
Enchiridion
or
Hand Book
of the
Christian Doctrine and Religion, Compiled
(By the Grace of God) From the Holy
Scriptures
For the Benefit of All Lovers of the Truth

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By
Dietrich Philip

1 Thessalonians 5:19

"Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesying; prove all things;
hold fast to the truth. Avoid all appearance of evil."

Translated from the German and carefully compared with the Dutch
(in which language the book was originally written).

By A. B. KOLB

ELKHART, INDIANA
MENNONITE PUBLISHING CO.
1910

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Translator's Preface

For a number of years there was a desire on the part of the writer to translate into English the works of Bishop Dietrich or Dirck (Theodore) Philip, contemporary of and co-worker with Menno Simons. Lack of time and means prevented the performance of this work, but just as the obstacle seemed insurmountable, C. M. Myers of Broadway, Va., who was moved by the same desire regarding the work as the writer, opened up a correspondence, and through his liberality and interest the work was made possible, and, by the help of God, is now for the first time presented to the public in the English language, although it had passed through numerous editions in the Dutch—in which it was originally written and published—and later in German as well as in French.

The primary aim in this translation has been to present as faithfully as possible the exact thought of the original, even to the extent of sacrificing strict literary style where this was necessary in order to render the exact meaning of the original. It is hoped, however, that the interested reader will find the thoughts so plainly and lucidly stated that all may readily comprehend their meaning.

Bishop Philip did not write for the purpose of entertaining the reader with fanciful theories or grandiloquent phrases. He was a teacher, and, although a scholar that was respected and envied for his attainments by his ecclesiastical opponents, yet his work needs to be studied as a text book and not read merely as a literary work of high merit. The translator offers this digressing thought that the reader may from the very outset realize the one and only purpose for which the book must be read. Nor will the reader

proceed far before he will realize the marvelous knowledge of the Bible possessed by the venerable Philip, and the need of having the Bible continually at hand for the sake of referring to the many passages quoted or pointed out.

Trusting that this book may be prayerfully read by many thousands who are sincerely seeking for the gospel landmarks which our fathers have set, and so fulfilling the ardent hopes and prayers of him whose financial aid made the publication of this work possible, the translator herewith submits the book to the public, feeling that while there is no earthly fame or fortune in such an effort, there is the deeper and more enduring pleasure and satisfaction of having in a humble way contributed to the perpetuation of the principles, the preservation and dissemination of which in past centuries was accomplished in the face of dungeon, rack, stake, water and the sword.

Preface to Book One

Inasmuch as many people for good and scriptural reasons desire to know what we believe, but many because of bitterness, some because of frivolous mind, despise and revile our faith, and yet do not really know what we believe, but speak of our faith as a blind man speaks of colors, we therefore desire by the grace of God, according to Peter's teaching, simply and briefly to render an account of and -testify to our faith (1 Pet. 3:15), of our blessed state of salvation, and whence it comes, of baptism, of the communion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and how (according to the gift and measure of the Spirit as given to us of God) we regard these things (Rom. 12:6). But we desire, by the mercy of God, and through the love of Jesus Christ, that everyone who professes faith in Christ and the gospel, read this our confession impartially, and measure and judge it by the Holy Scripture as the only guide and authority, remembering the word of the apostle who says (2 Tim. 2: 24-26) that a servant of the Lord must not be contentious, but must be gentle as a father toward every one, apt to teach, and patient under evil; in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves and the truth; that perchance God would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may extricate themselves from the snare of the devil who are taken captive by him at his will.

If everyone who professes that he is a Christian, and especially he who is looked upon as a minister of God's word, were thus minded, and had such an apostolic spirit, such a Christian nature, and showed his meekness and patience toward his adversaries, then Christianity would be of a higher order than it is today.

But now there is clamoring and slandering, judging and condemning without measure or end. And the whole world directs its rantings, ragings and destructive agencies especially against us, calling us Anabaptists or rebaptizers, fanatics and heretics, and can endure and countenance the open wickedness and abominable and destructive works of the flesh more readily than our faith.

All this, however, we commend to God and leave it to his judgment. No matter, then, how many may choose to revile us, the almighty God and Lord, who searches the

hearts and tries the reins of men (Jer. 17:10), and before whom we also have to render an account of our faith and life, knows that we seek and desire nothing but the glory of God, and the salvation of our souls, and all this through the grace of Jesus Christ, who is a Savior of all who believe (Acts 4:12; 16:31). Nevertheless some say that we endeavor to obtain salvation by our own works (1 Tim. 1:6), which, however, is as far from our faith as heaven is from earth; for we believe and confess that we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and obtain remission of our sins through his blood (Rom. 11:6).

But supposing that we were such people (Acts 4:12)—which by the grace of God we are not—and that in our ignorance and human weakness and want of understanding made mistakes, should it not behoove every Christian to have sympathy toward us and pray the Lord in our behalf, and remember that Paul had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart and could wish that he were accursed by Christ for his brethren and kinsmen in the flesh (Rom. 9:1, 2), who were blindly zealous for God and yet did not believe in Jesus Christ. Moses likewise prayed for Israel (Ex. 32:11); he would even rather that God blot him from the book of life than that God should so fearfully punish and wholly destroy the children of Israel as he purposed to do.

But now we believe in Jesus Christ and with our whole heart place all our hope in his grace. Neither have we made, nor set up, nor worshiped a golden calf, but we honor the one, true, living God of heaven and earth, and serve his Son Jesus Christ (John 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:13; Ex. 32:4; 1 Thess. 1:10; Acts 17:24; 1 Cor. 8:5), and know of no idol. Should not therefore every Christian manifest such patience toward us as did Paul toward the unbelieving Jews, and Moses toward idolatrous and apostate Israel?

Above all this Jesus Christ is presented to all believers by God the Father as a true and express example of charity and patience (Matt. 11:19; 1 Pet. 2:11), who by word and deed taught and exemplified that we should show love and mercy toward all men (Matt. 5:44; Luke 6:29), and judge no one unjustly (Matt. 7:1). Hence the apostle says: "There is one Lord who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another?" (Jas. 4:12; Rom. 14:4); "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (Jas. 2:13).

We would therefore by the suffering of our Lord Jesus beseech and admonish every one that he judge no farther than he is commanded to do; for it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God or to assume his judiciary (Heb. 10:31).

We say this not to screen ourselves, but for a warning to all, for we are, by the grace of our Lord, reconciled to suffer, for the sake of the gospel, everything that is laid upon us by the Lord, and we hope also in his mercy and that he will give us power and strength. We care not what the world says or thinks of us, but we submit ourselves in all humility to the judgment of all true Christians, before whom we confess as Paul in his defense before the governor confessed and said, "But this I confess unto thee that after the Way which they call a sect, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets (Acts 24:14). Thus we also declare, that, after this Way which many people consider and decry as heresy we desire to serve the only and almighty and ever living God and his ever blessed Son Jesus Christ, our Lord

and Savior; that we fully believe Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles, and hold the entire holy biblical scriptures as good and true (Deut. 4:35; Isa. 44:6; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 9:5; Deut. 18:15; Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16); as will become evident in the following account of our faith and confession and of the two sacramental signs of our Lord, if the same be read with pure and impartial heart. To this end may the almighty God grant his grace unto all who desire it. AMEN.

Book One

Confession of our Faith

Concerning

God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

First of all: We believe and confess, that there is one only God and Lord, as is fundamentally shown and expressly written everywhere in the scripture (Isa. 44:6; 2 Cor. 12:1-4; 1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 4:6; Gen. 1:1; Eccl. 1:6; Isa. 6:1-3; Matt. 11:25-27; Isa. 55:8-11; 1 Tim. 1:17); who is God alone, a Creator of all creatures, a Ruler of all things (Deut. 4:35; 6:4), a great, mighty King, a supreme Lord, Jehovah Shaddai, that is, an almighty and all-sufficient fullness of all that is good, a Lord and God of Sabaoth, that is, of the heavenly hosts, a Lord of heaven and earth—one eternal, true, holy, living, merciful, righteous, longsuffering, benevolent, and only good and wise God (Gen. 17:1); the First and the Last, who knows all things, past, present and future, who alone is a Redeemer and Savior, in whom alone we must believe, whom alone we must fear and love (Matt. 10:28; Isa. 41:4; 44:6), whom alone we must fear and alone serve, in whom alone we must hope and trust, whom alone we must look unto and confess as our Lord and God (Isa. 3:8), and in him alone hope for reward (Isa. 43:11; Heb. 11:6). To him alone be honor and praise forever. AMEN.

This one God and Lord is now and ever will be the only God and Lord forever and ever, and is, according to his ways, attributes and works, known by many names in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament (Matt. 28:19) he is called by Jesus Christ himself, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, by which three names the Divinity (so far as the human mind is capable of comprehending) is called by the Lord himself, and in which three names also the Lord commanded the apostles to baptize the believers, from which it is to be clearly understood that these aforementioned three names explicitly make known the one almighty and living God in his distinguishable or various attributes.

We confess the Father to be the everlasting God and heavenly Father, a perfect, self-existent Being, all and in all (Eph. 3:15) from whom all that exists derives its being (Ex. 3:14; Jer. 2:10), the Fountain of all good, from whom all that is good originates, emanates and descends (1 Cor. 8:6). From him his only begotten Son from the beginning and from eternity was divinely and inexpressibly born and the Holy Spirit proceeds (Mic. 5:2; John 5:17-29; Isa. 42:1-8; Gen. 1:1; Psa. 18:31-36; Isa. 49:7; Deut. 32:3, 4; Jas. 1:17,

18; 1 John 3; 4:1-14; Psa. 103:1-8). Therefore he also is God and Father of all, the First and the Last, the Supreme God, the almighty Creator, Ruler, Governor, who sits upon his throne, a reigning God of all, who lives from everlasting to everlasting (Eph. 3:15), and his nature, method, property and attributes are those of self-existence, omnipotence, immortality, eternal life, strength, power, wisdom, truth, glory, righteousness, faithfulness, love, kindness, benevolence, mercy, patience, gentleness and all the virtues (Isa. 44:14). Thus we confess the eternal God and Father in his divine existence, in his work, nature, attributes and character (Eph. 4:6).

We confess the Lord Jesus to be the first born, only born and own Son of the almighty Father and living God (John 1:14; Col. 1:15; Rom. 8:32; Heb. 1:8), and believe that in this same one Jesus Christ are two natures—a divine and a human nature. In his divine nature he is the Word, of whom John writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him there was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3; 14:1-12; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3; Rom. 8:29). In this divine nature he is also the wisdom of God, the truth and the light, the first born and beginning of God's creatures, the brightness of the eternal light, the image of the invisible God the Father and his Person, an immaculate reflection of divine purity (1 Cor. 1:29), and an express image of his divinity who in the beginning was with the Father in divine form, glory and purity.

But in his human nature it came to pass that this aforementioned Word which in the beginning was with God, and was God, became flesh, as John describes (John 1:14). How this came to pass the other evangelists describe thus (Luke 1:31; Matt. 1:19), namely that the Holy Ghost came upon the virgin Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed or shone upon her, whereby she conceived, and that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost, and that which was born of her is called the Son of the Highest, which is Jesus Christ our Lord. And in his human nature he is a servant of his Father, to work salvation for us, sent from the Father, our Teacher and High Priest, our Master and Prophet, our King and Messiah, our Redeemer and Savior, our Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate and Propitiator, our Peacemaker and Mercy-seat before God the Father, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (Isa. 53:1; Phil. 2:5; Heb. 3:1; 6:20; Matt. 23:7; Deut. 18:15; Col. 1:22; 2:14; 1 John 2:1; John 17; Eph. 2:13; Exod. 25:13; Heb. 9:5; John 10:11-14; 1 Pet. 2:25), and whatever else the scripture declares of him.

Thus we recognize in Jesus Christ these two natures, and because of these two natures he has also different names, for in many places in the old as well as in the new testament scriptures he is called God and Lord (Isa. 42:1; John 8:28; 1 Tim. 2:8), and other names as well, which belong or may be applied to none but God alone (Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:8; Psa. 45:7; 101: 24). Again, according to his human nature, in his service, office, and work, he is called a man and a servant, and has many other names which testify particularly to his humanity, to his position as a servant, to his office and his work (Phil. 2:5). Nevertheless he is, both in his divinity and his humanity, in the Spirit and in the flesh, Jesus the Christ, God and man in one person. Hence both things are true of him:—
1. That he is one with his Father (Matt. 28:19). of one divine nature in glory, majesty, and work without difference (John 17:11). Therefore in his name all knees must bow, in

heaven and earth, and under the earth, and all tongues must glorify and confess him, and all people shall praise him and fall down before him (Heb. 1:6; Psa. 96:1-13; Eph. 1:20); yea, all angels worship him and all creatures in heaven and on earth ascribe divine honor to him even as to the Father (Phil. 2:10, 11). 2. It is likewise true of him that he is a man, yea, our brother (Heb. 2:17; 5:2; Deut. 18:15), like us in all things except sin and all sinful propensity, for he is perfectly innocent, uncorrupted, pure and holy, who knew no sin, neither was there any guile found in his mouth (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22; John 8:28). Moreover he is not of the earth and earthly as we are, but is from heaven and heavenly, as it is written: "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all. And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth" (John 3:31, 32). That is, the first man is of the earth and earthly, the second man is the Lord from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, is described by the apostle in the epistle to the Hebrews as being without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but remaining a priest perpetually. These words should not be made to point to the figurative Melchizedek, but must be understood as referring to Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God, our only great High Priest, after the order of Melchizedek, for he is a King of righteousness and of peace, who has neither beginning of days, nor end of life, for he is Alpha and Omega, that is, the first and the last, and has therefore neither father nor mother, nor descent on earth, like other men, but he came from God, was conceived of the Holy Ghost in the handmaid Virgin Mary, and from her was born a Son of the Most High God, a wonderful Child, and above all human nature and comprehension.

Whoever rightly reads and understands these and similar passages of scripture will easily observe therefrom the difference between Jesus Christ and us, not alone in his divinity, but also in his humanity.

The Holy Ghost we confess to be an eternal and Holy Spirit, who in spirit is both of the Father and of the Son, a Spirit of truth and of all heavenly wisdom and of all divine comprehension, and the dispenser of faith and of all spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:3; John 14:26; 16:7; 1 Cor. 2:10; Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 12:13), a Comforter of our conscience, through whom all Christians pray and cry, Abba, Father; through whom they are enabled to truly call Jesus Christ Lord, through whom they believe and upon their faith are baptized into one body, through whom they are sealed unto the day of their redemption (John 15:26), through whom also Jesus Christ reigns in his church, by whom teachers are sent out to preach the gospel and bishops and shepherds ordained to feed the church of God (Acts 20:28), for he is the Paracletus (Intercessor), Comforter and Teacher of whom Christ spoke to his apostles and said, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth; but we know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," he will teach you all things, and will declare unto you all that which I have told you (John 14:16).

Thus, then, the Holy Spirit teaches and governs the Christian church, which is a fellowship of saints,' that is, that of the believers and newborn children of God, in which communion there is forgiveness of sins (through the blood of Jesus Christ), and at the last day all men who have died, shall be awakened from the dead through the power of God: the good unto everlasting life, but the evil unto eternal damnation (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15; Matt. 24:31; John 5:28; 2 Cor. 5:10).

All this, and whatever more is taught by God the Father and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, and by his Holy Spirit in the holy, biblical Scripture, and previously referred to as being embodied and proven in other articles of our Christian faith (to discuss all of which here would be entirely too lengthy), besides all that which has been taught and may yet be rightly taught from divine truth of this faith, by pious Christians, we do not oppose, but accept and acquiesce in; we agree to all of it; all of this we believe with all our hearts. Yea, our highest glory and joy is the pure and unquestioned knowledge of God the Father, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, which through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, by the true faith and (spiritual) comprehension, is graven into our hearts. We fully hope, also, that we have with this our confession, so far as the articles concern our common Christian faith, satisfied every well-intentioned and intelligent individual; therefore we will write no more of it.

But because we are blamed and condemned by many as though we desired to justify ourselves and sought our salvation through various outward ceremonies and works (called sacraments), we desire, by the grace of God, to briefly present our Confession to which we hold and by which we hope to be saved.

Our Confession Concerning the Creation, Redemption and Salvation Of Man

We believe and confess, that God, the almighty Lord and Creator of all living things, in the beginning created man in his own image, and after his own likeness, unto everlasting life (Gen. 1: 27; 2: 7; Eph. 4:12). But man did not remain in his first created estate, but transgressed the Lord's command, by which he and all his descendants became corrupt and fell under condemnation (Rom. 5:12), they all became sinners and a sinful generation. Hence we consider ourselves by reason of our first or natural birth no different than as the apostle says (Eph. 2:3), that we were "by nature the children of wrath, even as others." We also confess from the law of God that in ourselves we are poor sinners and that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:18; 3:2Q; Rom. 7:7); that we are all included under the curse of the law, and by our sins have richly deserved the punishment of God (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 17).

On the other hand we are comforted through the mercy of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ and believe the gospel of John 3:16, namely, that God our heavenly Father in his unfathomable mercy has given us his only begotten Son Jesus Christ as a Redeemer and Savior, who fulfills for us all the righteousness of God, has taken away all our sins, appeased the wrath of God, established peace between God and us, and has conquered Satan, the world, hell and death for us, etc. For he is the promised Seed who has crushed

the serpent's head, the Seed of blessing, in whom all generations of the earth are and shall be blessed that believe in his name (Mark 1:15; John 3:16; Col. 1:20; Rom. 8:3; John 1:11; 1 John 3:5; Col. 2:13; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:4; Matt. 12:29; Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 22:18). He is the true Messiah, our King and High Priest, who by the one holy offering of his body and blood has reconciled his people with God. He is the Throne of Grace established by God for us, whereby we draw nigh to God, and have free access unto him by the Holy Spirit. He is the horn of our salvation, the hope of our salvation, and in short, our eternal life (John 11:25; Heb. 5:1; 9:11; 1 Cor. 5:19; 1 Pet. 1:19; Ex. 25:17; Heb. 9; Eph. 2:4; Luke 1:64). For there is no name given us under heaven whereby we may be saved but by his name alone (John 3:16; Acts 4:12).

But the means by which we comprehend and obtain this grace of God which hath appeared unto all men in Jesus Christ—the true righteousness, holiness and salvation in and through him—is true faith (Heb. 11); that we believe with the whole heart and are fully persuaded from God's word by the Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ with all his heavenly riches is ours, our Redeemer and Savior, that through him we have peace with God and have become children and heirs of God (John 1; 3; 4; 6; 7; 8; 9; 11; Mark 16:15; Rom. 3; 4; 5; Gal. 3; 5; Heb. 11; Col. 1; 4; Eph. 2:15; Rom. 5:1; 8:16). For the apostle Paul tells us that from the beginning God loved us, by which he predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:5), and justifies us freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that he might be just, and the justifier of all that believe in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-26).

Such faith, however, is the work of God in man, whereby he becomes changed and renewed within, partaking of the divine nature, the Christ life, the Holy Spirit, and everlasting life, therefore faith brings with it true, divine righteousness, and makes man spiritual, and places his affections on heavenly things, desirous for and prepared unto every good work (1 Pet. 1:4; Heb. 3:14; Rom. 5:1; 1 John 3:3; 4:4; Col. 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:15).

All this the apostle comprehends and declares in brief words to the Ephesians saying: "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sin, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace we are saved;) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:4-10).

From these words it is clear that faith is a work and a gift of God. But from such faith springs love, even as Paul declares: "The end of the commandment is love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. 1:5; Rom. 13:8). But out of this love follow good works, as the apostle shows in the following words: "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which

worketh by love" (Gal. 5:16). Hence those who claim to have faith without love and good works, make a false claim, their faith is vain, and they are the people of whom the Lord declares in the gospel (Matt. 7: 22, 23): "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Paul agrees with this and says: "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even, their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (or void of judgment)" (Tit. 1:15, 16). The apostle James likewise rebukes all those who claim to have faith, but who do not show their faith by their works (Jas. 2:14-26). Nevertheless faith is not dependent on works or sacraments, but upon Jesus Christ alone, trusting in his mercy and his merits (Rom. 3:24; 4:1-6).

In conclusion, then, we confess and believe that we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8). But we obtain this salvation by that faith which God worketh in us by his Holy Spirit. Moreover by faith we acknowledge the love of God our heavenly Father and of our Lord Jesus Christ by what he has done for our salvation (1 John 4:19). From this knowledge of the love of God and the kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ love is engendered in our hearts, so that God becomes precious to us, and we love him because of the overwhelming love which he has shown us in Jesus Christ (Isa. 53:8). Moreover from the love thus kindled in our hearts through the Holy Spirit comes the desire to obey in our weakness the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 4:19), even as he said to his disciples: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Hence "If a man love me, he will keep my words." "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:23, 24).

But it is impossible to obey at the same time the commandments of God and of men (Matt. 15:1-9), for God and the world are opposed to each other. Christ and Belial do not agree (2 Cor. 6:15). Hence he who would serve God must forsake the world. He who would follow Christ must despise Satan (Luke 16:13). For this reason Paul says that he would not be a servant of Christ if he yet pleased men (Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:15), for the friendship of this world is enmity with God, and he who would be a friend of the world is the enemy of God (Gal. 1:10). What the apostle James says, Jesus also says in the gospel, namely: "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16:15). And this is the reason why we are not disposed to follow the world in obeying the traditions of men that are opposed to Christ, or, in other words, false service (sacrilege) and idolatry, and all ceremonies and services of the Romish church (Matt. 15:1-3; 1 Cor. 10:14), but we desire in simplicity to follow the plain teaching and example of Jesus Christ and to conform to the pattern given us by the original apostolic church (1 Pet. 2: 21), as far as the Lord will give us grace (Eph. 2:20). And since we find, in the first place, such abuse, both of baptism and the Lord's Supper, such contempt for, and transgression of the divine ordinances, we cannot consent to or practice these things with the Papists, but confess of both ordinances or sacraments of our Lord Jesus Christ as here follows.

