

A
Consoling Admonition

CONCERNING THE

SUFFERINGS, OPPRESSIONS

AND

Persecutions of the Saints,

FOR THE

WORD OF GOD AND HIS TESTIMONY.

BY

M E N N O S I M O N.

“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you,” Matt. 5: 15.

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

ELKHART, INDIANA:

PUBLISHED BY JOHN F. FUNK AND BROTHER.

1871

P R E F A C E.

I, MENNO SIMON, sincerely desire that all the true children of God may obtain grace and peace, a perfect understanding of the Lord, a firm mind in all temptations, from God our heavenly Father, through his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in the power of his Holy Spirit, to our edification and salvation, Amen.

Beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, since the all-merciful God and Father, through his boundless grace and goodness, has again, in these last times of unbelief, abominations and idolatry, in this terrible, wanton, ruthless, perverted and blood-thirsty world, revealed before the eyes of the consciences of some, his blessed, only, and eternal Son, Jesus Christ, who was unknown for so many centuries; since he has again opened the book of the divine declarations and eternal truth, which had been closed for many centuries; since some of those who lay dead, not for four days only, as Lazarus did, according to the flesh, but for twenty or thirty years, yea, who all their lives slumbered in the spiritual death of sin and all ungodliness, have awakened from the foul grave of unbelief and unrighteousness, and have been called to a new, unblamable life; and since through the preaching of his word, in the power of his Holy Spirit, he continues to call the poor, miserable, starving sheep out of the hands of the faithless shepherds, and out of the clutches of the ravening wolves; since he leads them out of the dry, unfruitful pastures of man's doctrine and commands, to the green, fat pastures upon the mount of Israel, and places them under the power and protection of their only and eternal shepherd, Jesus Christ, who, through his precious, crimson blood has purified and purchased them for his own; therefore, the gates of hell foam and rage. Herod with

the whole city is above measure frightened and enraged, because he has heard of the wise men, who are taught of God, that the King of the Jews is born. The great dragon, the old, crooked serpent, who was cast from heaven, whose head and power has been bruised and broken by the promised seed of the woman, is overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and, on account of the word of his testimony, burns with anger. He knows well that his time is short, and therefore he carries on his works and tyranny, through his children and servants, the unbelievers, with great wrath and fierceness, against those who have been sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb. Annas and Caiaphas, with all the scribes, counsel to slay Christ. Judas and all false apostles and teachers betray and deliver him up. Herod, with all his lords and princes, scorn and mock him. The people cry out, crucify him! crucify him!! Pilate, and all those who bear the sword, sentence him to stocks, fire, sword and water. The servants seize, spit upon, scourge, crown and crucify him. The centurion pierces his side, the others mock, blaspheme and upbraid him. Who is there that does not persecute, crucify and dishonor with heart, word or deed, the poor, innocent, peaceful, defenceless Lamb? Yea, in the ungodly Cain, has the bloody, murderous tyranny taken its origin, and has fully shown its artfulness, properties, fruit and nature to the pious, godly Abel.

Inasmuch, then, as the Lamb and its chosen members, from the beginning, have been persecuted and slain by the malice of the creatures of the conquered serpent, and inasmuch (according to Scriptures) as this persecution will not cease so long as there are righteous and unrighteous people on earth; and as in our days, especially, the cross of Christ, on every hand (as it was in

the days of our ancestors), is laid upon all God-fearing children, who are inwardly born again from the powerful seed of the holy word; therefore I cannot neglect to admonish my beloved brethren and sisters, fellow-believers and fellow-sufferers with the word of the Lord, concerning the suffering, cross and persecution of the saints, which is abundantly related in the Scriptures, and was abundantly visited upon our fathers, both of the Old and New Testaments, and also upon many pious witnesses of our own

days; that they may, according to the example of our fathers, fearlessly and valiantly continue the undertaken contest, in all constancy, patience, strength, courage and valor, through the power of their faith in Christ Jesus; and that they may thus receive the promised crown. For this purpose may the Father of every good and perfect gift, through his beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, grant us the riches of his grace, in the power of his Holy Spirit, Amen.



THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

“BLESSED are they (said Christ) which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

I know well, worthy brethren and sisters in the Lord, that the true laborers and servants of the Lord, have each one planted and watered according to the gifts which they have received; they have caused you to be born again of the living word of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, and that they have built in a godly manner upon Christ, the firm and immoveable corner stone; have taught you the word, will and ordinances of God according to his good pleasure; have united you in love as a willing, obedient, pure bride to your bridegroom, Christ Jesus. That they have in full earnestness, shown you the narrow, scornful way; have preached the cross, and have pointed out and admonished you in regard to the pains and costs of this godly building, for it can never be otherwise, as you well know, than that all who would hear, follow and enter through the right door, Christ Jesus, and would walk upon the highway to eternal life in the light of Christ, must first deny themselves, and all they are, with the whole heart. They must, in all misery, ignominy and trouble, take upon themselves the pressing cross, and must follow the rejected, outcast, bleeding and crucified Christ, as he himself said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.” Yes all who do not stand prepared to take up this grievous life of the cross and trouble, and hate not father and mother, son, daughter, husband and wife, houses, land, money, goods and life, cannot be Christ’s disciples.

My faithful brethren this is a true and sure word; for the eternal truth, Christ Jesus, has in many places of the Scriptures,

been pointed out and testified in great clearness; “Behold,” he says, “I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the gentiles,” Matt. 10: 16—18.

Again, “The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death, and ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake,” Matt. 10: 21, 22.

Again, “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household,” Matt. 10: 24, 25.

Again, “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it,” Matt. 10: 37—39.

Again, “Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake,” Matt. 24: 9.

Again, “They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service,” John 16: 2.

Again, “We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall

suffer persecution." "If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him," Acts 14: 22; 2 Tim. 3: 12; 2: 11, 12.

Yea, the whole Scriptures abound with exhortations, examples and histories of the troubles sorrows, miseries, proscriptions, upbraidings, reproachings, deceivings, imprisonments, plunderings, ignominious death and crosses of the saints.

Since then, from the beginning of the world, true righteousness, devotion and piety, are thus miserably hated, persecuted, and cast out, as it has been abundantly shown in the case of the pious fathers, and as may be seen and found in these last times, as we have said, I deem it necessary to show from the word of the Lord, to our youthful, weak, and untried brethren and sisters, who such persons are, that persecute us, and inflict upon us this trouble and sorrow; wherefore they do so, wherewith they maintain their tyranny and bloody deeds for right; what profit we receive from the cross, and what is promised to those, who, through the power of faith, overcome all temptations and extremities, and maintain the conflict through Christ Jesus, in order that they, through such counsels, may be ready and prepared for all trials. That they may put on the breast-plate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, with the shield of faith, and be girded with the sharp, piercing sword of the Spirit in all humility, meekness and patience, with ardent prayers and sighs to the Lord, in order that when any swift, unseen uproar, shall arise against us, it shall not fall upon us unawares, that an unexpected storm shall not cast down our house, the heat of the sun shall not scorch the growing plant, the heat and power of the fire shall not consume the erected works, and that we be not drawn off and frightened to a deadly apostasy by their threats, uproar and tyranny. Therefore, my beloved, read and understand in all love, for the Lord knows that out of pure love, I have written this for the benefit of my dear brethren, according to my received gifts, Eph. 6; 1 Thess. 5.

In the first place, dear brethren, I esteem it to be very necessary that all the godly, and strivers under the cross of Christ, who

seek for encouragement in their crosses and sufferings, which they endure for the sake of the testimony of God and their consciences, to consider carefully and earnestly, who and what they are that so madly persecute, oppress and afflict them; of what disposition and nature they are; upon what way they walk, and of what father, according to the Spirit, they are born. All who carefully observe them, and try them by the Scriptures, will find, according to my opinion, that they are not Christians, but are an unbelieving, fleshly, earthly, wanton, blind, hardened, lying, idolatrous, perverted, malicious, revengeful, unmerciful and murderous people. A people, who by their actions and fruits, show that they neither know Christ nor his Father, although they so highly praise his holy name with the mouth, and extol it with their lips; who tread in slippery, crooked and perverted paths; who display not Christian love and peace; who bathe their hearts and hands in blood; their disposition is to seize and kill. They are children and co-partners of him, who from the beginning was a murderer and a liar, of whom the whole Scriptures testify, that they shall forever bear, the intolerable curse and malediction of the righteous judgment of God, and the devouring flames of hell, unless they awake from the deep, deadly sleep of their sins, sincerely repent, believe the joyous Gospel of Jesus Christ, and put on Christ, and thus show by their whole lives and actions, that they seek their God with all their might, fear and love him, be they emperors, kings, doctors, licentiate, citizens, peasants, man or woman, For with God, says Paul, there is no respect of persons, but whosoever committeth sin, he shall bear it.

Worthy and faithful brethren in the Lord, observe what a blind, naked, poor, miserable and unwise people, in divine things they are, who so bitterly persecute and destroy you without mercy, on account of your faith. Therefore, it becomes all the true and chosen children of God, however severely they may be dealt with, and belied by these people, not to be angry with them, but sincerely to pity them, and sigh sorely over their poor souls, with all meekness and ardency, after the example of Christ and Stephen, to

pray for their raging, cursed folly and blindness, for they know not what they do. Who knows but God may give them eyes and hearts, that they may see and know their blindness and unbelief; see what an impure life they lead, what kind of people they persecute, and whom they have pierced.

O my beloved brethren! observe and consider well upon your own former life; we have all, in former times, served one Lord, were attired in the same habit, as has been said. But what we now are, we are not of ourselves, but of God, by grace through Christ Jesus. The mighty God, who lives forever, according to his great mercy, has called us out of our accursed darkness into his marvellous light, his ears are not stopped, nor his hand shortened; he can undoubtedly hear and help them as he helped us. If they never repent, but continue with impenitent, perverted hearts, in all ungodliness, blood, wantonness and tyranny, till they die, we know what the Scriptures testify concerning them; that they shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven; but their part shall be in the fiery lake which burns with fire and brimstone, and the fire will be everlasting, Rev. 21: 8.

Every one, then, who reflects that his persecutors are so wholly blind and destitute of understanding, concerning what the Spirit directs, as above said, and that their lot shall be like that of the angels of the bottomless pit, the intolerable wrath of God, death and hell, which shall last forever, and the sufferings which we have to endure from them for the testimony of Jesus, are but temporary and momentary, will through grace, by this means, preserve his heart pure from all wrath, malice and retaliation towards them, and will ardently pray for them; he will commend his affairs to God in all humility, long-suffering, and peace, will preserve his spirit unbroken, amid prisons, fire and water.

Again, I deem it a soft and mild salve, and a cooling to our miseries and grief, if we but reflect upon the reason why our persecutors so malevolently hate us, and so relentlessly destroy our name, property, reputation, welfare and lives, which is, because the grace of God, through Christ, has enlightened us; because we have believed the

preached Gospel, and have ceased from our blind, ruthless life and deadly works; because we desire, in our weakness, to follow in the fear and love of God, after the righteousness of faith which is required of God, and in obedience to the holy word; because we acknowledge the ever blessed Jesus alone for our Redeemer, Mediator, Intercessor, spiritual King, Example, Shepherd, infallible Teacher and Master; because we judge and prove all spirits, doctrines, councils, ordinances, statutes and ceremonies as far as regards spirit and faith, with the Spirit, doctrine, ordinances, commands and ceremonies of Christ, and thus esteem the commands and ceremonies of men, which are contrary to the commands and ceremonies of God, not only as vain and useless, but also as accursed and idolatrous, according to the Scriptures; because we regard and honor God more than man, we hold in exaltation his high, holy, true and precious word; because we, according to the Scriptures, listen not to the unclean, unsound, idolatrous, deceiving and blood-thirsty preachers; because we admonish and set an example in all love, as far as we are able, to the whole world, with the word and sacraments of God, and with humble, meek lives, though in weakness, according to our abilities; and we rebuke and shame (though always for their good), their deceiving doctrine, idolatrous sacrament and their wanton, earthly, fleshly life. In short, because we, in good faith, point them to the sure and infallible truth of God, to the true light and to the high-way of eternal life, and thus warn and alarm them, as much as we can, with doctrine and life, against eternal death, in hell and the wrath of God.

