

THE TRUE
CHRISTIAN FAITH,

WHICH CONVERTS, CHANGES,
MAKES PIOUS, SINCERE, NEW, PEACEFUL, JOYFUL AND BLESSED
THE HUMAN HEART;

WITH ITS NATURAL PROPERTIES, NATURE, OPERATIONS AND POWERS.

CAREFULLY REVISED, AND MORE FORMALLY PRESENTED, IN THE YEAR 1556.

BY

MENNO SIMON.

“He that believeth in me (said Christ) though he were dead, yet shall he live.
And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,” John 11: 25, 26.

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

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

CHRISTIAN FAITH

BY
ALFRED A. ANDERSON

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BY
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THE TRUE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

We wish all the chosen children of God, our beloved brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, an increase of faith, grace, peace and spiritual joy, perfect righteousness and eternal life, all which is of God, our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood. To him be praise, honor, glory, kingdom, power and majesty, from eternity to eternity, Amen.

CHOSEN, beloved children, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, although, O God! we are so unwisely prevented by this irrational, blind world, from preaching the true gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to every one, verbally; and, although the cruel, bloody tyranny, encouraged by our useless, wicked priests and preachers, is used so unrestrainedly against Christ and his word (for these poor children seek and love dross more than gold, chaff more than wheat, lies more than truth, and darkness more than light), yet shall God's only invincible truth, which always triumphs, through the Holy Ghost, in the true children of God, bear its crown; notwithstanding that it is stung so miserably in the heel by the conquered serpent and his seed, the proud despisers, liars and blood-shedders, that it can scarcely stand in obedience to its Lord Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding their raving, this envious, bloody seed and serpent must, with bruised head, and quite powerless, remain under its sway, for through the power of the Spirit, and the gospel truth in Christ Jesus he is wholly overcome.

Since then, this old, crooked serpent, which was from the beginning, proudly and falsely opposed to God, and was a cruel murderer, is put under the feet of Christ and his church, and has endured and seen his lying seed destroyed and trampled under foot, through the revealed truth, therefore, does he gnash his teeth in furious rage, and

breathe out his accursed, infernal breath of heresy through his prophets and preachers. He casts out of his mouth the terrible streams of tyranny through the rulers and the mighty of the earth, after the glorious church (woman), pregnant with the word of the Lord, with a view to exterminate and destroy her seed. But God be eternally praised, who has protected her against the red dragon, and has prepared her a place in the wilderness.

Since, then, for reasons assigned, I cannot teach publicly, nevertheless, I will serve you by writing, as long as the Lord will permit me, and I live. I will serve you with my small talents, which the gracious Father has granted me through his Son, Christ Jesus, out of the abundant treasury of his heavenly riches. I say with Paul, Not with the wisdom of man, not with words of wisdom to serve you, for I possess and know them not. I let those seek them who are eager after them. My boasting is, with Paul, only to know Christ, and him crucified; for to know him is eternal life. Therefore God cannot endow us with better wisdom than with this, although it is foolishness to the world; for truth is more precious than gold and silver; than all pearls and precious stones; there is nothing under heaven to be compared to her. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; she is a tree of life to them that lay hold

upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Yes, beloved brothers, every one who is thus rightly taught of God, in this wisdom (for she is the wisdom of the saints), may glory, by the grace given him, over all graduated doctors, theologians, jurists, orators and poets, although he could neither write nor speak, and were he the most helpless upon earth. But all those who are not instructed in this wisdom from God, though they were as glorious as Solomon, as victorious as Alexander, as rich as Cræsus, as strong as Hercules, as learned as Plato, as subtle as Aristotle, as eloquent as Demosthenes and Cicero, and as well skilled in languages as Mithridates: yea, so greatly experienced that his like were not to be found from the beginning, nevertheless, he is a fool in the eyes of the Lord; this must be confessed and acknowledged.

With this wisdom, I say, so much as the gracious Father, the Giver of every perfect gift, has given me through his Son, Jesus Christ, I desire to serve not only our brothers and sisters, but the whole world, with all my heart. that all the hungry and thirsty souls may be clothed from above, and be satisfied with this celestial wisdom. who desire to live according to the will of the Lord; those souls which he created to his honor, and purchased with the blood of his Son, that they may learn to know God through his Son and word, in spirit, who says, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD, which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness, in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the LORD," Jer. 9: 23, 24.

O, dear children, you who are born of the word of the Lord through the Spirit, reflect rightly upon these things in your hearts, how incomprehensibly great the heavenly bounty and grace are, which have appeared to us, through Christ, and have been given us of the Father, that he has so graciously bestowed upon us, grievous sinners, in our most abominable blindness, the glorious and divine gift of his wisdom: yea, when

we knew neither God nor Christ, were strangers to the life that is out of God, children of wrath and of eternal death, knew not the word of peace, and strayed like sheep who knew no shepherd; that he has so graciously bestowed upon us this great treasure, the true knowledge of the kingdom of God; the treasure which lies buried in the field he discovered to us by his Spirit, and made known to us the mystery of his good will, and the true regenerating signification of his holy gospel, which cannot be taught in colleges, cannot be purchased, is not to be brought from foreign lands, nor can it be merited by any thing; that he has opened to us with the key of his word and Spirit, the saving truth, and has closed it to all emperors, kings, lords, princes, the wise and the learned, before the whole world; that he redeemed us from the power of darkness, and, according to his will and good pleasure, led us into the kingdom of his dear Son; yea, that he has made us kings and priests, that we are to be a chosen and holy people; a people to serve him in love, and to be his own, that we are to publish his power and virtue, because he has called us out of darkness to his marvelous light, as Peter says. O great grace and love!

Most beloved brothers, always rejoice in the Lord. Again, I say, with Paul, rejoice, that the great King, Jesus Christ, who has all power in heaven and on earth, that he has manifested such grace towards you, that he has called you, poor, unesteemed children, to such high honor, you who are the reproach and disgrace of the whole world, that he has made you kings and priests: Kings, I say, who have been anointed with the oil of grace, through the Holy Ghost, crowned with the crown of honor, clothed with the garment of righteousness, and governed by Christ, your King; not with the weapons of death, such as fire-arms, spears, swords, horses, riders and servants, as the kings of this world do, but with the invincible and eternal sceptre of the power of God, namely, with the sharp-edged sword of the holy word, which will victoriously triumph by virtue of your unconquerable faith, over gold, silver, cities, countries, lords, princes, flesh, blood, banners, banishment, swords, stakes, water, fire, hunger, thirst, naked-

ness, hell, sin, law, fear, devil and death; you will be perfect in life and death, and secure from all your enemies, both visible and invisible, who would deprive and rob you of the promised kingdom, through the advice and seed of the old serpent. The dominion and government of the spiritual king are spiritual, therefore, they cannot be fatally hurt or conquered by tyranny, false doctrine, or evil lusts; for they can do all things through Christ, who strengthens them, who also is their helper and redeemer, whose shield and sword is their glory.

Again, you are also priests anointed of God, not with the external oil of Aaron and his sons, nor with the perishable blood of oxen and sheep; nor with the splendid garments of gold, silk and precious stones, as the law required; but anointed, sprinkled and affected with the oil of the Holy Ghost, with the blood of Christ, and clothed with the garment of righteousness, ordained and called of God, not to slay the creatures daily, and offer them upon altars, in outward temples of stone, as Moses commanded the priests in the law; but you are to slay human beings, all your lives, with the sword of the divine word (understand *spiritually*), together with your own refractory flesh and blood, that is, that you teach and reprove them, and yourselves, with the Spirit and word of the Lord, that you and they die to your unrighteousness and evil lusts, destroy them, and thus offer in your spiritual house or temple, not made with hands, upon the only and eternal altar of our reconciliation, Jesus Christ.

Besides, you are not such priests, who of their own righteousness offer bread and wine for the sins and transgressions of the common people, and for the souls of the deceased, neither are you to sing nor read mass, nor worship the golden, silver, wooden and stone images, nor serve nor burn incense to them as the poor, ignorant priests of the world do; but you are holy priests, who purify and sanctify your own bodies daily, and in time of need voluntarily offer them as a sweet smelling sacrifice, for the truth's sake, together with your ardent prayers and joyful thanksgiving, out of a believing, converted, pure heart; for such offerings are well pleasing to the Lord.

Would to God, that all who are called priests, were changed into such priests; ah! how much innocent blood would be spared, how gloriously the truth would be spread, and what a noble Christian world this would be!

Say, beloved brothers, who can fully comprehend *this* grace, or relate these benefits? Again, formerly, we all strayed as lost sheep, which have no shepherd; we walked according to the lusts of our evil flesh, even as they all do, who know not the way of the Father; we were unbelievers in divine things, blind and without understanding, full of bruises and putrifying sores from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, and by nature, children of wrath like others. But blessed be the Lord, now we are washed, now we are sanctified, now we are justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. 6: 11; in short, we are converted to the true Shepherd and preserver of our souls, Jesus Christ, who pastures us in the rich pastures of his truth, feeds us with the bread of his word, sustains us with the tree of life, and refreshes us with the water of his Spirit. Who can comprehend and relate this grace?

Besides this, when we were yet ungodly and enemies, he did not punish us as he did the angels that sinned, nor like the first depraved world, nor like Sodom and Gomorrah, nor like those who worshipped the calf, nor like those in the day of provocation, nor like the seditious and adulterers, nor like those in the wilderness, who acted contrary to his will and word, for he destroyed all of them; but he saved us through his great mercy, led us by his right hand, drew us by his goodness, renewed us by his word, begat us by the Holy Ghost, and enlightened us by the clear light of his truth; that we by his grace renounced the world, flesh, devil and all manner of evil, willingly entered upon the path of peace and submitted to the easy yoke of his gospel. It appears to me, this may properly be called grace.

Most beloved children, take heed: Since then, the gracious Father has dealt so marvelously with us according to his great mercy, and manifested his love toward us without our merits, it is right and becoming that we

also love, fear, praise and honor such a benevolent Lord and merciful Father, with all our powers serve him, and be obedient to him in all our weakness.

Since then, he has manifested, toward us afflicted sinners, such unspeakable love and grace, as said, which love and grace cannot be rightly seen and understood, with the blind eyes and the ignorant reason of the flesh, but must be seen and understood with the inward eyes of the mind, and through the unction of the Holy Ghost; that is, with a sincere, sure, immoveable, confident, vigorous, unfeigned and pure faith; such as the Scriptures teach.

Such an unfeigned faith being required as mentioned, and clearly finding in the word of the Lord, that all dealing and aim of true christianity, concerning the new birth or creature, true repentance, dying unto sin, a new life, true righteousness, obedience, salvation and eternal life, lie in a sincere, active faith, according to all Scripture, as may be seen and read in many passages; therefore have I, through the grace of the Lord, undertaken to prove to all lovers of eternal truth, by divine testimony from the word of the Lord, which is the true doctrine that avails before God, and has the promise in the Scriptures; namely, which has energy, power, work, and effect, agreeing with the gospel of Christ and the doctrines of the apostles, in order that all those who see, read or hear our writings, may thoroughly and understandingly know that the stubborn, fruitless faith of this world is vain and dead, and is eternally banished and accursed of God; and its fruits vain hypocrisy, commands of men, idolatry, and false service. It regenerates none, it is earthly and carnally minded, hating and persecuting the truth; for this faith knows neither Christ nor his word, as may be evidently seen through the whole world. God knows of no other faith than that which has power and fruit, regenerates the heart, converts and renews, as the Scriptures say, "The just shall live by faith," Hab. 2: 4.

It is all in vain to boast of faith where the godly, new fruits and works of faith are not.

I therefore, exhort all my god-fearing readers in the Lord, and entreat all, that

they would impress those things on their souls, and write them on the tablets of their hearts, that our holy and christian faith is not a dead or superannuated speculation, as the world thinks, nor is it only verbal boasting, as we find it among the great and tolerated sects; but it is an active gift and power of God, a living, heavenly inspiration in a melted, open heart, or conscience which firmly believes and lays hold upon, and acknowledges the whole word of God (the threatening law, as well as the consoling gospel), to be right and true, whereby the heart is pierced and moved through the Holy Ghost with a peculiar, regenerative, renewing, vivifying power, and it first produces the fear of God, for it knows the judgment and wrath of the Lord, over all transgressions and sins which are committed against his will and word. The heart dreads, fears, and is astonished before God, and therefore, dares not do, counsel, or permit anything which it acknowledges through the word, in the Spirit, that God, the righteous judge, hates and forbids in his holy word.

This faith also produces the love of God whereby we love him; for it acknowledges from the testimony of the holy Scriptures, rightly understood, in Spirit, the unsearchably great riches of grace, wherewith our merciful, good Father, through Christ, has so graciously endowed us. Therefore it loves in return its loving God, awakened by the manifest beneficence of the aforesaid grace, and is thus voluntarily urged, through the active power of love (resulting from such unfeigned faith), to obedience of all the commands of God, even as Christ says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words," John 14: 23.

Behold, this is the faith with which we have to deal in the following writings. It is the only faith which has the promise in Scripture of salvation and eternal life, through Christ, the only and first begotten Son of God. To him be praise, honor and glory, from eternity to eternity, Amen.

We see that if any one wishes to build a good house, or high and permanent tower, that first a solid foundation is laid, so that it will sustain the heavy superstructure; that the work, commenced at such great expense,

be not ruinously and shamefully demolished and abandoned. Thus it must be with all true christians; they must have, in their hearts, such a sure and solid foundation that they may stand unshaken in the building of their faith, against all the raging tempests, rains and floods, which will try them not a little, so that they may successfully accomplish, by the help of the Lord, their undertaken work and building; so that they may not again depart from the right road, to the everlasting shame and injury of their poor souls. Paul says, "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him," Heb. 10: 38.

Faithful brethren, take heed: This precious, and only well adapted corner-stone, ground and foundation in Zion, prepared for us by the Father, upon which we have to build the edifice of our faith, is Jesus Christ. All who are founded upon this ground, will not be consumed by the fire of tribulation; for they are living stones in the temple of the Lord, they are like gold, silver and precious stones, and can never be prevailed against by the gates of hell, such as false doctrine, flesh, blood, world, sin, devil, water, fire, sword, or by any other means, if ever so sorely tried; for they are founded upon Christ, confirmed in the faith and assured in the word through the Holy Ghost that they are not to be turned away from the pure and wholesome doctrine of Christ by all the furious and bloody Neros under the heavens, with all their cruel tyranny; they are not to be diverted from an unblamable and pious life, which is of God, as we have seen in many places for more than twenty years past: for they are as immoveable as Mount Zion, as firm pillars, brave soldiers, and as pious, valiant witnesses of Christ; they have fought till death, and do daily fight for the word and truth of the Lord (God be eternally praised). I speak of those who have the Spirit and word of the Lord.

Yea, that stone lies firm in their hearts, and is so sealed by faith in them, that in their greatest need they regard neither father nor mother, wife nor child, money nor possessions, life nor death; for they are so constrained by veneration to God in their hearts, because Christ says, "Whosoever

therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven," Matt. 10: 32, 33; that they are not allowed to speak a false word, even to escape the hands of the blood-thirsty and the dangers of death; as may be seen.

But I fear, yea, indeed it is found to be the case, that the greater part of all those who call these poor innocent sheep, accursed heretics; who betray, catch, banish, take their lives and possessions, are not ashamed, nor tremble before their God who hates all lies, to use, for the sake of a stiver, yea for nay, and nay for yea, and yet dare boast of Christ and call themselves after his name. If they are such liars and so unfaithful in small things, what they would do in greater things where life and possessions come into requisition, as is the case with these poor sheep, may be easily imagined.

O reader, reflect. If the old, crooked serpent, with all his deception, falsehood and lies, lived in the christian hearts, as is the case with their persecutors, their goods would not be plundered, and their blood would not be shed. And they would not only conceal the truth, but they would with all the children of the devil hate and oppose it. All who are born of the truth, hate lies. Again, all who are born of lies, hate the truth. If they hate the truth, how can they speak it? especially when life and possessions are at stake. If our rulers and judges wish to be assured of this difference, let them call some of their evil doers before the judgment seat, who are guilty of death, and examine them in relation to things whereof they are accused; but without punishing them, what does it avail, though they would freely confess their guilt, for which they are to die, as these innocent children do in their faith? Yea, what is more, let your most high-renowned monks, in their profession, caps, &c., your most accomplished priests in their terms and masses, be as severely tested as you do these, in their faith; then we will see what will become of all their professions, caps, terms and masses. But the common proverb is: The wolf escapes, but the lamb has to suffer.

Since then, I say, all those who are born of the truth, and have Christ and his truth, and his Spirit, dwelling in their hearts, in such during their lives, and in death, we find nothing but the simple, plain truth of Christ, by which they are born unto righteousness, and are converted; yet it is manifest, that however piously, and unblamably they live, our lying, adulterous, lewd, idolatrous, drunken priests and monks (who openly rob God of his glory, and maliciously murder those whom Christ purchased with his precious blood, belie them before the whole world, betray and bring them to the stocks and posts, and all this for no other reason than that they are urged through the manifest truth, through their strong faith and through the Spirit and fear of the Lord, to renounce their leaven, vain, false doctrine and idolatrous sacraments, and with all their hearts, to live according to the will of God. O Lord! thus they live with those who seek and fear Thee with all their hearts.

Say, beloved lords, when shall this cruel, disgraceful murdering, bloody seed, be prevented by you from continuing in their Judas like conduct? When will you turn your backs to their deceiving lies, and turn your faces to Christ? When shall the innocent blood be wiped from your deadly and avenging sword, and again be put into the sheath? When will you hear and fear God, more than you do lords and princes? When shall the abominations of anti-christ be rooted out of your heart, and instead thereof, the doctrine of Christ be planted therein? When will you be satisfied with pious and unblamable lives, and be satiated with the blood of innocent saints? When shall Christ Jesus, with his word, Spirit and life, through faith, be conceived in you, and in deed be born in you? I fear *never*. For you are earthly and carnally minded, the eyes of your understanding are darkened, that you desire the world rather than heaven; lies rather than truth; sin rather than righteousness; the honor and praise of man rather than that of God.

Yes, beloved lords, why say so much? With you it is the same as with the priests and preachers, who, through the instruction of Scripture, know the truth in part; but since they love their cross-fleeing body more

than God, they preach and teach only so far as the mandates and resolutions of the princes permit and suffer, so that they do not incur the displeasure of the world, and be deprived of their worldly honor, and their easy life. It is the same case with you, my dear lords. Though many of you well know that the teaching, ceremonies, divine service and life of your priests and preachers are untrue, deceiving, idolatrous, false and carnal, and that ours are the doctrine and ceremonies of the Lord, according to Scripture. Yet, in order to retain the friendship of the emperor, and your incomes I mean you who are guilty of blood, Christ Jesus with his innocent lambs must, without any mercy, if the mandates are enforced, as the ringleaders of all rogues and thieves, who are deserving of all torture and shame, be caught, banished, robbed and doomed to death. And then you say: The emperor's mandates judge you.

Beloved lords beware: the hour is fast approaching, that the Almighty, the great, and terrible God, the impartial, righteous Judge, will judge and sentence all our doings; then you will see too late, whom you have persecuted and pierced. Therefore, awaken in time, fear God, remember him, and reform, while it is yet called to-day.

I entreat you, my reader, be not displeased that I have digressed so far; for it was not done without a cause. But now, we will continue in the name of the Lord, in the thing we have undertaken, and treat and teach as much of it, as the merciful Father will grant us grace and aid thereto, that we may modestly show to all the godfearing, who seek the truth from their hearts, the difference between faith and unbelief; the fruits of faith and of unbelief, and that they may grow in the true christian faith, until the gracious Father, out of the abundance of his glory, makes them strong in the inner man, by power, through the Spirit, and till Christ dwell in their hearts, through faith, that they may be rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the abundant love of Christ, which passes knowledge, and be filled with all the fullness of God. And besides, that they may know

that it is all hatred and lying which the scribes teach and cast up, touching our faith concerning the sword, sedition, polygamy, &c. I speak of that, which I and my beloved brothers preach and teach, verbally or by writing, publicly or privately, to all the well disposed.

Cordially beloved brothers, when we can, with spiritual eyes, rightly see into the im-

pure, abominable doctrine of faith, with all the abominable unbelief and blind evil life, resulting from such abominable doctrine of those, who boast themselves to be christians, then we may with propriety be astonished, yea, grieved to death at their great blindness and grievous errors. For however inhuman and rude, it must be called the holy christian faith.

THE PAPISTIC BELIEF.

It is true, the papists teach and believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he offered up his flesh, and shed his blood for us, but if we would enjoy them, and be partakers thereof, we must adhere to and obey the pope and his church, hear mass, receive the holy water, perform pilgrimages, call upon the mother of the Lord, and the departed saints, confess at least twice a year, receive papistic absolution, have our children baptized, and commemorate the holy days. The priests must vow chastity; the bread in the mass, must be called the flesh, and the wine, the blood of Christ; besides all their other idolatry and abominations, which are daily practiced by them.

And all this is called, by these poor, ignorant people, the most holy christian faith, and the institution of the holy christian church. Although it is nothing but mere human opinion, self-chosen righteousness, seductive hypocrisy, manifest deception of

the soul, ungodly, indecent bodily nourishment and gain of lazy priests, an accursed abomination, an incensing of God, a disgraceful blasphemy, an unworthy despising of the blood of Christ, a self-devised undertaking, and a disobedient contumacy to the divine word. In short, a false, offensive, divine worship, and open idolatry, of which Jesus Christ (to whom the Father points us) has not left or commanded us a single letter of all these things.

It does not suffice that they practice such abominations; they not only also despise as vain and useless all true fruits of faith, commanded of God himself, the sincere, pure love and fear of God, the love and service of our neighbor, the true sacraments and divine service, &c., but they also revile them as damnable and heretical, and exterminate and persecute them. I think this may properly be called a sect.

THE LUTHERAN BELIEF.

The Lutherans teach and believe, that we are saved by faith alone, without any regard to works. They maintain this doctrine as firmly as though works were not at all necessary; yea, that *faith* is of such a nature that no work can be suffered or allowed beside it. And, therefore, had the highly important, zealous, and earnest epistle of James (because he reproves such a frivolous, vain doctrine and faith), to be esteemed and

considered as straw. O presumption! Is the doctrine straw, then must also the chosen apostle, the faithful servant and witness of Christ, who wrote and taught it, have been a man of straw; this is as clear as the meridian sun. For the doctrine shows the character of the man.

Let every one take heed, how, and what he teaches; for with this same doctrine they have led the reckless and ignorant, great

and small, citizens and the common people, into such a fruitless, wild life, and have so much unbridled them, that we would scarcely find such an ungodly and abominable life among the Turks and Tartars, as we see among them. Their open deeds bear testimony; for the excessive eating and drinking; the superfluous pomp and splendor, the whoring, lying, cheating, cursing, swearing by the wounds, sacraments and sufferings of the Lord, the shedding of blood, fighting, &c., which exist among many of them, and, alas, have neither measure nor bounds. In many carnal things, both the teachers and disciples are the same, as may be seen. I well know, what I write, and what I have heard and seen, I testify, and I know that I testify the truth.

