter says, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption," 2 Peter 2: 19. For this reason, some of the seed which is sown by the way side, is picked up by the fowls of the air; some is sown on stony places, where there is not much earth, and although it springs up in a short

time; yet it can not stand the scorching sun of persecution, and some is choked by the thistles and thorns, and brings forth no ripe ears, Matt. 13: 4—7.

Behold, the proper reason why some timid, light-minded, carnal, corrupt and selfish spirits have again associated themselves with them, is, Because the way was too narrow and the gate too strait for them, and they could not withstand the storming of the flesh. The smiles of the world were too inviting, and the tyranny too oppressive. The thousand wiles of Satan, by which all the pious alike are tempted, succeeded; because, alas, they preferred earthly to heavenly things, and therefore we could no longer live in unity of spirit and peace with them. For they would not be thus subjected, as the prophet laments, Jer. 2: 17; but would follow their own inclinations in every respect, and walk, without the cross, on the broad way of the flesh, with the world. But by the writings and services of Gellius, they were, surely, not redeemed, as he boasts they were.

Behold, these people of whom he so loudly boasts, were such (we regret to have to say it) as, with Demas, 2 Tim. 4: 10, loved the present world, and who so lived with us for some time that we, according to the divine word, dare no longer eat and drink with them. They are not regenerated as Gellius claims, but they are degenerated in their faith and act hypocritically, with earthly-minded hearts under the feint of prayer; they have not forsaken the broad way which leads to death but the narrow way which leads to life; they do not delight in Christ but have forsaken him; they have found rest for their flesh but not for their souls, through repentance, as Gellius pretends. For facts prove whose cause is right, theirs or ours; whose actions are hypocritical, and whose are not, while our actions sacrifice possessions, blood and even life for their cause; but what theirs do, is well known.

This, then, is my conclusion as to his first reason given, why he published his writing; namely, As the angel of darkness can transform himself into an angel of light; as Paul says, 2 Cor. 11: 14; can feign love and make great promises; can feign true

confession of Christ and can use Scriptures masterly, so also, can his servants do, as may be seen by this. For Gellius says he published his writing that he might redeem some and save others from deceit; to silence the anabaptists, as he calls them; to root out the pernicious weeds; to serve the church of Christ; to keep the weak of the Netherlands in the right understanding of evangelical doctrine and the right use of the holy sacraments, &c. But if we rightly consider it, and judge it by the Spirit, word and example of Christ; by the usage of the holy apostles and primitive apostolic churches, we find it to be nothing but an institution of the flesh; an encouragement to the impenitent; an inducement to the broad way; a defence of the churches of anti-christ; a confusing and blind-folding of the simple; a covert instigation to persecution of the pious; a destroying of the church of Christ; a dextrous encumbering of the godly; an unreasonable, envious defamation of the saints; an adulteration of the holy word; yea, an open encouragement to unrighteousness, impenitence and carnal liberty.

Behold, this is the effect, fruit and aim of his writing; although he adorns and covers it under the semblance of good intentions and love. If I should at any time yet meet with him, and not be able to verify these assertions, by their fruits and by virtue of the Scriptures, then I will be willing to recant them and bear my shame; for I trust that I, through the grace of God, know of what I write.

An other reason, says Gellius, why he published his writing is, because a nobleman to whom he addressed it, offered to bear the expenses of printing it, &c.

Answer. Zeal is a good thing and highly commendable, if in a good cause to the service and glory of God. But let every one well consider how, why and wherefore he is zealous; lest he make himself guilty of innocent blood, which is the most abominable sin next to sinning against the Holy Ghost.

If his honor has done this in sincere zeal and with good intentions, as Paul did before his conversion, and meant it to be to the honor of God and to the salvation of his neighbors, then I hope that God will give him more light and make truth more manifest to him. But if he has done it for

the sake of an idle name or fame, or for the sake of carnal profit and satisfaction, something which the learned can very adroitly portray to such high persons; or, if he contends against the people of God with a bitter zeal, which I trust is not the case, as does Gellius and the preachers, generally, then his action has become such a gross sin and great blindness that I fear he will never be brought to confess Christ.

I would therefore cordially admonish his honor, and beseech him in christian love that he no more burden himself with the sin of others; for he and every-body else will have burden enough of his own, at the day of judgment. All misleading of the miserable souls; all unbelief and idolatry; all light-mindedness and liberty of the flesh; together with all uproar and tyranny which are apt to be the result of his writing will be required, in the day of Christ, at his hands as well as at the hands of the preachers, if not repented of, because he assists and supports them in their abomination with his advice and assistance, with money and material.

Therefore, in my opinion, his honor would have better first considered the matter well and laid out these expenses to the support, assistance, consolation, nourishment and clothing of the needy, especially in these hard times; and not for the purpose of deceiving many unwary hearts and of putting more encumbrances and persecution on the pious.

Again, that Gellius has published his writing under the permission of the said nobleman, has an appearance as if he was one of those who honor and esteem a person according to the measure of his usefulness. But for what reason he has done so; what his seeking and how his heart is, in this matter, I will leave to the Lord who knows all things.

Experience sufficiently teaches of what disposition the rich are, namely, proud-hearted, ambitious and covetous of honor. God's wisdom did not say without a cause, Verily, "I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," Matt. 19: 24. James also says, "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for

your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire," &c., James 5: 1—3. Again, Paul says, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called," &c., 1 Cor. 1: 26.

Since, then, the mouth of the Lord, as also his faithful servants, James and Paul, have so plainly expressed the dangers of the rich and of those of high standing; since experience teaches how proud-hearted they are, as may be educed from their high titles, houses, shields, medals, clothes, servants, horses and dogs; and since Christ says, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 18: 3; therefore it would be more in accordance with evangelical righteousness, if Gellius, instead, would industriously teach such proud hearts and high persons, the humility of Christ, so that they may learn to forsake themselves; may learn to know themselves, of what they are born, what they are and what they will be; that they may die unto their excessive pomp, splendor, superfluity and ungodliness; may fear God in all sincerity, and walk in his ways; that they may faithfully serve their neighbors, with their abundance, in true humility

of heart, and not continually enkindle the fire of pride, fleshly security and light-mindedness, by his flattery or by high-sounding and supplicating phrases; for the inborn ambitious nature of the flesh of Adam's children is, alas, already too apt to crave such things without being encouraged by flattery and smooth words.

I would, therefore, faithfully admonish all to fear God, to strive after truth and to love their neighbors; for the time is coming, and is near at hand that we all shall hear, each one at his time, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward," Luke 16: 2. I do not dedicate this my reply and defense to this or that one, as is the custom of the learned, but dedicate it, in christian humility, "To the pious Reader," and desire to subject it to the judgment of all the godly and pious.

If any one under the broad canopy of heaven can teach me with plainer Scriptures or with more powerful truths, whether he be learned or unlearned, man or woman, I will gladly accept of such instruction and obey them. But, by the grace of God, we are convinced that we are on the sure and true way which Christ has prepared for us. Blessed are we if we walk in it and enter in at the strait gate. Let all of understanding minds, who, in true zeal and in the fear of God, seek the praise of their Lord, read and judge that which now follows.

OF THE MISSION OR CALLING OF THE PREACHERS.

GELLIUS complains very much of a bitter and sneering epistle of the anabaptists, as he calls them, in which they are said to have given five particular reasons, as I understand from his writing, why they cannot conscientiously accept the preachers as true and unblamable, and cannot use their sacraments as true and Scriptural ordinances, &c. Of which the vocation of their preachers is the first reason. Gellius assiduously tries to maintain that their calling is christian-like and according to Scripture and says that ours is sectarian and not according to Scripture.

Answer. How bitter and sneering the said epistle may have been, I do not know, for I have never seen it. But I presume it was not

so bitter as Gellius complains that it was: that it was a reproof of his corruption, his deceiving and unscriptural sacraments: something which he ever, maliciously, calls brawling and sneering.

Since I did not read the epistle myself, as said, therefore I will not undertake to defend every word of it; but will undertake a defence, by virtue of my ministry of the divine word, and because I have been disgracefully treated in regard to it, so far as concerns the five articles in which the preach-

ers are reprov'd or accus'd, whose vocation Gellius maintains as evangelical and right. And I trust that, with the gracious assistance of God, I will be enabled to defend these articles with such power and clearness of Scripture, that all impartial, reasonable readers, on comparing our writings, will, by the grace of God, behold, as in a mirror, that he and all the worldly preachers are not the called preachers and teachers of the church of Christ, to whom the Scriptures point: but that they are the open preachers and teachers of the world, or of the church of anti-christ against whom the Scriptures on every hand warn us, and in many places terrifies us against them. He that hath ears, let him hear what the word of the Lord teaches.

Gellius points out a difference between the calling or sending of the prophets of Christ and the apostles and between the calling of the bishops, pastors and other servants of the church, and says, "That the sending of the prophets of Christ and the apostles was done without any means of man, solely of God; but that the sending of the bishops and pastors is done of God by means of man."

Answer. We do not contradict this, but agree with him in this respect. But we contradict that the calling of which they boast is done in accordance with the apostolic doctrine and usage; and would say that we should well observe these five, following points or articles, according to the Scriptures; namely, Of whom they are called; what they are that are called; to what purpose they are called; what fruit the called bring forth; and what the proper desire and seeking of the called is.

In the first place, we must observe that the calling which was done in the primitive, apostolic church, by means of man, was not done of the world but of the true christians and obedient disciples of the Lord and his word. For Luke writes, Acts 14: 23, "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Paul also says to Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed thee," Tit. 1: 5, &c. Read also 1 Tim. 3: 12.

Since the preachers, then, boast of a call-

ing of God, by means of man, as said, therefore I would ask without all artifice, Who is the Paul or Barnabas, or Timothy or Titus that has called and ordained Gellius and his like preachers to the service? If they answer, the magistracy; then I would ask in the second place, If the magistracy, who assumes this matter, have the spirit, calling, ministry, ordinance and power of Paul, Barnabas, Titus and Timothy? If they answer in the affirmative, then I would like to see their grounds proven according to Scripture. If they say, because they are part of the church, as Gellius seems to have it, then I would ask in the third place, Whether they are actuated by the Spirit of God? Whether they have crucified the flesh with its lusts, and in their weakness, walk innocently and christianly according to Christ's example and teaching, with his followers? Whether they have become new creatures? Whether they are in Christ and Christ in them? &c. If they say, God knows, and not we, then I would ask in the fourth place, Are you such trees, then, that we cannot judge your fruits, and such lights that we cannot see its refulgence? My reader, ponder well on these questions.

Scriptures plainly testify that there is no christian but who is in Christ and has his Spirit, Rom. 8: 9. It is evident that the magistracy does not conform themselves to the example and Spirit of the Lord, as may, alas, be perceived on every hand by their fruits. For they live in every respect according to the lusts of the flesh; seek vain honor, treasure, pompous living, &c.; they are earthly, and not heavenly-minded; therefore we should consult the word of the Lord whether such people are competent to ordain preachers, pastors and servants for the church of Christ, while their fruits testify that they are yet without Christ's Spirit, kingdom, church and word themselves, as said.

If they should say that they are not called of the magistracy, but of the church, then I would ask in the fifth place, Whether the church which has called them is flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone? Eph. 5: 30, that is, a church which sincerely seeks and fears God; that walks in obedience to his word; loves and serves his neighbor; con-

trols his ungodly lusts; strives after truth with all his heart; leads an unblamable, pious life, and who is prepared for the sake, of the will and word of the Lord, to sacrifice and abandon, money, goods, blood and life, nay, father, mother, life, husband, wife, children and every thing else, if the honor of God requires it? If they answer no, which is the true answer, then it is already proven that they are not the church and people of the Lord; for the church of Christ must be in unity of spirit with Christ, as has already been heard. If, then, they are not of Christ's church, how can they call preachers unto the church of Christ, as Paul, Barnabas, Timothy and Titus, and the primitive church have done? If on the contrary they answer Yes, then I say again, their open unrighteousness, slander, godlessness, avarice, pomp, drunkenness, superfluity, unchastity, hatred, envy, unmercifulness, violence, &c., testify before the whole world that the answer is not the true one.

Inasmuch as it is manifest that both the magistracy and the subjects are directly contrary to the Spirit and word of Jesus Christ, to his walk and actions; and have not a syllable which in this respect agrees with the spirit and actions of Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, or of the primitive church; therefore I am very much surprised that he can be so imprudent and inconsiderate, or so very bold as to boast, in these times of grace in which the truth has become so manifest, that he and the preachers of his character were called and ordained of God by the means of man, as were the elders of the primitive church, by Paul, Barnabas, Timothy and Titus.

O, that God would grant that he would once consider and not compare the faithful men and dear servants of God, together with the zealous, regenerated communities and pious children of the primitive churches to this impenitent, reckless and bad world who wish to be considered the true church; and would no more blind the poor unwary hearts who little regard the holy word, with such a semblance and quotation of the Scriptures; for it would be of infinite value to his poor, miserable soul, at the time of his dissolution.

I would now leave it to the reflection of

all intelligent readers, how the calling, of which the preachers boast, can stand the test of the Scriptures, while those of whom they boast that called them, are found to be not only no regenerated, pious christians, but besides, open despisers and impenitent contenders against God and his word, as may, alas, be seen, on every hand, by their actions.

In the second place we should observe of what disposition, doctrine and conduct the called servants of the word should be, according to the testimony of the Scriptures; namely, "Blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;" not a novice; he must be holy, just, temperate, &c. "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught; that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil," &c. "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things," 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1.

My reader, observe, this is not my word but the word of the Holy Ghost, which gives a true pattern of a true preacher, bishop, pastor, teacher and servant who will, in the church of Christ, bring forth fruit which will remain, John 15.

The Holy Spirit points us to such teachers, to obey and follow them. Paul says, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief," Heb. 13: 17. In another place he says, "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake, and be at peace among yourselves," 1 Thess. 5: 12, 13.

Such teachers are compared in the Scriptures, to the oxen that tread out the corn, which shall not be muzzled. They are the elders worthy of double honor, and the

faithful laborers, worthy of their hire, Deut. 25: 4; Matt. 10: 10. But how Gellius and all the preachers of the German nations, whom he esteems as faithful servants, conform to this I will leave the impartial reader to judge according to the word of the Lord.

Faithful reader, consider well that which I write. They boast that they are called in accordance with Scriptures, as you may hear; although it is obvious and palpable that they lead a life as the one portrayed by Peter and Jude. Many of them are so fallen in the fullness of Bacchus that they, alas, live night and day as swine in full rest; their tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean, as the prophet says, Isa. 28: 8; they fearlessly walk after their own lusts, as Jude says; and they esteem as joy the temporal, lusty life, says Peter; they are spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you.

Some of them, also, are open fornicators and adulterers. How their wives, as a general thing, conform themselves to Scriptures, may be educed from their fruits. Others are so avaricious that they have become open usurers. They are so intent upon perishable lucre, money and possessions that I dare truthfully say that they, through the easy doctrine of their gospel, have become lords upon earth; yet, most of them are loved of the world and highly esteemed by the ignorant. Their pomp, laziness, ease-seeking, vanity, light-mindedness, pride, &c., baffle all description to say nothing of their tyranny, lying, brawling, slandering, betraying and uproaring against all who seek and fear the Lord.

Reader, it is as I write. O, how willingly would I be silent and close, if the honor of God and his word, and the love for your souls did not compel me to do so; but as it is I am forced to touch upon their abominable shame. Their abominations are so gross and terrible that my soul shrinks back at the thought of them, therefore, imagine how, if I shall treat and write of them. How their actions and behavior agree with the description of Paul, who teaches us that they shall be unblamable, have but one wife, not given to wine, not avaricious, nor covetous of filthy lucre; that

they shall be temperate, modest and amiable; have a good report of those that are without; this I will leave to all pious hearts to judge in the fear of God, according to the Scriptures. Behold, my reader, since it is manifest that they are quite contrary to the word of the Lord, in their walk; therefore it is, in fact, nothing but vain hypocrisy, to call such unfruitful, offensive actions, evangelical edification and such a void mockery, a calling.

But Gellius tries to clear himself of this, and lays the blame on those who, according to his writing, lead an unchristian life after the lusts of their flesh, against the ordinance of the apostles, saying, that they cannot weaken the cause of the pious, by their unrighteousness; I would, in the first place, say, Since he complains of them so much, in his book, and says, that they would better be pastors of swine than pastors of the sheep of Christ; and wishes that they would be ex-officiated, &c.; and since these constitute the majority of them, as may be openly seen; therefore Gellius should admit, that, according to the Scriptures, we should not follow such, nor partake of their sacraments, even, if they were the true sacraments; for he himself admits that they are useless people and wishes them ex-officiated.

In the second place I say, Since Gellius acknowledges that they are unfit for their offices; and since he and they are of one church, calling and service, why does he suffer them to remain in their offices, and why does he not, by virtue of his calling, excommunicate them with the advice and consent of his church? Since they are a hindrance to the community and a reproach and disgrace to Gellius and his brother-preachers, whom I would were themselves pious and unblamable.

If he says that the magistracy are to blame, he then admits, that those magistrates are not true servants and members of Christ, who admit such offensive people, as adulterers, wine-bibbers, covetous, &c., as are met with on every hand, to be preachers, while they ruin the souls of the poor miserable people by their wicked offensive life, to say nothing of their doctrine; whom

they might debar with a single word, without blood-shed. And what is more, Gellius himself is a faithless shepherd, and dumb watchman. And the magistracy, which is his elector and companion in church-service, have a contempt for God and slander his word.

In the third place I would say, It would be well for Gellius to first learn to know from the Scriptures the nature of Christ and his church together with the true church-servants, pastors and preachers; to rightly judge all things by the Spirit, word and example of the Lord; and to thoroughly search himself, his brother preachers and his church before contending so maliciously against the pious and accuse them before the whole world, without cause. I would further say, Since (if I understand him aright) he admits that we should not hear the adulterers, wine-bibbers, strikers, &c., nor partake of their sacraments (something which was intended, probably, to make his cause have a good appearance); therefore we are forced to view in a Scriptural light, how he, according to Paul's doctrine, can stand as a pastor of the church and as a servant of Christ.

Paul says, A bishop must be blameless; this applies also to a true preacher, pastor and teacher; and it is obvious that Gellius is not unblamable, but blamable in many respects; that he is a friend of the world, who seeks to please the world, contrary to the word of God and the example of Christ, the apostles and of the prophets, otherwise he would have suffered persecution, 2 Tim. 3: 12, and not have exercised his service at ease, for so long a time, as is testified by the example of Christ, the apostles and by all the true witnesses.

Again, that he is a hireling who has been hired as a servant at certain wages and a stipend, contrary to the example of Christ and the example of all the true messengers who have been sent by him. He is not only not persecuted for the sake of the testimony of Jesus but he himself persecutes the godly, pious hearts who have neither injured or harmed him nor any body else. He persecutes them wilfully by his instigation, advice and writings; contrary to the example of Christ and all the chosen, as may, alas, be seen by his writings here cited. Besides this, his doctrine is wrong and de-

ceiving. He is an upbraider, condemner, defamer and backbiter of the innocent who sincerely fear God and are zealous for his word; yea, who would seal it with their blood, something which he does not. This assertion is, alas, made good by his writing in which he, without just cause, accuses and condemns the god-fearing, pious hearts before the whole world as being apostates, anabaptists, conspirers, contrabands, sowers of pernicious seed, excommunicated sects, servants of the devil and tools; and thus makes them the objects of suspicion, although they sincerely seek the Lord and daily sacrifice possessions and blood for the sake of his holy word.

Besides, he is a supporter and defender of the kingdom of anti-christ, a falsifier of the Scriptures, an abuser of the sacraments, a strengthener of the impenitent, a liar, &c., as will be plainly shown, by the grace of God, each in its turn.

In the third place it should be observed for what purpose the true preachers are called, namely, that they should teach the word of the Lord; rightly use his sacraments; lead and rule in the church of God; gather together with Christ and not scatter; console the afflicted; admonish those not ordained; seek what is lost; bind up what is bruised; separate those that are incurable, without any respect of person, and should assiduously watch over the vineyard, house and city of God, as the Scriptures teach, Matt. 28: 19; 12: 30; Mark 16: 15.

Behold, my reader, these are the proper reasons why the Holy Ghost has ordained in the house of the Lord bishops, pastors and teachers, according to the precept of Paul saying, "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," Eph. 4: 11—13.

But for what purpose Gellius and all the preachers of the world are called, may be deduced from their doctrine and work; namely, to preach to suit the magistracy and the world. Again, to offer to the two golden

calves of Dan and Bethel (understand what I mean); to keep the church of anti-christ, without penance and regeneration in unity and peace of the flesh, on the perverted and crooked road of darkness and death, under the name and semblance of the word, contrary to the Spirit, doctrine and example of Christ; to console the wilful, reckless world, who wish to be called the church of Christ, without regeneration and obedience, in their impenitent and ungodly nature, with the death, blood, baptism and Supper of the Lord; to violently oppose Christ Jesus and his word and Spirit, so that the world may live on in their original state and unrighteousness unrebuked; that the preachers may continue in their improper gain and careless life; and that the ignorant people, both rich and poor may live on in the lusts of their flesh, pomp, splendor, drinking, carousing, in avariciousness and hoarding, in short, may continue in the broad and easy way of the flesh, unreprieved.

This is made too manifest to be denied, by deeds which speak for themselves; yet their cause is artfully adorned with the Scriptures; they talk much; boast loudly of the grace and favor of God; they use baptism and supper under the appearance of truth, as if they were the church of Jesus Christ; although, in fact, they are nothing but a selfish, refractory, impenitent, earthly and sensual people, as is obvious by their fruits. If I do not write the truth, reprove me.

Since, then, it is clearer than day-light that they are not called to uphold the church of Christ, which is of God and a divine nature, with salutary doctrines, Scriptural sacraments, an unblamable life; earnest reproofing, without favor or respect of persons; with faithful admonition and separation, if necessary; but are, under false pretenses of the name and church of Christ; they are servants of the world; receive their reward from it; honor and love it; speak of it, and please it, and whom it seeks and loves to hear, for they are of the world, as John says, 1 John 4: 5.

Therefore it is, in the third place, an incontrovertible evidence, that they, alas, are no called servants of the church of Christ, as they falsely pretend, but are the servants

and supporters of the kingdom of anti-christ, as may be unmistakably learned from their doctrine, walk and fruits if we closely examine them.

In the fourth place we should observe what kind of fruits they bring forth, for Christ says, "I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain," John 15: 16. We confess with holy Isaiah, as does also Gellius, that the doctrine of the holy gospel, if preached in the power of the Spirit, according to the Spirit of Christ, cannot fail to bring forth fruit. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud," so, also, is the word that goeth forth out of the mouth of the Lord, Isaiah 55: 10.

But Gellius and we should well consider that the sowers should, by the power of true faith and the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, be changed into the Spirit and nature of Christ, and should then teach or present to the people the pure, unadulterated seed, which is the word, without all abuse, leaven and hypocrisy, for where there are such sowers, there it will bud and bring forth. The word of the prophet, which the mouth of the Lord has spoken is true and firm. But where there are not such sowers there they arise too early or start out too late; labor and pains will be in vain; for God works not unto repentance but through those who are of his Spirit.

Inasmuch, then, that the word with true preaching does not remain fruitless as we have seen, and since we clearly see that the seed of the preachers of the world brings forth no fruit unto repentance, but alone hypocrisy, therefore it is an indisputable fact that they have not the word of the Lord in power; but that they are artful workers and not true preachers, or else the word of the prophet must be false, which says, "If they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings," Jer. 23: 22.

Since then, that preachers are known by their fruits, and that Gellius and his like

preachers have preached their doctrine and sacraments so many years to the whole world (which they may continue to do without fear, while they are not opposing the impenitent in their hypocrisy and uncontrolled life, but rather console and encourage them), and yet do not convert a miser nor usurer to liberality; do not bring forth their disciples further than that they profess in name and appearance; remain unchanged in their heart, hate and oppose true righteousness, walk upon the broad way, and earnestly strive after the world, flesh, money and possessions. The pompous remain pompous; the proud remain proud; and liars continue in their falsehood, as is manifest; therefore this their fruitless preaching, vain doctrine and church-service fully prove that their calling is not of God and his word, but of the son of the abyss, anti-christ and of the world, however much they adorn and boast of their cause. The word of God is and will remain true, Isaiah 55: 11.

Gellius then refers us to his fruits, and says, Is not the preaching of the truth and the light of the holy gospel, which we assiduously preach and promulgate both by teaching and writing a good fruit and glorious testimony that our calling is of God and not of the devil; by which the kingdom of the devil is destroyed and by which the papistical abominations, idolatry, masses, absolutions, vigils, &c., have become a deadly stench?

Answer. If they did not mix the dross with the silver and water with wine, that is, if they would preach the truth, without falsehood, and the light without darkness in the power of the Spirit, and would testify it before the whole world by a pious and unblamable life, then we would agree with them that it is a glorious light and a noble fruit. But while they practice wrong and pervert truth into lies, the true apostolic baptism into the baptism of heretics, the church of Christ into pernicious sectarianism and conspiracy, &c., and on the other hand pervert lies to truth, the anti-christian to christian baptism and the reckless, wild world to the Lord's church, &c., we say that their doctrine is deceiving, offensive and wrong, and is not the true doctrine, as Gellius boasts and pretends.

Yea, my reader, they so preach the word of the Lord that unrighteousness and abuse yet remain in full sway; they so teach the truth, that in many respects, false doctrine,

lying and deceiving is not yet weakened nor destroyed; they so use and practice divine service that the high places are honored and idolatry is not avoided; they so preach the christian church, that the church of anti-christ remains in full power, as is openly manifested to the whole world both by their work and their tyranny.

In short, it is manifest that they so preach and promulgate the gospel that no repentance follows but that every one, alas, remains as he is; yea, what is worse, that the people are not only not regenerated but are daily growing more wicked. Neither encomiums, reasoning nor artful demonstrations will avail here, for their fruit testifies that their doctrine is faithless and false, as said before, Jer. 23.

The serpent spoke the truth when he said, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," Gen. 3: 5. But that which he promised before was a lie, namely, "Ye shall not surely die." Adam and Eve were thereby deceived. Thus, also, do those who teach the serpent's word. They so teach the impenitent, carnal people, concerning the death of the Lord, by their unscriptural sacraments of impenitance, and so console them in their reckless, Adamic nature and life, by false promises (although they do some times speak the truth, as did the serpent, produce Scriptures, partly reprove sin and praise virtue) that there is no body to be found who truly feels sorry for his sins, who sincerely repents of his wickedness, saying, "What have I done," Jer. 8: 6. Behold, says the prophet, so they practice falsehood and strengthen the wicked that none repent of their wickedness.

That some of them have thus weakened the papistical abominations, for this they and we give praises to the Lord. But what does it avail if they renounce the pope and they themselves step in his stead? It is true that many branches of the tree of anti-christ are hewn off, but the roots and body still remain. And although he destroyed some high places, yet they walk in the ways of Jeroboam and have not come to Jerusalem for the purpose of truly worshiping.

Yea, kind reader, had the learned firmly

trusted the living God, faithfully adhered to his word, and had they not acted hypocritically with the world and had they themselves, in power and deeds faithfully practiced, without fear of the cross and the disfavor of the magistracy, what they have, in some of their writings, pointed out, O, what a noble and clear light would have shone on the world, which now, alas, has become such a pernicious darkness and destruction, and a broad way, through the fear of the cross, through hypocrisy, selfishness, desire of ease, ambition and favor of men.

In the second place he says, Is the whole Bible, translated (into the German language) by the memorable D. Martinus, a despicable fruit? Are the songs or hymns composed by Luther and many others a contemptible fruit? Is, also, the constancy, which exists in these times of peril and danger of body and possessions, as it did in the beginning of the gospel, not a noble and genuine fruit of our calling? But such fruits are of no account in their sight or else they will not see them; although they are the surest and the best fruits, &c. The fruits of the outward life and dealings with men, although often mere hypocrisy, only avail in their sight.

Answer. The deceased translators, authors and composers we will leave undisturbed, for they have already found their Lord and Judge; but we will turn to the living, with whom we have to speak. His saying, that writing, translating and composing are the surest and best fruits, is, in my opinion, a very senseless assertion, for such things can be done through learning and skill in languages, without regeneration and change of heart, as he himself well knows. Yea, as the Bible or the Scriptures are read by the greater part of the world, with impure, carnal hearts, so, also, they can, undoubtedly, be translated, through the knowledge and skill of languages, from one language into another, with a carnal, unregenerated and impious heart.

And as hymns are generally sung in God's houses or temples, carelessly, and are light-mindedly sung, here and there, in the streets and in riotous taverns; so, also, can they be composed by a light-minded heart without spirit or regeneration? These are, therefore, not the surest and best fruits, as Gellius pretends to say, for they do not remain. But whatever some, in by-gone times may have written, in true zeal, which is

Scripture or conformable to Scripture and useful to the regeneration of the pious, we should, reasonably, praise and esteem.

However, the surest and best fruits are, to so preach the word of God in power, that many may be born of him and be led to sincerely fear and love him; to cordially serve their neighbors; to die unto flesh and blood; to believe on Jesus Christ with all the heart, and tremble at his word; that they may do nothing contrary to it; may truly worship God and conform their whole life or walk according to his Spirit, word and example, for such fruits remain.

I would further say, He boasts of the danger and constancy (as he calls it) of some of their number; now, in these times of war, which he calls a time of trial, because, (if we understand him aright), they can no longer uphold and protect their cause by force of arms; and consider it a noble fruit, although they have, perhaps, not been tempted unto death as we daily are; and therefore he so indiscreetly condemns and profanes our cause, which the Lord knows we have maintained and will maintain in spite of sword or any other deadly weapon, something which cannot be truthfully refuted. We have patiently walked according to the example of Christ; sacrificed our possessions and blood which might have been saved by a single, hypocritical word; and at all times, for our invincible constancy, we suffer with fire, water and sword; being defenceless, and without any resistance "we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter," Rom. 8: 36.

But we give praise to God, that some of them have sacrificed their blood for the sake of the testimony which they had, and with James count them happy; yea, that they are joint-heirs in the sufferings of Jesus Christ; for their deeds have proven that they sought God and were faithful as far as they were enlightened. But what will that avail them, while they close their hearts to the light of truth; contend against the Spirit, word and will of God; preach lies, pervert and abuse the sacraments, and console and encourage the wild, wicked world in their impenitent, reckless life? Something which the faithful heroes have not done, for they were faithful

in every thing which they acknowledged as the truth. If they had acknowledged more they would, doubtlessly, have died for the sake thereof as well as for that which they did, at the time, acknowledge.

If our opponents are of the same spirit then they may boast. But their fruits openly testify that that they are, alas, very different.

Again, he writes, that the fruits of an outward life, alone, avail in our sight, &c. Do not our sore oppression, trials, great tribulation, misery, possessions and blood; besides, our open and frank confession, openly testify that he makes this assertion without all truth. Yea, that he openly slanders and wrongs us? *O malitiosam calumniam ac perversitatem*, (O malicious calumny and perversity).

My kind reader, observe that all Scriptures and the power of true faith constrain us zealously to teach an upright, pious, godly and penitent life; for Jesus Christ says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works." Paul, also teaches, "That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." That we might walk worthy of the Lord and his gospel. Peter says, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles;" and John says, That we should walk even as Christ walked, Matt. 5: 6; Phil. 1: 10; Col. 1: 10; 1 Pet. 2: 12; 1 John 2: 6.

Since Scripture, on every hand, enjoin upon us a pious life, as has been heard; therefore it is reasonable and just, if we believe the word of God, that we zealously follow, in our weakness, that which the Spirit of the Lord has so clearly taught and enjoined in his holy word.

But his assertion, that such fruits, only, avail in our sight comes, alas, from an impure heart. For, I presume, he well knows, that we plainly teach that we cannot be saved by outward works, however great and glorious they may appear or that we can thus entirely please God; for they are ever mixed with imperfection and weakness and, therefore, through the corruption of the flesh we cannot acquire the righteousness required in the commandments; therefore we point, alone, to Christ Jesus who is our only

and eternal Righteousness, Reconciliation and Propitiator with the Father, and do not at all trust in our works. My reader, I write the truth in Christ Jesus, and lie not.

O, that Gellius would quit his unguarded talk, and speak no more than that which is true, for a liar is a disgrace and shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and that he could once feel what a true, christian faith is, what it requires in its nature and what it produces in power; he would then know what it is that brings forth such a pious, penitent and unblamable life which he has in times gone by, so disgracefully slandered and upbraided as devilish fruits, hypocrisy and a new mockery; and, as appears, would yet upbraid, if it was not for the experience of many and the great quantity of innocent blood which has been shed.

Behold, dear reader, now you can see how they adorn and deck their abominable hypocrisy and fruitless, impenitent church-service with writing, translating, singing, &c., although generally alone without repentance and regeneration, as heard; and how they basely construe and explain the sincere, pious fruits of true faith which are taught and represented by all the Scriptures, ceremonies and sacraments; that they may daub the wall with untempered mortar and console the poor, miserable people in their disregard of the word of the Lord. But when the Lord's hurricane, flood and great hailstones shall come with a great noise, then they will break down the wall that they have daubed with untempered mortar and bring it to the ground so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, &c., Ezekiel 13: 13, 14.

In the third place, Gellius writes that the office of a preacher consists of two parts, namely, in rooting out, destroying and opposing; also in sowing and building, &c., and boasts that their fruits, especially as regards the first part, cannot be denied in many kingdoms and principalities; and that the Lord Jesus Christ (as he says), has, through their services, planted sincere repentance and such true christian faith in many hearts, that the small community at Emden, in sure expectation of a reward in heaven, willingly supports several hundreds of poor people by their alms, &c.

Answer. We admit that the first part of a preacher's office consists in rooting out, destroying and opposing, and the other of sowing and building up, and this is a proof for

us that they are not the preachers to serve in such capacity. Although they have renounced, in different cities and countries, (for which we praise the Lord), some abuses and idolatries, which were so gross that they might be plainly noticed, without Scriptures, to be abominations; yet, the root of all deceit remains untouched, namely, the false doctrine and unscriptural sacraments, with which they console the world and encourage them in their impenitence and natural state or Adamic heart which is the source of all unrighteousness, as may, alas, be seen on every hand by the fruits.

If, then, they are the true preachers as they pretend to be, let them execute the first part, namely, To break in pieces with the hammer of the divine word the proud, obdurate hearts, the impure, avaricious hearts, the blood-guilty, tyrannical hearts, &c., of whom it is written that they are worthy of death; to humble them by the eternal judgment and punishment of Almighty God: to discover to them their ungodly and corrupt nature and flesh, by virtue of the commands; that they may learn to know themselves, see their shame and thus, with sorrowing and repenting hearts, in the fear of the coming wrath and eternal punishment of the just and great God, sincerely and tremblingly repent and die unto their sins, crucify their flesh, smother their lusts, and walk before their God with broken and humbled hearts. Behold this is the true and principal rooting out, destroying and opposing to which Scriptures say, the true preachers are called.

Then let such moved and humbled hearts, such penitent and sighing sinners, who are, with Peter and Magdalene, heart broken, bitterly weep, and with David confess their guilt; then point them to the only and eternal seat of grace, Christ Jesus; teach them the eternal mercy, love, favor and grace of God, according to the Scriptures; console them with the gospel of peace; carefully anoint their wounds, caused by the sharp and smarting wine, with the oil of the joyful promises of Christ, that they may thus, through faith arise with Christ from the death of their abominable sins into the new life of all virtue; that they may, in true faith and in pure, unfeigned love, ever walk

without all offence, according to the example of Christ and all the pious; and give thanks to the Lord for his manifest love. Behold, thus sow and build, all true preachers who are called of the Spirit of the Lord and are fit for his service.

Dear reader, observe; Since Gellius and the preachers, then, are not such destroyers and builders, rooters and planters, as their deeds testify; but destroy that which is good and build up that which is bad; that they root out truth with their offensive doctrine and plant falsehood with their false sacraments and easy life; therefore our assertion is incontrovertible, that they are not the servants of Christ nor his true messengers.

He writes, "that the Lord, through their service, has planted true repentance and such a true christian faith in many hearts, that the small congregation at Emden were comforted in expectation of a heavenly reward."

Answer. If this were true indeed, as he writes, it should be attested by the fruits and manifested by the works. Paul says, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. 4: 20. Let nobody falsely boast; we will be judged of one before whom nothing is hidden. Nobody knows what true, christian faith and true repentance are, but he who has truly received them and felt their power. If God, then, plants repentance in so many hearts, as Gellius pretends, why is he and his like preachers, yet so impenitent, so inimical and refractory to truth, and so offensive and blamable in wholesome doctrine? If those of whom he speaks are of the same mind with him, which we trust they are not, then he has not written the truth; this is too plain to be denied.

Those hearts in which God has planted true repentance and an ardent, true, christian faith cannot, especially in these times of manifest truth, long be hidden, nor remain without the cross promised by the Holy Scriptures, if, even, their own preachers and relations are to persecute them. For if they would testify their faith by a frank confession, by a pious life and by works, which are the fruits of true and ardent faith, they would soon find that they have to bear the cross with Christ, their Lord. However much Gellius may garble it in his writings,

the word of Christ is and remains the word of the cross; all who accept the word in power and in truth must be prepared for the cross; this, both Scriptures and experience abundantly teach us.