Behold, my faithful brethren, it is for the reasons here enumerated, that the world lies, writes, calls, preaches, and is so malicious towards all the pious; they burn with such inhuman rage, as may be seen, that the ravening, fierce wolves and roaring lions, when compared with them, cease to be wolves and lions, but seem to be like tame deer, or innocent lambs. They are so moved by the inflamed, blood-thirsty spirit of their father, that they regard neither the law of God and Christ, which is love, nor reason and discretion, nor the inwardly written law of nature,

by which one honest man should reasonably, according to the good pleasure of God, meet, bear, admonish and serve another in all love. Yea, oft times the natural father delivers the son up to death, and the son his father; the mother the daughter, and the daughter her mother; and one brother delivers another on account of his faith, as said.

Behold, thus haughtily and maliciously, they assume, without any awe or fear, the umpire of God and the office of the Holy Ghost. They banish Christ Jesus, the head of all princes and powers, who has all might in heaven and upon earth, from the throne of his divine majesty; and judge also with their iron sword, after their own, blind opinions, and carnal desires, the chosen, god-fearing, pious hearts, enlightened in God, through Jesus Christ, over whom no literal sword may ever judge, for they are spiritual, and from their inmost soul are zealous for God and his holy word, even till death.

Behold, so malicious and haughty is human reason, and so revengeful and envious is satanic hatred, that they do not fear to strive against the Most High, and pierce Christ Jesus with their murderous, deadly sword, and persecute with all their power, the Holy Spirit, gifts, word and truth of God, and all that he commands and will have us to do.

O that God would grant that the blind watchmen of this world, I mean the preachers and theologians, may sound their horns to a right tone and at a proper time, or that they would let them hang on the walls, in order that they may not therewith, tyrannically call out the deadly, murder cry, nor longer deceive the carnal, blind world, nor instigate the rulers and magistracy to the destruction and murdering of the saints, like hounds pursuing the roe; that God would grant that the poor, common people would sicken of their leaven and lusk; yea, of their spiritual stealing and murdering; also that all rulers and magistrates would tear the bridle from their mouths, and cast their instigators from their backs, and not suffer themselves to be thus driven like dumb beasts, and then, according to my opinion, it will be well for their poor souls before God. Still, I fear that the lying, murderous serpent, will continue its envious bitings;

and the striving woman, the new Eve and her children must endure, to the end, in all patience and long-suffering, its daily bites and stings in the heel.

Since I have here pointed out to you, in a few words, the spirit and nature of those who destroy you and seek your property, life, and the principal, urging reasons which impel them to do so; I will now present to my brethren, some histories and examples from the holy Scriptures, for the comfort and encouragement of all miserable, afflicted, and troubled hearts who suffer oppression, and misery in the flesh for righteousness' sake, in which histories and examples these things may be clearly found and traced.

In the first place, Eve, the mother of us all, brought forth her two sons, Cain and Abel. Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. In process of time it came to pass, says Moses, That Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruits of the field, and Abel brought one from the first of his flock. The Lord regarded Abel and his sacrifice but he looked not upon Cain and his gift, therefore, Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell through great wrath, even as the ungodly always are envious of the pious, because the Lord regards the pious and loves their sacrifices. Cain spoke deceitfully to his pious, humble brother Abel, who knew not the malicious, bloody heart of his brother, saying, Let us go out, and when they were in the field, Cain's hot, envious spirit could no longer be restrained, and his blood-thirsty, revengeful spirit could not be hid. That which lays concealed in the heart must break out in the actions; he arose against his innocent brother and in his fierce wrath slew him. Why did he do this? Because Cain was of the evil one and his works were evil, and his brother's works were righteous.

It seems to me, dear brethren, that this is a fair example and a good reference; for the righteous always have been offscourings and a prey to the unrighteous, and so will they continue to be as the Scriptures sufficiently testify, and as daily experience plainly teaches.

Again, God blessed the patriarch Isaac, and gave him two sons. The elder was

Esau, and the younger, Jacob. Esau was a husband-man and hunter, and had great pleasure in the chase. Once as he came home much fatigued, he sold his birthright to Jacob, his brother, for some food, Gen. 25: 33.

After this it came to pass, that Jacob, through the artifice and craft of his mother, obtained the blessing of his father Isaac, by assuming the name and appearance of Esau. This was the intention and will of God, to remember the literal synagogue and the church of Christ, according to his word to Rebecca, while she was yet pregnant; namely, "Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people: and the elder shall serve the younger," Gen. 25: 23.

When Esau was now aware of this, he wept bitterly and said, Rightly is he called Jacob, for he has supplanted me twice. Esau sought the blessing, but did not obtain it, for God willed it otherwise, as said above.

Esau became very angry with his brother Jacob, on account of the blessing with which his father had blessed him. His malicious, bitter fierceness broke forth, and he said, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother." Then had the blessed Jacob to flee from his dear father and mother before his wrathful brother. He fled to a distant country, and became a servant for twenty years in the house of Laban, who did not deal with him according to equity and love. He dared not again enter the land of his birth, till the Lord said unto him, "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee," Gen. 31: 3.

My dear brethren, observe; as the patriarch Jacob, on account of his external birthright and blessing, was hated and persecuted by his carnal, fierce brother, Esau, thus also it is at the present day, with all those who, after the Spirit, are called after the name of Jacob, namely, true Christians, that in the power of the Holy Ghost, through the medium of faith, tread upon the devil, world, flesh, and blood; they obtain the birthrights which are written in heaven, and are blessed through our true Isaac, Christ Jesus, with spiritual blessings in heavenly

things, to eternal glory. They are maliciously hated and persecuted to death by their carnal and licentious brethren; must flee from one land to another, from one city to another, with great misery, hunger and distress; in prison, in bonds, with hunger, stripes, water, fire and sword, all the days of their lives, as may be seen.

Thus tyrannizes the fleshly Esau over the spiritual Jacob, on account of the spiritual birthright and blessing, although they are both born of the same father, Adam, from one mother Eve, and are created after the image of God.

Thirdly, Saul, the first king of Israel, on account of his thoughts and disobedience, was rejected of the Lord; and David, the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, according to the command of God, was taken from the sheep, and anointed by Samuel in his stead, yet he did not assume the government during the life of Saul. The Lord was with David, and strengthened his hands. He did great works in the name of the Lord; he released the stolen sheep out of the mouth of the lion and bear; he slew the terrible, great Goliath; he subdued two hundred of the uncircumcised Philistines. He acted in all things prudently, right and valiantly; for the Lord was with him. When Saul returned from the slaughter of the Philistines, the women of all the cities of Israel came to meet the king, singing and rejoicing with all manner of stringed instruments, and tambours, speaking joyfully one to another, Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands. This enraged Saul sorely, and he said, They have given David ten thousand and me but a thousand! what else does he want but the kingdom. From that day forth David had no favor with Saul, for Saul sought his life secretly and openly, with great assiduity and craft: although Saul well knew the piety of David and that the Lord was with him; yet his heart burned with such ill-will, envy, revenge and blood-thirstiness, that when David escaped, the good Abimelech and the priests of the Lord were put to death and the whole city, Nob, was laid in ruins for David's sake, 2 Sam. 22.

He regarded neither the piety, kindness, fidelity nor well-doing of David towards

him and all Israel, nor the grace, works and will of God, but became unmindful and drunken in his wrath and envy, so that the enemies and betrayers of David, as Doeg, the Edomite and the Ziphites were highly regarded and honored by him, but the peacemakers, and those who advised for good, as his son Jonathan, were hated by him, and held in suspicion. In short, David must take to flight, and for some years fly from one land to another, from one wilderness to another, and from one mountain to another, till Saul was overcome by the Philistines upon Mount Gilboa, when, through vain despair and impatience he thrust the sword, which he had borne against the righteous and innocent, into his heart, and thus took his own life.

Thus the Almighty Lord and Potentate of all things, punishes the haughty, blood-thirsty tyrants, each one in his time, who bear the sword of their office against God and his chosen, as may be seen of Saul, of Pharaoh, Antiochus, Ahab, Jezebel, Herod and others. On the other hand he can guard his chosen, and help them out of all difficulties, how hard soever they may be pressed. This he has shown in the deliverance of Israel when he led them through the Red Sea, and in preserving David, Helias, Elisha, Daniel in the Lion's den, and the three young men in the fiery furnace, and in many other instances.

Here again we have a clear example in the case of Saul and David, how the proud, reckless, self-willed and carnal princes every where, although they wish to be called christian princes, and gracious lords, act and behave towards the true David, Christ Jesus, and all his saints, whom he has anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit; who have power from above, with him, in and through him to overcome the fearful, infernal bear, lion and Goliath, hell, sin, death, devil, malediction and wrath of God. They can have peace nowhere, with this evil disposed Saul, howsoever innocent, godfearing, and pious they may be. Neither innocence nor piety, praying nor tears, word nor Christ, avail. As in the case of David, every thing must be perverted and construed for the worst. This has ever been the case, and

according to my opinion, will remain so to the end.

Still my brethren, fear ye not, for all your persecutors and enemies become old like a garment, how mighty, glorious and great they may be esteemed. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." But ye shall flourish and increase in God, and your fruit shall never more decay, for the kingdom of Jerusalem is given to you, and the glorious Lord will have honor in you, though Saul rages, and will give to you the eternal kingdom, which he has prepared and set apart everlastingly for you, and all the chosen, Isa. 40: 6.

Fourthly, Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, a priest of the priests of Anathoth, was sanctified from his mother's womb, and was chosen of God to be a prophet and a seer from his youth. He rebuked Judah and Benjamin on account of their disobedience, stubbornness, transgressions, false worship, idolatry and bloodshed, with the mouth and law of God. He taught repentance and reformation, prophesied of the promised Messiah, whom he called the Branch and Root of David. He preached the coming punishment and wrath of God, namely, the captivity and destruction of the kings, the destruction of the city and temple, and the captivity of the people for seventy years.

And these, his prophecies, faithful warnings, visions and rebukes from the mouth of the Lord, became to him as sharp, piercing thorns; they cast his word and admonitions aside, and would not hear them. The pious prophet and true servant of God must be regarded as their betrayer, a factionist and heretic. The word of the Lord was to him as a daily mockery. He was oft-times imprisoned and scourged, and thrown into a foul pit. They counselled concerning his death. He was so pressed with the cross, that he once resolved in his heart, to preach no more in the name of the Lord, yea, he cursed the day of his birth, and the man who brought the message to his father, that a man child was born. Thus the worthy man of God, had to bear the heavy cross for many years, for the sake of the word and truth of the Lord, Jer. 20. He had to yield his ear to all reproaches, and his back to scourging, till the floods of trouble burst

upon the hardened, rebellious, unbelieving people, but alas! they saw too late, that Jeremiah was a right messenger, and a true prophet of God. Besides all this he had to close his life in Egypt, being stoned to death, as a reward for his ardent love and difficult, bitter work.

My dear brethren in the Lord, here I will end the narratives from the Old Testament, for time will not suffice to relate all. The pious Joseph was grievously hated by his brethren, and by them was cast into a pit and again drawn out, and sold to the Ishmaelites, and was complained against as a perfidious adulterer, by the unchaste wife of his lord. Though he was innocent, yet he must suffer his lord's wrath, imprisonment and bonds. Also the high-revered, evangelical prophet, Isaiah, under the bloody and idolatrous tyrant, Manasseh, was sawn asunder, as the historian mentions. The spiritual prophet, Ezekiel, was stoned by those who remained of Dan and Gad. Urijah of Kirjath-jearim, was slain with the sword by Jehoiakim the king of Judah. Zacharias the son of Barachias, was stoned between the temple and the altar. The great, wonder-doing prophet Elijah, must retreat before the blood-thirsty, idolatrous Jezebel; the three youths, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, were cast into the glowing furnace, and Daniel into the lion's den. The venerable, pious, old Eleazar, and his worthy, pious wife, with their seven sons, were so inhumanly and barbarously treated by the terrible Antiochus, were murdered, martyred and destroyed.

Behold brethren, every christian should beware that this is the only reward and crown of this world, with which they reward and honor all true servants of God, who present to them in pure love, the kingdom, word, and will of God; who call to repentance and reformation; who have rendered many kindnesses, services and favors; direct to salvation, righteousness, truth, piety and love; who are the golden candlesticks in the tabernacle of the Lord, and flourish and blossom as the fruitful olive tree in the house of God. All who reflect on these and similar histories and narratives of the pious men of God, will undoubtedly not despond, but in all their miseries, crosses and suffer-

ings will stand, through the grace of God, and abide unwavering to the end.