Of Christian Baptism

We believe and confess that there is a Christian baptism which must take place within and without — within with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; 11:29), but outwardly with water (Luke 3:16), in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19). The baptism of the Spirit is administered by Christ Jesus himself to penitents and believers, as John the Baptist says:

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matt. 3:11).

Jesus speaks of this when he commanded his disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, "which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4; Acts 2:17, 18; Joel 2:28, 29).

"For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5).

Jesus here told them that they should receive the Holy Ghost from the Father in heaven and be clothed with power from on high (Acts 1:4; 2:1), just as it came to pass at Pentecost when Christ sent them the promise of the Father and they were all abundantly endued with the Holy Ghost (Joel 2:28). Likewise also Cornelius and all in his house who heard and accepted the words of life—the gospel of Jesus Christ—by the apostle Peter, were baptized with the Holy Spirit from above (Acts 10:44). This was never performed by man, but by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

But the outward baptism of water, which is a sign or type of the spiritual baptism, and an evidence of true repentance and a sign of faith in Jesus Christ, is administered, by the command of the almighty Father and his Son Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 8:11; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15), and in the name of the same eternal God, by a messenger and servant of the Lord in the office and power of the Spirit, unto those who have repented of their sins (Acts 2:41; Mark 16:15), have amended their ways and believe the gospel, confess their faith, and thereupon desire to be baptized, voluntarily presenting themselves to God and entering upon a service of righteousness, yea a service unto God and a fellowship with Jesus Christ and all the saints (Acts 8:11; 16:15).

This is plainly to be understood from the words with which Jesus instituted baptism, for according to Matthew, Christ says to his apostles:

"Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19, 20). Mark expresses it thus: "Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15, 16).

In these words of the Lord is fully comprehended the ordinance of, and law governing, Christian baptism, and all that conduces and belongs to the completeness of

this divine ordinance; for Christ is the wisdom of the Father (1 Cor. 1:30; John 15:15; 16:30), who has fully and clearly instituted and expressly commanded all things, for he came down from heaven a Light and Savior of all men (John 1: 3, 5; 3:2, 15-17; 8:12).

Hence it is indisputable that the divine ordinance of baptism is fully enunciated and comprehended in the few words just quoted, and all those have received a proper baptism who have been baptized according to this Christian ordinance; that is, those who have received and accepted it on their faith. For Christ has in explicit language ordained and commanded that the teaching of the gospel and faith shall precede baptism (Mark 16:15). This scriptural command must not be broken (Deut. 28:1-68), neither may anything be added to or taken from the word of God (Deut. 4:2); yea, not a jot or tittle of the gospel may pass away or be changed (Gal. 1:8, 9). Hence this divine command and ordinance of baptism must likewise remain unchanged, for it is a word of God, which abideth forever (Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:25).

This is the true, unchangeable ordinance and institution of the Lord regarding baptism, as the words of Christ, as quoted above from the two evangelists, clearly convey and prove (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15), namely, that the gospel must be preached both before and after baptism, that every one may, by the grace of God, through the teaching of the gospel, come to the true faith, and be baptized on his faith, to show thereby his sorrow for sin, and his faith (Acts 2:38; 8:11). Thereupon he must still at all times hear God's word and be diligent to obey all the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. For Christ says to his apostles: "Teaching them (namely those who believe and are baptized) to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

This divine ordinance and institution of baptism was thus observed regularly and with all earnestness by the apostles, without adding to or taking from the same, as is plainly to be seen and can be proved throughout the Acts of the Apostles. For in the first place, the apostle Peter answered the Jews, when they asked what they should do:

"Repent (reform you) and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

In further proof of this we see that when the eunuch, through the direction and instruction of Philip, had come to the true faith, and requested of him to be baptized, Philip declared to him: "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And when the eunuch confessed his faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God, Philip baptized him on confession of his faith (Acts 8:37, 38).

Further, when Peter preached Jesus Christ in the house of Cornelius and spoke the word of life (Acts 10:34-43), "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." Then said Peter:

"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Again, Paul and Silas preached the words of the Lord to the keeper of the prison and all that were in his house. The keeper thereupon was baptized, and he with all his house rejoiced, believing in God (Acts 16:32-34).

Again, Paul found certain disciples in Ephesus, to whom he said: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:1, 2). They said to him: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." And he said: "Unto what, then, were ye baptized?" They said: "Unto John's baptism." Then Paul said: "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Furthermore, Paul himself, when he had been struck down by the Lord on the way, and at Damascus, upon the command of the Lord, had heard from Ananias, and was taught what he must do, and had regained his sight, was filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:17-22), and had become a chosen vessel or instrument, was baptized and called upon the name of the Lord.

From all this it is evident that the apostles first taught the people and preached the gospel, and that those who repented and believed the gospel (Mark 16:15) were, upon confession of their faith, baptized by them. Hence it is incontrovertible, both according to the command and instituted ordinance of the Lord, and the custom of the apostles, that teaching the gospel must precede baptism; for from instruction in the gospel or the word of God come repentance and faith, but the true, penitent faith must be confessed and proven and sealed, so to speak, by Christian baptism. Moreover after baptism must follow a consistent, good, pious, Christian life. This is the command of the Lord Jesus Christ and the custom of the apostles.

All that has been presented above on the subject of baptism is strongly verified and confirmed by the sayings and writings of the apostles; for in the first place Paul writes to the Romans as follows: "Know ye not that so many as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Rom. 6:3-7)

With these words the apostle makes known what Christian baptism signifies to believers, namely, dying unto the flesh, or the putting to death of the old Adam, the burial of sin (Col. 2:11), the putting away of the body of sin, and resurrection into newness of life. The reason for this, and the finality of the matter rests on the fact that, since Christ died and was buried for our sins, and was raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25), and we are, in the first place, made members of the body of Christ by faith and therefore become partakers of his death, his righteousness, his holiness, yea, of all that is his, and, in the second place, are in and by baptism confirmed or established in this fellowship with him, to which we have been called by the grace of God, we must therefore also for

his sake die unto sin, bury the same and live in righteousness in the Spirit, that we may be true members of his body.

Paul states this fact clearly to the Colossians and says: "And ye are complete in him, that is, in Christ Jesus, which is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2:10); "in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him."

These words make it abundantly clear to us, firstly, that the circumcision of the flesh is not a figure or symbol of outward baptism (as the perverted theologians say, and the blind world thinks), but of the "circumcision of Christ," which was not the circumcision of the flesh, but of the heart, not performed with knife or stone, but without hands by God's word and the Spirit.

In the second place, the apostle here declares what the baptism of Christ typifies, namely, a putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, a burial with Christ, and a resurrection by faith to a new, spiritual life and being, for in Christ Jesus no outward sign alone avails anything without the true faith (Gal. 5:6; 6:17), without regeneration and the true Christian life, for by it man becomes united with God, incorporated into the body of Christ and a partaker of the Holy Spirit (John 3: 4-10). Hence outward baptism alone avails nothing if the person baptized does not believe (Matt. 3:11; Rom. 6:5), is not born anew in God through Christ Jesus, is not baptized within with the Holy Ghost and fire, has not died unto sin, and does not live unto righteousness (Rom. 6:5).

Inasmuch as infants know, understand and possess nothing of all that baptism signifies, or that belongs thereto, hence baptism is not for them, nor is it of any benefit to them, because faith, a right comprehension, and essence of the sacrament are lacking, and the token or evidence does not follow that which is indicated thereby and whereupon it is received, namely, that we are baptized into Christ Jesus and into his death to the intent that we die with him, are buried with him and rise to a new life. Where this does not take place in and through baptism, and follows thereupon in true power, there baptism has not been rightly received, although the outward token is in evidence.

In the second place Paul says to the Galatians: "Ye are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus for as many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26, 27).

Here it may clearly be seen that they must first be children of God by faith who are to be properly baptized, and that those who are rightly baptized have put on Christ. But to put on Christ means to become a partaker of Christ and his nature by faith ('Heb. 3:14), to become united with Christ, a member of his body, yea, to be transformed and changed from the carnal Adamic nature into the spiritual, heavenly, divine nature of Christ (Rom. 11:17). This must take place in all Christians. Through Adam man became miserable, poor and naked (Gen. 3:11; Ex. 12:5), and is thus born of him. On the

contrary, Christ is the Robe of Righteousness. yea, the innocent, spotless Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:19), with which every believing, baptized Christian is clothed.

How this comes to pass is portrayed to us in Adam and Eve. Before the fall, Adam and Eve were in paradise (the Garden of Eden), simple, virtuous and naked. They needed no garments, for they were of divine origin, without guile, and knew of no evil. They were made in the image of God and in his likeness (Gen. 3:7), and created unto eternal life, and the godly nature (integrity) implanted into them by God was their garment with which they were beautifully adorned; but as soon as they had eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they became conscious of and saw their nakedness and were ashamed, and sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons (Gen. 3:7). This, however, could not cover nor hide them from God, but they had to stand shamefaced before God because of their transgression and suffer its punishment therefore. Nevertheless God did not leave them comfortless, but in his unfathomable mercy he comforted them in every way; inwardly with the promise of the Christ; outwardly with bodily raiment; for God promised them Christ Jesus as a Redeemer and Conqueror of the serpent. And as an omen he gave them coats of skins and clothed them therewith as a testimony that Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (John 1:29), would take away and cover the sin of Adam, and the sin of the whole world, and that all believers should be clothed with him.

Therefore let no man judge or condemn the sin of Adam and Eve, for Christ Jesus by his death and blood has taken it away (Rom. 5:11, 12), as we shall by God's help explain more fully later. But as sin had its origin in disobedience, and began with the knowledge of good and evil in Adam and Eve, even so it is also the case with children; for, although they all descend from a sinful Adam, nevertheless for Christ's sake original sin (as it is called) is not imputed against them unto damnation, but they are in one respect like Adam and Eve were before the fall, namely that they are innocent and blameless, understanding neither good nor evil. But as soon as they attain to the knowledge of good and evil and step out of innocent ignorance into known evil, and by their own disobedience and transgression of the divine word and command, sin against the Lord, then is the proper and appointed time that they be first taught (Matt. 28:19), yea, be heartily admonished from God's law to repent (Rom. 3:19, 20), that they may amend their ways, bewail and confess their sins before God and have sorrow because of them (Acts 2:37, 38); afterward they must be comforted again with the gospel (Mark 16:15; Eph. 2:7). But they must believe the gospel, and upon confession of their faith they must, in the name of Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, be baptized into the fellowship of the body of Christ (Mark 16:15, 16; 1 Cor. 12:13), thus by grace being justified by having ascribed to them, and becoming partakers of, his righteousness, thus being born again into newness of life, created and renewed in the image of the heavenly Father (Gen. 3:15), that is, in Christ, and renounce the old, carnal life, and henceforth walk in a new spiritual life. This, then, is putting on Christ and being clothed in him (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:14).

How the believers are clothed in or with Christ is also shown in the gospel parable of the prodigal son, who wasted his inheritance shamefully, and returned,

miserable and poor, to his father, and in all humility begged for mercy. His father received him again full of love and joy, and for his sake had the fatted calf killed and caused him to be clothed with the finest raiment (Luke 15:12-24).

Although commonly interpreted to point to the Jews and Gentiles, yet, since all scriptures are written for our learning, our reproof and our comfort (Acts 2:17); Rom. 15:4; 2 Tim. 3:16), therefore this parable may, without distortion, be understood to teach that whosoever acknowledges his deplorable state, confesses his sins in all sincerity before God, is truly sorry for the same, humbles himself under the mighty hand of God, and reckons himself unworthy of any mercy, or of the state of sonship (Luke 7:6; 1 Pet. 5:6; Jas. 4:7), and yet comes to God in full faith, trusting implicitly in his unfathomable grace and mercy, him will God the Father receive as his child in Christ Jesus whom he has given unto death for our sakes; and clothes every Christian therewith, as with the finest raiment, makes a covenant of grace with him, and rejoices with his heavenly hosts over the salvation of a sinner that is lost and has become alive again.

Now, since all orthodox and baptized Christians have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27)—and to put on Christ really means to partake of Christ, his life, attributes, nature, spirit, and all that is his (Heb. 3:14), and which cannot be done except by faith, and must also as a power and fruit of faith be noticeably and feelingly present if baptism is properly received—it follows undeniably that baptism is for penitents and believers only.

In the third place, Paul writes to the Ephesians that Christ-sanctifies and cleanses the church "with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:26). To Titus he says: "After the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior; that being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. 3:4-7).

These words of Paul are by some construed to mean the baptism of the Spirit. Let that be as it is. Nevertheless they may also be scripturally comprehended as referring to outward baptism. The reason is this: Baptism is a washing for the reason that it is administered to believers with water in the name of the Lord. But the subjoined phrase: "by the word" shows that baptism is not simply washing, but is linked with the gospel and faith, with the promise that "whosoever believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

Baptism is also a washing of regeneration, because, according to the command and institution of the Lord (John 1:28; 3:5), it belongs to or is for regenerated children of God, that is, true believers. For what else is the new birth but the changing and renewing of man wrought in him by God, through faith in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that man is created anew in God, born of his seed, made in his image, renewed in his knowledge (1 Pet. 1:23), partaking of his divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24), and from his Spirit receives the desire and power to serve God in a life of the Spirit (John 14:16; 16:13; 20:22), in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life. Where

this takes place and is operative, there is true regeneration, there is the new creature in Christ Jesus (Gal. 6:16; 2 Cor. 3:17; Luke 1:75; John 3:3).

The evangelist and apostle John testifies to this and says: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13). Hence: "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2:29). And: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (John 5:1).

The true believers in Christ, therefore, are the regenerated children of God, but baptism is the washing of regeneration (Tit. 1:5), that is, there the newborn children of God are bathed and washed, but not by the virtue of the elementary or natural water, but by the power of the blood and spirit of Christ Jesus (1 Pet. 3:20). For: "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5:6-8)—the Spirit, by which man believes, the water, with which he is baptized, and the blood of Jesus Christ, with which the soul and conscience of the believing and baptized Christians are sprinkled. Of this sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (John 19:34; 1 Pet. 1:2), the apostles in their writings clearly testify, and hence Christ on the cross permitted his side to be pierced with a spear from which flowed water and blood as a testimony to his true humanity, and that he has, with his blood, sprinkled, washed, and purified his church (which is taken from his side and is of his flesh and of his bones, Eph. 5:29, 30) from all sin and poured over her the water of the Spirit (John 4:2), on account of which baptism is a sacramental sign.

Since, then, the believers are born again of God, and baptism is a washing of this regeneration (Tit. 3:5), and whereas infants have not attained to this new birth so long as they have no understanding and faith, therefore baptism is not proper for them, for it is for no one — and may be properly administered to none — but regenerated children of God, that is, to believers who have been renewed within — after the image and likeness of God; who deny the old Adam, that the new creature, even Christ, may, through faith, live and operate in them (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24; 2 Cor. 5:17). Such are proper recipients of Christian baptism, for to them it is a washing of regeneration and testifies of the new creature in Christ Jesus (Gal. 5:6).

In the fourth place, the apostle Peter says of baptism that "when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:3), while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water; the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:20, 21).

In these words of the apostle we observe that Christian baptism is typified and pictured by the deluge by which the whole world was punished, while Noah and his house were preserved in the ark by the same water. Likewise also the children of Israel

passed through the Red Sea dry shod, thus being saved from their enemies, but Pharaoh with the Egyptians who pursued them were all engulfed, and thus perished in the same water. Thus it is with all the works of God. What is life to the godly is death to the ungodly, even as Paul testifies with these words: "We are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life" (2 Cor. 15:16).

Now, in order to rightly understand the figure of the deluge it must be noted that Noah is a figure pointing to Christ, the household of Noah to believing souls, the ark to the church, and the deluge to baptism; for, as Noah was in his time a preacher, of righteousness, so also is Christ Jesus the true Preacher of righteousness, and the true Schoolmaster sent by God (John 8:17; 14:24; 16:5). As Noah at God's command prepared the ark for the preservation of his own life and the lives of others, so also has Christ Jesus built and prepared a spiritual ark, that is, his church, and made and set it up through his apostles as workmen, and wise master builders (1 Cor. 3:10, 11; 0:9, 10), for the eternal preservation and happiness of all his children and household (Eph. 2:17), of whom he himself has said: "Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. 2:13; Isa. 8:18).

Moreover, like as no one outside of the ark of Noah was able to preserve his life, but as all that were outside of the ark perished from the face of the earth by the water (Gen. 14:18), so also no one is able to preserve his soul or be saved unless he is in the ark of Jesus Christ; for outside of Christ and his church there is no salvation nor eternal life (Acts 4:12). No man cometh unto the Father but by Christ alone (John 14:6). All is concluded in him; all grace and truth came by him, and of his fullness have we all received, and grace for grace. Whoever believes and abides in him has eternal life, but whosoever does not believe in him is condemned already (John 3:18); upon him the wrath of God abides. And whosoever does not remain in him will be cast forth as a withered branch (John 15:6). Hence as the flood destroyed every living creature that was outside of the ark, while the ark was preserved by the same water (Gen. 6:17, 18), so also in baptism all carnal desires must perish and be put to death (Rom. 6:2; Col. 2:12, 13), but the soul will, by the power of the word, Spirit and blood of Christ, be preserved in his ark unto everlasting salvation. Moreover, like as few, that is, eight souls, were saved in the ark and preserved alive (1 Pet. 3:20), so also there are few who, with Noah, find favor in the sight of God, in this that they truly believe in God, enter the Christian church and are so baptized in the name of the Lord that they comprehend, possess and preserve the power, significance and mysteries of the true faith and of the baptism of Christ to the (renunciation of the world) dying unto the flesh, and of the resurrection unto eternal life, even as the Lord himself testifies, that there are few who find the straight and narrow way, that few are chosen, that few believe and are saved (Matt. 7:13, 14; 20:16).

On this thought, as to what it means, Peter says that baptism, an antitype of the flood, saves or preserves us (not the washing off of the filth of the flesh, but the answer—or seal—of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:21). The apostle here states clearly that in baptism the washing or pouring with elemental water does not accomplish the matter, but that it is the answer of a good

conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And this is a seal of a good conscience toward God, the almighty Lord and merciful heavenly Father, that God, in his everlasting love and unfathomable mercy, is gracious toward us (Eph. 2:4), loves us, makes a covenant with us, that he desires to be a Father unto us (2 Cor. 6:16), forgives all our sins, saves us from eternal death, has given us eternal life, has chosen and accepted us as children and heirs of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ (Col. 1:12; Eph. 1:5), and that we receive this gracious covenant with firm faith, again yield ourselves to God, to obey him, to remain firm and true to his word, to serve him all the days of our life and to walk before him with a good conscience (Luke 1:69).

Upon such faith and such confidence in God's grace and mercy, and upon such promises of the divine covenant, it is proper to receive Christian baptism in the name of the Lord, to live, with good conscience, in the covenant of God (1 Pet. 3:21), remembering the grace of God, which he has shown to us through Jesus Christ, who died for our offenses and was raised again for our justification (Isa. 53:8; Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4), thereby exemplifying to us the fact that we must die unto sin (1 Pet. 2:21) and live unto righteousness, that we must be awakened from sleep and raised from death (Eph. 5:14).

Inasmuch, then, as to baptism belongs the answer or covenant of a good conscience toward God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 3:21), and really avails with God, and as there is no good conscience without sincere faith (for the grace of God, which hath appeared unto us in Christ Jesus, and is accepted by true faith, 1 Tim. 1:5, assures the conscience, puts joy into the heart and gives one good courage), it follows therefore that whosoever is to receive Christian baptism must have and keep sincere faith, a good conscience, and all that the apostle Peter here adds to baptism, if the baptism is to be right and the words of the apostle are to receive due weight (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 8:12; 1 Pet. 3:21).

We have now pointed out briefly what baptism is, how it was commanded and instituted by Christ Jesus, taught and practiced by the apostles and must still be practiced and received, and what it signifies and points out to, and impresses upon the mind of, the believers. On the other hand we shall now write a little of how deplorably this baptism is misused and despised by some people. The Lord Jesus help us with his grace. Amen.

Infant Baptism, A Shameful Misuse

In the first place, baptism is shamefully misused by those who baptize infants. They abuse this baptism (which is a sign and testimony of the true, penitent faith) by administering it to ignorant children, even though all scripture on baptism unanimously shows that those of old who heard and received God's word, yea, who from the law learned to know God's wrath, his stern and righteous judgment of sin, and repented before the Lord, and moreover from the gospel learned, by the enlightenment and power of the Holy Spirit, to know God the Father in his grace and mercy, Christ Jesus the only begotten Son of God in his atoning merits (John 1:14; 3:16), and who lay hold of this

confession with firm faith and confidence and believe with their hearts and confess with their mouths (Rom. 10:9), and present themselves a living sacrifice; holy, and acceptable unto God — that such were proper subjects for baptism, and should receive it, that they might show and prove their faith in God, their sorrow for sin and all that pertains to baptism.

This ordinance Christ himself instituted and established, and the apostolic church observed. No man can overthrow or censure it without contradicting Jesus Christ himself and his apostles (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; 16:33; 8:36-38; 19:5). But of infant baptism nothing definite is given in the holy scripture. Though we read the whole New Testament through and through we do not find that Jesus Christ (in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. 2:3, and who declared unto us the perfect will of his heavenly Father, John 15:15), ever spoke a single word expressly on infant baptism, or that the apostles ever baptized infants.

Therefore we may not accept infant baptism as a command and service of God. The reason is this: The holy divine scripture teaches us everywhere that we shall accept, believe, and observe nothing but God's word and command alone, and that we shall neither add to nor take from God's word (Deut. 4:2), and that God will not be served with the doctrines and traditions of men (Matt. 15:9), and that every plant which God the heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up (Matt. 15:13), and that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9).