If any one can simply say with them, Ah! what dishonest knaves and villains these desperate priests and monks are! They wish them the venereal or some other disease; the ungodly pope with his shorn crew, say they, have deceived us long enough with purgatory, confession and fasting; we now eat as we have hunger: fish or flesh, as we desire; for every creature of God is good, says Paul, and is not to be rejected. But what follows they do not want to understand or know; namely, to (live as) the believing, who know the truth and enjoy it with thanksgiving. They further say, How shamefully they have deceived us poor people, they have robbed us of the blood of the Lord, and di-

rected us to their mummery and to their enchanting works. God be praised, we now know that all our works avail nothing, for the blood and death of Christ alone must blot out, and pay for our sins. They begin to sing a *psalm*: *Der Strick ist entzwei und wir sind frei, &c.*, i. e. The cord is cut asunder and we are at liberty, while the smell of beer and wine issues from their drunken mouths and noses. Any one who can but read this *distich*, if he live ever so carnally, is a good evangelical man, and a fine brother. And should some one come, who would, in true and sincere love, admonish or reprove them, and direct them to Jesus Christ, to his doctrine, sacraments and unblamable example, and show that it does not become a christian to carouse and drink, and to revile and curse, &c., he must from that hour hear, that he is a legalist (*Werkheiliger*), one who would take heaven by storm, or a factionist, a fanatic or hypocrite, a defamer of the sacrament, or an anabaptist.

Behold! thus God, the righteous Lord, suffers these to err and go astray in their hearts, who rely upon the precious death and the most holy flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, together with his saving and reverent word, in their sensual lusts and wantonness, and make it an occasion of their unclean and sinful flesh. It appears to me this may also truly be called, a liberal and free sect.

THE BELIEF OF THE ENGLISH OR ZUINGLIANS.

The English, or Zuinglians believe and confess that there are two sons in Christ Jesus, the one is God's son, without mother, and *impassive*; and the other is the son of Mary, or the son of man, without father, and *passive*. And in this *passive* son of Mary, the *impassive* Son of God dwelt; so that the son of Mary, who was crucified, and died for us, was not the son of God. This was acknowledged by one of their principal teachers, called Martin Micron, also by one Harman Von Ronsen (if I recollect his name rightly), before me, two or three times in a large assembly, in the year 1554.

Further, the said Micron, when I questioned him in relation to the *aura seminis* of the woman, concerning which we had not a few words, acknowledged and said: I have to confess that a woman has no seminal functions but an afflux of catamenial fluid to the uterus. See, before God, it is the truth that I write. He also wrote in a book, printed in England; these words, touching the coagulating of the fluids in the uterus. If the fluids thus changed, as the book says, and as he confesses, that a woman has only catamenial fluids in the uterus, as said; then, it is evident, that they believe (if they

agree with him) that their Savior is not God's first and only begotten Son, but the mere result of a vitiated state of the uterine fluids.

John A'Lasco also writes, that Christ partook of no other flesh than that which was subject to sin and death, in order that he might be tempted. He states in the same book, "If he is holy, why was he sentenced in the Father's judgment, for the sake of sin?" This I cannot otherwise understand, before God, than that he believes, that the man, Christ Jesus, was a sinful Christ and guilty of death. Read his defence made against me, of the Incarnation; there you will find his ground.

O God, watch over all true hearts, that they may never believe such intolerably great abominations. It makes me shudder, and I am astonished in my heart, yea, I am ashamed in my soul, that I must make mention thereof; for it is too offensive. But since they defame and slander us daily before all men, both verbally and by writing, what a very detestable foundation and doctrine we have of Christ (since we confess, with the

Scripture, that he was the first and only begotten Son of God, who died for us), and they present these abominable things to the poor, simple people, as said, and deceive them so miserably thereby; for this reason, am I constrained in my conscience, to the honor of God, and to the warning of all godfearing souls, to notice this and present it to the reader, whose mind is held captive by them, to reflect upon; for I know not how we could believe more cruelly and abominably of Christ, teach, feel, think or speak of, than to say, It was not the Son of God who died for us, but it was the result of a vitiated catemenial fluid; a man of sin and death, &c.

And though they may gainsay and deny this, and say that I wrote this gratuitously concerning them, it is true; it happened repeatedly, and before many pious hearts; they may deny it, but it will be found true in the day of the righteous judgment, before the eyes of the Eternal and great majesty, as I have written it. O abominable sect!

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN BELIEF.

We teach and believe, and this by virtue and power of the whole Scriptures, that the whole Christ Jesus from above and below, inwardly and outwardly, visibly and invisibly, is God's first and only begotten Son, the incomprehensible, eternal Word, by which all things are created, the first born of every creature; that he became a true man in Mary, the immaculate virgin, through the almighty, eternal Father, eternal Spirit and power, beyond the comprehension and knowledge of men; sent and given unto us out of pure mercy and grace, from the Father; the express image of the invisible God, and the brightness of his glory. We teach and believe that the first and only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, is our only and eternal Messiah, prophet, teacher and high priest, who has fulfilled the required and commanded law for all his believers, inas-

much as they could not fulfil it on account of the weakness of their flesh; who taught us the good will and pleasure of his Father, and went before us as an unblamable pattern, and freely offered himself upon the cross for our sins, as a sweet-smelling sacrifice to the Father. Through whom we all, who sincerely believe this, have received the forgiveness of our sins, grace, favor, mercy, liberty, peace, life eternal, a reconciled Father and free access to God, in the Spirit; and this all through his merits, righteousness, intercession and blood, and not through our own works. Behold this is the true summary of our belief concerning Christ, our Savior, the Son of God.

All who can believe this, as certain and true, are sealed, through the word of God, in their spirit, are inwardly changed, receive the fear and love of God, and bring

forth, out of their faith, righteousness, fruit, power, an unblamable life and a new being: as Paul says, "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness." Through faith, says Peter, God purifies our hearts. And thus follow the fruits of righteousness out of an upright, unfeigned, pious, Christian faith. Observe this well.

All those who sincerely believe the righteous judgment of God and his eternal wrath over all sin and wickedness, and do not doubt in spirit, look at the fallen angels; they look at the first, depraved world, at Sodom and Gomorrah, and upon disobedient, refractory Israel. They take particular notice how God humbled his innocent Son, who knew no sin, and in whose mouth guile was not found; how he was humbled, and made the most miserable among men for the sake of our sins. Yea, that he was so beaten and tortured, that while extended on the cross, he piteously complained to his Father saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. 27: 45.

All who truly believe this, will certainly flee from all unrighteousness, as they would from the fangs of a serpent; they turn away from all sins, and dread them more than a burning fire, or a piercing sword, for their whole mind and conscience testify to them, that if they knowingly and willfully sin against the law and word of God, and do not receive Christ in a pure and good conscience, live according to the flesh, and despise the inviting voice of God that they will fall under the dreadful, eternal sentence and wrath of God.

This the pious and aged Eleazar believed, who was well versed in the law, 2 Macc. 6: 18, and the god-fearing, virtuous mother, with her seven sons, 2 Macc. 7: 1, the three faithful young men in the fiery furnace, the beloved Daniel, and the fair, virtuous Susanna, the honorable pattern of all pious women, Daniel 13. They would rather endure for a season the wrath and fury of tyrants, than sin, and thus bring upon themselves the eternal anger and wrath of God. The righteous, say the Scriptures, live by faith. For the true evangelical faith, which makes the heart sincere and pious before God, moves, changes, urges and constrains a man, so that he will always hate

the evil, and willingly do the things which are right and just; even as it is unnecessary to admonish or warn a man of understanding not to cut his own throat, or drink poison, or thrust himself from a high tower, or run into deep water; for he well knows if he did so, he could not escape death. It is also unnecessary that we should admonish, or warn those, who sincerely believe that the wages of sin is death, that drunkards, liars, fornicators, whoremongers, adulterers, avaricious, idolators, blasphemers of God, envious, blood-shedders, perjurers, thieves and the like sinners, shall not inherit the kingdom of Christ, that they shall not get drunk, nor commit fornication, &c. The divine fear, which is of such a faith, warns, exhorts, reproves, urges and deters them, so that they will never more consent to such carnal, ungodly works, much less do them. For their faith, which is sealed of the Spirit through the word, teaches them that the end thereof is death.

We must thus believe with the heart, as Paul says; that is, we must so adhere to the word to receive and impress it upon our hearts, that we may never turn or be diverted from it, but that faith be more and more rooted in our hearts, that, through the virtue thereof, we may fear God with all our powers, and do sincere penance. Sincere, unfeigned fears drive out sin, for it is impossible to be justified without the fear of God.

Here observe, what an excellent, pleasing fruit of faith the fear of the Lord is; it is the only power which expels the sins of believers, buries; slays, destroys and makes sin nought, this is the first part of true repentance, as we are taught and admonished by the baptism of believers. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments; his praise endureth for ever," Ps. 111: 10.

Further, All who comprehend with a sincere, unwavering, believing heart, the great solicitude and ardent care of God for us (here I speak of him according to the manner of man), and his unbounded kindness, mercy and love, as paternally manifested toward us through Christ Jesus, that he did not spare his eternal Son, by whom he created the heavens and the earth, the seas and

the fullness thereof, his incomprehensible, eternal Word, power and wisdom, but for our sakes, gave him over, humbled him, suffered him to endure hunger, and thirst, was derided, taken, mocked, his holy face spit upon, scourged, crowned with a crown of thorns, condemned, crucified and slain, that we, through his sickness and stripes, might be healed, through his poverty, might become rich, through his being despised, obtain glory; through his cursing, obtain blessing; through his punishment, receive grace; through his blood, the remission of sin; through his offering, be reconciled, and through his death, might obtain eternal life. He also created every living creature for our use, and made them subject to us. He serves and provides us with winter and summer, heat and cold, night and day, rain and dearth; to us he sent his holy apostles with his holy word, endowed us with his Spirit, enlightens, governs, admonishes, reproves and comforts us; he has given us the necessary shelter and food to supply our wants, and in the midst of a perverted lion-like generation, he has kept and preserved us by his grace, &c. I say, again, he who believes this with all his heart, apprehends and lays hold of it, can never be prevented, neither by angel nor devil, neither by life nor death; but must love this gracious Father, from his inmost heart, who has manifested so great love and mercy towards us grievous sinners; yea, praise, honor, thank, serve, and be obedient to him, all the days of his life.

For this is the greatest delight and joy of believers, that they in their weakness may walk and live according to the will and word of the Lord, and where the unfeigned, pure love of God dwells, there without fail, must also be the voluntary, ready service of that love, namely, the keeping of his commands. Solomon says, "They that put their trust in him shall understand the truth, and such as be faithful in love shall abide with him," Wis. 3: 9. And this is what Paul says, "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith, which worketh by love," Gal. 5: 6.

That love is of such an effective power and nature, may be very plainly seen in natural love; we need not admonish rational parents, to provide their children with neces-

sary food and clothing, for natural love will admonish them thereto. And thus with man and wife, who sincerely love each other with conjugal love; they think it no displeasure willingly to serve each other and be fellow helpers, as it becomes them, being one flesh. And so is also the nature and property of holy, divine love, for all those who by faith are one with the Father and his Son, Christ Jesus, in love and spirit, through the true and genuine knowledge of the aforementioned favor, need not be admonished that they should serve the Lord, seek the kingdom of God, use baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the ordinance of the Scriptures, constrain heart and tongue, reflect upon the law and will of God with all earnestness, hear Christ and follow him, and that they should not love gold and silver, money and possessions, wife and children, life and death above Christ and his word. For the effectual nature of the ardent love of God, which is of a pure heart, good conscience, unfeigned faith urges and constrains, moves and operates so much in their hearts, that they stand prepared with body, soul, possession and blood, to do what he commanded them, and not do that which he prohibited; as we may see (God be praised) in great plainness and power, and hear daily of many pious hearts.

And it is hereby evident, if we would love God and walk in obedience to his commands, we should believe, have a special regard to his favors, and with the heart adhere closely to the word of his promise, as said; for that love which is sincere, is a very precious fruit, it is a branch and plant of faith from which the other part of true repentance flows, namely, the unblamable new life, represented to us by baptism, as related above, of the fear of the Lord; without which love, all eloquence, all tongues, all knowledge and understanding, all boastings of faith, learning, miracles, prophesying, alms, persecution, cross and suffering, are vain before God; yea, unfruitful and dead.

Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth him, for God is love, such a one does all things according to the nature and word of the Lord, for it is the fulfilling of

the law, obedience to his commands, the bond of perfection and peace, and it is pre-figured by the splendid girdle of Aaron and his sons.

Love, says Solomon, is as strong as death; jealousy is as cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which have a most vehement flame; many waters cannot quench love, yea, so firm and strong and ardent is love that it surpasses every thing, conquers and consumes what is opposed to Christ and his word, be it world or flesh, tyrant or devil, sin or death, or whatever we may think of or name; and this is all through the power and Spirit of Jesus Christ from whom it originates.

Moses preceded with fear, then came Christ with love. First the terrific law, and afterwards the consoling gospel; first wrath in the feelings of our consciences, afterwards grace; first uneasiness of pain, then peace; first tribulation, then joy. In short, first the letter which killeth, then the Spirit which quickeneth.

Behold, my reader, such a faith as mentioned, is the true christian faith, which praises, honors, magnifies and extols God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through filial fear and fruitful love, for by it we know the good will of the Father towards us through Christ; by it, I say, we know that all the promises to the fathers, the waiting of the patriarchs, the whole figurative law, and all the predictions of the prophets, are fulfilled *in* Christ, *with* Christ, and *through* Christ. That Christ is our king, Prince, Lord, Messiah, the promised David,* the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the strong Giant, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, God's almighty, incomprehensible, eternal Word and Wisdom, the first born of every creature, the Light of the world, the Sun of righteousness, the true Vine, the Well of life, the true Door and Shepherd of the sheep, the true Foundation, and the precious Corner-stone in Zion, the right Way, the Truth and Life, the promised Prophet, our Master and Teacher, our Redeemer, Savior, Friend and Bridegroom. In

short, our only and eternal Mediator, Advocate, High-priest, Propitiator and Intercessor, our Head and Brother. And since we know all this by faith, therefore, I say, we also observe his word rightly, hear his voice, and implicitly follow his example, and counsel, and depart from ungodliness; the heart is changed, the mind is renewed, and with Moses we rely upon the future promises, as though they were in sight, and patiently wait for them with pious Abraham, till he, with all the chosen, shall in reality inherit them. "Now faith," says Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. 11: 1. He says, further, But hope that is seen is not hope. God, says Christ himself, is a Spirit; his word, grace, and the promise of the New Testament; his kingdom and government are spiritual; and thus we have to believe all things through an upright, pure, and sure faith, with a candid heart, and judge and see with spiritual eyes; but we may well say with Paul, "All men have not faith," 2 Thess. 3: 2.

Therefore, all those who stop their ears to the threatening, punishing and death-dealing law, and will not fear God, reject, and desire not the gracious gospel of Christ, shut their eyes to the light of righteousness, and will neither see nor walk the true way, harden their hearts, and will not acknowledge the just judgment of the wrath and displeasure of God, his mercy and favor and his unbounded grace, are unbelievers; for they reject Christ Jesus, run haughtily into perverse ways; they choose to themselves a righteousness and means of salvation contrary to the word of God; the wisdom of the Lord they esteem foolishness; his truth as lies; his gospel as delusion; the virtuous, christian life as madness; and the true use of his sacraments, as heresy. Open idolatry, commands of men, superstition and offensively ornamented lies, are their greatest consolation and true worship; their belly is their God; they love the world more than heaven: all their delight is in covetousness, avarice, pride, pomp, gold, silver, money and possessions; in buying and selling, they cheat and deal treacherously; their common life is drinking, gambling, cursing, swearing, hatred, strife and fighting; they follow the flesh in its lusts; they defame and seek

* Jer. 23: 5; Rev. 5: 5; Isa. 9: 5; John 1: 1; Col. 1: 15; John 12: 35; John 15: 1; 10: 2; 1 Cor. 3: 11; Isa. 28: 16; John 14: 6; Deut. 18: 18; John 3: 2; 15: 5; Tit. 2: 12; John 3: 29; 1 Tim. 2: 5; Eph. 1: 22.

the calamity of their neighbor, his dishonor, disgrace and shame. In short, they say, with the fool, in their hearts, "There is no God," Ps. 14: 1.

Although they boast of God with the mouth, praise his name with their lips, bow their knees outwardly before him, and say that they are redeemed with the death and blood of Christ; it is nevertheless vain hypocrisy, for they do it only from habit, and feignedly, and not inwardly through faith, in power and truth. They are those of whom it is written, "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him; being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate," Tit. 1: 16. And this, because they do not believe Christ and his word, their end is death, as he says, "He that believeth not shall be damned," yea, is already condemned.

It is true what Paul says, "Without faith it is impossible to please him (God); for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. 11: 6. O for an open heart! For profound understanding! Yea, if we rightly examine these words, we have reason to be astonished at the wisdom and understanding of Paul. For if we rightly reflect upon the matter, we must ever confess before the Lord, who tries our reins and hearts, that we never believed it with the heart, that God is, and hence, we have led a vain, ungodly life. For it cannot be otherwise: if any one believes with all his heart, that God is, he will also believe that his word is true, that the wages of sin is death, that all things are open to his eyes, and that there is nothing concealed before him. That we must give an account of all our thoughts, words and deeds, before his judgment seat in the day of his coming. Believing all this, we then begin to be astonished before such an omniscient and righteous Judge, yea, to fear and tremble greatly.

In the second place, all who believe with the heart, that God is, they also believe that he is true, and therefore, none can be saved contrary to his word: for he is the God of truth, and in him there are no lies. His uttered word abides, it can neither be bent nor broken; those who thus believe, begin to fear his righteous judgment;

they cast behind them all their false patch-work, all false promises, all the bolsters and cushions of the false prophets, and they seek the Lord who has bought them. They are abased in their own eyes; for the heart is humbled. They sigh, weep, pray, lament, knock, and call at the throne of grace, till they are heard and encouraged by the word of his peace, comforted with the promise of his grace, and anointed with the Holy Ghost.

In the third place, all who believe that God is, also believe that he is gracious and merciful, that he has bestowed and sent us his only Son, that he taught us the right way, fulfilled the law for us, reconciled us to the Father, and redeemed us by his blood and bitter death; has conquered hell, the devil, sin and death, and obtained for us grace, favor, mercy, and eternal life, &c., and therefore, the sorrowful, afflicted hearts, which saw through the terrible, threatening law, nothing but the wrath of God and eternal death are again revived. They become candid, peaceable, and joyful in the Holy Ghost, are of a joyful disposition, and are thus made to belong to their Head and Savior, are united and made one with Him, ingrafted through the Spirit of God and pure, unfeigned love, that they are of one heart, one soul and spirit with him; they think, speak and live in their weakness as he has taught and commanded them in his word. They renounce and avoid all false doctrine, unbelief, false sacraments, and all idolatry; put off the spotted garment of sin, which is the evil perverted life, and is of the flesh. They seek the doctrines and sacraments commanded them of Christ; that divine service which is taught in the Scriptures, and that pious and unblamable life which is from God. For by faith they are changed in the inner man, converted and renewed, because they have a sealed, and assured conscience, which bears witness to them that God is, that he is righteous and true, gracious and of abundant mercy. And therefore they desire, seek and do nothing, either inwardly or outwardly, but that which they know, through the word, that Christ Jesus, with his holy apostles has commanded and taught them.

Behold, my brethren, here you have now

the true properties and nature of a true christian faith, and what a great mystery, signification, spirit and power are contained summarily in these words, *He must believe that God is*. "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life," John 3: 15; "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark 16: 16; "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed," Rom. 10, and the like passages. For it will always be the case where there is a true, christian faith, there also will be a dying to sin, a new creature, true repentance, a sincere, regenerated and unblamable christian. One does no longer live according to the lusts of sin, but according to the will of him who purchased us with his blood, drew us by his Spirit, and regenerated us by his word, namely, Christ Jesus.

But where there is only nominal faith, and no righteousness, or change, or new and penitent life, there is nothing but unbelief, hypocrisy and lies. No matter how much we may speak, or dispute about the Scriptures, this rule will remain firm, and can never be broken. "*If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die*," Rom. 8: 13. All therefore, who live in pomp and splendor, in excessive eating and drinking, adultery, fornication, avarice, hatred, envy, lasciviousness, defrauding and such sins; all who defame the Lord's holy and high name, word, will, and also his community, slander and traduce their neighbor; deprive him of his honor, name, welfare, body and goods; and all who curse and swear by the Lord's sufferings, wounds, sacraments, cross and death, are unbelieving heathens, and not believing christians. This is as clear as the light of day, for their fruits testify before the whole world, that they are not the true olive tree and vine from which we may pluck or gather the true, ripe fruits; for, that they comfort themselves with the doctrines and commands of men, use a strange baptism, Lord's supper and divine worship, which Christ has not taught; seek the remission of sins by foreign means; such as holy waters, masses, auricular confessions, pilgrimages, &c., walk in a perverted, crooked path, believe not Christ and his word, all must confess who have only natural discernment and understanding. All who acknowledge

Christ to be the Son of God, and his word as the truth, acknowledge that his commands are eternal life, and that they seek no other worship, word, sacraments, or means of reconciliation, nor another way of life than that which Christ, God's own Son, presented and taught them by the word of his truth.

Hence it is evident, that where sincere and true faith is, which avails before God, which is a gift from him, and comes from hearing the holy word, through the blossoming tree of life, full of all manner of precious fruits of righteousness, such as the fear and love of God, mercy, friendship, chastity, temperance, humility, candor, truth, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, &c., there is a sincere, evangelical, pious faith; there also are the sincere, gospel fruits of an evangelical nature.

I say gospel fruit, for the strange fruit, such as infant baptism, masses, matins, vespers, caps, palms, crosses, chapels, altars, bells, &c., know not the gospel, for they are neither commanded of God, nor of Jesus Christ, his Son, nor by the apostles and prophets, therefore, are they abominations and not believing fruits, even as the golden calf was with Israel, the worship of Baal, the high places, altars and churches, and the crime of making their children pass through the fire.