Since I have now presented some histories out of the holy Scriptures, by which it is plainly seen that true righteousness every where, has suffered, and has been destroyed, under the law as before the law; therefore, I will now, through the grace of God, present some examples out of the New Testament, by which all may learn, and acknowledge with Paul, that, "All that live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," 2 Tim. 3: 12.

First, John the Baptist, a man sent of God, as the Evangelist testifies; a burning and shining light, as Christ says, and of whom Isaiah had prophesied a long time before, saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," Matt. 3: 3, whom Malachi called the messenger of the Lord, whose birth, greatness, holiness, office, doctrines and works were announced, by Gabriel, the heavenly messenger, to Zacharias, his father. John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. He preached repentance to all Judea, pointed out CHRIST, the Savior of the world, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" Of him the Son of God himself gave testimony, that he was no wavering reed, that he was not clothed in soft raiment, that he was greater than a prophet, that he was the promised Elias, that he came in the way of righteousness, and among all that were born of women, there had not arisen a greater than he; he was also held by the people as a prophet, yet did they say, "He hath a devil," yea, Herod, the king, cast him forth as a profligate vagrant, and after some days, this holy man of God was beheaded by the executioner, as a shameful transgressor, on account of his rebuking Herod's incest, and besides, it was given to a vain, haughty, dancing maid, and an unchaste, adulterous woman, to be shown and presented to the drunken, useless and ungodly guests of Herod, in a charger, as a present and banquet dessert.

O Lord! how lamentably and grievously the righteous are destroyed on account of their piety, by this abominable, bloody,

murderous world, and no one takes it to heart. Yea, they are so dealt with, that it appears before the eyes of the unwise, as if the godly were an offence and an abomination, and were banished and cursed of God, and that they might neither hope for, nor find, to all eternity, comfort or grace from God. O no! the Lord be blessed; although their lives may appear to the foolish world to be but idle phrensy, and their end to be without honor, yet do we know that they are the people and children of the Lord, and the apple of his eye, that their blood and death are dear to him; that after a little suffering and trouble they shall be recompensed with good; that theirs is the kingdom of heaven: that they will not be touched with the pains of eternal death, Wis. 3, but their precious souls shall be in eternal rest and peace. Yes, my brethren, every christian may trust and rejoice in the Lord in all his trials and in all his need.

Again, Stephen, the crowned of God, a man full of faith, power and the Holy Ghost, who did great signs and wonders among the people, as Luke writes, was endued of God with such wisdom and spirit, according to the promises of Christ, that also his enemies, namely, the Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, &c., were silent, and stood abashed before him. As they saw this, the spirit of their fathers displayed itself as it had done from the beginning; consuming envy must use its artifices; Stephen must lead the way; they have rejected justice and equity; the men of Belial they employed to belie the pious Stephen, and say, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God; and that Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us; thus have the lies of the serpent overcome justice. They counsel to exterminate the saints. His own enemies saw his countenance, as the countenance of an angel of God. He spake the word of the Lord without fear, rebuked the false trust in the law and the temple, and testified of Jesus Christ in great power, of whom Moses and all the prophets prophesied. At length he grew very warm and ardent in his speech to the multitude, because they had ungratefully rejected the merciful visitation of God in

his proffered race. O ye stiff-necked! he said, and you uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so also do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? They have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the just One, of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers; who have received the law through the dispositions of angels, and have not kept it; and when they heard these reproving and sharp words, they could no longer endure it, for they were cut to the heart, and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," Acts 7: 51-56. Then they called aloud and stopped their ears, and as if they could not longer endure the blasphemous words with which the wicked heretic (as they considered him), boasted and with which he gave such honor to Christ; they rushed upon him with one accord and with great vehemence and wrath, cast him out of the city, and stoned him, but Saul kept the witnesses' clothing. Stephen called out, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. He kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, after the example of his master on the cross, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge, for they know not what they do," Acts 7. Thus the pious martyr fell asleep in the Lord, and received the crown of life which God has promised to all those who fear, love and seek him from the heart, with all sincerity.

O! god-fearing reader, observe and learn to know by such examples, that all those who believe the word of the Lord with true hearts, who become partakers of the Holy Ghost, who are clothed with power from on high, out of whose mouth flow grace and wisdom, who shame the world, rebuke sin, and with Stephen, must be cast out of the city and stoned.

Dear brethren, pray ardently and prepare yourselves. Through much misery and trouble you must enter into the kingdom of heaven. Here is the patience and faith of the saints. O my brethren, watch.

Again, Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, a chosen vessel, a champion of the holy word, an apostle and teacher of the Gentiles, who was not called by men, but of God himself, from heaven to the service of the gospel, was powerful and zealous in his teaching, and unblamable in his life. He labored more than all the other apostles, cast out devils in the name of the Lord, awakened the dead Eutychus again to life, restored health to the sick, shook off the serpent without receiving injury; as a true prophet, he foretold many things which were to come to pass in the last times, was taken up into the third heaven and to the paradise of God, and saw such vision, of which no man might with propriety speak. He was an infallible leader in all righteousness, holiness, piety and virtue, who sought and loved not himself, but God and his neighbor from the whole heart; he had nothing by which to justify himself; he regarded all gain as loss, that he might win Christ alone; yes, he dare not speak of any thing, but what Christ had wrought through him. It availed not how holy, unblamable, zealous, high called, powerful or how devout he was; yet he must, with Simon, the Cyrenian, help to bear the cross of Christ; for as soon as he was called from heaven, taught and baptized by Ananias, and had left off his tyranny, and preached Christ in Damascus, he was let down over the wall in a basket to escape the snares of the blood-thirsty.

He was often imprisoned; thrice scourged with rods, stoned once, in Ephesus he was cast to wild beasts, and at last, after inconceivable and innumerable pains and journeys from one land to another, after enduring much from nakedness, cold, heat, thirst, hunger, labor, watchings, dangers and anguish, he was seized by the Jews at Jerusalem, and scourged; they accused him before the judges, swore to take his life, secured him in Cesarea, and after his appeal to Caesar, he arrived with much danger and shipwreck at Rome, he was brought before the emperor, and at last, under Nero, the most blood-thirsty of tyrants, was put to death by the sword. He offered up his soul and surrendered his life.

In like manner were the apostles impris-

oned and scourged in Jerusalem; the church was dispersed and persecuted, and James was put to death with the sword under Herod. All who desire to become acquainted with other narratives besides those here noticed, from the Holy Scriptures, can read the church history by Eusebius, there will they find similar inhuman abominations, tyranny, unmercifulness and evincious falsehoods against the innocent. Besides they will find such extraordinarily strange inventions to torture, martyr, kill, root out and murder christians, that a natural man, to say nothing of a spiritual one, must in his heart, be awe-stricken and sickened.*

My most beloved brethren in Christ Jesus, be of good cheer and trust ye in the Lord, you who willingly submit to the cross of Christ. You may see and observe from the Scriptures, in the above examples from the Old and New Testaments, how all pious men and children of God, the righteous and prophets, apostles and true witnesses of Christ, yea, Christ himself, as we shall yet hear, have gone through this lonesome wilderness, through this narrow, ignominious and bloody way of misery, crosses and sufferings, to the true, promised land, and to eternal glory.

Yea, this is, and remains the only narrow and straight way, and door through which we must all enter, neither can we ever desire in any other way to enter with the saints

* As a further illustration of this subject the following extracts from Eusebins and others, concerning the humility and meekness of the believing Martyrs of that day (Eus. B. V. C. 3), is given.

"They followed Christ Jesus in all humility, although they were oft made martyrs.

"However they did not call themselves MARTYRS nor consented that others should call them such; but when even one of us called them MARTYRS they reproved us severely, saying, That this name properly belonged to Christ, who alone was the true and faithful Martyr and witness of the truth, the first born of the dead and the RESTORER of eternal life. Or that this name could only appropriately be given to those, who after laying off a testimony had departed this life and gone to God. But we (say they), as humble, poor people, wish alone to adhere undeviatingly to the confession, and therefore, they entreated the other brethren with tears, that they would pray to God that they might obtain the witness of a MARTYR (full confession), and they were so humble, though in truth they were MARTYRS, still they avoided the honor of the name. But among the heathens they acted with all constancy, showed great magnanimity, by

into eternal life, rest and peace, as Christ himself said, Whosoever will follow after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me; therefore, dear brethren, you who have sought, feared and loved the Lord, must suffer and bear much from this wicked and idolatrous race. Fear not those who take your earthly goods from you: for Christ and heaven they cannot take from you, or those who kill the body, for they cannot kill your soul, but fear him who has power to cast both soul and body eternally into hell. Yes, my brethren, would you be the people and disciples of the Lord, you must also bear the cross of Christ; this is, without doubt, the truth.

Again, we have set forth to the kind reader, several excellent histories out of the Scriptures, in which are represented the tyrannical mind, the envious heart, the wolfish rage, the murdering deeds of this miserable, brutal, murderous and blood-thirsty world, against the righteous. We shall now, through the grace of God, notice for a short

scorning the offered insults, and through patience, suffered. For among the brethren they were meek, among persecutors brave, a terror to the refractory, subject to Christ, opposing the devil; they humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, by which they are now exalted; they favored all, they accused none, relieved all, bound none; prayed for those who persecuted them, as did Stephen, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The devil opposed them powerfully, because they, out of great love in Christ Jesus, restored the fallen, whom the devil would fain have devoured. They entreated God to give them grace and constancy, lest they might depart from the church and become a prey to the devil.

"They preferred peace before every thing else, and commanded us to maintain peace. They were martyred without cause and were conscious that they made no discord among the brethren and no grief to the church; but they admonished assiduously, that we should, by all means, maintain and preserve peace, and cherish love, which is the bond of union.

"These things we mentioned for the benefit of the reader, because they have been recommended by worthy and beloved men. And on account of those who deal so haughtily with the brethren, and when the pious err through weakness, they have no compassion upon them, as if Christ should have no mercy on them. We will further relate what we found in the beforementioned book. There was one among the number apprehended for Christ's sake, called Alcibiades, who led a strict, zealous life, he would use no sustenance except bread and water; and as he was determined to live thus abstemious in prison, it was made known to Allalas, that Alci-

time, not only how the servants, of whom we have spoken, suffered but also how the Lord and Prince himself had to endure much, to again enter into his glory.

The apostles abundantly testify that the Lamb of God, the ever blessed Christ Jesus, the true Head of all true believers, had not only suffered from the beginning, as above said, but that he must suffer in the flesh in these last times, although he was the conqueror of the serpent, was promised to Adam and Eve; a blessing and benediction to all people, the true Shiloh, Messiah and Emmanuel, the true plant of David, the Lord who justifies us, the Prince of Peace, and the true Son of the Almighty and living God, whom all the righteous and true prophets desired.

When he had now become man, according to the promise of the fathers, he preached repentance and regeneration in the full power of the Spirit, in all love, righteousness, peace, humility and obedience; the rigid, terrible judgment of God over the impeni-

biades did wrong, because he would not rightly use the creatures of God, lest he might cause others to take offence thereat. But when Alcibiades was informed of the matter, he then enjoyed all things with thanksgiving, for there was a spirit which taught him and persuaded him to obey.

"Afterwards, Montanus, Alcibiades and Theodotus were regarded by many in the land of Phrygia as prophets, for in those days many favors were granted to some of the churches through the gift of the Holy Ghost, so that they believed that the gift of prophecy was imparted. And when great contention arose among the brethren, the churches in France again issued their sentence, with all discipline, reverence and the true exposition of the faith, and brought forward the epistles of the martyrs, who among them ended their lives, which they wrote in their prisons to the brethren in Asia and Phrygia.