Views of Many Ancient and Modern Teachers Regarding Mere Opinions Unsupported by Scripture

Many ancient and modern teachers have examined into and concluded — and therefore also publicly wrote and declared — that whatever God has not commanded, that he has prohibited. Hence all worship and service that is not ordained or instituted by an express command of God, is wrong, no matter how much gloss or disguise may cover it.

Hence to undertake to establish a form of worship or service according to human reason without God's command is simply setting up idolatry; for he will not be superseded by us; he proposes to teach and show us how we are to serve him, his word is to be present to enlighten and guide us; yea, without his word all is idolatry and mere lies, no matter how glorious and beautiful it may be.

Therefore let every individual see that he is sure that his worship and service is founded on God's word and not on what he himself may consider good, or proper, for let him who worships, without having the testimony, -know that he is not serving the true God, but his own imaginary idol, that is, his own opinion and false ideas, and hence is serving the devil himself; thus wrote Martin Luther in his Preface to the Prophets.

But we have not made this reference to such teachers with the idea that it should form the basis of our hope or trust. Never! God's word is unto us a sure and all-sufficient

and an unwaveringly solid foundation of truth. We have merely done so on account of our opponents, to show that we are not the first who have repudiated the doctrines and commandments and ceremonies of men and looked upon them as idolatry.

Since the scripture makes no definite expression regarding infant baptism, but much more points to the contrary, namely the baptism of adults — penitents and believers (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2: 37-39) — and since God so sternly forbids all human opinions, strange doctrine (Matt. 15:9) and traditions and ceremonies of men, all false worship and idolatry (1 Cor. 10:7), how, then, can we consider infant baptism to be right? And who can with any degree of propriety, fairness and truth accuse us for adhering simply to the scripture, and recognizing the true God and Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, one faith, one baptism, which is by Christ himself subjoined to the gospel and faith (1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:4-6)?

Antagonistic Views of Paedobaptists

But antichrist will not endure this. The Pharisees and learned divines are forcibly opposing it (for they have always despised the counsel of God, for which cause even the publicans shall enter the kingdom of heaven rather than they), and seek various subterfuges to uphold their baptism; but as they are all building at the tower of Babel, God has confounded their language so that one does not understand the other (Gen. 11:7), so that they differ widely, are not of one mind on infant baptism, and their words do not harmonize; for while some acknowledge that the children themselves do not believe, nevertheless they would have the children baptized upon the faith of the Christian church (as they say). The others, like Luther and his adherents, openly say that the children themselves believe and must be baptized on their own faith; for he writes in one place: "No one is saved by another's faith or righteousness, but by his own, therefore the sacraments may not be received without faith unto salvation; therefore for those who think that infants do not believe, it were altogether better that no infants were baptized than to baptize without faith, since both the sacrament and God's holy name would be used in vain." That is, he reprimands or accuses the Waldenses who baptize their infants while not believing that they themselves have faith and therefore take and hold the name of God in vain. That is, these infants are not baptized upon the faith of the church or fathers, but upon their own faith, and that sin is forgiven through grace, and not by virtue of baptism. In other words, that baptism profits no one, and should be administered to no one unless he himself believes, and without faith no one should be baptized, since not the sacrament, but the faith of the sacrament justifies. That is, the infant itself must believe, or else the fathers must lie, when they say in the child's stead, "I believe." Hence it were better never to baptize a child than to make such mockery and hypocrisy of the word of God. Simple-minded children then are better qualified to believe than are rational adults!

Then there are others who in all seriousness would have the grace of God and faith infused into the child through baptism. Read Sebastian Franck in his "Chronica."

Since, then, the learned men are and continue to be at variance with the common people in the matter of infant baptism, they give evidence enough therewith that they

have and know nothing certain about infant baptism, and that there is no foundation in scripture for infant baptism, because it is practiced on such various grounds, and for such various reasons; for all human doctrine is at variance with itself, is inconsistent and wavering, exists with doubt, is full of contention and bitterness; but Christian and apostolic doctrine is harmonious, flows from one spirit, and has a sure and enduring foundation, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor.3:11).

And although infant baptism has no foundation in scripture and our opponents are not in accord in the matter, nevertheless they, with one accord, endeavor to uphold infant baptism with the scripture each one in his own way. Those who say that the children should be baptized on the faith of the church or the fathers, try to prove their position by the fact that, when several brought a palsied man to the Lord, when he saw their faith, the Lord said to the man that was sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. 9:2), and healed him. In like manner they show how the centurion and the Canaanitish woman by faith and prayer obtained help and comfort from the Lord Jesus for others (Matt. 8:5; Luke 7:9; Matt. 15:28). To this we answer briefly, that all these intercessors or guardians petitioned the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of others and were heard, and that in like measure we also must pray with fervent hearts for our neighbor, especially for the salvation of his soul, even as Moses prayed to the Lord for Israel, for his brother Aaron, and for his sister Miriam. Paul writes to the Romans that his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved Rom. 10:1). Likewise James teaches us to pray for our neighbor, and say: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (Jas. 5:14, 15).

And John says: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death" (1 John 5:16). Yea, the whole scripture teaches everywhere that we shall pray for one another, and we have the promise of the Lord that whatever we ask of his heavenly Father in his name shall be given unto us (John 14:13, 14; Matt. 7:7-11).

But we have no command or example in all the scripture to pray that children shall be baptized on the faith of the church or the fathers; but we do have in the scripture another example of how we are to pray for children, namely, that the believing parents brought their children to Christ, desiring that their children might be blessed by his laying his hands on them (Matt. 19:13-15). Thus also we must consecrate our children unto Christ in prayer with firm faith and confidence that in him they have already, as in the promised seed, obtained the blessing of eternal life (Gen. 3:15).

The scripture furthermore shows clearly that the just shall live by faith (Hab. 2:4; Heb. 10:38; Rom. 1:17), and that every one shall be judged by his faith (Gal. 3:11), and that no one by his own faith is able to give salvation to another, or pious Lot would by his faith have preserved his wife (Gen. 19:26). But the Lord, through Ezekiel, says that Noah, Daniel and Job could not save the souls of sons and daughters, but should deliver only their own souls by their righteousness (Ezek. 14:14). On this thought Peter says that

the righteous shall scarcely be saved (1 Pet. 4:18), which fact is also to be understood in this that the five wise virgins had oil in their lamps for themselves only, but not for the others (Matt. 25:1-9).

Hence it is a gross misconception, and entirely contrary to the scripture, for people to base infant baptism on the faith of the church and the fathers, not noting the order and purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ, the practice of the apostles, nor thoroughly understanding the import of all scripture regarding baptism (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 2:41; 8:37; 10:47; 16:15; Rom. 6:2-4; Col. 2:12).

For all these passages unanimously show that every person that is to be baptized shall, upon confession of his own faith, be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This ordinance and plan of the Lord Jesus Christ, the custom of the apostles, the sense and tenor of the divine scripture must remain unmoved and unchanged; for "heaven and earth," says Christ, "shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 5:18; Luke 16:17).

False Arguments and Perverted Scriptures and Writings answered

Further, some say that children themselves have faith, because of the statement of the scripture that "whosoever believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16); for, since "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6), therefore, they say, children must believe or they must be damned, and cannot please God.

Answer

This is a gross misconception, and thereby the scriptures are sadly violated, because, in the first place, it is contrary to the scripture to make this and other scripture passages apply to children; for such scripture passages do not refer to children, but to adults and persons with understanding, who have "ears to hear" and "hearts to understand." To such Jesus speaks, as he himself says in the gospel: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15; Luke 8:8; Matt. 15:10). Therefore it is evident that the eternal, almighty and alone wise God has instituted this ordinance that from the hearing of the word of God, by the power of his Spirit, faith shall come and be received, even as Paul clearly shows to the Romans, and says that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Hence faith is, as the apostle describes to us, "the substance (or certain confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). Since then faith is such a certain confidence of the grace of God through Jesus Christ, and is always directed toward heavenly things, and seeks those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1), how can infants have such faith? Do not both scripture and actual facts testify against it?

Hence we conclude from this that infants do not believe, because infants understand neither good nor evil, and have no "ears to hear" (Deut. 1: 39); and the

scripture therefore does not speak to them, and they cannot be taught from it, and if they are incapable of being taught, how then can they be capable of believing? For does not the apostle say, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Hence we may justly ask: How can infants without understanding, without instruction, and without hearing, believe? (Rom. 10:14.)

But, say some, God is almighty, and could impart faith to infants. To this we reply that God is indeed almighty, and could easily impart faith to infants, and not faith only, but understanding also, with which to grasp faith, and speech with which to confess it. But since God gives to infants neither understanding nor speech, much less faith — which cannot be apprehended without understanding, nor be confessed without speech — is God therefore not almighty? Never! But although God is omnipotent and does what he will in heaven and on earth, he nevertheless in all his works preserves an order that pleases him.

Since then the omnipotent and omniscient God, through his eternal wisdom, has decreed and deemed proper that infants be simple, without understanding, speechless and without knowledge of good or evil, it stands to reason that humanity should rest content therewith (Deut. 1:39); "for who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. 11:34). Who can break his ordinance, or change it?

But some would cast it into our teeth that Jeremiah was sanctified in his mother's womb (Jer. 1:5), and that John (the Baptist) in his mother's womb rejoiced in Christ, his Lord and Savior (Luke 1:41).

Answer

In the case of Jeremiah and John it was a special and wonderful work of God, and not the common rule, just as Sarah by faith supernaturally conceived Isaac (Gen. 17:17; Heb. 11:11), and this came to pass because he in his godly works and in a figurative way bore the image of Christ (Rom. 4:19). The same is true of Jeremiah and John, namely, inasmuch as God desired to perform something great and wonderful through these two men, therefore they were, even before birth, filled with the Holy Ghost. But not all children are like Jeremiah and John. Yea, as little as all children, even of believing and God-fearing women, are conceived and born out of the divinely established order and in a supernatural way for the reason that it was so in the case of Isaac, even so little are all children (even of believers) gifted with understanding, or show the power of the Spirit and of their faith simply because God dealt thus with Jeremiah and John, for God does not make miraculous works and transactions a common rule, even as he does not, by an extraordinary or special command, change the general or common law. Of this we have evidence and examples in the scripture. Hence all children cannot be likened, in gift and power of the Spirit, to Jeremiah and John. Christ himself testifies of John that he is more than a prophet, and that among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist (Matt. 11:9, 11).

From this it may be clearly seen and understood that it does not follow, from the wonderful dealing of God with Jeremiah and John, nor can it be verified with any degree

of truth or propriety, that infants believe (John 4:51; Deut. 1:39), for the holy scripture expressly testifies to the contrary (as has already been sufficiently shown and explained) and shows the nature and state of infants very differently, for thereby we become aware of and find that in infants there is neither faith nor the power of faith. Faith, which is a powerful work of God and a gift of the Holy Spirit, may not be hidden, or fruitless, or dormant in man (Heb. 11; Eph. 2:8), as some profess, but it must, in its very nature, break forth and become active through love, fully trusting in the recompense of God (Gal. 5:6), and with a certain comprehension of heavenly things. Where this is not the case, there is no faith.

If infants believe, why then do they know nothing of sin, or of the law, or of grace, or of the gospel? For they must be taught the first principles of the word of God, and all the articles of the Christian faith, as those who know nothing of God and of things divine. How then have they become so ignorant, and unbelieving, if, when in their infancy they had understanding and faith? Have they then entirely forgotten all knowledge of God, his word and their faith?

All that the theologians and worldly-wise and their entire retinue say of the faith of infants is therefore nothing but the opinions of men; but regarding the state of infants (which openly show and prove that no knowledge of God and his word, no faith or fruit of faith is to be traced or found in them), we adhere to the holy scripture which is to us surer than all human opinions, which after all have no value before God.

We must also observe that the grace of God and the power of the Spirit did not lie hidden or dormant in John, but became manifest in him while yet in his mother's womb, and that after his birth he became strong in spirit, and walked before the face of the Lord (Luke 1:17), in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:80); but where can the like be traced in common infants? Hence they cannot be generally likened to John.

Those who would establish infantile faith and baptism of infants on Jeremiah and John, contradict themselves, and act contrary to their own confession when they liken children to Jeremiah and John, who were sanctified in the womb (Jer. 1:5; Luke 1:44), and possessed the Holy Spirit before birth, as the scripture declares. From this, then, it must follow without contradiction that infants have the Holy Spirit, by which they are sanctified. Why, then, do the champions of infant baptism presume to exorcise the evil spirit from infants? The holy prophets and people of God did not do this to Jeremiah and John, and where does the scripture mention such exorcism of the devil at the baptism of Jesus?

From all this it is easily understood that they err who say that infants themselves believe; yea, it is a great folly to ascribe faith to children who are as yet without speech or understanding. A still greater folly it is to presume to drive out the evil spirit from children who are supposed to believe. For, if the children believe, then they must without doubt have the Holy Spirit, since no one can believe except through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12; 12:3). In this case it is wrong to try to drive out the evil spirit. But if they do not believe (even as the scripture shows, and experience teaches —Deut. 1:35; John 4:51, 52), then it is wrong to consider them as believing, and to baptize them on such

superstition, whereby the true ordinance of God is despised, because Christian baptism (according to all evidence of the gospel and apostolic writings) cannot be administered or received without faith (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 2: 38; 8:37, 38; 16:33; 19:5).

Someone might now think or ask: If infants do not believe, why then are they saved and acceptable to God? We answer: By grace, through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:2), who through his death took away the sin of the whole world, so that adults by their penitent faith, and infants in their innocence are acceptable to God (John 1:29; 3:16; 1 John 3:16), so long as they continue therein. Of this the Lord himself declares: "Your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it" (Deut. 1:39). You see that what the adult Israelites, because of their unbelief and disobedience, could not obtain, their children, who had no knowledge of good or evil, obtained by the grace of God. Thus also the children of the true Israel, that is, of Christian believers, obtain and inherit the true promised land (Heb. 4:9)—that is, the kingdom of heaven—by grace through Jesus Christ that the promise of God, regarding the seed of Abraham, the children of the heavenly Sarah (who are included under the promise, Gal. 3:29), may be established by the grace and election of God through the merits of Jesus Christ, and not by the works or merits of men (Eph. 2:7).

Again, our opponents say: Does not Christ say in the gospel, "Suffer the children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven"? (Matt. 19:14). By this they try to establish infant baptism, and say that since the kingdom of heaven is theirs, therefore they may also be baptized, etc.

Answer

That the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children we believe without a doubt, as we have already declared. But that the salvation of children lies in their baptism and is dependent upon it we do not believe and cannot concede, for Christ accepted the children, and through grace and mercy promised them the kingdom of heaven, and not on account of or by baptism; for he neither baptized them nor commanded them to be baptized, but laid his hands upon them and blessed them.

Christ also makes it sufficiently plain to us why children are acceptable to God, inasmuch as he sets forth the children as an example, and moreover admonishes us that we should become like them; for he speaks thus to his disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 3:4; 19:14).

Since therefore Christ sets the children before us as an example and says that we should become like children, and humble ourselves, it follows without contradiction: First, that children (so long as they are in their simplicity) are innocent and reckoned by God as being without sin. Second, that there is also something good in children (although they have become partakers of the transgression and sinful nature of Adam), namely, the simple and unassuming and humble nature, in which they are pleasing to God (yet purely

by grace through Jesus Christ) so long as they remain therein; for which reason also Christ sets children before us as an example that we should in these respects become like them.

But many presumptuous people dispute about the salvation of children, and by such disputation make themselves fools in the sight of God, no matter how wise and intelligent they may be considered by the world; for they dispute and babble much about the salvation of infants, but what concerns themselves and is most necessary, namely, to learn of the children simplicity and humility as Christ admonishes us—of this they think little.

Since therefore children are saved, are included in the grace of God, and are under his hand, and the kingdom of heaven is theirs (Matt. 19:14), it is therefore a great folly to baptize infants that they may thereby be preserved and saved, and to damn those infants who die unbaptized. This is openly belittling and slandering the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ; for since through Jesus Christ the sin of the whole world is atoned for and taken away (John 1: 29), and no sin can be imputed to infants except that which comes from Adam, how then can infants be damned on account of the sin of Adam? Yea, who will charge it to the children, for whom Jesus Christ shed his precious blood? Who would damn the children to whom the Lord in his unfathomable grace and mercy, has promised the kingdom? (Matt. 19:14; Col. 2:14.) Or, who can repudiate the holy scripture which so explicitly declares that the sin of Adam and of the whole world is taken away, and that the handwriting which was against us has been blotted out and nailed on the cross (Col. 2:14), so that grace abounded more than sin (Rom. 5:20), and life has conquered death through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior? Therefore no one can blame or damn infants because of original sin, without repudiating the death, blood, and atonement of Jesus Christ. For if the infants must be damned through Adam or on account of his transgression, then Jesus Christ died in vain for them, then the death which fell upon us from Adam is not paid by Jesus Christ, then grace has not become mightier than sin, then life has not overcome death through Jesus Christ. But this is nevermore true! Firm and immovable stands the scripture, and may never be broken (Tit. 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:6), which speaks so definitely of the great and saving grace of God, which he has so richly and abundantly shown unto mankind through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:18). Faithful and true witnesses of God are the apostles, who testify so clearly that all of the curse upon men, and the sin of the whole world has been taken away by Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:13; Rom. 8:1).

Hence we conclude with the apostles and the entire holy scripture, that original sin has been paid and taken away by Jesus Christ, and that therefore children are not to be judged and damned on account of Adam's transgression (Gen. 6:5; 8:21). That the tendency of the child's nature is toward evil, does not damn them (Gen. 6:5; 8:21); yea, by the grace of God it is not accounted as sin unto them, but so long as they are simple and without the knowledge of good and evil, they are pleasing and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But why should many words be necessary? It is true and indubitable that children as well as adults— the children by their simplicity, the adults by their faith—are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:11).

It is therefore gross blindness, ignorance and nonsense to damn children if they are not baptized according to papistic ceremonial institutions and methods, for Jesus did not die in vain for them. However, it is in this matter as the Lord through Ezekiel complains of the false prophets, namely, that they would slay the souls that should not die, and save the souls alive that should not live, and this they do for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread for the sake of shameless gain (Ezek. 13:19).

It should yet be noted that the infant children of the Israelites, in the desert (Deut. 1:39), although they did not believe (for they understood neither good nor bad), and had no outward sign (for they were uncircumcised), were nevertheless, by the grace of God, acceptable to him in their simplicity, ignorance and uncircumcision, and heirs of the promised land. Why, then, should not the children of Christians be acceptable to God, and heirs of his kingdom, even though they do not believe and although they are not baptized? Is the salvation of children made more dependent upon an outward sign in the New Testament than was the case in the Old Testament? Or has God's mercy diminished, that he would not be as gracious to the children of Christians as he was to the children of Israelites? Never! "For the law," says John, "was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). From this it follows that grace has now taken precedence (Rom. 5:15) and is in full force.

Therefore, if God in the Old Testament showed his grace so abundantly to Israel, and accepted their children as heirs of the promised land, when they had no faith or any outward sign (Deut. 1: 39), that is, at a time when they understood neither good nor bad and were uncircumcised, he has far more abundantly manifested his grace toward the Christians and has chosen and accepted their children as heirs of his kingdom through Jesus Christ, not considering that they do not believe or are outwardly baptized; but they are baptized, washed and purified by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, as has already been sufficiently explained (Rom. 3:24; 5:15; Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:1).

We will now, once more return to the above mentioned words of Christ: "Suffer the children to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven," and leave them in their true, unadulterated sense, namely, that the children are saved, and the kingdom of heaven is theirs. But of baptism of children nothing is said here, for the parents brought the children to Jesus, not that they should be baptized by the Lord, but blessed by him; and Christ did not baptize them either, nor command them to be baptized, but blessed them by laying his hands upon them (Matt. 19:15). Hence infant baptism cannot be proven from this, since the children were not baptized, but blessed, by the Lord. We let this suffice for us and will not make any addition to the acts of Christ, or the example given in the scripture, as does the blind world, that we may not be under reproof or be found untrue.

In the third place, our opponents have still another subterfuge, namely, the words which Christ spoke to Nicodemus, saying: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).

From these words they would conclude that infants must be baptized, or they cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Some also say that since the Lord places water before Spirit, therefore children may be baptized without faith.

Answer

That these words of the Lord concerning the new birth, "of water and of the Spirit," do not refer to infants, but to adults and to intelligent persons alone, is not only certain and true, but incontrovertible. The reason lies in the fact that Christ here openly speaks of being born again; for he says first to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again (or from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

What the new birth is we have already stated, and in explanation of Christ's words to Nicodemus we will say again that regeneration cannot take place without the word of God, faith, and the Holy Spirit, but it takes place in the way described by the apostle Peter: "Ye were . . . born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the living word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23). With this the apostle James accords and says: "The Father of light, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1:17, 18).

To this regeneration (which is from above or of God the heavenly Father, through his eternal word by the power of his Holy Spirit, through faith in Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 1:23), belongs baptism, for it is the true ordinance of the Lord that regenerated children of God—that is, the believers—shall be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, as Peter says (Acts 2:17, 18).

Hence the aforesaid words of the Lord regarding being born of water and of the Spirit must be understood as giving the new birth the first place, but that baptism is the washing of regeneration, and that those who are born again and are baptized shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit from God through Jesus Christ, to the renewing of the heart, the transformation of the mind, and the sealing of our salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30).

That this view is right and scriptural is proved not only by the foregoing words of Jesus, that a man must be born from above or again, or he cannot see the kingdom of God, but also by the following words; for Christ, in speaking of the new birth by water and the Spirit (John 3:5) further says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit."