The true evangelical faith looks upon, and has respect to the doctrine, ceremonies, commands, prohibitions, and unblamable examples of Christ alone, and strives to conform thereto with all its powers, even as fire in its nature can produce nothing but combustion and flame; the sun, nothing but light and heat; the water causes moisture, and a good tree brings good fruit after its natural properties; and thus upright, evangelical faith produces true evangelical fruit, and that, after its true, good, evangelical nature; yea, even as an honest, virtuous bride, by the virtue and the nature of natural love, is ever ready to hear and obey the voice of her bridegroom; and from a sincere, pious disposition, favor and love which she has for and towards him, will ever so conduct herself, before her most faithful friend and beloved husband, whom she respects and loves with all her heart, that for his sake she voluntarily

endures what ever may befall her; even also it is with a sincere, regenerated believer, who has been joined to Christ, by grace through faith; he has become one with Christ through this ardent love, that he is ever willing and prepared to do his bidding and will, to endure all things for the sake of the holy name of Jesus, in evil as well as in good report. Eager to endure all things that may befall him at any time, be it joy or tribulation, satiation or hunger, refreshing or thirst, honor or dishonor, in good or bad report, in prison or at liberty, in exile or at home, ease or discomfort, life or death. Such a

soul partakes of her bridegroom's nature and disposition, is pious in heart and thought; true in words and well seasoned; all her ways are righteousness, devoutness; wise as the serpent; harmless as the dove; a genuinely pious disposition, fidelity, zeal, peace, fervent prayer, an unblamable conduct, a sincere, pure, brotherly love, and a voluntary obedience to Christ and his holy word; for the righteous live by faith, as we shall incontrovertibly and plainly show, by the grace of God, in the following examples, recorded and testified to in the holy Scriptures, Amen.

NOAH'S FAITH.

The holy Scriptures testify concerning Noah, the son of Lamech, that he found grace before the Lord, because he was a righteous man, unwavering and perfect in his generation. Peter calls him a preacher of righteousness. High and glorious is the testimony, which is given in the Scriptures concerning this man.

When all the world was depraved before God, and the face of all the earth was full of wickedness, the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all whom they chose, and would not suffer themselves to be reproved by the Spirit of God; then spake the Lord, I will yet give them respite for a hundred and twenty years; he also gave Noah a command, that he should make a ship or ark, by which he and his house might be saved from the coming flood, for God the Lord was about to destroy the whole world with water. Noah believed the word of the Lord with all his heart, and kept it in his mind, as if he saw it before him with his eyes. He commenced building as he had been commanded, for he believed with his whole heart, that the threatened punishment would come. And when the appointed year was completed, and the disobedient, wicked world repented not, the word of the Lord must be accomplished. Noah went into the ark with all clean and unclean creatures as the Lord commanded

him. The same day that he entered the ark, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and it rained forty days and forty nights, till all the high mountains upon the face of the whole earth were covered; fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and all creatures upon the earth that had in them the breath of life, as men, birds, beasts and worms were destroyed. Noah and his family, together with the animals which were with him in the ark, were preserved in the ark by the power and grace of Almighty God, in whom Noah trusted with all his heart.

Through faith, saith Paul, Noah honored God, and prepared the ark for the salvation of his house, according to the divine command which was not yet seen, through which he condemned the world, and became an inheritor of the righteousness which is by faith.

Oh! lovely example, O glorious pattern of a sure and firm faith. For, as he believed his God, so was he upright and unwavering. He believed the threatened punishment firmly, as if he saw it before his eyes. and therefore he labored so many years, and, through the eternal Spirit of Christ, he warned the unbelieving, disobedient spirits, or men led captive by sin, to repent and reform. He feared the word of the Lord, and doubted not that it would happen as the Lord had

spoken. He well knew that the word of the Lord was powerful, as the prophet said, "O Lord, thou spakest from the beginning of the creation, and saidst thus, Let heaven and earth be made; and thy word was a perfect work," 2 Esdras 6: 38.

And when he had preached and built forty, eighty or a hundred years (the Scriptures do not say how long he built and taught), he did not become weak in faith by long delay, for he well knew that the punishment of God would come upon the unconverted, because he had formerly so told him, and that he, and his would be preserved through the mercy and grace of him who promised, for he is the God of truth, and no lie is found in him.

The Lord God warned the pious Noah, and said, "The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth," Gen. 6: 13. So also hath he through his own blessed Son, through his holy prophets and apostles, with his holy word, truthfully warned us and said, If you repent not, be not born of God, believe not in Christ, walk not in his commandments, reform not your wicked lives, but serve strange Gods, be haughty, proud, ambitious, lustful, blood-thirsty, malicious, unjust, idle, earthly, fleshly, and devilish, you will die in your sins, and shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, shall be condemned, shall be cast into the fiery pool, must inherit eternal woe and pain, with all the accursed, and with devils, and have no part nor communion in the kingdom of Christ, to all eternity.

My readers, take heed, if we, with the upright and godly Noah, observe the faithful warnings of Christ and his Holy Spirit, and believe with the whole heart: believe the word of God to be true and immutable, the threatened punishment will come in its time, even though it should be delayed a thousand years; yet, I advise that every one watch, for all who die in their sins, receive their punishment, for the time of grace is then expired; then we would undoubtedly fear and tremble to the inmost of our souls, at the wrath and punishment, threatened in the Scriptures to all the impenitent which will be eternal in its duration: we would

pray to God for grace, would clothe ourselves in sackcloth and mourning garments, would truly repent, reform the wicked life, follow after righteousness, and with our new and spiritual Noah, Christ Jesus, enter into the new and spiritual ark, which is his church; ever being careful and fearful that the deluge of the coming wrath of God, will not unexpectedly overtake us with all the unbelieving and impenitent, who acknowledge neither God nor Christ, neither Spirit nor word, as it overtook the corrupt antediluvian world as mentioned: yea, we would sincerely watch for the coming of the Lord, and give heed to the time of grace, preserve our wedding garment, and have oil in our lamps, that our house be not unseasonably broken through, and we with the guest, who had not on a wedding garment, be cast forth from the Lord's wedding, into outer darkness and abide eternally without.

Because alas, we do not believe the threats, punishments, wrath and judgments of the Lord, and have little regard for the examples of Scripture, therefore, we say with the mockers, Beloved, where is the promise of his coming? All things abide as they were from the beginning since the fathers fell asleep. It will, I fear, happen with us as it did with the unbelievers and disobedient who were overtaken with sudden destruction in the time of Noah and Lot, as one may plainly see and read concerning the coming of the Lord, Matt. 24: Luke 17; because we do not believe the threats, judgments, and wrath of the Lord, but disregard them, therefore do we lead such a reckless, unbridled life, follow the lusts of the flesh, eat, drink, build, sow, reap and marry without any fear or care, and avariciously hoard up gold, silver and possessions, and haughtily say in our hearts there is peace and liberty, till swift destruction shall overtake us.

Again, let every one look well and watch. The messenger, with his peremptory summons is already at the door, who will say, Render an account; thou mayest be no longer steward. But could we, with the unwavering and pious Noah, firmly believe the coming eternal wrath and punishment, also the promises through Christ, to all true children of God, we would, undoubtedly, not be found so inattentive, drowsy and indiffer-

ent, but with full earnestness without delay, rise from our abominable sin, separate ourselves from our grievous errors, and shun wickedness as we would a hungry, roaring lion, or a blood-thirsty enemy; we should also watch with open eyes all our days, lest the Master of the house overtake us when we

sleep and regard us not. Let us not strike our fellow servants; neither eat nor drink with gormandizers, that he may not give us our portion and lot with the hypocrites. Concerning this watching, read Matt. 24; Mark 13: 37.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

Abraham, the highly renowned patriarch, who had not his equal in honor, as Sirach writes, believed God and trusted upon his word with the whole heart, and thus manifested obedience and power as the result of his faith. The Lord commanded him and said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," Gen. 12: 1—3. When he heard the command, he believed his God and consulted not the ease of his body nor his natural reason, but renounced both, and did not strive nor dispute with God, in whom he trusted and by whose command he went forth; he did not desire to know before hand into what land he should go. He believed his God with his whole heart, he was obedient and went forth at that hour, together with Sarai, his wife, not knowing where he should go. He reposed firmly and surely upon the promise of God, who would not deceive nor betray him, for he well knew that he was a God who was true and firm in all his words, and that he would bring him into such a country as he had promised him.

Behold, how upright and perfect, how plain, obedient, and full of confidence is true, christian faith, as may be seen in this patriarch. Compare your faith and its fruits with Abraham's faith and its fruits, and I presume you will find that you have never yet become his faithful seed and children;

for it is manifest that you are stubborn and unbelieving, so fleshly and earthly minded that you would not give a clay house, a poor bed, a cow or a horse, nor would you endure a hard word for the sake of the word of the Lord, and his testimony; and I doubt whether you would forsake father or mother, or the land of your birth, for the sake of your faith, and like Abraham, travel with wife and children to an unknown land. Cursed unbelief keeps off the whole world from the truth; for many of you say, We well know that you have the truth, but what does it avail? We are poor and full of years, we cannot longer labor or earn; we have a house full of children and cannot earn our bread in other lands; we fear, also, that the Lord may not have such a care for us as he had for Abraham; others, say we, have much wealth, we are young in years, and may live long, yet father and mother hinder us. The wife says, my husband opposes me; the husband says, my wife is against me, and the like unbelieving fleshly excuses and cares. They never take to heart, nor understand, that Christ has richly promised you, that if you abide by his word, you shall receive all the necessaries of the earth, as food, clothing, and shelter. "I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," Ps. 37: 25.

Faithful readers, observe, if we had a firm faith and a sure confidence, like this godly man, and dare trust from the heart upon the living God, O how little should we trouble ourselves with such heathenish cares, concerning dwelling, eating, drinking, and clothing, for we well know, that Christ,

God's own Son, has promised that if we seek the kingdom of heaven, and his righteousness, and turn our hearts to some honest labor, he will not forsake us to all eternity, but will supply all our necessities, for he cares for us.

Secondly, observe his faith, when a message came to Abraham, that Lot, his brother's son, was taken to Sodom by Chedorlamar, the king of Elam, and his confederate kings, Abraham rose up with three hundred and eighteen of his servants and followed after the aforementioned kings; he overtook them in the night and slew them and re-took all their goods, together with Lot, the prisoners and their wives, Gen. 14: 16.

Here the faithful patriarch manifested his love, the result of faith, and feared not the power of the four kings. He trusted in the living God, he sought not his own safety, nor the safety of his servants, but willingly risked all, in order that he might rescue his oppressed kinsman from the hands of his enemies, as an example for all the spiritual children of Abraham, that they should so love their brethren who are born of the incorruptible seed of the holy divine word, and not only assist them with money and goods, but also in an evangelical manner, risk and give their lives for them in time of need. I say in an evangelical manner; for the aid of the sword is forbidden to all true christians. According to the New Testament, all true believers should meekly suffer, and not fight and combat with swords and firearms. But if we wish to save or gain our neighbor's soul, by the help of the Spirit and word of our Lord, or if we see our brethren in need or peril, and persecuted for the sake of the word of the Lord, then we should not close our doors to them, but receive them in our houses, share with them our food, aid, comfort and assist them in their tribulations, &c. In such cases, we should risk our lives for our brethren, even if we knew beforehand that it would be at the cost of our lives. This example we have of Christ, who for our sakes, did not spare himself, but willingly yielded his life, that we through him, might live.

In the third place, observe, that to Abraham the promise was given, that his seed should be as numerous as the stars of heav-

en; that they should be strangers in another land that was not theirs, and that they should be oppressed and compelled to serve four hundred years, &c. When this promise was made he believed; he believed this, and his belief was reckoned to him for righteousness. He waited with patience, and it was fulfilled in its time; he murmured not, nor disputed with God, because his seed should suffer so greatly for so many years. An admonition to all true christians that they should cleave to the word of the Lord, with all the heart, and should hold firmly to his promise; for God cannot forget or break his word; heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall stand and abide forever. All who shall trust in it, to them it shall be reckoned as righteousness, as it was to Abraham. Through faith he saw the promise from afar; he saw it, and comforted himself therewith. In like manner also with us, the promise of the future, eternal life, is given through Christ, and we are informed that for his name's sake, we must suffer much from this perverted and wicked generation. This promise is seen from afar, and all who sincerely believe it and comfort themselves therewith, will doubtlessly receive it in due time, however hard and long they may be persecuted and tormented by the evil Egyptian race. For, although the children of Abraham were grieved with much sorrow and pain for some hundreds of years, yet did the Lord, according to his promise, lead them forth victoriously, and gave them the land of promise; and thus it will be with us if we doubt not the promises, but receive them with a firm faith, as Abraham did, and through faith walk in all the commandments of God, possess our souls in patience and honor, fear, love, thank and serve the Lord. How lamentably soever, we are here persecuted, oppressed, smitten, robbed and murdered by the hellish Pharaoh, and his fierce, unmerciful servants, or burned at the stake, or drowned in the water, yet shall the day of our salvation arrive, and all our tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and we shall be arrayed in the white silken robes of righteousness, and with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, follow the Lamb, and sit down in the kingdom of God and possess the precious, pleasant land of

eternal peace. Praise God, ye who suffer for Christ's sake and raise your heads, for the time is near when you shall hear, Come ye blessed, and ye shall rejoice with him forever.

In the fourth place, observe, that Abraham received a command from God, that he and also his male children of eight days old, should be circumcised, with all his servants, those who were born in his house, and those who were bought, and this should be a covenant sign between God and him. He was not disobedient to God, nor yet displeased with him, neither did he complain nor murmur against him on account of the great pain and smarting he should suffer in his old age, by performing such a dishonorable and ridiculous ceremony, whereby he could neither praise God, nor help or serve his neighbor, but he heard and believed the word of the Lord, and humbly and submissively followed it without delay. He well knew, that unless he would believe the word of God, he could obtain no grace, no blessing, no promise, for only the obedient obtain the promise.

Here again the simple, plain submission, and willing obedience of Abraham's faith, are made manifest by its fruits; for if he had followed flesh and blood, and reasoned with himself, he undoubtedly would not have obeyed, but he would have entered into argument with God, and said, No, Lord, it shall not be so, for this sign will profit me nothing, for Thou art not praised thereby nor my neighbor served. All the heathen who know not thy great name will mock at it as foolishness, from the very nature of the ceremony. O no! He spake not against the Lord, but he believed and acted, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.

This is for the encouragement of all the pious, that they should believe, and submissively follow the word of the Lord, however heretical and ridiculous it may appear to them, not murmuring against the Lord why he so commanded it; but it is enough that they know that he has commanded, and in what manner he has commanded.

Again, it shames all haughty despisers and unbelieving mockers, who so presumptuously open their blasphemous, wicked

mouths against Christ, and say, What can baptism profit us, or why does God demand so much water? It is enough, if we are inwardly pious men, regard the commands of love, and lead a pious, virtuous life, and such like hypocritical words; for these poor miserable hypocrites know not when the inward man, of which they boast, has become upright through faith and pious in God, through the grace, word, and Spirit of the Lord, that he dare not depart one hair's breadth from the word and ways of the Lord, but does willingly all things whatsoever the Lord has commanded him, let it be what it will.

It is very manifest that Christ Jesus has commanded water baptism, upon the confession of our faith, and that he received it himself, Matt. 3: 16. The holy apostles did not teach nor practice otherwise: their signification and effect were not otherwise, and so many glorious promises depend thereon, as may plainly be seen and read, Mark 16: 15 (understand me rightly), not by virtue of the wrought sign itself, but that we receive Christ, in whom the Father gave the promise through faith, and are ready to live according to his word. Say, beloved, how shall one obtain the accompanying promise if he does not do what is commanded? But what does it avail all who believe not the Lord's word, who would rather have money, goods, body and life, than Christ? They are earthly and fleshly minded, they strive against Christ, disobey the Scriptures, dispute and say, What can water benefit us? But if they believed the word of the Lord from the heart, as Abraham did, and were new and changed men in Christ Jesus, through the power of the same faith, they would love their enemies, do good for evil, pray for those by whom they are persecuted, be ready to forsake possessions and all that they have and are for the glory of the Lord, and for the necessary service of their neighbor. They would not reject the cross of the Lord, but flesh and blood would be mortified; they would fear God and his judgments, and love him, for his kindness; they would undoubtedly not murmur and dispute, but stand prepared, like Abraham, to seal their faith by its fruits; they would receive the commanded baptism, surrender

themselves to all obedience, and according to their weakness, walk as the Lord commands, teaches and enjoins upon all true Christians.

Since they believe not Christ and his word, they neither fear nor love him; therefore they reject, upbraid and blaspheme his holy doctrine, Spirit, commandments, prohibitions, ordinances and usages as deceiving heresy, and obedience to him as an open abomination. O reader, beware! God, the Lord, is a God who adheres to his word; he brought calamity upon Adam and Eve and their posterity on account of the forbidden fruit. For a small transgression Uzzah was punished with death, 2 Sam. 6: 7. On account of one transgression, the faithful Moses was not permitted to enter the promised land. Whoever received not the bloody sign of circumcision, was to be cut off from among the people. Therefore, it must be plainly understood, that his word and will must be obeyed, otherwise we cannot be saved, for he is the God who has made heaven and earth and the fullness thereof; the Almighty, terrible God, who lives forever in his majesty and glory; the Lord and Ruler over all. Woe to him who speaks against him and despises his word and will. The works of such an one testify that he believes not in Christ, and whosoever believeth not, as Christ himself declares, is condemned already. Therefore, it is all in vain to excuse ourselves or seek evasion. How any one who is so unbelieving and rebellious, that he refuses God a handful of water, can conform himself to love his enemies, mortify the flesh to the service of his neighbor, and to take up the cross of Christ, I will leave the serious reader to reflect upon, in the fear of God.

I know for certain, that all their disputation, pretensions and evasions are nothing but fig leaves, and their lives, nothing but hypocrisy.

In the fifth place observe, when the Lord had spoken to Abraham, that at the end of the year he would return, and that Sarah, his wife, should have a son, whom he should call Isaac, and that he would make his eternal covenant with him and his seed after him; though he was nearly a hundred years old, and Sarah ninety, nevertheless, he

doubted not. He did not think upon, or regard his own frailty and the barrenness of Sarah, but firm and strong in faith, he trusted upon the promise of his God, and praised him for his grace; for he knew that God was able to perform that which he had promised. Therefore, from this same Abraham, because he believed the word of the Lord, descended as many as the sand which is upon the sea shore or the stars of heaven, Gen. 22: 17.

Behold, most beloved, how an upright, unfeigned, christian faith regards God as almighty and true; it knows that he can and will do all that he has promised, and therefore, Abraham looked not upon the frailty and age of himself and Sarah. He doubted not the promised words, but believed without wavering, for he knew well, that the same God who created heaven and earth, and the fullness thereof through his word, who stretched the heavens abroad, and to the stormy, raging sea set an established bound, whose word sustains the earth in the midst of the water, who rules all with the word of his strength, and gives life to the dead, could undoubtedly, when he chose, render that fruitful, which before was barren.

Since then, such a promise was given to him of God, he doubted not, but hoped for that, which in nature, was not to be expected. Through faith in God, he received that which was promised to him, namely his son Isaac, through the aged and barren Sarah; so in like manner it is spiritually with us; if we believe, with the whole heart, the promised word of grace, which is the gospel of peace, whereby the redemption from our sins, through the blood of the Lord, is made known; so will also our dead conscience flourish and live; we shall receive the spiritual Isaac, Christ Jesus, with the eternal blessing, and bring forth fruit. Christ said, My mother and my brethren are those, who hear the word and will of God, and do accordingly; but whosoever believeth not this Isaac, receives not Christ, but the wrath of God abides upon him.

In the sixth place observe, how severely the Lord tried the faith of Abraham, when he said, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for

a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of," Gen. 22: 2. Abraham heard the word of the Lord and was obedient. He took his son with him and went to the place, which the Lord had commanded him; and when he came there, Isaac said, Father, behold here is fire and wood, but where is the lamb that shall be offered? Abraham answered his son, and said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

O my most beloved, reflect! Observe the conduct and conversation of Abraham and his son Isaac. I suppose reason will teach you how full of trouble and grief the mind of the father was on account of his beloved son, for Abraham was flesh and blood as we are. That son, who was born to him in his old age, through the promise and gift of God, his only son born of a free woman, the desire, the joy and the peace of his heart, the staff of his age, through whom he received the comforting promise; must be slain and burned with fire.

How hard and sorely he was tried, yet did he not oppose God with a single word, nor contend and say, Why hast thou given me a son since he must die? Neither did he reprove the Lord, by saying, that he had falsified his promise, for it was through Isaac that the promise was made, but he confided in his God with his whole heart; he laid aside all reasoning and wisdom, and followed not sense nor flesh. He spared not his beloved son for the Lord's sake. He loved his God far above his child, and therefore he refused not to offer him willingly as a burnt offering to Him from whom he received him. He bound him and lifted him upon the wood, and raised his hand and knife to slay him; he believed that God could again raise him from the dead. He was about to obey the command which he had received, when an angel spake from Heaven, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him, for now I know that thou fearest God; seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me," Gen. 22: 12. And thus the obedient, faithful Abraham received his son as a type of the resurrection. The word of James is true, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteous-

ness, and he was called the friend of God," James 2: 23.

Beloved children, we must always stand confounded before God, when we compare our little, weak faith and its fruit with the faith of Abraham. He refused not to travel in an unknown country, as soon as he was commanded. He was a man full of peace, and sought not his own interest. He released Lot out of the hands of his enemies. He believed the promise concerning the promised land and seed. He murmured not on account of the long time nor of the oppression of his seed. He suffered himself to be circumcised in advanced age. He believed the Lord's promise concerning Isaac, and taught all his servants and children, that they should follow the way of the Lord, and do that which was right. He was willing to offer Isaac as the Lord had commanded him. This may truly be called faith.

So entirely was this pious man dead to himself, that he denied all his lusts, his will and mind, and loved his God alone. He trusted, feared, loved and honored his God, with all his soul and heart, and walked according to his commandments, as is evidenced by his fruits, as may be observed and understood from many passages of Scripture. But what kind of faith our false, boasting christians possess, who suffer themselves to think that they are the seed of Abraham, I will let their fruits be the judge; for they covet and hoard, curse and swear, lie and cheat; they are haughty and proud, eat and drink intemperately, commit fornication and adultery, fight, rob, steal, take usury, and are full of idolatry and wickedness. Those who have a little light refuse to remove from one village to another, or from one city to another, for the word and truth of the Lord; they seek their own interests, and esteem brotherly love but lightly; they are earthly minded, and flee from the cross of Christ; they regard not the promise and goodness of the Lord; they fear not his coming judgment, and punishment; they love the creature more than the Creator; his name be blessed forever, Amen.

In short, I know not what it is, in which they do not serve themselves, nor act contrary to the command of God. They boast

notwithstanding, that they are the children of Abraham, and have his promise. Ah no! my friends, your prophets have led you astray, and your false hopes deceive you; as true as the Lord lives, if you believe not his word, from the whole heart, nor through the power of the same faith, walk in his ways, bring not forth the christian fruits of righteousness, and do not follow the foot-

steps of this pious patriarch; you are not his seed and children, neither have you his faith nor his promise. But all who receive Christ in their hearts, through faith, and adhere strictly to his word and obey it, are the spiritual children of Abraham, and fellow heirs of his promise, for they are reckoned his seed.

FAITH AND FIDELITY OF MOSES.

Moses, a servant and messenger of God, was also found faithful, vigorous, living and active in his faith. He was called of the Lord, that he should lead Israel out of Egypt. He did not exalt himself to the high station of a prince, but humbled himself before God with all his heart, and said, Send, Lord, whom thou wilt, but what am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and lead forth Israel? Besides, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant, but am of a slow tongue. He refused so long, that the Lord was angry. With fear and trembling, he at last took upon himself the commanded duty, and surrendered himself to his God, in whom he trusted.