The whole Bible, especially the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, speaks of the great crosses, tribulation, the martyrdom and deaths of the believers. Here we read of inhuman, cruel torturings, such as was neither heard before nor since. Boiling water and oil were poured upon their naked bodies; they were placed upon red hot gridirons and roasted there; their members were pierced through with sharp pointed instruments, they were scourged, and red hot irons were applied to their limbs; sharp thorns were thrust into their posterior and privates; other indignities were offered not to be mentioned; hot pitch was thrown into their faces; their eyes were bored out with pointed irons; they were beaten from head to foot with clubs; they were dragged through the streets by their feet; they were

tent; and also the eternal kingdom, grace, mercy, the sincere favor and love of his heavenly father over the penitent. He was himself that Word, fulfilling all righteousness, blessed of God forever, the infallible Example, the eternal Wisdom, Love and Truth, the brightness of the divine glory, the express image of his Father, after whom the first man was created, understand according to the inner man, the eternal power of God, the Almighty Word of God, through whom all things were created, are governed, and in whom all things stand. He knew no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; he is the true light of eternal life, and by the darkness, which is in the world, he is hated, blasphemed, rejected, despised, and trampled upon as the most degraded of men. The King of kings, the Lord of lords, became poorer than the foxes or the birds; for he had not where to rest his blessed head. On the day of his birth, there was no room in the inn; the manger was his couch. Even shortly after his birth, his parents had to fly with him to the land of Egypt.

suspended and their flesh torn from them with pincers, that their bodies were all raw; then vinegar, salt and lime were mixed and poured upon them; they were then rolled about upon thorns, potsherd, broken glass and other sharp instruments, then the tortured body was placed upon a gridiron, and roasted lingeringly to protract the pain, rolling the mangled body backward and forward upon the gridiron till the ghost was given up.

"They were cast before beasts of prey, such as lions, bears, and leopards; and before infuriated bulls; and after repeated torments, were again cast into prison, and after a short time tortured anew, which was repeated often, as we read of Maturio, Sanato, Allalo and others; and above all the amiable Blandina, whom they tortured six different ways; she may properly be called the pattern of martyrs. Others died in prison on account of their excruciating pains; some were starved to death; some women they hung up by the feet and suffocated with offensive smoke; flayed them, led them about on camels, and tore them to pieces with tongs; cast them into privies; their bones were broken, and they were cast into clefts of rocks; their heads were bruised so much till the brain ran down upon the earth; cut off their sinews and veins, then thrust them down precipices; they were first severely tortured, butchered like swine and then cast into the sea; their abdomen cut open and barley strewn in, and in this condition left to be devoured by hogs; yea, some of the tyrants, for fierce anger ate pieces of their livers; they watched day and night, lest their remains would be taken and buried!

Although in the time of his ministry he made the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the leprous clean, the palsied and feeble, sound, cast out devils, restored the dead, twice he fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, and showed to them the works and service of pure love, and although none could rebuke him in his word or his life, yet, their blood-thirsty, envious hearts were so enraged at him, that they desired that the wicked murderer, Barabbas, who was sentenced to death by the law, should live, and that the eternal Life himself, the Creator and Upholder of all creatures, should die. His pure, heavenly body, the seat of all virtue, is scourged and abused, the glorious countenance and head of all honor is disfigured with blood, spit and thorns. They also mocked him with a ludicrous garment, so that even the heathen judge, Pilate, pitying, said, "Behold the man!" Yea, worthy brethren, it avails nothing, no pain, torture, nor misery was enough; they would not be satisfied, till he was taken away and condemned to the most shameful death, extended upon the cross, his hands and feet nailed

They were smeared over with honey and lard, and suspended in baskets in the air for the flies, wasps and bees to eat; women and virgins were stripped stark naked, and while thus exposed, suspended by one leg, forcing the head down and leaving them in this position for one day; they cut off their breasts, horrible! horrible to relate!! melted lead they poured into their secrets; forced red hot spears in! applied red hot iron; sturdy trees they bent down and tied each leg fast to a tree, and then let them spring up again, and thus tore the women; took sharp splinters of pine wood, forced them under the nails of their hands, and then set them on fire; melted lead they poured down their backs. Twenty sharp pointed pieces were forced under the nails of one Benjamin, of Persia; this was not enough; they forced a sharp rugged tube into his urethra—and this was repeatedly done; after this a rod full of thorns was taken and forced into his posterior, till the valiant man gave up the ghost. It is impossible, nay, incredible, with a few words to describe the unheard of cruelties and tortures which were practiced; besides these, other modes of torturing were invented, and he that succeeded in inventing the most cruel mode was highly honored. The number that were slain like beasts, was so great that even the executioners became fatigued and their swords became dull.

"One king in Persia, as history relates, had sixteen thousand slain. But the more the christians were opposed the more their numbers increased, so powerfully did Christ reign in them, that the heathen themselves said, *The christian blood is a true seed, &c.*"

to the wood, and his side pierced with a spear. He was crucified as a prince and leader of the vicious, and reckoned among murderers. Thus they requited him for his incomprehensibly great love and beneficence, and in his great, bitter thirst, in the last hour of his sufferings, he could not obtain a drop of water, but they gave him vinegar and gall. In short, they treated him so that he cried, while extended upon the cross, with a loud voice to his Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He also laments through the prophet, "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people." He might well sigh and lament with Jeremiah or Jerusalem, and say, "All ye who pass, behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Thus he, who was eternally rich, for our sakes became poor; the eternal Glory was dishonored, eternal Righteousness, persecuted, eternal Truth, blasphemed, eternal Happiness, rejected, eternal Blessing, cursed, and the eternal Life was made to suffer a shameful death.

Most beloved brethren in the Lord, observe well, if the laborers have not spared their Lord's Son, but have cast him out of the vineyard and have slain him, how much more shall they destroy the servants. "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Matt. 10: 25. Christ said, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." And further, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you," for the disciple is not greater than his master, nor the servant than his lord; but it is enough for the disciple to be like his master, and the servant to be like his lord; and other like passages may be found in Scripture.

I hope, worthy brethren, that from these examples, the pious may have learned and fully understood, what kind of a people it always has been, from what father they are born, and by what spirit they are moved, who from the beginning till the present day, have rejected and persecuted Christ, the lovely, peaceful, innocent and obedient Lamb and his saints; who have plundered, belied, imprisoned, tortured, crucified, stoned, beheaded, drowned, roasted, strangled, slain

and murdered them; and, according to my understanding of the word of the Lord, this tyranny shall not cease till the rejected, murdered and crucified Christ Jesus, and all his saints shall appear in the clouds as an almighty Potentate, Conqueror and glorious King, before all the tribes and people, at the last judgment.

Inasmuch as the fearful tyranny of this blind world, always has been and is yet practiced upon the children of God, and as said, will probably always be practiced; and since, no other way leads, nor can lead through the narrow door to life, than this only, stony and thorny way of the cross (I mean according to the flesh; for according to the spirit it is broad and easy), as the Scriptures testify; therefore, have your feet shod with the gospel of peace, with the precious promises of God, with the pure knowledge of Christ, with the denial of yourselves, with the patience and faith of the saints and with the sure hope of the kingdom of God; that the hard stones and the sharp, stinging thorns of persecution, through which all the pious are tempted, do not terrify you and lead you upon the broad, easy way of the flesh. Lay aside all obstacles and besetting sins, the cursed works of darkness, avarice, unnecessary cares, love of home, goods, gold, silver, pomp and splendor; all things which are perishable, drunkenness, superfluity, idolatry, vanity, carnal and improper words, and all manner of wickedness, that you may not be overcome and thus led off the only, narrow high-way, upon crooked and dark by-ways. As, alas, may be frequently seen in our days.

Therefore, my dear brethren and sisters in the Lord, take the crucified Jesus as your example, and also all the righteous apostles and prophets of God, and learn through them, how they all entered at this strait gate and forsook their all. They prepared their hearts and were endued and drawn of God, that they knew, sought, loved and desired nothing else than eternal, heavenly blessings, the unchangeable things, God and eternal life. Thus they were grounded in ardent love, and became firm and immovable, so that they could not be affrighted from the love of Christ, neither by life nor death, angel, prince, potentate, hunger,

sword, martyrdom, pain nor ease. Their thoughts, words, acts, sufferings, life and death, were Christ's. They sought not their kingdom and rest upon earth, for they were spiritually, heavenly-minded. All their fruit was righteousness, light and truth. Their whole lives were pure love, chastity, humility, obedience and peace. The perishable, wicked world with all its evil works, was to them an offence and abomination. They loved their God with all their soul, and therefore, they rebuked all that was against his holy will, honor and word. They loved their neighbors as themselves, and therefore, they admonished and rebuked them in love, served them, pointed out and taught them God's pure will, word and truth, and sought their salvation with all their power, with great loss of life, goods and reputation, therefore has the foolish, envious, unthankful world, which swims in blood, so grievously hated, persecuted and rewarded them with death.

My dear brethren, it was not only the prophets, apostles and those of former times, to whom those things happened, which the Scriptures relate, but we have in these times witnessed the like with our own eyes. How many pious children of God have we known in the space of a few years, and we yet know some, the Lord be praised, who sought Jesus Christ and the eternal, unchangeable life, and continue so to seek, who fear God from their inmost soul, whose hearts burn with the word and love of the Lord, out of their mouths flowed power, spirit and wisdom. Their whole life was repentance and piety, they hated, shunned and rebuked all ungodliness. None could reprove their conduct with the word of God; they were opposed to the idle, fleshly, ungodly life of this world, as they yet are, and by the grace of God will continue to be. They listen not to the deceiving prophets, confide not their precious souls to the care of the spiritual thieves and murderers, neither serve nor honor wooden, stone and silver gods, and do not use the unscriptural, earthly sacraments, &c. In short, because they heard, believed, feared, served and loved the true and living God, therefore, did the lying serpent open its mouth and spew out so many false, slanderous, yea, inhuman

lies, into the face of the pious, and has, from the seat of its pestilences, defamed and depicted them in such horrible colors and shape, through their blind disciples, that they have become the curse and offense of the whole world; that all the people close their mouths and noses, and flee from them in horror; yes, every one, who can slander and defame the poor, god-fearing christians, is the favorite preacher and esteemed teacher of the world.

No lie is so gross and disgraceful, that they dare not bring it against the godly. At one time they accuse and upbraid us, as though we wished to invade cities and countries; they say, That we will injure the whole world; now we are adulterers, again, thieves and murderers; now, we say there is no repentance left to the sinner; again, we have rejected Christ and the Testament. In short, whosoever does not defame and upbraid the godly, is not considered by the world as a christian! O Lord, how pure and free are all the saints in heart and conscience before God, from all these and such like lies and slanders.

All these unchristian, infernal lies are not enough for the world, but they who know Christ, and would gladly live after his word, must endure something harder; they must meet with severer persecution, as we may witness with our own eyes, for how many pious children of God, have they within a few years deprived of their homes and possessions, for the testimony of God and their conscience sake; how many have they betrayed, driven out of city and country, and put them to the stocks and torture; the poor orphans and children are left naked in the streets; some they have hanged, some they punished with inhuman tyranny, afterwards choked them with cords on stocks and pillars; some they roasted and burned alive; some with their own reeking bowels in their hands, powerfully confessed the word of God; some they slew with the sword and gave them as food to the fowls of the air; some they cast to the wild beasts, some have their houses torn down, some have been cast into the muddy bogs, some have had their feet cut off, one of whom I have seen and conversed with: others wander about here and there, in hunger, affliction, mountains,

deserts, holes and caves of the earth, as Paul says. They must fly with their wives and little children, from one country to another, from one city to another. They are hated, abused, slandered and belied by all men, and spoken against in the pulpit and the councils; they have deprived them of food, driven them forth in the cold winter, and point at them with the finger of scorn, yea, whoever can wrong a poor, oppressed christian, supposes he has done God some service, as Christ says in John 16: 2.

Observe, dear brethren, how far the whole world is from God and his word, how swift their feet are to shed blood, how maliciously they hate the light, and how bitterly they persecute, defame and destroy the eternal, saving truth, the immaculate gospel of Jesus Christ, the pious, godly life of the saints. This is not only done by the papists and Turks, but also by those who boast of the holy word; who at first preached much concerning faith, that it was the gift of God, and that it must not be forced with the iron sword, but with the word, into the hearts of men, for it is a willing assent of the heart.