With these words Christ gives us clearly to know that he speaks especially of the new birth, and what a new-born being is, namely, spirit, born of the Spirit, just as a natural man is born of the flesh. And as the new birth is compared to the wind in that, as the wind does not waft or blow without its sighing or roaring, which can be heard but not seen, so it is in the new birth with the Holy Spirit's power, which can, through the Holy Spirit, be recognized in the new-born children of God, but cannot be seen with the natural

eyes or reason. Hence Christ says in the gospel (John 7:37, 38): "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." But this he says of the Spirit, whom those should receive that believe on his name. And this is to be noticed in many, that as soon as they have believed and are born anew of God, they have received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 38), and that he has revealed himself in them, of which we have examples enough given us in the holy scripture. Now, since infants have not attained to this new birth, to all that pertains to it, and cannot attain to it so long as they are without understanding and therefore incapable of exercising faith, the words of Jesus above quoted cannot be applied to them, just as many other passages of scripture do not apply to them; for the scripture speaks to adults who have understanding, of which we have already said enough (Matt. 13:9; Mark 4:9).

In the fourth place, our contradictors make the challenge that Paul writes thus to the Corinthians: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; . . . but with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (1 Cor. 10:1-5). See Ex. 13:21; 14:22; 17:6; Num. 10:10; 14: 36.

This passage our opponents understand to mean that the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt through the sea is a figure of outward baptism.

Answer

The apostle himself says that these things were given to the Israelites as an example or figure of the true essence of things which is typified thereby. Hence it cannot be taken letter for letter or be literally understood—for that is contrary to the nature or purpose of the figure and contrary to the intent of the scripture—but the letter must be changed into the spirit and the shadow into the real substance. In other words, the exodus and deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt through Moses typifies the deliverance of the human race through Jesus Christ; for Pharaoh typifies the ruler of the world, the prince of darkness (Eph. 2:2), Satan, who had power over the human race, whose servants we were, being led captive at his will (2 Tim. 2:26). The iron furnace (Deut. 4:20), and the house of bondage (Deut. 5:6) signifies the prison-house or bondage of sin in which the devil held us captive; Egypt typifies the darkness (Ex. 10: 22), in which we sat, for we all had our understanding darkened (Eph. 4:18) and did not know God as we should have known him. Moses, who at God's command led Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 3:18) and went before them as their leader, typifies to us Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our faith who opened the way for us and who delivered us from the kingdom and power of the devil. The Red Sea prefigures the blood of Jesus Christ, whereby our souls are baptized, our consciences sprinkled, and we are delivered, washed and purified from all our sins. Pharaoh and his servants, our enemies and persecutors who have ruled over us with violence, namely the devil, sin, death and hell, are all overcome, drowned and annihilated by the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross, for God has

delivered us from all sin, as the apostle says, and blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it (Col. 2:14, 15). The clouds typify the gift of the Holy Ghost which is abundantly shed abroad by God the heavenly Father upon the believers through Jesus Christ (Acts 2: 38, 39; 10:38, 44). Likewise the manna typifies the true living bread which came from heaven, that is, Jesus Christ, who is food to all believing souls. The spiritual drink, that is, the water which flowed from the rock that followed Israel when the staff of Moses smote the rock, typifies the living water of the Holy Spirit which, by the power of the Most High, springs from the spiritual Rock, that is, Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:4), and flows for the quenching and quickening of all thirsty souls, for they are refreshed in faith unto everlasting life (John 4:14; 7:38).

This is the true signification of this figure, if the scripture is to be left entire. For in this way the spirit and the letter, the substance and the shadow, agree. Or, if one is to be taken literally, and as pointing to the outward sign, then the other must be understood in the same way. But Egypt, Pharaoh, the iron furnace, the house of bondage, the manna, the water out of the rock, can be taken in no other than the spiritual sense; for how can we reconcile them with the truth if the baptism of the children of Israel and of Moses in the cloud and in the sea are to be literally understood? Beside this, we are not redeemed by outward baptism, but by the precious blood of Christ (Rom. 3:24, 25), to which sprinkling we have come by faith, and are therefore baptized unto Jesus Christ, and into his death, of which outward baptism is a sign and testimony (Rom. 6:3, 4; 1 Pet. 1:2).

Now, even though this baptism of the Israelites under Moses is literally taken as pointing to outward baptism, it still cannot be understood or explained as referring to any other than adults and intellectually responsible beings, that is, to the six hundred thousand who went out of Egypt (Ex. 12:37; Num. 11:21), among which no children, but able bodied men only, were included. The reason for this is, that the apostle not only says that they were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. 10:2), but he adds that they "did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same drink." But with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness (Num. 14:29, 32, 35). This cannot be considered as applying to the children, but to adults alone; for those who sinned were the adults who came out of Egypt (Heb. 4:6), and they were punished therefore by God, and not allowed to enter the promised land; but the children who came out of Egypt (Deut. 1: 39) and those who were born in the wilderness, entered in. From this it follows that the apostle speaks only of adults. Likewise when the scripture says that there went out to John, Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan (Matt. 3:5; Mark 1:5), none but adults and people with understanding are meant (Luke 3:10-16), as the following words show, namely that they "were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. 3:6). From this it is evident that none were baptized with the baptism of John (Luke 3:8; John 1:26) but those who believed and confessed their sins, therefore children are not included.

And if it is true that John in his baptism taught the people that were baptized of him repentance, confession of sins and faith in Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:5; Mark 1:5), how

much more should this be taught and demanded of those who receive Christian baptism? (Acts 10:34-48.)

It is well, also, to note and remember that certain disciples who had been baptized with the baptism of John, but knew nothing of the Holy Spirit, were baptized again by Paul, or by his command, in the name of Jesus; how much more then should those who under Papistry, without any knowledge of, or distinction between, good and evil (Acts 19:1-5), yea, who without the true knowledge of almighty God and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ (John 3:16), and of the Holy Spirit, are in their ignorance baptized in the Papistic way, nevermore rest satisfied with that, but should, upon attaining a clear knowledge of the Trinity, and upon confession of their faith, duly receive Christian baptism according to the command and ordinance of the Lord (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15).

Further, the fact that the apostle baptized several households—and upon which our opponents try to establish infant baptism—must likewise be understood the same way as has been above stated; that is, although the scripture speaks of households, nevertheless believers only are meant, for of the household of Stephenas, Paul himself says that they were the "first fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1 Cor. 16:15). Of the jailer's household Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles that Paul and Silas preached the word of the Lord to the jailer and to all that were in his house, and that he rejoiced*) that he with all his house believed (Acts 16:34). * *So rendered in the Froschauer translation of the Bible, which was used by Philip.—[Translator.]*

From this it may be clearly understood what kind of households were baptized, that no infant children are included, for they are not the kind of first fruits of God's creatures as he has, as the apostle says, begotten with the word of truth (Jas. 1:18), and cannot devote themselves to the ministry of the saints; they cannot hear the preached word of God, and, in short, they do not believe so long as they are infants, and know no difference between good and evil (Deut. 1:39).

In the fifth place, our opponents use as an expedient to establish infant baptism the words of Paul to the Corinthians: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13).

From this they argue that baptism is an incorporation into the church of Christ, and that outside of this church there is no salvation; therefore infants must be baptized or they cannot obtain salvation.

Answer

That children are not saved by outward baptism, but by the grace of Jesus Christ, we have already sufficiently proven with clear and incontrovertible evidence from the holy scripture, and will, by God's grace, hereafter explain the same still further; but the above quoted statement of the apostle does not refer to infants, but to adults and those who have understanding. Why? Because the apostle here writes expressly of the baptism of the Spirit and of incorporation into the church of Christ, which takes place through the

spirit of faith, for these are the words: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink*) into one Spirit." * *The word "into" is to be omitted. See Greek Testament.—[Translator.]* From these words it is readily seen that Paul here speaks specially of that baptism which is of the Spirit, and therefore means those who understand and believe; for they are qualified for such baptism while children are not; for what is the baptism of the Spirit other than that we receive from God our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33), by which we learn to truly know God and to truly believe in Jesus Christ, as the apostle testifies, saying "that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but the Holy Ghost, who divides unto every man the gifts of faith and all spiritual gifts severally as he will" (1 Cor. 12:3, 11). Faith, therefore, is the gift of the Holy Spirit by which all believers are gathered into one body, and are then baptized as a testimony and proof of the true, real inner life and of their spiritual fellowship with Christ and all the saints.

Since, then, infants have not the spirit of faith, how are they to be baptized by this same Spirit into one body with all believers? Or, if someone would (though wrongly and by force) maintain the idea of infants having the gift of Spirit and of faith, then must infants also by the same Spirit not only be baptized with believers into one body, but also partake of the Lord's Supper; for all who have, by one Spirit, been baptized into one body and made to drink one Spirit, and thus have become one body and one bread in Jesus Christ, must also, according to the ordinance of the Lord and the teaching of the apostles, break bread one with another (1 Cor. 10:36; 11:19).

In conclusion this is the idea: If infants must be baptized, then they must also observe the communion of the Lord's Supper, for the apostles brake bread with believing and baptized Christians (Acts 2:46). And now, since infants are not (and rightly so) admitted to the Lord's Supper, it is openly shown that infants are considered as being without understanding and faith, exactly as the scripture, as well as daily observation amply teaches and shows. Or, if infants are credited with understanding and faith (though against the plain words of scriptures, Deut. 1:39), then it is wrong to keep them from the Lord's Supper; for to those who have true faith in Jesus Christ, and through the Spirit have been baptized with all believers into one body, the Lord's Supper may not be denied; yea, being one body and one bread with all believers, they must also with them partake of one bread.

Erasmus of Rotterdam writes in his apology to the Spanish bishop that a pope with Augustine and certain other theologians had decided that infants must be made partakers of the sacraments of the altar (as they say), even as is now commonly done under popery. Against this, the others maintain that infants must be baptized, and consider them saved when they are baptized, but do not allow them to come to the Lord's Supper.

Both views are false and wrong, nothing but folly and ignorance, all because people will follow blind reason and not the expressed words of God; for if baptism were for infants, then the Lord's Supper also properly would be for them. But as unqualified as they are for the Lord's Supper, so unqualified are they for Christian baptism; for baptism

is as much a sacramental sign as is the Lord's Supper, for the reason that whatever belongs to a sacrament of Christ, namely faith, confession, the mystery of the sacrament, in a good conscience with subsequent strength and the working of God unto all godliness, belongs also to baptism. And as little as it is inimical to the salvation of infants not to partake of the sacrament, with all Christian believers, so little will it be injurious to them to remain unbaptized. There is a time for all things and we must govern ourselves accordingly.

Lastly, our opponents would prove their position regarding infant baptism by the covenant which God made with Abraham and the rite of circumcision which God gave him as a seal or sign of the covenant (Gen. 15:18; 17:4-14; 22:17, 18), and liken baptism to circumcision; hence we will also briefly present our understanding and conclusion on the matter.

God covenanted with Abraham that he would be the God of his seed, and gave him circumcision as a sign and seal of the covenant. But circumcision is a figure showing that in the new-born children of the true Abraham—God, the heavenly Father—there must be the circumcision of the heart with the living stone Jesus Christ (Col. 2:11; 1 Cor. 10:4).

Likewise also before this, God made his covenant with Noah, giving him the rainbow as a sign of the covenant (Gen. 9:13), and through the rainbow Jesus Christ is portrayed to us as a true mark of divine grace that is in heaven at the right hand of God as a Propitiator and Intercessor for all believers before God the eternal Father (1 John 2: 3).

These and other like signs and figures of divine grace are given by God in the Old Testament to the believers, all of which points to Jesus Christ, through whom we all receive grace from God (John 1:16); for he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29); he is the only Mediator between God and man, he is the Propitiator and Peacemaker, who by his bitter death and precious blood has wrought for us peace, salvation and eternal life (Col. 1:20; 1 Tim. 2:9; Eph. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:3).

Therefore the Abrahamic figure of the true spiritual being is to be understood in a twofold way: First, that God, the heavenly Father, is represented by Abraham, and that Isaac typifies Christ and all Christians; Sarah is a figure of the New Testament; circumcision of the flesh is a figure of the circumcision of the heart, which is the circumcision made by Christ and which is the operation of the Spirit, for thus is circumcision everywhere designated and explained, as we have already stated.

This being the case, we must understand in God's dealing with Abraham that God made a covenant with Abraham and his seed, that is, with all believers, and by grace accepted them as heirs of his eternal kingdom, and for our sakes gave Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, unto death (John 3:16), a sure sign of divine grace; for in this especially is recognized the love and mercy of the Father, that he gave his only begotten Son for us unto death, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life (1 John 4:9; John 3:16).

But the pledge and true seal of God and Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit who is poured out by God through Jesus Christ into the hearts of believers as a witness of the divine covenant, the sealing of salvation and the renewing of the spirit and mind (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7; Eph. 4:23; 1:18; Rom. 8:16; 12:2).

This grace, and this covenant of God with all believing Christians, is not linked with any outward sign, but with Jesus Christ alone. He is the only and true sign of grace (Rom. 5:2; Heb. 5:3), and faith alone comprehends this through the Holy Spirit, who beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Rom. 8:16). Therefore it is a want of understanding in those who do not look upon Christ, but upon baptism, as the true sign of grace, thus ascribing to baptism what is to be ascribed to Christ alone.

It is true, indeed, that baptism and the Lord's Supper are signs, by which the Lord sets before our eyes his grace, his suffering and death, and all that he has done for us (Luke 22:17; Mark 14: 22; Matt. 26:25; 1 Cor. 11:22), for both baptism and the Lord's Supper are open evidences of God's love and the kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 5:3). Nevertheless Christ is and ever will be the true, only sign of grace (Ex. 25:22), and all outward signs point us from them to him, that is to Christ, and admonish and remind us of him, testify of him, and in the practice or observance of those signs nothing is accomplished toward our salvation, except what Christ himself worketh in us, and we receive and accept by faith (John 1:11), for it is Christ who baptizes us within with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and receives us into fellowship with him and as members of his body, who sprinkles our conscience with his blood, cleanses and washes away our sins; it is Christ who makes us partakers of him in the Supper, who feeds us with the true bread of heaven, who gives us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink; that is, his grace it is, and his work in us (Matt. 3:11), that we, through faith, in the Spirit, by the power of his word, by his flesh once offered for us on the cross, and through his blood, once shed for us, have everlasting life (John 19:34; Heb. 9:14; John 6:32; Ex. 16:5).

Thus Christ fulfills in us the signification of the sacraments, for, when we practice or receive the outward rites of baptism or the Lord's Supper, we look, not upon those outward signs, but preeminently upon Christ Jesus himself, for of his fullness all we receive, and grace for grace, as John says (John 1:16). And as it is written that God gave the children of Israel a saving sign in the wilderness, and that those who looked upon it were healed (Num. 21: 8, 9), not by the looking on with natural eyes, but by the Lord, the Savior of all, so also no outward sign will help us, but the Lord Jesus Christ by his grace alone. This rule applies to all that the scripture says concerning signs, although according to the letter it sometimes seems to give a different meaning.

Further, so far as the practice is concerned, there is no similarity between baptism and circumcision, for in the first place God expressly commanded in the Old Testament that infants must be circumcised, but did not command the giving of any instruction previous to circumcision, nor demanded faith, but it was practiced upon children who had no understanding, as a figure or sign. But of infant baptism Christ Jesus has uttered not one specific word. Besides this he commanded and demanded instruction and faith prior

to baptism (Matt. 28:15; Mark 16:15), and no one can give scriptural proof that baptism was otherwise practiced in the church of Christ.

To the statement that as God in the beginning gave circumcision to the ancients, and as it was afterward practiced with infants, and that therefore baptism must be likewise administered to infants, we reply briefly that Abraham received circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of his faith, and at the same time God commanded him to circumcise every man child in all his household. Abraham did so and not otherwise (Gen. 17:12, 23-26). God at that time uttered a specific command regarding circumcision, but now Christ has instituted baptism for believers, but of infant baptism he has said not a word. If infant baptism were pleasing to God, and were necessary to the salvation of infants (as the perverted world thinks and their learned men so beautifully babble), could it be possible that Christ Jesus (who came from heaven to declare unto us all truth and to make known to us all that he had heard of his Father (John 15:15), should not in the whole New Testament have uttered one definite word and command regarding infant baptism, the same as God did in the Old Testament regarding the circumcision of infants? Moreover, Paul shunned not to declare unto us the whole counsel of God, but of infant baptism he has not written one iota (Acts 20:21).

Therefore we are certain that Christ does not demand baptism of children because he has given no command regarding it. He demands no baptism of children before they believe, and no faith before they have been taught the word of God, and they cannot be taught the word of God before they have understanding (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Rom. 10:14), and they have no understanding so long as they are infants, as has already been shown, and as the scripture declares.

The second reason why the practice of circumcision may not be compared to that of baptism is that God had appointed a time unto Israel, namely the eighth day, when the rite of circumcision was to be observed. Christ also appointed a time when baptism should be administered, namely, upon confession of faith (Acts 8:12, 36-38). As at that time no infant was to be circumcised before the eighth day, so also in the spiritual Israel, in the Christian church, no child is to be baptized unless he first believe and confess his faith. For baptism is divinely appointed to follow faith, as the rite of circumcision was appointed for the eighth day (Mark 16:15).

The third reason is that in Israel the male infants only were circumcised, but not female infants, nor was any outward sign given them, and yet these latter were just as much God's children in his covenant as were the former. From this it is clearly to be understood that circumcision above all things is not a figure of baptism and bears no comparison to it, or else boys only would have to be baptized; but now baptism is administered to boys and girls alike without any distinction of sex. What similarity is there then between the practice of circumcision and the practice of Christian baptism? That male infants alone were circumcised in Israel is, according to our understanding, a figure pointing to the fact that the spiritual children of Abraham, the Israel of God, whose circumcision is that of the heart (Rom. 2:29), must possess a manly nature, character and power of faith (Gal. 6:12-17; Eph. 4:11-15; Col. 2:11).

The male infants remained uncircumcised seven days, yet they were before, as well as after circumcision, children of God under the covenant, for their salvation lay not in circumcision of the flesh, but in the grace and mercy of God who in his everlasting love had elected and chosen them, and had made a covenant with Abraham that he would be the God of his seed (Gen. 17:8). It is also clearly understood that Ishmael, according to the flesh, was a son of Abraham and was also circumcised as well as Isaac, nevertheless God did not make his covenant with Ishmael, but with Isaac; thus Ishmael was not an heir in the household of Abraham, but Isaac alone who was the child of promise born of Sarah, the freewoman (Rom. 9:7-9; Gal. 4:22, 23), and shows us that God, our heavenly Father, has by his grace chosen the children of the spiritual Sarah, that is, of the New Testament; they are the children of promise and are accounted as seed (Gal. 3: 29), and their salvation rests upon the unfathomable grace and mercy of God, and in the innocent death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:7; Gen. 17:8; 21:1; Rom. 9:7; Col. 1:14; Rom. 3:14).

Briefly then, as circumcision was practiced by the Israel of the flesh, so baptism is to be practiced by the spiritual children of Israel, the new-born children of God, that is, believers in Christ. For as circumcision was commanded by God and was appointed for the eighth day, so also baptism has been instituted by Christ and commanded and ordained to follow faith (Mark 16:15; Acts 8:36). And as in the Old Testament the salvation of children rested upon the grace of God, and not upon circumcision in the flesh (Gen. 17:10), even so now, in the New Testament, the salvation of children rests upon the mercy, love and goodness of our heavenly Father, and in the atonement of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:29; 5:1; 11:6), and not upon outward baptism. And, lastly, like as the male children in Israel who always remained uncircumcised seven days, and in the wilderness remained altogether uncircumcised as were the female children, and inasmuch as the lack of this external sign was not inimical to their salvation, and they were not excluded on this account from the covenant and congregation of God, so also it is not inimical to the salvation of children of Christians, nor are they excluded from the covenant and fellowship of God, even though they have not received the outward rite of baptism, for they are washed and baptized with the blood of Jesus Christ, which saves their souls (Heb. 12:14; Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:24).

But they are to receive the sign of baptism at the appointed time, upon confession of their faith, according to the ordinance and institution of Christ, and the custom of the apostles.

Inasmuch as we have written of the misuse of baptism, we will also make a few observations on how by some people baptism as an external rite is rejected altogether. This, however, neither surprises us nor causes us to falter; for we confess and know full well, by the grace of God, that what is Christ-like and according to the gospel is considered foolishness and is ridiculed by the world; also, that whatsoever is highly esteemed among men is an abomination and foolishness with God, as Christ himself says in the gospel (Luke 16:15). Hence God and the world are opposed to each other in this that the wisdom of God is foolishness with the world, and that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know

them, because they are spiritually discerned." Likewise the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, as the apostle shows (1 Cor. 1:18; 2:14).

Therefore it is no wonder that baptism is despised by the world. But what of that? It is God's ordinance, thoroughly grounded in the gospel, and he that despises it despises not a human but a divine ordinance; yea, he derides the name of God in whom Christians are baptized; he despises Christ Jesus and his death, in which believers are baptized (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3; Mark 16:15), and he disobeys the gospel, because the gospel teaches and shows that baptism must be received upon confession of faith.

We will let the world go with all their mockers and despisers of divine truth, for they are blind and leaders of the blind. But we desire, by the grace of God, to follow Christ Jesus, for he is set before us by God the Father as an example, that we may become like him (Rom. 8:29); yea, he has come into the world as the true light, and whosoever follows him shall not walk in darkness (John 8: 12), but will have the light of life.

Since therefore Jesus Christ, our Example Guide and Prince of our faith, himself personally received (Matt. 3:13) and instituted baptism and subjoined it to the teaching of the gospel and faith (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; 1 Cor. 1:13-17), we have in this only Jesus Christ, the eternal wisdom and truth of God, example and evidence sufficient to show how necessary baptism is, and that it may by no means be derided or considered insignificant (John 14:21, 24).