This had necessarily to be said, lest we be consoled with a false boasting and idea, and lest the word of the Lord, spoken to the false prophets, be applied to us: saying, Ye promise life to those souls to whom you should not promise it, "By your lying to my people that hear your lies." Ezekiel 13: 19.

Notwithstanding, many are suffered in their churches who wantonly live in pomp, splendor, carousing, avarice and according to the lusts of the flesh, which service a true and faithful preacher, through which God works, does not allow, if the evangelical Scriptures and apostolic ordinances and doctrine shall avail and are true.

But, as to the alms and support of the poor, I would say, that it is a good and praise-worthy work, and cordially approve of it. Also, that many pious, gentile philosophers, as Aristotle, Plato, &c., have considered it as right and just. But we contradict that sincere and true repentance, or the true seed and foundation of sincere love, which is a fruit of true faith, consists therein; for we may give in hypocrisy, as well as in love, as may be seen by the Scribes and Pharisees, by the open heathens and daily, yet, by the papists.

Paul also agrees with this, saying, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing," 1 Cor. 13: 3. Therefore, let every one take heed for what purpose and with what heart he bestows his alms. For the love which is of God and of a divine nature hates all boasting and hypocrisy, neither does it know them; of this I am convinced.

If Gellius points to the support and service of the poor, which I deem praiseworthy, as a fruit of true repentance, then I would ask in the first place, Whether he finds a lack of alms with our church; although they are exiled to foreign countries and live in poverty and misery and are partly robbed of their possessions?

In the second place I would say, that while he wants to boast of true repentance, he should first commence with the repentance of such faith as brings forth the love and fear of God, and not with the alms for the poor. For the Lord's own mouth speaks, That love is the keeping of his commandments; yea that it is the greatest commandment, Deut. 6: 5.

Yea, my reader, if he and his could fully comprehend sincere, true repentance and true christian faith, which he thinks has been planted in their hearts, O, how cordially would they fear their God, love and thank him for his favors and loving-kindness, and how willingly would they follow and obey his holy word! But how they do love and thank him for his loving-kindness and how they obey and follow his word, their actions and fruits, alas, too plainly testify.

If they love God, and if a true, living faith and genuine repentance has been implanted in their hearts, as he boasts, why do they, then, yet walk after the manner of the Gentiles in pomp and splendor, in the lusts of their eyes, embellishment of their bodies and houses, in avariciousness, carousing, &c.? and why do they not heed the words of Paul? namely, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die," Rom. 8: 13.

If they love their neighbors, as the Scriptures command and true repentance brings forth, why are they, then, so usurious, avaricious and perfidious amongst themselves? Why do they litigate? Hatred, envy, lying, deceit, backbiting and defamation still prevail amongst his followers; besides they curse, swear, brawl, fight, war, destroy, rob and some of them are fornicators, perjurers, &c.; to say nothing about their disgraceful upbraiding, profaning and defaming of all those who seek and fear the Lord. What sort of repentance and faith it is, of which he so loudly boasts, you may consider in the fear of God.

O, my kind reader, it never fails that where true faith is, there, also, is the righteousness of faith; where there is unfeigned, christian love, there also is obedience to the holy word, and where there is true, sincere repentance there also is an unblamable life,

according to the truth; this is incontrovertible.

Is it not a false assertion to say that the giving of alms shows true repentance; since we do not know whether it is done in sincerity of heart or in hypocrisy and vanity, while he can plainly see that those who give alms generally are merely of the world and flesh, yea, without regeneration and repentance?

It would be well if he could take to heart what stands written: The alms (gifts) of the ungodly do not please the Most High; and sins are not remitted by much offering; he who offers of the possessions of the poor, does, even as if he slaughtered the Son, in the sight of the Father. But to keep God's commandments, is a pleasing offer and to do according to the command, this is an offer which avails. "To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord; and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation." Again, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams," Eccl. 35: 3; 1 Sam. 15: 22.

I would further say that it is my fixed opinion that the beforementioned alms, of which he boasts, are not the two mites or pennies of the widow's necessities; but only a small crumb of their abundance, riches and wealth. This I frankly assert, and I have not the least doubt that if they would apply, to the support of the poor, their silk, damask and the superabundance of clothes in which they go splendidly attired, the ornaments of their houses, the golden and silver rosaries, the useless, costly ornaments, gold rings, chains, silvered and gilt swords, besides, the booty of the persecuted which may be found in the houses of some, then the poor would not, in the least, suffer from want.

O, my reader, yet by him, this must be called true repentance and a highly boastful work. If such boasting of outward works was heard from our side, how soon would we hear that we are work-saints, and that we want to be saved by our own merits.

O, Lord! O dear Lord!! thus the ignorant people are deceived and consoled in their impenitent, reckless life with their own works and merits. I think that such preachers may justly be called peace-preachers, bolsters

and false daubers of the Spirit of the Lord, since they praise such a carnal people as penitent and happy according to the prophetic word, while they are still quite earthly and carnally-minded; as their daily walk openly testifies before the whole world.

My faithful reader, observe the word of the Lord, and take heed; for it is not always a true christian faith nor sincere repentance which the children of the world, who are prone to walk upon the broad way, sometimes teach and represent as true faith and sincere repentance. But this is true faith; which cordially accepts all the words of God, the threatening commands as well as the consoling gospel, and trusts in them as the sure and true word of God, &c. From such faith, which Paul calls a gift of God, springs the fear of God which drives out sin, and the true love which gladdens, enlivens and cheers the heart and leads it into the obedience of the word.

Where there is such a faith which brings forth a new, converted and changed mind; which makes us dead unto sin and leads us into a new life; changes us from Adam to Christ; puts off the old man with all his works and puts on the new man with his works and thus conforms all his thoughts, words and works to the Spirit, word and ways of the Lord, behold, there is true repentance to which the holy prophets, John the baptist, Christ Jesus, together with all the apostles and pious servants have so earnestly pointed us and so faithfully admonished us.

All those who would rightly preach this faith and this genuine repentance, and would thereby bring forth fruits, must themselves first, truly believe and sincerely repent; this is too obvious to be denied; and that Gellius and his like preachers do not yet, in power and truth, believe and sincerely repent, I will leave to be judged by their own writings and fruits, both here on earth and before the throne of God and Christ.

Gellius further writes, and says, If it were true that many of our audience turn the preaching of the holy gospel to lasciviousness, as in Jude 4, and that our preaching avails but little, although many pious, penitent hearts incontrovertibly prove the contrary, then the old lamentation of the prophet Isaiah were but verified, that says, Who hath believed our report, &c.? He also points to the saying of Christ, namely, If they have kept

my word they will also keep your word; with which he doubtlessly means to say, as the world has not kept my doctrine, therefore they will not keep your doctrine.

He also, refers to the four kinds of seed and four kinds of earth, Matt. 13: 8, 19, 23.

Answer. God has never, from the beginning, preached repentance through the impenitent. The mouth and wisdom of God say, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles," Matt. 7: 16.

Since, it is clear that Gellius and his like preachers remain so earthly and carnally-minded, and are driven by such an unmerciful, tyrannical and slandering spirit, which is, properly, the inborn spirit, nature and fruit of the old serpent; how, then, can they rightly preach the penitent, pious life and the fruitful, merciful, amiable spirit, nature and disposition of Christ, which they not only not acknowledge, but upbraid as hypocrisy and which they sincerely hate in all the pious?

In the second place, I say, that the preaching of peace and the making of cushions of the learned, as they do, will bring forth but few truly repentant persons. For although the world is so wicked and wild that we should reasonably be terrified at their very great wickedness, yet they are so comforted and consoled by their preachers, with their infant baptism, supper, alms and with the merits, grace, death and blood of the Lord, that they presume themselves to be the Lord's chosen holy church and people.

In the third place I would say, because he speaks doubtfully, saying, If it *were* true that many of his audience turn the preaching of the word to lasciviousness, and little fruit was brought forth by it, something which he however does not admit, &c., the reader should well mark how assiduously they defend the world and the church of anti-christ, saying, If it *were* true, &c. Yet the whole German nation has degenerated to such a wild and reckless freedom, by the preaching of their free gospel that if we reasonably admonish and reprove them for their open unchastity, carousing, pomp and splendor, cursing and swearing, lascivious and foul words, we must immediately hear that we are conspirators, vagabonds, fanatics, heaven-stormers, anabaptists and other indecent, disgraceful slanders.

But in regard to the complaint of Isaiah and the saying of Christ, If they have kept my saying, &c., John 15: 20, with which he wishes to cover and adorn his unscriptural practices and doctrine of impenitence, I would ask him: If Christ and the apostles have received those who lived after the lusts of their flesh, such as drunkards, railers, extortioners, avaricious, fornicators, adulterers, &c., as their disciples, so long as they had not sincerely repented?

If he answers in the affirmative, then he speaks contrary to all Scripture. For Paul says, That we shall not eat with such, if he does call himself a brother, 1 Cor. 5: 11, and that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6: 11. If he answers in the negative, then I would again ask, Why they receive them as disciples while they are not disciples of Christ, but are, according to his own words, of the world?

If he answers that they do not receive them, then I would ask him why they baptize their children before they let them partake of the supper? And whether it would not be better if he would separate them, according to the Scriptures from the communion of those whom he esteems pious? If he answers that he does not know of such, which he can by no means, truthfully say, then I would, lastly ask, if he does not know a tree by its fruits; if he cannot see a light that shines in darkness, as all true christian lights are called in the Scriptures, nor a city which is built upon a high mountain? Matt. 5: 14.

Since Gellius and all the preachers, receive and suffer such impenitent persons, whom he himself calls of the world, as heard, in the communion of their churches, against the practice of Christ and of the apostles, therefore they must thereby acknowledge that Christ's church is of the world or the world of Christ's church; that they, contrary to the apostolic doctrine, ordinance and example, dispense the sacraments also to the world, which according to the Scriptures properly belong to the penitent alone, who have placed themselves in the church of the Lord, in obedience to the word; that they, thereby, include the penitent (if such there be) in the communion of the impenitent; and that they are open flatterers and ene-

mies of the cross of Christ, Phil. 3: 18, who act hypocritically with the higher class and flatter the world, lest they lose their favors; and thus openly and faithlessly transgress the Lord's word and ordinance, for the sake of their bellies and reject it as powerless and discouraging.

Again, as to his reference to the Lord's parable, I would say, That I would have him take a better view of it and not console himself herewith; for it has reference to the true preachers and disciples who have been put to the trial of the cross of Christ, in obedience to the word, and not to the cross-fleeing preachers and the world, as may be learned not alone from the Scriptures but also from experience.

For some reject the received and manifest truth, and the sown seed is devoured of the fowls of the air and does not bring forth fruit. Some are withered by the scorching sun of the cross, oppression and misery, which proves them wood, hay and stubble, 1 Cor. 3: 12.

Others are smothered by the cares of this world, and by deceitful riches and the lusts of the flesh, so that the received knowledge dies in them, and the lusts and love of this world prevail, which in our times, as well as in the times of the primitive church, is too often the case with those who, with Demas, alas, again grasp the love of the world.

But the last receive it in a sincere, pious heart, and meekly bring forth fruit with patience; although they are much tempted by all kinds of trials, anxiety, oppression and deadly perils, yet they are, by the gracious help of God, so armed with a true faith, love, hope, and patience or long-suffering; are so confirmed in God, that neither the fire of tribulation can consume them (for they are gold, silver and precious stones), nor sword and pain can frighten or deter them from the ways of the Lord, Rom. 8: 38.

That the beforementioned parable has reference to such christians and not to the world and its preachers, is too clear to be controverted or denied. And Gellius and his like preachers of the world remain defenders of unrighteousness, comforters of the impenitent and servants of the kingdom of anti-christ, who not only pitifully deceive

their own souls but also those of their church, and support and defend them in their gross abominations and impenitent carnal lives, by their perversion of Scriptures and useless consolations, to their eternal destruction.

In the fifth place it should be observed, what the preachers' desire and seeking should be. The Scriptures teach that Moses and Jeremiah, Exod. 4: 10, reluctantly accepted of the service when they, Jer. 1: 6, were called and sent of God, as Jeremiah laments when the cross bore heavily upon him, Exod. 4: 10; Jer. 1: 6; Jer. 20: 8.

All that the prophets, apostles and faithful servants of God ever sought and desired was nothing else than that they might proclaim the name of their God and might point their neighbors to the way of peace. They did not seek money, gold, honor and an easy life, but they executed their office to which they were appointed, and which was, alas, not weighed by the heedless people, under many sore trials, miseries, anxieties, tribulations, beatings, poverty, oppression and tortures, and at the risk of life even, as sacred and profane histories, in many instances, teach. But why the preachers of the world have hitherto refused and yet refuse the service, and what they seek thereby, experience and the Holy Spirit plainly teach us, saying, that they *promise* death to the pious and life to the wicked, for the sake of a hand-ful of barley or a piece of bread; that they seek the fat and the wool, milk and flesh; that they eat but do not feed the Lord's sheep, Ezekiel 34: 3; that they preach peace for their bellies' sake (that is, if well paid), and war if not well fed, &c.

Facts testify openly that it is true that they do not seek the salvation of souls, but a careless, easy life; for we never saw in all our life that the preachers lived where there were no rents or liens. That, also, Gellius does not seek the salvation of his sheep, but the rents, he has testified when he left Norden, where he was called by the same calling, and moved to Emden where the annual income was greater; something which the paters, in times gone-by, esteemed as unjust in their concilions and decrees, and punished with excommunication.

If he sought the salvation of their souls, and not the rents, as becomes a good and faithful shepherd, according to the example of Jesus Christ and of all faithful servants, why, then, did he make void his first calling, which was, according to his assertion, divine, and leave the first sheep who were no less delivered through the death of the Lord, and bought with his precious blood, than the last, of which he now has the charge. O, hypocrisy and feigning!

Again, Gellius says in regard to the sustenance of the preachers, That they have little care as to how the community, of whom the magistracy are a part, provides them the necessaries of life, while it is certain that if they serve the gospel, as he says, they shall also live of the gospel; and cites Matt. 10: 10; Luke 10: 7.

Answer. If Gellius and the preachers were such servants as are referred to in these Scriptures, then it is plain, that the sustenance of the gospel was promised them. But if any-body goes into the service and uselessly destroys and ruins the Lord's goods, if faithless, seeks his own self in all things and does the things which are contrary to the will and honor of the Lord, should such a faithless servant receive the reward which is reasonably due to the faithful, assiduous laborer? I think you will answer in the negative; and that he should rather receive the displeasure and punishment of the Lord. For he speaks, "When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons," Matt. 21: 40, 41.

We acknowledge that sustenance has been promised, by Scriptures, to the true and faithful servants. But, since Gellius and his like preachers are unfaithful servants who destroy the Lord's goods, steal his gain, scatter his sheep and do not gather them together; who, alas, fearlessly lead to hell his precious treasure, namely the poor-miserable souls, in great numbers, as those truly regenerated can scripturally judge by the testimony of their open deeds; therefore their sustenance is not the sustenance of true preachers, but an unreasonable, shameful gain; an unbecoming livelihood and the

reward of the deceived souls; this, all of sound understanding must acknowledge and admit.

O, my faithful reader, remember, so long as the world donates such splendid houses and large incomes to their preachers, the false prophets and deceivers will be numerous.

They pretend to vindicate by Scripture all heresy, deceit, idolatry, pomp, hypocrisy, tyranny and drunkenness, together with their unreasonable and shameful service of the flesh and world, and make the ignorant and blind world believe that it is right.

But I openly testify, I testify it unreservedly that the preachers of the world, to take them all in all, are Balaamites, who love the reward of unrighteousness, and serve for the sake of a handful of barley and a piece of bread, whereby they profane the name of God, Ezekiel 13: 19. "Prophets which eat at Jezebel's table," 1 Kings 18: 20, servants and defenders of Maaz, 1 Chron. 2: 27, who are honored with great rewards of Antioch, that is, anti-christ; Ahabites, who, for the sake of an acre, stone the pious Naboth, 1 Kings 21, that is, who advise and instigate the world by their speeches, writings, backbiting, complaints and permission to the killing of many an innocent, pious child of God.

Again, they are priests of Jeroboam, who, contrary to the example of Christ Jesus and his holy apostles, hire themselves, for an annual stipend, to an unevangelical service of impenitence, which is practiced, in all respects, without power, spirit, repentance and regeneration, as may openly be seen; their service is vain labor and mockery, besides, an unbecoming speculation.

O, how distinctly has the Holy Ghost portrayed them before our eyes, if we would but see, saying, "And through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you." Again, "Having men's persons in admiration because of advantage," 2 Peter 2: 3; Jude 16, and other like sayings; For that they have sought unreasonable gain and an easy life, from youth, and yet seek it, is so obvious, that it cannot, at all, be denied.

Besides, their liens and properties have

been obtained from anti-christ, through artful dealings, enchanting roguery and clerical robbery, and are yet, daily, thus obtained from those who walk upon the broad way without repentance, and who find, alas, no pleasure in the Lord's holy word.

They act hypocritically and flatter the magistrates and those of high-standing; they console the impenitent and persecute the pious; they adulterate the plain word, sacraments and ordinances of Jesus Christ, by which the church should be gathered and maintained in Him; they preach to suit and please the world, that they may receive, under the semblance of the gospel, the blood-reward of the poor and miserable souls, for which they assiduously strive; that they may peaceably possess it and turn it to the advantage of easy times. Yet they console themselves with the idea that they serve the gospel and therefore should live of the gospel. Behold, thus they give a scriptural shape to all kinds of false doctrines and works, and thus they give a fine appearance to hypocrisy.

My faithful reader, I warn you in sincere love, take heed. Again, I say unto you, The true and faithful servants of Jesus did not have such annual stipends, rents and property attached to the apostolic churches; but the greater part earned their livelihood by their own labor; yet served the church of Christ, and, in all love and humility, walked before them with true doctrines and an unblamable life. They have diligently watched over the Lord's house, city and vineyard; opposed all evil and deceiving spirits with the word of the Lord; admonished the disorderly, consoled the afflicted, reprov'd the transgressors, excommunicated the disobedient and refractory; served reasonably, left the world to the world, and have patiently borne its cross; and what necessities they needed they received, not of the world, but at the hands of their pious disciples, in humility, without avariciousness or on desire of shameful gain. Scriptures allow this much, as said above, for they rightly pastured the Lord's sheep, they faithfully planted the vineyard, assiduously tilled the land, and stored the sheaves and fruits in the Lord's barn, as the example of the prophets and apostles points out

and the Spirit and word of the Lord command, and enjoin upon all faithful servants.

I will conclude my remarks in regard to the calling of the preachers, and would yet say, Since the Scriptures teach that the servants of the holy word are called either of the Lord himself, or by means of the pious, as has been heard; that they shall be unblamable; able rightly to rule the Lord's church, bring forth permanent fruits, destroy and build up; that they shall not seek unreasonable gain, but sincerely seek the honor and praise of God and the salvation of their neighbors, &c.; and since we plainly see and palpably feel that they, alas, are altogether called of such as we would wish had the Spirit of Christ; moreover that they are blamable in all things, for they are of an unmerciful, tyrannical disposition, and of an earthly, carnal life; pervert the gospel, and do not teach it in power and true repentance; wrongly use the sacraments without power, spirit and repentance, and dispense it to those who are not disciples of Jesus Christ; they deceive the people; do not bring forth permanent fruits, plant that which is evil and root out that which is good; they do not seek the honor and praise of God but their own profit and gain, the favor of the world and an easy, careless life, I will let their doctrines, sacraments, fruits and life testify to this; therefore I say without any reservation that they are *not* the called preachers and servants of the church of Christ, whom we shall, according to the Scriptures, obey, accept and follow, as they pretend we should, but that they are preachers for the sake of gain and servants of anti-christ, against whom we are, on every hand, warned by the word of God; not to hear or follow them nor their doctrine but to flee from and *avoid* them as deceivers, false prophets, wicked men and faithless servants.

Yea, my reader, what can they say about their calling, preaching and church-service? It is, briefly stated, not possible, according to the sure promises and prophecies of Christ Jesus and the prophets, that a true and faithful preacher, witness or teacher, especially in these evil times and in this wicked and tyrannical world, can faithfully

teach and proclaim, without respect of persons, the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, without being exiled, proscribed or killed; much less enjoy life at ease and liberty, as they do, without persecution, yea, receive annual stipends of the world and be highly honored and loved by them.

Peruse all the Holy Scriptures and see if you can find that Christ Jesus, with his holy apostles, true witnesses and followers fared as they do and received as they do; whether persecution, cross, tribulation, anxiety, prison and death were not, generally, their lot and part. Besides experience, yet daily, teaches this abundantly.

If, then, the preachers acted rightly, if they were walking according to the example of Christ and his apostles; if their teachings and dealings were right, as they pretend them to be, then all the Holy Scriptures must be wrong, the word of the cross be fulfilled and Christ and his prophecies must be false, this is incontrovertible. Therefore, all their boasting and artful citations concerning their calling, office, doctrine and church-service, together with their defense are, in fact, wrong, futile, hypocritical, unjust and without truth. "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," Phil. 2: 21; their own ease and not the salvation of their neighbors; they are enemies of the cross; they serve their own bellies, Rom. 16. If they would rightly reprove all the ungodliness, idolatry, abuse, pride, pomp, splendor, hypocrisy and unfaithfulness of this world, without respect of persons with the same earnestness, assiduity, heart and mind, &c., as did Christ with his holy apostles and true witnesses, and in other respects would not act so freely; if they would hate all unrighteousness of the world as Christ Jesus and his apostles hated it, then they would not long remain at ease in their comfortable houses; they would not have such incomes and they would be little regarded by this reckless, wild world. Of this I am convinced.

But they do differently; they make the garment to fit the man (as the saying is), and they so teach and act that the world may suffer them and love them and that they may be the friends of the world, so that they

may be at ease, not be persecuted and enjoy good times; this is something which is generally well understood, and a sure proof that their sending or calling together with their doctrine and church-service is in every particular without the ordinance, Spirit and word of God, as said before.

Herewith, Gellius' article on the calling has been replied to. I would earnestly beseech him and all the preachers to reflect in the fear of God for before the flaming eyes of the Lord, which search heaven and earth, nothing wrong will be hidden, however artfully it may be covered before man's eyes, and however much it may be decked and adorned with smooth words.

Next, Gellius denies our calling, and says, Before we can agree with the preachers or teachers who claim that they bring forth fruit, they must first be rightly called of a church of God, and not from a collection who have been deceived by false prophets; and then come boldly forward and preach; or they must show by facts (as he says) that Christ has done wrong, and that he should have rather preached secretly to avoid the cross (as he says we do) than in public, &c.

Answer. The sending or calling of Moses, of Christ, of Paul, of the apostles and prophets was also denied by the perverse. Moses had to hear that he had killed the Lord's people and that he had led them into the wilderness that they might perish through want and misery. Christ Jesus was called a wine-bibber, blasphemer and one possessed of the devil, Matt. 11: 19. Paul was called a rebel and an apostate Jew, &c. Behold, thus in their times the sending of the faithful servants of the Lord, nay, the the Lord and Messiah himself was despised, although testified by many miracles. How much more, then, shall we be despised, who are such weak and insignificant instruments, and live in seven fold worse and more wicked times than those in which they lived.

Inasmuch, then, as we are accused by our opponents, the learned, that we are not called of a church of God, but of false prophets, or of a false church, therefore I would briefly admonish the reader, to weigh well with the Scriptures who, how and what the church of God is; that it is not a collection of proud, avaricious, extortionate, vain persons, drunkards and impenitent, as the church of the world is, of whom the learned are called but a collection or congregation of

saints, as the Holy Scriptures and the Nicene symbol clearly teach and represent, namely, of those who, through true faith, are regenerated of God unto Christ Jesus and are of a divine nature, who will gladly conform their lives according to the Spirit, word and example of the Lord, are actuated by his Spirit and are willing and prepared patiently to bear the cross of their Lord Jesus Christ.

Behold dear reader, such were they whom the apostles and faithful servants won unto Christ Jesus, and added to his church with his Spirit and word, nor does Scripture acknowledge any others. From such and of such they have, with fasting and prayer, chosen and called unto the service of the Lord the pious and unblamable pastors and teachers; and not of the world, as has been heard.

Since, then, the preachers of the world and their congregations, are not the church of Christ but are such preachers and churches as shown, by their spirit, words and deeds that they are of the world; and since the merciful, great Lord in these latter days of abominations, graciously gathers together, by his Spirit and word, many faithful hearts from the different unscriptural sects, both great and small, and from different nations and tongues, in one faith; and places them as an admonition to sincere repentance, with their doctrine, life, goods and blood, before the whole world, yea, as a light upon a candlestick; therefore these must be the Lord's church and people; or else the word of God, which is and remains true, must be wrong and false. And some from these and of these are chosen with fasting and prayer and ordained to the service of the Lord by the laying on of hands according to the example and doctrine of the apostolic churches; now, all of sound mind may judge and weigh, according to Scripture whether such a calling or choosing is not consistent with Scripture and according to the usage of the primitive churches; and whether it cannot stand before the Lord and his church as divine, holy and just.

Further, it is a fact well known to me, that the preachers tell the simple, and which Gellius' writing, if carefully read, also insinuates that I should have received my

faith, doctrine and calling of a deceiving, refractory and corrupted sect, by the secession of whom the Lord intends to purge his church. For this reason I am necessarily forced to explain my actions briefly, which I, under different circumstances, would, for the sake of modesty, remain silent; namely, how I first came to the knowledge of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; and how I afterward, unworthily, became one of his servants; and I hereby beseech all my readers, for God's sake to consider well this my narration, and that they will not think hard of it, nor consider it as vain boasting that I here tell it; for the honor of my God and the love for his church urge me to do so. Let all judge me as they will He who has created me and has hitherto graciously delivered me from my enemies, knows me; he knows what I seek in this life and what my greatest desire is.*

Again, that Gellius wants us to preach publicly, has been sufficiently replied to above, as I trust, in treating of night preaching. Yet I would propound these three questions.

In the first place, Whether a person would not be guilty of blood, if he would persuade somebody by artful words or force him into a deep water or by such means get him to take poison, if he knew beforehand that death would be the consequence?

In the second place, Since he boasts to be a called preacher and preaches in public, I would ask, Why he is not moved to love and compassion for his own country? Why he does not, amongst the papists, openly proclaim his faith, sacraments and doctrines, contrary to the emperor's decree, tyranny, persecution and ill-will as he would have us to do?

Thirdly, since he will admit, as I suppose, and must admit, if he judge according to the Scriptures, that the avaricious, proud, haughty, drunkards, vain, extortioners, liars, unrighteous, &c., can not inherit the kingdom of God, and that they therefore are not christians; I would ask him, Why it is that he does not lay aside the fear of

* Here follows in the original works of Menno Simon his renunciation of the Church of Rome. See First part, Page 4.

the cross (of which he blames us) and separate, without all respect of person, the impenitent of his church, from the communion of his sacraments, according to the doctrine and ordinance of the Holy Ghost, since it is God's express word and ordinance? He would have us preach publicly, notwithstanding that he well knows that we can no more do so without the loss of life, than to go on the water without sinking, or to take poison without dying. For he and the learned have brought about such a state of affairs, by their disgraceful slanders and preaching, that we are, alas, already judged before we are caught. Besides he advises the magistracy to stop our doings; and he well knows how he treated a certain person, about ten years ago, who would gladly proclaim to the people the testimony he had, in sincerity of heart, and that he refused me a discussion of Scripture twice, as has been heard. Yet he says, if we are true teachers we should preach in public; while he himself, for the sake of a livelihood and the fear of the cross does not preach his doctrine (whatever it amounts to) in his own place but has moved to another and more safe place, and there, although he can freely practice his doctrine and sacraments, he neglects separation, scriptural reproof and the ordinances of God from the fear of the cross. Now the reasonable reader may educe from all this what kind of a christian, not to mention preacher, he is; since he would have us, miserable ones, to do that which he himself dares not do nor touch, as you may see.

If Gellius could take these three questions to heart and would consider them in a scriptural light and in the fear of God, he would be ashamed all his life that he so indiscreetly attacks us, against all love, reason, intelligence and the Scriptures and that he, under such a semblance, so tyrannically strives after the ruin, blood and death of the pious.

But in answer to this writing that the prophetic and apostolic doctrine and sacraments should not be taught and dispensed in secret, retired corners and shops, but in public, I would say, We admit that Christ Jesus, generally preached in public, however with such discretion that he sometimes

avoided the raving, mad people, after they had resolved upon his death, until the time of his suffering had arrived (which time was known to him beforehand), and the prophecies were fulfilled, Luke 21:32.

Also, that although Jesus Christ sent his disciples to preach the gospel to all people, to Gentiles as well as Jews, he did not command them, nor would he, that they should serve and dispense his sacraments, namely, baptism and Supper to the enemies of his word, Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15. Therefore it is obvious that he accuses us of this without any truth or foundation of the Scriptures. He does not only accuse and reprove us but also Christ Jesus, God's eternal word and wisdom himself; for he has celebrated his Holy Supper, at night in a secret place, with a separate people; he also accuses and reproveth Paul and the primitive, apostolic church, who oft held their brotherly meetings at night, in retired places, as has been sufficiently adduced above. Observe how openly he speaks against God's word.

He writes further, that our calling is not testified by any thing, further than that we not only fill the hearts of many with a mad and irreconcilable hatred of all church ordinances and true servants of the church, however pious they be, but also inspire them with a contentious, envious spirit.

Answer. If animosity and bitterness of heart had not so entirely blinded him, and if but a small spark of a true, christian spirit were in him, then he would soon acknowledge the precious fruits of true repentance. But as it is, he has become so blinded, that, alas, he calls the glorious fruits of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of the devil and new monkey; and the burdensome, pressing cross of so many pious saints, the cross of evil-doers or heretics. Which is in my opinion an abominable sin and gross slander.

The Pharisees said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils," Matt. 12:24, although they strongly felt in their hearts that it was the finger and power of God. Christ said that it was blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, Luke 12:10. But what Gellius does against us I will leave to the Lord.

God knows that I wish that I might deliver him and all the preachers from their

sore damnation, even at the cost of my own life. Behold, thus I hate him and all those who seek my life; although we must hear so much evil spoken against us; and I trust that all who fear the word of the Lord, will be of one mind with me in this regard. Notwithstanding this, he writes that we fill many hearts with anger and irreconcilable hatred against them, &c. By no means. And this for no other reason than that we in sincere and faithful love, earnestly reprove the hypocritical deceivers, whom he calls the true and pious servants of the church, and the unscriptural infant baptism, together with all abuses, which he calls church ordinances not only by the Spirit and word of the Lord, but also by our possessions and blood, and because we point them to Christ Jesus and him crucified, to his Spirit, word, ordinances and to the doctrine and usage of his holy apostles.

I truly believe that a spiteful, envious person has no part in God's city. And if we, who are daily killed for our love, are yet spiteful and envious, then much suffering is in vain. I trust that I write the truth when I say that I am more terrified at hatred and envy than at fire and sword. Yet we must hear that we are spiteful. Behold, thus good is ever turned to evil and our love to hatred. What sentence the Scriptures pronounce against such may be seen in Isaiah 5.

He also accuses us That we are not unanimous but quarrel amongst ourselves in regard to many articles of christian religion; namely, in regard to obedience to the laws; to the justification of man; to the Godhead of Christ and his becoming man, and in regard to the powers of the magistracy, &c.

Answer. I trust that I can write with a clear conscience that we, who are grains of one loaf, are also of one mind in Christ Jesus. But as in the times of the apostles, false teachers arose in the apostolic church who started and taught false doctrines and who were, after faithful admonition, separated from the communion of their church, if they did not repent, as may be learned from many Scriptures; so also it is in our times. Satan is ever at work. Paul says, "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you," 1 Cor. 11:19. And

if such be deaf unto truth, reject admonition and start perverse sects, then we may no longer receive them as brethren, as the Scriptures teach us. So long as we continue to do this in obedience to the holy word and in the true fear of God, we are convinced from the inmost of our hearts, that we will be clear of all sectarianism as also of blasphemy and perversity; although we must innocently hear such charges from the world.

Since it is a fact well known to Gellius and his fellow-preachers that peace-breakers and sectarians are not allowed in our communion at all, but are unanimously separated from us, according to apostolic doctrine and usage, Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10, therefore it is very wrong in him to call so many pious persons contentious, and cause them to be of such bad report with the world, without truth; while they hate discord and strife and seek nothing but that they may humbly follow the crucified Jesus, in the peace of their hearts.

If he should say that he accounts them as of us because they have received the same baptism with us, then I would say again that Peter, Simon, Paul and &c., were also one. Then all papists, Lutherans and Zuinglians besides all thieves, murderous wizards, buggerers fornicators and rogues are one; for they have received one baptism; this is incontrovertible.

Again, in regard to his accusation that we dispute among ourselves in regard to obedience to the laws; the justification of man; the power of the magistracy &c. I would say, that I trust I can testify before the Lord and his church with a clear conscience, that I never but once to my knowledge, disputed, or as Gellius calls it quarreled with any one in regard to the justification of man, and this one has already run to ruin. Nor have I ever discussed the questions of obedience to the laws or the power of the magistracy other than by way of brotherly instruction. What our confession and grounds are concerning the before-mentioned articles, may be clearly deduced from our writings.

O, dear Lord, that Gellius would once consider his own words when he writes that the calling of the pious should not be nulli-

fied on account of the impious, and would have sufficient fear of God in him to feel concerned about the lies, violence and injustice which he unreasonably practices on us. For what else does he but wilfully defame the pious, perhaps against his own sentiments, that he may oppose the word, may uphold his cause by making ours false and suspicious, lest his pharisaical faithlessness be made manifest. Yea, he writes as if he would say, Judas was a traitor and thief, therefore all the other apostles are traitors and thieves. Again, Simon was a rogue, therefore all the members of the apostolic communities were rogues, &c. For he well knows that we do not, may not suffer heretics, peace-breakers &c. in the communion of the peaceful and pious, as already heard.

O, that he would leave off slandering the peaceable and could rightly see into the angry quarreling, bitter hatred, division, rupture and brawlings of all those who uphold infant baptism; could see how dreadfully they are divided amongst themselves; that they are so inflamed by envious zeal one against another that they not only slander and adjudge each other to hell by calling each other fanatics, profaners of the sacraments and anti-christians, but that they also take up the sword against each other, as is the way of sectarians; that they utterly destroy countries and inhabitants, cities and towns, against the meek nature, doctrine and example of Christ Jesus and his apostles.

Besides their learned men are so divided amongst themselves that we can scarcely find five or six in one country who agree in doctrine. One includes every thing in the providence and predestination of God, *Quasi necessarium* (as an implied necessity). Another disputes it; the third includes Christ's flesh and blood in the bread and wine; the fourth understands it spiritually; the fifth baptizes the children on their own faith; the sixth on the strength of the covenant with Abraham and its promise; the seventh says that faith is no obstacle to persecution; the eighth denies it; the ninth believes in faith without fruits or work; the tenth says, that faith through love shall be active; the eleventh says, that the sacra-

ments may be dispensed to the impenitent and perverse; the twelfth denies it; and other like differences exist among them.

Notwithstanding they call the godly, pious hearts and peaceable children of God, who are zealous for God and his righteousness, as much as is in their power, and who do not countenance quarreling, a contentious sect and ungodly, deceiving conspirators, while they, on the contrary, are peaceable, teachers of one mind; besides they call the impenitent, wicked world the church and people of the Lord.

Behold, so manifestly the Lord "will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent", 1 Cor. 1: 18, yea, that to them Christ Jesus is Belial, and Belial Christ Jesus; light, darkness and darkness, light, 2 Cor. 6; that they, alas consider the doctrine, life, power, confession, and the sacrifice of possession and life of the chosen as nothing; but that they judge every thing perversely, unfavorably and with partiality, according to the flesh, and thus construe every thing to offensiveness; that they seek all kinds of excuses to offend the pious, to blaspheme truth and to uphold unrighteousness, that nobody be converted, repent and sincerely seek and follow the word of the Lord. O, Lord! grant that this may be made manifest unto them.

He further writes: "Nor is it a desirable fruit, but a shameful disgrace that they, contrary to the example of Christ, and the apostles constitute themselves a church, desecrate the Lord's Sabbath, leave the open assembly and service, hate and upbraid the servants, and not only not examine the solicitous labors and prophecies of the servants but also boldly despise them, contrary to the command of the Holy Ghost and the doctrine of the command of the Sabbath."

Answer. Observe, reader, how adroitly they can adorn lies, and how frightfully they can suppress and despise truth under cover of virtue. All the evangelical Scriptures teach us that the church of Christ was and is, in doctrine, life and worship, a people separated from the world. It also was in the times of the Old Testament, 2 Cor. 6: 17; 1 Peter 2: 9, 10; Exod. 19: 12.