He went willingly before the fierce Pharaoh, and showed great wonders and power before him and all his servants. He ransomed the people, through the out-stretched arm and strong hand of God. He divided the Red Sea and passed with Israel, unharmed, through the deep, Exod. 14: 21, 22. He received the tables of stone on which were written the commandments of the Lord. He caused bread to rain from heaven, and water to flow from the flinty rock. He prepared the tents and the ark of the testimony, as he was directed upon the mountains. He ordained the figurative priesthood, with all the duties, offerings, sanctifications, apparel, &c., according to the command of the Lord.

He went with the people, pitched the tents, and took them up again at the command of the Lord. He gave them the commands and

statutes of the Lord. He stood as a faithful mediator between God and the people, when they had sinned, and he turned the wrath from Israel. He punished idolaters, whoremongers and the rebellious. He slew Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan. The Lord was with him in all his ways.

By faith, says Paul, "He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure in Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward; by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first born should touch them," Heb. 11: 24—28.

Kind reader, respect the word of the Lord, for when we look spiritually upon such holy examples and contrast them with the insupportable pride, haughtiness, avarice, idolatry, disobedience and unfaithfulness of the prince of the world, and with the blind, mad unbelief of the common people, then we must acknowledge that they are far from the obedience and active faith of Moses. Yea, they are unbelieving heathens, and not Christians.

Moses believed his God and acted rightly in all his transactions. He was kind, and solicitous for the welfare of the people under his care, as he was commanded. He

was the meekest of men; served neither for gift nor reward, but obeyed the voice and word of the Lord; was faithful in all his house, and faithfully prosecuted his duties in the fear of the Lord. He faithfully commanded out of the mouth of God, and in upright love, faithfully admonished the people, that they and their descendants, from generation to generation, should hear and be obedient to the voice of the Lord God of their fathers, and should follow no other customs, commandments, righteousness or worship, than that which he had taught or commanded them, till the new prophet, the teacher of righteousness, the blessed seed of Abraham, Christ Jesus, should come.

But if we would go to our rulers, princes, lords, bishops, priests, monks and preachers, and all those who boast of the name and faith of Christ; if we would rightly measure their faith and obedience with the word of the Lord, which is the true standard, and should find some who sincerely seek Christ from the heart, fear, love, be-

lieve and trust him; who teach and practice rightly the ordinances, commands, sacraments and true worship of God; who conform their whole lives both inwardly and outwardly, according to the word and example of the Lord; and who, in love, execute the service which is enjoined on them, as this faithful Moses has done in all his transactions, I fear they are so few that we should have to go far and search long to find them, and if there are still some, they must be, alas, given as a prey to the blood-thirsty, and bear the cross of the Lord.

I testify to you the truth in Christ, and lie not. All who hear not the voice of Christ, believe not his holy word, follow not his pure unblamable life, from the whole heart, in all humility, patience, meekness, obedience and love; have not the working and living faith of Moses, but are, after the contents of his doctrines, already judged. O, reader, beware! neither money, name, nor boasting will avail you, but power and deeds, if you wish to be saved, and not be condemned.

THE FAITH OF CALEB AND JOSHUA.

Joshua and Caleb, through faith, passed over Jordan and entered the promised land. When Moses sent out the twelve spies to view and explore the country, he said, "Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain, and see the land what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad, and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strong holds, and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not; and be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first-ripe grapes," Num. 13: 17—20.

They went up and viewed the land, even as Moses had commanded them by the mouth of the Lord, and after forty days they came to Moses and Aaron, and to the

whole congregation in the wilderness of Paran to Kadesh, carrying with them grapes, pomegranates and figs, saying, "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. Moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, we be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature; and there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants; and we were in our own sight as

grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight," Num. 13: 27—33.

"And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried; and the people wept that night, and all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole congregation said unto them, Would to God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would to God we had died in the wilderness, and wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt. Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes; and they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, the land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not. But all the congregation bade, stone them with stones." Num. 14: 1—10.

Behold, dear reader, it is because these two faithful men believed the word and promise of God, with all their hearts, that they trusted firmly in his Almighty power, paternal mercy and great works, as if they had already obtained them. They saw the heinous unbelief and heard the bitter murmuring of their brethren, that they thereby detracted from the Almighty Majesty, as if he were not able to fulfil his promises unto them, and that he had deceived them by his enticing words, therefore, they were very sorrowful and sad, and rent their clothes, as has been said. And therefore they were the only two persons of six hundred thousand, that came with Moses out of Egypt, who entered into the promised land. All the rest died in the wilderness during the time of forty years, and they did not reach the promised land, because they did not believe on the Almighty God, the God of their

fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who with such unheard-of signs and wonders, led them through the Red Sea, and so graciously upheld and guarded them in the wilderness.

Thus, alas, it is with some at the present day. They have spied the pleasant land, have seen and tasted its precious fruits, have been enlightened by the word of the Lord, have tasted the heavenly gifts, have partaken of the Holy Ghost, have tasted of the sweet word of God, and the power of the world to come, and have beheld the grace of the Lord, but since they do not consult God, but their own sinful, disobedient, evil flesh, which always seeks its own pleasure, and will not willingly bear the cross of the Lord. They behold with carnal eyes, and see that so many powerful tyrants and fenced cities are arrayed against them, that they have to pass a howling wilderness, and must ascend many high mountains: that they must give as a prey, honor, money, possessions, wife, children, body and life: hence they murmur against Moses and Aaron, and seek to stone Joshua and Caleb. They cause their poor teachers and leaders, who with true love direct to the word and examples of Christ, and preach the pure truth, such intolerable suffering. They backbite and defame them beyond measure, and choose for themselves, here and there a captain, false prophet or teacher, who, with fair words and under the appearance of good, lead them back to Egypt. They prefer temporal to eternal things, they fear perishing man more than the immortal, eternal God, the Lord and Creator of the world. With unbelieving, carnal Israel, they say in their hearts, We are not strong enough to go up against this great and strong people, and are not able to obey the doctrine, ordinances and example of Christ, for all the world is against us, all lords and princes persecute us, the preachers and priests upbraid and defame us, and we must become a by-word and a derision to all the world. We are much too weak to bear such great misery, therefore they want to transfer it to the Lord. Thus you think and err, for your unbelieving, carnal hearts have so blinded you, that you know not the righteous judgment of God, you hope not that a

holy life shall be rewarded, and esteem not the honor of an unblamable soul.

Dear reader, take warning, for as true as the Lord lives, I tell you, that all those who thus cast aside the word of the Lord, again become unbelieving in God, and become so earthly and carnal-minded that they fear those whom they ought not to fear; and fear not those whom they should fear; who think more of the perishable creatures, such as home, lands, gold, silver, wife, children, body and life, than of the everlasting God and his eternal kingdom, and have a greater desire to enjoy in peace, for a season, the dark Egypt of this ungodly world, than to inherit the pleasant fruitful land, in endless peace with God; such shall all fall in the wilderness, and unless they repent, shall never enter into his rest, Heb. 4: 1.

But those who, with Joshua and Caleb, hold firmly to the word of the Lord; who firmly believe on Christ, as the Scriptures direct; who are firmly assured in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, that God will not fail

in a single word, but that he will fulfill, in its time, all that he has promised; who are not prevailed on by the gates of hell; who suffer not themselves to be deceived by the subtle lies and philosophy of the learned; who are not frightened by the tyranny of the blood-thirsty; who are not vanquished by carnal lusts; nor enchanted by the fine appearance of false prophets, but walk humbly in the King's highway; who follow Christ, their Shepherd and Leader, and judge all their ways by his Spirit, word, and unblamable example; who turn not aside, neither to the right hand, nor to the left; behold they are those who will victoriously enter the spiritual, promised land, the eternal rest and peace, God's eternal kingdom and glory, with all the saints and believers, and through grace, eternally inherit it with Christ, as Joshua and Caleb inherited the figurative land through faith, and with their children inherit it. O children believe. "All things," says Christ, "are possible to him that believeth," Mark 9: 23.

THE BELIEF OF THE PIOUS KING JOSIAH.

Josiah, an illustrious and pious king in all his works, did that which was pleasing to the Lord, and walked in all the ways of his father David, and departed not therefrom, neither to the right hand nor to the left. And when he was yet a child he began to seek the God of David, his father. And in the eighteenth year of his age he sent Shaphan, his scribe, to Hilkiah the high priest, that money might be given to those who worked at the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah said to Shaphan, I have found the book of the Law in the house of the Lord, and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan and he brought it to the king. And when the king heard the words of the law, which were written in the book, he rent his clothes, as one who feared his God. He believed the word of the Lord, and feared the coming wrath which he threatened in the book which was found. He then commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, and Shaphan

saying, "Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found, for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us," 2 Kings 22: 13.

So they went to Huldah, a prophetess, the wife of Shallum, and asked her as Josiah had commanded them; the woman answered them, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the men who hath sent you unto me, Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read, because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger, with all the works of their hands; therefore, my wrath

shall be kindled against this place and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah, which sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, as touching the words which thou hast heard, because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes and wept before me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. Behold, therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place, and they brought the king word again.

“When now the king heard these words, he sent and gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets, and all the people both small and great, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant, which was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes with all their heart, and all their soul to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant,” 2 Kings 22: 15—20 and 23: 1—3. And Josiah caused all who were to be found in Israel to serve the Lord, and they departed not from him as long as Josiah lived.

Here, dear reader, observe what kind of faith Josiah had, and what the fruits thereof were. He heard the word of the Lord, and believed it. He rent his clothes, inquired of the Lord and renewed the covenant because he heard what God had commanded in the same book; that they should not do according to their own thoughts; that they should not follow after strange Gods, nor the abominations of the Canaanites and the other heathens which were dispersed before them, but they should serve the Lord alone and cleave to him, and keep his commands as he directed them. He was strong in the

Lord, resolved in a manly spirit, and acted valiantly in all his doings, for he believed and trusted God with all his strength; and with earnest zeal, he tore down all that his forefathers and former kings, out of their own imaginings and choice, had brought in and established as holy service.

He burned all the vessels of Baal and tore down all the groves, high places and altars, in the land of Judea and Samaria. He defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom. He destroyed the horses of the sun, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. He broke down the altar of Bethel and offered the idolatrous priests and the dead bones thereupon, as the man of God had proclaimed aforetime. He destroyed all that was opposed to the law of God. He kept the passover of the Lord as it was written in the book of the covenant, in such a glorious manner as no judge or king had kept it before. He also put away all sooth-sayers and wizards, images, idols, and all the abominations, that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that they might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah, the High priest found in the house of the Lord, and like unto him there was no king that turned to the Lord with all his heart and all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him, 2 Kings 23: 24, 25.

Hear now, O ye great princes and kings, and all those who suffer themselves to think that they are faithful lords and christian princes, to you is my admonition! Have you any fear of God? Any love to Christ or his blessed word? Or is there yet any sincerity of nature with you, who have understanding? Then know that you are not gods from heaven; but poor dying men of the impure guilty seed of Adam. Humble yourselves under the Almighty hand of God, and compare Josiah with his faith and works with your faith and works, in order that you may learn to know how far you are from the Spirit and word of Christ, and that you bear nothing else than a mere, idle, vain, empty name.

Whilst Josiah was yet a child, and young in years, he feared God, and manifested a

mature mind and understanding in all his works; but you, my dear lords, fear neither God nor the devil. Cursed unbelief is your mother, and unrighteousness, your sister. In divine things you are blind, deaf and dumb; yea, during your whole lives, you are as destitute of understanding as children.

Josiah was eight years old when he was made king, and in the eighth year of his reign, he began to seek the God of his father David; but your seeking, from the cradle on, is solely pomp and splendor, haughtiness of heart, wantonness, riding, sporting, killing, enlargement of your dominions, increase of patronage and treasure, fighting, warring, taxing and usury; to afflict the destitute and poor; to domineer one over another, and to live, with all your might, openly, according to the lusts of the flesh. The open deed testifies that I write the truth.

Josiah began, in the twelfth year of his reign, to purify Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, groves, idolatry and molten images, but you build them in every city, village, street and alley; upon every high mountain and in every deep valley, and whoever would admonish you with the Spirit and word of Christ, must be a heretic and must tread the press of affliction.

Josiah was solicitous for the house of the Lord, and appointed and paid artificers to labor thereat. But you break down, and by your vindictive mandates, tyranny and the sword, oppose the house and dwelling of Christ, which is his church, which he has sanctified by his Spirit, cleansed by his blood, and adorned by the word, ordinances and sacraments of his Father. You prevent it from being rebuilt in its apostolic clearness, and from becoming perfect in its doctrines, sacraments and conduct, according to the command of Christ and his holy word.

Josiah expelled all soothsayers and wizards. He offered the idolatrous priests upon their idolatrous altars, and burned the dead bones, &c., but the bones of the man of God from Judah, and of the prophets of Samaria, he burned not. But you sustain and cherish, as shepherds of the flocks of Christ and keepers of your souls, false prophets

and deceiving priests; the greater part of whom are open drunkards, libertines and idolaters, full of all unrighteousness, covetous in heart, whose belly is their god, blind watchmen, and dumb dogs, who dishonor God, and destroy poor miserable souls. You have them in preference in your courts and give them the highest seats at your tables. They are honored with high names and great titles, and are greeted by every one as doctors, lords and masters. You present them splendid dwellings, great rents and possessions, and say, They who serve the gospel must live by the gospel; although they do nothing but place soft pillows and cushions under you, and preach according to the itching of your ears. But the true, pious teachers and faithful servants of Christ, who sincerely seek your salvation and that of the whole world, who direct you to Christ, who rightly use his sacraments and ordinances, who desire to lead you and all men on the right way, and who walk unblamably, they must without mercy or christian modesty be persecuted by you, sentenced to fire and water, and must bear mockery and shame before all the world.

Josiah made a covenant with the Lord, and with all the elders, priests, prophets and common people, that they should serve the Lord as long as they lived, &c. But you have made your covenant with anti-christ and with all your preachers, priests, monks, judges and rulers, that the perverted, broad way should be pursued, the doctrines and institutions of men should be taught, followed and observed, instead of the true service of God; to the people, doctrine, commands, Spirit, Supper, life and separation of Christ, you give no place, and whoever acts or speaks contrary to your abominations, must lose his possessions or his life.

Josiah heard the word of the Lord and became contrite in heart; he rent his clothes and wept before the Lord; he feared the coming wrath, because they and their forefathers had rejected the word of God. But you, my dear lords, are so hardened and blinded, so bound by your sins, and lusts of the flesh, through cursed unbelief; so enchanted by the false prophets, that we cannot, in the least, move your impeni-

tent, hardened hearts, neither by the threatening law of the Lord, nor by his fierce wrath, and terrible judgment; neither by the devouring flames of hell and eternal death, nor by the peaceful gospel of grace; neither by the precious blood of Christ, nor by the pious, unblamable life of all the saints, who with their simple *yea* and *noy*, are daily murdered, before your eyes as innocent sheep, on account of their faith and piety. It is time that you awake, and take notice how you and we, with our forefathers, have so abundantly merited the righteous punishment and wrath of God. May the merciful Lord grant you eyes that you may see.

Josiah turned to the Lord with his whole heart, soul and might, but you dare proudly disregard the God who has created you, deny the Lord who has purchased you, and turn yourselves to dumb idols, to wood, stone, gold and silver images, to water, bread and wine, to the unprofitable doctrines and commandments of men, *yea*, to open abominations and idolatry, not observing that it stands written, "Idolaters shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," Rev. 21: 8.

Behold, dear sirs, the above is true; it is manifest by your pride, whoredom, carnal life, and by the ruins of burnt countries and cities, the great number of churches, cloisters, priests and monks, matins, vespers, and every other false worship.

Besides, when we, on account of the multitude of our sins, are visited with pestilence, famine, war, and other dangerous evils and plagues, your only remedies, to appease the wrath of God, and quench the burning fire of his anger, are idolatrous masses, processions, as they are called, dead bones, images, crosses, banners. They, the papists I mean, bear these strange abominations, and follow after them with uncovered heads, folded hands, and burning waxcandles, &c. Therefore, you turn not aside the fierce wrath, but augment it more and more, for the Lord will not give his divine honor to works of man's choice nor to any creature, neither does he accept any such masses, processions, crosses, images and abominations, nor regards them in his mind, as the prophet said.

Beloved sirs, repent. The statute book of Christ is entirely lost to you. Christ and his truth, sacraments, Spirit and life, you have never known nor possessed in the least degree. You serve strange gods, you hear, follow and use the doctrine, sacraments, ordinances and commands of anti-christ; you lead an unclean, ungodly and carnal life. O sirs, take warning! your sins have arisen to heaven.

Although it is so little regarded by you, God grant it may be otherwise, yet this book of Christ, by the grace of God, has been found again by some. The pure, unadulterated truth has come to light, through the pure, unmingled gospel, and is daily read in your ears, and explained before your eyes with a godly, virtuous life, with an open confession, and above all, with much of the property and blood of the saints; yet your hearts continue so stony and hard that they cannot be converted or moved, neither by grace nor wrath; neither by adversity nor prosperity, as we have said. Behold thus has the blindness of Sodom, the darkness of Egypt, the hardening of Pharaoh, through the righteous judgment of God, come upon our kings, princes, lords and rulers.

Dear sirs, awake! and make haste, the trumpet is sounded, prepare yourselves! Your mortal sickness and cankering, filthy wounds are shown to you. I counsel you to suffer yourselves to be helped. You possess neither Christ nor his word. Your controversy is against the Lamb and his chosen. Your way is in darkness, and leads to the abyss of hell. The wrath of the Lord has gone forth over you and your land, for you live more carnally and evil than can be imagined or described.

O my dear sirs! reform, repent, so that you may stand before God; cleanse your hands and hearts before the Lord; change your pride, into humility, and your mirth, and joy into sorrow; rend your hardened hearts, and your garments; hear and seek Christ, and not anti-christ; implicitly obey Christ's Spirit, doctrine, sacraments, commands and infallible example, and not the vain doctrines and commandments of men for they corrupt and profit not.

Put away from among you, all offence,

abominations and idolatry, masses, altars, infant baptism, the idolatrous bread, or supper (I mean such as is used by the world), images, confessions, the wanton sodomy, unchastity of the papistic priests and monks; destroy and root up all accursed heathen disgrace; such as brothels, every species of gambling, open houses of drunkenness, together with idolatrous temples, high places, groves, churches and cloisters, which were so numerous built contrary to the Scriptures by our forefathers, through blindness and ignorance.

We call on all, poor, deceiving teachers and false sects, great and small, who are against the Spirit, ordinances, word and life of Christ, sincerely to repent, and help us to resist, not by violence, tyranny or sword; as, alas! it is the custom with you, but by the Spirit of Christ, with doctrine, exhortation and the like virtuous services and mild means, so that they may turn from evil, and hear and follow Christ.

Permit all faithful messengers and servants of God to preach Christ, to use his sacraments and ordinances according to the Scriptures, lead a penitent and unblamable life, and gather unto Christ a glorious church, that they may, through the Spirit and grace of God, according to the Scriptures, win and bring unto Christ an unspotted, pure virgin.

Again I say, reform; you have erred and mocked God too long, and worshipped anti-christ instead of Christ too long; walked too long in the perverse and broad way of death. Awaken! it is yet to-day; behold, the true book of the law; the saving, pure gospel of Christ which was hid for so many centuries by the abominations of anti-christ, is found.

Hear and read attentively, believe and observe it faithfully; it is the word of the Lord God, which Jesus Christ, the first and only begotten Son of the Almighty Father, brought from heaven and taught us. Bow to his righteous sceptre, fear, love, serve, honor and follow him with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your powers, as did the pious Josiah. For the Lord our God, is Lord of lords, and God of gods,

a mighty, and a terrible God, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.

Yes, beloved lords, Can you thus convert yourselves with all your hearts? Can you change your hearts and humble yourselves before God? Deny yourselves, seek and follow Christ and his righteousness? Renounce the world and flesh with all its lusts, as you have heard? Then you will become, true, spiritual kings, and priests; then you will possess your souls in peace, gain the victory and conquest over all the deadly enemies of your souls; you will live and die in grace; then you may in truth, without any hypocrisy, be called christian kings and believing princes. The testimony of Peter to all christians, I say to *all* christians, is true, "Ye are a chosen generation, a holy nation, a peculiar people," 1 Pet. 2: 9.

But if you refuse this and remain what you are now, preferring perishing, temporal pleasures, joys and glory, to the imperishable, eternal joy and glory; I desire then that you would reflect upon what Sirach says, "Why are earth and ashes proud? He that is to-day a king, to-morrow shall die," Sir. 10: 9. Yea, what are they all, who are of Adam, but dust and ashes, a passing wind, a vapor, poor, miserable, mortal flesh, food for worms, yea men, and not God. O, Sirs, take warning, awake and reform yourselves! God is Lord, who will judge you. Once more, take warning.

Behold, my kind reader, here you have before you a few examples of true faith, as Noah and Abraham, before the giving of the law, and Moses, Joshua, Caleb and Josiah, under the law, cited from Scripture, wherefrom you may learn how simple and plain, unfeigned, open and obedient, yea, how full of all kind of virtues and fruits a true faith has been from the beginning, as may be seen in Abel, Enoch, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Jephthah, Baruch, Gideon, Sampson, Rahab, Samuel, David, Ezekiel, Elias, Helias and others. Now I will, by the grace of God, present you with a few examples from the New Testament, whereby you may very clearly learn what an indescribably great power, fruit, spirit, life and energy, a true, evangelical, christian faith in its true nature always includes. So that you will not, through a false notion, conform to this

ignorant, unbelieving world, who boast and pretend that their fruitless, dead opinion and historical knowledge of Christ, is a sincere, evangelical faith.

THE FAITH OF THE CENTURION OF CAPERNAUM.

At the time when the Lord Jesus entered Capernaum, the servant of a centurion lay sick, whom he loved much. When he heard that Jesus was there, he had the consent of some of the elders of the Jews, and sent them with a request to Jesus, that he would come to him and restore his sick servant, and Jesus went with them. And not being far from the house of the centurion, he sent some of his friends to him, who said, Lord trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof (here notice his humility), and I did not think myself worthy personally to call and see thee: but speak the word, and my child shall be healed. He acknowledged that all must bow to Christ and his word, and said, I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another come, and he cometh; and to my servant do this, and he doeth it. As if he would say to Christ, Behold, Lord, I am but a man, and have to serve the councils at Rome, nevertheless, I have so much power over my servants, that they must obey what I command them; but thou, Lord, art such a Lord that all the mighty have to bow to thee, all that is in heaven above and on earth beneath, must yield to thee. If thou but command sickness and death, they will have to obey thee, and leave my child. And again, if thou command health and life, they will have to return again. Therefore, it is not necessary that thou shouldst come into the house of thy unworthy servant: Lord, only speak the word, and my child will again be restored. When Jesus heard these words, he was quite astonished, and said to the people that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. Matt. 8.