Moreover the apostle of the Lord at his command and in his name taught, extolled and practiced baptism as the passages and evidences above referred to from the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles clearly show. Therefore both the institution of our Lord and the teaching and practice of the apostles suffice us to stand firmly thereon as upon a sure and immovable foundation of truth, against all who abuse and deride Christian baptism, whom we have no desire to follow, but much more Christ Jesus and his apostles, and hold baptism as an admirable institution of .the Lord, and belonging to the gospel, linked with faith, and which must, according to the example and command of Christ, according to the teaching and practice of his apostles, be received by everyone who believes the gospel, upon confession of his faith.

We are neither weakened nor disconcerted by the fact that some (who, having the nature of spiders, turn everything good into evil, yea, change honey into poison) revile us and ask us what benefit baptism is to us and why we suffer persecution when we ourselves confess that salvation is not dependent upon outward signs. They also say that faith and love can break and change all outward ordinances and institutions of the Lord, such as baptism, the Lord's Supper, etc.; upbraiding us by saying that as Moses in the wilderness discontinued circumcision, so may also Christians discontinue the practice of baptism and do as they please about it.

Although we pay no attention to those who are so ingenious in their sallies and questions, and have already answered them, nevertheless we will again answer this much: First, as in the Old Testament salvation was pre-eminently based on the grace of God,

and not on circumcision (which, as an ordinance of God, was beneficial to those who obeyed the law, see Rom. 3:1, 2), so also now under the gospel, salvation is pre-eminently based upon the mercy and grace of God, our heavenly Father, and in the atonement of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3: 24; 5:1, 2; 11:4-6; 8:1-3). But on this account, baptism, as an ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, is none the less beneficial and of service to all who believe and obey the gospel; for the words of the Lord are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63), and man liveth by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4), and the signs which Jesus Christ has appended to the word are not to be despised. For, inasmuch as they are given and commanded, therefore they may not be despised without despising God, nor neglected or omitted without danger. Therefore faithful Abraham, whom all believers must imitate and walk in the footsteps of his faith, by his faith did not reject outward circumcision (Gen. 17:10), although it was but a sign and insignificant, but he received and accepted it as a seal of his faith (Rom. 4:11). Likewise also should Christians by their faith not reject baptism, but faithfully and earnestly receive' and accept it, for they have not Abraham only, but Jesus Christ for an example.

Therefore those make vain boast of faith and love, who in their boasted obedience to the word do not follow faithful Abraham, yea, and Jesus Christ, and all that they do aside from and contrary to the practice of the apostles, yea, aside from the teaching and institution, example and command of Christ in connection with baptism, are wrong, false and idolatrous; but they who follow Christ, receive baptism according to his word, will not be deceived, for Christ is the truth and the life (John 14: 6).

It is also well to note that the Lord met Moses on his return journey to Egypt while he was in an inn and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son (Ex. 4:24, 25), and the Lord left him. If this came upon Moses, what will come upon those despisers and revilers of Jesus Christ and his ordinance?

The fact that Moses discontinued circumcision in the wilderness does not prove that Christian baptism may be likewise omitted. For we are not to be pre-eminently guided by figures and types, or by the imperfections of the law (Heb. 7:11), but by the perfect, true essentials and spirit of the gospel (Rom. 6:14). We are not under the law, but under the gospel (Rom. 7:6). We are not to serve in the old ministration of the letter, but in the ministration of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6). Lastly, we are not disciples of Moses, but of Christ, therefore also have we received a command of the heavenly Father that we shall hear Jesus Christ, his beloved Son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5), be obedient to his words, and follow his example. Nevertheless we do not mean herewith that we despise Moses with his figures and shadows, but behold them with spiritual eyes, yea, that we would discern and comprehend them according to the realities of the New Testament.

Moreover baptism is not now omitted by force of necessity, as was the case with circumcision in the wilderness, but it has been completely changed into an idolatrous abuse; for beside baptism as instituted by Christ for penitent believers, and as practiced everywhere according to divine injunction by the apostles, but now perverted into infant baptism by antichrist, there is so much of shameful practice and idolatrous ceremony in

connection with infant baptism that it cannot be looked upon as a Christian rite or deed by intelligent, God-fearing, believing people, but everyone who fears God and is taught of him may well complain with the prophet: "How is the gold (the word of God) become dim ! How is the fine gold changed!" (Neh. 4:1). "Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water" (Isa. 1:22). The heavenly Father's plant is sadly trampled (Matt. 15:13), and a plant that has been planted by human hands is set in its place. The blind Pharisees have set the institution of the Lord at naught for the sake of their own, and this pleases the world well, hence the blind lead the blind until both fall into the ditch. The almighty God preserve us through Jesus Christ from these blind leaders. Amen.

Concluding Words on Baptism

This is our confession of baptism as instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the view of the scripture, which God in his grace has given us. But before God, the righteous Judge, it is unjust for certain people, out of malice, some because of ignorance, to persecute, villify and abuse us on account of baptism, yea, to liken us to the Donatists, Munsterites, and other turbulent, erring spirits, saying we are of the same kind. A great injustice is done to us. But that some hypocrites (the same as Judas Iscariot, Simon Magnus and others did) receive baptism under false colors and abuse the same, causes us heartfelt sorrow, yea, we deplore with distress of soul that many people at this time are covering their guile in regard to the holy, precious name of God with the cloak of false piety and with distorted writings, but we are not thereby weakened in our faith, for we have not built upon men, but upon the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, of which Jesus Christ is the cornerstone, and therefore we say with the apostle: "Shall the unbelief of men make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Rom. 3:3, 4).

Therefore we maintain that our Lord Jesus Christ's ordinance of baptism is ever pleasing to him, and remains as a word and command of God, regardless of the fact that some so fearfully misuse baptism, or that some despise it, whereby they heap upon themselves the wrath of God and will not escape his judgment.

But we thank God, the almighty Father, through Jesus Christ, who by his grace has given us a better understanding, for we acknowledge one God and eternal Father who created us (Eph. 4:5), one Lord and Savior, the only begotten Son of the living God, who redeemed us, that is, Jesus Christ; we acknowledge one Holy Spirit, who is the true Comforter and Teacher (John 14:16; 15:16; 16:7; Eph. 4:4); we acknowledge one Christian Church, one faith, one new birth, one baptism, which is to be received upon confession of faith, and the new birth, as a seal and sign of faith and as a washing of regeneration (Rom. 4:3).

In short, we hope, by the grace of God, that we confess all that the sacred scripture teaches us to believe and confess, excepting always human weakness and imperfection. And we desire in quietness to live according to our faith, being obedient to the higher powers in all things that are not contrary to God (Rom. 13:1), to seek peace

and to live peaceably with all men, as much as lieth in us (Rom. 12:18). Finally, it is our mind and purpose to follow Jesus Christ by his grace; God knows— for he searches the heart and tries the reins (Jer. 17:10)—that we do not lie. We will also, with God's help, briefly present our confession of the Lord's Supper.

Our Confession Concerning The Lord's Supper

We will not undertake a lofty, subtle and sophistical dissertation upon the Lord's Supper, for such treatises injure far more than they promote, the commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ, love and unity, in behalf of which the Lord's Supper was divinely instituted. We shall rather present our views and belief on this subject in simple and clear language, as God gives us grace.

In the first place, we confess that we must believe all that is written of the Lord's Supper, especially what our Lord Jesus Christ in his great love commanded the believers to do in remembrance of his death as an admonition to promotion and strengthening of Christian love and unity, in such form, that he took the bread in his hand, and, after blessing it, broke it and gave it to his disciples to eat (Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; Matt. 26:26), and said: "This is my body which is given for you." After this he gave his disciples the cup that they should all drink out of it, and said: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you; this do in remembrance of me."

This institution and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be observed by all Christians. At a meeting of Christians bread and wine are to be set forth, and the death of the Lord is to be proclaimed by a minister of the word and taken thoroughly to heart by every Christian, and because of which thanks are to be given to God, after which the bread is to be broken and received and eaten by every Christian, and the wine is to be drunk in true faith and in remembrance of the fact that Christ Jesus gave his body for us and shed his blood for us. This must be firmly believed, without doubting, for we maintain that above all other things one must believe, and that faith must conform to every word of God.

Where this is not the case, human reason must prevail and faith perish (John 7:16).

Thus the holy scripture teaches us that at the communion supper of our Lord Jesus Christ four things or points must be believed and taken to heart, viz.:

Firstly, that Jesus Christ broke the bread, gave it to his disciples (1 Cor. 11:23, 24), and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you" (Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19).

Secondly, that Paul said to the Corinthians: The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10:16.)

Thirdly, that the bread and the wine in the supper is a token of remembrance of the suffering and death of Christ, for he himself says (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24, 26): "As oft as ye do this, ye do it in remembrance of me." Moreover Paul says: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do*" shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). * *In the Froschauer translation used by Philip, the Greek version is more nearly followed and says: "As often as ye eat ye shall declare (or announce) the Lord's death," etc.—[Translator.]*

Fourthly, that the Lord says thus of the cup of communion: "This cup is the new testament in my blood" (1 Cor. 11:25). Matthew and Mark say: "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20).

All this concerning the Lord's Supper we believe without any doubt, and confess it. And when we examine and everywhere look closely into the above words of scripture in order to thoroughly understand them, and to obtain no other than a true sense and comprehension therefrom—that accords in all cases with the scriptures, and is contrary to no scripture or the faith—we find nothing else than that our Lord Jesus Christ, out of love that was great to overflowing, gave his body for us, and shed his blood for us, and that he instituted and left for us as a memorial the supper of bread and wine, that we remember with thanksgiving that he gave for us the bread of his body, and for us shed the wine of his blood.) Hence the words of Christ at the supper: "This is my body," "this is my blood," must be taken in their spiritual significance for how else could it be that in the Lord's Supper the bread and wine were at the same time bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ, the communion of his body and blood, and a memorial of his suffering and death, a new testament or the blood of the new testament, and all scripture be reconciled? We will now look carefully into all these scripture passages and by God's grace thoroughly explain them.

In the first place the Lord Jesus Christ instituted his supper with bread and wine, and this accords perfectly with the statement, that he is himself the living bread, come down from heaven, by which souls by faith are spiritually nourished into eternal life (John 6:33). He is also the true vine (John 15:7), planted by the true Husbandman, God his Father, and his word is the pure wine (Isa. 55:1), by which the believing soul is refreshed and made to rejoice in the Holy Ghost. Hence as often as Christians eat of the bread of the supper they are admonished and reminded of this.

After giving thanks, Christ broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you." On account of these words there is much dispute both among the learned and unlearned. Many firmly maintain that Christ is bodily in the bread. With this we do not agree, and do not understand the words above referred to literally, but spiritually. The reasons that lead us to this conclusion are many, and we will here present and point out a few:

In the scripture the word eating is often synonymous with believing, but the food and drink that are eaten and drunk is the bread of heaven, the word of God, the water of the Holy Spirit, yea, the flesh and blood of Christ. This is evident in the sixth chapter of

John, where the Savior says: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6: 35). And again he says: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). And again: "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (John 6:55, 56).

From all this it incontrovertibly follows that he has eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of Christ who believes in Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who died for us.

Thus in the scripture, eating often signifies believing, for Jesus is the true bread of heaven (John 6:33), which is eaten, and the bread of heaven is God's word, and the Word was made flesh (John 1:14), and the flesh of Christ was sacrificed and given for us that the soul of him who believes in the crucified Jesus Christ is fed with the bread of heaven (John 6:47, 48), with the word of God, yea, with the flesh and the blood of Christ; for these three—the bread of heaven, the word of God, and the flesh and the blood of Christ—are all alike called the bread of life, and Jesus himself in the gospel speaks of one as of the other without any distinction. For in the first place, he speaks at some length of the bread of heaven and calls it the bread of life; then he speaks in the same way and manner of his flesh and blood and calls his flesh meat indeed,*) and his blood drink indeed; but lastly—when some of his disciples understood his words literally, and therefore could not believe or endure them (John 6: 60)—he explained all that he had said of the bread of heaven, of the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood, and in conclusion said: "The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the spirit that quickeneth: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6: 63), as much as to say: All that I have said of the bread of heaven, likewise of eating my flesh and of drinking my blood, is said, meant, and is to be understood of my words, for they are spirit, and life, and meat for believing souls.* *The German, like the Greek, renders it "True Meat" and "True Drink."*—[Translator.]

Therefore whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who was crucified and died for us (Matt. 18:5; 26:25), and trusts in him, receives Jesus Christ, the word of the Father, is fed with the heavenly manna, yea, he eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Jesus Christ (John 1:1; Ex. 16:15; Num. 20:13), but spiritually with the mouth of the soul, and not literally, with the natural mouth, for spiritual food (that is, the flesh and the blood of Christ) must be spiritually received.

From this it can be clearly taken that at the Lord's Supper, Christ, in his statements about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, spoke figuratively, and meant them to be spiritually understood. For what he here (in the gospel according to John) once taught at such length, and impressed upon his disciples regarding the spiritual eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood, and moreover clearly and expressly repudiates and reproves the carnal conception of eating his natural flesh and drinking his natural blood (which idea some, through their lack of understanding, have gathered from his words), that he surely has not changed in the Lord's Supper (for his word is unchangeable), nor

broken (for his word may not be broken, Matt. 24:35), nor abrogated (for his word endureth forever, 1 Pet. 1:25), but much more has confirmed and established the same.

Therefore what Christ enunciated and decreed in John, must stand without any doubt or controversy, namely, that the bread which he gives us to eat, which is also his flesh, and which he has given for the life of the world, is the true living bread which came down from heaven, God's word, which we receive and accept by faith, so that our souls are thereby fed, refreshed and strengthened unto eternal life.

Jesus explains his own words regarding the Lord's Supper when he says: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given (or broken) for you" (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19).

The last words explain the first, for it is certain and positively true, and incontrovertible, that not the bread, but the actual body of Christ which sat at the table with the disciples and gave the bread and the wine, and said the words: "This is my body"—this body, and no other—was given, broken, and offered upon the cross for us. How can we believe otherwise when Christ himself says that his body, his natural body, that was conceived by the Holy Ghost (Matt. 1:18), and born of the virgin Mary (Luke 2:7), was given unto death for us, but the apostles ate the bread and drank the wine; thereby -they, with all believers, were assured of salvation, which Christ wrought for us with his body and blood.

Judas also ate of the bread and drank of the wine, yet he did not receive the flesh and blood of Christ; for all that God gives us in the use of the sacraments we receive by faith, and God works in his chosen ones only through his Spirit that which the sacraments outwardly signify. Therefore it is impossible to partake of Christ and his gifts without faith. Still less possible is it for the unbelieving and wicked (in whom Satan dwells) to receive the pure, spotless and holy flesh and precious blood of Christ. Only the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness is fed and refreshed thereby as with spiritual food and spiritual drink, and is thereby confirmed and preserved in the fellowship of Christ, as he himself says: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in-me, and I in him (John 6:54, 56). From this it follows incontrovertibly that the unbelieving and wicked have no more part in the flesh and blood of Christ than that they themselves are and dwell in Christ, and Christ in them. Although they, like Judas, may eat of the bread, they do not thereby become partakers of the blood of Jesus Christ, but much more, are guilty of (or offenders against) it. And this is just what Paul writes to the Corinthians, namely: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11: 27). For to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ and to partake of the body and blood of Christ are not the same, but are widely different; for by faith man becomes spiritually a partaker of Christ and his gifts, yea, and his flesh and blood; but by the misuse of the Lord's Supper, man becomes guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and eats and drinks damnation to himself.

Of this we have an example in Judas; for although he ate the bread with the apostles, and drank the wine, nevertheless the bread was to him not the communion of the body of Christ, nor the cup the communion of his blood, as it was to the other apostles;

for he was before, during, and after the Lord's Supper in the communion of Satan. But those who eat Christ, are in his communion, as he declares in the foregoing words, and cannot be in the communion of Satan. Therefore Paul says: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and the table of devils" (1 Cor. 10: 21). Now, if the cup of the Lord cannot be drunk with the cup of devils nor the Lord's bread be eaten with the offering of devils, how much less can the cup and bread of the Lord, yea, the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, be eaten and drunk by the wicked in whom Satan dwells!

But as the apostate Christians by their backsliding from God and his word, by their willful sin and rejection of the truth and of the Holy Spirit, crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and trample him underfoot (Heb. 6:1; 10:26), so also the hypocrites by the misuse of the Lord's Supper become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But now, although Christ is not again crucified bodily in his human person (for he died once for our sins, and death has no more dominion over him (Rom. 6:10), but he sits personally at the right hand of his Father in heavenly places (Eph. 1:20), nevertheless he is still crucified by the wicked, as the apostle says, for they are co-partners and followers of the bloodthirsty Pharisees and Jews who crucified and killed Jesus Christ.

In the same sense Christ is not eaten bodily by the wicked and false Christians, nevertheless they, by the misuse of the Lord's Supper, become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, for they eat the Lord's bread without spirit, without faith, without love for Christ and the brethren, without discerning the body of Christ. Yea, they have evil in their minds against the Lord and their neighbor, as may be readily seen by their works; therefore it is impossible for them to receive the Lord Jesus Christ through the bread, but as with the traitor Judas, into whom Satan entered (although he was in him before) after Christ had given him the sop (John 13:27), so it is with these. But Christ has no fellowship with Satan, nor with the children of unbelief (2 Cor. 6:15), in whom Satan dwells and works. All these have neither fellowship with Christ, nor Christ with them; yea, where Christ enters, Satan must depart, as all gospel parables clearly indicate (Matt. 12:29).

The scripture at times speaks figuratively, and calls many things otherwise literally than they are to be understood spiritually and in reality. Thus the scripture applies the name "the Door to the sheepfold," "the True Vine," "a Rock" (John 15:1; 10:7; 1 Cor. 10:4, etc.) and other names to Christ, which must be spiritually understood and explained.

It is also a common mode of speaking, in the scriptures, to give to the sign the name of that which it indicates or characterizes.

Thus Christ, in the Lord's Supper, calls the bread his body, and the cup his blood. He does not mean that his bodily substance is in the bread and the cup, but that both bread and blood signify and indicate that Christ gave his body for us and shed his blood for us, and that we through the power and as a result of his one holy sacrifice— namely, the offering of his flesh for us once, and the shedding of his blood for our sin once for all (Heb. 9:12; 10:10)—in the spirit, by true faith, have eternal life. Therefore when he gave

the bread and the cup to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body," "Drink ye all of it," "This is my blood of the New Testament," he added, "which is given for you," or "which is shed for you," by which he gives us to understand that by means of the bread and the cup of the Supper we are to remember and be assured of our redemption and reconciliation with God the Father through the offering of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; also that thereby we become renewed in and reminded of the spiritual fellowship which we have with Christ, namely, that through faith he is in us with his spirit, and we in him; yea, that he is our head (Eph. 5: 25) and we his members, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones, and therefore also partake of all that he has wrought by the offering of his body and shedding of his blood, which is peace with God, forgiveness of sins, righteousness salvation and everlasting life.

We are greatly surprised that people are so foolish as to try to incorporate and unite the corporeal body of Christ with the elements of the bread and wine, simply because in the Lord's Supper he has called the bread his body, etc., and do not observe that in John he speaks so expressly and much more of the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood, than he does at the Supper; nevertheless he meant a spiritual eating, that is, faith, although he spoke literally and figuratively of it, which they also acknowledge and confess, and yet at the same time they on the other hand would understand the words regarding the Lord's Supper in an entirely carnal sense, eat the corporeal body of Christ in the bread, and receive and drink his natural blood in the cup. In this way Christ would be divided and at variance with himself, even though he is the truth itself (John 14:6), and his words everlasting, and that shall not pass away, as he himself declares (Matt. 24:35).

The scriptures so clearly and abundantly show—and we believe and confess—that Jesus Christ was an entirely human person, like us (excepting sin and all sinful characteristics, Heb. 2:14; '5:2), and is now with the same, not on earth, but in heaven, at the right hand of God and will remain there until the last day, when he will appear from heaven in person in the glory of his Father and his angels, to judge the living and the dead (Heb. 1:3, 13; 9:24; Psa. 110:1; Matt. 16:27; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26).

This is an article of our Christian faith; this is the word of the Lord, which he addressed to his disciples, and said: "The poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always" (Matt. 26:11). For, he said: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John 16:28). In proof of this the evangelist Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles that Christ, in the presence of his disciples, was taken up in a cloud. And, while they looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them, in white apparel; which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11). both Peter and Paul likewise testify that Christ sitteth at the right hand of the almighty God forever (1 Pet. 3:22; Col. 3:1) until he make his enemies his footstool (Heb. 1:13; 10:13), but unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation*) (Heb. 9:28). * *Another rendering of this verse is: "So also*

the Anointed One will appear a Second time without a Sin-offering to those who are expecting him, in order to salvation."— [Translator.]

The theory that some advance, that Christ dwells bodily in all creatures, and therefore also in the bread and wine of the communion, also has no value here, but is an open, barefaced lie, and a falsification of the scripture, against the plain testimony of Christ and his apostles.

It is true that Christ with his divine power is in. all things (Heb. 1: 3) since all things are made and upheld by him, but he is not everywhere in his human body (Col. 2:5), nor in all creatures, nor in all places, even as the angel declared when he said to the women who were standing at the grave of our Lord: "Fear ye not, for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:5, 6). But what is the need of writing much about it. Christ himself says again and again in the gospel that he had gone to the Father and that he was no longer in the world, which must always be understood as meaning his human body and not his spiritual being and divine power.

These and other reasons move, yea, compel us, so that we cannot believe that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God, who is one with the Father, is bodily in the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper, but we believe that in divine glory and in human form he is personally at the right hand of God, his heavenly Father; but in his spirit he is in and with his disciples, the true Christians, unto the end of the world, as he himself says (Matt. 28:20).