Since the church always was and shall be a separate people, as has been heard, and since it is as clear as the meridian sun, that for centuries no difference has

been made between the church and the world, but that they have been indiscriminately blended together in baptism, Supper, life and worship, which is so plainly contrary to all Scripture, therefore we feel ourselves constrained by the Spirit and word of God, and not of our own account, to gather together, to the praise of Jesus Christ and to the salvation of our neighbors, and not unto us, but unto the Lord a pious and penitent church or community from all untrue and deceiving sects of the whole world, not contrary to the doctrine and example of Christ Jesus and the apostles, as Gellius falsely accuses us, but according to the Spirit, doctrine and example of Jesus Christ, manifested unto us; yea, gather them *patiently* under the cross of misery, in spite of all the violence and gates of hell, and not by force of arms and persecution as is the custom of the world, but separate them from it, as the Scriptures teach, that they may be an admonition, example and reproach to the impenitent world as has already been heard.

They keep and sanctify the Sabbath which is not the literal, but the spiritual Sabbath, which never ends with true christians, not by wearing fine clothes, not by carousing, vanity and idleness, as the reckless world do, but by the true fear of God, by a clear conscience and unblamable life, in love to God and their neighbors; for that is the true religion, Heb. 12:1, and in the fear of their God they do not attend the public Sabbath and holiday gatherings which are, alas, not consecrated to Christ, but to anti-christ in all manner of vanity and hypocrisy, in pomp and splendor; nor do they take part in their idle church-service which tends to nothing but deceiving that they may thereby attend the gathering of the saints and the true service, convince the erring, and thus make manifest, truth and the true doctrine, to the reformation and salvation of all mankind.

They do not hate and envy the open deceivers and false preachers who so miserably deceive the poor people, as Gellius accuses us, but earnestly reprove them in love according to God's Spirit and word, that they may repent and be converted, as the Scriptures teach us.

In short, they do not despise the solicitous labors and the prophecies of the true and faithful servants of Christ, nor the precious gifts of the Holy Spirit, against the commands of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of the command of the Sabbath, as he very wrongly complains we do, but they shun, at the risk of possessions and life, according to the advice, doctrine and admonition of the Holy Spirit, and the doctrine of the Sabbath, the false labors, and the powerless, impenitent and hired prophecies of the anti-christian servants, who do not serve Christ and the church, as they boast, but serve their bellies and the world; and they dare not hear and follow them because their doctrine and fruits show that they are those whom the Scriptures and divine truth forbid us to follow.

Their priests, says the Lord, "teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money." They rely upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord amongst us? No evil can betide us; therefore "Zion shall be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps," Mic. 3:12; Jer. 26:18. It is also manifest that Gellius and his like preachers have done the same thing of which he accuses us, for they, long before we did, have separated themselves from the papists into a separate church, as is known to all mankind to be incontrovertible. But we are sorry to say that our separation from them was caused by themselves. For if we would have found them to be right we would have remained with them; but as it is, we have, alas, to leave them at the cost of life and possessions, as may be seen.

Behold, my kind reader, here you have before you, my brief reply to the main articles concerning the calling of preachers, which Gellius so respectfully brought forward to the defense of his cause and to the detriment of ours.

I have no doubt but that you, by the grace of God, will find a clear difference, explanation and foundation, if you compare his writing with ours and judge according to the word of the Lord by the manifest fruits on both sides; and this is the summary of my writings, that nobody can be a truly called preacher and God-pleasing servant in the Lord's house and church,

without having the Holy Spirit which worketh in all true christians; without regeneration which transforms the heart from earthly to heavenly things, through faith; nor without unfeigned love, which seeks nothing

but the praise of God and the salvation of his neighbor, nor without the salutary, precious word which cuts and cleaves without respect of person; nor without the pious, unblamable life which is of God.

CONCERNING BAPTISM.

I deem it unnecessary to write much concerning the baptism of the believing, in this place; why we teach that it shall be received and practiced at the confession of faith; for we have explained this matter before, by so many plain Scriptures and reasons, to the intelligent reader, that he can plainly see and palpably feel the foundation and truth.

Therefore I will refer to the main articles and arguments with which Gellius undertakes to defend his infant baptism as apostolic and christian, and will rebut them with the Scriptures; and I trust to be enabled, by the grace of God, to do this with such clearness and power that all attentive, intelligent readers may fully perceive that he can stand before the holy ordinance, word and truth of the Lord, with his infant baptism, as little as he can with his calling.

Before I enter upon the examination of the matter, I would, not without cause, first relate to the kind reader, that some years ago, I had a discussion with John A'Lasco, Gellius and Herman; and, as we had a lengthy reasoning concerning baptism, and they admitted that all the Scriptures which I adduced, relating to the matter, were spoken by the ancient or believing, we at last got on the subject of infant baptism, which, according to their opinion was also right, although not Scriptural. At last, after having had a lengthy discussion and after they had made many unscriptural assertions, I propounded two questions and prayed them for God's sake to answer them Scripturally. The first question was, Has a ceremony any promise, which is practiced without the command of God? They answered that it had not. Then I asked them, in the second place, Is not such a ceremony,

which is practiced without the command of God, idolatry? They answered that it was.

When I heard them answer these questions thus unreservedly, I said, Well, dear men, what will become of your infant baptism? They all three simultaneously answer: Yea, dear Menno, if you would ask of us for the command, then show us first where it is commanded that we should baptize the believing. When I heard this I was much alarmed, for I perceived that, in fact, they meant nothing but party and carnality. I pointed them to the sixteenth chapter of Mark, where the Lord speaks, "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.

But this was no command to them. Then I referred them to Matthew 28: 19, where the Lord says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them (or as the Greek text has it: Make all nations disciples, and baptize them), in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

This did not avail with them, for it reads, they said, "baptizing" and not "baptize them;" although, alas, they well knew that the surest translation is the Greek text in the imperative mode, namely, baptize them; something which I had till then never noticed so particularly.

Behold, they contended so wilfully against the plain word and truth of God, that they openly denied it to be a command; while they had many times read (also according to the Lutheran translation) that the Lord had commanded it in an express command, saying, "And baptize them."*

* German Translation

When I perceived that they wanted to find an excuse by means of the use of the participle, I proposed the following, If I command my servant and say, Go and plow the ground, sowing it with wheat; as the Lord said, "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c., have I not, I now ask, commanded my servant to plow the land and to sow it with wheat, although I use the participle sowing, the same as baptizing was used. They answered that this was using philosophy and not the Scriptures. Behold my reader, thus boldly they sought to deny the truth.

Seeing that they, although convinced, obstinately persevered in falsehood and would not receive the powerful and plain truth, as did the Pharisees, I was much grieved and said, Men! men!! Since I find it to be a fact that you, in perversity of heart, reject God's truth, and delight in falsehood, I will be silent and not speak another word with you concerning this matter; for, alas, it is all in vain! Reader, in the day of the appearance of Jesus Christ, before his impartial and eternal judgment, it will be found true as I here write.

Behold, so dishonestly do they deal with God's precious and eternal truth, that they *then* pretended that there was no command to baptize the believing, and *now* they have an abundance of commands to baptize the unconscious children. O, God! thus they mock with the souls of men, and they know not how much to garble, bend and break the sure foundation of truth, that they may remain on the broad road, without the cross, that they may please the world and that they may lead a careless life according to the lusts of the flesh.

Gellius first says in regard to this matter, That we blasphemously speak against the holy church, because we say that the children cannot believe, cannot repent and cannot obey the word of the Lord, while they (as he says) constitute a great part of the church, and that they are referred to in plain and clear words by the prophet Joel, in the preaching of repentance, &c.

Answer. His commencement is unscriptural and his end will be unscriptural. Observe, the word of God shall be our judge. Say, beloved, is it not a great blindness in him to undertake to include unconscious children in the preaching of repentance? and a little further on admits himself that they

cannot, in their feeble understanding, understand the doctrine, which is a doctrine of penitence. If they cannot understand the doctrine how can they then believe; if they do not believe how can they then repent, and if they do not repent how can they be included in the preaching of repentance? If they, then, have neither doctrine, faith nor repentance, which he admits they have not, on account of their feeble understanding, and which is not necessary for them to have, while they are God's own and while sin has not become alive in them to bring forth fruit, therefore all of sound judgment must admit he reproves himself and acknowledges that he wrongfully accuses us, when he says, that we speak blasphemously against the holy church, because we say that the unconscious children cannot repent, believe nor obey; for he admits that they, in the feebleness of their understanding, cannot understand the doctrine, from which faith, repentance and obedience originate, as has been already said.

In the second place he writes, That there is one church and one faith, both under the Old and New Testaments, from the time of Adam to the end of the world; and that from the time of Abraham, under the Old Testament, preaching and circumcision was commanded for the purpose of the gathering, edification, growth and extension of the church, and under the New Testament, preaching and baptism, without regard to the age of persons.

Answer. I understand it that all those who, from the time of Adam to the present time, and also hereafter, had, have and shall have the Spirit, mind and nature of Jesus Christ, and who did, do and shall walk as obedient children by virtue of such a spirit, in truth, were, are and shall be the Lord's church, kingdom and people. But we would have reasonably expected that Gellius would have added that each in his times had a peculiar doctrine, ordinance and usage. That from the time of Adam to Abraham no ceremony was practiced on the children because the Lord had not commanded it; and that circumcision was commanded from Abraham to the time of Christ. But now we have Christ, the promised prophet, Deut. 18: 15; Acts 7: 37, to whom all the Scriptures pointed that we should obey and follow him. He is the eternal Word and Wisdom of God; all that abide in his doc-

trine, walk in the truth, for his word is truth, and his command is eternal life. What ordinance this wise counsellor has commanded us concerning the children, under the New Testament; what he has commanded us and what he has not, concerning them, all pious, faithful hearts may learn from his holy word.

But what he says in regard to them, that in the New Testament no regard is made as to age, but that we should preach to all and baptize them, is in my opinion so directly contrary to Scripture, common sense and his own words, that he should reasonably be ashamed of the assertion. For how can we teach a little, unconscious child repentance according to the word of God? Christ commanded that we should preach the gospel to those who have understanding, and those who believe are to be baptized. Nor has he left in his gospel any other command, ordinance or example concerning this matter.

Besides, he acknowledges that the children, on account of their feeble understanding, cannot understand the doctrine, as already heard. Yet he writes, in the face of this plain ordinance of the Almighty God, and his own confession, that in the New Testament, teaching and baptizing are commanded, without respect to age.

Behold, thus grossly err all who reject the word of the Lord. Is this not violently rejecting Christ and accepting anti-christ, and is it not plainly wrong? I must admit that I have never read a word in the Scriptures with such misunderstanding.

In the third place Gellius writes, That the church should give the seal of the covenant of grace to children according to the command of God because they are participants in the covenant or promise of God, and in the sanctity of the church and in eternal life; for the covenant is not altered and God is no less gracious to our children, who are born under the promise, than to the children of Israel who were born according to the flesh; for it is written, I will be thy God and thy children's after thee; and that therefore, in the gathering of the churches, under the Old and New Testaments the same command obtains, both as regards the preaching, and the use of the holy sacraments.

Answer. Gellius does even as all the false prophets have done who miserably deceived the people, and pretended that the Lord of lords said so, although the Lord had not

spoken it, as Scripture informs us, Jer. 23: 17; Ezek. 13: 7.

Say, reader, is it not an intrepid deed and a condemnable boldness, that he dares publish to the whole world that God has commanded it; since eternal Wisdom has neither commanded it by word nor deed? Peruse the whole New Testament from beginning to end, and if a word can be found that the mouth of the Lord has commanded it, or that the apostles have anywhere taught or practiced it, then we will, by the grace of God, unanimously admit that he is right.

Inasmuch, as it is clear that nothing has been mentioned concerning it in all the Holy Scriptures, as has been said, and that he, in the face of this, dares write that they do it according to the command of God, then the pious reader may imagine how abominably he sins against his God, especially since truth is manifest, and how lamentably he deceives the poor souls by open falsehood when he writes that God commanded it; since the Holy Spirit, I say, has not expressed it in a single word, nor manifested it unto the church of God by word or practice of the true witnesses of Christ.

His assertion that the command is not altered, is so diametrically opposed to truth, that we may well wonder at it. The Scriptures clearly testify that God promised Abraham the multiplying of his seed, and the land of Canaan as an eternal inheritance, and commanded him that he should circumcise himself, his son Ishmael, &c.; also all male children of the age of eight days; for it was a covenant in the flesh, Gen. 17.

And thus was commanded to Abraham, at the promise of the multiplication of his seed and the possession of the land of Canaan, the blood-sign of the circumcision of the foreskin, on the eighth day of their age, of all the male children and not the female children. But to us the blood-sign of circumcision is not commanded, but baptism in the water. Now, observe the first difference. Not on the eighth day, but when we, through the spirit, in faith, are born of God, and have become followers of Abraham. Observe the second distinction. Not

alone the males, but both males and females, who through the preaching of the holy word, have died unto the old life and have arisen with Christ in newness of life; who are pricked in their hearts; who circumcise their hearts and minds; who put on Christ, and who have the testimony of a clear conscience, before God, Rom. 6; Acts 2: 37; Col. 2; 11; Gal. 3: 27; 1 Pet, 3: 21. Observe the third difference. Not to possess a literal kingdom and land, and to become a great people upon earth, as was promised to Abraham and his seed; but to bear all manner of anxiety, affliction, tribulation and misery upon earth, for the sake of the testimony of the word of God; to turn the heart away from all visible and perishable things; to die unto pomp, splendor, the world and flesh, and thus to walk in our weakness as Christ has walked in his perfection, &c.

Behold, reader, how openly he adulterates the Scriptures, and how grossly he perverts the truth when he writes that the command is unchanged, and that the gathering of the churches under the Old and New Testaments are the same, and that no different commands are given, both as regards preaching and the use of the sacraments; for it is all changed and renewed as may be clearly educed from the foregoing references. I will leave to your reflections if such a thing may not be called perverting truth into falsehood.

Again, from his saying that the church is no less gracious to our children than to the children of Israel, born in the flesh, I understand him to say, If God will not have our children baptized, that he is less gracious to them than he was to the children of the circumcision; by which he openly testifies that he couples the kingdom, grace and promise of God with that sign.

If God is only gracious to such children as have received, or may receive that outward sign, then it must necessarily follow that God has been ungracious to, and displeased with all the children before the law of circumcision; besides to all children who died before the eighth day, and during the forty years they passed in the wilderness, together with all the maids and women, because they were not circumcised; then he

must also be displeased with all the children under the New Testament, for they are not commanded to be baptized.

O no, to children belongs the kingdom of God. Not by virtue of any sign, but alone by grace through Christ Jesus, Matt. 19: 14. And as to his calling infant-baptism a sealing of the covenant of grace, I would reply, If he can show me a place in all the New Testament where the baptism of the believing is called a sealing of the covenant of grace, then I will admit that he is right. But I know to a certainty, that he cannot do so. If the baptism of the *believing*, which is ordained of God himself, is not called such, how can infant baptism, then be called such, which is not ordained of God, but is merely self-chosen fiction invented of man?

If he should allude to the circumcision, I would say that they are two distinct and different signs, and that the first has no relation whatever to the second; for these following reasons: Firstly, because all the signs, before and under the law, given to the patriarchs, as the coats of skins to Adam; the rain-bow to Noah; the circumcision to Abraham; the yearly offering of the high priests, &c., Gen. 3: 21; 9: 16; 17: 10, 11; Lev. 16, all, unitedly pointed to Christ who has now appeared, and in whom all the preceding signs are fulfilled; and we now have no sealing or assurance through outward signs and symbols, but through the true Sign of all signs, Christ Jesus, as he himself says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life; for God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son," John 3: 14—16. Secondly, because we, now, are not a people according to the letter, as was Israel, but are a people according to the spirit; who, before they receive the sign, are turned to God through the preaching of repentance; who die unto the old sinful life; who receive the light of grace in their hearts; who accept the true Sign of peace, Christ Jesus, through faith; arise with him into a new life and are thus sealed in their hearts, through the promise of the Holy Ghost and the eternal covenant and the

grace of God. For if we were not sealed in our hearts before the sign, then we could not truly repent before the sign; nor could we burden ourselves with disesteem, disgrace, anxiety, tribulation and misery which are connected with the cross.

But by the sign, which we accept in obedience to the holy word, we testify that we, through Christ, the true Sign, given us by the Father, and made known to us through the word, have peace with God, and that we are assured of the spirit of his grace.

Behold, my reader, here you may now observe that the signs of the New Testament do not seal or assure us, as the learned teach the poor people; but that our only, eternal surety, is Christ Jesus; that the sealing of our hearts is the Holy Spirit; and that the signs or sacraments are nothing more than that they are given to the penitent, sealed and assured christians, for the purpose of admonishing and reminding us that we should walk in continual repentance; that we should practice our faith, and that we should eternally give praise to the Lord for his inexpressibly great kindness and grace, through Jesus Christ.

All who teach differently, and point you to water, bread and wine as a sealing or assurance, as Gellius does, points you away from the true Being, to the signs; from Christ to Moses again; give you a vain hope and a false surety and cause you to remain impenitent and without Christ all your lifetime; for you console yourself so much with the signs, that you remain without the signified truth, as may, alas, be plainly seen by the whole world.

For however drunken, covetous, pompous vain and given to lies they may be, they still boast themselves christians. They are so consoled with this ungodly sealing of the idolatrous water (I say ungodly sealing because it is so directly contrary to the word of God) and with the bread and wine of the preachers, that they all walk upon the broad road, and remain without the word of God.

Behold, this is the proper fruit and effect of the sealing of Gellius, which he so highly praises and so artfully teaches. But, as regards the saying: I will be your God and your seed's after you, from which they con-

clude that as the children of Abraham were circumcised with him on account of the promise; that also our children should be baptized on account of the same promise, I would reply, Firstly, God promised Abraham to be his God and his children's God. In this promise the females were included as well as the males; this must be admitted. Notwithstanding, Israel did not circumcise the females but only the males, although the females were included in the promise; and that because God had so ordained it. From which it may be safely educed that the male children of the seed of Abraham were not circumcised for the sake of the promise but for the sake of the ordinance which was commanded to Abraham and his seed. For if it had been done for the sake of the promise, and not for the sake of the ordinance, then the females should also have been circumcised, as joint participants and joint heirs of the same promise. This is incontrovertible.

In the second place I would say, That if Israel had followed the doctrine of Gellius, and some other preachers, in respect to this matter, then they would also have circumcised the females, notwithstanding they were not commanded to do so; for they were joint heirs of the covenant of grace, as our children whom they want to have baptized, are joint heirs of the promise.

If they should answer, that the ordinance referred to the males and not to the females, although the females were joint heirs of the covenant of grace, then I would reply that their cause is already lost. For as the command of circumcision at that time, had only reference to the males and not to the females, although the females were joint heirs of the promise, so also does now the ordinance of baptism have reference to the believing and penitent, and not to the unconscious children, although they are joint heirs of the promise, as heard.

They further say, If infant baptism is not commanded neither is it prohibited. To this I reply: The circumcision of the females was neither ordained nor prohibited, even as infant baptism is neither ordained nor prohibited, yet they did not circumcise the females, and that because they were not commanded to do so. Therefore, all who

blame us because we do not baptize our children, who are joint heirs of the promise and are not prohibited from being baptized, also blame Israel because they did not circumcise their female children, who were joint heirs of the promise and were not prohibited from being circumcised.

Thirdly, I would say, since I observe that Gellius only includes the children of believing, and not of unbelieving parents in the baptism, and since he well knows that the proud, avaricious, pompons, envious, blood-guilty, whoring and idolatrous are not believers, nor, according to Scripture, joint heirs of the promise, therefore I cannot stop wondering at his inattention, that he, against his own belief and doctrine, yet baptizes the children of such parents, whom he must acknowledge, as being without God and Christ, and therefore having no promise. If he says that he does not know the faith of others, then I would say again, that he then acknowledges, in the first place, that his infant baptism has an unstable foundation, if we, according to his own words, are to baptize them on account of the promise to the parents, while he does not know whether the parents believe or not; and, in the second place, that such parents are not fruitful trees nor shining lights.

But what shall we say! If Gellius were to tell all his pompons, drunken, usurious, and unrighteous members, without respect to person, that they are without Christ and have no promise, and would not baptize their children, he would not long remain a preacher at Emden, nor enjoy his easy, careless life in peace.

He further writes, That Paul testifies that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, has the same signification and is called the circumcision of Christ.

Answer. In this instance Paul himself rebukes him, that he has mistaken his word; for he says, "Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily; and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also 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; and you, being dead in your sins, and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses," Col. 2: 8—13.

My faithful reader, observe the word of the Lord; the doctrine of the New Testament, and his sacraments treat of none but those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand. For it is a service of the Spirit, and not of the letter, as Paul says, 2 Cor. 3: 6.

Inasmuch as the preachers ever point the poor, simple people to the elementary water, bread and wine, and teach that baptism is our seal which assures us that we are heirs of the covenant of grace; that God operates through his sacraments, &c., and, since we find, however, that neither the sealing, surety nor power are found in their hearts, as the fruits testify, but that they are led by the preachers to a false profession, vain hope and an unstable surety, under the semblance of the gospel; therefore I would faithfully admonish all my readers and hearers with these words adduced from Paul, not to be at all deceived by such high-sounding, smooth words of the philosophy and artful fictions of men, nor by the hypocrisy and worldly institutions of the learned, but to follow after the perfect Institutor, Christ Jesus, in whom is embodied the perfection of the God-head, truth, light, power, righteousness, &c., and who therefore does not point to uncertain, deceitful, dark and unrighteous ways, but in him all true christians are perfect and full of his grace, Spirit, love and power.

He is the head of all principalities before whom every knee shall bow, and whom all tongues shall confess that he is the Lord, and that besides him there is no other, Isaiah 45: 23; Phil. 2: 10. Therefore his word shall avail, and his command shall stand, and not that which the world adds to his kingdom or church, in which all regenerated children, who are of his Spirit, are not now circumcised unto Christ, with

hands, as was the case with literal Israel, but the impure foreskins of their hearts are circumcised with the Lord's word, Spirit and power, that they may become in spirit a new, regenerated Israel and people of God, by dying unto their sinful flesh, and by smothering the old man through the circumcision of Christ, which purifies and changes their hearts through his word and Spirit. For the penitent are buried with him in baptism, die unto the old sinful life, and arise in the new life of righteousness and virtue, by means of faith, through which God operates by the preaching of his powerful word, and the inspiration of his Holy Spirit. The faithful God and Father who has resurrected his Son from the dead, has also bestowed his power upon us, poor sinners, and has graciously resurrected us, who were dead in so many gross sins and tresspasses, into a new life with him; has called us from darkness unto light, and has placed us with him in a celestial being, in Christ, Eph. 2: 1; 1 Pet. 3, &c.

Behold, dear reader, this is the proper ground and meaning of the words of Paul, by which Gellius tries to show, that baptism has taken the place of circumcision and is called the circumcision of Christ.

Judge now, if you fear God, whether you find a word in the writings of Paul, that has reference to unconscious infants. That this saying of Paul has reference to the believing and penitent, and not to unconscious children, all reasonable, to say nothing of spiritual persons, must acknowledge and admit. Notwithstanding, he writes that this saying implies that baptism has taken the place of circumcision and is called Christ's circumcision. He does, or will not observe that the circumcision of Jesus Christ to which Paul alludes, is done without hands, and that he daily serves with his hands the infant baptism which he calls the circumcision of Jesus. Behold, thus lamentably does he satisfy Paul, and thus violently break the word of God.

If he seeks an evasion to adorn his cause, and say, that God works through his sacraments invisibly in the heart, which the sign represents, then the deceit will be more distinct. For how shall God operate through a sign which is an abomination before

Him? I say an abomination, because he has not commanded it, and because neither doctrine, confession, faith nor repentance precede it, which these signs represent, in the New Testament. Then, also, the sign and the signification must be one and the same, which never was nor ever will be the case unless the letter becomes spirit. This is incontrovertible. Yea, my reader, how the baptized children are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ Jesus in the foreskin of their hearts, which is the circumcision of the New Testament, the deeds and the fruits of the world, alas, plainly show.

In the fourth place he writes, As in the Scriptures, which testify that women are participants in the merits of Christ, and are disciples, a command is implied that the Holy Supper shall be dispensed to them, so, also, a command is implied in the Scriptures, which testify that children are of the church of Christ and of the Kingdom of God, that they should be baptized.

Answer. The words of Gellius prove clearly that women are participants of the Lord's Supper; for he acknowledges that they are disciples. If they are disciples, as they are in fact, then it is manifest that they hear the word of God, believe, repent, suffer themselves to be baptized, and that they are gifted of God in power with the representation of the Holy Supper, and that they are participants of his mystery no less than the men. Since they are believing and penitent disciples, as heard, therefore it is reasonable and right that they should partake of the sign, whereby this mystery of faith and of the holy gospel are represented to the believing, and admonished to the repenting. As we cannot deny but that the believing, repenting women understand and realize the representation of the Holy Supper—namely, the remembrance of the offering of the flesh and blood of Christ, the love of God and one's neighbors, &c., for which purpose it was instituted by the Lord, therefore they should have a place at the Lord's table, as believing, penitent disciples and guests. Now, Gellius, to make his infant baptism of effect, must prove and show to us by works, Scriptures and truth, that little, unconscious children realize the effect of holy baptism, namely, faith, repentance, obedience to the word, a clear and peaceable conscience, &c., for which purpose the sign

of baptism was instituted of the Lord, as the believing, penitent women realize the signification of the Holy Supper. But if he cannot prove this, then it is sufficiently plain that this, his assertion and argument are not according to the Scriptures, but that it is deceitful, false, and contrary to God's word.

He further says, If such a command to baptize children is not sufficient, as the one he has adduced from the Scriptures, then he wants us to point him out a prohibition (as he says), or sufficiently prove that God wills that we shall not baptize children.

In the first place, I reply: Gellius herewith openly betrays that his reference to the command of infant baptism can, in his own opinion not stand, according to the Scriptures. For he turns from the doctrine of commands and wants us to point out a prohibition, never observing that if one wants to partake of anything (that is a ceremony), he must first adduce and point out the command of the institution.

If he wants to make good the infant baptism which he teaches and practices, then he must prove that it is commanded, and not ask us to point out or show where it is prohibited.

We practice baptism in a manner as the mouth of the Lord has commanded, for we know that it stands written, "What things soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it," Dent. 12: 32; Prov. 30: 6. Yea, my reader, I would say to Gellius and the learned that if they can find an instance in all the Scriptures where the pious and faithful servants of God have changed a word of the commands, and ceremonies, and practiced them differently than God had commanded them, then we will further reflect upon the matter. But we know it to a certainty that it cannot be done.

The Lord commanded Israel that they should circumcise their male children on the eighth day; there was no command that they should not do it on the fifth, or on any other day. Yet they never circumcised a female; nor did they circumcise on any other day but the eighth. For the ordinance and command of the Lord was on the eighth day, to the male children, and not

on the seventh or ninth; nor to the female children as has been heard.

If they, now, had circumcised the females, or if they had circumcised the males before, or after the eighth day, although it was not expressly forbidden, they would have committed an abomination, as did Nadab and Abihu with the strange fire, and circumcised without God's word; by the grace of God, no man can Scripturally convince me to the contrary.

It was also commanded Israel that they should eat the Passover in remembrance of their deliverance and departure out of Egypt, on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening; it had to be a male lamb, without blemish, of the first year, &c., Ex. 12: 5. Israel did just according to the command, and never offered a female lamb, but in every instance a male, although the Lord had not expressly prohibited the offering of a female lamb, for if they had offered a female, they would have offered contrary to the command, which stipulated that it should be a male.

In the second place, I would say that I would refer to the testimony of the Almighty and great God, who says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him," Matt. 17: 5. If Gellius, now, can point to a single word of divine truth and unadulterated testimony of the Holy Scriptures, that this Son of God, Christ Jesus, the Father's eternal Truth and Wisdom, has taught or commanded one word of infant baptism, or that his holy apostles and missionaries have taught or practiced it, then I will recall my doctrine, willingly submit to dungeons and bonds, confess my guilt, repent and stand before the whole world conquered and abashed; this I promise in sincerity of heart.

But, if he cannot do so, as he never can, and still professes that infant baptism is apostolic and right, whereby he forsakes the ordinance of Christ and the apostles doctrine and usage; consoles the people in their impenitence—then it is manifest that he is a deceiver of the poor souls and an adulterer of the holy word, who would be wiser than the Son of God himself; for he says that it is a sealing of the covenant of grace, an embodiment into the church of

Christ, &c. And the great Lord has not at all commanded that he should reprove the Holy Spirit which has not manifested unto us in the Scriptures this doctrine and usage; nor the apostles that they did not at all disclose unto the pious such an important matter, as he says, and that they have not given a word in all their writings, in testimony thereof, and thus manifested it unto their descendants.

In the third place I would refer Gellius, and all his preachers, to Luther, who writes very clearly that we should renounce not only that which is contrary to the word of the Lord, but also that which is beside it, and advises every body, although, alas, he himself did not follow the advice, to follow certainties and not uncertainties; for the Scriptures admit of no addition nor diminishing, by which he has caused quite a rupture in popery. If the Scriptures admit of no additions, and we find nowhere a word in Scripture commanding infant baptism, as Luther himself admits, then I would leave it to the impartial judgment of all who have understanding, whether infant baptism is not prohibited.

In the fifth place, Gellius writes, They say that the children have no ears to hear; and cannot distinguish between good and evil. But it does not follow from this, he says, that the sacrament of the embodiment into the church should not be practiced upon children; for the children of the ancient church had no such ears that they could hear, and they could as little distinguish between good and evil, as our children can.

Answer. If Gellius will show us the command, ordinance or usage of the Lord, that we shall take them in by such sign, then we will consider the matter further. But he cannot do so.

We say with holy Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace," &c., Eph. 1:3—6.

My faithful reader, understand well what these words of Paul mean. This paternal

adoption unto membership; this great favor, love and grace through Christ Jesus; this holy, unblamable life in love, of which Paul speaks, is taught by the gospel. All who rightly believe this, and who are, through faith, truly converted, changed, renewed and born of God, and have the Holy Spirit, are children of the covenant, are graciously accepted of God, and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; even before they have the sign of baptism.

Behold, thus we are, by God's choice through faith in Christ Jesus, and through the inspiring power and renewing of the Holy Spirit, embodied into the body of Christ, which is the true church, and become flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; and not through any outward sign.

But this rule does not apply to unconscious children; for they have no ears to hear nor hearts to understand. They are, however, in grace, children of the kingdom, participants in the promise; not through any outward sign, I say, but in the adoption of Grace through the reconciliation, mediation and merits of the death and blood of Christ, as the Scriptures teach. The New Testament treats with those of understanding minds, and its sacraments belong to the penitent. Let this be to you a sure and eternal reference and doctrine.

All those who give a different meaning to the signs of the New Testament, by their philosophy, and teach you that they should be dispensed before faith, deceive you, however much they may adorn it with choice words, such as, sealing, sign of grace, embodiment, &c., for it is in fact, nothing but human wisdom, deceiving of souls and hypocrisy. If the children under the old covenant were incorporated by circumcision, and the children under the new covenant are incorporated through baptism, as he says they are, then we are forced to conclude that the children which died before the eighth day and those who were left in the wilderness, besides, all the females, were not in the Israelitic church, and consequently had no share in the grace, covenant nor promise.

The same would also apply to our children which are hindered from baptism,

through death. O, abomination and blasphemy! If that is not attaching God's selection, grace, favor, love, kingdom, covenant and salvation, to the element, water, and to works, I will leave to the judgment of all the godly and pious.

In the sixth place he writes, and says, We have ever received, in return for our assiduity and clear, convincing explanation of the Scriptures, yea, for our solicitous care, to again gain them, nothing but anathemas. For what else do we hear from them than that we are wolves, blood-hounds, deceivers, &c., who run their own course and bring forth no fruit?

Answer. All those who rightly seek our salvation, who rightly teach the word of the Lord, and who walk before us with an unblamable life, understand, according to the doctrine, Spirit, and example of Christ Jesus, are not reproved by us, nor by the Scriptures; but we sincerely thank and love them and will by the grace of God, never despise their fraternal assiduity and paternal solicitude, but will, in sincere love and very thankfully, accept them, and as much as we, in our weakness, are able to do, follow them. But we are not to blame that Gellius and the preachers are called deceivers, false prophets, ravening wolves, men guilty of blood, &c., by the Scriptures, but they themselves, are the cause; because they so lamentably adulterate the Scriptures, reject Christ Jesus and his Spirit, word and walk; because they preach according to their own pleasure, seek improper gain; because they teach and walk to suit the world, destroy the poor sheep by their false doctrine and deceiving practices; and because they upbraid, blaspheme, belie, betray the pious, faithful hearts and thus deliver them to the sword of the magistracy and executioner, as may, alas, be too clearly witnessed at many different places.

Yea, reader, if he cannot bear to be called by such hard names, of which he is guilty, according to the Scriptures, then he should reasonably consider how shamefully he accuses, in his writings and conversations, the poor, miserable souls who are quite innocent, as being ungodly heretics, apostles of the devil, deceived conspirators, hedge-preachers, sneaks, adulterators, &c., and how he, by his rebellious, fiendish, bloody doctrine, deprives the innocent of their property, welfare, honor, blood and life;

and instigates the unmerciful cruel tyrants to robbery, imprisoning, banishing and murder. My faithful reader, reflect, and see if I do not write the truth.

In the seventh place he writes, The example of the apostles shows that it is a command; for the Holy Spirit testifies that the apostles baptized whole families; no children are excepted, which, surely, would have been excepted if it were wrong to baptize them.

To this I reply, in the first place, that Gellius hereby testifies that there is no command for infant baptism; for he here founds his doctrine and faith upon presumption and not upon imperative words, according to which all things should be judged that are to be a pleasure in the sight of the Lord. In the second place I would say, that the Holy Spirit has testified in plain words, that the three families of which the Scriptures make mention in particular, to have been baptized, were all believing persons as may be plainly understood from reading Acts 10: 16.

But as to the house of Lydia, it is plain that she at that time had no husband; for the house is called after her name, which is neither the custom of the world nor of the Scriptures, if the husband is alive. Since the New Testament, then, makes mention of but four households in particular, to have been baptized, and three of them were believing, and the fourth, as appears, had no husband, as has been heard, how much then should we rely on it, that there were little children in these households, both nature and the Scriptures teach us.

He further writes, That it cannot be gainsayed that the children, all through the Scriptures, are always included in the household, for a household or family includes both young and old; therefore also children should be baptized because the Scriptures mention that whole households were baptized, which includes children.

I reply: If Gellius proves to us, by the testimony of God's word, that the unconscious children have faith, then we would gladly include them in the believing, baptized households and allow them to be baptized. But as he cannot possibly do so, we would faithfully admonish him and all the preachers to take heed, how and what they say concerning this matter; for all they philosophize and teach about it, is mere deceit. Besides, I would yet ask, if we can also cause unbelief in small children by

false doctrine, or, if we can teach them faith, through God's word? If he answer in the affirmative, then his answer is contrary to all the Scriptures, common sense, and contrary to his own words; for he admits, that they, through their feeble understanding, can not comprehend the word. But if he answer in the negative, then he admits, himself, that his including both old and young in one household, is contrary to Paul. For Paul says, that the vain talkers and deceivers subvert whole houses, Tit. 1: 10, something which cannot be done to little children, on account of their not having sufficient understanding, as he himself admits. He also says that we too boldly exclude the children, which the Holy Spirit has not excepted, &c. To this I reply: The Holy Spirit has commanded and ordained that we should teach the understanding, and baptize the believing, and this ordinance we follow. Therefore, it is not boldness, but obedience to do as the mouth of the Lord has commanded us. But whether the preachers are not boldly opposing the Holy Spirit, who reject his doctrine, advice and ordinance as heretical and sectarian, and institute instead a doctrine and ordinance to suit their own taste, of which we find not a single word in the Scriptures, I will leave all the pious to judge according to the word of the Lord.

As to his reference to Tertullius, Cyprian, Origenes and Augustinus, I would reply: If these writers can support their assertions by the word and ordinance of God, then we will admit that they are right. If they cannot do so, then it is a doctrine of men, and condemned by the Scriptures, Gal. 1: 8. In the second place I say, Rhenanus annotates on Tertullius that it was customary with the ancients to baptize adults with the baptism of regeneration.

Cyprian left infant baptism optional.

Erasmus writes that the ancients have disputed much concerning infant baptism, and never came to a conclusion.

Zuinglius writes, Although we are aware that the ancients baptized children, yet it was not practiced so commonly as it is in our times. They were openly instructed in faith; and when they verbally confessed their faith which was imprinted in their

hearts, they were allowed to be baptized. This doctrine (he says) I wish to have again resuscitated, Lib. Art. 18.

Bucer writes that the ancients generally baptized adults and not children.

Oecolampadius writes, I, in my weakness, cannot yet find Scriptures which command infant baptism.

Luther admits that they have no express command to baptize children.

What Martin Cellarius and others write, concerning this matter, is too lengthy to be here reproduced.

Since it is plain that few children were baptized of the ancients, as the above mentioned Rhenanus, Zuingli and Bucer show; that Cyprian left infant baptism optional, and the others acknowledge that there is no express command for it; how can Gellius, then truthfully write that they received infant baptism from the apostles; that it is an incorporation into the church, and a sealing of the covenant of grace?