Behold, faithful reader, here you have the centurion as a living example, by which you

may learn how a true christian faith humbles itself before God, and doubts not his power, and how kindly and graciously *he* deals with *his* poor servants, be they male or female. The centurion was moved with compassion towards his poor servant, and had great concern for him, that he spared no pains to trouble the elders of the Jews to send to Christ and entreat him to come and heal his sick servant. This is to the disgrace and shame of all false christians, and especially to many rich, some of whom are more severe on the poor servants and hirelings, and have less feeling for them, than they (with your leave) have for their domestic animals; for as soon as the servants sicken, so that they cannot perform all manner of drudgery, they are unmercifully turned out of doors, and sent to this or that asylum, or to their parents and friends, who sometimes, scarcely have a mouthful of bread or a bed in their houses. Others again have to get a substitute in their place, while sick, and pay him out of their own earned pittance; and if they in health even do fulfil their engagements with hard and severe labor, still, some of these unmerciful, blood-thirsty, treat these innocent ones, who have to watch when they sleep, labor when they rest, run when they command, stand when they sit, in such a manner, as to take the greater portion of their earnings, or scandalize them; now, say they, a spoon is lost; anon a dish is broken: in short, they always speak evil of them and can never be pleased. Yea, some of them would feed them upon water or straw, and pay them with the whip and chaff, even as they do their laboring oxen and horses, if they were not afraid and ashamed of men, for they would not be ashamed before God, alas, whom they know not. O woe, unto such heathenish tyranny and unmerciful cruelty! The centurion calls his servant *his child*,

by which he manifests his paternal love and humility towards his poor servant. Though he was lord, and held in high honor, nevertheless, he did not exalt himself above his poor servant, for he well knew that one God created both of them, that they were born of one seed, and had one origin. But what conduct such heathen christians manifest towards their oppressed servants, their actions, alas, openly show!

How lamentably some of the poor children are despised by some of them. How many disgraceful words have some of them to hear, and how many sore stripes to endure. Their scolding and rash words, continue from morning till night; some of them make their girls prostitutes; yea, what shall I say more. These poor children are regarded by them, and especially by the rich, as the poor, despised donkey, by the magnificent, fat horse, and the filthy pebbles by the beautiful pearls. Ah! reader, it is all much worse than I can describe; it is indeed time that they would look into these things, and reflect more deeply upon love.

The centurion humbled himself before the Lord with all his heart, esteeming himself not worthy that Christ should come under his roof. But our haughty, proud heathens strut about with puffed up hearts and extended necks, high-minded, idle, and daring; one boasts of his family, another of his wealth, a third of his wisdom, a fourth of his skill and beauty, &c. But the innocent and meek Christ says, Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and falsely boast that they have his name, word, death and blood, yet know it not.

The centurion believed, that Christ was mighty and able, by his word, to do all that he desired; but this miserably benighted people esteem it not more than they do Lucian and Æsopian fables. Hence it is, that they lead such an impenitent, carnal life, and use such idolatrous sacraments and false worship, and have departed so far from the true King's highway, still they would be the true, apostolic, and believing church of Christ; but even as Christ testified to the centurion, that he had not found such faith in Israel; so we might, on the other hand, testify and say of this people, that such a heedless, cruel, haughty,

proud, and unmerciful unbelief is unknown among the heathen, and is not to be found with them, who never heard of the word of Christ. Behold, thus does the righteous Lord let those err and fall into blindness of heart, who so little regard his most holy word, hate and thrust his fatherly grace, goodness, Spirit, knowledge and faith from them.

But it is not so with you, my most beloved. Take this sincere, pious centurion as an example; imitate him in his faith, love, humility and virtues, and be as solicitous for your servants, as he was for his servants; teach, admonish and reprove them with a paternal spirit, as often as they err; set them an unblamable example, in all righteousness and piety; have compassion with their severe labor; comfort them in their poverty; comfort them and grieve them not; supply them with their necessary wants, food and their earned hire, and do not curtail them; protect them in all honorable things; rebuke them not without cause, lest they become timid; do not drive them away from you, but let them unmolestedly serve out their time as agreed, lest the name of the Lord be blasphemed; be at all times friendly towards them, and if they are weak and sick, assist and minister unto them; get others to serve in their place, without detriment to them, till the Lord take them hence, or restore them to health; sympathize with them, and be merciful; assist them in all their need; lift not your hearts above them, nor despise them, for they are your brethren according to the flesh. In short, be you so minded in love towards them as Christ Jesus is towards us. At all times remember that we also have a Lord in heaven, before whose judgment-seat we must all appear and render on account of all our works.

But if they are wanton and obstinate, and will not hear your word and command, nor follow your admonition and counsel: would rule and not serve; waste their time and not labor industriously; are unfaithful, rebellious and troublesome; roguishly ruin your family and children, &c.; then agree with them and bring the matter, touching their wages, before two or three witnesses, so that the blame may not rest upon you, and the word of the Lord be not blasphemed. In

such case then, let them be dismissed, that your good conscience be not disturbed on their account, and your house and children be not depraved. Yea, my brethren, you should do to your poor hirelings, even as you desire that it should be done to you, being called with them. This the law and the prophets teach.

THE FAITH OF ZACCHEUS, THE PUBLICAN.

Luke says that "Jesus entered and passed through Jericho; and behold, there was a man, named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich; and he sought to see Jesus, who he was, and could not for the press, because he was little of stature; and he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree (or as some say, into a wild fig tree), to see him; for he was to pass that way; and when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said to him, Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house, and he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold; and Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he is also a son of Abraham," Luke 19: 1—9.

Paul says, For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our instruction; and though we know Zaccheus' faith, fruit, mercy, love and true conversion, it avails us nothing, if we do not practice and come up to his faith, with its contrite, pious fruits. I therefore entreat all my readers, who live openly in sin; all the wealthy, avaricious, unrighteous merchants and grocers, all financiers and bankers, all who love money; judges, lawyers, advocates, preachers, priests and monks, all drunken landlords, together with all those who deal in unlawful gain; I entreat all by the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that they would well consider, with an understanding heart, this history and narrative touching Zaccheus, in order that they may learn therefrom, that they do not yet possess the right, true faith and that christian-

ity which avails with God; and that they have nothing but a fruitless, vain boasting of Christ and of faith.

Zaccheus was chief of the publicans, and he received Christ joyfully in his house and heart. He believed and was renewed; he reformed his life, and departed from his former evil ways. That our open transgressors do not yet reform their old, ungodly lives, and that they do not desire Christ and his faith, however much they may boast, is as clear as the light of day.

Zaccheus was rich, and one half of his wealth he gave to the poor. But our rich people seek more and more, how they may increase their money and possessions, build their houses splendidly, and add farm to farm. They do not defend the cause of the poor and needy; are unmerciful, proud, avaricious and wanton; do not remember what is written concerning them, "Go 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," James 5: 1—3. Neither do you reflect on what David says, "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like the green bay-tree; yet he passed away, and lo, he was not: Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found," Ps. 37: 35, 36. Ah! what a hard saying which the Lord uttered, "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation," Luke 6: 24, and "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," Matt. 19: 24.

Zaccheus said to the Lord, "If I have taken any thing from any man by false ac-

cusation, I restore him four fold," but our miserably avaricious, never cease from defrauding their neighbor. For the whole, broad world, both man and woman, are so greedy after unlawful, shameful gain, that it cannot be imagined nor related.

Lords and princes daily invent new devices and practices, that they may increase their dominions, interests, tolls and rents. They tax, shave, grasp and rob without any mercy or bounds; they draw the very marrow from the bones of the poor, and show by their actions, that they are companions of those of whom it is written, "Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves," Isa. 1: 23. O that he knew Christ, would repent, cease to do evil, and would reflect more on love.

Judges, lawyers and advocates also seek all artifice to get unlawful gain; with few exceptions they all serve for gifts and money, for if they did not expect profit or gain, I am persuaded that burgomasters and judges would be few in the whole empire. For the sake of gain, they sit and judge, and they often encourage causes for the sake of a fee. Some of them pervert law and right for the sake of a gift, and do not reflect on what Jehoshaphat said to the judges, "Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgment; wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts," 2 Chron. 19: 6, 7.

Captains, knights, servants and such like bloody men, are ready to serve for the sake of gain, and swear with uplifted fingers that they will destroy cities and countries, take citizens and inhabitants, kill them and take their possessions from them, although they never harmed them, nor gave them any provocation. O God! what execrated, ungodly abominations and traffic. And still it must be said, that they protect the country and people, and that they assist in administering justice!

Priests, monks and preachers are equally bent upon unlawful gain. They are not shocked to make God's only and first begotten Son, his eternal, Almighty Word and Wisdom, the one and only everlasting foun-

dition of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ, with his holy apostles, to be open, false witnesses, heretics, and deceivers; for Christ says, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved," Mark 16: 16. But they say, He that believeth and is baptized, is a heretic, and shall be damned. Christ says, "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Matt. 19: 17. But they say, None can keep God's commandments.

Paul says, If ye live according to the flesh ye shall die; again, The unrighteous, drunkards, the avaricious, the haughty, the unchaste and the like, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But they say, We are poor sinners; who can always live as the Scriptures teach? Christ died for sinners, and the like consolations, whereby they deny Christ and his word, and thus encourage the whole world, rich and poor, small and great, in their hardened and wicked life, that there are, alas, few who truly repent, or seek after God. They preach what the ignorant blind world desires, that they may quietly enjoy the reward of Balaam (their cloisters and stipends, I mean), that they may lead an epicurian life without care; for they, poor creatures, know not that they are those of whom it is written, "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core," Jude 1: 11, accursed people, 2 Pet. 2. O God, that they would beware!

The unrighteous merchants and grocers (I say the *unrighteous*, for I do not mean those who are righteous and pious), together with all those who deal avariciously and penuriously, are so bent upon accursed gain, that they exclude God from their hearts. They censure what they should properly praise, and praise what they should censure; they lie and swear; use many vain words; adulterate their merchandise to cheat the people, and to take what is not their own; they sell, lend and trust the needy at exorbitant gain and usury, never seriously reflecting nor taking to heart, that it stands written, "That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter," 1 Thess. 4: 6.

I would that they might more seriously lay to heart the doctrine of Sirach, "A mer-

chant shall hardly keep himself from doing wrong; and a huckster shall not be freed from sin; many have sinned for a small matter, and he that seeketh for abundance will turn his eyes away; as a nail sticketh fast between the joinings of the stones, so doth sin stick close between buying and selling. Unless a man hold himself diligently in the fear of the Lord, his house shall soon be overthrown." Eccl. 26: 29; 27: 1—3.

This I write as a warning to the god-fearing merchants and grocers, so that they will not imitate the ungodly, lest they be overcome by avarice, but be circumspect in dealing and beware of dangers.

Some are made thieves, some murderers, others jugglers, necromancers, some are whoremongers, others gamblers, others are betrayers, others become executioners and tormentors, and also some persecutors and slayers of the pious, &c., and all this for the sake of accursed gain, whereby they openly testify (because they walk in such a way and are so bent upon unlawful gain), that they are of the devil and not of God, that they have not the faith and word of Christ, but in every respect are inimical and opposed thereto.

Yes, kind reader, the whole world is so contaminated and involved in this accursed avarice, fraud, false practices and unbecoming gain, in this false traffic and merchandise, with this finance, usury, and self-interest, that I scarcely know how it could be worse; yet they are still the priest's and preacher's christians, and are said to earn their bread honestly, and to do justice to all.

Ah! my reader, how different all this is from the faith, disposition and converted life of Zaccheus. For if they had the mind, faith and power of Zaccheus, which we must have, if we would ever be saved, it is my opinion that few lords and princes would continue in their violence and wanton lives; few riders (knights) and servants in their ungodly service and deeds of blood; few judges, lawyers and advocates in their courts and offices; few rich persons in the unlawful use of their riches; few merchants and grocers in their usurious and dangerous trade; and few preachers, priests and

monks would continue in their incomes, stipends and cloisters. There would soon be a different state of things: because it cannot be, but that the righteous live by faith. Yea, they would, with joyful heart, say with Zaccheus, The poor we willingly serve with our goods, and if we have defrauded any one, we will gladly satisfy him.

All who, like Zaccheus, rightly receive Jesus Christ in the house of their consciences; rightly receive the word of Christ as he did, and be also truly born through the word; are rightly influenced by the Spirit of Christ; and are of the same mind with him, it is impossible that they could defraud any one even of a farthing; for we see that the disposition and usage of all true believers is to injure none on earth; but, as much as in them is, assist all; to defraud none, but to do justice to all. As Paul says, "Let him that stole, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good; that he may have to give to him that needeth," Eph. 4: 28.

But why say much? For my part I do not know where to find the mighty and the rich; in what courts we can find judges, lawyers and advocates; and in what cities and countries, merchants and grocers; or what cloisters and churches we can look for preachers, priests and monks, who rightly believe and follow Christ; who, being regenerated, penitent and pious, desist from all improper practices, fraud, craftiness, robbery, and unlawful gain, and say with Zaccheus, Those whom we have defrauded we will repay four-fold. The prophet complains that every one from the least even unto the greatest, is given to covetousness, Jer. 8: 10.

Since then they are determined upon accursed, abominable avarice, and unlawful gain, and deal so rudely and plainly contrary to love, and none any where repent, hence, it is evident that they are not in the church of Christ, for the church of Christ is called his body and bride in the Scripture. If the church be his body, she must then be flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; and if she be his bride, she must be of his generation, be righteous, holy, meek, chaste, true, lovely, merciful; yea, hear and be obedient to his voice; therefore, Christ cannot admit of any other members in his church

but those who are of one heart, spirit and soul with him, partakers of his Spirit; who are dead to all unrighteousness, bury the old evil life of sin, walk by faith, unblamably in love, receive the truth joyfully, willingly serve their neighbor, as did this believing, regenerated and renewed Zaccheus.

He desired to see Christ, and received him with joy; he believed his word, and abandoned his ungodly life; he ministered to the poor, and reconciled those whom he had defrauded. In short, he proved himself to be a pious, sincere, regenerated child of God in all his actions; therefore he heard the peaceable, joyful word of divine grace, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham," Luke 19: 9.

Behold, worthy reader, those who believe, are penitent and renewed as Zaccheus was, and walk in love, belong to the church and body of the Lord, as Christ himself says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my dis-

ciples, if ye have love one to another." They are the living stones of the Lord's temple, and the true citizens of Jerusalem; in which neither sorcerers, nor whoremongers, nor murderers, nor idolaters, nor whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, have part. Yea, as long as Zaccheus was such a one, he was without; for such, says Paul, have neither lot nor part in the kingdom of God and of Christ.

But as soon as he believed the word of the Lord, through faith he repented and turned himself to love; from that hour he was entitled to citizenship, with Christ himself; the path of life was opened to him, peace declared, salvation bestowed, and he was acknowledged and received as a joint-heir of grace, and a child of God, as the Lord says, This day is salvation come to this house, &c. For as Christ is holy, so must also his children, brethren, members, church and bride be holy; for it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

THE MURDERER'S FAITH.

The evangelists teach that there were two malefactors crucified with Christ; the one on the right hand, and the other on the left. "One of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us? but the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we, indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss; and he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," Luke 23: 39—43.

Good reader, observe particularly what I write. When we critically view the confession of this evil doer, we are astonished at the great power, the good nature, the abundance of fruit, spiritual vision, energetic love and the free confession of his faith. It is evident that he had been an abandoned,

ungodly reprobate, who neither knew nor feared God, but maliciously committed all manner of sins, robbed his neighbor of his goods and shed his blood. Matthew and Mark call him a murderer, and Luke calls him a malefactor. This appears to be the case as he testifies himself, that he had to die for crimes which he had committed.

Notwithstanding all this, as soon as this malefactor, extended on the cross between Jerusalem and Mount Calvary, heard in his last distress, the word of God from the mouth of the Lord, it wrought in him so powerfully, that his heart within him was touched and changed, which led him to seek, from that moment, the salvation of his fellow-men and rebuked his reviling companion, saying, Fearest thou not God? He confessed his own sins and his maliciousness, saying, We are receiving according to our merits and works; and he acknowledged the condemned Jesus (who was cursed to die on the cross as one of the most aban-

done malefactors, by the chief priests, pharisees and scribes, and denied of the people and condemned to death), to be innocent, righteous, pure and without sin, saying, This one has done no evil. Besides this, he also sought grace and mercy of God, although it appeared to human understanding that he was denied all mercy, and every favor both by God and man. For he was at this time the most rejected and despised of all men, as the prophet laments, Isa. 53: 6, and the thief applied to none other, in heaven or upon earth, than to this poor, innocent, calumniated, banished and crucified Jesus; in full confidence drawing near to him, as the throne of divine grace, that he might obtain the remission of his sins, saying, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

I think, this may justly be called, a true, christian faith, and a truly worthy fruit of penitence and repentance; and it was nothing else to the Lord, but a refreshing of his thirsty soul, as a molifying of his deep wounds, as a consolation of his sore distress, and as a comfort in his painful sufferings and cruel death, so that he in the same hour, heard the consoling, joyful word of divine grace and eternal peace, from Jesus, namely, Fear not, all thy sins which thou didst commit in thy ignorance are covered, they shall never more be remembered, either by me or my Father. I pledge my innocent blood as security; therefore, be of good cheer, what thou didst desire, thou hast already obtained, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Behold my reader, here you have, in the malefactor mentioned, a fair example of a sincere, christian faith, with its properties, disposition, nature, power and fruits. With this same murderer, many vain despisers comfort and flatter themselves in their sinful and impenitent lives, think and say to themselves, God is merciful; he knows that we are the children of Adam, if we do not live as the Scriptures teach, and as they would have us live, yet we hope, by the grace of God to be saved, as was the murderer. These poor creatures know not that the thief will be a sore condemnation to them; because they hear the word of the Lord so often, and believe it not, neither

are they obedient thereto. Ah reader! do not thus mock God; I fear many will fail in their hopes in this matter.

Again, I say that all wilful despisers, who thus say and think in their hearts, must be eternally convicted by this thief, and shall stand confounded, for as soon as he heard the gospel of grace, he received it in a pure conscience, through faith, and became penitent, regenerated and pious. And these hear it from year to year, see daily so many fair fruits, and that it is so gloriously testified by possessions and blood; nevertheless, they remain unbelievers and are hardened in sin; for they reject the inviting grace, they resist the operating Spirit, they contemn the preached word, they trample under foot the proffered gift, and say, where are the Scriptures, whereby we may comfort such unreasonable, shameful scorers, or promise and proclaim to them the grace and peace of the Lord?

I fear they are the sterile, unfruitful earth, of which Paul speaks, which drinketh in the rain of the holy, divine word, that cometh oft upon it, and nevertheless, bears only thorns and thistles; are rejected and nigh unto cursing, which are to be burned. They are those of whom Solomon laments and says, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I, also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh and when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer," Prov. 1: 22—28. But because they do not look for light, he will turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

The murderer believed as soon as he heard. O! that they would do so; and think upon what David said, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation," Heb. 3: 15.

The murderer heard but *once* and *believed*, and these hear it so often, and yet they believe not. He heard and was changed; but these hear and continue the same, and harden their hearts yet more and more.

He reprov'd his reviling companion, and admonish'd him, that he should fear God; but these blaspheme and revile all the faithful who do so; and love those who hate the truth. He unreservedly confessed his sins and wickedness, without fear; but these, no matter however avaricious, drunken, proud, unchaste, unclean, envious and idolatrous they are, do not confess their transgressions and sins, and when called to repent and reform, they say, Yea, what have we done?

He acknowledged that Christ's kingdom was not earthly, for he said, *When thou comest into thy kingdom*; but these have all their pleasures in gold and silver, in eating and drinking, in splendor and wantonness, and in the perishable, visible riches of the world; they do not regard the invisible, eternal riches, which Christ out of grace, has bestowed upon all his believers, and merited them by the shedding of his precious blood.

He confessed the poor, condemned, crucified Jesus before all the rulers, priests, Pharisees and before the people, and acknowledge him as his Savior and Lord; but these, alas! deny his Almighty Majesty, his heavenly origin and glory, and do not regard his judgment, Spirit, word, ordinances, commands, sacraments and promises, although he has seated himself as a triumphant and conquering prince, at the right hand of the Father, and has received all power, both in heaven and upon earth, in eternal glory of the Father.

He sought mercy, favor and the forgiveness of his sins, of Christ; but these seek it of their preachers, priests and monks, through masses, confessions, absolution, bread and wine, holy water and the like superstitions and abominations.

He heard, because he believed on Christ, the pleasing words, *To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*; but these shall hear, because they believe not on Christ, the dreadful, intolerable and awful sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire*. Their faith was unlike, as will also be their reward. Let all mockers take this to heart.

And thus, take notice, finally this penitent sinner will rise up against those who have comforted themselves with him in their sins, and criminate and condemn them before the face of his Majesty. For they hav-

ing so often heard the sweet melody of the divine word, and never were grateful, nor ever learned or believed it with open and renewed hearts; but the murderer heard it but once, and immediately believed. Ah! dear children, beware and seek Christ while he may be found, and call on him while he is yet near, lest his anger go forth, and the fire of his fierce wrath consume you.

Think you, O perverted scorners! that you can receive or reject faith, repentance, sorrow for sin, and the grace of God, at pleasure? O no! Holy Paul says, "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind," Rom. 1: 28. That sentence shall be passed upon all proud scorners. Children beware!

Notice this parable, There is a very rich potentate, emperor or king, whom I, through great ignorance, hated all my days; he had compassion upon me, and because I am such a poor man, he, through his faithful servants, tendered me not only his favor and friendship, but also a great sum of gold, many precious stones and gems, and all this out of love and compassion; and I am so ungrateful, that I will not only not give meat and drink to the faithful servants of this kind prince, who loves me dearly, for these great favors; but I turn them with ignominy and disgrace, out of doors, throw mud and stones at them, put them into prison and bonds, deprive them of property and life, take the proffered gifts, place them in a closet, and trample them under foot, &c., and inform the prince, That I do not now desire his presents, but if he will, in the course of one or ten years offer them again, then I will perhaps, make up my mind and receive them and tender my thanks for the favors. Now, I will allow you all to judge, whether it would be right that such a prince should again offer his favor, since I treated him and his servants so perfidiously? Or whether he should not much more turn his favor into displeasure, and his love into wrath toward me, for my presumptuous tyranny, haughty rejection of his favors, and severely punish me? I think, you would award me his punishment and not his grace.