Herewith is explained, in part, why we do not believe that Jesus Christ is bodily in the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper. Those who teach that, we reject as perverted expounders of holy scripture. Moreover we have, in our opinion, sufficiently shown from holy scripture, that to truly believe in Christ is to eat his flesh and drink his blood (John 6:53, 54), yet not naturally, but spiritually even as Christ also had hidden meat of which his disciples knew nothing, for he said to his disciples: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of" (John 4:32). Is it a wonder, then, that the blind world neither knows anything of, nor understands about, the true nourishment of believers? "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me" (John 4:34). Hence he has also commanded us to labor for that meat, for he says in the gospel: "Labor ... for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (John 6:27). As it was Christ's meat to do the will of his heavenly Father, so also it is meat which God and the Son of man, Jesus Christ, give us, that we do the will of God, and do his work, that is, that we believe in Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, accept and obey his word, for that is God's work, will, and command, as can be read and seen (John 6:29).

But now is the world so blinded and perverted, that it does not even think of laboring for such meat or to desire it of Christ, but allows itself to imagine that if it eats and drinks the bread and wine of the altar of its own sacrament (as it is called) merely as a matter of custom, although with the false idea and the superstitious and idolatrous conception that it is receiving Christ bodily, that this is doing the work! Oh, no! Those who imagine this will find themselves deceived when they shall appear before the

judgment seat of Christ and render an account of their faith; for neither bread, nor wine, nor water will bring Christ into the heart, nor cleanse us from sin, nor save us; Christ alone does that, if we accept him in true faith, hear him, follow him, and thus do God's will.

In the second place, Paul calls the bread the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup the communion of his blood (1 Cor. 10:16). In order to thoroughly understand what communion of Christ with believers, and of believers with Christ is, it may be observed that Christ accepts the believers, unites with them in such a manner that he is the Head and the believers are his body (Eph. 5:23), that he may infuse into them his eternal life, give them his Spirit, and bestow upon them all his riches, and make them partake thereof.

Thus, then, this communion of Christ and the believers is renewed and confirmed by baptism and the Lord's Supper. For all believers are baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). Although they all became one body with Christ by faith, even as Paul had, before baptism, been chosen of Christ, and filled with the Holy Ghost; likewise also Cornelius and the others who in his house heard the word of the apostle had received the Holy Ghost before they were baptized (Acts 10:44), nevertheless they were by one Spirit baptized into the communion of the body of Christ, that is, they were confirmed therein, reminded thereof, and in the outward fellowship of the saints added to the Christian Church.

This communion and incorporation with Christ is also confirmed and renewed through the Lord's Supper in that Christians in true unity of the Spirit and of faith break the bread and drink the wine which signifies to them, and by which they are reminded of, the fellowship of Christ and the participation of all his merits, all his righteousness and holiness, yea, all that is his, that they partake of all this together unto eternal salvation; for this fellowship consists in this that all the riches are given unto, and possessed by, all Christians in common; therefore Paul says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10:16, 17).

This same thought again he explains by an example of the people of Israel and says: "Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" (1 Cor. 10:18). Now, as the children of Aaron were partakers of the altar, that is, of the sacrifices of the altar, so also the children of the spiritual Aaron, Jesus Christ, the only true High Priest, are partakers of his altar, for they are, by reason of the new birth, of his generation, and therefore in the Spirit they by faith partake of the spotless sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9:14) which he through the Holy Spirit offered for us upon the altar of the cross. Hence they break the bread and drink the cup as a testimony that they are in the communion of the body of Christ, into which communion they have entered by the grace of God and election by faith, and they are confirmed therein by the true baptism, in which communion they are also preserved and confirmed by the Lord's Supper, by which communion moreover they are made partakers of all that belongs to

Christ, like as the sons of Aaron, who, in partaking of the altar, were therefore partakers of all that God had given, and prescribed for, Aaron, their father. —

In the bread and wine are also portrayed and typified the harmony and fellowship of the believers. In order that this fellowship may be better understood, the Lord used and prescribed such emblems in the Supper as are everywhere available, and which by their form and composition point to and suggest such communion. For as the bread is made of many grains broken and ground together, and out of many grains has come a loaf of bread, in which every little kernel has lost its individual body and form, and likewise as the little individual grapes, by changing their form become a common wine and pleasant drink, so also must all Christians be united with Christ and with one another—first with Christ, whom they receive by faith and who becomes their nourishment—for there is no closer intimacy nor anything more inseparable than the union of food with those who are fed; for the food is taken and becomes changed in its nature, and becomes one with or part of, the one fed. Thus also true Christians by faith in Jesus Christ are wholly united and incorporated in and with him, yea, transformed and changed so as to be like him in kind and nature. Therefore Christ takes such an interest in their behalf that he who harms them harms Christ himself (Matt. 25:45; Acts 9:4). Again, he that does good to them does it to Christ, as he himself says: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:40).

But through this fellowship and love of Christ love must in turn be so enkindled in Christians that they consider the infirmities and needs of all Christians as being common to all, taking to themselves their condition and need and thus making of it a common need through the love which bears one another's burdens, and thus fulfills the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2).

O! That is a great sacrament, a great mystery, says Paul, that Christ and his church are one flesh and one bone (Eph. 5:30), and indeed it is a marvelous and blessed union where all Christians are one bread and one body in Christ Jesus. They are one bread of the good seed which the heavenly Father has sown in this world (Matt. 13:8), and baked by the fire of love. They are one body of Christ with many members, baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), and must, according to the example of a natural body, be one heart and one soul, and must serve one another, be helpful and comforting one toward another, even as do the members of a natural body.

In the third place, the bread and wine in the Supper are a token of remembrance of the bitter suffering and innocent death and shedding of blood of Jesus Christ, namely, that in connection with it we are reminded that Christ Jesus in his great love gave his body for us, and for us shed his blood. "He hath made it to be remembered, and the gracious, merciful Lord hath given his meat unto them that fear him" (Psa. 111:5). He has instituted for the believers a supper with the bread and wine that thereby they may ever remember his suffering and death.

But since the Bread and wine are memorial tokens of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, therefore they are called by that name which is thereby remembered, namely, the body and the blood of Christ, just as the figurative paschal lamb is by God

called the passover (Ex. 12:27), because the passing over should thereby be brought to remembrance, for the reason that Israel was to remember the favors and wonders which had come to pass in their behalf in Egypt and not forget that the angel of the Lord in one night slew all the first-born among the Egyptians, but passed over their own houses because the lintels had been sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb, which was a token of divine grace or favor. Hence God gave them a command that they should eat every year a paschal lamb, and this was called the passover, for it was a token or sign of the Lord's passing over.

Jesus has done the same for us. He has delivered us out of Egypt and the power of the devil, therefore he is the true Paschal Lamb, slain upon the cross, roasted in the fire of love, and by the sprinkling of his blood we are purged and cleansed from our sins (1 Cor. 5:7), and protected from the destroying angel, from the punishment of God which will come upon Egypt, that is, upon the blind world. And in order that we may not forget this, but always keep it in remembrance (1 Pet. 1: 19), he has instituted and left for us the Supper of bread and wine, that in the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup we may gratefully remember his body which was given and broken for us, and his blood which he shed for us.

"This commemoration of the suffering of Christ is very necessary for us and teaches us to fear God and hate sin; because in the suffering of Christ we see and realize the fierce anger and unchangeable zeal of the Lord against sin and sinners, that he has stricken his most beloved only begotten Son so grievously for the transgression of his people, as it is written in the prophecy of Isaiah (53:7, 8, 10)7] That must have been an inexpressible, an unendurable zeal that would launch itself against such an immeasurably exalted Person, even God's own Son, the eternal wisdom of the Father himself; and yet the Father would not release the sinners unto him unless he would first make such a great atonement for them.

From this we may get a faint conception of the righteousness of God. At the same time we must remember that Jesus Christ had to taste so bitter a death for our sakes; for on this account it all came to pass.

Now, when man properly contemplates this he is frightened and humiliated by it, he is grief-stricken and trembles before the Lord his God, at his stern judgment and his great wrath against sin. And, remembering how greatly God hates sin and how sin was the cause of the bitter suffering and the innocent death of Jesus Christ, he will, by God's grace, guard against sin as much as lies in his power, thanking Christ for his love and faithfulness which he has manifested toward the human race. To this end the proper use of the Lord's Supper serves the purpose of reminding us, always bringing before our eyes and into remembrance these things, that our hearts may be thoroughly concerned therewith, which is very necessary, in order to come to the true knowledge of our condition, to true humility, to the true fear of God, contemplation of the suffering of Christ, and to the hatred of sin.

In the fourth place, regarding the cup of the Supper, Jesus says (Mark 14:22; Matt. 26:25; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11: 22): "This is the cup of the new testament in my

blood," or "this cup is the new testament in my blood." What that new testament is, the prophet Jeremiah and the apostle Paul show when they say: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord (Jer. 31:31-36; Heb. 8:8-12), that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with the fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more."

From these words it may be readily understood what the new testament covenant is, viz: The word of almighty God, our heavenly Father (1 Cor. 3:11;

John 1:1), as declared by Jesus Christ (John 7:16; 17:8), and written by the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of believers by the grace of God which hath appeared through Jesus Christ for the instruction and enlightenment of troubled hearts, for the forgiveness of sin, for eternal salvation, and for the comfort of souls and consciences; for God, the eternal and merciful Father, the Giver of all good gifts and Dispenser of all heavenly riches, has made a new and gracious covenant in which he shows overflowing love to us in this that he has made us a free gift of his only begotten Son (Rom. 8:32), and with him all things, through whom we have received grace, forgiveness of sins, a knowledge of God and every good gift (John 1:16; Rom. 3:24; 5:1).

This new testament (the word of saving grace, the testimony of divine love and the everlasting salvation of souls) Jesus Christ as the true Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 12:24), received of God his Father, declared the same to his chosen apostles and all God-fearing people, and by his Holy Spirit has written it upon their hearts. Therefore it is principally called a testament; for, as a testament is the utmost and inmost will of a dying man who makes known to his friends his will and desire, has it written down, and orders the disposition of his goods and chattels among his heirs after his death, so Christ before his death called his disciples—his beloved friends—to him, revealed his words, and declared his will to them, and commanded them to preach his gospel, after his death, to all creatures. This gospel is the glad tidings of the grace of God and the atonement of Christ, namely, that by his suffering and bloodshed he has vanquished sin and eternal condemnation (Col. 1:13, 14; Mark 16:15), conquered Satan and death and wrought salvation and eternal life (Rom. 5: 9-11), and has given for a possession all his riches (Matt. 28:19, 20); that is, his glory, righteousness and salvation is a gift to all that believe, and has made us partakers of everlasting life.

And since a testament without death is invalid, and the old testament is not established without blood, therefore Christ Jesus dedicated or established the new testament with his innocent death and precious blood (Heb. 9:8-25). And so much more precious is the sealing and dedication of the new than of the old testament, as that

whereas Moses sprinkled the old testament with the blood of calves (Ex. 24:8), Christ, the true Moses and Prince of our faith, who led us out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, who received from his Father the ministration of the Spirit and the commandment of life, and delivered the same to the true Israel, and wrote it upon their hearts, confirmed and made effective his testament with his own precious blood.

And for a token and remembrance of this he instituted for the apostles and for all believers a Supper of bread and wine before his death—calling the bread his body, and the cup the new testament in his blood—for a true memorial token that he has redeemed us with his body, and confirmed or validated his testament with his blood.

Then, on the third day, he again rose from the dead (1 Cor. 15:4, 20; Matt. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Cor. 3:6), and appeared to the apostles and made them ministers of the new testament, confirmed and consecrated them with his Holy Spirit, and commanded them to preach the gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15), to baptize the penitents and believers in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and to teach them to observe all things which he had commanded them.

Last of all, he ascended into heaven and is set at the right hand of God his heavenly Father (1 Pet. 3:23; Col. 3:1) in heavenly glory, and sits there personally and eternally (Acts 1:9-11), yet in such a way that he is with and in his own with his Spirit as long as the world shall last, and on the last day he will come from heaven to judge the living and the dead (Matt. 28:20).

From all this it is readily to be observed that Christ Jesus is not bodily in the bread and cup of the Lord's Supper. For a testator is not bodily in his testament, but he is in it with his power or authority, by which his testament is valid and effective. Thus also is Christ in his testament with his divine power or authority, and with his Spirit he comforts and refreshes everywhere the hearts of the believers who remain steadfast in his doctrine and grace, and observe his Supper as a memorial according to the scripture, in which Supper they are by faith in the crucified Son of God, Jesus Christ, and by the remembrance of his death, comforted in their consciences, admonished and assured (1 Cor. 12:13) that they are children of God and brethren and sisters of Jesus Christ, incorporated into his body and united with him, and justified, holy and happy through him (Rom. 5:1), and have the right and authority to use and partake with all believers—with whom they are one body in him— of all that Christ Jesus has commanded and instituted (Gal. 3:28).

We therefore maintain that Christ is in heaven in person, but that he has a spiritual existence on earth. This spiritual existence of Christ we understand to be the Holy Ghost, by which he lives and labors in all his members. This he himself shows with these words (Matt. 10:20, 40; Luke 9:48; John 17: 8): "He that receiveth you receiveth me"; "for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you." Therefore Paul says (Rom. 15:18): "I will not dare speak of any of those things which Christ hath, not wrought by me." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8: 9). "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" (1 Cor. 3:16). Hence "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12:3). And John says,

"Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (1 John 4:13).

Of this spiritual existence Christ speaks to his disciples in the Lord's Supper, that it were better for the believers that he go away than that he remain personally and bodily with them, viz.: "I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). Hence the words: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father; he shall testify of me" (John 14:16; 15:26); "glorify me, reprove the world" (John 16:8, 14); "admonish you and guide you into all truth; for he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you, and he will be with you forever."

In this way Christ is with his own unto the end of the world; but the idea that he is bodily in the Tread and wine of the Supper, and is thus eaten and received by the wicked as well as the righteous, as the blind, perverted world thinks, is contrary to the entire holy scripture, its spirit, sense and idea, contrary to the Christian faith and palpably contrary to the actually known conditions and experience, as well as contrary to the character of the natural body of Jesus Christ, as has been sufficiently elucidated above.

Now, if our belief regarding the Lord's Supper rests upon the right foundation and is built upon God's word, it is necessary to consider well and take to heart the proper use of the Supper. For what the Lord instituted and commanded us to observe must be rightly used as well as understood, believed and confessed. But to a right observance of the Holy Supper belong the following essentials:

There must be a Christian congregation that has assembled in the name of the Lord and that declares and shows the Lord's death with a true faith and sincere, openhearted confession, that just as Christ Jesus gave and left to his apostles and all believers the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine, so he freely gave them his body and blood as a gift for an eternal salvation (1 Cor. 10:16, 17; 11:23).

To this belongs a calling to remembrance, and a thoroughly sincere commemoration of, the suffering and death of the Lord, of the conformity to his suffering and death, of unity of the Spirit and of faith, of love to God and fellow-men, all of which belongs especially to the observance of the Lord's Supper (Phil. 3:10).

We believe that this Supper must be partaken with those only who are the friends of God, the true Christians, who have accepted the gospel and thereupon have amended their lives, and who, upon confession of their faith, have been properly baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19), and in this faith are faithfully solicitous to lead a Christian life, and diligently meditate upon conformity to Christ, his suffering and death, his burial and resurrection; in short, to be one body with Christ and all the saints. These, and no others, are, according to the teaching of the gospel, to be reminded by this Supper and confirmed in the fellowship of Christ and all the saints.

This Supper is to be observed concordantly by all believers (as many as are gathered together) and not by one alone, as some do. For thus the Lord ordained, and thus he desired it to be observed; all Christians must know how to conform thereto; for if it is not right to despise or alter a testament executed by man, how much more so is it to despise the testament of Jesus Christ or to break his commandments (Gal. 4:14).

Moreover the minister is to observe the Supper with the congregation, and the bread is to be broken; for the Lord did so, and so the apostles continued its observance. Hence Paul writes (1 Cor. 10:16): "The bread which we break." And Luke writes: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat" (Acts 2: 42, 46). That is, the disciples gathered together to break the bread, hence in the Supper the bread must be broken, and both parts of the Supper, that is, the bread and the cup, must be given, divided and received by everyone; and not each one eat his own bread by himself, as, sad to say, it is done in the world; for whoever does this, shows that he is eating his own supper, and not the Supper of the Lord.

4. Paul admonishes us to "let a man examine himself" before he eat of that bread and drink of that cup (1 Cor. 11:28). For whoever has not true faith in Jesus Christ, who is not a member of the body of Christ, who will not die and live with Christ, who has not a genuine love for Christ and his fellow-man, can never rightly observe the Supper (which is a sign of divine and brotherly love and unity), nor rightly discern the Lord's body. For in the body of Christ two things are especially noted, viz: the Head and the members. By the Head, which is Christ, it must be noted that from it we all receive grace and life (Eph. 1:23; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; 10:17), and that one must cleave to the Head alone, and also take an example of love therefrom and remember how faithfully the Lord Jesus Christ served us. Then we must take note of the members of the body with whom we are one, and remember how Christ has served us with his gifts and is still serving us, that we likewise, and with our gifts which we receive of God—be they natural or spiritual—serve our members for the perfecting and edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12), and all this in love. This, then, is what it means to rightly discern the body of Christ.

In this investigation it is also very necessary to observe how the Israelites ate the figurative paschal lamb, namely that in the first place the paschal lamb had to be without blemish and be "roasted with fire" (Ex. 12:5, 8). This typifies the spotless Paschal Lamb Jesus Christ, which in the everlasting fire of love is roasted for us upon the cross (1 Cor. 5:7), which we eat spiritually by faith, and by the sprinkling of whose blood we are preserved and spared from the punishment that shall come upon Egypt, that is, upon the blind world.

In the second place, the Israelites were to have no leaven in their houses when they observed the passover, and the paschal lamb had to be eaten with unleavened bread. Paul thus explains this to the Corinthians and says: "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the

leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:7, 8).

In the third place the Israelites had to eat the paschal lamb with bitter herbs (Ex. 12:9), signifying that our Paschal Lamb Jesus Christ seeks and desires a sorrowful soul, which suffers and sorrows with him and contemplates with profoundest meditation his suffering and death, and is filled with godly sorrow (Matt. 5:4; 2 Cor. 7:11).

In the fourth place the Israelites had to gird their loins, have their staves in their hands and eat the paschal lamb standing and in haste. This signifies to us that we must keep the Passover (Luke 12:35) in such manner that we gird up the loins of our minds (Eph. 6:14; 1 Pet. 1:13), and hold in our hand the staff of the divine word and comfort, and say with David that though we pass through the valley of the shadow of death we will fear no evil; for the Lord is with us, his rod and his staff, they comfort us (Psa. 23:4). We must also keep the Passover with hungry heart, hungry and desirous for Christ, our Paschal Lamb, and have a desire to leave the Egypt of this wicked world and enter into the promised land of the eternal kingdom of God.

In the fifth place, no stranger who was uncircumcised was to eat the figurative paschal lamb. How much less, then, may any one observe the Passover with Christ unless he is circumcised in heart, and is accounted and found in the fellowship of the covenant of Christ and all the saints?

Lastly, the children of Israel had to consume the paschal lamb entirely, and let nothing of it remain, and what was left over was to be burned with fire. This signifies to us that we are not to partake of Jesus Christ, our Passover, in part, but altogether, that is, we must hear and obey all his words, his whole doctrine, and not do as some, who accept one word and reject the next, but we must believe every word that has proceeded out of the mouth of God and of Christ, and we must remain steadfast therein unto the end, for "man liveth by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4). That is to say, "He that remains steadfast in the doctrine of Christ shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22). And since many things in the scripture are hard to understand, therefore it is necessary at all times to ask our heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ for the gift of the Holy Spirit that our hearts may by the burning of the consuming fire be kindled with love to God and be, by the brightness of the everlasting light, enlightened to a knowledge of him and to our salvation. Amen.

It is well indeed if all this be thoroughly borne in mind in partaking of the Lord's Supper, for although it is chiefly a figure unto which we by faith partake of Jesus Christ, our Paschal Lamb, and keep the Passover in the new life of the Spirit, nevertheless since this spiritual eating and keeping of the Passover is presented to us, brought to our remembrance, and renewed in the Lord's Supper, and we are to remember it, therefore the sign must be observed in accordance with the example and signification of the true substance.

When therefore Christians worthily observe the Supper with pure heart and in true faith their souls will be refreshed by Jesus Christ, who, according to his promise

(Matt. 18:20) is in the midst of such an assembly, they are admonished in their consciences and are assured of the grace of God, the fellowship of Jesus Christ, and all the saints, yea, that they are united with God by Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24; 5:1, 2; 8:1), justified and guiltless, members of his body, and temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 3:16), that Christ is their Brother, Bishop, Mediator, Advocate and Propitiator (1 John 2:1, 2; Heb. 2:17; 5:1), and by his atonement will justify them, and will heal all their infirmities and reconcile them by his perpetual offering and ceaseless prayer, and govern them by his Holy Spirit and lead them into eternal glory.

The realization that they are united one with the other as members of his body (Rom. 12:14) like bread of many grains and wine of many berries (1 Cor. 10:17; 12:12), and are therefore partakers of all that Christ has wrought in his own person and in all believers and still works in them, and, moreover, that they have the privilege and authority to enjoy with all the saints all things that Christ instituted, for the hallowing of his name, and the promulgation of faith and love, delights and comforts the heart of the Christian, so that, kindled with love, both toward God and fellow-man, it wells up and becomes fervent, and breaks forth into thanksgiving, praises and glorifies God for his grace and loving kindness and says with the prophet: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psa. 103:1, 2).