Yea, my reader, if infant baptism has the virtues which Gellius ascribes to it, then our ancestors grossly sinned to have baptized so few children; and also because they left optional that which (he says) the apostles practiced and taught to be an incorporation into the church, a sign of grace and a sealing of the covenant of grace.

In the third place I answer, If we consider the confession and doctrine of the learned in regard to infant baptism, we find it to be such a Babel that we are forced to acknowledge that it is not of God. For some of the ancients (not the apostles) as appears, baptized some children, but not a considerable number. Some said they had received it from the apostles; others, again, denied it. Some have, and some still baptize them to wash off hereditary sin; others because they are children of the covenant. Some baptize them for the sake of the faith of the church; others, again, for the sake of the faith of their parents. Some on the strength of the faith of the patriarchs; others on the strength of their own faith; and again, others that better care shall be taken of their education. Behold, thus the defenders of infant baptism are divided among themselves.

Inasmuch, then, as they do not teach

one doctrine and are not of one mind in regard to infant baptism, therefore it is manifestly proven that they baptize them without the word of God. For if their cause had a foundation in Scripture, then they would baptize to the same purpose or end, according to the same ordinance, rule and doctrine. This is incontrovertible.

In the eighth place he writes "that it is not prohibited at all, in Scripture, nor testified that infant baptism is wrong. And that the Lord Jesus Christ testifies that it is not his word and will; but the will of his Father who is in heaven."

Answer. Peruse all the Scriptures—Moses and the prophets, Christ Jesus and the apostles, and diligently meditate upon them, and you will find different instances that God was not only displeased at unbidden ceremonies and worship, but that he has often severely punished such. O, dear Lord, what blind reasoning! If they can, with a clear conscience do so because it is not expressly forbidden that infants shall be baptized, then they may as well accept holy water, candles, palms, clocks, confession before a priest, masses, the building of convents, altars, the becoming of monks, pilgrimages and the praying for the departed souls, &c., as just and right; for there is not a word to be found in the Scriptures which expressly prohibits these works; or which says: You shall not do these things.

If he should say that the circumstances of Scripture and its fruits testify that they are contrary to the word of God; then I would again say: Still clearer do the circumstances of the Scriptures and the fruits testify that infant baptism is contrary to God's word. For the mouth of the Lord has not commanded so at all. All those who practice it, misuse the name and ordinance of God, and act hypocritically, and those that receive it, console themselves, when they come to years of understanding, that they are baptized children, although their whole walk is manifestly, for the greater part, quite impenitent, ungodly, earthly and carnal.

In the second place I answer: Christ Jesus has testified and said, "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. Behold this is the express, eternal and unchangeable ordinance of the Lord, which he has commanded and left for his church to follow. Also have the apostles so taught and practiced it.

¶ If now the unconscious children have faith, that is, if they are penitent, Rom. 6; have circumcised the foreskin of their hearts by the circumcision of Christ, Col. 2: 11; if they have a clear conscience before the Lord, if they have a new mind, which are all the result of faith, and which are represented by baptism—then baptism can not be refused them. But while it is plain that they have not one of the beforementioned qualities, therefore we say that infant baptism is a self-chosen superstition, an abuse of the glorious and holy name of God, an adulteration of the ordinance of Christ, a vain, hypocritical consolation to the impenitent, a sacrament of the church of anti-christ, nay, an open deceit, blasphemy and idolatry. Notwithstanding all this, this thoughtless man writes that it is the word and will of the Father, and then uses the eternal Father and his beloved Son and Holy Spirit, together with the chosen, holy apostles, as a cover for his deceitful abomination and wicked blasphemy. O Lord!

In the ninth place he writes: "That they have the promise, that God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, a true and living God, is powerful in his command and works; and will, through his power, sanctify the children of the church and bestow on them his Spirit."

Answer. If he could prove that infant baptism was commanded by the word of God, by apostolic doctrine and usage, or by the example of Christ, as he pretends that it was, then we would gladly admit it to be a holy rite, and pleasing to God, and that it would be a blessed, admonishing, useful, fruitful and powerful thing, for God commands nothing in vain. But since it cannot be proven that it was commanded, and since baptism cannot apply to little children, because the signs of the New Testament are applied to the penitent, therefore we say again, that it is not a God-pleasing ceremony, but according to all Scripture, a wicked blasphemy and abomination, as has already been heard. And how powerfully God works through such abominations, may

be plainly seen in the cases of Nadab, Abihu, Jeroboam, Uzza and others.

The pious reader should also know that the children of the churches are not sanctified by means of ceremonies, words and water, but solely through the grace, favor, merits, blood and death of the Lord, and by no other work nor means, at all. But as to his writing that God bestows upon the baptized children his Spirit, we would say that we would have him consider more deeply and learn to know what the work of the Spirit is, before he teaches such doctrine.

Is it not deeply to be regretted that such people dare take upon themselves the care of souls, while they have not yet learned what is the nature, fruit and power of the Holy Spirit? For wherever the Holy Spirit is, there also must be its fruits; this is incontrovertible. And what fruits we find in children when they begin to become of understanding minds, we may, alas, educe from their words, works and life.

I would further say, that if the Spirit is bestowed upon children, through baptism, as he says, and since the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit is given to the believing, then it must follow therefrom, since the children do not believe, that the Holy Spirit is not given them through faith, but that it is given through the merits of the ceremony of baptism, which the preachers practice. And what is worse, such a spirit, which in every respect is without knowledge, intelligence, inspiration, power, fruit and work, as may be seen. O, great blindness and error!

In the tenth place he writes: "The Lord Jesus Christ commanded that the children should be brought to him (which the anabaptists do not at all) and that he embraced them, laid his hands upon them and blessed them, that is, baptized them with the Holy Spirit; and all this, done by Christ, is not powerless."

Answer. Here I would ask Gellius, and all who practice infant baptism, Firstly, If all the believers brought their children to Christ when he was preaching? If they answer in the affirmative, then they ought to be ashamed; for they can not prove their assertion by the Scriptures. But if they answer in the negative, then they acknowledge that they in the first place, are wrong to teach and practice that children should

be brought to him, that is (according to their understanding), to baptize them.

In the second place I ask, whether in any part of Scripture *bringing to Christ* is called baptism? If they answer in the affirmative, then they can not produce proof. If they answer in the negative then they admit that they, in the second place, adulterate the word of God, by explaining and construing *bringing to Christ* to mean baptizing.

In the third place I ask, whether Christ baptized the children, brought to him, with water? If they answer in the affirmative, then I would answer with John, that Christ, himself, did not baptize, John 3: 5. But if they answer in the negative, then they acknowledge, in the third place, that it is a false doctrine to try to defend infant baptism on the strength of this *bringing to him*.

In the fourth place I would ask, because he says that Christ baptized the children with the Holy Spirit. If, then, baptizing with the Spirit is the same thing as baptizing with water? If they answer in the affirmative, then Spirit must be letter, or letter, Spirit. But if they answer in the negative, then they, themselves, pronounce sentence against infant baptism; that Christ's action with the children does not teach nor imply it.

In the fifth place I would ask, How we are to understand this *bringing to him*—in a carnal, or spiritual way? If they answer in a carnal way, then I would say, that it cannot now be the case, since Christ, in body, is taken from us and removed hence, where we cannot approach in the body, 1 Tim. 6: 16. But if they answer, in a spiritual way, then I would again ask why Gellius so shamefully abuses the pious, whom he calls anabaptists, by writing that they do not at all bring their children to Christ (something which could not have been written in purity of heart), while many of them are so solicitously caring for the salvation of their children by teaching, admonishing and punishing them, and by having a constant solicitude for them, as God's word and the love of their children command and teach all christian parents to do.

O, that God would grant that Gellius and his followers would more deeply consider this spiritual *bringing to Christ*, as I trust

that many of ours do, by the grace of God; and that they would abandon this unscriptural infant baptism, of which they make so much ado. This, in my opinion, would be a very desirable thing. For, as a general thing, they abandon their children, from the cradle on, to the wiles of the devil, by educating them in ignorance, blindness, pomp, splendor, vanity and idolatry, as their fruits plainly show to all of understanding minds. Behold, my reader, from these questions and answers you may conclude whether Gellius and the learned can stand on the strength of the saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," with their doctrine and practice of infant baptism, which they practice so indiscriminately, and about which they make so much ado?

Observe, too, that Gellius, by his writing that we do not bring our children to Christ, at all, not only judges and disgraces us, but also Christ Jesus, because he has not commanded us such bringing to him; he also judges the holy apostles who have not testified nor taught us a word in regard to this matter neither by word nor practice in the whole Scriptures.

In the eleventh place he writes: Since Luke testifies that John the baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb, and leaped in the presence of Christ (which, he says, doubtlessly, was caused by a spiritual movement), and as also Jacob, &c., therefore it is manifest that God also works in the children of the church according to their measure, through his Holy Spirit, and that infant baptism is a command and has the promise.

Answer. If these particular miracles of God, which were wrought in the case of John and of Jacob, are to be a common rule, then these following miracles were also common rules, namely, that Sarah and Elizabeth, two barren women, conceived in their old age, and that Balaam's ass spoke; Num. 22: 28; and, therefore, all aged, barren women should conceive, and all asses speak. O no. That such miracles of God were no common rule things, may be educed from the floating of iron at Helizenm; from the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and from the standing still of the sun and moon, 2 Kings 6: 6; Ex. 14: 21; Joshua 10: 13.

I would further say, if, according to the doctrine of Gellius, it follows from the case

of John, that all the children of the church, or of the believing members, have the Holy Spirit, then the greater part of his fellow-believers of the German nation (whom alone, he esteemed as faithful servants, and who, with him, are of the same calling, office and service) are greatly contemned in their doctrine, faith and usage; for he writes that the children of the holy church have the Holy Spirit, and they believe and teach that they have the evil spirit, for, before they baptize them, they say, Depart thou evil spirit, and give room to the Holy Spirit.

Behold, thus it is generally with all who teach and practice this shameful doctrine. And, although they are unanimous in the practice, yet they are so divided in opinion as to the grounds of this doctrine, that we are forced to say that it is nothing but a vain mask and infernal mockery. Notwithstanding he writes that infant baptism is commanded, and that it has the promise; while he well knows that he cannot advance one plain word from all the Holy Scriptures, to show that the wisdom of God has commanded it, or that the apostles have taught or practiced it; or, moreover, that its signification, penitence, regeneration, &c., can apply to children. To say nothing of the author mentioning that the primitive, incorrupt church did not practice it, as has been heard

Is not this adulterating the word of God, breaking the Scriptures, perverting truth into lies, stealing the honor and praise of God, killing souls and defending the church of anti-christ? I say again, as I did before, I have never read a word in the Scriptures with such misunderstanding.

In the twelfth place he writes: "That, according to Matthew, baptism was not first instituted by Christ. For it was before commanded of John and practiced by the disciples of Jesus Christ; so that we are not obliged to follow one rule."

Answer. Let every one take heed, and observe what the word of the Lord teaches. Gellius, alas, is not at all ashamed to deny the plain word of God, and writes: "That we are not obliged to follow one certain rule in regard to baptism; that Christ did not command to baptize the believing persons alone; nor that his heavenly Father did, when he commanded John that he

should baptize; and that it was not Christ's meaning that such and such persons should be baptized." Behold, thus the Lord's holy word is perverted.

Inasmuch as Gellius so degrades his Lord's mouth, and so lamentably adulterates his word, therefore I will place the words of Christ, according to Matthew and Mark, before the reader, that he may see what rule and law he has made concerning baptism, and what command he has given. Christ says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them (understand, whom you make disciples, by your doctrine) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28. Again, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth (namely, the gospel) and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16: 15, 16. Behold, this is the word and ordinance of the Lord, how and when we are to baptize. I think these words are too plain to admit of perversion by fine words and acuteness—*preach the gospel and baptize those that believe.*

But that John taught and practiced baptism before Christ, is evidence for us and not against us, for he practiced upon those who confessed their sins, Matt. 3: 6, and not upon unconscious children, as the disobedient, offensive preachers do.

Since John did not baptize any but the penitent, before Christ; since Christ commanded it at the confession of faith, the apostles taught and practiced it so, and, also the primitive church, as heard, therefore, the reasonable reader may reflect, in the fear of God, how miserably and lamentably the poor souls are deceived by these degenerated men who so boldly adulterate the pointed, plain words of Christ concerning baptism, and his pleasing, salutary ordinance, and thus destroy it and found it upon an unstable foundation and wrong meaning.

But his writing, "That the apostles were commanded to gather unto Christ a church, from all nations, and to teach them, not that which Moses, but that which Christ

had taught," we admit. Yet through no other command nor ordinance than that they should preach the gospel, make disciples through the doctrine, baptize these disciples, and thus to gather unto the Lord a peculiar people, who should walk in Christ Jesus in righteousness, truth and obedience, as the regenerated children of God, and give eternal praises to his great and glorious name. And with such a people, who walk in his fear, love, word, ordinances and commands, he will be, always to the end of the world. But of infant baptism not a word is mentioned.

In the thirteenth place, he writes, "That the apostles, some of whom were baptized of John, and those who came to him from the cities and from Jerusalem were indiscriminately baptized of John, and could not have had much knowledge of Christ, or a true, strong, sincere faith in him."

Answer. If I understand him aright, he would conclude from this, that, as the baptized disciples were not, before baptism, thoroughly fitted in the doctrine, faith and repentance, but had to exercise themselves in continual penitence, and to die unto sin, as baptism represents, that also the children, although they have no faith before baptism, will, after baptism, when they become of understanding minds, study the doctrine, repent, die unto sin, and walk in newness of life.

To which opinion (if this be his opinion) I would reply: The prophets prophesied of John, Isa. 40: 3; Mal. 3: 1. His birth was made known by an angel; Christ testified of him, that he was the second Elias, a shining light, not clothed in soft raiment and not like the waving reed; that he was the greatest of all children born of woman, &c. From which it may be safely educed that he was no light-minded nor reckless preacher, but that he earnestly and valiantly executed his office, according to the pleasure of God, and that he rightly practiced the commanded baptism according to the ordinance. And, although his disciples were not so thoroughly instructed in all things, yet he did not baptize any but those who confessed their sins, as said, Matt. 3, Acts 19.

But, as to his explanation of the words: "If thou believest with all thine heart," which Philip spoke to the Ethiopian, that

they mean to believe without deceit and hypocrisy which he rightly asked of the Ethiopian; and of Luke, to leave an example to all servants of the church, how those of mature years should be baptized, he has rightly pointed out, since he also had arrived to years of maturity. We say, that this is right. We would also state what we desire of all baptizers, is: That they first examine well the faith and foundation of those who wish to be baptized, before they baptize them, that they, in their work and service, may not prove hypocrites.

I think that this is a plain example that the servants of the church should not ask the confession of faith from others, but from those, themselves, who wish to be baptized, as also Otto Brunsu. says concerning this: He says not (he writes), If you do believe or answer for your child, it is then permitted to be baptized.

Since Gellius refers us to the disciples and to those baptized of John, and, as appears, would thereby demonstrate that baptism does not require true faith, and that it makes no difference whether faith comes before or after; and, since we, also, are called anabaptists by him, therefore I in my weakness, would ask him, If the command of Christ and the example of the eunuch are not sufficient to show that faith should precede baptism, and that baptism requires true faith, and why Paul re-baptized the disciples of John, who had before been baptized with the baptism of John, while John's baptism was not of men, but from heaven? Matt. 21: 25. He cannot, scripturally, answer it otherwise, than that it was done because they had never known that there was a Holy Ghost. Inasmuch, then, as these disciples were once baptized in their years of maturity, with divine baptism, and lacked nothing but that they did not have an understanding of the Holy Ghost, and were, on that account, re-baptized of Paul—therefore Gellius should consider whether or not true, christian baptism requires true faith, and whether he does not wrong us by contemptuously calling us anabaptists because we re-baptize those who were not baptized with a divine baptism, as were the disciples of John, but with an anti-christian baptism, without any

knowledge, faith, command or word, as the reckless, ignorant world, in part, can judge and see.

If we, then, are anabaptists because we re-baptize those who received a baptism instituted of man and which was practiced upon those who had no knowledge whatever, how much, then, was Paul an anabaptist since he re-baptized those who were of understanding minds and baptized with a baptism which was from heaven and ordained of God.

In the second place I would ask, since he calls us anabaptists, as has been heard, Why he still adheres to Cyprian, together with both the Concilions—the African and the Nicene? which unanimously resolved: "That heretics have no baptism, and that therefore those, who have been baptized of heretics, should be baptized with the true baptism." If he says that it is according to the Scriptures and right, then he admits that he was not baptized with the right baptism, and that we are right in re-baptizing those who have been baptized of such who are not alone by Scripture, but also by Luther, Zuingli and the learned, pronounced anti-christian servants and the root of all heresy, before the whole world, as we may on every hand see in their writings.

But if he pronounce it offensive and sectarian, then he thereby testifies, in the first place, that the church, or at least a great part of it, was at that time offensive and sectarian.

In the second place, That he couples God's Spirit, word, work, ordinance and command with the anti-christian and heretical service and works.

In the third place, That he is an anti-christian and heretic himself, since he was baptized with an anti-christian and heretical baptism, and that he yet defends it as the true baptism.

O, my reader, that Gellius had but half an understanding of the word of God, and could but see a little of the truth, he would, all his life-time lament to God that he has so lamentably profaned the Lord's express command and ordinance, given through John, Christ and the apostles; that he has so inimically slandered the pious, and that

he passes such a thoughtless and ungodly sentence, by his writings that he not only pronounces us, but also Cyprian, all the African bishops, the Nicene Fathers, besides also, holy Paul himself open anabaptists, nay, heretics.

In the fourteenth place he writes, "That it is with baptism as it was with circumcision. As God commenced circumcision with Abraham, upon preceding instruction,—and, for the purpose of the sealing of the promise, it was practiced upon Abraham's seed and children—so John, the baptist and the apostles commenced baptism with those of mature years, and it was gradually practiced upon the children, since it could not be otherwise on account of circumcision."

Answer. That it is with baptism as it was with circumcision before, namely, in this respect; that it was commenced on previous instruction—is our ground and doctrine; for Christ Jesus has so ordained it and his holy apostles have so taught and practiced it. But that it should, by the command of Christ and by the teaching and practice of the apostles, gradually have been practiced upon the children, is mere conjecture and not Scripture.

For if it were so, then the apostles did wrongly that they did not, according to the manner of circumcision, commanded of God, baptize both the believing and the children (something which they did not do), as Abraham circumcised himself and his house together with the males of eight days old after him, according to the command of God, and did not gradually institute circumcision, as Gellius maintains, and would make us believe, that the apostles should have done with baptism.

But that he writes that this should have been done on account of circumcision is conjecture and not Scripture; for as the apostles and also John served on the believing ones of the Jews the sign of baptism, why not, then, on their children, if God had so ordained and commanded it, as Gellius pretends he did?

No, no, the command of the Lord concerning circumcision expressly applied, first to Abraham and his household, and then directly to the males of eight days old, Gen. 17: 14; but this is not so with regard to baptism, for it applies only to the believing and not to the unconscious children, Matt. 28; Mark 16. Therefore baptism was

not gradually practiced upon the children, as Gellius pretends; but it was afterward instituted without the word, ordinance and command of God, by disobedient and self-conceited men, who, alas, have considered a wrought ceremony above the Lord's command and its representation, as is generally the case with the learned and worldly-minded.

Again, as to his writing "that the promise is sealed by baptism, and that it is given not only to the aged, but also to the children"—the reader should observe that the promise of the grace of God, and of the eternal covenant, is not sealed, now any more, by the perishable blood of oxen and rams, nor by visible water and ceremonies, but solely by the precious blood of Christ on the cross. Blessed is he, who believes it, and cordially accepts it. <This promise is made to the unbaptized children, no less than to the baptized believing, so long as they are clothed with childish innocence, and continue in simplicity. But when they come to maturity and accept the dispensed gospel of grace through faith, then the Scriptures teach us that we should baptize them, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15. But if they reject grace, and lead an easy, impenitent life, neither Christ's blood nor death will avail them; much less will word and water avail them. For, "he that believeth not" (the Scripture means those of understanding minds) "is condemned already," John 3: 18.

In the fifteenth place he writes, "They err abominably, because they conclude, from the Scriptures and examples which have reference to those of mature years, to a certainty, that it is an ordinance of God that the children should not be baptized, notwithstanding that there is not a tittle in the whole New Testament which forbids it. And therefore they are no less wrong than I should be if I would not feed my children that cannot labor, because Paul says, he that does not labor shall not eat, which is incontrovertibly spoken in regard to those of mature years, and not to children.

Answer. In my opinion, Gellius wilfully intends to uphold the things contrary to Christ and truth, that he may execute the office of an anti-christian preacher, according to the pleasure of the world. For, when he *should* write that we act rightly according to the Scriptures, and that there is not a tittle in the New Testament that children

should be baptized—he writes that we err abominably, and that there is not a tittle that forbids infant baptism, &c.

Inasmuch as he so willfully and violently contends against the Lord and his truth, and since he in various ways seeks to give his cause a fine appearance by the use of many borrowed words, lies, conjectures and perversion of the Scriptures, and says that we err abominably, &c., therefore I would briefly state: That if he can at any time prove to us by the unadulterated, divine Scriptures and truth, that John the Baptist practiced infant baptism any where; or that it was commanded of Christ and taught and practiced by the apostles; or, that it was, through the ordinance of the Lord, gradually practiced upon children, as he writes it was; or, that bringing to him is called ed baptism and baptism bringing to him, in the Scriptures; or, that Christ and the apostles have baptized the children that were brought to them; or, that Christ baptized them with a spirit that was powerful in works (the Spirit of God is never idle); or, that small children have faith, or that they are penitent, that they bury their sins and are circumcised through faith and thereby arise with Christ in newness of life; or, that circumcision is called baptism, and baptism circumcision; or, that they have the answer of a good conscience; or, that baptism, anywhere in the Scriptures, is called a sign of the covenant of grace, a sealing of the promise, and an incorporation into the church, or that unconscious children speak with tongues as the believing members of the house of Cornelius did, of whom Peter says, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” Acts 10: 47, or, that the true, primitive church practiced it by the apostolic doctrine, usage or command; or, that God is powerful through works which he has not ordained, then we will lay aside our pen, repent and confess before the whole world that our cause is mere deceit, and nothing but falsehood, in this respect.

But if he cannot do so, as it is impossible for him to do, then I would faithfully admonish and fraternally beseech him to consider earnestly and thoroughly how shame-

fully he reflects on God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, John the Baptist and the apostles, in this matter of infant baptism; how lamentably he adulterates the plain Scriptures and deceives the poor souls; what gross falsehoods he teaches the poor people; how deceitfully he teaches the accursed abomination and passes it for a holy, glorious work; and also, how unjustly he accuses us of abominably erring, we, who clearly have on our side Christ's plain word, the apostolic doctrine and usage, the signification of baptism, and the usage of the true, primitive churches; while he cannot show by a single word of all the Scriptures, that his infant baptism has any foundation in the ordinance and command of God. My faithful reader, beware; fear God; act justly; search the Scriptures; shun falsehood and follow the truth.

Again, by undertaking to draw the saying of Paul, “That if any would not work, neither should he eat,” into his argument, he contradicts himself, and is unworthy of a reply. For, as Paul thereby commands the idlers and busy-bodies to earn their own bread by honorable labor, lest they become an offense, and troublesome to others, and since such cannot apply to children, therefore such labor was not thereby commanded them. Neither does Paul say, he who does not work, &c., as Gellius writes; but he says, “If any would not work, neither should he eat.” So, too, baptism is not commanded to be practiced on unconscious children, but it is commanded in the Scriptures to be practiced upon those who believe the word of the Lord, lead a penitent life and who have a sound understanding and comprehension of baptism, as has been said several times.

In the sixteenth place he writes, “That in Christ Jesus no respect of persons or time is made. For the glory of the kingdom of Christ is not limited to any cities, times or persons; so, neither to any age nor generation.”

Answer. Herewith, if I understand it, he would assert that, although, according to his assertion, baptism has taken the place of circumcision, and the males only were circumcised in Israel, that notwithstanding this, both males and females are to be baptized, now, be they believers' children, and

born of believing parents or not. If that is his meaning and foundation, then he should know that as the grace, favor, love, covenant and promise of God under the New Testament, extended to both men and women, so, also did it extend to all under the Old Testament. For, if God had coupled his covenant of grace and all to signs, whether it be circumcision or baptism, and if those alone were in the church who had received the sign, then the Israelitic women and maids, and also the children of the primitive churches, were in a bad situation: since the first, according to the Scriptures, were not circumcised, and the latter, according to the ancient authors, were not baptized, as has been already said.

No, reader, no. Abraham and all his seed, I mean both men and women, young and old, were the Lord's people and church. But the males only, were circumcised, and not the females, the male children of eight days old, and not the female children, according to the ordinance of God; yet, they all, both men and women, were members of the church under the covenant of God, and were children of the promise, although, I repeat it, the males only were circumcised, and not the females.

So it is under the New Testament. The gospel is preached, and all who believe it and are baptized, shall be saved; be they males or females. They are members of the church of Christ under God's covenant and grace; they are joint heirs of the kingdom of God, and children of eternal life; also the children, although they are not baptized, Mark 16: 16; Acts 5: 14; 1 Cor. 12: 13; Rom. 8: 14.

For, as God would have his ceremonies under the Old Testament, such as circumcision, the passover, sin-offering, burnt-offering, &c., practiced just as he ordained and commanded them through Moses, in the same manner he will have his signs, under the New Testament, such as baptism and Supper, practiced in no other way than he has commanded and ordained through his Son.

For he says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." If, now, this Son had ordained infant baptism, then we should practice it, if we would be

his disciples; but since he has not done so, we pronounce it, according to the Scriptures, accursed, as said, Gal. 1: 8.

I further say, If they, now, place the children of both believing and unbelieving parents, on the same foundation, which, according to my opinion would not be contrary to the Scriptures, then they must recall their doctrine whereby they, before, applied the grace and covenant of God, with many words, to the children of believing parents, and admit that their doctrine in regard to Abraham and his seed, whereby they make baptism take the place of circumcision, has no similarity to, nor connection with it, at all; for it was not commanded of Abraham to circumcise all the children round about him, who were not his seed, but only those which were of his seed, as may be learned from Genesis 17.

In the seventeenth place he writes, Would to God that they could once rightly understand the 5th chapter, of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, wherein he describes the church, saying, Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water in the word, or as Erasmus says, through the word. Then he goes on and says, This incontrovertibly includes the children along with their parents, that is, the believers and their seed, nay, the whole church. How should they, then, be excluded from the word, while it reads, He has cleansed the church with the washing of water by the word?

Answer. I trust that we, through the grace and enlightenment of the Lord, in our weakness, do not misunderstand these words of Paul, but that we do rightly understand the meaning. We offer Gellius and all the learned, the use of all the Scriptures, besides all reason and experience, if they can show one tittle in the Holy Scriptures to prove that reason and experience teach, that we can teach little children the word of God, from which originates the true cleansing of the heart, or that the Scriptures of the New Testament any where apply the word and sacraments to them; if they can, then we will admit that they are cleansed by baptism through the word, or in the word. But, if they can not do so, then it is already proven that these words of Paul are not written in regard to little children.

It is true, Christ has so loved his church, that he has given himself for her, and has sanctified her through the power and merits

of his innocent blood, and cleansed her by water, which is a sign of a new and penitent life, but not otherwise than in the word, or through the word, which, preached in the power of the Spirit, and accepted in true faith, is followed by the ordained baptism as commanded.

Christ said, "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you," John 15: 3; not, my reader, that they were clean on account that it was outwardly spoken unto them, but because they believed that which was spoken unto them. For God does not cleanse the hearts through any literal water, word or ceremony, but through faith in the word; otherwise all who outwardly hear the word and receive the outward sign of the water, would be holy and clean; this is incontrovertible.

In the eighteenth place, He advances an argument and syllogism. Whatever pertains to the church, also pertains to the members of the church. Baptism pertains to the whole church, both old and young—therefore baptism pertains to all the members of the church.

Answer. In my opinion it were better for Gellius, since he boasts himself a preacher of the holy word, to leave his logic to the wise of the world, who, alas, seek their own praise and honor more than they do God's; and satisfy himself with the true doctrine, foundation and truth of Christ, and with the unpretentious, plain testimony of Matthew, the publican, and of Peter and John, the fishermen, &c., that he does not deceive the unlearned by such acute reasoning and lead them off the true way.

As to his major proposition (as he calls it), I would say, that if Gellius had applied it to grace, reconciliation, promise, eternal life, &c., which were bestowed upon the whole church, young as well as old, for Christ's sake, and not upon the ordinance of the church, then he would have been right; but as it is, he will have to admit that it is wrong, and contrary to the word of God. For, as regards the ordinances of which he speaks, in which baptism is included, I would say, that all the members of the church are not of one and the same calling, service and work, and are not under one and the same ordinance; for the Lord has ordained apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and servants, in his church,

and all are not, on that account, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and servants. Thus it is with the ordinances of baptism and the Holy Supper, in his church; not that we should therefore serve them to the unconscious children, but only to the believing and penitent, according to the Scriptures.

As to his minor proposition, I would say, our doctrine, belief, foundation and confession is, that our unconscious children, so long as they live in their innocence, are, through the merits, death and blood of Christ, in grace, and joint heirs of the promise, as has already been heard. The doctrine of the New Testament, which is a doctrine of the Spirit, does not include them with those who are ruled and governed by the word and sacraments of God, and who are properly called the church of Christ in Scripture.

That the children should be counted into the church on account of the promise, we consent to, but we controvert that they should be included in the ordinances of the church; for this is contrary to all Scripture and common sense, as we will prove by Christ's own words. He also openly reproves Christ and the apostles, together with the Holy Spirit. For he writes, "Baptism pertains to both young and old;" while they have not left us a single example, nor one word in all the Scriptures whereby it is taught or commanded, as may be seen.

Since both his major and minor propositions are not consistent with the word and command of God, as shown, how then, his conclusion, that baptism pertains to all the members of the church, can be consistent with the word and ordinance of God is sufficiently clear to the kind reader.

I would further say, that if this, his syllogism, is right and true, namely, Whatever pertains to the church, must pertain to all the members of the church, &c., which, however, is not so, then it would also be true that as doctrine, faith, knowledge of Christ, true repentance, a regenerated, new life, the circumcision of the heart, a clear conscience, baptism, Lord's Supper, the love of one's neighbor, a living hope, ardent thankfulness, &c., pertain to the church

—therefore they pertain to all the members, both young and old.

If he denies this first proposition of mine, then he denies his own, for it is like his. If he denies, besides, the second, because children, on account of their weak understanding, as he admits, cannot understand the word, and that they, therefore, cannot repent nor be admitted to the Supper, &c., then he testifies that the children do not belong to the church which is governed by the Lord's word and sacraments; and that his syllogism, wherewith he includes all the members of the church, both young and old, in one and the same ordinance, is wrong and false, nay, contrary to God's word. This is my answer to the argument of Gellius and his fellows. How they can stand with this, according to the Scriptures, you may reflect upon in the fear of your God.

In the nineteenth place, he makes a long discourse in regard to the child which was, according to Mark and Luke, called to Christ; and will thereby prove and teach that children believe, or if they do not believe, that they are accounted as believing, be they of whatever age they may. He further writes that a child of two, three or four years old may be corrupted by bad examples; and that we are too timorous because we dare not baptize those whom Christ accounts as believing (as he says).

Answer. If Gellius and the learned had received but a little understanding of the nature, power and properties of true faith, they would be ashamed all their lifetime to have such a poor idea of that precious faith which is a power and gift of God. Moses says that the children have no knowledge of good and evil. The wise man says, that they have no understanding. Paul says, "Brethren, be not children in understanding," 1 Cor. 14: 20, and yet Gellius dares write that they believe; as if faith were but a dead thing that has no motive power or work.

O no, true faith, which avails before God, is a living and saving power which is, through the preaching of the holy word, bestowed of God upon the heart; that moves, changes and regenerates it to newness of mind; that smother all ungodliness; that destroys all pride, ambition and selfishness; that in malice, makes us like children, &c. Behold, such is the faith which the Scriptures

teach us, and not a vain, dead and unfruitful conjecture, as the world pretends it to be. And that such faith is not to be found in children of two, three or four years old, both the Scriptures and common sense teach us.

O, dear Lord! what great blindness, that this thoughtless man does not observe that he and his like preachers, some of whom have grown already gray, who daily read the Scriptures after their manner, are yet so unbelieving that they dare, for the sake of a piece of bread, adulterate the plain word of God, lead the poor, miserable souls to hell, in great numbers, upbraid, slander and hate all the pious, and innocently heap upon them slanderous lies and disgraces, incite the magistracy to tyranny and blood, and that they delight in pomp, splendor, the lusts of the flesh, avarice, &c., which is such clear proof that they are not alone unbelieving, but that they are also quite earthly and carnally-minded; and yet they assert that a child of two or three years of age has faith. O, folly and error!

The reason that Christ called unto himself the child, and placed it in the midst of his disciples, was because the disciples were casting about as to who would be the greatest. He set the child as an example to them, and said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And that we must inherit the kingdom of God, as a child (in malice, understand), as Mark and Luke write. Paul says, "In malice be ye children." Christ says, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matt. 18: 4—6. Behold, Christ himself explains to what children we should apply this.

As to his writing that children are accounted believing, is merely a conjecture and opinion which cannot be substantiated by a single word of the Scriptures. Again,

as to his assertion that a child, two, three or four years old may be offended, I would say, first, If we were to apply, as Gellius does, this saying, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe on me," &c., to young children (to which I, on my part, do not consent), then the whole world might well be astounded at these words, from the inmost of their souls. For how they educate their young children, and with what ungodly, offensive life they walk before them, their disgraceful ill-manners and roguery, alas, teach us, both in city and country. O, reader, that the world would take to heart the salvation of their children, and not, from the cradle on, lead them in the way to hell, by their doctrine and example; what a blessed thing it would be for their souls at the day of judgment!

Second, If the preachers and magistrates would rightly understand this saying of Christ, and believed it just and true, then, in my opinion, the offensive, deceiving doctrine would soon be at an end, and the tyrannical sword be put into the sheath, by which, now, alas, hundreds of thousands of souls, are offended to everlasting destruction, and consigned to the kingdom of the devil. O, Lord! "Woe unto the world because of offences," says Christ, God's mouth and wisdom.

To his writing that we are too timorous, because we dare not baptize children, I would say this, that the Scriptures teach us not to do that which we see proper, but that which is commanded us, Deut. 4: 2; 12: 32.

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, And there went out a fire from the Lord and devoured them, Lev. 10: 1, 2.

Jeroboam was chosen king of the ten revolted tribes of Israel, worshipped in a manner not commanded of God, and therefore he was told by the prophet that God would take away the remnant of his house, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone, 1 Kings 14: 10.

Uzziah was smitten for life because he burned incense upon the altar of incense, to which the Lord had not called him, 2 Chron. 26: 16.

Luther writes in his preface to Isaiah and says, "God will not be told how he is to be served. He will teach and lead us. His word should be our guide; for without his word it is all idolatry and vain falsehood, however fine and pleasing it may appear." Again, in the 3rd chapter of Daniel, "Worship without God's word is ever idolatry."

I would further say, All those who seek God, and sincerely fear him, obey his ordinance and word.

Israel never circumcised a female, nor offered a ewe for the passover; for God ordained that the males should be circumcised on the eighth day, and that rams should be offered, Gen. 17: 11; Exod. 12: 5, as heard before.

Since we clearly learn from the Holy Scriptures that Moses and the prophets and besides, the Father, himself, unanimously point to Jesus, who is Wisdom and Truth, to obey him; and since we surely know, by the grace of God, that he is the true Prophet and perfect Teacher, whose word is truth, and whose command is eternal life, and since he has not commanded us a single word of infant baptism, nor his true witnesses, the holy apostles have taught it or left an example, and since we also find that the signification is not applicable to children, and besides, that the Scriptures do not admit of strange worship, self-chosen ceremonies, nor addition, nor subtraction, and that God has several times punished such self-chosen righteousness and worship, as heard; and further, that the primitive church did not practice infant baptism, as has been often heard, therefore we are so timorous, that we dare not baptize our little children; for these cases to which we have referred, together with the unfeigned love of salutary, divine truth, the sincere fear of our God, and the power of our faith, although in weakness, prevent us.

O, reader, would God grant that our opponents could rightly understand what frightful abominations they commit on every hand with their infant baptism, and how they practice it to the dishonor of God and corruption of their neighbors, then, I trust, this matter would soon be reformed, and by the help of God, he changed to a scriptural usage.

In the first place, they falsify God and the Holy Scriptures by their infant baptism; for they assert that it is God's ordinance, while there is not a single word or example to be found in all the Scriptures, that teach infant baptism.

In the second place, they thereby destroy the true church of Christ, and establish an anti-christian one which bears the name and semblance of the christian church; although it hates and despises its doctrine, spirit, ordinances and usages, taught by the Scriptures.