But the learned, within the last few years, have suppressed this doctrine, and as it appears to me, have effaced it from their books, for lately they draw unto their carnal doctrine, lords, princes, cities and countries; they preach the contrary from that which they did formerly, as is evident from their writings. By their seditious writings and preachings they deliver into the hands of executioners, many pious hearts, who gainsay, reprove and admonish them, by the clear word of God, and point out to them the true ground of the gospel, which is powerful, active faith, which works by love, a penitent, new life, obedience to God and Christ, and the true, evangelical ordinances of baptism, Lord's Supper and *Separation*, as Christ himself instituted and commanded, and his holy apostles practiced and taught.

Yea, all who do this out of pure love, must be accursed as anabaptists, factionists, deceivers and heretics, all the pious may expect this, nevertheless all of them, lords, princes, preachers, scribes and common people, be they Papists, Lutherans, or Zuinglians, wish to be called the christian

community and holy church; and never take notice of their ungodly, impure and impenitent lives, that they are altogether earthly, carnal, and contrary to the word of God. There are some, whose hands are stained and reeking with the blood of christians, and all their doings are diametrically opposed to the Spirit, word, and example of Christ. O! that these poor, blind, hardened ones would lay this well to heart, and examine well the nature and spirit of true christianity. They would be ashamed before God, and sincerely lament that they so miserably abuse his glorious name, blessed word, divine grace, and his crimson, precious blood, of which they vainly boast, and thus make the name of Christ as a cover to all their wickedness and disgrace.

For a truly believing christian is one that is born of God according to the Spirit, has become a new creature in Christ, crucified his flesh with its lusts, and hates all ungodliness and sin. All his fruits are righteousness, patience, truth, obedience, humility, chastity, love, and peace; he is influenced by the Spirit of the Lord, and his delight is in his law; he meditates thereon by day and by night, all his words are seasoned by grace, he sincerely strives for the life which is from God, and fears him with all his soul. In short, according to the grace received, he is of one mind with Christ.

Could these miserable people only see that a christian is thus minded, as related, that he is such an amiable and peaceable creature and child of God; and if they had the grace, they also would be thus minded. If they were christians as they boast, they would then hate none, but would be hated, would belie none, but would be belied, would prejudge none, but be prejudged, would betray none, but be betrayed, would rob none, but be robbed, would not murder, but be murdered, would not devour the lamb, but be torn of wolves, not ensnare the dove, but be taken by the falconer and devoured.

If our persecutors are christians, as they imagine, Why are they then not of God and born of his word? Why are they yet the old, accursed creature, and live according to the lusts of the flesh? Why are they influenced by the spirit of the devil? Why

have they fixed their thoughts and affections upon perishable and temporal things, and are concerned therewith day and night? Why are they guilty of talking of all manner of unchastity, vanity, lying, cursing and swearing? Why do they not fear God and his word? Why are they like the old, deceitful serpent, and obedient to him? Why are they still like terrible, ravenous beasts and birds of prey, instead of innocent lambs and doves, as the Scriptures teach?

Ah! dear brethren, let them boast as they will, Christ Jesus does not know such wicked and blood-thirsty christians. He only knows those having his Spirit, who sincerely believe and are obedient to him; are flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone; are meek, humble, pious, holy and pure of heart; confess Christ Jesus in word and deed before this wicked world; deny themselves and take up the cross and follow him, and say with holy Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" They glory in nothing but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which they are dead to the world and the world unto them. All who are thus minded, are the anointed of God, saints and christians, and not the impenitent, carnal, blood-thirsty boasters. Every one may be mindful that this is true, else the whole Scriptures are false.

It appears to me, dear brethren, that the pious reader may fully understand from what has been said, what kind of people these are, who so shamefully tread you with their feet; strike, belie, and deprive you of life and property, and also the reason why they do so, namely, on account of your infallible testimony of God and your consciences. Even as all from the beginning, who sought, feared and loved God, walked according to his divine word and will, reprov'd and admonish'd the confused and erring world, for their good, and were ever considered as off-scourings and heretics.

We will now proceed in the name of the Lord, and show with few words, what a feeble and unbecoming excuse our persecutors advance, which before God is as stubble and sulphur before fire, whereby they think to excuse themselves, that they are doing right to slander and molest the pious;

all sinners seek some excuse, and no matter how disgracefully soever any one conducts himself, he wishes not to be considered as wicked, but as a righteous, pious and true christian!

In the first place, our persecutors accuse us as seditious, even as those of Munster are, and that we are not obedient to the magistracy.

To which we reply, in the first place: That the Munsterites were seditious, and in many things acted contrary to the word of God. But we do not agree with them. We are wholly opposed to these seditious abominations, such as resisting the king, seeking earthly power, taking up the sword, polygamy, acting the hypocrite with the world and the like guilt and disapprove of them; we neither eat, drink, nor have any communion with those who do such things, according to the doctrine of Christ and Paul, unless they renounce their errors and become sound in the saving doctrine of Christ.

As the Papists and Lutherans are not a little divided, so we are more divided in our views, from the Munsterites and other sects which sprang from them. That this is the truth, we have shown by our writings, life, and oral testimony, before lords, princes and the whole world; and it has been testified by the blood of many pious christians, which flowed like water, in many countries, for many years, to the present time.

But we cannot help that the world will not believe this. Nevertheless, we testify that our hearts and consciences are pure and free before God, of all sedition, hatred, vengeance and thirst for blood; and we strive earnestly to live as much as possible, in peace with all men, according to the doctrine of Paul, and if it be not possible for us to keep peace with them, still we do not desire to avenge ourselves, but we will commit it to him, who says, "To me belongeth vengeance and recompense," Deut. 32: 35. And we commit to him alone all our concerns, as Jeremiah and all the pious did from the beginning.

In the second place, we reply: Why do they so indiscreetly accuse us of such sedition, since we are wholly innocent and clear, and since they pay no attention to their own bloody, murdering uproar, which they, alas!

commit without bounds? O Lord! how many principalities, cities and countries, have they destroyed, how many houses have they fired, how many hundred thousand have they murdered, how many poor peasants, who were peaceable, and innocent of sedition, have they robbed of their possessions and destroyed their goods? How many women and virgins have they disgraced? What brutal and inhuman tyranny did they commit and continue daily to practice? all this they do not notice, yea, it must be said, all is right and well done. Ah! how well does this accord with the doctrine, nature and Spirit of Christ, or with the disposition of innocent children, whom christians must resemble, in malice, or with defenceless lambs and innocent doves, to which the Scriptures direct us. If the temporal magistracy have not the disposition and Spirit of Christ, then all must acknowledge that they are not christians.

I am well aware, that these tyrants, who boast themselves christians, justify their abominable warring, uproar and shedding of blood, by referring us to Moses, Joshua, &c., but do not reflect that Moses and his successors, with their iron sword, have served their day, and that Christ has *now* given us a new command *and* another sword. I do not speak of the sword of the judge, for that is quite different; but I speak respecting war and sedition. They do not reflect, that they bear the sword of war, contrary to the gospel, against their own brethren, namely, their brethren in the faith, who have received the same baptism, and have broken the same bread with them, and are thus members of the same body. Again, what a strange, bloody uproar the Lutherans have made for several years, to introduce their doctrine, I will leave to them to reflect upon; yet have we, although innocently, to be called the seditious heretics and they, the pious, peaceable christians! Behold, thus lamentably is their understanding of this world darkened. Well then, let them deal with us as they think proper, the merciful, gracious Father will preserve us from such abominable disturbances as the Munsterites have caused, and which, alas! are yet in vogue among the supposed christians; for we have, by the manifest grace of God, beat-

en our "swords into plough shares, and our spears into pruning hooks;" and we shall sit under the true Vine, Christ, under the Prince of eternal peace, and will never take part in bloody wars.

In the third place, we reply: That we know and use no other sword than that which Christ himself brought down from heaven, and which the apostles used with power and Spirit; which proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, the sword of the Spirit, which is "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing assunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." With this sword and no other, we desire to destroy the kingdom of the devil, reprove all wickedness, preach righteousness, raise the father against the son, the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, &c. In such a way, even as Jesus Christ, the holy apostles and the prophets did in this world. I do not here mean the prophets, Elias and Samuel, understand me rightly, who also used the sword; but I mean the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zecharias, Amos, &c., who only improved with doctrine, and not otherwise.

That is the sword we bear; and we will lay it down for none, neither for emperor, king, nor other authorities. Peter says, "We ought to obey God rather than men." We must serve, to his praise, him who committed us, whether we chance to live or die, as it may please God.

That the world is now ascribing to us this uproar as a reward for the pure love which we have manifested toward them, we must endure, as did our forefathers. "Art thou not he," said Ahab to Elijah, "that troubleth Israel?" The prophet answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house." Jeremiah, on account of his faithful warning and salutary admonition, was regarded by them as a mutineer, rebel and heretic; Christ Jesus was crucified; Paul and the apostles were cast into prison as deceivers and rebellious, and finally had to suffer martyrdom. If the world could pass a true sentence, they would well perceive, that Christ and his followers were not tumultuous towards the world, but the world

towards them; and also, that we do not rise against any one, but that the whole world are in uproar, tyranny and raving against us, as may be seen.

Again, that we are opposed to the magistracy in the things to which they are ordained of God, is not true; understand me, in lawful things, such as giving toll, tribute, paying taxes, &c. But that they are to rule and lord over our consciences, contrary to the Spirit of Christ, as they please, to this we do not consent, but we will sacrifice possessions and life, rather than knowingly sin against Jesus Christ and his holy word, for any man's sake, whether he be emperor or king.

That we are right in this respect, the Scriptures abundantly testify; and therefore, with pious Susanna, we wish rather to obey God than man, and thus fall into the hands of men, rather than into the hands of God. May the gracious Father, through his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, grant to this deaf, blind world, ears to hear, and eyes to see, that they may be converted and be eternally saved.

In the second place we are, without cause, maliciously accused that we are stubborn, selfish and unconverted persons, who will by no means suffer ourselves to be taught or instructed.

To which we reply, first: If this accusation even were true, it is still very unbecoming for our persecutors to exterminate or harm us, because they would be, or boast themselves christians, for the punishment of the wicked will be eternal, as the Scriptures testify.

All men, says Paul, have not faith, but it is a gift of God. Now if it is a gift, it may not be enforced by worldly power, nor sword, but it must by means of the pure doctrine of the holy word, in conjunction with the ardent prayer of humility, be apprehended, by the grace of God, through the influence of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, it is not the will of the Householder, that the tares be rooted up, until the time of harvest; as is clearly evinced in the Scriptural parable.

Now, if our persecutors were christians, as they suppose, and if they considered the word of the Lord as true, Why do they not

hear and follow the word and commandment of Christ? Why do they root up the tares before the time? Why are they not afraid, lest they root up the good wheat, and not the tares? Why do they arrogate to themselves the duty of the angels, who, at the proper time, shall bind the tares in bundles, and cast them into the furnace of everlasting fire?

Since, by our belief or unbelief, unbelief it must ever be, if their assertions are true, we injure no man upon earth; therefore, justice demands that they should commit us with our belief or unbelief to the Lord alone, and his judgment, who, in the fullness of time, will judge all things in righteousness, and that they should not, like savage pagans, pursue us with the sword of destruction. The true disposition of a pious and sincere christian, is to lead poor, wandering sinners to repentance, and not to destroy them, as these men do. In regard to all those who evince a contrary spirit, it is an easy matter for any intelligent christian, to show from the Scriptures of what father they are children.

Again, we reply: That we are prepared, in every way, even unto death, for the reception of all sound doctrine, admonition, instruction, and chastening, in righteousness; we spare no labor, pains, nor expense, if we can only obtain faithful stewards to dispense bread to us in proper season; for our souls hunger after the living bread, and our spirits thirst for the living water. All who are rightly qualified to break the former, and pour out the latter, we desire to hear with devotedness of heart, and to live in obedience to their doctrine.

But we will have nothing to do with the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the lies and deceivings of false prophets, the stealing and outrages of thieves and murderers, let what may happen by divine permission. Thank God, we have tasted the heavenly bread, hence, we have become heartily tired of the leaven and husks of the learned; we have drank the pure water, the impure we leave for them; we have received the truth and rejected lies; the light hath shined upon us, there is no more place for darkness. In short, we have found Christ, the true Messiah, his saving word, his pure or-

dinance, and his holy, and unblamable life, according to the gift of grace within us, and as a consequence, have turned away from anti-christ, with the confident hope, that we will never more observe, or make use of his ordinance of infant baptism, and idolatrous supper, nor ever be reconciled to his odious, carnal, ungodly life.