Thus it is with you. O you scorners! The

merciful Lord, whose riches and grace are immense, has graciously pitied us in these abominable, last days, and had compassion on our great blindness and deadly poverty, although we hated his holy will from our infancy, and through his faithful servants freely offered us his beloved Son with his holy word, Spirit, merits, ordinances and example, tendered us his grace, peace and eternal life, kingdom, inheritance, joy and glory, together with the remission of our sins; he dug about us and fostered us, barren trees, for many years. He calls and teaches daily, through his chosen, who willingly sacrifice possession and life as a testimony; he puts at variance the father against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the members of the family against one another, and friend against friend, &c. Some he suffers to be driven about in strange countries, in tribulation, in sorrow, in misery, in fear, in want, in vexation, in deserts, in mountains, in dens and in caves of the earth. He gives signs in the sun, moon, and the stars in heaven; in earthquakes, war, pestilence, new diseases, famine, and unheard of wonders upon the earth. As a hen gathers her chickens, he would gather us under the wings of his love; and as a faithful shepherd of his sheep, he would bring us to the right fold of his grace; bring us into the chamber of his covenant, and kiss us with the lips of his peace; wash us from all our uncleanness, and make us his bride; redeem us from the dominion of hell and death, and lead us into the kingdom of heaven, and of eternal life. In short, he would release us from the power of darkness and the devil, and receive us and make us holy as his chosen children and heirs.

But, alas, in relation to you, it is altogether vain; as already said, his proffered grace and word you reject; you persecute and kill his faithful servants and ministers; you defame and blaspheme the unblamable, pious life, together with the confession of the saints; you scoff at his great signs, wonders and reproofs, and your faces are like those of the lecherous, and your hearts as diamonds; you are neither ashamed, nor will you be converted; you say with per-

verted scorners, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit should we have, if we pray to him? Job 21: 14, 15.

Since then, you are so ungrateful to your God, yea, are altogether vain and insulting towards him, who has shown to us, from the beginning, such great mercy, that you entirely reject and disregard his paternal admonitions, chastisings, doctrines, commands, obedience to his holy word, and the innocent blood of his saints, together with all his great powers and miracles; yea, you consider them as mere deception and heresy; that you do not regard the day of grace; that you inconsiderately trample under foot Christ and his holy Spirit, gospel, regenerations, faith, sacraments, death and blood, together with all his other spiritual riches and heavenly gifts; and that you do not fear, seek, love, honor thank nor serve the Almighty, immortal, only and eternal God; and still hope that you will be saved with the murderer, then I tell and warn you in sincere love, while it is yet to-day, that your hopes will not be realized, for when you think to find him, he will then hide himself from you; he will turn his fierce countenance upon you, as the Scriptures say, "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me," Prov. 1: 28.

I therefore entreat and exhort my readers in general; to hear while you have ears, and see while you have eyes; understand while you have hearts; awaken and watch while you have time and space, lest your ears, eyes, hearts, and opportunities be taken from you, and you become deaf, blind, impenitent, hardened and perverted.

Friends, beware! now it is to-day, yesterday is past; to-morrow is not promised us. Short is the time; behold, the judge is at the door, therefore delay not, to turn unto the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for his wrath will soon overtake you. Late repentance, says Augustine, is seldom true; but if true, it never is too late. Repent while you enjoy health, says he, that you may be certain.

Therefore, do as did the thief or murderer, for, as soon as he heard, he believed.

Do you also thus hear, and thus believe, for the eyes of the Lord are upon the faithful. The Savior says, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be filled; those who seek, shall find; those who ask, shall receive; those who knock, to them it shall be opened. But if you refuse, when he seeks to bestow his grace upon you, he will also refuse when you seek him, and would fain obtain his grace. "They that despise me," saith the Lord, "shall be lightly esteemed," 1 Sam. 2: 30.

Therefore, seek while it is day, that you may find; ask, that you may receive; hear, that you may believe; believe, that you may do; and do, that you may live: for, from hearing, cometh faith; out of faith, doctrine; on obedience, the fulfilment of the promise depends.

For this reason all things are imputed to faith in the Scriptures; such as true repentance, regeneration, sanctification of the heart; the righteousness which avails before God; the blessing of salvation and everlasting life; for faith is the source and cause of all good, as is fully related.

Seeing, then, that this is the true and proper ground of the Scriptures, as we have briefly explained, you will then have to confess that all wilful scorers are put to shame in their doings, by the thief, and

that he will be their accuser in the day of the Lord, as the Lord says of the Ninevites, and of the Queen of the South.

All who hear and believe the word of Christ, and are turned by the power of faith with all their hearts to Christ, acknowledge Christ openly, by an unblamable, pious life, before all the world, confidently seek his grace and mercy, &c.: to them he is a glorious comforter, a precious balm and liniment in their troubled and wounded consciences, by which they may see and know God's unbounded favor, mercy and love, towards all truly penitent sinners, if they have sinned ever so long and heinously, that they by faith may satisfy their souls with him, and not doubt the grace of God on account of their sinful lives in which they formerly walked: for the Lord did not withhold his grace, nor did he say, No, thief, your sins are too great and numerous, and you also have sinned too long. But as soon as he saw his new heart, and heard him confessing, he bestowed his grace upon the poor, distressed sinner, and forgave him all his sins, and said, *To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise; for he that believeth on me has eternal life.* The prophet also says, If the righteous turn from his unrighteousness and does righteously, I will not remember his unrighteousness which he did.

FAITH OF THE SINFUL WOMAN.

Luke says, "One of the Pharisees desired Jesus that he would eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat; and behold, a woman of the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet, behind him, weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment," Luke 7: 36—38.

Here we again learn to know, in the case of this sinner, what kind of a heart, disposition, fruit and life, a sincere, true Chris-

tian faith produces. She was possessed of seven devils (if she was the woman called Mary Magdalene, whom the evangelists mention), and as it appears, lived according to the inclinations of her flesh, for she is called a sinner in the Scriptures, so long as the Lord had not called her out of darkness into light, from lies unto truth. As soon as she heard his word, she with eagerness received it in a sincere and renewed heart, by which she, who was a great sinner, became a penitent and pious woman. Her unrighteous, carnal heart was so warmed and touched, that her eyes streamed with tears, that she wet the feet of the Savior

therewith. Her hair she used as a towel to wipe his feet; her avarice was quelled; she anointed his head and feet with precious ointment, which might have been sold for three hundred pence; her proud heart was humbled; she did not seek the highest seat at the table, but she sat mournfully at the feet of the Lord, and heard his blessed word.

When the Pharisee saw this, he murmured: Christ said to him, "Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven; *** thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace," Luke 7: 44—48, 50.

Beloved reader, take notice that all the proud, haughty, avaricious, carnal and adulterous, who call themselves Christians, but who are by no means such, testify by their disposition, heart, mind and walk that they hate and are inimical to Christ, are shamed and reproved by this regenerated, penitent sinner, in all their actions; for through her faith she changed her proud, haughty and obdurate heart into an humble, contrite and broken one.

They say that they believe, and yet there are no limits nor bounds to their accursed wantonness, foolish pomp, show of silks, velvet, costly clothes, gold-rings, chains, silver belts, pins, buttons, curiously adorned shirts, handkerchiefs, collars, veils, aprons, velvet shoes, slippers and such like foolish finery: never regarding that the enlightened apostles, Peter and Paul have, in plain and express words forbidden this to all christian women. If this is forbidden to women how much more then should men abstain from it, who are the leaders and heads of their women. Notwithstanding all this they still want to be called the christian church.

Every one makes an ostentations display;

yea, sometimes goes beyond his ability to pay. One is desirous to excel another in foppery, or at least to be equal with him. And does not reflect that it is written, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever," 1 John 2: 15—17.

Again, I say, this sinful woman believed, and from that moment she was freed from disgraceful sins, for the unclean devil was cast out, as you have heard. But what abominable, disgraceful unchastity, adultery and fornication is practiced among many men and women (who boast that they believe), in many cities and countries, is best known to him before whose eyes all things are open; and, alas, not wholly concealed before men. It is manifest that the world is full of lasciviousness, adulterers, fornicators, sodomites, buggers, bastards and illegitimate children, and, alas, it has come so far, that they live at peace and liberty, notwithstanding that God commanded through Moses, that both the adulterer and adulteress should die, Dent. 22: 22; that there should be neither whores nor whore-mongers in Israel, and the illegitimate children even to the tenth generation were not to be admitted into the congregation of the Lord. And further, It was the express command and ordinance of God, that if any one in Israel had intercourse with a virgin, who was not betrothed or engaged, he was compelled to marry her, if her father consented, and was not to put her away all his days, because he humbled her, Exod. 22: 16.

Ah! reader, reflect upon what the last command contains. They all boast, however lascivious they are, that they are spiritual Israelites, that they have the truth, and are baptized in the name of Christ, and yet they are not ashamed to reduce their poor, weak sisters, who are comprised with them in the same faith, baptism, holy Supper and worship, to poor, deluded and degraded strumpets, against all Scripture and christian love; although God's own word,

and the quoted command tell them, that if they have lain with them, they should marry them and never forsake them. If they would more seriously reflect upon these things, many a disgraced one would be saved of her shame, whereas now, many a child is so unmercifully disgraced and many a girl and virgin bereaved of her honor and virtue.

I write you the truth in Christ, you may believe it if you will, that if you are a christian or would be one, and have seduced but one poor child with your subtle attempts and pretences, and if you would not lose your soul, you will have to marry her and not forsake her, nor cast her from you; for you have humbled her, as heard. Behold, this is the Lord's own word and law. All, therefore, who knowingly despise this law of God, and reject the disgraced and marry another, will have to confess before God that the *first one* is his wife, and not the *last one*. O, you violators of female chastity, reflect upon these things and learn wisdom.

Would you say that this command has reference only to Israel and not to the christian, I would then ask you in the first place, Whether you consider yourself to be a christian or not? If you say *no*, do then all you can, and look for the judgment threatened to all out of Christ. But if you say *yes*, then the matter is already decided, that she must be your wife. For a christian must not live with a sister, in such a manner as to make her a prostitute. O no! the Scriptures teach, that christians are members of Christ, and not whores and profligates. I hope this blunt language will be understood.

In the second place I ask, Which of the two people should be the more holy and virtuous, the literal or the spiritual? If you say the literal, then you have exalted Moses with his people and service above Christ, which thing is evidently opposed to all Scripture. But if you say the spiritual, then the matter is again decided that she must be your wife; then the literal must not make his sister to be a prostitute, much less the spiritual, which is the Lord's own body, brother, sister, generation and bride.

In the third place, I ask, Whether the command, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, is not given to the christians as well as

to Israel? If you say *no* you have denied the whole New Testament, which teaches and earnestly insists upon the love of our neighbor. But if you say *yes*, then I say for the third time, that she must be your legitimate wife. Because you did, contrary to the command of love, so abominably disgrace and humble her, therefore, the Scriptures teach that you are to restore her to honor, and that you shall take her to be your wife. Let every one see to it, the commands of love will ever remain. Blessed are they who take heed to them and observe them in fear.

In the fourth place I ask, Whether there is any one who, with a good conscience, can transgress and break the command of God? If you say *yes*, then you deny the Scriptures, which teach, that we shall walk in the ways of the Lord and keep his commandments. But if you say *no*, then I tell you the fourth time, that she is, and must be your wife; for it is the command of God, firmly based upon love, that if you have lain with a virgin, you should marry her and never forsake her, as heard.

Behold, my reader, here you are more than plainly taught what the word of the Lord teaches in regard to this matter. And if you continue so ungodly as to transgress the command of the Lord by disgracing one, and marrying another, you may read the consequences in 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10, unless you sincerely repent.

This I write by no means, to encourage him who has, in days gone by, ignorantly done so, to leave the wife whom he afterward married, and take in her stead the disgraced one; not at all, for I doubt not but that the merciful Father will graciously overlook the errors of those who have ignorantly done so, and who will henceforth fear, and willingly obey his commands. But I write this, that every one should guard himself against such disgrace, and reflect more profoundly upon the command of the Lord and of love, and observe how Christ is so wholly neglected by the world: for, alas, they are generally influenced by their accursed lusts, whether they are lords, princes, priests, monks, noble or ignoble, citizens or peasants; with few exceptions, they are so much inflamed, that they follow

this unbecoming, devilish disgrace of accursed lechery, like the dog pursues the hare. They are, says Jeremiah 5: 8, as fed horses in the morning, every one neighed after his neighbor's wife. There is nothing that can deter or prevent them from this accursed abomination, neither natural honor, nor Moses, with all his threatenings, neither the prophets, nor Christ Jesus himself, nor the apostles, neither heaven nor the angels; yea, neither hell nor devil; neither life nor death; if they can only satisfy their unchaste, disgraceful lust, then all is well with them.

They are wholly bent upon this; some they seduce with fair words, others by false promises and gifts, some by giving them wine to drink; by dancing, and songs of levity, some by courteous flattery, by amorous tenderness, and the like artifice; yea, some deceive by their affected sighings and weepings, so that they can only accomplish their ungodly designs, and gratify their lusts, then all is right, and they rejoice. But they do thereby incense Almighty God, transgress his holy word, disgrace their neighbor, do violence to the law of love, defile the marriage bed, violate virgins, have illegitimate children and destroy their poor souls eternally; about all this they care nothing. They say, this is our portion and our lot and nothing else.

I, therefore, say with Moses, Cursed be they of God, who do works of iniquity; and all the people shall say, Amen. And with Job, That hell will consume them, as drought and heat consume the snow-waters; with Paul, That God will judge them; and with John, Their part is in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the eternal (second) death. Ah! that these poor people would take heed, believe and observe the words of the Lord.

In the second place, I write this; that every one might awaken, sincerely repent, and weep over his past disgraceful conduct before God, lest he cast him off eternally; but be gracious to him for the sake of the blood of his Son; and no more defile the bed of his neighbor, nor disgrace virgins, but live in all honor, each with his own wife; that the unmarried keep free from lechery, and if he cannot restrain himself, let him

seek a pious wife in the fear of God; and he that has transgressed, and has not taken another, that he honor the disgraced one, and according to christian love and the word of God, extricate her from her degraded state; thus teaching their children, and children's children, from generation to generation, even as Tobias did his Son, saying, Beware of all whoredom, my son, and take not a strange woman, but keep to your own wife.

"Know ye not," says Paul, "that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid," 1 Cor. 6: 15. Again, he says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (body) in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the gentiles which know not God, for God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness," 1 Thes. 4: 3—7. Yes, good reader, true believers have to lead an honorable and chaste life; that not as much as adultery, lechery, and unchastity be privately or openly mentioned among them; if any one among them, only mention it, it is an abomination, for thus it becomes the saints to live.

As we find many wicked men who shamefully seduce poor, simple hearts; so on the other hand we find impudent women and girls, who are often the first cause that such disgrace is sought and sometimes practiced upon them. Although many are not guilty of the deed, nevertheless they are not guiltless, that they make so free with other men and associates in open triflings, singing, dancing, drinking, kissing, courting, flirting, and the like vanity and abominations, whereby they kindle the fire of base passions, which continue till consumed, as may be seen.

O how properly Sirach admonishes us, when he says, "Meet not with an harlot, lest thou fall into her snares; use not much the company of a woman that is a singer, lest thou be taken with her attempts; gaze not on a maid, that thou fall not by those things that are precious in her; give not thy soul unto harlots, that thou lose not thine

inheritance; look not round about thee in the streets of the city, neither wander thou in the solitary places thereof; turn away thine eye from a beautiful woman, and look not upon another's beauty; for many have been deceived by the beauty of a woman; for herewith love is kindled as a fire. Sit not at all with another man's wife, nor sit down with her in thine arms, and spend not thy money with her at the wine; lest thine heart incline unto her, and so through thy desire, thou fall into destruction," Sir. 9: 3—9.

Were it now so, that the aforementioned married and unmarried women were true believers, even as was the sinful woman, they would then also fear the Lord, they would abandon all vanity and ungodly actions, and lay snares for none, nor give any occasion for evil; yea, would walk honorably and modestly; avoid all manner of pride and superfluity, and make, or desire no other clothes than those necessary and comfortable for their daily labor. They would not frequent the idolatrous temple and idle banquets, for which occasions this pompous show is generally gotten up.

The sinful woman adorned her soul and not her outward appearance, for she believed; but these adorn their bodies, and not their souls, for they believe not.

The sinful woman sighed and wept, was afraid of the wrath and judgment of the Lord, for she saw that she had done wrong, and sinned; but these laugh and sing, dance and prance about, and do not see their enormous misdeeds, and great sins, and therefore, they do not fear the wrath and judgment of the Lord.

She was compassionate and merciful; anointed the head and the feet of the Lord, and found the true worship; but these are unmerciful and cruel, and know of no other worship than to go to the chapel to receive holy water; to offer tapers and wax-candles to blind blocks and images; to offer masses and vespers; to call upon the departed saints for help; to confess once or twice a year to their idolatrous, drunken, lascivious priests; to receive their bread of abomination and absolution, and the like superstitions and delusions.

The sinful woman sought the company of

the righteous; but these seek the company of the unrighteous. They visit each other to talk all manner of foolishness; to injure their neighbor's reputation; to defame and backbite; to speak disgracefully of one another, speak of costly furniture, houses, goods and handsome companions, men and fine clothing. In short, their works openly show that they have not the faith of the sinful woman, and belong not to the congregation of the righteous.

The sinful woman sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his holy word; but these hear teachers, who can tickle their ears, and preach to please them. In short, why need I say much? it is, O God! so corrupted, that we find the whole world filled with foolish men and women, I mean spiritually, deaf ears, unenlightened hearts; the blind are leading the blind, and they will all fall into the pit of eternal death, unless they are again enlightened, if we believe it to be true what the mouth of the Lord has taught us; for their doctrine, sacraments, and worship are altogether false; their unbelief, and carnality prevail every where.

Behold, reader, here take notice, how vastly this sinful woman differs after conversion in her faith and conduct, from the faith and conduct of the world. They are like the sinful woman before her conversion, but not after conversion. Whether such are believers, I will let the sensible reader to reflect upon with the Spirit and word of the Lord.

I know of a certainty, that a proud, haughty, avaricious, selfish, unchaste, lecherous, wrangling, envious, disobedient, idolatrous, false, lying, unfaithful, thievish, defaming, backbiting, blood-thirsty, unmerciful and revengeful man, whosoever he may be, is no christian, even if he was baptized one hundred times, and attended the Lord's Supper daily; for it is not the sacraments, or the signs, such as *baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*, but a sincere, christian faith, with its unblamable, pious fruits, represented by the sacraments, that makes a true christian and has the promise of life.

Here, neither masses, holy water, holy days, rosaries, auricular confession nor absolution, avail; only a believing, contrite, broken heart, spirit and mind, a penitent, changed, new heart, a pious life, dead unto

sin, according to the truth will avail. Such was the confession and repentance of the sinful woman, and she also heard immediately, *Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.*

But the abominable, auricular confession which is so highly esteemed by the world, is nothing but hypocrisy, human righteousness and superstition, open delusion of unbelievers, a false hope of the impenitent sinner, and a subtle invention of gain by the avaricious priests, whereby they set aside true confession and repentance, and comfort and encourage the world in their reckless, ungodly life.

But if you would rightly confess and repent, and receive true absolution of God, then approach him with a believing, penitent and regenerated heart, with a sorrowing, broken, distressed mind, leave off sinning, do justice to your neighbor, love, aid, serve, reprove and comfort him, and if you have sinned against him, or deceived him, acknowledge it to him and reconcile him. Behold, this is the only true confession and penance, which is taught in the word of God. The Lord grant that you may rightly understand, and perform this confession and repentance.

I, therefore, entreat and desire all women, through the mercy of the Lord, to take this

sinful, sorrowing woman as a pattern and follow her faith, humble yourselves before the Lord, and reprove your avarice, pride, obscenity and all manner of evil. Let all your thoughts be pure, and let your words be circumspect and seasoned. And whatsoever you do, that do in the name and fear of the Lord Jesus, and do not adorn yourselves with gold, silver, costly pearls, and embroidered hair; but dress yourselves in such apparel, as becomes women professing godliness, and which is serviceable. Be obedient to your husbands in all reasonable things, so that those who do not believe may be gained by your upright, pious conversation without the word, as Peter says.

Remain within your houses and gates, except you have something of importance to do, such as attending to your temporal concerns, to administer to the needy, to hear the word of the Lord, or to attend upon his holy sacraments, &c. Attend faithfully to your charge, to your children, house and domestics, and to all that is commanded you, and walk in all things like the sinful woman did after her conversion; that you may be true daughters of Sarah, believing women, sisters of Christ, and joint heirs of a future life, 1 Pet. 3: 6; then you shall hear the gracious words, *Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.*

FAITH OF THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

Matthew writes that Jesus was in the land of Genesaret, and says, "Then Jesus went thence and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil; but he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us; but he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to

take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs; and she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said to her, *O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* And her daughter was made whole from that very hour," Matt. 15: 21—28.

Here you again have a fine example and pattern of a sincere, christian faith; for when this woman perceived how powerfully Jesus preached grace, and hearing besides that he could do what he desired, that he manifested love and mercy, and that he sent none away comfortless, she unhesitatingly

approached him, not doubting his grace, mercy, love and power, although she was not heard at the first or second request. She was importunate both in her faith and prayer, with such a desire that she might partake of the spiritual crumb of his mercy, and obtain relief for her poor daughter. Yea, she manifested such a faith, constancy, humility and piety, that the Lord said to her, "*O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*"

Faithful reader, observe; were we with spiritual eyes rightly to look upon this woman's faith and fruits, we would be aptly taught of her, especially in two particulars.

For, as soon as she heard that the Lord taught pure mercy, grace, repentance and reformation, preached the kingdom of God, raised the dead, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the cripples walk, the leprous clean, healed the sick, and cast out unclean spirits; that he reproved the scribes, pharisees and the common people, for their unbelief, perverseness, blind hypocrisy and carnal lives, and testified that he was the prophet and Messiah, promised in the law and the prophets, whereby his fame spread abroad through all Judea and the adjacent countries; hearing all this, her tender heart and mind were so turned to him, through such testimonies, miracles, doctrines and deeds of love, that she did not doubt his mercy, power, goodness and grace; she therefore, went to him with a sincere desire, in sure and true faith, trusting with all her heart, that he would not deny her humble prayer, but that he would graciously hear and grant it; and she also obtained what she desired.

She heard and believed; she saw and confessed. But these insane people imagine that they are christians, but are, according to my understanding, greater disbelievers, blinder, more hardened and worse than Turks, Tartars, or any of the heathens. Their works testify that I write the truth; and they cannot be moved to hear, or obey the truth by godly means and services; neither by doctrine nor exhortation, neither by the unblamable lives nor the innocent blood of saints, which is daily shed before their eyes, as has been mentioned before, when treating of the *faith of the murderer.*

The movement and doctrine of the holy divine word, we have had in Germany a number of years, and have it yet daily more abundantly, in such power and clearness, that they may plainly see that it is the finger and work of the Lord. For the haughty are humbled, the avaricious are made kind, the drunkards become sober, the unchaste made pure, &c., and dare not indulge in a single thought, or word, or act contrary to the will, word and Spirit of the Lord, and they receive it with such an affection, that they do not fear to forsake father, mother, husband, wife, children and possessions, nay willingly suffer death on account of it. For many of them are burned, drowned, killed with the sword, apprehended, exiled, and their property confiscated; yet all this avails nothing with these obdurate people. If it is but reported (when an innocent sheep has been slaughtered), that he was an anabaptist, it is sufficient; they never inquire what he professed and what scriptural grounds he had; what his conduct and life were, whether he injured any one, or not. Neither do they reflect, that it must be a special power and work which restrains one wholly from drunkenness, lasciviousness, pomp and pride, from all vanity, abominable lying, carnal life and from all idolatry; and constrains him to all sobriety, chastity, meekness, piety, truth, and the true worship, on account of which, we have to hear all manner of disgrace, and to endure persecution and misery, and so often endure the loss of life, as you may see.