In the third place, they thereby console the world in their unrighteousness; for however ungodly, adulterous, perjurious, covetous, pompous, envious, blood-thirsty, greedy, drunken, carnal, idolatrous and hypocritical they be, yet they boast that they are baptized christians.

In the fourth place, they hate and persecute all those, who, out of pure, godly zeal, avoid this deceitful abomination, reprove their damnable worship, and point them to Jesus and his word alone. Nay, they are called their apostate anabaptists, apostles of the devil, deceived heretics, off-scourings and booty.

In the fifth place, although they, and their authors, in the past, have condemned unto hell the institutions and commands of men, and have written one volume after another against it, yet they, alas, altogether adhere, to this horrible abomination, because they want to avoid the cross, and gain the favor of the world; they act hypocritically in all things, and do the things which are pleasing to the world; they heap one abominable error upon another; hang crosses upon the child's breast and forehead; they conjure and ask the parents if they believe, &c., drive out devils, and commit other disgraceful acts; so that we are forced to say that all the infant baptizers are hypocrites of all hypocrites, and that infant baptism is an open incorporation into the church of anti-christ, the beginning of all deceit, and an accursed blasphemy and enchantment, which is not only contrary to the plain word and ordinance of the Lord, but also against all reason, nature and common sense. For who that has read the word of the Lord at all, does not know, that a cross

made with the fingers cannot help or save a child? That the innocent creature, the unconscious child, which is cleansed by the blood of the Lord, is not possessed of the devil, and that one cannot insure the faith of others, since it is a gift of God?

Say, kind reader, What worse mockery and hypocrisy could be imagined, than to ask of one in the name of another: Do you believe? Do you renounce Satan, &c.? and on an affirmative answer, to baptize an unconscious child that knows nothing of neither yes nor no, of God nor devil, of truth nor falsehood, of life nor death? O blasphemy and shame!

O, Lord! O, dear Lord!! how long shall this gross deceit and vile abomination be practiced! I think it were high time that the world should take heed, and learn to know such open deceivers and their doctrine, baptism, supper, life and fruits, and that they would pay more attention to the ordinance, will, word, ways and works of the Lord.

In the twentieth place, he accuses us of a false security, as he calls it, because we, or ours, say that we are assured in our hearts that they err, and that we are right, &c.

Answer. The Lord speaks through Moses, "Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he" (that is Christ) "shall speak in my name, I will require it of him," Dent. 18: 19.

The Father says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him," Matt. 17: 5.

Christ says, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28: 29.

Paul says, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. 1: 8.

John says, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, has not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son," 2 John 1: 9, and other like sayings.

Since all the Scriptures point us to the Spirit, gospel, command, ordinance, usage and example of Christ; and since we, in

our worship, do not follow conjectures, our own desires, false explanations and doctrines of men, as we are accused of, Christ's plain word and command, the doctrine and usage of the holy apostles, and of the true, primitive church; and, as they (our opponents) are no more commanded to baptize children than Israel was to circumcise females, or that they should found churches, altars and places of worship on hills, or in dales, or that they should offer their children as burnt-offerings, or that the papists should baptize bells as they are accustomed to, and since they call and persecute the baptism ordained of Christ, as the baptism of heretics, and esteem and practice infant baptism, which was instituted through hypocrisy, as a christian baptism, and since they, besides, boast that they do right by not abandoning this practice; therefore I would gladly leave it to the judgment of all reasonable and impartial readers, who of us are the Sanherib, Holofernes, Pharisaical, and deceiving sects, mentioned as trusting in false security.

He further writes, What else has deceived the anabaptists in the past, that they took up the sword, than just such security. They imagined that they, as the people of God, were marked with the sign, Tau; should subdue the whole world, and hang us preachers, who they said knew better, to our own door-posts?

Answer. Reader, observe, What else does he hereby say than, Beloved lords, will you yet be merciful unto such an offensive people and wicked heretics? Persecute, imprison, banish and destroy them. They are deserving of it. You may consider and judge whether the Holy Spirit, in the Revelation does not call this the sting of scorpions, Rev. 9: 10. Further on he says that our church was originated by me; something which, as will be hereafter shown, I do not admit. He knows very well that I never was found in the company of the rebellious; but that I reprov'd their doctrines and abominations with the word of the Lord, as much as I ever did those of the preachers. Notwithstanding, he accuses us of these ungodly practices and wicked deeds; that he may thereby make us, who are innocent, suspicioned of all the world, and deliver us unto the sword of the magistracy. I will leave it to the consideration

of all the pious and good-fearing, if this is not seeking the blood of the innocent.

O, that he would have sufficient discretion not to mix the innocent with the guilty. For what else does he seek than to change Simon Peter into Simon Magus, and John and James into Judas?

If I should say, I have known some infant baptists which were open perjurers and thieves, therefore Gellius and all the infant baptists are perjurers and thieves. Would not that be wrong? O, faithful reader, how justly has holy David portrayed such slanderers, saying, The wicked murder the innocent in secret places; his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor, &c., Ps. 10: 8, 9. For, by such murderous cries, it is caused, that in different places, the pious and faithful hearts—men and women, youths and virgins, the gray-headed, the lame and halt are pitilessly and mercilessly imprisoned and robbed, their children sent abroad in the world, homeless and penniless, as the most wicked upon earth. Some are thrown into boiling oil; others are hanged, racked, drowned, strangled, burned, beheaded or tortured by some other heathenish and tyrannical means. Behold, such are, alas, the consequences of the deceiving and false writings of such blood-thirsty preachers, in some countries.

Would to God, that he and his preachers, together with all the papists and monks, who are guilty of innocent blood, may find mercy and grace before the eyes of the great and Almighty God, in the day when the fearful sound of the last trumpet shall sound, and that the innocent blood of which they are guilty, be not counted against them. This is my sincere wish and prayer. But if they continue in their present minds, and do not turn from ungodliness, then, says the Spirit of God, the fiery pool will be their reward and part, Rev. 19: 21.

Further, I would say, Just as we hate and reprove (understand this in a gospel-like way) the bitter and inimical heart, and the bloody and fiendish crying and writing of Gellius and all the contentious—so, also, do we hate and reprove those that take up the sword, steal, rob, or in any manner

wrong any one on earth, be he friend or foe.

In this we should pay no respect as to persons, be it father, brother, emperor, king, neighbor, friend, great or small, baptized or not baptized. All those who shed human blood against the word of God, who act contrary to love, who wrong, offend or afflict their neighbor, can not be our brethren, for they plainly show that they are not christians.

We must ever hear that the rebellious and their aiders at Munster, have, in the past, alas, taken up the sword, contrary to God's word, as if we were one with them in that abomination: although we are quite innocent in the matter. But they do not see that they arm whole countries and corrupt them; that they destroy one principality after another, that they use all manner of violence, and thus cause affliction, misery and sorrow, every where. Yea, this is, alas, called doing right.

Since it is manifest that not only France, Italy, Spain and Burgundy, but also all the German nations, and the rest of the world who boast of the word are guilty of the same deeds, as regards fighting, warring, robbing and shedding blood; why do they, then, reprove the crimes of the rebellious, while they are so far from being innocent, yea, have done the same criminal deeds as those they reprove? Paul says, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, doest the same things," Rom. 2: 1.

In the last place he writes, Our eyes have seen better than the eyes of the anabaptists in regard to wilful sinning, because they have made many doubtful and caused some to recede, &c.

Answer. If he aims this at us, then he should know that he has written more than he should have done. For I can say with a clear conscience, that I never was troubled concerning this matter by the brethren, and that the doctrine has not been broached among us in my time.

I have ever taught that all sins which are repented of are pardoned in the blood of the Lord, be they what they may. David's adultery and shedding of innocent blood, is to me a sure testimony. Yet everybody

should take heed that he sincerely fears God, acts rightly, and that he does not wilfully sin against his God, that he does not pervert falsehood into truth, nor truth into falsehood, as did the scribes. For who knows but that he who wilfully sins against his God, will never truly repent and receive grace? Christ says, "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin," John 8: 34.

I fear that if his imperial highness were to present to me many costly gifts, and I should ungratefully squander them, or trample upon them, or cast them from me, his imperial highness would, undoubtedly, severely punish me for such ingratitude, and would probably not again offer me such favors and costly presents.

Therefore, take heed that you do not wilfully despise and adulterate your Lord's word, nor walk according to the pleasure of a carnal mind; lest the manifest grace at once be withheld from you, and you are led into perverse ways. *Qui timet Deum, recedit a malo*, he that fears God, shuns evil.

As Gellius exerts himself to adulterate, by his false doctrine, the word of the Lord, to render of no avail his precious blood, and to harden and console the impenitent, reckless world in their wild and wicked ways, under an appearance of the holy word; so he also exerts himself, in my opinion, to root out the salutary, pure truth from earth, and to deliver the pious and godly children into the hands of the executioner, by all manner of false defamations and criminal accusations. If I am wrong rebuke me.

If the name, "grasping kite," is not more applicable to him than a gathering hen, by which name he would like to be called, I will leave to himself and the Lord.

But the Lord, who is the shield and surety of all the oppressed, defends them against the ungodly. He destroys the liars. He abhors the bloody and deceitful: "There is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue," Psalm 5: 9.

Therefore they shall not stand before the storm; their light shall be extinguished, and their glory shall vanish. For the Lord is strong, who shall judge them, and he

will require the poor, deceived souls, and the innocent blood at their hands, and he will give them their reward.

Behold, dear reader, from this you may see that the doctrine and confession of the preachers in regard to infant baptism, can not stand, according to the Scriptures; that it is not founded upon the Lord's command, nor upon the doctrine or practice of the holy apostles, as is the baptism of the believing, but merely upon logic, opinion, conjecture, falsehood, borrowed names and custom. If you be of reasonable mind, then

let the infallible and true word of the Lord, and your impartial heart judge between us and the learned.

I would hereby, for God's sake, beseech all readers not to think hard of it that I improve falsehood, according to the Scriptures; defend truth with truth, point out the right way, seek the salvation of your souls, controvert the false prophets, expose their deceiving, secret snares and defend the Lord's praise. He who seeks the Lord in sincerity of heart, read and judge.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

WE will very briefly review and reply to the treatise of Gellius on the sacrament called the Lord's Supper, because we have published our foundation and belief of this matter, and referred to many Scriptures, in the past. Whosoever finds a delight in the truth, may read them and reflect on them in the fear of God. Yet we would, in our weakness, remind the pious reader, before we commence our reply to Gellius' publication, that it is written, "For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread," 1 Cor. 10: 17. Since we learn from the Scriptures that the Holy Supper was instituted of the Lord as a sign and testimony, not to the world but to the church of God, that all of us who are one bread are members of one body, namely, of the body of Christ; and since we plainly see that both the dispensers and partakers of the worldly supper, are not true members of the Lord's body, because the dispensers are all hirelings, thieves of the honor of God, and murderers of our souls, who retain the thoughtless, reckless people in all manner of unrighteousness, blindness, and in an unbridled, carnal life, by their promises, philosophy and logic; who deceive all the world and hate, upbraid, belie, apprehend, banish and exterminate the pious, who renounce evil, follow the word of the Lord, and ever eat of his bread; and because the partakers, generally, are an

impenitent, light-minded and vain people, nay, worldlings, part of whom not only little regard the Spirit, word and knowledge of the Lord, but trample it under foot, as may be seen—therefore we abstain from their supper; for the sincere fear in our hearts, caused by the word of God, prevents us from partaking of it with such dispensers and partakers, lest we also partake of their deceiving actions and abominable abuse, and, at the day of Christ, receive the same reward with them.

He boasts a great deal of his admonition, yet all his admonition is nothing but vain boasting, without all power; for how can he and his like preachers rightly teach Christ, and admonish others, while they are yet filled from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet, with all manner of unrighteousness, blindness and disgrace?

They would do well to reflect upon the words of Sirach, and rightly learn to know themselves, because many of them are as yet such useless people, that they are more fit to be herders of swine than to be shepherds of the sheep of Christ, as he writes. And because Gellius is not only an adulterer of the Scriptures and deceiver of souls, but also a very cruel, profane and defaming man, as may be very clearly educed from his writings.

He writes that they admonish them in the first place, what should be the qualifications of the partakers, ac-

ording to the doctrine of the law, and especially of the holy gospel.

Answer. Wherever the law is preached rightly and taken to heart, through faith and manifested in Spirit and power, there we find a subdued mind, a penitent, humble heart, and a conscience which trembles before the word and true fear of God, and which allays and disperses sin, as Sirach says.

This is the real intention and object of the law: To reveal unto us the will of God, to discover unto us sin, to threaten us with the wrath and punishment of the Lord, to proclaim death and to point us to Christ, that we may, before the eyes of God, be humbled in heart, die unto sin, and seek and find the only and eternal medicine and remedy for our souls, Jesus Christ.

In the same manner it is in regard to the gospel. Wherever it is preached in true zeal, according to the pleasure of God, and unblamably in the power of the Spirit, so that it penetrates the hearts of the hearers, there we find a converted, changed and new mind, which joyfully and gratefully gives praises to his God for his inexpressibly great love towards us, miserable sinners, in Christ Jesus, and thus enters into newness of life willingly and freely, by the power of a true faith and a new birth.

If Gellius would knock at the innermost heart of his followers, and of himself, with the hammer of the law, and zealously enkindle in them the fire of the holy gospel, so that they would, in true repentance, change their unclean, obdurate hearts, and abandon their heathenish pomp and splendor in their houses, and clothes, their vain show of gold and silver, their extravagance, avariciousness, drinking and carousing, and would enter with Christ into newness of life, then I would admit that that which he has written here concerning the Lord's Supper, did well compare with their walk. But as it is, he consoles the poor with an empty purse, only, and acts in a manner entirely contrary to that in which he should. For the signs of the New Testament are in themselves quite powerless, vain and useless, if the signification, namely, the new, penitent life, is not there, as has been said above in treating of baptism.

He further writes, that they, in the second and third place, admonish them (their hearers) that it is not enough to know and understand the doctrine, but that it should be, also, manifested in their walk, yea, at the risk of body and life, that they should be prepared for the cross and temptation, that they should patiently and obediently bear it, and follow their bridegroom, for the devil dislikes such confession and therefore hates and persecutes them.

Answer. Caiaphas said unto the Pharisees and Scribes, "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not," John 11: 50.

His intentions sounded right, yet his cruel, blood-thirsty heart did not perceive that it was he, who, through bitter zeal, sought the life of the king of all glory.

We do not controvert but that Gellius and his fellow preachers sometimes talk of a pious life, according to the Scriptures, and admonish their hearers of the cross; but how they love true righteousness, which true doctrine brings forth, and how they treat the confessors thereof, may, alas, be educed from their indiscreet and disgraceful writing and crying.

Since he writes that he thus admonishes them, as heard, and that it is plainly manifest that he not only hates the true righteousness, power, fruit and obedience which true preaching brings forth, but also crucifies it, I fear, by his indiscreet and disgraceful writing, therefore, the godly, pious reader may consider if he is not like unto the Scribes and Pharisees, in this respect, who, although they understood the law, yet so hated righteousness, that they, by their connivance and advice, crucified him who was promised in the law, the Fulfiller, Christ Jesus.

Dear reader, understand what I write. Outward preaching, hearing, baptism and Supper do not at all avail before God; but before him avail teaching and believing, faith and works, outwardly baptism and Supper, according to the letter, and inwardly according to the Spirit and truth. Behold, this is what God's word and ordinance teach us.

So long as such impenitent, carnal people are the dispensers, and such vain, pompous, covetous, extortionate, carousing and drinking people the partakers, so long, I say, it

is not the true Supper of the Lord, but it is a supper of the impenitent, an encouragement to the unrighteous, and an enchanting mockery, however much it may be adorned and decked, before men, with high-sounding words and praises; for outside of the church of Christ, which is a gathering of the penitent, there is neither baptism nor Holy Supper. Again understand that which I write, Neither water, bread nor wine avail in Christ without true repentance, if they were, even, served by the apostles themselves; before him avail, alone, a new creature, a converted, changed and broken heart, a sincere fear and love of God, unfeigned love of one's neighbors, a sober, humble, peaceable and converted life, according to the word and example of the Lord. Where there is such a new being, lo, there is true baptism, and the true Supper. But to be baptized outwardly and partake of the Supper, according to the letter, and not inwardly before God in Spirit and truth, I repeat, is nothing more nor less than a shadow, vain mockery of God's work, nay, hypocrisy and deceit.

Is it not a lamentable blindness, that these poor, misled people attach so much value to the outward, visible sign, and do not observe that they are, with all their heart inimical to the invisible signification, for which the visible sign was commanded in the Scriptures? as if God had a special pleasure in the mere elements, water, bread and wine, and not in the proper signification, which is represented and admonished thereby.

O no, reader, we can not please nor serve God with mere water, bread and wine; for by his hand, it was all created. But we can serve and please him with the signification of his baptism and Supper, namely, that we thereby testify our faith and obedience, that we will walk in continual and eternal penance, that we will remember his inexpressibly great love and blessings, that we are thereby admonished that he has offered for us his spotless, pure body, and that he has shed his precious blood for the reconciliation of our souls, in his ardent love for us; that we will ever walk with him in unity of the Spirit, and follow him; that we will love, assist, console, reprove, bear,

admonish and serve each other as members of one body; and that we will prove ourselves unto death, as the newly born children of God in all righteousness, holiness and truth. Behold, dear reader, for this purpose the signs of the New Testament were instituted. If Gellius and his like preachers were to use the Holy Supper in such heart and spirit; if the signification, fruit, spirit and power, although in weakness, were found in them and their disciples, as it is represented and taught by the sign, then we would, by the grace of God, soon meet, and not dispute about the use of the sign. But so long as they walk on the broad road, practice and uphold infant baptism, defame the baptism of the believing, do not separate their disciples and church from the world, and teach an unblamable doctrine and life, so long we cannot unite with them in doctrine and sacraments, whether this is attended by prosperity or adversity, as God pleases. For we know to a certainty, that the Lord's invincible, strong truth is on our side, and the damnable, weak falsehood on theirs.

My faithful reader, reflect upon what I write. Our separation from the doctrine and sacraments of the preachers is principally for two reasons. In the first place, because we can plainly see, from the Scriptures and by their actions, and are assured, that they are not pastors but deceivers. All the Scriptures teach us that we shall not hear, but shun such preachers. For if we are afraid of thieves, murderers and wolves, according to the flesh, how much more should we fear those who so miserably devour our poor souls, who retain us in darkness, deprive us of the light of Christ, and fearlessly lead us to the frightful, indissoluble darkness of everlasting and infernal torment, for the sake of a meal of bread. For God's sake, dear reader, do not think hard of me. Behold, before God it is true what I write.

The second reason is, that we may, by such shunning, testify to you and all others, by open deeds, that you are outside of the Spirit, word, kingdom and church of Christ, that you walk upon the wrong way and that you are miserably deceived by your preachers—so that you may yet awaken in

time, depart from evil, walk in truth and be eternally saved.

If you are of reasonable minds, then consider well what we hereby seek, and think not that we are so thoroughly deprived of reason that we walk this narrow way, through contentiousness and partizanism. O, how gladly would we save our weak bodies, our wives and small children, our possessions and lives, and live peaceably with the world, if we were not constrained by the love of God, and the eternal salvation of your souls and our own. But, as it is, we should, for the two mentioned reasons, sacrifice all to robbery, and, if the case require, to death, in sincere, genuine love. For, as a general thing, truth is maintained dearly; and sincere, faithful love crowned with a crown of thorns. O, Lord!

In the last place he writes, "From this, every pious christian may educe, how unreasonably these people, who accuse us of enmity, contention and discord, and who quarrel about the articles of faith among themselves, and thus sow enmity, contention and discord, as said, Yea, who never thoroughly searched our doctrine, and who have scarcely seen us partake of the Supper, notwithstanding, they reprove us of our Holy Supper, and leave the assembly of Christ's church."

Answer. To this I would reply in the first place: The unrighteousness which shuts us out from the kingdom, church, body and Supper of Christ, is not merely included in enmity, contention and discord, but also in all other kinds of works of the flesh, such as, pomp, splendor, avariciousness, drinking and carousing.

Although enmity and discord are, by the use of their supper, partially appeased among some of them, as he writes, yet all the other abominable sins and unrighteousness remain untouched as may be very plainly and publicly seen by their fruits. The heathens, too, conclude peace among themselves, when they are at variance with each other, yet they are not the right grains of the Lord's bread, and the true members of his body. Let every one of sound mind reflect upon what I say.

In the second place I say, He can not with truth substantiate his accusation against us, that enmity, contention and discord exist among us.

But as he and his fellows berate our

christian doctrine and faith, our sacraments and actions before the whole world, cause much trouble and affliction; and we, by the grace of God, do not treat them inimically, but patiently bear with them, teach, reprove and admonish them; maintain truth with truth; and in sincerity of heart, show and point out to them the right way, at the risk of blood and life, for which they so hate us, so also, some raise up among us, as was the case in the times of the apostles, who would rather follow their own opinion than the Scriptures; who again return to the broad road, seek honor and a name, and therefore make unscriptural pretensions. With such we entreat and reason, admonish and reprove them, as the Scriptures teach us, and I trust we do this reasonably and in love. If they suffer themselves to be taught, change their ways and strive after peace, then we thank the Lord for his blessing. But in case they despise fraternal admonition, remain obdurate in their ways and cause contention and discord, then they cannot be our fellows and brethren, until they acknowledge their faults, and return to the Lord's people in peace, 1 Tim. 6: 5; 2 Tim. 2: 17; Tit. 3: 11. If this should be called causing contention, enmity and discord about the articles of faith, or whether it should be called purification of the house of the Lord, all the right-minded may judge, both by their common sense and the Scriptures.

In the third place I say, the reason why we do not hear their doctrine, and do not see their partaking of the supper, as he complains, is, because we have for a long time witnessed by their fruits, that their doctrine is vain and powerless, and their sacraments are not according to the word. For of what spirit both their preachers and disciples are, may, firstly, be educed from the dishonest, infamous, bitter, false, spiteful and incentive writings of the preachers, and, secondly, from the abominable show of clothes, the extravagance about their houses, and from the superfluous, carnal life of the best of their disciples. What does their fine appearance, their ornamental logic avail, while they, in fact, forsake the Scriptures and the signification, fruit and power of the holy sacraments, nay,

hate and persecute it? If I do not write the truth, reprove me.

In the fourth place I would say, Gellius accuses us that we forsake the church of Christ. But I say that we, according to the teaching of the word and ordinance of God, and to the example of the holy apostles, forsake the world and their false prophets, and that we, through the Spirit and grace of God, rid the church of Christ from snares, faithfully admonish her members, and in our weakness, establish and edify them, according to the command of the holy word, Isaiah 52: 11; 2 Cor. 6: 17; Acts 2: 40; Rev. 18: 4. What shall this poor man say and boast of the church of Christ, while she is yet quite unknown to him? I voluntarily make this offer: If they allow me a discourse with them under safe conduct, either privately before witnesses, or publicly, before a full assembly, and if I cannot prove or maintain, by the power of the truth that the preachers, in general, are deceivers and not pastors, and that their pompous, avaricious, extortionate swearing and cursing disciples, are of the world and are not christians, then I will publicly acknowledge before all the world, that we not only have forsaken the church of Christ, but also lamentably destroy her and cause many a pious heart much misery, affliction and trouble, in vain.

But, as we can substantiate these assertions by the power of the truth, why, then, must we yet hear so many evil words? It were, indeed, high time that the preachers would quit their deceiving, that they and their disciples, who, where and what they be, would awaken, that they would tremble at the wrath and punishment of God, would repent, conform themselves to the Spirit, word and example of the Lord, and establish a true christian church, in accordance to the command of the Scriptures, and that they disclaimed and abjured their borrowed names and false boastings, as evangelical teachers, faithful shepherds, soul-savers, and preachers of the holy word, which they, to the dishonor of God, merely claim in appearance.

Behold, reader, I write to you the truth and lie not. I seek nothing, before my God, but that I may gain Gellius and all the preachers, wherever they may be, to Christ, by the Spirit and word of God; or that I may be vanquished of them and stand abashed before all the world, as an open deceiver. If they, now, be of christian disposition, and preachers of the holy word who are desirous of unity, as they pretend to be, then let them agree to what I desire they should, namely, a free discussion of the grounds and doctrines of both sides; that thereby the pure, saving truth of Christ may be maintained, and the impure, damnable falsehood of anti-christ be destroyed.

But in case they refuse this, as they have before twice refused me, and continue their infamous defamation and upbraiding as they have ever done before, and accuse us with all manner of accusations before the common people, that we forsake the church of Christ; that we are a misled, deceived people, and that we pervert good into evil; what else can we then do but leave them to the Lord and his judgment; and willingly submit to the cross, as we have done, possess our souls in patience, admonish those of unperverted heart, as much as possible, minutely consider what kind of preachers and pastors they have, what great injustice they do us, poor miserable ones; how scornfully they reject truth, and maintain falsehood, since we, in all humility and true love, invite them to this free, christian discussion of the Scriptures, to the praise of Almighty God, and his eternal truth, and to the beneficial refreshment of all the oppressed and afflicted souls. But they refuse us this, and besides, slander and defame us by their infamous publications without discretion, and without all foundation and truth, and thus, disgracefully accuse us before the whole world, and cause many pious, innocent children to be deprived of their possessions, honor and lives, even, as may, alas, be witnessed in many different localities of the Netherlands.

EXCOMMUNICATION, BAN OR SEPARATION.

BEFORE I commence a reply to Gellius' excuse why they do not practice Excommunication, Ban or Separation in their church, I would briefly refer the kind reader to different passages of the Scriptures to show that the Excommunication, Ban or Separation was not always practiced in the same manner, nor according to the same ordinance, by the Lord's people. The ban of Moses was punishment with death, Deut. 13; Lev. 16; Numb. 31; Josh. 7. This ban was in force until the Roman dominion. At that time a change was made; for, under the Roman scepter, they were not allowed to put the law in force, in regard to capital punishment as before. But they separated those who disobeyed the law; that is, they ejected them from their synagogues and assemblies, shunned their daily intercourse, neither ate nor drank with them, as may be learned from many of the Scriptures of the apostles, Luke 15: 2; Matt. 18: 17; 1 Cor. 5: 11; 2 Thess. 3: 6—14.

To this shunning, rule and usage, the doctrine and example of Christ Jesus, and the holy apostles unanimously point us; and these two following benefits are derived from them.

In the first place, that we be not deceived by the erroneous doctrine of false spirits, and weakened by their carnal, vain life, 2 John 1: 10. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven," &c., 1 Cor. 5: 6, 7.

Yea, my reader, wherever this excommunication, ban or separation is zealously and earnestly taught and maintained in the fear of God, without respect of persons, there, doubtlessly, the church of the Lord will be maintained unprofaned, in salutary, pure doctrine, and in an offensive life. But where this is neglected, we find nothing but vanity and worldliness, as may be plainly observed by all the churches and sects which are not of us.

Reader, observe, so long as the literal Israel, in this respect, followed the ordinance of the Lord, and punished those de-

serving of the ban, according to the word of the Lord, they remained upright and pious; but when they neglected it, inclined their ears to falsehood, and gave way to false prophets, they deviated from the way of life, and degenerated into all kinds of wickedness and idolatry, as the prophetic Scriptures, on every hand, complain and testify.

It was also the case with the primitive church; for so long as the pastors and teachers strictly required a godly, pious life, served baptism and Supper to the penitent alone, and rightly practiced separation, according to the Scriptures, they remained the church and community of Christ. But as soon as they commenced to seek an easy, careless life, and to shun the cross of Christ, they laid aside the rod, preached peace to the people; gradually abandoned the ban; and thus established an anti-christian church, a Babel or worldly church, as may, alas, be noticed, to look back over the last several centuries. Yea, my reader, if we had not until now strictly maintained this means ordained of God, then, we and ours, at this day, would have been a reproach and curse to the world, while, now, I trust, they, in their weakness, will be, by the grace of God, an example and a light to many men; although the world will not acknowledge it. In short, a church without ban or separation, is like a vineyard without an enclosure and trenches, or a city without walls; for the enemies have free ingress into it to sow and plant their pernicious tares unhindered.

In the second place, that the wicked, by a reasonable admonition, and separation from the pious, may, at heart, become ashamed, humble themselves and sincerely repent before God and the church. Therefore, Paul delivered the Corinthian unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5: 5. He also thus delivered Hymeneus and Alexander, that they might no longer blaspheme, 1 Tim. 1: 20. At another place he writes, "If any man obey

not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother," 2 Thess. 3: 14, 15.

Behold, reader, here you have it briefly stated of whom, how, and to what purpose, the ban or separation is ordained in the house and church of the Lord. Judge, now, if you fear God, if it is not an especially noble and necessary institution of pure love, which is ordained of the God of love to a service of love, although the unenlightened and refractory judge and consider it as enmity. For its ultimate design and fruit is, that the church may remain sound in doctrine, and unblamable in life; and that the erring, either in doctrine or life, may be converted, and again return to the pasture and flock of the Lord. But how far, yea, how very far, are all the preachers and churches of the world from this God-pleasing ordinance and very necessary practice.

His first excuse that separation is not practiced in their church is, That the papistical abomination has so abominably destroyed the ordinance of the churches and the right usage of the ban, by their abuse, that it cannot be immediately re-established.

Answer. If we diligently search the writings of the historians and compare the actions of the church, to which they refer, with the Scriptures, then, I think, that we surely find that there was not among all the German nations, a true, apostolic, christian church which stood right in doctrine, sacraments, ordinances and life; but that they were all founded upon the papistic foundation and abominations, and remained so, these many years.

Since, then, the church is not founded by the apostles upon the foundation of Christ, but is founded of the Pope, upon his own foundation, and is in every respect a papistical, and not a christian church, and since it is palpable that it has at this hour, neither teachers, communion, life nor sacraments conformable to the ordinance, doctrine and example of Christ, therefore he can not practice the ban until he separates himself, because he is an adulterer of the Scriptures and deceiver of souls, and then all the church, because they are generally impenitent in life and outside of the com-

mand, ordinance and word of Christ in doctrine, as may be plainly noticed. *Cogita quae dico, Qui male facit, non videt Deum,* 3 John 11. Remember that it is spoken, "He that doeth evil hath not seen God."

In the second place he writes, "We admit that in many churches negligence is found, which we cannot commend; which is caused in some places by the punishment of all open transgressions by the magistracy, so diligently that the pastors esteem it unnecessary to put the ban in force."

Answer. In my opinion it is high time that the preachers would quit their trifling with the souls of men; that they would unreservedly acknowledge that they are not the church of the Lord, but a poor, erring and worldly flock; and then would earnestly commence to learn to know themselves and next, to preach rightly the word of sincere repentance, in the power of the Spirit. All those who would accept it in sincerity of heart and truly repent, should serve the sacraments of the Lord, according to the ordinance of God, and those who would stubbornly reject it, should, by virtue of the holy word, be excommunicated, without respect of persons; then they might gather a church unto Christ, and rightly practice the ordinance of the Lord, according to the Scriptures.

But so long as they baptize unconscious children, esteem all those who are baptized as christians, dispense the bread to the impenitent, and admit all the avaricious, extortionate, pompous, drinking and carousing, in the communion of their churches, the world will be their church, and their church the world. In such a state of affairs they may preach and admonish all their life-time about separation, and the true church ordinances, but never establish them, since it is evident that all their doctrines and sacraments are nothing but a vapor, vain and powerless, for they are not the rightly called preachers, their sacraments are not the true sacraments and their disciples are not the Lord's church and people.

Say, beloved, how shall a house be built without workmen, timber, iron, stone and mortar? *Qui sanicordis est, cogitet quae dico.* He who is of sound mind, may ponder on what I say.

I would further say, that if Gellius right-

ly understood Christ and his word, he would be ashamed all his life-time; and for these two reasons:

Firstly, because he undertakes to excuse the neglect of the pastors, by saying that the magistracy punish open trasgressions, as if therefore it were not necessary. I think that hundreds of pastors can be found in Germany, who never in their life knew that the avaricious, drunken, adulterous, &c., should be excommunicated; nay, what is worse, that the greater part of them are themselves guilty of such infamous doings.

In my opinion it is as clear as day-light that his covering up and decking this ignorance, nay, negligence and disgrace, with the excuse that the magistracy punish the transgressors is nothing less than to willfully defend falsehood and oppose truth.

Secondly, because he complains that the magistracy do not grant authority or hearing to the pastors. Say, kind reader, where, in all the days of your life, did you read in the apostolic Scriptures, that Christ or the apostles requested the authority of the magistracy to punish those who would not hear their doctrine or obey their words? Yea, reader, I know to a certainty, that wherever the magistracy is to maintain the ban by the force of the sword, there are not the true knowledge, Spirit, word and church of Christ. If this is not rightly called by the papists, *Invocare brochium seculare*, that is invoking the assistance of the world, I will leave to the judgment of the discreet reader.

Also, observe here his hypocrisy and his pernicious flattery of those in high standing; for where do we find, alas, more ungodliness than among those in authority? Notwithstanding, he wants the ban to be maintained by them, as if they were the true and faithful members of the church of Christ and children of his community; and never observes that if the pastors would rightly judge, according to the holy word, the magistrates, next to the preachers themselves, would be the first who should be, according to the Scriptures, separated and excluded from the communion of the pious.

Since he, in this instance, so openly wheedles the magistrates and those of high standing, and thus flatters them, against all

the Scriptures, therefore I cannot neglect to admonish all magistrates and subordinates, and in faithful love to warn them, to consider how miserably they are deceived by the preachers. Beloved lords, observe. You all boast that you are christians and have the word of God, while it is manifest that so many of the lords and princes, daily shed human blood like water, by their ungodly warring and tumult; that they rob many innocent people of their homes and property, that they cause many afflicted orphans and helpless children to be made; and that many of them drink and carouse day and night; abuse the creatures of God above measure, namely, wine, beer, victuals, clothes, &c., all of whom are deserving of excommunication and can not stand the test of the Scriptures, as, I presume, many of the learned and preachers themselves, well know; yet they connive at such, desire their authority and assistance; they act hypocritically with them, they talk so as to please them, do not separate and punish them, however wickedly they behave; dispense to them the bread and wine as if they were members of the body of the Lord and brethren of his church. By this they so comfort and encourage them in their wickedness, that they never stop to inquire into the fear and ways of the Lord; for it is all peace, peace, whatever they preach, as the prophet complains, Jer. 8: 8; Ezek 13: 22. Beloved lords, take heed; they lead you straightway to the abyss of hell; therefore, beware. I tell you the truth in Christ Jesus, they deceive you. Again, I say, beware, they deceive you.

On the other hand, they hate and upbraid above measure, all those who seek the Lord sincerely, who strive after his holy word, in their infirmity, and who would gladly, in their weakness, lead a pious, godly life, in the fear of the Lord; because they point them to Christ; and in true, godly zeal, and brotherly love, reprove and admonish them, to their own good, of their false doctrine, false sacraments, hypocrisy and indifferent life, according to the teachings of the Scriptures. Nay, we are called apostles of the devil, apostates, anabaptists, conspirators and heretics, by them.

Behold, thus they connive at and flatter

those of high standing, although they, generally, are upon the broad way; and thus they shamefully upbraid the innocent who never harmed them, and who would gladly lead a pious life. Yet they boast that they are preachers of the gospel and teach the word of God.

In the third place he writes: The disrespect to the servants of the church, has, everywhere, become so prevalent, through the doings of these devilish conspirators and heretics, that few churches submit themselves, in unity of spirit, to their pastors, which is necessary.

Answer. That the disrespect to the preachers has become so prevalent, is caused by nothing else but their own, exceeding wickedness, deceit, avarice, blasphemy and shamelessness, as the prophet says, "Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, &c." "Ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts; Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law," Mal. 2: 3, 8, 9.

Yea, dear reader, they have become so sinful, and have so trafficked with the souls of men, that the just and great God could no longer endure it; he therefore graciously inspired some pious hearts with the Spirit of his divine knowledge, in his great love, and has discovered unto them the decked, babylonian woman, the preachers and their churches, with all their fornication, abominations and blood-guiltiness, and thus made manifest their inhuman disgrace. And these, on account of their warning, all, in unfeigned love, against the deadly, enchanting poison of her cup, by doctrine, life, example, blood and possessions, by which they seek nothing but the praise of God and the salvation of their neighbors, are called devilish conspirators and heretics. O, Lord! O! never heard of blasphemy! O disgrace of all disgrace!

Ah, my reader, my faithful reader, if we could reason with them, how soon would it be shown who are the devilish conspirators and heretics! But what does it avail? The Scribes and Pharisees sat upon exalted seats, but Christ had not whereon to lay his

head. Besides, he had to hear, that he was possessed of the devil, and wrought his miracles in the name of Beelzebub.

Is it not a perverse, lamentable hypocrisy, that this man undertakes to blame us for their not practicing the ban, while it is known and manifest to the whole world, that the greater part of the preachers are such an indifferent, blind and carnal people, that they neither acknowledge God nor his word, and seek nothing else than that they may satiate their carnal appetites and continue in their careless easy life? What kind of christians their churches or disciples are, what knowledge they have, and how they fear God, may, alas, be educed from their words and works, in city and country.