If in this matter we do wrong, and transgress in the presence of God and his church, as they imagine, then the fathers and the Scriptures must have miserably betrayed us. But no; the word of God is truth, and the truth shall abide forever, even though the whole world be offended.

And because we dare not again take part in their false doctrine, pretended sacraments, idolatry, false worship, and in their shameful, wicked, and ungodly life; because by the Spirit of God, the evidence of the Scriptures, and by the witness of our own consciences we have turned away from such; therefore, must we be called stubborn, selfish, obstinate, and, alas! must be to all men heretics, spoils and derision.

I hope, beloved brethren, that such absurd accusations may never dismay the hearts of the pious, nor render them faint, inasmuch as they are entirely destitute of foundation; whilst we, on the contrary, have the whole Scripture, together with prophets, apostles, saints, nay, Christ Jesus himself; all of whom in truth and righteousness, remained steadfast and immovable, even unto death, in their opposition to all false doctrine, torture and tyranny, and did not, in a single point, agree with their ungodly deeds or consent to them, neither in heart, speech, nor behavior.

Ought we then to reject the heavenly light, and embrace the darkness of condemnation? Forsake eternal truth, and everlasting life? Follow after lies, and pursue death, for the sake of a little perishable wealth, and the enjoyment of temporal life for half an hour? If so, it would be better for us that we had never been born. From a contingency so dreadful, it is our firm hope, that God, by his boundless love, will ever preserve and protect us.

In the third place we answer: That we sincerely detest and abhor such teaching and conversion, as our persecutors would

make use of, in order to instruct and convert us; for their end is death, according to the testimony of the whole Scriptures; the reason is, that their doctrine is false and deceptive, their sacraments are idolatrous, and contrary to the word of God; their worship is sheer idolatry, and their whole life is earthly, carnal, and contrary to the word of God; as may be seen, James 3: 15, yea, they are a people of whom we may justly testify as they do of us, namely, This is a stiff-necked, seditious, unconverted people, whose hearts are harder than diamond, a people who know not their God, as the prophet speaks of Israel, saying, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider," Isa. 1: 3.

Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. "They hold fast deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle; yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord," Jer. 8: 5—7. And more passages of a similar nature.

Like John the Baptist, one might well rebuke them, and say, Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and say not that you are christians, as the Pharisees said they had Abraham for their father; for such perverse, carnal christians, God knoweth not. The axe is laid unto the root of the tree, therefore, every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Paul says, Neither drunkards, covetous, envious, proud, idolaters, adulterers nor fornicators shall inherit the kingdom of God; hence, in the spirit of commiseration, we may aptly say to our persecutors, who are still such, Reform, for alas! lords, princes, rulers, learned, unlearned, citizens, countrymen, man and woman, all, on every hand, have become degenerate, walking in the ac-

cursed fruits of profanity and ungodliness; they reject God and his word; they grieve the Holy Spirit; they persecute the righteous and pious; the fear and love of God are an abomination to them; yet to such as walk in the way of truth, die unto flesh and blood, are heavenly and spiritually minded, with sincerity of heart seek Christ Jesus and the imperishable everlasting life; they say, Reform, be instructed, and use similar expressions, just as if we had the lies, and they the truth; although according to the gift imparted to us, we love and seek the Lord sincerely; but what they do, I leave to any intelligent christian to decide.

Moreover, even they themselves demonstrate, that the fruits and ardent charity of our members far exceed that of theirs, nevertheless, we have to be looked upon, as deceived, selfish, obstinate, and unconverted heretics, while they consider themselves the real, spiritually anointed christians, the truly legitimate children of God.

Now, dear brethren, judge by this how puerile and nonsensical is the excuse of the world, with regard to their tyrannical proceedings, and how indiscreetly and childishly, we are accused by them. O! it is our heart's desire, that all our persecutors may receive grace unto repentance from the Lord; for it is high time that they awake, and turn unto him.

Again, our persecutors bring in an excuse, saying it is right that we should be persecuted, for by us many men are deplorably misled, and brought to destruction.

To this we reply: That if the case is examined, and sentence passed upon it, according to the flesh, it does appear that many are miserably deceived by us, for all those who follow our doctrine, faith, life, and confession, in obedience and power, must bring into jeopardy all which they have received from God; character, reputation, land, house, gold, silver, father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, yea, life itself. The finger of scorn will generally be pointed at them; they shall be trampled under foot, hated of all men, slandered and calumniated, betrayed, and delivered up unto death; galleys, racks, offensive pools, stocks and swords, as also hunger, thirst, want, toil,

affliction, distress, anxiety, nakedness, sorrow, buffeting, bonds and imprisonment, must be their portion and recompense here upon earth; no man may administer unto, or befriend them, but at the risk of person and property; the father may not receive and assist the son, nor the son the father. In short, they are looked upon by the world as unworthy of heaven, or earth; moreover, they show all pomp, splendor, gluttony, intoxication, carnal life, &c., which the world delight in, and make use of, as much as their means will allow; besides they teach humility, soberness, and an humble, despised life, in the fear of the Lord, which the world hates and rejects. It is, therefore, no wonder, in my opinion, that the erring, blind world who neither have the Holy Spirit nor know it, as Christ says, who seek, understand, and judge earthly things alone, should regard, consider, and detest such a life, as the result of imposture and deception.

But those, who are taught of God, who have risen with Christ to newness of life, are made partakers of the Holy Spirit, are spiritually-minded, look upon, and judge all things by the Spirit, they do not consider it as imposture and deception, but esteem it above all gold, silver, knowledge, wisdom, riches, honor, parade, ostentation; nay, above all that is named under heaven; for they know from their hearts, that this is the only doctrine that leadeth to immortality and eternal life; they look not at the things which are transitory, but at things which are imperishable. They provide and prepare a treasure and inheritance that abideth in heaven, but earthly treasure they esteem not; seek the wisdom which is eternal, being therefore regarded by the whole world as fools; adorn themselves with the inner garment of righteousness, despising the outer moth-eaten garment of pride; strive for that kingdom and crown of glory which will abide forever, and the earthly kingdom with its glory, they leave to such as take delight in them.

Hence, dearly beloved, it is absolutely necessary to judge all things spiritually; for the world is come to such a state that the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ and his Holy apostles, is esteemed heresy; to preach

Christ Jesus, his Spirit and life, his unadulterated word, will and ordinance, and to turn the people from ungodliness to piety, is considered as imposition and deception. Behold, how blind and ignorant, in divine things, are our persecutors who so miserably oppress, persecute and destroy us for the sake of the truth. Yea, my brethren, here is the patience, and faith of the saints; all, who in their hearts experience this (as here related), will possess their souls in patience, let the opposition be ever so great, and will pray for their enemies with all the ardor of the power that is in them.

In the fourth place, our persecutors accuse us with great bitterness, because we separate ourselves from their doctrine, sacraments, church service, and from a carnal life, and in such things we dare have nothing to do with them; they say that, in this thing, we condemn them, and banish them to hell.

To this we reply, in the first place: The reason why we can never, by word or deed, consent to their preachers, sacraments, church service, and impure, carnal life nor allow them, is that they are openly opposed to God and his word; the preachers serve when they are not sent; their doctrine is false, deceptive and contrary to the saving doctrine of truth; their life is in every respect, blamable; they preach for filthy lucre's sake; they act the hypocrite for the world, to flatter the desires thereof; the foundation of their faith and religion, is emperor, king, prince and potentate; what they command, they teach; and what they forbid, that they leave untouched. Their infant baptism is unfounded in Scripture; their supper is idolatrous and impure, and by the impure, administered and received; their church-service is contrary to the doctrine of the apostles; and for the most part so carnal and ungodly is the ordinary tenor of their life, that every child of God must be exceedingly amazed and astonished at it.

Seeing then that their doctrine, sacrament, church service and life, are in fact, so palpably opposed to the word of God, how could we again intermingle and enter into familiarity with them in such heinous abominations? That we separate ourselves from them, is the express word and will of God.

For, says Paul, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. 6: 14—18.

These words of Paul are plain and intelligible, and it is, therefore, utterly impossible, that those who have, through the beneficence of God, received from on high, the true Light, Christ Jesus, unfeigned righteousness, pure, effective faith, have become a fit and worthy temple of the Lord, are under the influence of the Holy Spirit, are chosen and adopted as the children of God, that such should again have fellowship with darkness, Belial, unrighteousness, infidels and idolaters; for while you, through the grace of God, are convinced that their doctrine, sacraments, church-service and life, are fundamentally false, if you have a true zeal for God; count all things but dross, that with Paul, you may win Christ, according to Scripture; abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good; have washed your robes in the blood of the Lamb, and have conformed in all your thoughts, words and actions, to the touchstone of the holy word, and example of Christ, how then can you again have communion with them, and say amen to their abominations? We cannot serve two masters at once: we cannot at the same time hold communion with Christ, and the devil; we cannot be the children and servants of God, and also of satan; if we love that which is good, we must abhor that which is evil; if we embrace the truth, we must forsake lies; and such passages and Scriptures there are many.

Now, forasmuch as we thus separate ourselves from them, and testify by word and deed, even unto death, that their works are

evil; therefore they are filled with the most inhuman rancor and indignation, and say from the heart, as all the ungodly have done from the beginning, "Let us lie in wait for the righteous; because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doings; he upbraideth us with our offending the law, and objecteth to our infamy, the transgressions of our education," &c. He exposeth our secret designs and cunning devices. "He is grievous unto us even to behold; for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion. We are esteemed of him as counterfeits; he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness; he pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed." "Let us condemn him with a shameful death," Wis. 2: 12, 15, 16, 20.

Here, my dearly beloved brethren, the Holy Spirit has given a faithful delineation of our persecutors; for our actual confession, that is to say, our separation from them is the sole reason why the blind, blood-thirsty world, frantic with rage, tyrannizes over us with so much cruelty; and why we must bear and suffer so much; as Peter also says. They think it more strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. Nay, for this reason, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, Daniel, Eleazar, the mother with the seven sons, Christ Jesus and all the pious had to die and bear the cross; because they earnestly reprov'd the world in its doctrine, ceremonies and conduct, and opposed them unto death.

This is, even unto this day, the only and principal reason, and in reality there is no other, notwithstanding our persecutors allege many, as we have shown, why we must be considered by the world as anabaptists, heretics, knaves, deceivers and movers of sedition, and be regarded as fit subjects for persecution. But, thank God, we know the reason of our suffering; we know also that he who called us to this grace, and in whom we put our trust, will successfully plead our cause, and will faithfully stand by and deliver his poor, oppressed children, in every time of need, to the advancement of his eternal praise and everlasting glory.

Although our persecutors assert that our

separation from them is the result of pure obstinacy and caprice, yet their declaration is false and unjust, in the presence of God who knoweth the hearts of all men; because our separation has no other foundation nor design than this, that we desired, in our weakness, to observe with all our heart the word of God, and keep his commandments; and that we might, in real charity, and in fact, show to the whole world that they lie in wickedness, and are strangers to God and his word, to the end that they may, in due time, awake and turn from iniquity. For how can they in truth, teach others generosity, chastity, humility, and every virtue, if they themselves are abandoned to avarice, lewdness and pride, and addicted to every vice? It would be the height of folly for a person to point out the right way to others, warning them of robbers and murderers, while he would take a winding, unfrequented road and voluntarily offer himself an easy prey to thieves and robbers. My brethren may reflect upon what I mean.

It is not sufficient for a sincere christian merely to speak the truth; but he must also demonstrate in power and in deed, that which he speaks, conforming himself thereunto, or he shall hear, with the Pharisees. You say, and do not; and also as Paul, in writing to the Romans, says of the Jews, "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonorest thou God?" Rom. 2: 21—23.

In short, a christian teaches and acts; professes and practices; believes and obeys; directs and advances; his heart, word and deed are in unison; if not he is a hypocrite, and no christian; as, alas! there are numbers in our day, who boast highly of knowledge and wisdom, though in power they are vain and unfruitful.