If a thief is led to the gallows or a murderer is broken upon the wheel, or if a malefactor is punished with death every one inquires what he has done. He is not sentenced by the judges as long as they do not understand fully the ground and truth of his evil deed; but if an innocent, contrite christian, whom the gracious Lord has rescued from the evil, ungodly ways of sin, and placed in the way of his peace, is accused by the priests and preachers, and placed before the judges they deem him unworthy of an impartial examination, in relation to what reasons or Scriptures move him that he will not hear his priests and preachers, nor have his children baptized, nor attend their service, nor longer eat and

drink with them, and serve the devil. Nor do they desire to know why he reformed his life and received the baptism of Christ, or what urges him that he willingly suffers or even would die for his faith. They only ask, *Is he baptized?* If he answers in the affirmative, the sentence is fixed, that he must die.

All who see or hear such miracles of Almighty God that such poor, unlearned men, yea, sometimes, poor, feeble women, or girls, are so fortified in God that they fear neither judge nor executioner; that neither fire nor water, neither halter nor sword, neither life nor death can deter them from their faith. These persecutors do not inquire what they did, whether they are traitors to their country or city, whether they have taken the property of others, or disgraced some one's daughter or wife; or whether they did any thing, not in accordance with the word of God, with common honesty and natural probity? O no! So much discretion and love are not to be found. If they only have the word of the Lord, and believe it and fully obey his commands and ordinances, and gladly regulate their poor, weak lives by the truth; then they are called rebels by the lords; heretics by the learned; and are adjudged by the common people as well deserving such cruel punishments and disgraceful death. Behold, thus has the murderous, blood-thirsty devil deceived the whole world, through his priests and preachers; yea, that I fear, scarcely one is to be found among a hundred thousand, who will lay to heart such a strong faith, obedience, frankness, power, great suffering and ignominious death, so that he would once reflect upon his abominable unbelief, disgraceful wickedness and presumptuous, carnal life, or doubt the doctrine of his teachers, sacraments, their lives and worship. How truly did the prophet say, "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart," Isa. 57: 1. There cannot be found beneath the wide canopy of heaven, a more hardened unbelief, more perverse, scornful, obdurate wickedness, more accursed madness, more execrated ungodliness, or a worse state of things than that which is related.

If there is a report of war and warriors, the whole land is in dismay, great and

small, citizens and peasants; defensive armor is provided; they watch and make ready for defense as much as possible. Or if they hear of famine or pestilence, then all tremble, who have come to years of understanding. And, if on the contrary, there is a time of tranquillity, peace, prosperity and weal, then all who hear it, rejoice. But *now*, the trumpets of the Lord Jesus Christ are blowing, and the drums are beating; warning us to tender love, through all his apostles and prophets, to shun the crafty wiles and subtle assaults of satan, and that all who follow and are obedient to him, must die. However, but few are to be found who put on the armor of God; but few who are guarding against the secret encroachments of satan, and preparing to resist him. Both men and women, voluntarily run into his hands and eagerly do the things which delight him; and those who do not, have to await great tribulation and much misery.

Besides, it is manifest that the abominable pestilence of false doctrine will destroy the whole world. The bread of life, which is provided for all the spiritual hungry, is very scarce, in consequence of the envious cry and false writings of the serpent-like preachers; and alas, there are few who weep and sigh on this account.

The eternal grace, mercy, favor, glory, kingdom and joy of Christ are offered unto us. But our ears have waxed dull, our hearts become hardened, and our perverted wickedness, desire them not. But this pious woman did not so; she heard, believed, saw his miracles and confessed his power; and therefore, prayed with confidence and obtained what she desired, for she believed Christ with all her heart and doubted not his grace.

In the second place, she admonishes all pious parents, that they should be solicitous for the salvation of their children, because she so faithfully entreated for her demoniac daughter, not desisting till she was heard. For it cannot be otherwise, that if I am a true christian, all my work before God and my neighbor, are works of love, for God (by whose word a christian is born), says John, *is love*. That the Father and those who are born of him, are alike, of one mind and heart, is as clear as day-light.

If I seek the praise of the Lord with all my heart, and desire the salvation of my neighbors, many of whom I have never seen; how much more should I desire the salvation of my children, whom God gave me, who are out of my loins, and are naturally my flesh and blood? So that the mighty Lord may be praised and be eternally honored by them.

What I write, I consider unquestionably true; I write it from a true testimony of my own conscience, as before Almighty God, before whom I am, that all true, believing parents are thus minded towards their children, that they would far sooner see them set in a dungeon for the sake of the word of the Lord and his testimony, than be with the deceiving priests, in their idolatrous churches, or with drunken, erroneous interpreters in taverns, or in company with scorn-ers, who despise the name of the Lord, and hate his holy word.

Sooner far would they see them, for the sake of the truth of the Lord, bound hands and feet, and dragged before lords and princes, than to see them marry rich persons, who fear not God, neither walk in the ways of the Lord, but pass away time in splendor, with music, in excessive drinking, dancing and singing; sooner far would they see them scourged from head to feet, for the sake of the glory and holy name of the Lord, than to see them adorn themselves with silks, velvets, gold, silver, costly, striped and fashionable clothes, and the like vanity, pomp and haughtiness. Yea, far sooner would they see them exiled, burned at the stake, drowned, or placed on the wheel, for righteousness' sake, than see them live out of God, in all earthly and carnal lusts, than to be emperors and kings, and then be damned.

Woe to all, yea woe to all those who are not solicitous for the salvation of their children. If I so love their bodies that I overlook their sins; if I do not punish the transgressions of the young with the rod, and reprove the aged with words; if I do not teach them the ways of the Lord; if I do not set them an unblamable example; if I do not direct them at all times to Christ and his word, ordinances, commands and example, and do not seek their salvation with

all my heart and soul, then I will not escape my punishment, for in the day of the Lord, their souls, blood, damnation and death will be required at my hands, as a dumb and blind watchman.

Christianity plainly teaches us that all christian parents should be as sharp, saturating salt, a shining light, and as unblamable, faithful teachers in their houses. The high priest, Eli, was punished because he did not zealously reprove his children.

If I see my neighbor's ox or ass go astray, I must bring him to the owner, or keep him safe, as Moses teaches. If it becomes me thus to do with another's animal, how much more solicitous should I be for the souls of my children, who are so readily misled by the youthful flesh, in which no good dwells.

If I see my neighbor's ox or ass, fallen in a pit, or meet him on the way lying under the weight of a burden, I must not leave him till he is extricated, how much more should I be solicitous for my children, whom I have before me, that they lie not under the burden of their sins; and if they are not earnestly reprov'd and instructed in grace, they will fall into the infernal abyss of eternal death.

Again, if I see my neighbor's house on fire, and his goods perishing, it is reasonable that I should exert myself to put out the fire, and if possible, to save the goods; but it is much more reasonable, that I extinguish the fire of base desires in my child, with the water of the divine word, and preserve, as much as is in my power, the heavenly goods.

The Holy Scriptures teach, that God purifies the heart by faith; that faith comes by hearing; and by faith we are justified. Therefore, let every one take heed, who truly loves his children, that he rightly and purely instruct them, as soon as they can hear and understand the word of the Lord; that he lead them in the ways of truth, and that he zealously watch over all their doings, that they may from youth, learn to know the Lord, their God, fear, love, honor, thank and serve him; so that the inborn nature of sin may not rule in them nor conquer them, to the everlasting shame of their poor souls.

Moses taught Israel saying, "These words,

which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates;" "that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth," Deut. 6: 6—9; 11: 21.

In another place he says, "And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, what is this? That thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand, the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage," Exod. 13: 14.

Joshua commanded Israel, according to the command of the Lord, and said unto the twelve men, "Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then, ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever," Joshua 4: 5—7.

Behold, dear reader, thus the Israelites were obliged to teach their children from youth, and to acquaint them with all the blessings and miracles of the Lord, which had been bestowed on them and their fathers, so that they might fear, love and serve the Lord all their days, and thus receive the blessing, and escape the curse which was included in the law.

In like manner with us, if we rightly confess Christ, we believe his word, and we and our children desire to obtain the happy fields and pleasant land, and eternally inherit the grace which he has promised his children; therefore, let us not neglect it, but

lay it well to heart, that we teach our children rightly in the word, and instruct them in relation to his righteous judgments, so that they will learn to fear the Lord with all their heart, and turn from evil.

Let us also keep before them God's unbounded mercy, love, and services of his grace, so that they may love him and walk in his statutes. Let us imprint on their hearts, Jesus Christ, our only and eternal Savior, with his Holy Spirit, word and example, so that they may rightly know him and follow in his footsteps; and let us set them an example in all wisdom, righteousness and truth; with a pious and virtuous life, so that they may, through such discreet admonition and unblamable example of their pious parents, be instructed in the kingdom of God and trained to all manner of good.

For all who have such a faith as this woman had, and see that the end of sin is death, will not cease to sigh and lament to God, that he would, in mercy, assist their poor children to so resist the impure spirit of the devil that he may not lead them captive at his evil will, to the eternal shame and disgrace of their poor souls.

But that they may, from their youth, rightly learn to know the immortal, eternal God and Father, through Jesus Christ his beloved Son, and in truth serve and submit to his cross; and recount all the mighty works and miracles of the Lord our God, the great mercy, grace, favor and love of the Almighty Father, his blessed word, will, ordinance and life, with all the merits, power and fruit of the death and blood of Christ his blessed Son; also the munificence, wisdom, truth and the gifts of his eternal and Holy Spirit, this to their children, and children's children, and all their descendants, till the Lord Jesus Christ appear in the glorious majesty of his heavenly Father in the clouds of heaven, to the final judging, and where every one will be rewarded according to his works, be they good or evil, 2 Cor. 5: 10.

Behold, worthy reader, thus it behooves true christians to teach, admonish, reprove, and correct their children, to set them an example in all righteousness, raise them in the fear of the Lord, be solicitous for their

poor souls, lest they through their negligence, depart from the true path, die in their sins and finally perish in their unbelief.

The Lord spoke of Abraham and said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment," Gen. 18: 17—19.

Pious Tobit taught his son and said, My son, obey thy father, serve the Lord in truth and be just, and this teach to thy children, that they give alms, always fear God, love him, and confide in him with all their heart.

And when they attain the age of maturity, and have not the power to refrain (but he that has, him I would advise with Paul, that he use it to the Lord), let them not marry to those out of Christ and his church, be they noble, rich, or handsome, as do the proud, avaricious and unchaste of this world; but let them marry those who fear, love, seek, honor, follow and serve the Lord with the whole heart; be they noble or ignoble, rich or poor, comely or uncomely, for they are holy and children of saints, and therefore, it is of the Lord, and must be done in his name.

Let every one beware and do right, lest the wrath and fearful judgments of God be inflicted upon him on account of his lewdness and evil desires, even as the judgments, in the days of Noah and Lot, were inflicted, Gen. 6.

But, alas! how few there are who take this to heart, and sincerely seek the salvation of their children. If they can but provide for them temporally, then their desires are gratified. The priests' ordinances, and church services alone are their faith, hope, and the foundation of their salvation; they neither know nor seek any other.

Their whole life from beginning to end is contrary to the word of Christ. For as soon as they are born they are carried to the idolatrous, false bath (baptism); the holy name of the Lord is mispronounced over them; they are raised in all vanity and blindness, in pomp and splendor, in open

idolatry and false worship, and in the ignorant, unrestrained life of the world.

In and out of their houses they hear and see nothing but unrighteousness, malice, lying, defrauding, cursing, swearing, infidelity, avarice, quarreling, fighting, intoxication, whoring, and all manner of disgrace. They never learn to know Christ and his word, but they hate the truth and persecute righteousness. In short, they show by their actions that they are full of the evil, unclean spirit, and are led by his will, as may be seen.

For as your spirit is, so must also your fruits be. Is the Spirit of Christ in you, which is holy and pure, then are also your whole life and fruit pure and holy. Again, if the spirit of the evil one is in you, then all your ways and fruits will be evil and impure. This is incontrovertible.

Therefore, says Paul, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Again, those who are led by the spirit of the evil one, are the sons of the devil. Dear reader, reflect well upon this. Yea, if these poor people had but a spark of the Spirit of the Lord, they would a thousand times sooner be seethed in boiling oil, and burned with fire, than hear and see such foolishness, ungodliness and wantonness in their children, much less would they teach them or set them an example in such things. For it is incontrovertible, according to the power of the Scriptures, if they do not be partakers of Christ, that their end will be eternal death.

Therefore, all you who fear the Lord, love your children with divine love, seek their salvation with all your hearts, even as Abraham, Tobit, and the Maccabean mother did. If they transgress, reprove them sharply; if they err, exhort them parentally; if they are child-like, bear them patiently; if they are of good understanding, instruct them christian-like; dedicate them to the Lord from youth; watch over their souls as long as they are under your care; so that you will not lose your salvation on their account; pray without ceasing, like this pious woman did, that the Lord may grant them his grace, that they may resist the devil, subdue their natural depravity by the Spirit and help of the Lord, and walk from their youth up be-

fore God and his church, in all righteousness, truth and wisdom, in a firm and sure faith, in unfeigned love and living hope, in an honorable and holy life, unblamable and without offence, abound in the fruits of faith, unto eternal life, Amen.

In addition to all the aforementioned examples, the diligent reader may also, with a pious and good conscience (mind) seriously reflect upon the faith of the immaculate, glorious mother Mary, of Matthew, of the aged Simeon and Hannah; also of the blind man (Luke 1; Matt. 9; Luke 2: 15, 18; Mark 10), and such like more; and I trust that he will, by the help and grace of God, fully understand how simple, plain, unfeigned, pious, righteous, forbearing, ardent, peaceable, joyous, merciful, amiable, ameliorating, modest, moral, humble, zealous, unblamable and pious a true, regenerating, christian faith is inwardly in power, before God, and outwardly in fruits, before one's neighbor.

Yea, even as a good, fruitful tree, of its own accord, without any compulsion, always brings forth its own good fruits, so also a true christian faith must bring forth its own good fruits. For it is infallible, the righteous must live by faith.

If Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and Sammel, with all the patriarchs and prophets believed the word of the Lord, which was declared to them by angels, or were found so faithful therein, how much more should we believe and be faithful to that word which the Prince of angels, God's only begotten Son, the true witness and Teacher of righteousness, Christ Jesus, who came from the high heavens, from his Father's bosom, brought down and taught on earth.

It will not suffice to say, 'That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he fulfilled the law for us, that he paid for our sins with his blood, and made reconciliation with the Father, by his offering and death; neither will it suffice to only believe that his gospel is true, his word is right, the wages of sin is death, and that grace is eternal life; but the heart must rightly comprehend it, and the mind must be resolved upon it, otherwise it will not justify. Paul says, "With

the heart man believeth unto righteousness," Rom. 10: 10.

All who believe with their whole hearts, that Christ Jesus is the righteous Branch of David, the righteous, wise King; the true, promised Prophet; the right Way and Truth, and our only Propitiator, Intercessor, Mediator and High Priest, Jer. 22: 5, also believe that all his words are immutable and true; and his offering sufficient and perfect; they, therefore, obey his word, walk in his commands, bow to his sceptre and pacify their consciences by his grace, reconciliation, merits, offering, promises, death and blood. They believe and acknowledge, if they neglect his word and will, and presumptuously transgress his commands, and live according to the flesh, that God will require it at their hands and punish them eternally, with the fire of his wrath, through his righteous judgment. For if those who wilfully transgressed the Mosaic law, were to die without mercy, upon the testimony of two or three witnesses, how much sorer then will those be punished, who trample under foot the Son of God; who esteem the pure blood of the New Testament as impure, and profane the Holy Spirit of grace? Heb. 10: 28.

Yes, kind reader, if we truly believed, and acknowledged it from the inmost of our souls, it would so move our hearts, and enkindle them with the fear and love of the Lord, that although all the tyrants that ever were, would rise in all their dread torture, and blood shedding, and stand before us, they would not in the least deter or hinder us from the word and way of the Lord. Besides, all our impure, carnal thoughts, unseasoned words, and useless, ungodly works would soon die, as Sirach says, "The fear of the Lord driveth away sins," Eccl. 1: 21; and it is impossible, without the fear of the Lord, to become right.

Seeing then, it is very evident, that a sincere, christian faith acknowledges God in his righteousness, and therefore fears his judgment, and thus through fear buries sin and dies to it, as more than once related, and that nevertheless, you live in all avarice, unchastity, drunkenness, wrath, lewdness, blindness, idolatry, and all manner of wickedness, tell us, beloved, where is then

your faith and word of God of which you boast so much? Do you not know that it is written, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die?" Or do you think that you can trifle with God as with a man? Be not deceived, says Paul, God will not be mocked.

Ah! reader, take heed, I tell you the truth in Christ, Beware! if you do not repent with all your heart and seek God, through Christ, do not hear, believe and fear him, but remain earthly and carnal, and walk after the lusts of your flesh, your sentence already pronounced, will be *death*. As Christ himself says, I judge no man, but the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

I, therefore, faithfully admonish you, as before God, even as I do mine own soul, divest yourselves immediately of false doctrine, of all unbelief, idolatry and earthly, disgraceful lives, in which, alas! you have hitherto walked, lest the wrath of God overtake you in the sleep of your sins.

Awaken! He is still merciful, seek and receive the true doctrine, true faith, true sacraments, the true service, and lead a godly life, as the Scriptures teach, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward," Isa. 58: 8.

Further, I say, If you truly believed and rightly understood that you became, through Adam's disobedience, children of the devil, of wrath, and of eternal death, subjected to the righteous curse and judgment of God, and that now all obstacles and all your sins are taken away and reconciled through the precious blood of Christ; so that you are called from wrath into grace, from cursings to blessings, and out of death to life (not to mention the favors which are daily shown you), then your hearts would sprout forth as the sweet-scented, blooming violet, full of pure love; yea, flow as the living fountain, from which flow forth the refreshing sweet waters of righteousness, and you would, with holy Paul, say, from the bottom of your soul, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Since it can never be, if I am in the bonds of perfection with him, and love him with a pure heart, a good conscience and unfeigned faith, that anything

then can turn me away or separate me from him. For it is my own desire and highest joy, that I hear and speak of his word, and in my weakness, walk as he commanded and taught through his Son, should it even cost money and possessions, flesh or blood, his will be done.

Behold, dear reader, since then it is manifest in the Holy Scriptures, that the true Christian faith through the fear of God, dies to sin, and through love does the things of righteousness, though in weakness, I therefore let you judge whether those believe from the heart, who with the mouth say, that the blood of Christ is the propitiatory sacrifice of their sin, and nevertheless seek and follow up all kinds of idolatry, such as infant baptism, holy water, absolution, auricular confession, masses, gold, silver, and wooden images, wafers, stone churches, and the drunken adultery of the priests. Ah! how well it would be for them to reflect.

I say, As true as the Lord lives, there will eternally be found no other remedy for our sins, whether in heaven or upon earth; neither works, merits nor sacraments, even though they are used according to the Scriptures; neither cross, tribulation, angels, men, nor any other means will avail, but alone the immaculate, crimson blood of the Lamb (Christ), which was, out of pure grace, mercy and love, shed for the remission of our sins, Mark 14: 24.

Hence, it is incontrovertible, that all those who use such strange, idolatrous means for sin, belong not to the believing, grateful church of Christ. Therefore, I will present you with a few passages from the gospel and writings of the apostles, and set them before your eyes as a clear mirror, in which you may view yourselves, and see whether you are believing Christians.

Thus teaches the word of the Lord, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And again, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Prove yourselves with this; if you are born of the pure seed of the holy word, then the nature of the seed must be in you; and if you have become like little children, then

there are no more pride, unchastity, avarice, hatred and envy in you; for the innocent children know nothing of such sins. But if you continue to live in old Adam, and not in Christ, and walk after the base, impure desires of your flesh, then you practically prove that you are not born of God, and have not his faith.

The word of the Lord teaches again, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here, prove yourselves again, He that believes and is rightly baptized, truly repents, circumcises his heart, dies to sin, rises in Christ to a new life, &c. But if you remain impenitent, your hearts uncircumcised, not dead to sin, but live out of Christ and his word, then is the deed your witness, that you are disbelievers and have not the baptism of Christ. Again does the word of the Lord teach, "If thou wilt enter life keep the commandments." For in Christ, says Paul, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth, but the keeping of the commands of God. And this is his command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Mark 12: 30.

Hereby, prove yourselves again, If you love God, you will keep his commandments, you will do to your neighbor as you would have him do to you; but if you despise his word, do not follow his ordinances in doctrine, baptism, Holy Supper, and separation, and if you do not walk according to his holy, godly commands; also belie, cheat and betray your neighbor; if you take your neighbor's life, disgrace his wife, daughters or servants, and treat him perfidiously; if you mislead the poor, blind souls from the true way and obedience of the Lord, be it through persecution or false doctrine, and thus bereave them of the eternal kingdom, and lead them to hell, then it is more than clear, that you hate the command of the Lord and have not his faith.

Again, the word of the Lord teaches, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for 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 nar-

row is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it," Matt. 7: 13. At another place it is written, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." He that loves father and mother, man or wife, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.

Here prove yourselves again, Have you such a spirit, such frankness and faith, that you, in time of need, are ready to forsake father, mother and your all, for the sake of God's word and his testimony; to take upon yourself the cross of Christ; to deny yourself in all things; to enter, with Christ, upon the way of suffering, and thus enter, with the poor small flock, at the narrow, strait gate; then may the Lord strengthen you. But if you live unto yourselves, reject the cross of Christ, and love father, mother, wife, children, property or life more than Christ; walk on the broad way with the multitude and enter the wide gate, then the mouth of the Lord gives testimony that you are disbelievers and that your end is damnation.

Again, says the word of the Lord, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. 5: 24. For those who live after the flesh, such as adulterers, whoremongers, incontinent, avaricious, drunkards, gamblers, thieves, hateful, haughty, defamers, blood-thirsty, idolaters, shall die.

Prove yourselves again, If your lusts do not reign in you, if you do not walk in any of these and such like carnal ways, which have been mentioned, but if you can smother them and trample them under foot, through faith, then thank God, fight piously, watch and pray. But if you satiate your lusts, and walk in the impure ways of your flesh, then reform yourselves; for then it is evident that you are not, penitent, believing christians, but impenitent, carnal heathens.

Again, The word of the Lord teaches, "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the gentiles seek; but seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," Matt. 6: 31.