In the fourth place he writes, It is a fact well known to the whole community (he refers to the community at Emden) that we have for several years, assiduously labored to again establish the christian ordinance of the ban.

Answer. The world acknowledges no ban, but when such a transgression has been committed, that the executioner bans them with the sword, noose or fire, for the sake of their evil-doing. Or, if one sincerely repents and returns to God, abolishes the wicked, sinful life, in true fear, and puts on the new life of true repentance, that they, along with the papists, often deprive such an one of honor, possessions and life, or exile him and thus drive him into the mouth of the gaping lions.

But that they should, according to the Scriptures, shun the misers, drunkards, fornicators, &c.; that they should neither eat nor drink with them, they do not know, since they are, as a general thing, unchanged at heart, earthly-minded and full of all manner of avarice, pomp, extravagance and carnal works.

Therefore I say again, they will admonish all their life time, concerning the ban, but never establish it according to the word of God; for how can one avaricious person shun the other, one drunkard the other and one deceiver the other, according to the Scriptures, and separate him from the communion of the church, while they are altogether earthly-minded and without the communion, Spirit and word of the Lord, as has been heard.

In the fifth place he writes, "The example of the anabaptists frightens us, who so practice the ban with discord, hatred and irreconcilable anger one against the other, that it tends more to the destruction than to the edification and gathering of the church, among them."

Answer. All that I read and see of him, is a benighted vision, wrong judgment, wheedling of those of high standing, upbraiding and slandering the pious, excusing perverseness and adulteration of the Scriptures.

O, how little does he, as appears, fear God; for here he undertakes to cover up his fleeing from the cross and his disobedience, by citing the example of others. Reader, remember that the word of God should teach and govern us; that some refractory persons take offense at us, we cannot prevent. We act as the word of God has commanded us.

All those who once enter into the obedience of the word, and afterwards live or teach contrary to it, can not be permitted to continue with us as brethren and sisters, if they will not hear our admonitions. In this case, neither greatness nor littleness, riches nor poverty avail. With God there is no respect of persons; they must all bow to the Spirit, word and scepter of Jesus, or else they cannot remain our brethren.

Since it is manifest that the Spirit of the Lord becomes extinct in such as seek the broad road, and are desirous of the freedom of the flesh, of money and possessions; and that they offend the pious by their light-mindedness or self-conceit, therefore, they should, though reluctantly, be separated from the intercourse of the godly, when there are no hopes left of their reformation. If they take offense at this, because they hate to bear this shame, which is visited upon them in love, for no other purpose than for their reformation, and therefore slander and upbraid us, as, also the preachers do because we dare not hear their teaching, and partake of their sacraments, we cannot help this; nor can we prevent that some of them become Davidists* and Epicurians† (as

Gellius calls them), in spite of all our faithful admonitions, assiduity, labor and brotherly service.

The fact is, the seed did not fall on the right kind of soil, but by the wayside, on rocky ground and amongst thorns, Matt. 13: 5.

I repeat it. We have applied to them the faithful service of our brotherly love, from our inmost hearts; admonished and entreated them, and have patiently borne with some for one or two years, still waiting on their reformation, and in truth have not hastily separated them, as he accuses us, without all foundation. Since we follow and practice the ordinance of the Lord, in this respect, if he feared the Lord, he should reasonably commend our action, because we do rightly, follow the commands of God, at the risk of possessions and life, and because we act according to the Scriptures, without all respect to persons; and he would acknowledge the truth, and confess that not our example frightens them, but the fear of the cross. For if they would justly act and treat with kings, dukes, lords and princes, and also with their drunkards, misers, vain-showers, &c., then it would be quite a different thing with them; this I dare unreservedly say, and could prove it by facts.

In the sixth place he writes, "If they think that they do much good by their banning, toward the edification of the church, then let them point out from the several hundreds which they have banned, not ten, but only five, whom they have banned in love, and reformed through their brotherly love, or whom they have brought to order and saved by their banning."

Answer. He seeks all kinds of causes to blaspheme the word and work of God, that he may give some appearance of reality to his cross-fleeing and hypocrisy. Inasmuch, as he says that separation tends more to destruction than edification, therefore the reader should know that we daily find, by experience, that the following benefits are derived from separation, among us: Firstly, that we thereby obey God's word. Secondly, that we thereby rid the community from false doctrine, discord, and offensiveness, as has been said. Thirdly, that the disobedient are thereby, daily admonished to reflect, repent and return. Fourthly, that we thereby testify that we do not consent

* Davidists are the followers of David George, a sect of quiet mystics in the sixteenth century, who were accused of very erroneous sentiments.

† Followers of Epicurus, an ancient Greek philosopher.—Webster's Royal Octavo Dict.

to, nor unite with the Munsterites, and other rebellious sects. Fifthly, that we thereby admonish all preachers and their churches, that they are without the ordinance and word of God, in this respect. Sixthly, that thereby the whole world may learn from us that the advice, doctrine, ordinance and command of God should be maintained and obeyed.

Behold, dear reader, these are the fruits which true separation, daily brings forth, by the grace of God. But these, the preachers, alas, do not regard. If it were true that few are reformed thereby, as he imputes, they must still admit that these beforementioned results are obtained thereby.

Reader, take notice that however we may act, it is of no avail with the perverse; for if we had disregarded this means and divine ordinance, as the preachers do, and had left every body to follow his own mind, from which the great Lord ever preserve us, how loudly would they cry that we were rebels and Arians*. But while we separate them, according to the Scriptures, from the communion of the church, it is called a destructive means and a hasty ban. Behold, thus they seek, on every hand, to destroy truth and uphold falsehood.

In the seventh place he writes, "It is better not to use the ban, than to abuse it, to the destruction of the church.

Answer. If it were true as he asserts, then, still a good thing should not be abandoned for the sake of some. If the ban is a means of destroying and rupturing the church of Christ, then Christ and the apostles have very much deceived us in this regard, to have taught us this ordinance, openly, both by word and example, as may be read in the Scriptures. But what does it avail? He might briefly state his point thus: We do not separate and ban, for we are, as a general thing, all led by an erroneous spirit, and members of the body of anti-christ.

In the eighth place he writes, "None have proved a

* Arians, followers of Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, about 315, who maintained that the Son of God was totally and essentially distinct from the Father; that he was the first and noblest of those beings whom God had created—but inferior to the Father in nature and dignity: also, that the Holy Ghost was not God, but created by the power of the Son.—*Buck's Theol. Dic.*

greater obstacle to us in re-establishing the ban, than the anabaptists, who have caused a disturbance in the edification of the church of Christ, and in its right course; who have brought the servants into disrepute, and have, under semblance of truth, drawn many zealous hearts from the church (on whom it was to be practiced) and led them into falsehood."

Answer. If I had not learned to know Gellius from his other writings, this excuse of his, in regard to the ban, would more than clearly teach me what kind of a man he is. O, dear Lord? It is nothing but hypocrisy, falsehood and deceit, whatever he says! He writes that we obstruct the ban; yet, if he would confess the truth, he would be forced to admit, that we do not obstruct him, but his own unbelief, carnal-mind and his cross-fleeing flesh, as said before.

He writes that we have disturbed the edification of the church, while it is manifest that we point out to all the churches of the world, by doctrine and life, by the periling of possessions and blood, the right way to a true worship and ordinance, and that they are those who, with all their strength, disturb the course of the edification of the church of Christ, by their light-minded doctrine, false sacraments, and vain life.

He writes that we have brought the servants into disrepute, because we reprove them, in unfeigned love, and point them by doctrine and life to Christ's example, Spirit and word, while he acknowledges above, that some are more fit to be herders of swine than shepherds of the sheep of Christ.

He writes that we have, in semblance of truth, drawn many zealous hearts from the church, and led them into many errors; while the facts show that we do not separate them from the church but from the world, and that we lead them, by the hand and help of God, into eternal truth.

I would further say, Their doctrine has been preached for over thirty years, in Germany, and there are whole kingdoms, principalities and cities where not a single anabaptist, as he calls them, is to be found. Who is it that obstructs the pastors there in re-establishing the ban? In all the time that they have preached and taught their doctrine, they have never yet banned an adulterer, drunkard, miser, &c., and excluded such an one from the communion of

their churches; notwithstanding he writes that we obstruct and hinder them. O, dear Lord! thus are the pious everywhere evil spoken of, although they seek God sincerely, and would gladly see a christian church, true in doctrine, sacraments, ordinances and life.

In the ninth place he writes, "For two reasons we could not so soon establish it (he means the ban) as the anabaptists did. Firstly, because our gatherings are open and consist of many hundreds, whom we cannot all know; while their gatherings are secret and consist of but few. Secondly, because we do not establish sects, as they do, which is a work of the flesh, and befriended of the devil; but we establish an eternal church unto Christ, which is beguiled and robbed by the devil."

Answer. Above he has partly acknowledged that many of their hearers are of the world. Here he writes that their gatherings consist of many hundreds, and that they gather an abiding church; yet they never came to the point that they separate their disciples and church from the world, and conform to the divine ordinance. The reason is because they are of the world.

But to his writing that their assembly is large and kept in public, and that ours is small, I would, with the word of the Lord, reply in this manner, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life and few there be that find it," Matt. 7:13, 14.

Yea, my reader, if you attentively read the Scriptures you will find that the number of the chosen ones ever was small and the number of the unrighteous was always great. The pure and true gospel of Jesus Christ, the true knowledge of eternal truth, never was so appreciated by the world that the true believers can be counted by many thousands in any country or city. Christ Jesus and his eternal truth must ever abide with few, in retired places; but anti-christ and his falsehood can go abroad undisturbedly and in public, and count his followers by thousands.

Again, by his writing that they cannot know all on account of their great numbers, he testifies that brotherly love is very scarce with them; for where is there a christian pastor who does not know his sheep? and

where is the christian brother who does not know his neighbor? If the preachers do not know all, on account of their great numbers, still one brother should know the other; they should teach, admonish, comfort and reprove each other; they should seek each other's salvation; for this the word and unction of God teach us.

Reader, observe. He pretends "that they cannot possibly know all;" and I, who am most of the time, keeping myself in retired places, could point them out in great numbers. Let him, once travel through city and country where they boast of the word, and let him take a close observation, and he will find out how they dare heap one falsehood upon another, and one ungodly act upon another; how they dare swear by the Lord's sacred flesh, blood, death, wounds and sacrament, and how they are decked with different, vain ornaments. Let him take a view of the taverns, fencing-schools, the houses of ill-repute, &c., of which there is no lack in Germany; let him examine the courts of kings and princes; and into the ways of the nobility, and I presume he will find thousands doubly deserving of separation. But an earthly mind and perverse heart has, alas, little regard for the ordinance and word of the Lord.

Again, to his assertion that they do not establish sects, as he says we do, and that it is a carnal work, I would reply thus: I do sincerely wish that Gellius and all the Papists, Lutherans, Zuinglians, Davidists, &c., could appreciate this matter, for it is written of heresies and heretics, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

It is a small matter to us to be called heretics by the world; for the children of God, in the apostolic times, were also called the same. Notwithstanding, we, in our humility, would say this in regard to this matter, that we point to Christ Jesus, God's eternal Wisdom, Truth and Son; for he is the One on whom to rely, and we unreservedly refer to his doctrine, ordinance and usage. If any one under the whole canopy of heaven, can convince us with the infallible truth that we are wrong and act contrary to his word, then we will gladly hear it and obey the truth.

But in case they cannot do so, they must

confess that we are the apostolic christian church, and that they are the deceiving, carnal sects.

But that sectarians are raised amongst us, and not amongst them, is also a strong proof that we are the church, and that they are not. For Paul says, "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you," 1 Cor. 11: 19. John says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us," 1 John 2: 19.

Say, beloved, why should Satan beguile these with heresies, who are already heretics and his adherents? But those that turn to the Lord, such he beguiles and seeks to devour them, Gen. 3: 15; 1 Pet. 5: 8.

In the tenth place he writes, If they only said that we do not teach the ban, it might insult us and many teachers and churches, and they might almost be disgraced thereby. But they say that we neither have, hold to, nor practice it.

Answer. In my opinion it would be well for him not to ridicule these things, but to closely observe the word of the Lord. Before God, the literal teaching does not avail; but before him, avails action in power and truth. If they should say that this would cause a disturbance, then I would ask what kind of protectors and shepherds they are, if they neglect the will and word of God on account of the disturbance of the world. Let all the right minded judge this according to the Scriptures, Matt. 10.

In the last place he writes, But, admit it to be true that this failure exists in all of our churches, although the contrary is true of many of them, for in the German church in London, England, one is banned; and it is not altogether neglected here in Emden. Would the church on that account lose its name and henceforth, as they say, be no longer the church of Christ? Then, truly our body, to which the church is likened, would lose the name of body on account of some blemish or wound.

Answer. I think this is *posuimus mendacium spem nostram*, to make lies our refuge. For he says, the contrary is true of many churches; yet he can point to only one, of the many kingdoms, princi-

palities, cities and towns, who is banned, namely, at London, England. I have never, in all my life time heard of a more ridiculous assertion. How manifestly does the great Lord turn their wisdom to foolishness and their understanding to nothing, 1 Cor. 1. Yet the blind, ignorant world does not see it.

Reader, reflect, and see if these are not the mockers of which Peter and Jude prophesy, 2 Pet. 3: 3; Jude 8. The whole German nation or people, nay, all countries, are so replete with ungodliness, abominations and wickedness that we should stand dumb-founded. Yea, that the righteous, who fear the Lord, are as scarce as the grapes of a vintage which has been diligently gleaned, and in which few are left to pluck and use, as the prophet laments, Mich. 7: 1; and out of so many hundreds of thousands, he points to one who was banned at London, that it may be said that they practice the ban, and thus that they thus may give a semblance to their disobedience.

I think that they act so awkwardly, that the whole world must see that it is nothing but hypocrisy, falsehood and deceit. O, Lord, how long will this mockery be endured! But to his writing that if the church should lose her name on account of an error, that then, also, our bodies would lose its name on account of a blemish or wound, I would reply: If this was the only error in their church, then there would yet be hopes of a reformation; but their failures and short-comings are so numerous, that they would better be compared to a dead body, than to a body that has but one blemish or wound, as he pretends to say.

I think that in this instance the cunning of the fox which destroys God's vineyard (which he, in his writing imputes to us) is plainly discernable here. For how cunningly they flee from one latibulo (hiding-place) to another, lest they be caught, may, alas, be clearly educed from this frivolous excuse of the ban.

CONCERNING THE CHURCH, AND AN INSTRUCTIVE COMPARISON HOW
WE MAY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST,
AND THE CHURCH OF ANTI-CHRIST.

GELLIUS complains that we destroy and leave the church of God, and that we are devilish sects and conspirators; and, on the contrary boasts that they gather an abiding church. Therefore, in my opinion, it is necessary, in the first place, to compare the churches with the requirements of the Scriptures, that the pious reader may know the difference, and see which and what the Church of Christ is, and also what the church of anti-christ is; how long they both have existed; of whom they are; of whom they are brought forth; to what purpose they are begotten; of what disposition or nature they both are; what their fruits are; and by what signs they may be known, lest he be deceived by the preachers, and mistake the church of Christ for a heresy and conspiracy, and the church of anti-christ for the church of Christ.

In the first place, it should be taken into consideration, that the community of God, or the church of Christ, is an assembly of the pious, and a community of the saints, as is represented by the Nicene symbol; who, from the beginning have firmly trusted and believed in the promised seed of the woman, which is the promised Prophet, Messiah, Shilo, King, Prince, Emmanuel and Christ; who accept his word in sincerity of heart, follow his example, are led by his Spirit, and who trust in his promise in the Scriptures, Deut. 18: 18; Gen. 49: 10; Jer. 23: 5; 33: 15; Isaiah 7: 14.

Such are now, generally called christians or the church of Christ, because they are born of Christ's word by means of faith, by his Spirit, and are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, as the children of Jacob, on account of their natural birth, were called the house of Israel, Rom. 9: 7—9.

On the contrary it should be observed that the church of anti-christ is a gathering of the ungodly, and a community of the impenitent, who reject the aforementioned seed, Christ, and his word, and oppose his

will, and for that reason are called the anti-christian community or church, because they, through the spirit and artifices of anti-christ, although in semblance of the word, and in the name of Christ, teach, believe, act, and establish a strange worship, contrary to the Spirit, word, example and ordinance of Christ.

In the second place, it should be observed that the church of the pious is from the beginning; yet, it had not always the same ordinance; nor was it always called by one name in the Scriptures. For, before their departure from Egypt, they had no particular, written law; yet they feared the great and powerful God, faithfully served Him, offered burnt-offerings, and walked in his ways, as may be seen in the case of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others; they were, at that time, called God's children. Afterwards, Abraham was commanded to circumcise himself and his household, and all the males after him, on the eighth day after their birth, Gen. 17: 10. About four hundred years after that, Moses gave the law; and from that time they were generally called the people of God, or the house of Jacob and Israel. At last Christ Jesus, the Messiah of all the world appeared, to which all the Scriptures point. All those who hear him, believe his word and follow him, are now called christians, or the church of Christ, as heard, Isaiah 58: 2, 4; Jer. 23: 5.

Although at different times she was under different ordinances and usages, and, although the church is called by different names, as said, yet all, before, under and after the law, who, in sincere, true fear of God, walked, and continue to walk according to the word and will of God, and trust in Christ, are one community, church and body, and will ever remain so; for they are all saved by Christ, accepted of God, and gifted with the Spirit of his grace. It should also be observed that the church of the ungodly, which is the church of anti-christ,

commenced first with the ungodly, who were inspired with the spirit of the devil, which is envious of all good things; and will be unto the end. For the anti-church has generally existed, from the beginning, side by side with the christian church, and is the most numerous; and till the deluge, it is spoken of, in the Scriptures as the "children of men," Gen. 6: 2; John 8: 44. But from the flood until the circumcision of Abraham they are called Gentiles. After the time of the circumcision they are called Gentiles or uncircumcised, Gen. 17: 11; Rom. 15: 9.

They did not know the true and living God, but they worshipped and served the handiwork of men, wood, stone, silver and golden gods, besides, dragons, serpents, oxen, fire, the sun, moon, &c., until the apostles preached the gospel unto all the world, and gathered a church unto Christ, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15; Rom. 10: 17; Col. 1: 23, which church has been in the meantime so destroyed by anti-christ, that the greatest number have degenerated into open Gentiles and idolaters, although, in appearance they call themselves christians; for they bend their knees to rods and blocks, and require the assistance of the artificer. Others, and these are the best minded of them, seek consolation and their salvation in wrought ceremonies, water, bread, wine, and absolutions; so that we are forced to say that they are the church of the impenitent, and the church of anti-christ.

In the third place, it should be observed that the christian church is of God, as Paul says, "For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one," Heb. 2: 11. For as Christ Jesus, who is the true Savior, is of God, nay, God's only begotten and firstborn Son, so also are all those who, in sincerity of heart, believe his word, and are actuated by his Spirit. John says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John 1: 12, 13.

Again, "Every one that loveth, is born of God," 1 John 4: 7. On the other hand it should be observed that the church of anti-christ is of the evil one, as the Lord said

unto the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it," John 8: 44. "He that committeth sin, is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning," 1 John 3: 8.

Reader, observe. By these words the spirit of truth has already judged all liars, blood-shedders, avaricious, perjurers, adulterers, drunkards, pompous, idolators together with all the unrighteous that they are of the devil; that is, that they are the devil's community. Nevertheless they boast that they are the church of Christ, as also the Pharisees boasted that they were Abraham's seed and children, John 8: 39—44.

In the fourth place it should be observed that the church of Christ is begotten of sincere, pious preachers and christians, who are actuated by the Spirit of Christ; and who are, as Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, John, &c., unblamable in doctrine and life; who, in pure and faithful love, seek the salvation of their neighbors, and who can, in sincerity, say with Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ," 1 Cor. 11: 1; who preach the word in the power of the Spirit; who are shining lights before all men; and who with all their strength strive with their received talent, and may make a great gain to the treasure of the Lord, Phil. 2: 15; Matt. 5; 16. For it was God's way and will from the beginning, to proclaim the doctrine of repentance through pious and unblamable servants, as has been sufficiently shown above under the head of the "Calling of the Preachers."

On the other hand it should be observed that the church of anti-christ is brought forth by faithless preachers, who are actuated by the spirit of anti-christ; who with Korah, Dathan and Abiram seek the applause of the people, Num. 16: 2, who with Balaam seek inordinate gain, Num. 22: 24; and who with the prophets of Jezebel seek choice victuals. Who, with Hananiah flatter the people, Jer. 28: 11; who, with the false prophets preach Peace, Ezek. 13: 16; who

are earthly and carnally minded, and seek nothing but world, ease, honor, belly and gain, Phil. 3: 19; Rom. 16: 17.

O, reader, how the greatest and highest esteemed preachers of our day, whose names have become wide spread, seek the poor, naked and crucified Christ Jesus, and the souls of men with their gospel, may, alas, be educed from the accursed, ungodly pomp and splendor about their houses, and from the vain and curious ornaments, chains, rings, silk and satin, of their women and children. Notwithstanding their doctrine is called the evangelical theology, and they, the servants of the holy word.

In the fifth place, it should be observed that the church of Christ is begotten by the Spirit and word of Christ. For as an honorable woman can bring forth no legitimate children but from the seed of her lawful husband, so, also, the bride of Christ, namely, the church, can bring forth no true christians but from the legitimate seed of Christ, that is, from the unadulterated word, rightly preached through the Holy Spirit, and conceived in the heart of the hearers. Paul says, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel," 1 Cor. 4: 15; James says, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," Jas. 1: 18; also read Rom. 10; 1 Pet. 1.

On the other hand the church of anti-christ is begotten of deceiving doctrine, through the spirit of error. Paul says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy," 1 Tim. 4: 1. Yea, reader, what else has the church of Christ abolished, and the church of anti-christ re-established, but the false doctrines of the learned, the many inconsistent concilions, decrees, statutes, doctrines and commands of men? What else blinds the German nation, to-day, and what else retains them in their ungodliness, but the lightminded doctrine of the preachers, the ungodly, infant baptism, the unscriptural, idolatrous supper, and the neglect of the Lord's ordinance (separation), as it was practiced by the apostles?

The prophets on every hand complained

that Israel inclined their ears to false preachers, Isaiah 30: 9; Jer. 8: 8; 14: 14.

Christ Jesus, and his holy apostles faithfully warn in many Scriptures against false prophets; for they deceive you, says Christ; they serve their bellies and not the Lord Christ, says Paul; they promise others liberty and are themselves servants of corruption, says Peter. They turn the grace of God unto lasciviousness, Jude 4, and they are of anti-christ, Matt. 7: 15; 16: 9; 2 Pet. 2: 19. O reader, reflect diligently on what I write.

In the sixth place it should be observed that the church of Christ is begotten for the purpose of hearing the Lord, to fear, love, serve, praise, honor and thank God sincerely, as Moses says, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul; to keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes," Deut. 10: 12.

Again, "Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him," Deut. 13: 4. Peter says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light," 1 Peter 2: 9.

Behold, the church of Christ is begotten that his great miracles, his Almighty Majesty, his inextinguishable love, and his adorable, high and holy name may be eternally glorified.

But the church of anti-christ despises, hates and reviles God, as the prophet says, They transgress my covenant, as Adam did, by which they despise me. Yea, all who reject the Lord's will, word, advice, admonition, chastening, grace and love, hate him and will not be ruled by him. They do not his will, but their own; they say in their hearts: Depart from us, we will know nothing of thy ways; who is this Most High, that we should serve him? Behold, thus they boldly despise the Almighty, eternal God, who is the Creator, Messiah and Lord of all the world. May the dear Lord grant them

eyes that they may see their great faults, and hearts to realize them; this is my sincere wish for them, Amen.

In the seventh place it should be observed that the church of Christ in her weakness, is disposed and minded as Christ; for Paul says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 2 Cor. 5: 17; he is led by the Spirit, and acknowledges through this Spirit that he abides in God and God in him; he partakes of the divine nature. Yea, dear reader, the true church hates that which Christ hates, and loves that which he loves; for she is his Bride, flesh of his flesh, and "made to drink into one Spirit." Therefore she can not be otherwise minded than Christ is minded, for she is begotten of his word and abides in him and he in, over, and through her, 1 John 4: 12; John 15: 4—7.

Compare this with the church of anti-christ, and you will find that it is of like nature as her father of whom she is begotten, namely, proud, envious, murderous, false, disobedient, self-conceited, earthly and carnally minded, selfish, avaricious, bold, proud, pompous, superfluous, impure, and altogether opposed to Christ. For all things that Christ prohibits, they do; and that which he commands, they despise; whatever he hates, they love, and whatever he loves, they hate; notwithstanding they boast that they gather an abiding church, as has been heard, 1 Cor. 8: 6; 1 John 3: 24; 4: 13. He that hath ears let him hear, and judge whether or not I speak the truth.

In the eighth place it should be observed that the church of Christ brings forth the fruits of Christ, as he says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit," John 15: 5.

Every tree bears after its own kind; all who are born of God, and partake of the divine nature, fear, love, serve and praise God with all their heart; walk unblam-

ably; fraternally teach, admonish, reprove, uphold, and comfort their neighbor; daily die unto the flesh and its lusts; conform their ways according to the word of the Lord and continually lament over their being such poor, weak and frail sinners, Matt. 7: 17.

They strive to become conformable unto the death of the Lord that they may arise from the death of their sins, and that they may attain unto a perfect being in Christ. Not, my reader, that they have already attained or become perfect. By no means; but they strive, with Paul, to follow after, if that they may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus, Phil. 3: 12.

On the other hand look at the fruits of the church of anti-christ. Their preachers falsely teach, boldly deceive, and live an easy, superfluous life. The magistracy behave as if they were born for no purpose but to make war and tumults; to torture, murder, destroy cities and countries; to make vain show, drink, carouse, and to live in all manner of lasciviousness, yea, many act so that they, alas, would better be called *Leones rugientes* (roaring lions) and *lupi ves pertinii* (howling wolves) than *humani* (human beings) and reasonable persons to say nothing of christians.

The common people drink, carouse, curse, swear, grasp, tear, lie, and cheat. In short, we find such behavior on every hand, as if God was a chimera, and his word a fable. Behold, such are the fruits of those who boldly boast that they are the church of Christ. Oh! would to God that they could see what Christ Jesus, after whom they call themselves, and his holy apostles, have taught them in plain words, and what example they left them, that they might yet be saved. For as it is they only play with the letter, cry and boast; but, alas, no spirit, work, power and fruits are apparent.

THE SIGNS BY WHICH BOTH CHURCHES MAY BE KNOWN.

ALTHOUGH I think, kind reader, that the difference between both churches may be fully perceived in the foregoing comparison, yet I will, for the sake of greater clearness, briefly present the following signs by which the one church may be known from the other, that truth may be the more fully testified and manifested.

The first sign by which to distinguish the church of Christ is the salutary and unadulterated doctrine of his holy and divine word. God commanded Israel to abide by the doctrine of the law and not to deviate therefrom, neither to the right hand nor to the left, Dent. 5: 32. Isaiah admonished them to conform themselves to the law and its testimony, or they would not receive light, Isaiah 8: 20. Christ commanded his disciples, saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and "teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The prophets testify on every hand that they spoke the word of God, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, they say; again, the mouth of the Lord says; again, thus speaketh the Lord God who has led you out of the land of Egypt, and other like testimonies. Paul also says, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed," Gal. 1: 8. In short, where the church of Christ is, there his word is preached purely and rightly; but where the church of anti-christ is, there the word of God is adulterated; there we are pointed to an earthly and unclean Christ and to means of salvation which are strange to the Scriptures; there we are taught a broad and easy way; there the great are flattered, truth perverted into falsehood; there easy things are taught, such as the poor, ignorant people will gladly hear. In short, there they are consoled in their unhappy state, that they may underrate it, and say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," Jer. 8: 11. They promise life to the impenitent, while the Scriptures say, that they shall not in-

herit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6: 10; Gal. 5: 21.

The second sign is the right and Scriptural use of the sacraments of Christ, namely, the baptism of those who, by faith, are born of God, sincerely repent, who bury their sins in Christ's death, and arise with him in newness of life; who circumcise the fore-skin of their hearts with the circumcision of Christ, which is done without hands; who put on Christ, and have a clear conscience, Tit. 3: 5; Rom. 5: 4; Col. 3: 11; 1 Pet. 3: 21. Again, the dispensing of the Lord's Holy Supper to the penitent, who are flesh of Christ's flesh, who seek grace, reconciliation and the remission of their sins in the merits of the death and blood of the Lord, who walk with their brethren in love, peace and unity, who are led by the Spirit of the Lord, into all truth and righteousness, and who prove, by their fruits, that they are the church and people of Christ.

Where baptism is practiced without the command and word of Christ, as those do who not only baptize without faith, but also without reason and consciousness; where the power and representation of baptism, namely, dying unto sin, the new life, the circumcision of the heart, &c., are not only not upheld, but also quite hated by those of mature age; and where the bread and wine are dispensed to the avaricious, pompous and impenitent; where salvation is sought in mere elements, words and ceremonies, and where a life is led contrary to all love, there is the church of anti-christ; this all intelligent persons must admit. For it is manifest that they reject Christ, the Son of God, his word and ordinance, and place in its stead their own ordinance and works, and thus establish an abomination and idolatry.

The third sign is obedience to the holy word, or the pious, christian life which is of God. The Lord says, "Ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy," Lev. 19: 1. Christ says, "Ye are the light of the world." Paul says, "Be blameless and

harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world," Phil. 2: 15. John says, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked," 1 John 2: 6.

But how holy the church of anti-christ is, how her light shines, how unblamably and purely they walk, and how their life conforms to Christ's life, may, alas, be educed from their words and works, on every hand.

The fourth sign is the sincere and unfeigned love of one's neighbor, for Christ says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," John 13: 35. Yea, reader, wherever sincere, brotherly love is found without hypocrisy with its fruits, there we find the church of Christ. John says, "Let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love," 1 John 4: 7, 8.

But whether the church of anti-christ is not there where brotherly love is rejected, where they hate, defame, strike and beat each other, where every one seeks his own interest, where they treat each other deceitfully and faithlessly, curse, swear and slander, where they defile their neighbors' maidens, daughters and wives, deprive each other of honor, possessions and life, commit all manner of recklessness, abominations and malice against each other, as may, alas, be seen on every hand, all intelligent persons may judge according to the Scriptures.

The fifth sign is, that the name, will, word and ordinance of Christ, are unreservedly confessed, in spite of all the cruelty, tyranny, uproar, fire, sword and violence of the world, and that they are upheld unto the end. Christ says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven," Matt. 10: 32. "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels," Mark 8: 38. Paul, also, says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;

and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," Rom. 10: 10.

But what kind of a church is found, where they are papistic, when with the papists; Lutheran, when with the Lutherans, &c., now build up, and anon demolish and act the hypocrite to suit the magistracy, every one may judge who is enlightened by the truth, and taught of the Holy Spirit.

The sixth sign is the pressing cross of Christ, which is taken up for the sake of his testimony and word. Christ says unto his disciples, "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake," Matt. 24: 9. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution," 2 Tim. 3: 12. Sirach says, "My son if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure, and make not haste in time of trouble. Cleave unto him, and depart not away, that thou mayest be increased at thy last end. Whatsoever is brought upon thee, take cheerfully, and be patient when thou art changed to a low estate. For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity," Eccl. 1: 5. Also read, Matt. 5: 10; 10: 23; 16: 24; Mark 13: 13; Luke 6: 22; John 16: 2; Acts 14: 18; 2 Tim. 2; Heb. 11: 37; 12: 2.

That this very cross is a sure sign of its being the church of Christ, has been testified not only in olden times by the Scriptures, but also by the example of Jesus Christ, of the holy apostles and prophets, by the primitive and unadulterated church; and also, by the present pious, faithful children, especially in these our Netherlands.

On the other hand, the ungodly, heathenish, lying, hating, envying, upbraiding, blaspheming, and the unmerciful apprehending, exiling, robbing and murdering, as may be witnessed in different localities, are plain signs of the church of anti-christ. For John saw that the Babylonian "woman was drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," Rev. 17: 6. He also saw that to the beast which arose from the sea, a mouth was given, speaking great things and blasphemy against God and his holy name, and his tabernacle or church, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto

him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them, Rev. 13: 5, 6, 7. Yea, dear reader, this is the proper way and work of the church of anti-christ, To hate, persecute and put to the sword those whom she cannot enchant with the golden cup of her abominations.

O Lord! O, dear Lord! grant that the wrathful dragon devour not entirely thy poor, small number; grant that we, by thy grace, may, in patience, conquer by the sword of thy mouth; and may leave an abiding seed, which shall keep thy commandments, preserve thy testimony, and which shall eternally praise thy great and glorious name. Amen, dear Lord, Amen.

Herewith I will abbreviate the doctrine of the churches, and conclude this subject with the following questions and answers, which, I trust, by the grace of God, will enlighten the diligent reader considerably.

Quest. What is the church of Christ?

Ans. A community of saints.

Q. With whom did she originate?

A. With Adam and Eve.

Q. Of whom is she?

A. Of God, through Christ.

Q. Of what kind of servants is she begotten?

A. Of those who are unblamable in doctrine and life.

Q. Whereby do they beget her?

A. By the Spirit and word of God.

Q. For what purpose do they beget her?

A. That she shall serve, thank and praise God.

Q. Of what mind is she?

A. Of Christ's mind, in weakness.

Q. What kind of fruits does she bring forth?

A. Fruits which are conformable to the word of God.

Q. What is the church of anti-christ?

A. A community of the unrighteous.

Q. With whom did she originate?

A. With the first ungodly.

Q. Of whom is she?

A. Of the evil one, through anti-christ.

Q. Of what kind of servants is she begotten?

A. Of such as are blamable in doctrine and life.

Q. Whereby do they beget her?

A. By the spirit and doctrine of anti-christ.

Q. For what purpose do they beget her?

A. That she may despise, forsake and hate God.

Q. Of what mind is she?

A. Of an earthly, carnal, and devilish mind.

Q. What fruits does she bring forth?

A. Fruits contrary to the gospel.

THE TRUE SIGNS BY WHICH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST MAY BE KNOWN.

I. By an unadulterated, pure doctrine, Deut. 4; 6; 5; 12; Isaiah 8: 5; Matt. 28: 20; Mark 16: 15; John 8: 52; Gal. 1.

II. By a scriptural use of the sacramental signs, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16; Rom. 6: 4; Col. 2: 12; 1 Cor. 12: 13; Tit. 3: 5; 1 Pet. 3; Matt. 26: 25; Mark 14: 22; Luke 22: 19; 1 Cor. 11: 22, 23.

III. By obedience to the word, Matt. 7; Luke 11: 28; John 7: 18; 15: 10; Jas. 1: 22.

IV. By unfeigned, brotherly love, John 13: 34; Rom. 13: 8; 1 Cor. 13: 1; 1 John 3: 18; 4: 7, 8.

V. An unreserved confession of God and Christ, Matt. 10: 32; Mark 8: 29; Rom. 10: 9; 1 Tim. 6: 13.

VI. By oppression and tribulation for the sake of the Lord's word, Matt. 5: 10; 10: 39; 16: 24; 24: 9; Luke 6: 28; John 15: 20; 2 Tim. 2: 9; 3: 12; 1 Pet. 1: 6; 3: 14; 4: 13; 5: 10; 1 John 3: 13

THE TRUE SIGNS BY WHICH THE CHURCH OF ANTI-CHRIST MAY BE KNOWN.

I. By a light-minded, easy and false doctrine, Matt. 7: 16; 15: 9; 16: 4; Rom. 16: 26; 1 Tim. 4: 2; 2 Tim. 2: 16, 17.

II. By an unscriptural use of the sacramental signs, as infant baptism and dispensation of the supper to the impenitent, 1 Cor. 11: 19, 20.

III. By disobedience to the word, Prov. 1; Tit. 1: 15, 16; Matt. 7: 26; 25: 26.

IV. By hatred of the brethren, 1 John 3: 15.

V. By hypocrisy and denial of the name of God and Christ, Matt. 10: 33; Mark 8: 38; Luke 9: 26.

VI. By tyranny and persecution against the godly, John 15: 20; 16; Rev. 12: 13.

Behold, dear reader, we have here shown you the foundation of both churches; what they are, of whom they are, and by whom they are begotten; of what mind they are, what kind of fruits they bring forth, and by what signs they may be known.

Whoever does not willfully err, to him a plain way is hereby pointed out. If you, then, would be a true member of the church of Christ, you must be born of the word of God; be of a christian mind: bring forth christian fruits; walk according to his word, ordinance and command; die unto the flesh and the world; lead an unblamable life in the fear of God; serve and love your neighbors with all your heart; confess the name and glory of Christ, and be prepared for all manner of tribulation, misery and persecution for the sake of the word of God and its testimony, John 3: 3, 4; 15: 4; 8: 31; 1 Pet. 1: 23; Phil. 2: 15; Rom. 8: 14.