This is our confession regarding the Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ. But while some revile our confession and consider it fanaticism because we believe and confess that Jesus is bodily in heaven at the right hand of God, but with his Spirit dwells and works with all his believers (Acts 1: 9-11; Heb. 1:13; John 6:62), and is partaken of or received spiritually by them, because they believe in him and accept and obey his word, we must exercise patience, we must not believe contrary to the scripture, but according to the scripture (John 7: 38; Mark 16:15), for faith cometh by the word of God (Rom. 10:17) and must in all things conform with it. And since the scripture proves so abundantly that Jesus Christ is bodily and personally in heaven and spiritually on earth (as we have sufficiently shown above from the scripture), therefore we believe this with all our hearts. And since we believe this, and beside this the words of Christ: "This is my body," and all that is written and above referred to and explained concerning the Lord's Supper, and endorse it by our confession and believe it to be true, therefore we take one concordant view from all these scriptures that is in every case conformable to the truth and not contradicted by any scripture. But we cannot take or come to this view unless we understand, believe and confess the words of Christ: "This is my body," etc., in a spiritual sense, that Christ can be received by a hungry soul, yea, his flesh and blood be spiritually eaten and drunken by faith. With this view all scriptures accord and remain unbroken. But if we understand the aforesaid words of Christ literally and in a carnal sense, then we are reprov'd in our conscience by many scriptures, yea, we are convinc'd and overcome as are those so often who do not believe all the words of God. Therefore we maintain what we have here confessed regarding the Lord's Supper, and this in all Christian simplicity, according to the true sense of the spirit, according to the intent and content of the scripture and according to our profoundest conception and understanding of God's

word, and, in short, according to the gift and measure of faith we have received from God; anything better and surer we cannot confess of or find in it.

May the almighty God and Father of all. mercy and grace, who from the beginning chose the believers and ordained them unto salvation, enlighten all zealous and well-intentioned hearts with the glory of his holy Spirit, and gather all the scattered sheep into the unity of the true faith under the one Good Shepherd and Bishop of all believing souls, that is, under Christ Jesus, to whom be praise and honor forever. Amen.

To God alone be glory!

D. P.

Book Two

The Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

The Only Begotten Son of His Eternal
and Almighty Father.

A Brief Confession by
D. P.

The Word was made flesh. John 1:14.

That which was from the beginning, which we have
heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which
we have looked upon and our hands have
handled, of the Word of life, which was
with the Father and was
manifested unto us, etc.

1 John 1:1.

Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.

1 Tim. 3:15.

Preface to Book Two

Whereas we are greatly reviled and derided by many people on account of our faith, many even lying and saying that we do not believe in Jesus Christ, simply because we cannot accept the old leaven of the Pharisees (who devise and make such strange comments upon the scriptures regarding the incarnation of Jesus Christ) and are defamed therefore by some as though we did not believe in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:12), who nevertheless is our only hope before God the Father (Col. 1:14-20); therefore we will, by the grace of God, briefly declare our belief regarding Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God, our Lord and Savior, that every one may see, read and hear what views we entertain of Jesus Christ, of his divinity and humanity, and know that they are neither heretical nor Jewish (although the world brands us as heretics and Jews), but that we are simply Christians, and believe and confess all that the scripture teaches and testifies of Jesus Christ; for this is our hope and consolation before God, that we firmly believe in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:7, 8; Mark 16:15; John 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:3), fully trust and hope in him, have been baptized in his name upon confession of our faith (Matt. 28:19, 20), and by grace have become, and desire to remain, his disciples. But unto the eternal God and Father of all mercy, who hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2), and has taught us the pure knowledge of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, through the enlightenment of his Holy Spirit, and written it in our hearts: To him (2 Tim. 4:18) be everlasting praise and glory in eternity for his inexpressible grace and goodness. Amen.

Our Confession Concerning

Christ Jesus

**That we Maintain, Believe and Confess that he is
the Firstborn and Only Begotten Son of the
Almighty Father and Living God, and that Jesus
Christ is our Redeemer, Savior and Mediator, Truly
God and Man; How and in What Manner he is and
Became So.**

We believe and confess that Jesus is our Lord and Savior (John 1:12, 14; 3:16; 1 John 4:9), the first-born and only begotten Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16), the

brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person (Heb. 1:2, 3); from the beginning of the world, and from eternity, divine, and inexpressibly born of the Father, and one Being with the Father, in such manner that they are one God and Lord, having equal power, might, love, glory, work and will together forever (Micah 5: 2-4; Isa. 53:12; John 5:19-27; 8:14-19; 9:4; 10:15-18; 13:3; 14:6-10; 15:1; 17:3-22).

But because the Son of God is called the Word (Greek, Logos; Latin, Sermo or Verbum), it is by no means to be understood that every word that God utters is his Son (John 1:1); for the Son is not a spoken word, but an existent, living Word (1 John 1:1), of whom all the words spoken by God (which is the holy scripture) bear testimony (2 Pet. 1:20, 21; 2 Tim. 3:16). But the reason, and the opinion expressed why the Son of God is called the Word is this (according to the understanding of many learned men, and so far as we can comprehend the scriptures), that the Son is the express image of the mind of the Father (Heb. 1:3), as proceeding out of the mouth -of the most high God (Matt. 4:4);proceeding, we maintain, as a personified Word, and as a natural Son of God, one in personality, attributes and nature with the Father (John10:25; 13:3),yea, into whom the Father infused the personality of his attributes and his express image, wherefore the apostle says that God who in time past spake by the prophets, afterward spake to us by his Son, the incarnated Word (Heb. 1:1, 2; Col. 1:15), so that his Son is not a spoken, but a speaking Word, and by this Word, that is, by the word of the Son's power, all things are upheld (Heb. 1: 3) and have their being. Therefore John declares that the Son is the Word of life, from whom the apostles saw and heard all the things which they have declared to us (1 John 1:1-3).

This same Word, namely, this Son of God, was promised by God, in mercy and love, to Adam and his descendants (Gen. 3:15) and announced as a Savior; therefore he became a man (Phil. 2:6); for since he is a Savior of men and a Mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5) therefore he must be truly God and man. In his divinity he was enabled to forever help us, fully reconcile the Father and do his will (John 10:17; 17:19, 20; Heb. 10: 14; Eph. 5. 25-29); yea, the will of the Father is also the will of Christ. In his humanity he was enabled to offer himself for us a pure, holy, acceptable sacrifice, as a sweet-smelling savor unto God (Heb. 10:12-14; Eph. 5:2), but to us it was the forgiveness and washing away of our sins, because he died innocently for us, and his human nature is spotless, without sin (Eph. 1:7; 2:4, 5; 1 Pet. 1: 18, 19; 3:18; Isa. 53:4-9).

Therefore we believe and confess that Jesus Christ is our Redeemer, Savior and Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Gal. 1:4), truly God and man. He is truly God from everlasting, and born of the Father before the foundation of the world (Micah 5:1, 2). But he became truly man in these last days, yet how his incarnation was brought about the evangelists and apostles describe to us in clear and express language. Matthew says that the angel said unto Joseph: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:20). Luke writes that the angel said to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). And John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were

made by him" (John 1:1-3). "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ... and is the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). And again John says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us), that . . . declare we unto you" (John 1:1-3; 4:9).

**How the Flesh of Christ is not of Mary,
as the World Maintains and Imagines, but that he
is the Living Bread Which Came From Heaven,
Which Christ Himself Calls his Flesh.**

In all these words we see and note clearly that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God (John 1:18; 3:16), became man in Mary, not by human seed (which is corruptible, 1 Pet. 1:23), but by the eternal, incorruptible seed of God, the heavenly Father (1 John 3:9), through the power and operation of the Holy Ghost.

John confirms this and says: "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven (namely, Christ Jesus) is above all" (John 3:31). Paul accords with this in his epistle to the Corinthians and says: "The first man (Adam) is of the earth, earthy; the second man (Jesus Christ) is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:45, 47). These words are an explanation of the above mentioned words of John, in which a distinct difference is made between Christ and Adam, namely that Adam is of the earth, while Jesus is from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47).

But if the body of Christ had been formed by Mary (as the world thinks and says with such want of understanding regarding it), then there would be no difference between the body of Christ and that of Adam, because like as Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost in Mary (Luke 1:31, 35; Matt. 1:20), so also Adam was made by God, and had no other father than God. What difference would there be, then, between the body of Christ and the body of Adam, if the body of Christ had been made of the earth, the same as the body of Adam? (Gen. 1:27); for the body of Christ would necessarily have been made of the earth if it had been formed of human seed; for because of the body all men are dust and earth (Gen. 2:7; 3:14). It might, however, be suggested that Adam was made of pure earth by God. But the earth was corrupted by sin, and all men were laid under the curse and became corrupt in their nature (Rom. 3:10; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 5:14). How, then, should Christ have an uncorrupted body, if he had been formed of human seed (which is corrupt, John 14:4)? Far from it! God, the heavenly Father, prepared for Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, a body (Heb. 10:5), not of corrupt human seed (Luke 1:35), but of his incorruptible seed, with which he caused Mary, the pure virgin, to conceive through the power of his Holy Spirit, as the afore-quoted statements of the evangelists and apostles clearly demonstrate (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:31).

Therefore Christ everywhere testifies that he came down from heaven, but he speaks of his origin especially in John 6:51: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (See also John 8:23; 15:19-23; 16:5; 17:3).

Now, if Christ is the bread of heaven, and if the bread of heaven moreover is the flesh of Christ, it is impossible for the flesh of Christ to be formed by Mary; for neither the seed of Mary, nor that of any earthly creature can by any means be the true living bread that came down from heaven, or be so called.

Christ says much, according to John, of the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood (John 6:32-58). It, therefore, behooves us to see and consider, how the flesh of Christ shall and must be eaten and his blood drunk, namely thus, that we accept and obey the word of God with pure hearts and in true faith. Why do we eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood? Because God's word was made flesh (John 1:14), and hence the word of God and the flesh of Christ are one and the same, as Christ himself shows with these words: "I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; and the Bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). And the living bread (which is Christ and his flesh) is beyond all doubt and contradiction the Word of God, and therefore if any man believes and obeys the word -of God (1 John 2:5), receives Christ, the Word of life and the bread of heaven, yea, he eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Christ (John 6: 54). And because of this, Jesus calls his flesh "meat indeed," and his blood, "drink indeed," because the word of God is really meat for the soul. But in as much as the Word was made flesh (John 1:14), and therefore the Word and the flesh of Christ are the same, therefore also the flesh of Christ is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

Lastly: Christ Jesus is the living bread which came like dew or manna from heaven, and what was the food of angels has also become the food of men (Psa. 78:25). But the bread, which he is himself, and gives men—that is, believers—to eat, is his flesh, which he has given for the life of the world (John 6:51).

That Man Cannot Receive Help in any Manner or by any Means but by Him who Created Man

Furthermore it is well to note and to reflect here that when man had fallen, there was no way of helping him except alone from and through him by whom and through whom he was created, therefore the eternal and almighty God (who created the first Adam and all creatures) in his unfathomable grace and mercy promised to fallen and corrupted man his eternal Word, and only begotten Son (by whom all men and all things are made, 1 Cor. 8:6), and permitted him in the fullness of time (of grace) to become a man (Gal. 4:4; John 1:14; Heb. 1:1, 2), that through this same Son, by whom he created man, he again might and would help to redeem man (2 Cor. 5:15), and forever reconcile

man with him (John 3:16). Therefore John says so expressly: "The Word (by whom all things were made) became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). And Paul says that God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. 8:32). So then "God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Hence "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). Therefore "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:5—8).

How God's Only and First Begotten Son, Yea God Himself, Became Man and Yet Remained God, Portrayed and Prefigured in Melchizedek

From all this a Christian easily comprehends that God's eternal Word, God's own only begotten, firstborn Son—yea, God himself—became man (Rom. 8:32; John 3:16; 1 John 1:1—14), and laid aside his divine form, forsook his glory, and took upon himself the fashion of a man and a servant; in short, he who was God became man; and he who became man is God and man (John 1:14; Rom. 9:5; 1 John 5:11, 20), and he who is God and man, dies as a man; and he who dies as a man, rises as God (John 20:17).

All the aforesaid confirms the figure regarding Melchizedek, of whom the apostle writes to the Hebrews (7:1, 2), that this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; and Abraham gave him a tenth part of all.

In the first place he is characterized as a king of righteousness, after that also king of Salem, that is, a king of peace, without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, and remaining a priest continually.

This text testifies clearly of the eternal divinity and of the humanity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. For the apostle speaks of the person of Melchizedek as having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, whereby he compares the Son of God and his Person, which is eternal; for thus it is written of the Person of the Son of God: "His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). He is the mighty God, the everlasting Father, he is God whose throne is forever and ever. He has glory, he had glory with God before the world was, he is before all and all things are made and upheld by him, he is the Word that was in the beginning with God, in him was life (John 1:1-4). He is the First and the Last, who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore (Rev. 1:17, 18; 2:8). See also Isa. 9:6; Psa. 44:4, 5; Heb. 1:8; John 7: 6.

These and similar passages of scripture really speak of the divinity of the eternal Son of God; for the humanity, the office and priesthood of the Son of God are not from everlasting, but the Person of the Son of God has always been with God—without beginning, the Word of God, the wisdom of God, God himself, truly, and in his being, in divine form and glorified as God (John 1:1; 1 John 5:20; John 17:5).

But when the apostle says of Melchizedek that he was without father, without mother, without descent (Heb. 7:3), he himself explains it in another place (Heb. 7: 6, 13), namely, that his descent is not counted (mentioned) among men, and this was because he was a type and figure of the Son of God, the true Priest. For it is always known that Melchizedek had a father and mother among mankind, since the whole scripture does not once say that God created a man without father and mother except Adam and Eve; but Melchizedek's descent is kept silent by the Spirit (Heb. 7: 3) that he may be truly compared to the Son of God, to that which is true, that he lived and served on earth and offered himself up as a man (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:2), and yet not of the earth, but from heaven; born the Son of man, and yet is the life and salvation of all men (John 3:16, 31; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 1:1-8; 1 Cor. 15:45; John 1:1-14; 1 John 1:1-14; 1 Cor. 8).

Lastly, the apostle concludes that the true Melchizedek, Jesus Christ (Gal. 4:5-8), is God and man, the Son of God and of man, God and God's Son from everlasting, but becoming man and the Son of man in these last days (Heb. 1:1; Col. 1:15-19), and yet in a way that he has not, and yet has, father, mother, and descent; for Mary calls Joseph his father (Luke 2:47), and she herself is his mother, and according to the flesh he is born of the tribe of Judah (Matt. 1: 25; 2:6; Mic. 5:2). But he has neither father nor mother nor descent among men (Heb. 7:3) in the sense that he should be born a man of human seed; for he is the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:45, 47), the Lord from heaven. This same Lord from heaven is truly God and man, the Son of God and the Son of man, one Jesus Christ, our High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, our eternal King and Prince of peace (Rom. 9:4, 5); Heb. 2:6; 5:1; 8:1; Isa. 9:6), who rules in the house of David and in the spiritual Salem with the scepter of the divine word (Luke 2:69; Psa. 45:6; Heb. 1:8), who by his grace brings peace to the consciences of the believers, and assures unto them the grace of God and everlasting salvation. Yea, he makes all his Christians kings and priests unto God, his heavenly Father, to whom be glory forever. Amen (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6).

How, Why and in What Manner Christ is Called the Seed of a Woman, as Well as of Abraham, and of the Loins of David

That the scripture calls Christ a seed of a woman (Gen. 3:15) does not confound us, as we will, by God's grace, proceed to show as follows:—

In the first place the scripture in many places speaks figuratively, and calls many things differently by letter than they are in spirit and real nature, and as they need to be understood. Therefore Christ has many names in the scripture, which, according to the

outward being, in no sense belong to him. For instance, he is called a Rock (1 Cor. 10:4), and a Vine (John 15:1), not that he is in reality a natural rock or vine, but for significance' sake he is so called. By the same token he is called the seed of a woman and the seed of Abraham, not because he is essentially the natural or carnal seed of the woman and of Abraham, but because to Adam and Eve and Abraham he is promised as a coming Savior who was to be born out of them according to the flesh (Gen. 3:15; 22:17, 18; Gal. 3:3). But if it were the case that Christ was a natural seed of man, then man would have been holpen by God by his own seed, that is, by himself. Far from this: for God willed and needed to come to the aid of fallen and corrupt man, not by the natural seed of fallen and corrupted man, but by his eternal Word and Son, so that the redemption of man was like his creation (John 1:1-3).

Moreover, all Christians well know that Eve is a figure of the Christian Church (Eph. 5:22, 23), which God, the eternal Father, has, through the second Adam, Christ Jesus, made his bride, for she is flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones, and all believing Christians are her children, having been born again of the incorruptible seed of God (1 Pet. 1:23), and between whom and the serpent's seed, that is, all the children of the devil (who are rightly called the seed of the serpent), there is constant enmity (John 8:44, 45; Gen. 3:15), and by whom they are assailed with all craftiness, yet through Christ Jesus always triumph and overcome, as Paul says: "Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 57; 2 Cor. 2:14).

In the second place, God made a promise to Abraham that in his seed all the Gentiles should be blessed (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:8). Thereupon God gave him Isaac his natural son, who bore the image of the promised Seed, the true Isaac, Jesus Christ. Since then Isaac is a natural son of Abraham and a type of Christ, and flesh cannot be signified for, or understood as pointing to, flesh, therefore also Christ cannot be a natural seed (descendant) of Abraham, but is a natural descendant of the spiritual Abraham, his heavenly Father, who was promised by grace to the patriarch Abraham by God (Gen. 17:8, 21; John 1:1; Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:8; Rom. 4:3).

Paul also explains the figure of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac thus: That Abraham typifies God the Father; Sarah, the new testament, and Isaac, Christ (Gal. 4:22-31), and that not Jesus only, but all Christians are of the seed of Abraham, and, like Isaac, the children of promise, for Paul says: "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Rom. 9: 6-8). "That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son" (Rom. 9:8, 9).

From these words we see clearly that the true Christians are alone the children of Abraham, for the reason that they believe in Jesus Christ, in whom Abraham also believed. But those who are Abraham's children and believe in Jesus Christ are also born of God, and those who are born of God are also children of God, the true Abraham, and of the eternal heavenly Father (Rom. 4:16, 17), of whom the patriarch Abraham was a

figure. But those who do not believe in Jesus Christ are neither the children of Abraham nor of God (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 3:8); although born of Abraham after the flesh, they are still not included under the promise, nor counted for Abraham's seed—so little does the natural pedigree or birth count with God, which is of the carnal seed of Abraham, and so wholly does the true sonship of Abraham consist in the incorruptible seed of God (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 3:8; 4:22), by which and from which comes the new birth. Hence what the scripture says of Abraham and his seed has more a spiritual than a natural significance, and must therefore be discerned with spiritual rather than with natural eyes (1 Pet. 1: 23; 1 John 3:1; 5:1).

In the third place all these scripture quotations and testimonies referred to regarding the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1: 25)—that the Holy Ghost came down from above into Mary (Matt. 1:35; Luke 1:31), and that that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost, and that holy thing which was born of her is the Son of the Most High: and that Christ, the Word of life, whom all that the apostles made known to us, heard, saw, looked upon and felt with their hands, was made flesh (John 1:1-14; 1 John 1:1), and Christ, the second Adam, is the Lord himself from heaven, and that he is the living bread that came down from heaven, and that the living bread is his flesh which he has given for the life of the world (John 6: 51)— all these scripture passages and comparisons, I say, which all alike do clearly demonstrate, how, whence, and whereby the incarnation of Jesus Christ took place, would have to be broken and suffer violence if Christ Jesus is looked upon as the natural seed of woman and of Abraham.

Therefore we will hold simply to the afore mentioned passages and testimonies of scripture, believing and confessing: That Jesus Christ was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, the holy Son of the Most High, the Word of life, the second Adam, the Lord himself from heaven, the living bread which came down from heaven (Matt. 1:25; Luke 1:31; John 1:1-3; 1 John 1:1, 2; John 6:51), which living bread he himself calls his flesh, which he has given for the life of the world. All this we believe without a doubt, without any addition to or subtraction from, the word of God, to which nothing may be added and from which nothing may be taken (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6).

Further, like as Christ is called the seed of the woman and of Abraham, in the same manner he is also called the fruit of the loins of David (Acts 2:30), having been promised to him by God, and born of his seed according to the flesh, and yet is not his natural son; for the natural son of David and the natural fruit of his loins, of which the letter of the scripture text speaks or makes reference, was Solomon who sat upon the throne of his father David (1 Kings 2:12) and was the figure of Jesus Christ, the peaceful Solomon, the everlasting King, who rules over the Israel of God (Isa. 9:6, 7; 11:1-3; Luke 1:69-73; Gal. 3:16-18). But Christ is not a natural Son of the patriarch David, but of the living God (Matt. 16:16), therefore he himself said to the Pharisees: "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him. The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying: The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool (Psa. 110:1). If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (Matt. 22:41-45).

With these words Jesus incontrovertibly shows that he is not the natural son of David or he could not be David's Lord and be called so, inasmuch as the son is not the lord of the father, but the father is the sire (or lord) of the son. But Jesus Christ is the Lord and God of David, therefore he is not a natural son, as one who is conceived by his seed and becomes a man, but as of one born of his seed according to the flesh and has risen out of the tribe of Judah (Rom. 1:3, 4; 9:3-8), to which tribe David belonged. Those who understand the scripture should not be surprised that the scripture calls Christ the seed of the woman and of Abraham, and the fruit of the loins of David and of the body (womb) of Mary; for inasmuch as the scripture calls Christ sin, who knew no sin (Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21), simply because he became a sacrifice for sin, why should it be wonderful that this same scripture should, for the reasons already given, call Christ the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the fruit of the loins of David, and of Mary's womb, although essentially he is not, nor can he be considered by any Christian as being such.

Then there are some who reproachfully tell us that the apostle tells the Hebrews that "both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." And again: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of the flesh and blood, he also likewise took part of the same" (Heb. 2:11, 12, 14).