Again, we reply: That our persecutors do violently and unjustly accuse us of condemning them to hell. Ah no! far be it from us to condemn any man under heaven before his time, let him be ever so wicked. For we are well aware that the Scriptures say,

“Condemn not, and ye shall be not condemned.” There is one who, in the fullness of time, will judge every man according to his works, namely, he to whom the Father has committed all judgment; whosoever usurps his judgment shall not go unpunished. Moreover, we know not the measure of grace the sinner may be made partaker of before death; therefore we are clear and innocent before God, of condemning others. Nevertheless, we are permitted to judge and speak by the word of God, as follows: If a miser does not abandon his avaricious principles; a whoremonger, his lewdness; a drunkard, his intoxication; an idolater, his worshipping of strange gods, and by a pious, penitent life, turn to the true and living God with sorrow and anguish of heart, in the operative faith of Jesus Christ, he is no christian, nor shall he inherit the kingdom of God; if sentence is thus passed, it is not we that judge, but the Scriptures; as Christ says, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day,” John 12: 48. We are well assured that God neither does, nor can save any man contrary to his word; for he is truth, and cannot lie. Where there is no faith, no newness of mind, there is no repentance, nor sorrow of heart, &c.; upon such, alas! Christ Jesus has already passed sentence, saying, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;” “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish,” and more similar expressions.

Brethren, we therefore judge no man with our word before the time, as you well know; but we commit that unto Jesus Christ and his word, who will judge them in due season; we do not condemn them by our separation, as they complain; but we teach and admonish them by word and work, with all diligence and fidelity, that they might cease from evil, follow that which is good, do righteousness, seek and fear God in a good conscience, lest they die in sin and unbelief, and abide forever the wrath and judgement of God. Nevertheless, the pure charity and faithful service of the pious are ascribed to bad motives, and construed to their disgrace.

In the fifth place, many cover their tyran-

ny and shedding of blood with a thin fig-leaf, and say, We judge you not, but the emperor's mandate judges you.

To this we reply: If our persecutors are christians, and have the knowledge of Christ, as they suppose, we earnestly desire in the spirit of humanity, for God's sake, that they would draw a comparison between the emperor and Christ, and observe with attention, whether the emperor and Christ are of one spirit; whether he walks as Christ taught his disciples; also, that they would compare the mandate of the emperor, with the gospel of Christ. If they discover that the emperor does not agree with Christ in spirit and life; and that his mandate, after which they frame their conduct, is contrary to the gospel, then they must acknowledge that the emperor is no christian, and that his mandate is proscribed and accursed in the presence of God.

It is the most lamentable blindness that they fear and honor the poor, earthly emperor more than Christ Jesus, and his blood-thirsty, malicious mandate, than the gospel of love. Yet they desire to be considered christians. O! that the emperor and his subjects were christians! This is our most earnest desire. Then would be spared a great deal of innocent blood, which is now spilled like water, contrary to all Scripture and charity.

Say now, all who are guilty of innocent blood, and who palliate your conduct with the mandate of the emperor, Where have you read a single passage in the whole life of Christ, which authorizes men to shed blood and punish with the sword for the sake of faith? Where have the apostles once taught or countenanced such a practice? Should not the cause of the Spirit (understand faith) be reserved unto the judgment of the Spirit? Why do you and the emperor place yourselves in God's stead, judging things which you understand not, neither are they commanded you? Do you not consider what befell Pharaoh, Antiochus, Herod, and many others, because they feared not the Most High, and vented their wrath against his people? Consider, O you tyrants and blood-thirsty! that the emperor is not the head of Christ, but that Christ is the head of the emperor; that the emperor shall

not judge and govern Christ, but Christ, the emperor. Dear men, how can you be so arrogant and so rebellious against him who created you? Do you consider the Scriptures as mockery and as destitute of truth? Or do you hope that your life will remain forever, and that it will never run out? Stand in awe of Him who locks up the heavens and the earth in the palm of his hand, who sends forth the lightning, gives wings to the tempest, and shakes the foundations of the mountains, who rules all things with the power of his word, at whose name every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and to whom every tongue shall confess that he is the Lord. As soon as he calls, you must appear at his tribunal (his summons is peremptory), no matter who you are, where you be, or what your pretensions; there will be no equivocation, no counsel, no excuse; when he calls, you must be there to give an account; you may be no longer steward; yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; though his throne is exalted unto heaven, and his dominion extends to the ends of the earth, yet in a short time, he shall be sought, and shall not be found.

Therefore, beloved brethren and children in the Lord, be of good cheer, and full of consolation in Christ Jesus; for all who persecute you shall be as grass; and all their power and glory as the flower of the field; therefore, be not afraid of perishable, mortal man, but fear the Lord who has chosen you; for all the children of men shall wither as the grass, vanish as the mist, and wax old as a garment; but you shall abide forever, as the Scripture testifies, and your souls shall enjoy everlasting life.

Yes, beloved brothers, the longed-for day of your visitation is at hand, in which you shall stand with great power against those who have afflicted you, and exacted your sweat and toil, nay, your blood and life; then shall all our persecutors be as ashes under the soles of our feet; and know, but too late, that emperor, king, duke, prince, crown, sceptre, majesty, power, sword and mandate, are but earth, dust, wind and smoke.

With this day, all afflicted and oppressed Christians, who now labor under the cross

of Christ, console themselves, in the firm hope of a future life, and commit all tyrants with their heathenish mandates unto God and his judgments; they remain firmly attached unto Christ Jesus and his holy word, and conform thereunto, their whole doctrine, faith, sacraments and life, never paying respect to any other doctrine or mandate; even as the Father commanded from heaven, and as Christ Jesus with his holy apostles taught in all clearness, leaving it as a legacy unto all pious, god-fearing children.

I suppose, beloved brethren, it is sufficiently evident that the apology of tyrants, in which they aver the justice and right of the outrageous murders, is perfectly futile and barbarous; and that their accusation against us has no foundation or truth; is diametrically opposed to Christ and his word, nay, contrary to the principles of love and equity. May the Father of mercies grant unto all, who suffer for his truth's sake, a sound understanding of his word and truth, and a freedom of mind in all temptations, Amen.

We will now, by the grace of God, show, in a few words, how greatly it serves for our good, that our flesh is afflicted and tempted with many crosses and tribulations here upon earth.

Beloved brethren, when we consider the weakness of our sinful nature, and how prone we all are to evil from our youth; that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing, and that we have drunk iniquity and ungodliness like water, as Eliphaz, the Temanite, said to Job. And have, at all times, although we seek and fear God, an affection for the things of time and sense. The gracious God and Father, who, through his eternal love, is always greatly concerned for his children, has prepared, and left in his house, an excellent remedy therefor, namely, the oppressive cross of Christ; so that we, who in unbounded mercy are received, through Christ Jesus, to the glory of the Father, believing in pureness of heart on Christ Jesus, and love him in our weakness, may, through the aforesaid cross, that is, through much affliction, oppression, anxiety, apprehension, bonds, robbery &c., forsake all the transitory delights and enjoyments of earth, die unto the world and the flesh,

love God alone, set our affection on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, as Peter also says, "Forasmuch, then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God," 1 Pet. 4: 1, 2.

It appears to me utterly impossible, beloved brethren, that they, who voluntarily submit to the word and will of God; who are willing and prepared to support the word in all things, on which account they are constantly persecuted, afflicted, slandered, imprisoned, robbed and put to death, should turn again and set their affection upon carnal pleasures, and the vain and sinful desires of the world. For, of what value are money and possessions to us, if we but believe, that we have in heaven a better treasure; that temporal riches can neither render us happy, nor afford us relief, and that we know not how soon they may be taken from us by robbers? Or, why should we gratify the lusts of the flesh, when we look for, and expect nothing else every instant, than to be apprehended by the officers, and be treated by the executioners after this manner; be racked, tortured, drowned, burned and assassinated? Moreover, how can the world afford us any enjoyment, seeing we are looked upon by the whole world as deceivers, heretics, scorners and fools?

Forasmuch as eternal Wisdom recognizes an extreme weakness, and since earthly ease, peace, and prosperity have so great a tendency to ruin and undo us before our God, and to render us careless, refractory, lukewarm and drowsy, he has appointed his cross as an awakening rod for the use of all his followers, by which, as a faithful Father, he restrains, awakes and excites the children of his love; as Solomon says, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction; for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth even as a father the son in whom he delighteth," Prov. 3: 11, 12. "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; For what son is he whom the father chasteneth

not. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then ye are bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness," Heb. 12: 7, 10.

Behold, brethren, these words of the apostle are, beyond measure, gracious, and replete with consolation unto all those who have to bear the cross of Christ; for as a well-disposed and faithful earthly father who loves his children, desiring to teach and instruct them that which is best, does sometimes, out of pure paternal love, sharply admonish, chasten and punish them with stripes, for the good of his dear children, not regarding the pain inflicted in the flesh, in order that they may not disregard their father's will, command and voice, but that they may gladly obey it and learn and practice modesty, piety and obedience; so does our heavenly Father oftentimes chasten his elect children with his paternal rod, that they may hear and obey him in his holy word, will and commandment; practice piety and every moral virtue; fear God with sincerity of heart; unite not, nor familiarize themselves with the world; live no longer unto flesh and blood; and hereby, as obedient and chastened children of God, be finally made partakers of the promised kingdom and inheritance.

But if they refuse the rod of chastisement, reject the cross of Christ, and become, in consequence of their Father's kind chastening, the longer, the more abandoned and refractory; despise their Father's will and word; deal and act according to their own inclination, then they must at last be cast off and be considered as infamous bastards, and not as legitimate children.

Therefore, holy brethren, refuse not the rod and correction of your kind Father, for its tendency is extremely beneficial, namely, that you lay aside every weight and the sins which so easily beset you, and in all things, without exception, fear, love, and obey your Father. Thus, is this rod of the cross

of Christ pure love and benevolence, and not indignation and wrath; as may be perceived and evinced by the Spirit of God, and not by the dictates of the flesh.

For a similar reason did God oftentimes permit his people, Israel, to be chastised by the Philistines, Assyrians, Chaldeans, &c., when they forgot and rebelled against their God, in order that by such scourges and punishments, they might again seek their God, hear his law, cease from evil, and act uprightly in all things. Notwithstanding, the paternal punishment was for the most part lost upon Israel, as the Prophet says. He hath often reprov'd, but what did it avail? The rod amendeth not the wicked children, saith the Lord God.

“Behold, famine and plague, tribulation and anguish, are sent as scourges for amendment. But for all these things they shall not turn from their wickedness, nor be always mindful of thy scourges,” 2 Esdras 16: 19, 20.

Again, “Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return,” Jer. 5: 3.

The above cited words of the prophet show plainly why the Israelites were so often punished and stricken of the Lord, namely, that they might turn themselves from iniquity. Yet all in vain, as the prophets lament and declare in the above words.

Beloved brethren, let this serve you as an admonition, that you be not like circumstanced with disobedient and hard-hearted Israel, but that you willingly submit yourselves to the chastening of your merciful Father, reflecting upon that which is written, “When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” 1 Cor. 11: 32.

Therefore, dearly beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, reject not the chastening and instruction of your affectionate Father, but receive, with abundant joy, the exhortation of his sincere affection, giving thanks, that through his paternal favor he has chosen you in Christ Jesus, as the children of his love, taught and called you by the word of his power, enlightened you with the Holy

Spirit, that through the salutary influence of the cross of Christ, you may restore to health your poor, weak, mortal flesh, which is subject to so many loathsome, infectious diseases of concupiscence, and wean it entirely from the pleasures and enjoyments of the world; that you may be made partakers of the cross of Christ, and rendered conformable unto his death, and, by this means, attain unto the resurrection of the dead; as Paul, in a certain place instructs, saying, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body,” 2 Cor. 4: 8, 10. But we who live, surrender ourselves daily unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Behold, for this reason, he teaches, admonishes, rebukes, threatens and chastises that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; die entirely unto the world, flesh and the devil; seek our treasure, portion and inheritance in heaven, alone Love and believe the true, living and eternal God, looking in patience for that blessed hope, and the glorions appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, serving him in righteousness and godliness all the days of our life.

And for the same reason James says, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing,” James 1: 2, 4, for as gold, in passing through the fire, is severed from the dross and becomes more and more refined, so the susceptible man of God is subdued, purified, and refined, in the fiery furnace of affliction, that he may enhance the everlasting praise and glory of Christ and the Father, and may out of a pure heart, without hinderance, fear, love, honor, thank, and serve the same eternal God.