But if you refuse this and remain unchanged in your natural state, lead an impenitent, easy life, lay aside the word and ordinance of the Lord, act the hypocrite with the world, and refuse the cross, then you cannot be a member of the church of Christ; or else the word of God must be false and fallible; for on every hand the Scriptures teach faith, love, the fear of God, repentance, obedience, dying unto the flesh, self-denial, a new life, and the cross. Therefore, sincerely fear God, deny yourself, search the Scriptures, follow the truth, and take heed lest you be deceived and eternally lose your soul for the sake of temporal life and its enjoyments, Mark 1: 15; 8: 36; John 1: 3; 13: 14; Luke 13: 24; 9: 25; Rom. 6: 8; Col. 3: 9; Gal. 6: 1; Matt. 16: 25.

Having given a scriptural explanation of the difference between the two churches, I will now turn to Gellius' argument by which he would prove their church to be the christian, and ours the heretical and conspirator's church. This, I trust to be enabled to show by the word of the Lord, so that the impartial reader must clearly see that he (Gellius) strives, with all his power, to suppress the salutary and plain word of God, together with his church, and to excuse and uphold as well as he can the deceiving serpent and his church.

In the first place he writes: "The saints at Corinth

and of the church of Galatia, whom Paul reproves on account of their abominable sins, still continued to hear the word of God, and to receive the sacraments from their bishops and pastors."

Answer. If Gellius and the preachers would conform their doctrine and life to the Scriptures; would rightly serve out their sacraments, would separate their church from the world, according to the Scriptures, then we might talk of listening to the preachers. But so long as the preachers remain deceivers, use their sacraments contrary to the word of God, and their disciples are of the world; so long as they practice neither ban nor punishment as the Scriptures require, it is, in my opinion, of no use to say much in regard to this, for it is manifest that they are without Christ and his word.

Reader, understand this matter rightly. Paul did not bear with the ungodly state of affairs in the beforementioned churches, as the preachers of the present day, do; but he rebuked them, in severe terms, especially those of Corinth, and pointed the obedient to the separation, if they, at his coming again, had not reformed themselves, 2 Cor. 12: 13.

Gellius should, reasonably, also do this and should not console the poor, reckless people with the idea that other people, in the past, have also sinned; for this is surely what Sirach calls, excusing with the example of other people; neither can it help his cause; for, in the first place, these churches were rightly built, but afterwards some of them were misled by false prophets and heretics, and led into byways. Some of them, as appears, have again given themselves to an easy, carnal life, as is generally the case with those who turn their backs upon the truth, delight in new doctrines, discord and disputation, as experience, alas, has sufficiently taught me for these last, several years, Jude 19; 2 Pet. 3: 3.

Paul calls the disturbers at Corinth, contentious and heretics; and those of Galatia he calls deceivers; he desires and commands that they be separated from the church, lest the whole lump be leavened by this leaven, 1 Cor. 5: 6; Gal. 5: 9.

Since the beforementioned churches, being rightly established, in the first place, and being afterwards made contentious by the

heretics and carnal who arose among them, were reprov'd of Paul, because they suffered such contentious persons, with their open abominations, to remain in the church; how, then, can Gellius make good their cause by their example, while he and his preachers never were the true preachers, and their churches never were separated from the world, and therefore were not the church of Christ, as heard?

In the second place, he writes: Zachariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, Simeon and Anna, together with other saints, heard the word of God in the church of the Jews, among whom were the murderers of Christ; and, the disciples of the prophets did not separate the murderers of the prophets from the church."

Answer. These words of Gellius show that the Jewish synagogue, although many pious persons were among them, as Zachariah, Elizabeth, &c., was not the christian or apostolic church, and that they had not the ordinances of Christ and his holy apostles, nor used them; for it can never be shown that the apostolic church, so long as she remained the apostolic church, were persecutors and murderers of the pious, or that she suffered such, as was at that time the case with the Jewish synagogue. Therefore he answers and judges himself, for he does not claim that their church is the Jewish synagogue in which such abominations were found, but he claims that they are the christian church, which never thought of such things, much less practiced them.

Again, we should not follow the before-mentioned church in such abominable abuses and sins, but should be thereby admonished how we should, according to the doctrine of Paul, treat such, which ever arise among the pious; and that we should not, on account of such, mistrust the promises of the Lord, as if we were not the church of Christ; for we are thereby taught that in the church of Christ, which is ever beguiled by her opponents, offenses, blasphemies and heresies will arise; that, however, we should separate such whenever the case requires it, after proper admonition; whereby she openly testifies before God and man, that she is clear of such offenses and deceivings. This the worldly church does not do; they suffer and retain them as members, against the word and command of God, against the ordinance of the Holy

Spirit, and against the example or usage of the holy apostles; notwithstanding they well know that the institution and command of the Lord does not admit it, yet they willfully do this. Therefore they can not be Christ's church and community so long as they continue to do so; or else the express word of God must be fallible and false. O, reader, reflect upon this matter.

But from his writing that the disciples of the prophets did not separate them from the church, among whom were the murderers of the prophets, I understand him to say that their church still remains the church of Christ, notwithstanding numbers of wicked and ungodly persons are found among them, and suffered to remain among them, directly contrary to the evangelical Scriptures and the usage of the apostolic church. O, no, reader, beware, this cannot be. So long as the transgressors and willful despisers are unknown to the church, she is innocent; but when they are known and not excluded, after proper admonition, but suffered to remain in the communion of the church, then, in my opinion, she ceases to be the church of Christ. For she transgresses willfully, and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ; she despises the word and ordinance of God, because she will not bear the cross of Christ to the praise of God and to the service of their neighbors, and, because she does not want to lose the favor of men, and makes herself guilty of the sins of others, therefore she, according to John, has not God in power and in truth, 2 John 1: 1; 1 Tim. 5: 22; Deut. 17: 2; Lev. 19: 17; Matt. 18: 15.

In the third place he writes, "That they are plainly the church of God and Christ who publicly assemble, keep the word, accept and preach it; who with open confession and in the holy, divine name, dispense and partake of the sacraments, and who banish the offensive criminals and obdurate sinners."

Answer. If to meet publicly, although in all manner of vanity, pomp and splendor, to preach as the world likes it, to baptize infants, to break the bread with the impenitent, feignedly to pray, and exterminate thieves and murderers with the sword, constitutes the church of Christ, then, also, all the papists, together with the Arians, monks, &c., were Christ's church; for they all have done these things publicly. This is incon-

trovertible. Oh no, no! But where they meet in the name of Christ, where the unadulterated word of God is preached, be it in secret or public, where the baptism and Holy Supper are served in accordance with the ordinance of the Lord, where not merely the criminals, who are judged by the law of the emperor, but also drunkards, whores and adulterers, avaricious and extortioners, are excluded from the communion of the pious, according to the doctrine and example of the apostles. Behold such is the visible church which is attested by the Scriptures.

In the fourth place he writes, "That they, invisible to the eyes of man, which cannot search the heart, but only before the eyes and judgment of God, are the true church of Christ and of God, which are found in the visible church. that is, among the number of the elect; since God, through the preaching of his holy gospel and through the use of his holy sacraments, powerfully works in them, and whereby many are again born unto life everlasting, who are only known to Him who knows his people, and who searches the hearts of men. These are the true bride of Christ."

Answer. In part I admit this to be right, however with this understanding; that the visible church, in which the invisible (as he calls them) should be included, must be salutary in doctrine, sacraments and ordinances, and unblamable in life before the world, so far as man, who is able to judge only that which is visible, can see.

Since it is as clear as day that Gellius and his like preachers are blamable in every thing, because they adulterate the word of God, abuse the sacraments, flatter the world, upbraid the pious, do not separate their church from the world, and none of their disciples reprove such open transgressions and abuses, but every one is satisfied with his doctrines and sacraments, follows and maintains them; therefore they all act the hypocrite, walk upon the broad way, hate the cross of Christ and lay it upon others. Notwithstanding all this, that the invisible church should still be among them, I cannot admit; and for this reason; for I know to a certainty that it never fails, that where the true church of Christ is, there she will be made manifest among this wicked and perverse generation by words and work, for she can as little be hidden as a city upon a hill, or a candle upon a candle-stick, Matt. 5; 14; Phil. 2; 15.

In the fifth place he writes, "That the churches at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, &c.; and also the strangers here and there in Ponto, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, are called, by Paul and Peter, saints and chosen. For the church, he writes, is called after the better part of its members, and is called the church of God or of Christ, holy, pure, and unblamable."

Answer. Think not, kind reader, that all those who lived at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Ponto, Galatia, Cappadocia and Bithynia, are called the church of Christ, of Paul and Peter, as all those who live in Meissen, Düringen and the German countries are called the church of Christ by the preachers. By no means. But they meant the small number, who, begotten by the word of the divine power, separated themselves from the world, and with open confession willingly placed themselves under Christ and his covenant. If I should write, the chosen children and saints of God at Antwerp, Ghent, Leeuwarden, and the strangers in the German countries, here and there, I would not mean all those that live at those places mentioned. By no means. For *they* also live there, who persecute and trouble the chosen children of God; but I would refer to those who confess Christ Jesus, through true faith and are obedient to his holy word.

Behold, reader, if the preachers, in the same manner, would separate their church from the world, would preach the word of God in purity, would use the sacraments in accordance with the Scriptures, and would strive with their churches, after a pious and christian life, then he might truthfully boast that the chosen, which he calls the invisible church, are included in their church, as he pretends they are.

In the sixth place he writes, "If they should say, your church is not believing, holy and unblamable, then I would refer them, first, to the Jewish church, from which we may learn that they, at the time of Elias, Jeremiah, Daniel and all the prophets, of John the Baptist, of Christ and the apostles, were not all holy; this the Scriptures of the prophets and of the apostles sufficiently teach us. But that they, notwithstanding both people and magistrates were for the most part wicked, were called the church of God and of Christ, and were thus called on account of some pious persons, to whom God sent his prophets."

Answer. If the preachers would rightly discharge the duties of their office, as Elias, Jeremiah and the prophets did; and if some were found in their church who follow

the word of the Lord, as in the time of the prophets, then this might help the case of Gellius. But they are not such as Elias, Jeremiah and Daniel, nor the teachers who are led by the Spirit of Christ; but are such preachers and teachers as were reprov'd of Jeremiah, as may be seen in many of his Scriptures; such as were destroyed by Elias, and against whom we are faithfully warn'd of Christ and his apostles not to hear them, Jer. 8: 14; 23: 27; Matt. 7: 15; John 10: 3.

I would further say, Israel was the literal people, and had the promise of the fathers, on account of their birth after the flesh. The law was given them that they should serve God, and walk according to his commandments; when they transgressed the law and did not observe that which God had commanded them, they yet remained the literal people; and God, ever mindful of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has awakened his faithful servants, the prophet, and often sent them to reprove them earnestly, out of the word of the Lord, to point them again to the law, and boldly threaten them with punishment for their sins, Gen. 15: 17, 18; Deut. 5: 32. This is not the case with us at present; for we are not the literal race, brought forth from the loins of Abraham and Isaac, but are begotten of the word of God, through the Spirit. If we again forsake this birth which is of God, do not abide in the word of Christ, and again enter into the broad way, then we do not remain his church and community, 2 John 1: 9. Behold, reader, it being manifest that Gellius and the preachers of his class, together with their churches, never were the spiritual people, because they, as appears, are not born of God in truth but are earthly and carnally minded, live according to the lusts of the flesh, did not enter in at the right gate, teach an impure doctrine, and use strange sacraments, whereby no abiding church can be gathered unto Christ, as has been heard; and, besides, they act altogether contrary to the Spirit, word and will of Christ, nay, hate and despise them; how then can they be likened in the fall, unto Israel, who were the people and church, on account of the patriarchs, while this people and church never were the church of Christ in Spirit, as has been heard?

Lastly I would say, All the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, on every hand, point us to Christ Jesus, that we shall hear him, Matt. 17: 5; Mark 9: 7; Deut. 18: 15. Whosoever does not hear him, it will be required of him. Therefore take heed. As I have said before, although all the pious, from the beginning, were the community, church or body, yet at different periods they have had different doctrines, ordinances and worship.

Moses gave the law and Israel had to obey it, until Christ appeared, who was promis'd. We are now directed to his Spirit, word and ordinances. If it can be proven to us by his word, that his Spirit suffered drunkards, avaricious, pompous, adulterers, blasphemers, tyrants and murderers (understand, such as do not repent), in the communion of the apostolic churches; and also that his Spirit ordained open deceivers and worldly minded persons to be bishops and pastors, then I will admit that they are the church of Christ; but if they cannot do so, as it is impossible for them to do, then they must confess that their church, which is full of such people—aye full, is not the church of Christ, as they boast it to be; but that it is 'a disorderly, refractory and disobedient people, nay, that it is the church of anti-christ, and of the world; and that their pretensions in this respect are nothing but open seduction, falsehood and deceit. Reader, observe, I testify this unto you in Christ; believe it if you will; I write the truth unto you.

In the seventh place he writes, "In the second place I refer them to the church of the Corinthians, whom Paul, in the first place, reprov's on account of their dissensions," saying, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal," 1 Cor. 3: 1.

Answer. Heretofore I have said that this church was first rightly taught of Paul, and won unto Christ; but, being deceived by philosophers, who despis'd the doctrine of the cross, and by false apostles, they became divided; for which they were reprov'd and fraternally instructed of Paul, and admonish'd to separate the unfaithful and carnally minded; for the Scriptures command and instruct us to do this, namely, that such should first be admonish'd, and if they do not repent, that they should be

unanimously separated from the communion of the church. Judge now, what Gellius can substantiate hereby; since he and his, never having been separated from the world, are not the church of Christ. Yea he, good fellow, does nothing more nor less than that he hereby manifests his cross-fleeing and open disobedience, and that he covers up and defends the abominable transgressions of his disciples, however gross they be, with the precedents of others.

In the eighth place he writes, "In the third place I refer them to the parable of Christ, of John the baptist, and of Paul. Christ likens the church unto a field in which the tares grow with the wheat until the harvest. Again, she is likened unto a net in which both good and bad fish are caught. Again, unto the virgins, of whom five were wise and five were foolish. Moreover, unto a royal wedding, where the good and evil are gathered together, one of whom is found by the king, to be without a wedding garment."

Answer. This first parable is explained by Christ himself, saying, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world" (understand it rightly, Christ says, It is the world, and not the church, as Gellius claims); "the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels," Matt. 13: 37—39.

Reader, understand it rightly. Christ, the Son of man, sows his seed (God's word), through his Spirit, in the world; all who hear, believe and obey it, are called the children of the kingdom. In the same manner the opponent sows his tares (false doctrine), in the world, and all that hear and follow him are called the children of evil. Now, both wheat and tares grow together in the same field, namely, in the world. The husbandman does not want the tares to be plucked out before their time, that is, he will not have them destroyed by rooting them up, but wants them left until the harvest, lest the wheat be destroyed with the tares, Matt. 13: 29, 30.

O, reader, if the preachers rightly understood this parable and feared God, they would not cry so loudly against us, who, alas, are every where called *tares, heretics* and *conspirators*, "Down with the heretics;" even if we were heretics, from which God

save us. Oh! what noble wheat they destroy! But what does it avail? Satan must rebel and murder; for it is his nature and work, as the Scriptures teach, Gen. 3: 4; John 8.

Some of the other parables, as of the net in which good and bad fishes are caught; of the wise and foolish virgins and their lamps; of the wedding of the king's son and the guests, and of the threshing floor with wheat and chaff, although the Lord spoke them in allusion to the church, yet they were not spoken for the purpose that the church should knowingly and willfully accept and suffer open transgressors, drunkards, carousers, defilers of women, avaricious, robbers, gamblers, and usurers, in their communion; because, then, Christ and Paul would differ in doctrine; for Paul says that we should avoid and shun such. But they were spoken because many intermix with the christians, in semblance only, and place themselves under the word and sacraments, who, in fact, are no christians, but are hypocrites and enemies before their God; and these are likened unto the refuse fish; unto the foolish virgins who had no oil in their lamps; unto the guest without a wedding garment, and unto the chaff, which will be cast out by the angels, at the day of Christ. For they pretend that they fear God and seek Christ; they receive baptism and the Lord's Supper, and outwardly act in semblance, but, in fact, no faith, repentance, true fear and love of God; no Spirit, power, fruit nor work is found in them.

But, as to the two kinds of laborers in the vineyard, Matt. 2: 28, 29, and as to those called to the great supper, Luke 14: 16, the reader should know, that they have a different meaning and cannot conform to his sentiments. Whosoever loves truth, may examine them, and judge by the Holy Scriptures what their proper meaning is. Again, as to his citation of the vessels to dishonor, I will let Paul's words explain them. He says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work," 2 Tim. 2: 21.

Behold, dear reader, here you may ob-

serve how miserably he perverts the word of the Lord, that they may, apparently, be the church of Christ, although they knowingly and willfully admit open transgressors to the communion of their church, against the Scriptures. But the flaming eyes of the Lord, which search every thing, cannot be blinded by such sophistry.

In the ninth place he writes, "The church, now being perplexed by such evils as these which she has to suffer unto the day of judgment, as some of these parables imply; nay, that it never was her lot to be entirely rid of evil ones and hypocrites, however strictly she used the ban, therefore they are wrong, and grossly sin by condemning us, and saying that we are false teachers, and not the church of God, as was the church of the patriarchs, prophets and Moses; and by maliciously and wrongfully calling our church, which is founded by our faithful service upon the true foundation, according to the example of all the messengers of God, and which is daily increased and built up, upon the chosen cornerstone, an unbelieving, unholy and blamable church, against all the Scriptures, and thereby not only bringing our church into disrepute, but also all the churches of the German countries, nay of all the christian world, which have and must have a different doctrine from their church, which they call holy, pure, unblamable and spotless on account of their dreadful ban."

Answer. If he should have said that the church is troubled with such evils, and that she must suffer them, in such a manner as to mean that the true church must suffer the enmity, rebellion, violence and tyranny of the wicked, and ungodly actions of the perverse, then he would have written the truth. But since his meaning is, that since the church ever has hypocrites among her number, that therefore the evil ones, that is, open despisers and transgressors should be tolerated; therefore he writes contrary to the word of God; for Paul says, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person," that is, separate from the communion of your church him who is wicked, 1 Cor. 5: 13.

Again, to his writing, "that we grossly sin by saying that they are not the church of God," and to his boasting "that they build their church upon the corner stone," I would say that his boasting is false; for their light-minded doctrine, false sacraments, reckless life and his indiscreet writing, alas, prove too plainly, that they do not build their church upon the true cornerstone; it being manifest that they, on every hand are at fault, adulterate the word of

God, abuse the sacraments, practice no separation, and for the greater part, both teachers and hearers walk upon perverse ways; whether we therefore sin, because in faithful love we admonish them for their own good, and in humility show them that they, under such a state of affairs, are not, neither can be the church of God, the reader may judge. We know to a certainty that where there is no pure doctrine, no pure sacraments, no pious, christian life, no true, brotherly love, and no right minded confession, that there is no christian church; let them boast ever so much.

Again, in regard to his complaint, "That we not only call *them*, but *all* the churches of the German countries, nay, of the whole christian world, unbelieving, unholy and condemn them, the reader should know that we condemn no one; for he, Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given it, will do that. Yet we say, and teach it verbally and by writing, that all those who are not born of God and his word, are not actuated by the Spirit of Christ, are not changed into his nature and disposition, however high and fine an appearance and name they may assume. In this case, neither emperor, king, doctor, licentiate, pope nor Luther will avail. All who would be in the church of Christ, must be in Christ, must be of his mind, and walk as he walked, or else Christ Jesus, John, Paul and all the Scriptures must be false; this is too clear to be denied, John 5: 22; 1 John 2: 6; Rom. 8: 14; Phil. 2: 5.

Since he accuses us that we condemn all the churches of the German countries, and of the whole christian world, as he boasts, therefore I would answer with a few plain words: If the German churches and the beforementioned world were born of God, were of Christ's mind, walked as he walked then the accusation of Gellius would be right, since we do not acknowledge them to be true churches. But as they prove by deeds that they are without Christ, walk and act against his word and will; as they are quite earthly and carnally minded, therefore, they are not judged of men, but of the word of the Lord, for Christ says, "The word that I have spoken, the same

shall judge him in the last day," John 12: 48.

Further, by his writing that the said churches have and must have a different doctrine, he judges himself that they are not the church of Christ. For Christ will, that his church should keep and follow his word, ordinances and commands, whether it be to the joy or to the pain of the flesh.

Behold, dear reader, since it is doubly plain that the Scriptures teach, both by words and examples, that open transgressors should be excluded from the communion of the church; and since the preachers, who fear men more than God, and serve their bellies more than the praise of the Lord, neglect this on account of the cross, which might result from such action, therefore their public actions testify that they are not the bride and sheep of Christ; for they do not hear his voice, neither do they follow his doctrines and commands, 2 Thess. 3: 6; John 10: 26.

Again, to his writing that we consider our church holy, pure and unblamable, on account of the cruel ban, this is my simple reply: We do not at all boast but of the grace of our God through Christ Jesus. Our frailty is great, our stumblings are many, and we feel with Paul, that nothing good dwells in our flesh. Notwithstanding all true members of the church of Christ strive after the unblamable, holy being, which is in him; they conform their walk to the word of the Lord; they follow his commands and ordinances; and separate those who are separated by the Scriptures, which he, alas, calls a fearful ban. O, Lord.

O God! Thus the precious word is esteemed as unworthy by this thoughtless man. For, by this abominable, unseasoned blasphemy, not only we, but also the Son of the Almighty and living God, together with the Spirit of eternal wisdom, by whom this ban was commanded, and also all the apostles and the primitive church, who so diligently taught and earnestly practiced it, are adjudged fools. If the ordinance is foolishness, then the Institutor, and all who teach and practice it, must be fools; this cannot well be denied.

Observe, reader, if this may not be called hating the word and will of God, despising

his commands, and speaking blasphemies against the Most High, you may reflect upon, and judge by the Scriptures. O, reader, awaken. Beware, and learn to know your preachers, and of what spirit they are the children.

In the tenth place he writes, "Thus they are given to a wrong understanding, prejudice without knowledge, and leave the church from motives of spiritual pride and fancy of righteousness, more than from motives of sincere righteousness; they have no other reason to leave the church, than that they, according to the manner of the Pharisees, would justify themselves by despising others."

Answer. I fear that it would weary the reader to reply to all his false accusations minutely. Yet I would say, in regard to this, If I could speak with Gellius before the public, I have no doubt but many, through the grace of God, would begin to see that it is not us who have a wrong understanding, but them; that they prejudice us, indiscreetly; remain outside of the church of Christ, from motives of pride; and not only despise us, according to the manner of the Pharisees, but also often deprive us of possessions and life, as may be witnessed in different localities. But we must suffer, bear, and console ourselves with the saying, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," Matt. 5: 11, 12.

In the eleventh place he writes, "They will probably say that if we would be the church of Christ, we must verify the saying of Christ;" "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" and ask where our church has existed, inviolated by the devil, anti-christ and heresies. He further writes, "Since the church, which is not limited to certain boundaries, but is scattered over the whole world, has this article of faith," "I believe in the holy, christian church, the communion of saints," "and that she will endure unto the end of the world, therefore we are forced to acknowledge, that God, true to his promise, saves his church, and has always saved her, although the old serpent, the devil, deceives her by the lusts of the flesh, the pomp of the world and by many sects; and, although she is combatted, persecuted and disturbed, by the potentates of the world, until she, inattentive to her cause, drowsy in her prayer, indifferent to the will of God, and ungrateful for the word of God, or, until found apostatical of Christ, so enrages God that he takes from her the light of his word, and lets her fall into weighty errors, and adhere to idolatry,

adultery, whoredom, and other sins and disgraces and follow after them, so that the church in such case, almost destroyed and ruined, scarcely is worthy of the name."

Answer. I would beseech the diligent reader earnestly to observe how the words of Gellius sound, which I have here cited at length. He admits that the church, deceived and enchanted by the devil, the lusts of the flesh, the pomp, sects and potentates of the world, has become drowsy, inattentive, ungrateful, and an apostate of Christ, has enraged God, and fallen into all manner of wickedness and sins; yet he claims that she remains the church of Christ, as if the church was inherited by one generation from another, and did not consist in faith, Spirit and power. I would not know what poorer excuse he could find. Therefore observe that which I write, and let it be unto you a certain rule, namely, where the Spirit, word, sacraments and life of Christ are found, that there the Nicene article comes in, "I believe in the holy christian church, the communion of saints, &c. On the other hand, where the Spirit, word, sacraments and life of Christ are not to be found, but where the spirit, doctrine, sacraments and life of anti-christ are followed, there, also, is the church of anti-christ, and not the church of Christ, although we might say a thousand times, "I believe in the holy christian church." For without, or against the Spirit, word, sacraments and life of Christ, there can never be a christian church, however much we may pervert the truth. The word stands immutable. "Who-soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God," 2 John, 9.

In the twelfth place he writes, "Because God, in his grace, has made an eternal covenant with his church, and has promised her that the gates of hell, although they may rend and weaken her, shall not thoroughly prevail against her, therefore he will, at all times, preserve a shadow of the evangelical doctrine and of his sacraments, upon which the church shall be upheld; and he will also preserve some members upon the true foundation, who will grow up amidst the thistles, thorns, wolves, bears and lions, and deliver them as in a violent hurricane, from the elements, as Noah was saved from the deluge."

Answer. Where they conform themselves to the Spirit, word, sacraments, ordinances, commands, prohibitions, usage and example of Christ, there the holy christian church

is found, as has been heard, and there is also the promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against her. For although she grows as a rose amongst thorns, as he expresses himself, keeps herself amongst wolves, bears and lions, and as a ship cast about by wind and waves, she must suffer much tribulation, yet she cannot be capsize, that is, she cannot be turned from Christ (understand this to be the true christian church); for she is built upon a rock, Matt. 7: 24.

That this is the truth, the Scriptures and their examples teach us on every hand; and we also have found it so by facts, within the last few years. For, however fiercely the lions, bears and wolves have roared, raved and torn, for the last few years, by their frightful mandates, apprehending, torturing and murdering; and, although the waves often roll up to the clouds, yet the manifested truth remains with the humble and pious children; and however sharply the thistles and thorns may sting, yet this noble and beautiful rose daily grows, and, praise be to God, increases in size and strength, whereby it is made manifest unto many reasonable persons, that God's promise to the church stands firm, and it is the miracle and power of the Most High; for neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. 8: 38, 39.

Yet this thoughtless man thinks that they are the true, christian church, and does not observe that the beforementioned thistles, thorns, wolves, bears and lions, by which the true church has been so much troubled, and still continues to be, are members of the very church which he claims were and yet are the true church of Christ. For they, during the last few centuries, have used one sacrament, and, unseparated, were greeted as the children of grace, and were admitted and accepted in the communion of these churches.

He, besides, also consoles the poor people that the Lord has, at all times, preserved a shadow of the evangelical doctrine and of his sacraments upon which to support his

church; as if God was well pleased with such a dead shadow of false preaching and of infant baptism; and, as if the church of Christ, the bride of God and of the Lamb, could be supported by adulterated doctrines and unscriptural sacraments. O, dear Lord! How long shall such errors yet endure? Who cannot understand such palpable deceit? He must have an extremely obdurate and perverse heart, or he must be a very ignorant and blunt man, I think.

In the thirteenth place he produces two arguments whereby he means to prove that their church is the general church (as he calls it) wherewith God has so dealt. And in the first place writes, "in which church anti-christ was seated; for, according to the prophecies of Paul, he had placed himself therein and exalted himself above God; and asserts that it is the true church to which God has given the promise, although she was dreadfully stained and miserably torn up. In our church the anti-christ has been seated, and placed himself as a God, and has exalted himself above all that is of God and religion—therefore our church is the true church and temple of God, to which the promise of God is given." "This argument he proves with these words: "The first proposition is true; for Paul calls the church in which the anti-christ would place himself, the temple of God; the other is also too clear to be denied, from the prophecies of Paul and the teachings of experience. For in the churches which baptize infants, he and all the violent tyrants have exercised their power and violence, and trampled under foot all religion and worship. If both propositions now are true, then it follows, also, that the conclusion is true; and shows the anabaptists, in what a fearful condition they are, since they have left us and our church."

Answer. By the side of this I will place my syllogism: Where true religion and worship, as required of the Scriptures, are trampled under foot, there is not the church of Christ. Anti-christ has, Gellius testifies, trampled under foot the true religion and worship required by the Scriptures, in the church of which Gellius speaks; therefore, the before-mentioned church is not the church of Christ. All Scriptures teach that my first proposition is true; for Moses says, "Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he" (meaning Christ) "shall speak in my name, I will require it of him," Deut 18: 19. Christ says, "If ye continue" (mark, "continue"), "in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed," John 8: 31. Again, Paul says, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed," Gal. 1: 9. John, also, says, "Who-

soever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God," 2 John 1: 9.

My second proposition, Gellius admits to be true; for he says, that anti-christ has trampled religion and worship under his feet, as heard.

Since, then, that the first proposition can be substantiated by the Scriptures, and the second is acknowledged by Gellius to be right, therefore, my conclusion must also be right, namely, that the church to which he refers, is not the church of Christ. For she does not accept the word of Christ, but a strange gospel; and does not abide in the pure doctrine of his holy apostles; therefore they have not God in power, and are not the disciples of Christ; or else the cited sayings must be wrong and false.

As regards the first proposition of Gellius, Paul testifies in plain words, that it is false, for he says, "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition," 2 Thess. 2: 3. Here Paul teaches in tolerably plain words that the falling away of faith would first come as was also the case here, 2 Thess. 2: 3.

Since Paul openly testifies by the Spirit of God, that the falling away would come before the day of the Lord, and also shows through whom it would come, namely, through the man of sin (son of perdition); and since it is clearly visible that this son of perdition has placed himself in the temple of God, that is, in the hearts of man, or rather, in the stead of God in the before-mentioned church, and has quite demolished and destroyed it, and through deceit has changed it, under the semblance of the name of Christ, from the doctrine and ordinances of God to his own doctrine and ordinances, therefore, I would leave the attentive reader to judge if this church, which is quite demolished and destroyed by him, can be called God's temple. If he judge that it cannot be so called, then he judges rightly; otherwise many passages of the Scriptures would be fallible and false; and, as a consequence, God and the devil, Christ and anti-christ must have been seated in one temple, and reigned in one church. But, if they deny this, then I would again say that

Luther and the learned have done wrong in bringing about such a disturbance, tribulation and misery in the world by their doctrine and change, since they, according to Gellius, still remained the church of Christ, although the anti-christ had quite destroyed and demolished the true religion. Reader, reflect upon this, and judge whether I write the truth or not.

In his second proposition he judges himself; for he writes, that anti-christ was seated in their church, which baptizes children; has placed himself therein as a God; trampled under foot the true religion and worship; he also acknowledges, above, under the head of the separation, that the papists are no christians; for he says, "that those who leave us would sooner become papists than christians again." Kind reader, observe closely what I write. Since it is manifest that the Roman anti-christ has, for a number of years, reigned in peace in their church; has given them to drink from his cup of abominations; has destroyed the true religion, and re-instated his abominations; and since he himself admits that the papists are no christians, therefore, it is certain and plain that their church was not, as he claims, the general christian church and temple of God, to which the promise of God was given. For it cannot be that they can be the disciples of anti-christ and then yet remain the christian church and temple.

Now consider, if the pious, whom he calls anabaptists, are so much out of way, by renouncing all the anti-christian abominations, false, condemned sects and churches; and, if they place themselves in such a frightful position, as he sighingly complains, by humbly submitting themselves to the only, eternal Messiah, Christ Jesus, and by placing themselves as an example of all obedience and virtue, in their weakness, before all the world.

His second argument is this: "In and with all churches which teach the doctrine and faith of Christ Jesus; are not altogether fallen away; do not altogether reject and profane Christ and his holy gospel and which do not altogether trample upon the use of the holy sacraments and neglect them, as under the reign of Mahomet, there still remains the name of the holy church. In and with our church, which has the infant baptism as an apostolic ordinance, the doctrine and faith of Jesus Christ, as taught by the apostles, never was altogether

fallen away, as it was with the Turks; although abominably adulterated and weakened by anti-christ; therefore, the name of the church remains with our community and has true members in it."

Answer. If his first proposition was consistent and right, then it would also be consistent and right to say, The doctrine and faith never were entirely fallen away with the Arians, Circumcellians, Munsterians and other sects; the gospel was not altogether rejected and profaned, and the sacraments altogether trampled upon by them, therefore, the name of the church remains with them, and true members of the church are found among them. We are, therefore, also wrongfully called "devilish heretics, conspirers, and apostate anabaptists," by him, for we so highly prize the gospel and the sacraments of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we daily sacrifice our possessions and blood for their sake, as may be seen.

If he should say that the beforementioned sects did not act and teach in accordance with the Scriptures, and that they therefore were not in the communion of the christian church; then he judges himself still more markedly. For the papistic church to which he refers, did not do this; if they did rightly act and teach, then he very unjustly says that they are not christians, as has been heard that he did.

Again, by his writing, "There still remains the name of the holy church," he openly testifies that his assertion is without all foundation in the Scriptures; for he does not refer to the unadulterated doctrine, to the salutary use of the holy sacraments, nor to the pious, unblamable life, which should ever be found in the church of Christ; as if the name could keep the church in God and could bind it to the promise, without the Spirit, word, sacraments, faith and obedience of Christ. No, no, reader, no. "I know," says the First and the Last, "the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan," Rev. 2:9. If the name alone constituted the true church, then all the raving tyrants, enemies of christian truth, all murderers, perjurers, whoremongers, avaricious, pompous and unrighteous, would be members of the church of Christ,

for they call themselves after the name of Christ. This is incontrovertible.

As to his second proposition, I would say in the first place, Since he says that their church has infant baptism, as an apostolic ordinance, that he thereby heaps open falsehood upon the holy apostles, the upright, pious testifiers of eternal truth; for he never can prove by a single word in the Scriptures, that they taught or practiced infant baptism, as has been sufficiently shown, above.

In the second place I would say, That the church to which he refers, was not only adulterated and weakened, as he calls it, but has become so estranged from God, that she has worshipped, honored and served wood, stone, gold, and silver gods, and, besides bread and wine; as has, alas, been seen these many years, in all the temples and houses of worship, throughout Europe; and, as may yet, daily, be seen in many kingdoms, cities and towns. Yet, Gellius asserts that their church ever was the church of Christ. I have never heard more inconsistent reasoning. Therefore, dear reader, beware, and do not listen to the smooth talk of the learned, for they deceive you. But hearken unto him who says, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," John 8: 12, and then you will never be deceived.

Reader, understand what I mean; we do

not dispute about whether or not there are some of the chosen one's of God, in the beforementioned churches; for this we, at all times, humbly leave to the just and gracious judgment of God, hoping there may be many thousands who are unknown to us, as they were to holy Elias; but our dispute is, in regard to what kind of Spirit, doctrine, sacraments, ordinances and life, Christ has commanded us to gather unto him an abiding church, and how we should maintain it in his ways.

Behold, reader, these are his most important arguments with which to maintain his assertion, "that their church is the true one," namely, because they sprang from the papists, and practice infant baptism. Just hear how strangely he writes. In my opinion, he pens all that comes in his mind, if it has but a little semblance, that it may tickle the ears of the thoughtless people, and console them in their impenitent, easy life. If these adduced assertions of his were true, then it could not be otherwise than that hitherto the church of Christ must have been the church of anti-christ, or that of anti-christ must have been the church of Christ; also, Christ and anti-christ must have both reigned in one church; infant baptism must have been called apostolic, without the Scriptures, and the mere name constitutes the church of Christ; this, by the grace of God, no one can successfully rebut; let him garble and twist the matter as adroitly as he pleases.

CONCERNING SOME ACCUSATIONS AGAINST US.

In the first place Gellius accuses us, saying, "They (he means us), falsely, adorn and deck themselves with the sanctity of the church. For, since the Holy Spirit, which sanctifies the church both by the remission of sin, and dying unto the old man with all his lusts, and also by the nullifying of the sins in the flesh, is given through faith, therefore I cannot see how they can receive the Holy Spirit, together with true sanctification, and be the true, holy church, while they so bitterly contend among themselves about the divinity of the Holy Spirit (which, besides other evidence, sufficiently proves his divinity by the work of sanctification), as well as about many other articles of faith."

Answer. Zuinglius formerly taught that the will of God actuated a thief to steal, a murderer to kill, and that their punishment was also brought about by the will of God; which, in my opinion, is an abomination of abominations. Now, if I conclude that because Zuinglius taught so, all preachers teach it, it would be a wrong conclusion. Athanasius could not prevent Arius from teaching that the Holy Spirit was a creature of the creature of Christ.

Reader, understand my meaning. I never have thought that God's Holy and eternal Spirit was not God, with God and in God; yet, he would accuse us, who are not guilty, of denying the sanctification, grace, fruit and power of the Holy Spirit, because some, who have been separated from us, have erred in this respect, and probably still err; although he plainly sees and palpably feels the sanctification and power of the Holy Spirit in us, namely, that it smothers the old man with his lusts, and destroys the sins of the flesh; something which he calls the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, as has been heard. Behold, thus he upbraids and accuses the guiltless. Whether this is not the Parisaic, envious and disgraceful spirit, which explains away the good intentions of Christ and his disciples, and thereby inflamed the thoughtless populace against them, I will leave to his own reflection.