Here prove yourselves again, If you believe

that the strong and mighty God, who nourished Israel forty years with bread from heaven and with water from the rock, and kept their clothes from being worn out, and fed Elias by a raven, will not forsake you in your distress, but will provide for you by his grace; this is a true evidence that you have the word of the Lord. But if, through your cares, you are induced or constrained, that you neglect the kingdom of God and his righteousness, seek temporal, more than eternal things, and are so much concerned as if God had more concern for the flowers and fowls than for you and your children, boast not that you believe the promise and word of the Lord.

Again, the word of the Lord teaches, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," John 3: 16—18.

Here prove yourselves the seventh time. If you sincerely believe these words of Christ with the whole heart, that the Almighty, Eternal Father so loved you and the whole human family, that he sent his incomprehensible, Almighty, eternal Word, Wisdom, Truth and Son, by whom he created the heavens, earth, the sea and the fulness thereof, and his eternal glory, into this vale of misery; that he let him become a poor, grieved, miserable man; that he let him, for the sake of all our sins, suffer hunger and thirst; permitted him to be slandered, apprehended, crowned with thorns, scourged, crucified and killed; then it cannot fail that your old carnal mind must become a regenerated, spiritual mind; your thoughts must become chaste and pure; your words must become discreet and well seasoned and your whole life pious and unblamable.

Instantly you should awaken, walk in the right way, keep aloof from all abomination and idolatry, forsake false prophets, preachers and priests; and seek the true teachers, sacraments and divine service; for a true,

sincere, Christian faith cannot be idle; but it changes, renews, purifies, sanctifies and justifies more and more; it makes joyous and glad, for by faith it knows that hell, devil, sin and death, are conquered through Christ, and that grace, mercy, and redemption from sin, and eternal life, are acquired through him. In full confidence, the possessor of true christian faith approaches the Father, in the name of Christ, receives the Holy Ghost, becomes partaker of the divine nature, and is renewed after the image of him, who created him, lives by the virtue of Christ, which is in him; all his ways are righteousness, godliness, honesty, chastity, truth, wisdom, goodness, benevolence, light, love and joy.

He sanctifies his body and heart as a habitation and temple of Christ and the Holy Ghost; hates all that is against God and his word; honors, praises and thanks God with a sincere heart; and there is nothing to deter him, neither judgment, wrath, hell, devil, sin nor eternal death. For he knows that Christ is his Intercessor, Mediator and Propitiator. He acknowledges with holy Paul, that "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. 8: 1. The Spirit of the Lord assures him that he is a child of God, and a joint heir of Christ; he, therefore, wholly dedicates himself to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who called him through grace, drew him by his Spirit, enlightened him by his word, and purchased him with his blood.

Behold, this is the nature of living faith, which has such an urgent, cogent power, spirit, fear, energy and life; which avails with God and has the promise in the Scriptures. Happy he who has such a faith and will salutarily retain it to the end. I repeat it, prove yourselves, whether you are in the faith; in Christ or out of Christ; penitent or impenitent. For in the mirror presented, you may view the whole face of your conscience and life, if you but believe that the word of the Lord is true and right. Here notice how the true, christian faith, through grace, is the only living fountain, whence flows, not only the penitent, new life, but also obedience to the evangelical ceremo-

nies, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper will have to come and follow, not as those compelled through the law, for the rod of the oppressor is broken, but voluntarily, through the free will and submissive spirit of love, which is of a christian nature, and is ready to all good works and obedience of the holy divine word.

For all the truly regenerated and spiritual conform in all things to the word and ordinances of the Lord; not because they think to merit the propitiation of their sins and eternal life; by no means; in this matter they depend upon nothing except the true promise of the merciful Father, graciously given to all believers, through the blood and merits of Christ, which blood is, and ever will be the only eternal medium of our reconciliation, and not works, baptism or Lord's supper, as said above.

For if our reconciliation depended upon works and ceremonies, then it would not be grace, and the merits and fruits of the blood of Christ would be void. O no! it is grace, and will be grace to all eternity; all that the merciful father is doing or has done for us grievous sinners, through his beloved Son and Holy Spirit, is grace. Hence it is that they hear the voice of the Lord, believe his word, and therefore they should willingly observe and perform (although in weakness), the representation of both signs, under water, and bread and wine, set forth in obedience. For a truly believing christian is thus minded, that he will not do otherwise than that which the word of the Lord enjoins and teaches; for he knows, that all presumption and disobedience, are like sins of witchcraft, and the end thereof is death.

Yes, good reader, the true christian belief, as the Scriptures require, is so lively, active and powerful with all those, who have rightly received it through the grace of the Lord, that they do not fear to forsake father, mother, wife, children, money and possessions for the word and testimony of the Lord; to suffer all manner of scorn, disgrace, fatigue, hardship and prison, and finally to have their poor, weak bodies, which are so fearful of suffering, burned at the stake, as may be frequently seen in the pious children and witnesses of Christ Jesus, especially in these our Netherlands.

Alas! how many did I know before, and know the greater part of them now, both men and women, men and maid-servants (would to God that they be increased to many hundred thousands), who, from the inmost of their souls, seek Christ and his word, and lead, in all meekness, a pious, unblamable life before God and man; sincere and holy in doctrine, full of the fear and love of God, ready to help one another, merciful, compassionate, meek, sober, chaste, neither refractory nor seditious; but quiet and peaceable, obedient to the magistracy in all things not contrary to God; and who have, nevertheless, for a number of years, not slept in their beds, and even do not now; for they are so much hated by the world, that they have been persecuted, betrayed, taken, exiled and slain like highwaymen, thieves and murderers, and that without mercy; and for no other reason, than that they, out of true fear of God, dare not take part in the abominable, carnal life, and with the accursed, disgraceful idolatry of this blind world; neither dare they hear nor acknowledge the unchaste, drunken, lecherous priests and deceiving blind preachers, as the true apostles and teachers of God; they dare not receive the bread with the avaricious, envious, proud, drunkards, whores and rogues, from their hands, nor carry their children to the anti-christian washing and baptism, but seek such preachers and teachers, and also such a baptism, supper, church and life, which are in accordance with the Scriptures, and may stand according to the word of the Lord.

Behold, before God, I write the truth, indeed they are such a people, if I otherwise know them rightly, hypocrites excepted, who, in the flesh, weep more than they laugh, mourn more than they are joyful, rather give than receive; who are ready not only to sacrifice possessions, and their all, but also body and life for the praise of the Lord, and to the necessary service of their neighbor, according to the command of the Scripture, as much as in them is. No matter how much the poor children are harassed, they are still so much strengthened in God, that they can neither be moved nor deterred. They possess their souls with patience, waiting for the joy which is promised. Truly

said Christ, "Ye will be hated of all men for my name's sake," Matt. 24: 9.

Since then it is evident from all this, that the true evangelical faith is of such a nature, as said, and is the only means and tree, which, through the grace of God, bears and propagates all manner of good fruit; therefore, it is considered, in Scripture, the most precious, and greatest work, and all things are ascribed to faith, such as miracles, and the power to become the children of God, and be justified; be blessed and saved; purified and sanctified; and have eternal life, as we have related when treating of the Mafactor's faith.

Not, dear reader, that we believe that faith merits this on account of its worth; by no means; but because the pleasure of God, through his word, has given his promise through true faith; then it must also by virtue of that word follow faith. For the Scriptures plainly teach, that all things, visible and invisible, must hear, yield, serve and follow the powerful word of God, as when he said, Let there be heaven and earth. Heaven and earth sprang into existence at these words. For God's word, says Esdras, is his perfect work. God also says to Israel, If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, all these blessings shall come upon thee; but if thou wilt not hearken, the curse shall be upon thee; and it also happened, as it was told Israel, "For God," says Balaam, "is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent." For these reasons the promise must follow true faith, or else it cannot be denied that God, who is a God of truth, must be untrue and faithless. O no! all that he wills must be done; what he promises must be fulfilled, and not otherwise than he has promised, for he alone is true, and we are all liars," Rom. 3. Paul says, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself."

Since then faith so firmly acknowledges that God cannot break his promise, but must keep it, because he is the truth and cannot lie, therefore, does he make his children free, joyful, and glad in spirit; though they are confined in prisons and bonds, have to suffer by water and fire, in chains and at the stake; for they are assured in

the spirit, through faith, that God will not withdraw his promise, but will fulfill it in due time; for they believe on Christ in whom the promises are sealed, and through him also acknowledge his grace, word and will; notwithstanding that they, in former times, lived so ungodly, and walked according to the flesh.

They hope with faithful Abraham, where nothing is to be hoped, and wait for things invisible, as though they saw them, and with full confidence adhere to the assurance, truth, faithfulness and power of the heavenly promise, which is made to us by the infallible, true mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, without any previous work or merit, through the gracious choice and will of his merciful Father in his true word. And this regenerating, justifying, converting, penitent, active and confident faith, which comes from the Father of light, by hearing his holy word, is the only faith that avails with God, and which has the assurance of the promise of grace in the word, through the Holy Ghost; besides this, the Holy Scriptures know of no other faith.

Before now, I have read in some books, which they have written, that there is but *one* good work which saves us, namely, FAITH, and but *one* sin which will damn us, namely, UNBELIEF. This I will leave as it is, and not find fault with it; for where there is a sincere, true *faith*, there are also all manner of sincere, good fruits. On the other hand, where there is *unbelief*, there are also all manner of evil fruits; therefore, is salvation properly ascribed to *faith*, and damnation to *unbelief*.

Faithful reader, pay attention. Since we plainly perceive that the whole world, Papists, Lutherans, Zuinglians, Davidists, libertines, &c., walk the broad road of sin, and lead a carnal, vain life, and do not abide by the pure, salutary, perfect, doctrine, sacrament and unblamable, pure example of Christ; therefore they are themselves witnesses, that they reject the corner stone, Jesus Christ, and believe not his word and truth, though a few of them write much of faith and speak of the Scriptures. Say, beloved, did you ever read in the Scriptures, or did you ever hear, that a truly believing, regenerated christian, after repentance and

conversion, remained proud, avaricious, unchaste, greedy, hateful, tyrannical and idolatrous, and continued to live after the base desires of the flesh? You must say, *no!* If you speak of Peter and David, you must observe how short or how long a time their fall lasted, and what penance they did. Turn yourselves to the east or west, south or north, and you will find ungodly, vain, pompous, foolish actions and conduct, with all those who boast of faith, so that we shall have to say with Christ and John, They are, with few exceptions, of the devil and not of God. For the devil, from the beginning, was proud and haughty, so are they; he was a liar, so are they; he was a falsifier of the word of the Lord, so are they; he was disputatious against God, so are they; in short, he is a revengeful murderer, an abominable, blood-thirsty tyrant, so are many of them. The way in which they use those who seek Christ sincerely and believe, fear, follow, serve and call on him, has been more than once fully related.

Yea, alas, they are so wrathful and enraged at them, that they will scarcely call them by their right names, but they call them anabaptists, fanatics, rioters, factionists, hedge preachers, deceivers, heretics, new monks, knaves and miscreants, although they seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness with all their hearts, which God knows, who tries the reins and hearts of men, and wish no evil to any one upon earth.

This they all do through the ignorant, defaming of the envious, inhuman, lying, crying and writing of their learned priests and preachers, who ever since the blasphemous beast of anti-christ ascended his kingdom and glory, have always been the true cause of the tyrannical shedding of innocent blood in the past and present; for they are those who instigate the magistracy to murder, and the thoughtless, reckless people to defame and blaspheme, and, I fear, that they will continue to be the cause till the end.

Nevertheless, the chosen are to awaken, repent and obey the voice of the Lord; for idolatrous, blood-thirsty, confused Babel shall sink, and be desolated; and fair Jerusalem, the city of peace, shall increase, and through the power of Almighty God

must be built up in glory. Of this all rejoice, who are called to the marriage of the Lamb, and whose names are written in the BOOK of LIFE with God. Here is the understanding, wisdom, faith and patience of the saints; let him that has understanding, observe, that the word of the Lord is true. Blessed are they who are ready to meet the coming of the Lamb.

Behold, such a faithless, impenitent, tyrannical, idolatrous, refractory, disobedient, blind, carnal people they are, who imagine that they are the believing church, and the lawful bride of Christ. These poor children do not observe that all under heaven is spoiled, even as the prophet complains that "there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood," Hos. 4: 1, 2. The world, says John, lieth in wickedness. If we come to the lords and princes, there we find such pride, arrogance, pomp and wantonness, such banqueting, eating and drinking to excess, with some, such adultery and whoredom, and such unreasonable, blind idolatry, and with many, such unmerciful, raging tyranny that they are in truth more like proud Nebuchadnezzar, drunken Belshazzar, and Nabal, and blood thirsty, vain Antioch, Nero, and Maximinus, than christian, believing lords and kind princes. If we come to the judges and rulers, to each in his station, with some we find only violence and injustice, with some nothing but avarice, astonishing practices; they steal honestly and rob honorably; pass sentence for gain and gifts; honor the high and despise the poor, do not justice to the poor widow, orphan and the oppressed stranger, execute their office and power with rigor, and not fraternally; serve princes and not God, as the prophet Micah laments, What the prince desires, the judge does, so that he will again reward him. Alas! where shall we find one, who loves God with all the heart, hates avarice, seeks the truth, who will defend the godfearing, and do him justice?

If we come to the priests or monks, there we find such insatiable avarice, that they offer and sell prayers, psalms, matins, vespers, masses, sermons, baptism, Lord's Sup-

per, absolution, and all their church services, together with their own souls; take rents and gold from the deceased, will go six or ten miles, from one place to another for a guilder; where they find the most milk, wool and meat, there they prefer to be among the sheep; like to be flattered and honored by the world; suffer themselves to be called doctors, lords, masters, abbots, provosts, priors, fathers, guardians, commanders and presidents; like to wear long garments; seek to be greeted at the market, and take the first seats at the table and in the church, as Christ said of the scribes and pharisees, Mark 12: 39. Besides, the greater part of them live in such whoredom and sodomy that the angels are astonished and blush; they defile one woman after another, also one virgin after another; they defraud and corrupt the whole world, both temporally and spiritually; they have all their joy in a temporal, carnal life; study by day and by night, how they may pamper their proud, idle, lazy flesh; eat and drink, saying, as it is written, "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant," Isa. 56: 12. They betray the faithful, pious hearts, who with all their powers seek Christ and eternal life; they warn every one of the truth and its followers, and cry, Hear us, we are your teachers and pastors, we will pledge our souls for you in the judgment of God; and thus encourage the malicious, lest they be converted from their wickedness. Promising liberty to others, and are themselves servants of corruption. I do not know how they could make it worse; nevertheless, those unblushing, abominable men, who according to the law of Moses, would have been stoned, and who according to the Scriptures must be eternally cursed and condemned, unless they repent, alas, are called the pastors and teachers of this poor, rude people. Behold, thus the world is corrupted.

If we come to the preachers, who boast of the word, we will find, that some are open liars, others drunken sots, some usurers, some wanton and gay, some defamers and slanderers, others persecutors and betrayers of the innocent; how some of them live, how they came to get their wives, and what kind

of wives they have, this I will commit to the Lord and to themselves. They teach secretly that there are *two sons* in Christ, the Son of God, and the son of Mary, and that he who died for our sins, was not the Son of God; they also teach and practice a baptism which is not commanded in the Scriptures, and a supper, in which they consider the *bread* the *body*, and the *wine* the *blood* of Christ; they have, and hold no other BAN, than the gallows, and the wheel; lead an unconcerned, easy life; they live of mere flattery, deceit and the booty of antichrist, and preach just as much as the worldly, carnal magistracy desire to hear; promise peace to the poor impenitent, although there is no peace.

If we come to the common people, we find such an unbecoming, carnal, blind, uncircumcised horde, that we are astonished; they know neither God nor his word. If nature teaches anything reasonable, that is all their piety; but of the Spirit, word, ordinances, will and life they indeed know but very little. In short, it has come so far in the world, that we may lament and say with the holy prophet, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth," Jer. 5: 1.

Not one stone has remained upon another; all is desolated which Christ and his faithful messengers taught us of faith, love, baptism, Supper, reconciliation, sin, repentance, regeneration, separation, teachers, deacons and of true, divine service, nevertheless, they are called the church of Christ by their blind priests and preachers, even as if Christ and the Father were to be satisfied with names, bread, wine and water. O no! the chosen of God are the church of Christ, his saints and beloved, who washed their clothes in the blood of the Lamb, who are born of God, influenced by the Spirit of Christ; who are in Christ and he in them, who hear and believe his word, who follow him in their weakness, in his commandments, walk in his footsteps with all patience and humility, hate the evil, and love the good, earnestly desiring to apprehend Christ as they are apprehended of him, for all who are in

Christ, are new creatures, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, and members of his body. How you and the rest of mankind conform to this, I will leave you and all reasonable readers to reflect upon, in the fear of God, both according to your understanding, and according to the Scriptures.

Since, then, all things are desolated through the righteous wrath and judgment of God, because (as Paul says) they delighted in unrighteousness and lies, by the false prophets and ravening wolves, so that nothing salutary has remained according to the true sense and ground of Christ and his holy apostles, and since we find nothing in the whole world, among all the great sects, only vain boastings, mere names, false doctrine, false sacraments, vain unbelief and an impenitent, carnal life, and this under the name and semblance of Christ and his holy church, therefore, I am constrained, by true, christian love, to make known the power and ground of the holy Scriptures, according to my small gift, given me of God, and through this to show which is the *true, christian faith*, having the promise; namely, the faith which changes man from evil into good, to a divine nature, both inwardly and outwardly, and makes him, as said, holy, righteous, obedient, new, pious, peaceable and joyful; in order that all good, pious hearts, who desire to walk in the right way, but who are hindered therefrom by their blind priests and preachers, may read or hear this my faithful EXPOSITION and INSTRUCTION, and that they may thereby be instructed in the truth; that the indifferent and drowsy may be awakened, and that all hypocrites may be ashamed, and reform; and that all those who love God sincerely, may be more instructed and taught in the faith, if they do by any means acknowledge this as the sure FOUNDATION of God, as it is, and will be, for ever. Lord, grant that many may read and understand it, and thus receive and obey it, that they may sincerely repent and be saved, Amen.

And since I do it out of a sincere heart, and labor not with any other view, of which the great God, the Searcher of the hearts and reins of men is my witness, than that I may teach repentance to the ignorant, rude world, which knows not Christ, lead them

to Christ and his doctrine, sacraments and example, that many might be saved; and as we plainly see there are many profligates who have reformed their sinful, carnal lives, and commenced an upright, penitent, pious life in the fear of the Lord; then it is gross ingratitude, yea, hardened, ungodly tyranny, to hate me and my faithful co-workers so enviously, and recompense us so shamefully, who manifest such great fidelity and love towards them in our manifold sufferings and trials.

But thus they treated all the prophets and faithful servants of God from the beginning, who preached to them the word and will of the Lord with great fidelity, reproved their sins, sought their salvation till death, with all their powers, with many tears, watchings, prayers, labors, cares and sorrows; therefore, it is not strange, and no wonder, that they will treat us so; for Christ says, "For so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you," Matt. 5: 12.

I hereby entreat and desire, through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, all my readers and hearers in general, of whatever name, office, station and condition, that you be pleased neither to defame nor to reject my labor, as long as you have not read it impartially, heard it rightly and understood it. Therefore, separate the doctrine, sacraments and life of Christ, from the doctrine, sacraments and life of the priests and preachers; separate faith and unbelief, spirit and flesh, righteousness and unrighteousness. Seek after the truth, strive zealously for your salvation, believe that God is true, that he will reward the good and punish the evil, that his word is, and will for ever remain truth. Fear his judgment, love his bounties; then you shall know, by the grace of the Lord, that the aforementioned is the true Christian faith, which avails before God, and has the promise in the Scriptures, as we have so abundantly testified and shown to you by the word of God, and with such strong and incontrovertible reasons, Scriptures and examples, without deceit and fraud, as it were before, in Christ Jesus.

May the Almighty, eternal, merciful God and Father, through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, lead you all, one with another, into

his holy, divine knowledge and evangelical truth, and make your faith so fruitful and active, that you may, with sincere, new hearts, patiently submit to his cross in every trial and affliction, and that you may walk, with unfeigned love, be peaceable and

joyful in spirit, as the unblamable, pious children of God, before the Lord and his church all the days of your lives, and ultimately obtain the promise of grace, the end of your faith, and the salvation of your souls, Amen.



TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

CONCLUSION.

Beloved reader, here you have my FOUNDATION AND DOCTRINE OF FAITH, with its *properties, power, operation and fruits*. I therefore entreat you all, if you appreciate Christ and your own salvation, suppress your perverted minds, be not enraged and embittered, should you find any thing contrary to the usages of our forefathers, standing usages, or philosophic writings and the cry of the learned; but first prove it rightly, and scrutinize it well with Christ and the word, spirit, life and example, of his holy apostles, whether it is not the true content, meaning, doctrine and sense of the whole Scriptures; if so, you will have to give up the unscriptural usage, and the deceptive cry of the learned, and hold only to the word of the Lord, if you would be saved. Let, therefore, your heart be impartial, and your judgment sincere after truth; for the Almighty God and Lord, before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, will not and cannot yield to any of the learned, or to long-standing usages or customs; for he is Lord, and we are his servants. We must follow *him*, and not he follow us. Reader, lay it to heart.

Likewise, if you find that we preach our doctrine rightly, respect not the dignity of any man, fear no man's tyranny, nor yield to the learned, but that we in true, sincere love, faithfully teach, admonish and reprove all who do amiss, without respect of persons, with the Holy Spirit, word, example and ordinance of the Lord, in all things not right; then, I entreat you again, that you would be pleased not to attribute this to spiritual pride, but to well-meant frankness and christian simplicity. I desire that you would all walk rightly, so that you may be saved, on

account of which I have to endure not a little tribulation. I refuse not to become as a fool before all the world, so that I may make many wise in Christ, and with the Holy Spirit and powerful word of the Lord, lead them to wisdom and to the saints; and I well know that Christ and his apostles, and the prophets, were guilty of the same foolishness, and were of the same mind with me in this matter.

If I reprove, they reprove more; If I threaten with the wrath of the Lord, they do so much more. Were they on that account carnal and proud? Far from it, Yes, my reader, had not the dark smoke of men-pleasing-preachers, the accursed, false doctrine of the dreadful, abominable locusts out of the abyss, risen up; but had sincere reprovng, the true, pure doctrine, the scriptural usage of the holy sacraments, and the separating of the impenitent, without respect to person, continued in the world, never would the pleasing sun have lost his splendor, nor would the church have lapsed into such a grieved and deadly condition; therefore, I esteem it with Paul, to be unimportant, to be judged of men in this matter. For I know that I mean it well, do right and reprove only with the truth, so that they may be converted.

May the true heavenly Light, Jesus Christ, be eternally blessed, and enlighten all dark, benighted hearts with the clear and lucid ray of his Holy Ghost and eternal truth, that they may view, in unfeigned, pure faith, the eternal brightness of Christ, to the praise and honor of his great name, and to the salvation of many souls, Amen.