And this is the word that is written in the

book of Wisdom, namely, "Having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them worthy for himself. As gold in the furnace hath he tried them, and received them as burnt offering. And in the time of their visitation, they shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks among the stubble. They shall judge the nations, and have dominion over the people, and their Lord shall reign forever," Wis. 3: 5, 8.

Beloved brethren, be you, therefore, full of consolation in the Lord, and bear willingly your tribulation as pious soldiers of Christ, that you may please him who hath called and chosen you as soldiers. Paul says, "If a man also strives for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." Conduct yourselves, therefore, valiantly in the strife, and you shall gain favor in the eyes of your King; but if you become intimidated, throw down your arms, and forsake the combat, you shall receive no crown; for Christ says, "He that endureth to the end, shall be saved."

I fear that some may be found among our young and inexperienced brethren, who suffer themselves to be perplexed by the fleeting thought. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? And why do the righteous suffer much tribulation? Yea, it appears in the eyes of the imprudent as if the ungodly were born to prosper; for they grow and increase like a blossoming branch. They marry and are given in marriage; they sow, plant, and gather the grain into barns; they hoard money in their chests; their dwellings are magnificent and filled with costly things; they deck themselves with gold and silver, with silk and velvet; they nourish their hearts as in a day of slaughter; their fields and meadows flourish luxuriantly; their cattle are healthy and prolific; their children are merry, gay and vigorous in their sight; they play upon the organ, the tambour, the viol and the lute; they sing and leap for joy, and say to their souls, Rejoice, and be gay while life endures.

Their preachers confirm and console them, and their worship is a pleasure exceeding all pleasures. In short, it would appear as if they were loved and blessed of God with a peculiar love, and that the righteous are

accursed and hated of God with a peculiar hatred; for they are like a slender shrub in a barren soil; like a poor affrighted owl that is persecuted by all other birds; like a pelican of the wilderness; and as a sparrow alone under the housetop, Ps. 102. All who look upon them, mock them; all who know them, despise them. There is no kingdom, principality, city, nor country, large enough to endure and tolerate a poor, rejected Christian. All who abuse, slander, and injure them, think they do God service.

Brethren, were we to speak, or judge after the manner of men, we would doubtless complain with holy Jeremiah, Jer. 12: 1, and say, "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet, let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?" Again, "Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devonreth the man that is more righteous than he?" Hab. 1: 13, and Esdras, Are they of Babylon better than they of Sion? Asaph's feet were almost gone, his steps had well nigh slipped, when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, and observed the opposition and tribulation of the righteous, Ps. 73.

I counsel and admonish all who have to contend with such thoughts, that they direct their hearts and eyes unto the word of the Lord, and observe with attention that which is written concerning the end and issue of both, and first of the ungodly. Job says 21: 13, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave." Again, "Fret not thyself," says David, Ps. 37: 1, 2, "because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb." Again, "If ye live after the flesh," says Paul, "ye shall die;" "To be carnally minded is death," and many similar passages.

But respecting the end of the righteous, it is written, "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction; but they are in

peace," Wis. 3: 1—3. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all," Ps. 34: 19. Again, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven," Matt. 5: 11, 12. Again, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God, to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," 2 Thes. 1: 6—10; yea, all who truly read, believe, and understand the Scriptures, and have a correct perception of the vast dissimilarity in end and issue of both, will not envy them their short-lived prosperity, joy, and felicity, but will, by the grace of God, be prepared for, and find consolation in their own cross, tribulation and affliction.

Moreover, brethren, we are well aware that the cross appears to the flesh as grievous, harsh, and severe, and is not, in this life, looked upon as productive of joy, but much rather of sorrow; yet, since it contains within itself, a source of profit and delight, in that it adds to the piety of the pious, separates them from the world and the flesh, makes them revere God and his word, as mentioned above; and that it is also the Father's holy will that by it the sincere be approved, and the pretender exposed in his hypocrisy; therefore, all the true children of God are prepared through love, to do the will of the Father, rejoicing in it; as Paul says, Gal. 6: 14, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Again, The apostles "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name," Acts 5: 41.

For, inasmuch as we well know that the

cross is a sting and vexation to our poor, weak flesh, as we may also find in the case of Job, Jeremiah, Elijah, and others; yea Jesus Christ himself, earnestly desired, that if it were possible, the cup might be removed from him, nay, in excess of agony he trembled, quaked, and sweat as it were great drops of blood, so that an angel appeared unto him from heaven strengthening him, therefore our best counsel is, that in faith and humility of heart, we fly for refuge to our God, as all sincere bearers of the cross have done from the beginning, and seek, in full confidence, his grace, aid, assistance and consolation; For whom does he forsake, that trusts in him? And who hath called upon him, that he did not hear? He is our God and Father, our Lord and King, our helper and protector, our strength and fortress, our consolation and refuge in the time of need; he is the horn of our salvation and our shadow at noonday. By my God, says David, have I leaped over a wall. If God is for us who can be against us? We can do all things through Christ, who strengthens us. To him commit thy cause; he worketh in his saints that which is pleasing in his sight. Some he has rescued from the hands of tyrants, some he has preserved in the midst of fire; for others he has stopped the mouths of fierce and ravening lions; he has released some from prison and confinement, others have trampled the fear of death under their feet, and through the strength of their faith, have triumphantly and victoriously conquered hunger, thirst, shame, derision, nakedness, stripes, imprisonment, anguish, and, in addition, the gallows, rack, massacre, torture, water, fire, life, death, &c.; for they were actuated by the constraining, effective influence of divine love, which converts the bitter into sweet, and the horrible into that which is greatly to be desired. "Love," says Solomon, "is strong as death;" many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; all who possess it, ought to say with Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay,

in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, &c., shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. 8: 35—39.

Therefore, beloved brethren, bearers of the cross of the Lord, acknowledge your God; fear, love, believe, confide, and serve him, and that in the fullness of pureness of heart, according to the example of all saints, and of Christ Jesus, and the Father of mercies and of truth, in the excellency of his love, will not forsake you; but will care for you as the apple of his eye, will faithfully support you, in every misfortune and extremity, will extend his hand, and guard and preserve you, in life or in death, as is pleasing in his sight, to the enhancement of his glory, and to the salvation of your own souls, for he is so kind and faithful, that he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to endure, but will in his boundless mercy graciously make a way for you to escape, if you only remain steadfast in the belief of his word, and consider him as your faithful Father.

Dear brethren, if in your trials and temptations, you exhibit such evidence as here related; drinking with patience the cup of the Lord; bearing witness of Christ Jesus and his holy, inestimable word, in action, and conversation; suffering yourselves, in perfect constancy, to be led as meek lambs to the slaughter, for his testimony's sake: then will the name of the Lord be sanctified, and exalted with praise and abundant glory; the hope of the righteous shall be revealed; the kingdom of heaven, spread abroad; the word of God acknowledged; and your poor, weak brethren and companions in the Lord, edified and confirmed by this your plain dealing.

Yea, my brethren, in the manner here related, we are informed and instructed, even unto this day, by the offering and blood of Abel; by the faith and obedience of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the chastity of Joseph; the patience of Job and Tobit; the excellent and manly confession of Eleazer; the mother and her seven sons; the candor, constancy, and piety of all the pious be-

fore us; the pure, unspotted love, humility, peace, righteousness, and voluntary offering of Jesus Christ, that according to the promise of God, he was sent from heaven, in everlasting love, by God our heavenly Father, and descended upon earth as an infallible teacher, and as an eternal example of all good.

My dearly beloved brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, dispersed abroad in every land, for whom, out of pure, christian love and duty, I have composed and written this exhortation: I will now draw to a conclusion, and I entreat you, in all humility, that you consider well, in the first place, the nature of the people who so malevolently persecute you, spoiling your property, and destroying your lives.

Secondly, why they persecute and injure you. Thirdly, that all saints, as also Christ Jesus himself, have suffered and all the pious must suffer persecution; as may be seen. Fourthly, how futile all their arguments are, with which they try to excuse themselves of their bloody deeds, accusing us, as though they did right, and we justly merited every kind of punishment and disgrace.

Fifthly, how profitable and advantageous to us the cross of Christ is, which, for the sake of the word of the Lord, we must take up and bear daily; how we should desire to hear, believe and obey Christ Jesus. Now, if you consider with discretion, according to the Scriptures, and reflect, in purity of heart, upon these five points, I have not the least doubt that this exercise will afford you invincible strength, and an invulnerable armor and shield against all tribulation, persecution and distress.

Finally, I beseech and exhort you to consider with earnest diligence that which is promised to all the conquering soldiers of Christ Jesus in the world to come, namely, the eternal, incorruptible kingdom, the crown of glory, and the life that will remain forever. Therefore, O thou people of God! equip thyself and make ready for battle, not with external weapons and armor, as the blood-thirsty barbarous world, but with the firmness of confidence, the tranquillity of patience, and the vehement ardor of prayer.

There is no alternative, the combat of the cross must be maintained, and the wine-press of affliction must be trodden. O thou bride and sister of Christ, prepare thyself; the thorny crown must pierce thy head; and the nails transfix thy hands and feet; thy person must be scourged, and thy face spit upon. Gird thyself round about, and be prepared; for thou must go forth with thy Lord and Bridegroom without the city, bearing his reproach. On Golgotha thou must offer up thy sacrifice. Awake and pray, for thine enemies are more numerous than the hairs of thy head, or the sand of the sea. Though their hearts, hands, feet, and swords are exceedingly red, and stained with blood, be not dismayed; for God is thy leader. Thy life on earth is an incessant warfare. Strive valiantly, and thou shalt receive the promised crown.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God,” and of the hidden and heavenly manna.

Him that overcometh will God make a pillar in his temple, and will write upon him his name and the name of the new Jerusalem.

He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and his name shall not be blotted out of the book of life, but Christ Jesus will confess his name before his heavenly Father, and before his angels.

He that overcometh shall sit with Christ in his throne, even as Christ overcame, and has sat down with his Father on his throne, Rev. 3.

O thou soldier of God, prepare thyself and fear not! The wine-press thou must tread; thou must go the narrow way, and enter in through the strait gate unto eternal life.

The Lord is thy strength, thy refuge and consolation; he is with thee in prisons and bonds; he flies with thee to foreign lands; he is with thee in fire and in water; he will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; yea, he will come quickly, and his great reward shall be with him.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted

for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Be not grieved that thou art black; thou art still comely and pleasing to the King.

As a rose, thou must grow among thorns, and be stung with the prickles. Rejoice for the King delighteth in thy comeliness.

Though in his first appearance he was offered as an innocent Lamb, and opened not his mouth, yet the time shall come when he will appear in judgment as a triumphant Prince and a victorious King. Then will our persecutors look upon him whom they pierced: then will they cry aloud and exclaim, Ye mountains fall upon us, hide us ye hills. But you shall leap and dance in excessive joy like calves of the stall, Matt. 4. Joy and exultation will never forsake you; for your King, Bridegroom and Redeemer, Christ Jesus, will remain with you forever. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,” Rev. 21: 4.

Praise, thanksgiving, and glory to God, shall flow from your mouth in an eternal stream. I repeat it, Strive, the crown of glory is prepared, shrink not, neither draw back; “For yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. The just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him,” Heb. 10: 37, 38.

Take heed and watch, lest the fire of the cross consume you as wood, hay and stubble, and the rains and storms of persecution overthrow the house. Let not the heat of the sun wither the cross, lest like the dog you turn again to that which you have ejected. Let not your garments and your feet, which you have washed, become unclean, lest seven worse spirits enter you, and so the last error be worse than the first.

Therefore, beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, fear God with all your heart, and with all your souls, and seek him with all your powers. Watch night and day; knock before the throne of his mercy, that with his paternal hand he may support you under every affliction, succor you in trouble and distress, and graciously preserve you in his way, word and truth; that you may

not dash your feet against a stone, and so failing in your profession and your life, be overcome and disgraced; but that you may preserve the treasure, intrusted to your care, pure and untarnished against that day, and thus obtain, with all saints, the promised land, inheritance, kingdom, life and crown. May the Father of mercies and of love, grant this unto you and us through his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of his eternal Holy Spirit, to his praise, and everlasting glory, Amen.