In the second place he accuses us, saying, "They have an obdurate faith; one half of which is founded upon the merits of Christ, and the other upon their own merits. For Obbe Philips, who has a great many followers (as he says) does plainly assert that the justification of man is not brought about by faith alone, but by faith, love and good works."

Answer. I would humbly ask Gellius this question: Does it follow that because Obbe Philips formerly taught this doctrine, Menno and the others also teach it? If he answer in the affirmative, then I would say that he does us an injustice, as, alas, he often does. For our doctrine and publications abundantly testify that we and the church of God are not thus minded, but that we seek justification alone in the righteous and crucified Christ Jesus.

But if he answer in the negative, then I wish he would have the kindness and virtue in him to make a difference and not mix the innocent with the guilty; and I also wish that he would say no more than the truth; for he writes that the beforementioned "Obbe Philips has a considerable number of followers," and I make the assertion that he cannot find more than six or ten who believe as he does.

In the third place he accuses us, saying, "How can they be a holy church who disagree among themselves about the head of the church; do not suffer him to be the true God, and thereby resuscitate the old Arian heresy."

Answer. We may well sincerely thank the Most High, that he so manifests unto us his paternal grace and great mercy, that even our most adroit and acute opponents cannot accuse us but by such puerile, and, for the greater part, false reasoning. If he would consult natural honor, not to mention love and truth, as much as he, alas, consults bitter and envious feeling, how loth would he be to think that which he now is not ashamed to publish in writing, indiscriminately saying that we resuscitate the old Arian heresy, while he and his like, well know that such have no part in the communion of our churches, so long as they do not renounce such errors, as heard.

O dear Lord, how long will such bitter and envious accusations and false backbitings continue? Would to God that the magistrates would have a little fear of the Lord, and consider what they are doing, and that they would hear and compare the different parties, so that they would once learn whom and for what purpose they persecute, and what kind of people and teachers they are whom they daily maintain and encourage in their injustice and abominations, by their violence.

In the fourth place he accuses us, saying, "If they are the true, holy church, the spiritual bride of Christ, pure, holy, and unblamable, then let them prove the unity of the Spirit, especially concerning the twelve articles of faith, which are the foundation of the church; then the one should not be Mennonite, the other Adam Pastorite, the third Obbeite, the fourth Dirkite, &c. For although they may ban one another as much as they please, it still is evidently true that they are all anabaptists and enemies to infant baptism, and thus still continue to conspire and fanaticize against the churches of Christ."

Answer. I trust that we, by the grace of God, are so wedded to our Lord and Bridegroom, Christ Jesus, that we are prepared to sacrifice our lives for the sake of hearing his holy voice. We do not boast of our holiness and piety, as Gellius accuses us, but of our great weakness. I also trust that we, who are grains of one loaf, agree in not only the twelve articles (as he counts them), but in all the articles of the Scriptures, as regeneration, repentance, baptism, Holy Supper, separation, &c., which we, along with Isaiah, Peter and Paul, Isaiah 28 : 16; 1 Peter 2 : 6; Eph. 2 : 20, accept as the only foundation of the churches, as preached by

Christ's own, blessed mouth, and left and taught us in clear and plain words; and not only the twelve articles as he does.

Neither are we so divided as he says; for Dirk (Dietrich Philip) and we are of the same mind, and I trust, through the grace of God, we will ever remain so. But that Obbe has become a Demas, and that Adam Pastor has separated from us, is not our fault. Such things, also, often happened in the apostolic times. God reclaim them at his will; they have taken their leave, and are, alas, no more counted among us, so long as they do not repent.

His writing "that we still conspire and contend against the church of Christ," and other like bitter and resenting words, show that he is so actuated by the spirit of envy, that he cannot write or speak a discreet and reasonable word about us; but he must call us fanatics, conspirators, hedge preachers and sneaks; and he never observes how different of opinion, and how divided in doctrine the baptizers of infants are, who claim to be the true church; and into how many different sects they are divided. One party is papistic; the other Lutheran; the third Zuinglian; the fourth Calvinistic, &c.; and, although they violently quarrel among themselves, disgrace, condemn and ruin each other, as much as they please, yet it is still evidently true that they baptize their children, are unfriendly to the baptism of Christ, continue to conspire against the truth, and persecute it and the church of Christ. O, reader, that the world would once learn to know who are the fanatics and conspirators; then we might hope for the better, but as it is, it is hidden from their eyes.

In the fifth place he accuses us, saying, "If they are the holy church, then, let them hearken unto the voice of Christ; which says that the word of the holy gospel and its sacraments should not be preached and dispensed in secret nooks and corners, but in public."

Answer. If we are not the true church of Christ, but if Gellius and his like are that church, as he pretends, and would yet have us publicly proclaim our doctrine, why has he then twice refused a public discussion with me, under safe conduct, to which I

have invited him, while he well knows that I have to endure so much for the sake of my doctrine and faith? It would be reasonable, if we err in some things, from which God preserve us, that he should go with me before the public, vanquish and convince me of our errors, for God knows that I am willing to be vanquished if I can be convinced by stronger Scriptures and more powerful truths; that he might thus receive the applause of his fellows (which he, in my opinion, very much strives after), and, besides save my soul and the souls of many others.

If he is a true preacher, and a member of the true church of Christ, why does he, then, desire us to go before the public, while he well knows that I could not do so without the loss of blood and life? I freely offer myself, if he can show one plain passage in the Scriptures, that the apostles and prophets have publicly taught at such places where they knew that the people had resolved upon their death, as, alas, they have every where resolved upon our death, and, by the grace of God, we will do the same.

I know to a certainty that he can find no such examples nor Scriptures in the Bible. Yea, dear reader, if he would be straightforward in assigning the reason why he ever desires us to go and preach in public, he would confess that he seeks nothing by his hypocritical and artful pretension, other than to make our cause suspicious with the people, that his cause shall make a good appearance, and that he is very desirous and thirsty after the blood of the innocent, while he, I say, against all reason, love, and Scriptures, desires us publicly to proclaim our doctrine, well knowing that in all Germany, not a place can be found where this could be done without imprisonment, violence, or rebellion. If he, now, were in the truth, as he would like to be considered, namely, an upright, unblamable preacher, how loth would he be to think of such gross disgrace, which he now, alas, dares loudly proclaim both by speaking and writing. David says, "The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man," Ps. 5:6.

In the sixth place he accuses us, saying, "As they want to be the true church of Christ, they would do well to look back to the origin of their church and see how it agrees with the origin and age of the true church. That their church is not of the origin and times of Adam, Abraham, or David, is proven by their wrong opinion and abominable error in regard to the incarnation of Christ, whereby they make him neither God nor man, and rob us of our Messiah. Also, above, under the head of the Calling, he writes, It is an abominable fruit that they have resuscitated, and again introduced into the world such a disgraceful error in regard to the incarnation of Christ. For if Christ was not of our flesh (of which he was not, unless he received it from the woman), then the law was not fulfilled in our flesh; then the righteousness of God is not yet acquitted, which without the ransom would not leave us unpunished.

Answer. The learned ever slander us and complain because we, with the angel Gabriel, Luke 1: 32; with John the Baptist, John 1: 15—36; with Peter, Matt. 16: 16; with Martha, John 11: 27; with the apostles, Matt. 14: 33, and with the eternal Father

himself, acknowledge Christ, both according to his divinity and humanity, as the true and only begotten Son of God; and we dare not teach and believe more nor otherwise than the word of the Lord teaches us of him. I would therefore beseech all readers and hearers to consider well the following brief answers and references. I trust that, by the grace of God, I will be able to explain the matter so clearly in a few words, that the reader will plainly see that they not only rob us of Christ, the doctrine, sacraments, Spirit, life, ordinances and usage of our Savior, but also rob him of his most holy origin, glory, honor and person; and, that they, by their deceiving comments and reasoning, render Christ a divided, impure and inconsistent Christ, both according to nature and the Scriptures. Whosoever has ears to hear let him hear, and whosoever has a mind to understand let him understand.

THE CONFESSION OF THE LEARNED CONCERNING CHRIST.

The Confession of the Learned concerning Christ, is, "That the eternal word, the second person in the Godhead (these are their words), the eternal Son of God, has taken unto himself the nature of our flesh. Yea, that the whole man, Christ, who was sacrificed, and who died for us, is the natural seed of the woman, of Abraham, and of David. The seed of the woman (they say) according to the ordinance of God, Gen. 3, with which seed, namely, Mary's flesh and blood, the beforementioned divine person, the eternal Word and eternal Son, has united himself; and thus became one person and Christ. Or that the whole person, Christ Jesus, with body and soul, is the natural fruit of the flesh and blood of Mary, in which the eternal Word dwelt. The man, Christ Jesus, died, but the Word remains whole and intact."

Answer. It seems very strange to me that the learned never cease to upbraid us by their indiscreet words, and cause us more and more tribulation, by the blood-thirsty; we, who have plainly and incontrovertibly on our side, the firm and immutable foundation of the holy apostles and prophets, nay, also the blessed word and testimony of Christ; while they have neither common reason nor the Scriptures on their side, as may be seen. For, that all the fol-

lowing weighty and intolerable improprieties and abominable errors result from their confession, is as clear as day.

First, A divided Christ; of which one half must have been heavenly and the other earthly; as some, even dare boldly assert that the person of Christ consisted of two principal parts, namely, God and man.

Secondly, An impure and sinful Christ, for the defense says: *Christum non alterius ullius carnis participem factum esse, quana quae and peccato (ut tentaretur) and morti simul obnoxia esset, &c.*, that is, Christ partook of no other flesh but of sin, that he might be tempted and subject to death. At another place the defense says, in regard to Christ: *Si sanctus (inquit) quomodo sub peccatum in Patris judicio condemnatur?* that is, If Christ is holy, why is he then judged in the judgment of the Father because of sins? this agrees perfectly with the writing of Gellius; that the righteousness of God

would not leave us unpunished, without the ransom.

Reader, observe, How could they speak more blasphemously of the most holy manhood of Christ, nay, of the Son of the Almighty and eternal God, than they thereby do? For if Christ was flesh of our sinful and death-guilty flesh, and if he was thus tempted of his own flesh, then the sin, of which he was tempted, must have dwelt in his flesh, and then he died for the sake of duty, and not for the sake of grace; this is too clear to be refuted. Nor could it be otherwise, if we assert that Christ's flesh was of Adam's sinful flesh.

Again, If his holy, precious flesh was such a ransom as Gellius claims, how could the righteousness of God be fulfilled and acquitted thereby, according to the holy will of God? If this may not be rightly called, preaching an impure and sinful Christ, and robbing our most holy Savior and Messiah (something of which they accuse us), I will leave all right-minded and reasonable people to reflect upon in a scriptural light.

Thirdly, Two persons in Christ, namely, the one the second person in the Godhead, and the other the man of Mary's flesh, in which human person the divine person dwelt. Which error is not alone controverted by us, but also by Luther, saying, "Beware, beware (I say) of the *Alleosi*; it is the devil's mask; for it will ultimately establish such a Christ as I would not be called after; namely, that Christ henceforth is no more, and that his suffering avails no more than the suffering of a common saint. For, if I should believe that alone human feeling suffered for me, then that Christ would be a poor Savior; he would stand in need of a Savior himself. In short, it is unspeakable what the devil seeks and intends by this *Alleosi*. We say, God is man and man is God; we cry against them that they divide the person of Christ, as if it were two persons."

For, if the *Alleosi* shall stand, as Zuingli teaches it, Christ must be two persons, one divine, the other human. This he says, "Reader, observe, to what kind of Christ they teach and point us.

Fourthly, Two sons in Christ; of which

the first is the Son of God without a mother; the second, the son of Mary, without a father; in which son of Mary, the Son of God should have been embodied, and thus have been united, as they claim. Just behold what a monstrosity they produce!

Fifthly, The person, Christ Jesus, then was neither the first nor only begotten Son, but the third son of God in order, who was not born, but created of God; and would be, as Pomer says, the accepted son of God, *Quod & Bonosianorum five Monosolitarum heresis est*. I say He would be the third in order. For the first is the Word; the second, the first Adam, Luke 3:38, and the third, the man of Mary's flesh, who should have been accepted as a son of God, as heard.

Sixthly, Then we are not redeemed and delivered through God's first and only begotten Son, but through Mary's son, created of Adam's impure and sinful flesh, as also the defense and his followers dare assert, in the face of all the Scriptures, saying, that the nature imbodyed in the loins of Adam, which committed the transgression also, according to the righteousness of God will requite and remit the same.

Seventhly, If we are thus delivered through Adam's flesh, as they claim, then we should not only give thanks to the Father for his Word, but also to Adam's flesh, through which our deliverance is caused; this, all right-minded persons must admit.

Eighthly, If the man Christ was a creature of Adam's flesh, and we were delivered through him, as the learned claim; and since God speaks through the prophet, That he will not give his glory to another, Isaiah 48:11; and since it is manifest that we should honor our Redeemer, Christ, no less than we honor the Father, therefore it must follow that God either did not speak truly through his prophets, or else they were all idolaters because they gave divine homage to a creature of Adam's flesh; something which is so strictly forbidden in the Scriptures, and which often was severely punished of God. Behold, reader, such an inconsistent, impure and divided Christ he is to which the learned point and teach you by their sophistry and garbled Scriptures. A christ composed of two persons and two

sons; of which one person and son should have dwelt in the other; and of which one person and son should have suffered and the other not; and the one that suffered should have been the son of Mary and not of God. I think this may well be called forsaking the Lord who has bought them, and preaching a strange christ whom the Scriptures never knew.

O, reader, dear reader, how lamentably the deceitfulness of the old serpent robs us, through the reasoning of the learned, of this noble, exalted and precious Messiah, and points us to an impure, sinful, earthly and created being; never minding that the Holy Spirit openly testifies that the Word of God was made flesh, John 1, and that this same incarnated Word is our Emmanuel, and our God, Matt. 1: 25; the Lord who justifies us, Jer. 23; the first and only begotten, John 1; God's own Son, Rom. 8; descended from heaven, John 3: 13; the living bread from heaven which was not his invisible godhead, as the learned say, but his visible flesh, as he himself testifies, John 6: 51; come forth from God, John 16: 30; the first and last, Rev. 1: 11; who humbled himself and did not assume the form of a great emperor or king, but of an humble servant; came down to the level of man; assumed the form of man; obeyed his Father unto death, nay, unto the death of the cross; truly God and man, man and God. God at all times, of God and in God; God's eternal word, who, in due time, according to the promise made to the patriarchs, became a miserable, suffering and mortal man in Mary, the pure virgin, who was of the seed of Abraham, and married to a man of the house of David, named Joseph (upon which Joseph, the evangelists base their genealogy); not divided, as the learned teach, but an undivided, only Christ and Son of God; pure and spotless; planted in her of the seed and Word of his Father, by the Holy Spirit of God; conceived of her through faith; fed and nourished in her virgin body and in due time became man, as Isaac was brought forth of Sarah, and John of Elisabeth; born of her according to the promise; obedient to the law; a light to the world; a preacher of grace; an example of righteousness; and at last, not on account of his own

sins, for he knew not sin, but for our sins, he was innocently condemned to death, nailed to the cross, died, buried, arose, and ascended to his Father in heaven, where he dwelt before; and there he is our only and eternal Mediator, Advocate, Intercessor, Expiator and High Priest, with God, his Father, Mark 16; Acts 1; John 6; 16; and thus the Almighty and eternal God, our merciful, heavenly Father, alone receives the honor and praises, through this his Christ, our eternal Messiah, his first and only begotten Son and eternal word; and not through the impure and sinful flesh of Adam, as the learned teach.

Observe, reader, which of these confessions is the most powerful and has the strongest foundation in the Scriptures; and in which of the two the greater love of God, and higher honor to Christ is perceptible. Whether God had taken a man of the seed or flesh of Adam, as the learned teach, or whether he had given his eternal word, power, wisdom, nay, the heart of his own body, (to make a common expression), in death, for us, as all the Scriptures teach us that he did.

O what an inestimable word is this, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, &c., John 3: 16. Again, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world," and again, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John 4: 9, 10. Mark, he has sent his *Son* and not a man of the seed of Adam who had no father. Paul says, "He spared not his own Son," Rom. 8: 32, and other explicit sayings.

[ Here, in the original works of Menno Simon, follows a brief argument, in reference to the incarnation of our Lord, which the publishers have deemed proper to omit, for the reason that they felt that the book would be more edifying to the general reader without it.]

In the seventh place, he accuses us, saying, "That, secondly, their church has not existed since the time of Abraham; and that she is, therefore, not the true church, is clearly visible from the fact that they, in disobedience to the will of God, refuse the seal of the eternal covenant to the children of the church, which has, since the time of Abraham, been practiced and maintained in the churches."

Answer. Abraham was commanded of God that he should leave the land of his fathers, and of his kinsmen, and that he

should leave his father's house, and remove to a land which the Lord would show him. Abraham believed in the Lord, and departed as the Lord had commanded him, Gen. 12: 4—6.

Again, the Lord commanded him that he should offer Isaac, whom he loved, his only begotten of the free woman, as a burnt offering. Abraham believed in God; he was obedient, and prepared to do whatever God commanded, Gen. 22; Rom. 8: 32.

In the same manner he was commanded to circumcise himself, his son Ishmael (Isaac was not yet born) and every man child of his household, and all the males after him, at the eighth day after their birth. Abraham believed in God, and did as the Lord commanded him.

Behold, thus Abraham believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness, Gen. 15: 6; Rom. 4: 3. In the same manner God has spoken unto us in the New Testament, not only by angels and prophets, as he did unto Abraham and the patriarchs, but also by his Son, which Son has thus commanded, namely, That the gospel should be preached to all the world; to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; and whosoever believes it should be baptized, Mark 16; even as it was commanded Abraham to circumcise all males, Gen. 17: 10—13.

This command we have received from the mouth of Christ, therefore we believe in it, even as Abraham believed in his time. We believe it, I say, and do accordingly; we teach those of understanding minds, and baptize those that believe, not in disobedience, as Gellius says, but in obedience to the clear, plain and express ordinance and command of Christ, God's own Son.

Dear reader, observe. The Lord, Christ, thanked his Father, and said, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent," John 17: 3. At another place he says, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Mark, he says, "If ye continue," John 8: 31. And, while the merciful and affectionate Father, through his great kindness, has discovered unto us the glorious knowledge, and the wonderful, deep mystery of his beloved Son, and, be-

sides has given us such a fruit through his Spirit, that we dare not willfully and knowingly deviate one hair's breadth from his holy word, ordinance and command, as is testified and shown by our tribulation, misery and deprivation, to the whole world, yet, alas, according to the judgment of Gellius, and of the learned, we are not the believing church, nor the disciples of Christ, as may be seen by their writings.

Behold, thus the righteous judgment of the Almighty and great God is passed upon the wise and learned of this world, that the clear and plain signs, by which the true disciples and church of Christ may, and must be known, are esteemed an abomination and error—that they who have received light from above, through grace, are not accounted christians, by them as has been related.

In the eighth place he accuses us, and says, "They must admit that their church has existed but sixteen or seventeen years, that is, since the time Menno Simon commenced preaching. For they do not want to be counted at all, of the Munsterites, Amsterdamites, and Oude Kloosterites, among whom Menno lost a brother, lest they be called seditious or the seed of sedition."

Answer. We point to Christ Jesus our only and eternal Prophet and Messiah, sent of the Father, who is the only true Cornerstone in Zion, the true Teacher, Law-giver, Commander, Intercessor and Head of his church, together with all his angels, apostles and prophets, through whom he, in former times, spoke, and also his Spirit, word, ordinances, commands, prohibitions, usage and example—and if Gellius, or any other person under the canopy of heaven, be he learned or not, can convince us by divine truth that we teach or maintain any thing contrary to his word and ordinances, then I, for myself, sincerely desire to correct the wrong, and to follow that which is right. This he knows who has purchased me; for I want to be saved. But if they can not do this by the truth, but only in appearance of truth, and thus blaspheme it, as all the perverse do, and have to leave our testimony unbroken, then it is sufficiently proven that our hated, despised, and small church is the true, prophetic, apostolic, and christian church, which was begun with the first righteous who walked

according to the will of God; and not with me, as Gellius, alas, maliciously says.

Secondly, I would say, since he has accused us, at different times, of the errors and sedition of the Munsterites, of which we are clear and ever have been, before God and man, therefore, I would beseech him to take a view of his own infant baptist church, of which he is a teacher and head, and see how abominably they have, for years, rebelled amongst each other; how they have afflicted countries and nations with their accursed, ungodly wars, and have given the blood of innumerable human beings, together with their poor souls, to the prince of hell, and have placed them as an offering upon his altar; of which, alas, the learned, by their seditious writings, together with the priests, monks, and preachers, were the principal cause, which is as clear as day to many reasonable persons.

Thirdly, I would say, that in my opinion, he here so indiscreetly alludes to the error of my poor brother, for one of these two reasons: Either, that he thereby would make me suspicioned with the reader, that I, formerly, also was of the same feeling with my brother, or, that he would thereby injure my reputation. For my brother is no longer subject to the punishment of man which he once suffered in the flesh, but alone to the judgment of God. It seems that Gellius can not master this envy and bitterness of his heart; for nobody can be corrected or taught righteousness by such a course.

If he did so for the first reason, namely, to make me suspicioned, then all those who formerly heard me, when yet of the papal church, and all who have ever heard me until this hour, and also my published writings, will be my testimony, that he wrongfully suspicions me; for I never thought of such a thing, much less taught it.

But, if he did so for the second reason, namely, to blemish my reputation, then he should know that I and mine, I trust, never harmed him nor his in the least; and also, that my poor brother, to whom he so cruelly alludes, did no greater wrong than that he erroneously, alas, defended his faith by force of arms, and retaliated the violence committed against him, as all the learned,

preachers, priests, monks and all the world do. I presume that I have merited this cruel allusion by nothing less than by my faithful love, because I have, in sincerity of heart, pointed him and all the preachers to the divine truth of the word, and because I have admonished them to their own well-being. And how this allusion, which cannot have been made but in envy, agrees with honorableness, and with the fear of God, all reasonable readers may judge by the Scriptures and the common *rules* of decency. May the kind Lord grant that he may rightly learn the heart from which this unmerited allusion comes, that he may purge it and sincerely repent; this is my revenge and punishment which I invoke on him.

In the ninth place he accuses us, and says, "That we cannot prove that infant baptism is an anti-christian abomination; nor show from the anti-christian ordinance who was the institutor thereof. It can also be proven, he says, that infant baptism was practiced ever since the apostolic times; long before the violence of anti-christ, which was yet unknown, or, at least, very weak, at the time of Augustine."

Answer. We teach and practice such a baptism as was commanded by Jesus Christ, God's own Son; as was taught by his faithful witnesses, the apostles, in clear and explicit terms, and as was transmitted to us by their practice; which is the baptism of the believing, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 15; Acts 2: 38; 8: 36; 10: 48; 16: 33; 19: 5; Rom. 6: 3; Col. 2: 12; 1 Cor. 12: 13; Tit. 3: 5; 1 Pet. 3: 21. Whosoever, now, will teach and practice any other baptism, must show by the Scriptures where it is commanded. But if they can not do this, as is impossible to do, then it is already proven that it is not Christ's baptism, but that of anti-christ, however finely it may be ornamented with learned words; this is too clear to be denied.

But, as to his assertion, that the violence of anti-christ was yet unknown at the time of Augustine, or that it was at least feeble, is too absurd to admit of an answer. Whoever will, may read history, and he will find in great clearness, that anti-christ was, at the time of Augustine, in full honor and that he reigned with his doctrine, in the hearts of men.

In the tenth place he accuses us, and says, "If they

were the true messengers of God, who are to purge and deliver the church of Christ from such abominable, anti-christian errors, they should not be a separated sect; for the prophets, and all the faithful servants of God, by whom God has often purged his church, did not separate themselves from the church and establish a church of their own, but they remained with the church and bestowed their faithful labor upon the church, at the peril of their lives."

Answer. Whatever Gellius does, it seems that he must slander. I say again, take Christ Jesus and all his prophets, apostles, Spirit, word, ordinance and life, and if he can thereby convince us, that in any article we are at fault and contrary to their teaching (his slandering amounts to nothing), or that we do not conform thereto, or, that, in our weakness, we do not agree therewith—I will give up that we are a separated sect. But if he can not do so, as it is impossible for him, and yet calls us a separated sect, he shows thereby that he is no better judge of the church of Christ, than Tertullus was when before Felix, and the Jews at Rome, before Paul.

I would further say, that if he can prove to us that the faithful prophets intermingled with the worshippers of the calf of Jeroboam; with the servants of Baal, and the abominations of Israel, which they so zealously reprov'd; and remained united with those who disobey'd the law; and, also, that the holy apostles admitted the Pharisees and Scribes, together with other refractory persons, in the communion of their churches—then we admit that he has a good cause to reprove us, and to write as he does. If they did not do so, (and they have not), but, on the contrary, reprov'd, by the power of the Spirit, the abominations that crept in from time to time, according to the pure word and ordinance of God, at the peril of their lives, then he must admit, that he accuses us without cause, since we do not otherwise than according to the example of the holy apostles and prophets, reprove all false doctrine, unrighteousness and abominations with the pure, apostolic teaching, Spirit, ordinance, and word of our Lord Jesus Christ (without which no true church of Christ can exist); avoid that which is wrong, and, faithfully, in love and purity, teach and promulgate the salutary, christian truth, verbally and

by writing, to all the hungry hearts, at the peril of life and possessions.

Lastly, I would say, Since he calls us an excluded sect, because we do not unite with them, why have he and his followers seceded from the Papistic and Lutheran churches? If he answer: Because of their abominations. Then I would again say, that we do it for the same reason. For they forsake the Son of the true and living God, and point us to an earthly creature of the unclean and sinful flesh of Adam as being our Savior; besides, they do not follow the command and ordinance of God in regard to baptism, Holy Supper, and separation. We will never, at any risk, desire to be of one church with those who seek their reconciliation and salvation in the sinful flesh of Adam, who reject God's testimony of his Son and his ordinance; but we desire to be of one church and body with those who give the praise to God through his word; with those who confess the whole Christ as the only, and first begotten Son of God, and who abide unchangeably in his holy ordinances, example, Spirit and word. Let those of understanding minds understand that which the word of the Lord teaches, John 10.

In the eleventh place he accuses us, saying, "From this it follows that the calling of their doctrine is wrong, and that their whole church, service, and walk, cannot aid to salvation, but can only lead to the corruption and destruction of the true churches; and therefore they do not suffer as innocent and harmless christians, but as busy-bodies in other men's matter (he refers to 1 Pet. 4), except that they want to suffer for such a cause of which they must be doubtful themselves, and for which no martyr ever suffered."

Answer. As the Spirit of Christ, and of unfeigned love, accepts all good and godly actions as right and godly, so, also, the spirit of anti-christ, and of bitter envy explains every thing that is right and godly, as wrong and ungodly. For it is testified to with possessions and life that we dare not willfully and knowingly deviate one hair's breadth from the word and example of the Lord, but judge every thing according to the doctrines and usages of the apostles, so far as the Lord gives grace. We, in our weakness, would gladly conform our lives to the requirements of the Scriptures, and gladly seek the praise of God and the

salvation of our neighbors, at the peril of possessions and life. Notwithstanding this, he dares write that the calling of our doctrine is wrong, that our walk and actions are not conducive to salvation; that we cause all manner of corruption and disorder, and that we do not suffer as christians, but as evil-doers, who are busy-bodies in other men's matters. Behold, thus all good offices of the godly, are ever explained to the reverse.

O, reader, beloved reader, that the poor, ignorant world would sincerely accept this, our despised doctrine, which is not of us but of Christ, and that they would faithfully obey it; for then they might change their deadly swords into plow shares and their spears into pruning hooks; they would level their gates and walls, dismiss their executioners and hangmen, for all those who accept our doctrine, in its power, by the grace of God, will not desire to injure any one upon earth, not even their most bitter enemies, much less wrong or harm them by works and actions; for they are the children of the Most High, who sincerely loves all that is good, and, in their weakness, avoid that which is evil, nay, hate it and are inimical thereto. Yet we must hear that we suffer for the sake of wrongdoing, as has been heard.

But in regard to his assertion "that we suffer for a cause of which we must be doubtful ourselves, and for which no martyr ever suffered," he should know that if we at all doubted our faith, we would not so deeply impress the seal with our possessions and blood, as we do; for a house built upon the sand cannot withstand such torrents of water and wind-storms as visit us daily, Matt. 7: 25.

Neither do we suffer on account of an uncertain cause as he says, but for the sake of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for the sake of his holy, precious word and ordinances; for the sake of the sincere confession of God and Christ; for the sake of obedience to the Scriptures, for the sake of which all have suffered, from the beginning, who have rightly suffered according to the will of God, as may be plainly and clearly deduced from profane and sacred history.

In the twelfth place he accuses us, saying, "That they

are the church and Israel, is false, since they stain the true church of Christ by many errors which they daily produce and bring forward as from the abyss of hell; destroy the true sheep of Christ; unreasonably adorn themselves with the sanctity of the church; cause strife and dissension concerning the articles of faith; are carnal, sneak about and preach in secret, and do not agree with the elders of the churches, as said before."

Answer. If the spirit of truth had been the writer in this case, the game would have, doubtlessly, been reversed, and this accusation laid on our opponents; for they still maintain and uphold some gross errors which were formerly brought forward by anti-christ from the abyss of hell (to use his own expression), both by doctrine and force; and thereby cause the godly much affliction and tribulation, cause many a pious child to be deprived of possessions and life, adulterate truth, preach falsehood, are carnally minded, and in fact deny that the man, Christ Jesus, is God's only and first begotten Son, while we, with our small, despised number shun and forsake all the anti-christian abominations and errors, build up the church of Christ and again place it upon the true foundation, again publish and proclaim the clear and plain truth, to many, both verbally and by writing, at the peril of life and the displeasure of the world, confess the whole Christ, as the true, only and first begotten Son of God, as did the angel to Mary, John the Baptist, Peter, Martha, and the Father from high heavens himself, and rightly use his ordinances of baptism, Supper and separation, as all those did from the beginning who rightly knew God, and acted according to his will.

Behold, reader, these are the most important accusations charged against us by him; and that they, for the most part are artful fabrications, false explanations, false suspicions, false accusations and partial charges, whereby he obstructs the course of divine truth, maintains falsehood, insults the godly, and consoles the impenitent in their easy life, is fully proven in this our replication.

In the last place he writes of us, saying, "Experience fully teaches that their teachers and prophets are not the teachers and prophets of God. And that they are not the people of God, I have, perhaps, already proven too powerfully. From which, then, it is clear that our magistracy are right not to let them proceed in their wicked

course, but to stop them; and they might, in pastoral and paternal faithfulness or solicitude for the church of Christ, speak and act a little harder towards them, lest the church be quite destroyed. But then we would be their persecutors and blood-hounds."

Answer. Jeremiah, Micah, Elias, Christ Jesus and Paul could not be called the true prophets and servants of God; nor can we. But the great Lord shall, in due time, make it manifest who are the faithful prophets and servants of God and who are not.

Again, to his saying that we are not the people of God, we answer with holy Paul that it is a very small thing that we should be judged by the judgment of men; and especially of such men who are so diametrically opposed to the ordinance, will and word of God, as may be seen in the case of Gellius, by his writing. Yea, kind reader, if he and his like preachers acknowledged us to be the people of God, they would thereby testify that they are not; something which an ambitious, carnal person, who seeks reputation and fame, never will do.

Again, in regard to his approval of the magistracy hindering our course, which he calls wicked, I would say that the longer and the more he writes, the more indiscreet and offensive he becomes, and the more he manifests his blindness. If he be a preacher called of the Spirit of God, then let him show a single word in all the New Testament, whereby he can prove that Christ or the apostles have ever called on the magistracy to defend and protect the true church against the attack of the wicked, as, alas, he calls us. No, no. Christ Jesus and his powerful word and Holy Spirit is the protector and defender of his church; and not the emperor, king, or any worldly potentate. The kingdom of the Spirit must be protected and defended by the sword of the Spirit, and not by the sword of the world. This is too clear to be controverted, according to the doctrine and example of Christ and his apostles.

I would further say, If the magistracy rightly understood Christ and his kingdom, they would, in my opinion, rather choose death, than to meddle with their worldly power and sword in spiritual matters, which are not subject to the judgment of man, but

to the judgment of the great and Almighty God alone. But they are taught by their pastors that they should proscribe, imprison, torture and slay those who are not obedient to their doctrine, as may, alas, be seen in many different cities and countries.

In short, kind reader, if the merciful Lord did not, in his great love, temper the hearts of some of the magistrates, but would let them proceed according to the fiendish instigation and blood-preaching of the learned, no pious person could endure. But some are yet found, who, notwithstanding the crying and writing of the learned, suffer and bear with the miserable, and, for a time, show them mercy, for which we will forever give praise to God, the Most High, and for which we feel very grateful and thankful to such kind and discreet regents.

But, to his writing that in paternal and pastoral solicitude and faithfulness they might use harsher means against us, I would say this: If he had entered in at the right door with Christ, who is the Prince and Head of all true pastors, and if he could taste in his heart, of the friendly and amiable Spirit, nature and disposition of Christ, he would not at all think of such a resolution against the blood of others, much less advocate and invoke it. This I know to a certainty, for the Spirit of Christ is not thus natured, John 10: 2; 1 Pet. 2: 3.

Reader, observe that he, in this instance, does not write plainly that the magistracy should put us to the sword; this he does, because he does not want to be called a blood-hound or persecutor; nevertheless he makes it understood that if they should do so, he would call it a praiseworthy thing. Whoever is not quite destitute of understanding, well understands what he hints at in this instance. O, a doctrine of blood!

O, that he could comprehend the force of the word which the Lord says, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning," John 8: 44. For, since he encourages the blood-thirsty by such writing, and I have myself heard from his own mouth that it is right to persecute and kill one on account of his faith (understand, such faith as they think to be heretical), he, therefore, has thereby burdened the inno-

cent blood on his soul. I say innocent blood, for neither he nor anybody else upon the face of the earth, can, by the grace God, convince us by the force of truth, that we act or do aught against Christ or his word; or that we deserve the punishment and sword of the magistracy.

He should further know that this blood-doctrine of his, is not only contrary to Jesus Christ, God's own Son, and that of his servant, Paul, but also contrary to the doctrine of Luther, see his book, "*De Sublimitate mundi potestate.*" Besides contrary to the doctrine of Hieronimus, Augustine, Theophilactus, Anselmus, Remigius and others, who unanimously agree that the heretics should not be killed, but admonished and convinced, and if they do not repent after admonition, that they should, according to the word of God, be separated from the communion of the church, and shunned.

Besides, this stone thrown by him might light upon his own head. For what greater

and more terrible heresy, deception and blasphemy can be imagined than to assert that the pure and holy flesh of Christ, is a ransom for sin, to adulterate so sadly his ordinance and the apostle's clear and plain doctrine of baptism; to neglect Exclusion as required by the word of God; to slander the pious, and to console and encourage the impenitent and carnal minded by garbling the Scriptures, as he has constantly done in his writings from beginning to end.

If we were thus to resolve against those who are wrong in doctrine or faith, as he says we should, then we would have to commence with him, because he is a defender of such great errors, as may be plainly seen by comparing both our writings.

May the merciful, dear Lord permit him and all our opponents to see the right foundation of truth; understanding hearts to understand it rightly, and a willing, free and new mind to believe and follow it with sincerity, Amen.

CONCLUSION.

HERE, dear reader, you have my forced answer to the unseasoned, blasphemous writing of Gellius, which he has published and printed, A. D. 1552, against the unadulterated truth of God and his scattered church; whereby he so lamentably adulterates the salutary doctrine of Christ, and so miserably accuses the innocent, pious hearts, before the whole world, that I could not neglect to do so, by virtue of my office, to which I was unworthily ordained of God, through the pious. I had to controvert him with the word of the Lord, and publish it through the press, as he in the first place has done against us, to the praise of God and his truth, to the justification of the innocent, and to the instruction of the humble.

Whoever seeks and strives after truth may find it; for it has been shown with great clearness; but whoever despises it, does not despise us, but Christ Jesus, who has taught it unto his church through his holy apostles, and who has bequeathed it to us by the testimony of the Scriptures through his Holy Spirit.

I hereby offer myself to you and to the whole world, if these writings are not sufficient for you, to let me have safe conduct to an open and free discussion with Gellius and the learned; and if I cannot maintain my doctrine and faith by virtue of the Scriptures, and if I cannot prove their doctrine and faith as deceiving, then I will not refuse to acknowledge my fault before the whole world, to retract my doctrine and to consign myself and my writings to the fire. But if I can substantiate my doctrine, then I desire and ask nothing more than that they acknowledge their fault, discontinue to deceive the people, repent, teach the truth to the people and flee from falsehood. Herewith I commend you to God; he will guide your feet upon the way of peace, and lead you all in the unadulterated, pure knowledge of his eternal, saving truth, Amen. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all who sincerely seek and fear him, Amen.

MENNO SIMON.