To this we answer briefly thus: That the apostle neither said nor meant that Jesus Christ was made man of our flesh and blood is clear enough from what has already been said regarding the incarnation of Christ, and what has been quoted from the holy scripture, for it is neither right nor permissible (as some learned men say it is) that many passages of scripture must make way for one single passage, and be broken, distorted and altered because of one passage, but one passage should give way to many and be understood according to many proofs, yet all things with definiteness, truth and justice.

Hence it is true and incontrovertible that the words of the apostle above quoted must be understood and explained as meaning that both Christ that sanctifies and the Christians that are sanctified are not of Adam, but of God, the heavenly Father, of whom Christ is born from everlasting (Mic. 5:2), and of whom all Christians, through Christ Jesus, are born in the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:13, 14), as Paul says: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26). And Peter says: "Ye . . . are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23). Hence "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God" (1 John 5:1). Therefore all Christians are brethren and sisters of Jesus Christ, but not because of the natural birth, but because of the spiritual birth (Matt. 13:43; 12: 50), as Christ himself declares in the gospel (Rom. 8:29).

Since then these brethren and sisters—children of Christ—have flesh and blood, Christ also partook of the same, that is, he became man, like as his brethren, sisters and children are (Heb. 2:14). But the apostle does not say—nor does he mean—that he became man of our human flesh and blood, and it cannot be truthfully proven from his

words, for Christ is the spotless Lamb of God (John 1:36; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:6), without sin: but his brethren, sisters and children are, according to the flesh, sinful by nature; yea, what dwells in their flesh Paul clearly shows in his epistle to the Romans when he says: "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7: 18). Hence the holy flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed (John 6: 55) and makes alive, did not originally come from our flesh and blood, but he (Jesus Christ) was graciously given to us and begotten by God, our heavenly Father, as a gift and proof of his everlasting love and unfathomable mercy, and was made man (Isa. 7:14) like as we are. How, by what means, and whence this came to pass, has been sufficiently stated and declared above.

In order to more thoroughly understand this, let us note the analogy and fellowship of God and Christ with all believers, namely, that all believers are partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), yea, called the possession and offspring of the Most High God (Acts 17:28, 29; John 1:12; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 4:6, 7; 1 John 3:1, 2; Psa. 28:6), and are in the world as Christ was in the world and shall in time to come become like him (John 10:28-30, 34-38). Now, although men become partakers of the divine nature, yea, are the possession and offspring of the Most High, and shall become like Christ in heaven and on earth, they do not in their being and in person become what God and Christ are. O no! The creature nevermore becomes Creator, and flesh will nevermore become the eternal Spirit himself, which is God (John 4:24; 2 Cor. 3: 6, 17; 1 Cor. 15:45), for that is impossible; but all believers become the possession and offspring of the Most High through regeneration (John 3:3), the imparting and fellowship of the divine nature, holiness, glory, purity and eternal life, and shall in the glorified state shine as God, even as God is light (John 6:48; 14:3); live as God lives eternally; and as God is a Spirit, so they also will become spirits and spiritual who are or have been in outward being and body earth and flesh, and are taken up into glory as God is in glory. But men are and remain creatures, and God Creator and Ruler; nevertheless they are one, and God all in all (John 17:22-24; 1 Cor. 15:28).

Now, like as the believers are exalted by Christ, transplanted into God, become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), and in glory become like Christ, so also Christ for the sake of his brethren humbled himself (Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 2:14-18), that is, inasmuch as his brethren have flesh and blood, he likewise partook of the same, and thus became like his brethren in lowliness, human nature, weakness, temptation and mortality, yet without sin (Heb. 5:1-8; Isa. 53: 4-9 1 Pet. 2: 21-24; Rom. 8:3), appeared in the form of sinful flesh, and upon him as upon a mighty prince were laid the infirmities of all his brethren; nevertheless he is, in his being, the Word which was made flesh (John 1:14), the second Adam, that is, the second Man, the Lord himself from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47).

Lastly, Christ is like his brethren, and again his brethren are like him, namely: Christ is God, and the Son of God (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9; 5:11, 12); his brethren, by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, are gods and the children of the Most High (Psa. 82:6; John 10:34; 1 John 3:1, 2; Heb. 2:13); and because they have flesh and blood, Christ likewise took upon himself the same (Heb. 2:14). Nevertheless there is a difference between Christ and his brethren. 1. Christ is the true and natural God and Son of God (1 John 5:1, 5; Eph. 1:3), while his brethren, by the grace of God, are gods and

children of God by election, adoption, and the imparting of the divine nature and gifts through Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:13, 14; Rom. 8:3). 2.

Christ, the eternal Word made flesh, was conceived of the Holy Ghost in the virgin Mary and born of her (Matt. 1:20; Luke 2:7; John 1:14), therefore also the flesh is pure, spotless, holy and did not see corruption (Acts 2:31; Psa. 16:10; John 6:51), but is the living bread and gives life to the world. But his brethren are, according to the flesh, of the earth, and to earth they will again return (Gen. 3:19; 1 Cor. 15:44), although they shall, at the coming of Christ, by the power of God be clothed with an incorruptible and glorified body, and thus be like Christ (2 Cor. 5:1; Phil. 3:20). They are also by nature evil and of a sinful generation, nevertheless by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, it is not imputed to them for sin so long as they are and remain in him (Rom. 4:5; 8:1; Psa. 32:1, 2).

A Question Answered Regarding Christ's Suffering as a Man

The question is commonly asked: If Christ did not receive his flesh and blood from Mary, how then could he suffer and die? In reply we ask: If the flesh of Christ is of the earth and earthly, of Adam and his seed (which was of a sinful nature and laid under the curse, Rom. 5:12), how then was the Word of God made flesh (John 1:14; 1 John 1:1)? How could Christ make an everlasting atonement for our sins and pay for them? Therefore the scripture everywhere says that God gave his only begotten Son, by whom the world and all things were made (John 1:3; 5:10; 3:16; Heb. 1:5), yea, gave him even unto death. And if any one should ask: Did God die? we answer that neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost, but the Son of God was made man; laying by his divine form he took upon himself the form of a servant and died in the flesh, but was made alive by the Spirit, as Peter says (1 Pet. 3:18). Therefore Paul says to the bishops of the church: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed (govern) the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

For us these words of the apostle suffice; we will neither add thereto nor take from them, that we be not condemned nor be found untruthful (Deut. 4:1; 12:32; Prov. 30:6). Nor are we ashamed to openly confess with Paul that God was made manifest in the flesh and shed his blood for us (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:16). But if any man desires to quarrel with us about it, he does not quarrel with us, but with the apostle, and with the whole scripture, and moreover with many bishops and teachers who unanimously adopted the following resolution against Nestorius, the bishop of Constantinople: "We confess that God's Word suffered in the flesh and was crucified in the flesh"; that is, we say that the flesh of Christ quickens, as Christ himself calls his flesh the bread of life (John 6:48-58). Now, it is an established fact that "the Spirit quickeneth," and that God's Word is Spirit and life (John 6: 63) and alone is food for the soul. Since then the flesh of Christ also quickeneth and is food for the soul, therefore the flesh of Christ must also be the Spirit and the Word of God, and therefore also Christ calls his flesh the living bread

(which is the Word of God, John 1:1-3), and therefore John says: "The Word was made flesh" (John 1:14).

In conclusion, then, our belief and the confession of our hearts before God the Lord, before his angels and all true Christians, and before all, is, that Jesus Christ is the own, natural, only begotten, firstborn Son of the living God, truly GOD and the Son of God (John 1:1-10; 3:16; Heb. 1:1, 2, 5, 6, 8-10; Mic. 5:2), truly a man, and the Son of man; God. and the Son of God, from everlasting with God and in God (of whom he is born) from eternity (Rom. 8:3). But in these last days, according to the promise of the Father, by his own, voluntary, resigned submission, obedience, humiliation, he, laying aside his divine form, took upon himself the form of a man and a servant, he became a man— and this out of overflowing love; therefore he is also the only true Mediator between God and man, for he truly stands between (1 Tim. 2:5), in this that he is not only God and the Son of God, but he is also man and the Son of man. He is like the Father in his divinity (John 10:30), but he is like man in his humanity, except sin and all sinful and carnal nature of our flesh, for he is the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:47), the Lord from heaven. He gave his flesh for us unto death, and commended his Spirit into the hands of his Father. That at the death of Christ the sun was darkened (Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33), and yet did not pass away seems to show, and may not improperly be taken to point to, the fact (since in the scripture God is called a Sun and is represented as a sun (Psa. 84:11), that the Brightness of God's Glory—Jesus Christ—died according to the flesh (1 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 1:3) and at the same time lives according to the Spirit, as he himself says: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Rev. 1:18).

For three hours, contrary to nature, the sun was darkened, and yet did not pass away; for three days and three nights Jonah was in the fish (Jonah 1:17) and was supernaturally kept alive; so also Christ Jesus was dead for three days in the flesh, contrary to his divine nature, and he rose again from the dead on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4) and was supernaturally made alive in the Spirit. Thus the precious grain of Wheat, Jesus Christ, fell into the ground (John 12: 24), and by his suffering and death brought forth much saving fruit. Thus the faithful and only Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, according to and at the command of his heavenly Father, of himself laid down his life, and again took it up unto himself (John 10:11, 15, 17, 18). Thus the innocent Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, which taketh away the 8 sin of the world and who became unto his heavenly Father a sweet smelling savor, but unto us everlasting salvation, was offered upon the cross, for this was his own will (Isa. 53:10; John 1:35; 1 Pet. 1:19; Eph. 5:2).

Short Review of the Foregoing Confession

This, in brief, is our confession regarding the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Beside this we also declare that whoever does not recognize and confess the eternal divinity and true humanity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is Antichrist (1 John 5:10), for he does not. believe the record that God gave of his Son. Furthermore we say with Paul: "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (2 Cor. 5:16). "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away;

behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). Therefore it is not sufficient that we confess that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, was conceived of the Holy Ghost in Mary, and born of her a real man, but we also must receive and treasure him through the Holy Ghost as the eternal Word (1 John 1:1) and incorruptible Seed of God, the everlasting Father (1 Pet. 1:23), and be preserved thereby. If not, then all our boasted knowledge and faith is of no account (1 John 3:6, 7), for the devil also knows and confesses that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. 8:29; Jas. 2:19), but as little as such knowledge and confession is of any benefit to the devil, so little will the mere oral confession of faith benefit us without the living, operating power of God (John 8:19), of which all pious Christians are the recipients. Therefore Christ says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 11:25; 3:16). Why? Because he has received the divine power of the eternal life-giving life in his heart (John 3:16; 6:51; 11: 25), which completely permeates, purifies, renews and finally impels, leads into and transforms into its origin, from whence it sprang, even into everlasting, divine life.

If any man thus believes in Jesus Christ and has received this living power of God and it manifests itself everywhere in him, he is a true, believing; Christian, he confesses Christ in the Spirit (John 3:18), for he is of one Spirit with him (1 Cor. 6:17), and he also comprehends what the flesh of Christ really is; for he is himself flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bones (Eph. 5:30). Therefore he has in Spirit and in true faith eaten the flesh of Christ and drunk his blood (John 6:53-55), by which union and fellowship he has become one body with Christ. This knowledge of God and Christ is eternal life; whatever else is said of Jesus Christ, without this indwelling power of God, without this enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and without this fellowship and partaking of the divine seed, the attributes and nature of Christ (John 17:3, 8), all is vain babbling, the challenge of a blind man, who, according to the old adage, disputes and passes judgment on colors that he has never seen and cannot see. Therefore we would faithfully admonish everyone who claims to be a Christian to thus learn to know Christ, thus believe in him, thus receive him, that in the last day Jesus may acknowledge and receive him as his brother, sister, mother (Matt. 12:50), before God, his Father, and all his chosen angels in his everlasting kingdom. Amen.

Book Three

The True Knowledge

of

Jesus Christ

The Only Begotten Son

of the Almighty and Ever Living God,

our Lord and Savior,

and a Brief Admonition on the
Immovable, Immutable Foundation
of His Doctrine of Salvation.

By

D. P.

I determined not to know anything among you,
save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

1 Cor. 2:2.

Foreword

Unto all brethren and sisters whom God hath from the beginning chosen to salvation (2 Thess. 2:13) in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29) and hath now enlightened by his Holy Spirit and called through the gospel into the fellowship of his Son: Grace, peace and mercy from God, our heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, his heavenly Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. (Gal. 1:3-5.)

The Reason for Writing this Book

Beloved brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, and co-partners in the grace of God and in the fellowship of the gospel (Phil. 1:15): Inasmuch as these are the perilous times of which Christ and his apostles prophesied, namely, that many false Christs should arise and deceive many (Matt. 24: 4, 24; 1 Tim. 4:3; 2 Tim. 3:1; 2 Pet. 2:1; Jude 4), therefore I feel constrained by the debt of Christian love to write a little, by the grace of God, concerning the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of the immovable foundation of his doctrine of salvation, although I have confidence in you that you as the children of the new testament are yourselves taught of God, by the anointing which you have received of him. Nevertheless since (as the apostle says) all members have not the same office (Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:15-19; Eph. 4:16) and they serve one another, each member according to his nature, gift, and function, and all for the welfare and preservation of the body, therefore I desire to serve my beloved brethren and sisters, my fellow-members in Christ Jesus, with my little gift, to rightly present, point out and portray Christ Jesus and his word, inasmuch as many undertake to lower the high estate that belongs to Christ Jesus, one denying his divinity, another not rightly confessing his incarnation, and a third rejecting his blessed doctrine, so that the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, is blasphemed in many different ways (even as the Holy Spirit has said, 1 Pet. 2:6; Isa. 28:16; 8:14; Luke 2: 34—that to the unbelievers Christ should become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, and a sign which should be spoken against), therefore love for my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, constrains me (as much as lies in me, his poor minister and unprofitable servant) to make my confession, first, of his true divinity; secondly, of his holy humanity; thirdly, of his doctrine of salvation; for my heart's delight

is to extol and glorify Christ Jesus, in the face of all blasphemers and despisers of Christ and his word, who are wise in their own eyes and consider themselves men of understanding (Jer. 10:1-10; Isa. 5:20, 21), and yet who, with all their wisdom, are fools before God (Bar. 3:23), in which wisdom the Pharisees and scribes, the controversialists of this world, and the fabricators of high and incomprehensible things, have always made, and are still making, fools of themselves, as it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (1 Cor. 1:19; Isa. 29:14). Where are the wise, where are the theologians, where are the controversialists of this world? Has not God made the wisdom of this world foolishness?

Therefore I beseech all my brethren and sisters by the mercy of God and the love of the Spirit, not to seek to be wise in your own eyes, or prudent in yourselves, but that you hold, confess and acknowledge Christ Jesus alone as the wisdom of God, that all grace came by him and all salvation comes from him, and that there is no other name given us among men whereby we may be saved, but alone the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST (Acts 4:10, 12; 3:6, 16).

How One Must Truly Know Christ, In His Eternal Divinity

But no one can obtain this salvation unless he first truly know Christ Jesus. And this is true knowledge of Jesus Christ, that we know him both in his true divinity, and in his pure, spotless humanity. Of his true divinity the prophet Isaiah testifies as follows: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever" (Isa. 9:6, 7). See also Luke 1: 32, 33.

Again Isaiah says: "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him, and ... he shall feed his flock like a shepherd," etc. (Isa. 40:10, 11). This shepherd of God which the heavenly Father promised to the people of Israel is Christ Jesus, the true David, the King of Israel, Prince and Shepherd, who came to seek the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6). Therefore he says of himself: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). And Peter says: "Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. 2:25).

Furthermore Isaiah prophesies of the new heavenly Jerusalem (which is the Christian Church) saying: "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called" (Isa. 54:5).

This prophecy proves to us sufficiently the true divinity and glory of Jesus Christ; for although it may be said and plead that God the Father himself is the Lord and

Husband of his Church, which we also confess and acknowledge, nevertheless it is incontestable that Jesus Christ is, in the new testament, really the Lord and Bridegroom of Jerusalem, as he himself testifies in these words: "Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast" (Matt. 9:15). And John the Baptist confesses that he is the friend of the Bridegroom, when he says: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:29, 30). And Paul says to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:2): "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." And John says in Revelations: "I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven; prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And there came unto me one of the seven angels, . . . saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God" (Rev. 21:2, 3, 9-11).

From these words it is evident that Jesus, the Lamb of God, is also the husband of the new Jerusalem; hence he is also the Redeemer, who loves his bride, and gave himself for her, as Paul says: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

This accords with what the prophet David says: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him" (Psa. 45:10, 11). This king is Christ Jesus, upon whose vesture and thigh a name is written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:16). Therefore also the bride, that is, the Christian Church, shall honor and worship him.

Thus also Jeremiah prophesies of Christ and says: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16). This name LORD, by which the prophet here calls him, is with the Jews the inexpressible name which they call TERTRAGRAMMATON, which the holy scripture ascribes to none but the true GOD and LORD.

Daniel, in referring to Christ and his kingdom, speaks of a stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands (Dan. 2: 45), and which itself became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:35). This is a far-reaching prophecy and incontestable

evidence of the actual divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ (Isa. 53:12); for the taking of the stone out of the mountain without hands indicates to us the wonderful, incomprehensible and inexpressible birth of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, from God his heavenly Father, which came to pass before the beginning of creation; therefore also all creation cannot comprehend or describe the same; but for us it is sufficient that we know beyond a doubt and firmly believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, born of God from the beginning and from the dawn of eternity, that his origin and descent is from God, as the scripture in many places abundantly testifies, whereby then his true divinity is sufficiently shown and established; for it is undeniable, the testimony of Jesus himself, that like produces like (John 3:6), therefore the Father and his only begotten Son are of the same divine order, the same as the mountain and the stone that was cut out of it without hands are of the same substance, although all creature comparisons are far too insignificant and weak to properly portray divine things, for the imperfect creature cannot fully express the perfect Creator. The signification of the stone which was cut without hands out of the mountain and became so great that it filled all the earth, is explained thus by Daniel himself: That the God of heaven will bring forth his Christ, who shall have all power in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), which honor, power and glory God the Father will give to no one but alone to his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, who was born of him, proceeded from him, and therefore is one with him, so that all that the Father has, the Son has also; and what the Son has, that the Father has also, as Christ himself declares in many places in his gospel (Luke 10:22; John 16:15, etc.). Yea, the time would be too short for me if I should here fully discuss and explain at length from the old testament all the passages and testimonies referring to Jesus Christ, of his true divinity, of his everlasting kingdom, of his divine honor, power and glory,, beside all the shadows and types, of Melchizedek,, of Isaac, of Joseph, of Samson, of Moses, and of Aaron's rod which in one night blossomed and yielded almonds; of the manna, and of the rock from which flowed water, of the serpent which Moses raised as a saving token in the wilderness,, of David and Solomon, of the holy of holies, both in the tabernacle of Moses and in Solomon's temple; of the golden altar, of the many sacrifices, of the mercy-seat and all the other types and figures, all of which point to Christ Jesus (Ex. 16:16; Psa. 78:15; Gen. 14:18,19; Num. 20:11; 21:9; Gen. 21:1-3; Gen. 36, etc.). Therefore I request the Christian to examine the scripture for himself, even as Christ commanded the Jews saying, "Search the scripture; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me" (John 5: 39), and pray to God for wisdom, for he will give it (Jas. 1:5). Nevertheless I shall draw attention briefly to several passages in the new testament in confirmation of the true divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first place Christ is the firstborn, the only begotten and own Son of the almighty and living God, which alone is sufficient to prove his true divinity, as said above; for inasmuch as the Son is born of God in a natural and yet inexpressible manner (Heb. 1:1-3), even as brightness naturally proceeds from the sun, and light from the fire, hence he is in all things like his Father, so that Jesus himself said to Philip: "Philip! He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Therefore also the scripture calls him the image of the invisible God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3), the brightness of the everlasting Light, a spotless reflection of his divine glory, the brightness of the glory of

God, and the express image of his Person (Heb. 1:3), from which it is easily to be understood how conformably God is reflected by his Son, how completely the Son expresses the Father. Therefore Christ says: "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:29). So wholly one are Son and Father, and alone know each other as those of like divine being, who have one will together eternally, work all things together, and have all things in common (John 5:20, 21; 16:14, 15; 17:22, 23).

John declares this in the beginning of his gospel, where, in speaking of the true divinity of Jesus Christ, he says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 14).

This is an incontrovertible proof of the eternal divinity of Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, because he was the Word, in the beginning, with God, and God himself was the Word. Christ himself confirms this in what he said to the Jews: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), and when he said in his prayer: "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). And in Revelations of St. John Christ testifies of himself and speaks in the same manner as God spoke of himself through Isaiah (Isa. 41:4; 42:12, 13; 44:6): "I am the first and the last" (Rev. 1:17).

John also bears strong testimony to the true divinity of Jesus Christ in his epistle in this that he calls Christ the Word of Life and eternal life (1 John 1:1, 2), saying: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)" (1 John 1:1, 2). And again: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

This harmonizes with what Paul says to the Romans of his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 9:4, 5).

To human reason this is incomprehensible and must be received by faith alone, that the same Christ, who is of the fathers, as concerning the flesh, is over all, God blessed forever. Therefore Paul says: "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). This mystery the apostle Thomas could not rightly apprehend at first, but after being enlightened by God through the Holy Spirit, and rightly taught by experience, and thus came to believe truly, he said to Christ: "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). This confession of Thomas is not

addressed to the Father, but to Christ, and therefore cannot be understood as meaning the Father, but Christ.

Paul writes to the Colossians that "by him are all things created" (the same as John states in the beginning of his gospel, John 1:3) "that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:16, 17). Hence in him are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and the knowledge of God; yea, the fullness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily. Therefore the apostle shows so clearly to the Hebrews that the Son upholdeth "all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3). "And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1:6). But what this is, Christ explains himself and says: "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him" (John 5:22, 23). The apostle also writes in the first chapter to the Hebrews of the difference between the Son of God and the angels, and says: "He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest" (Heb. 1:7-11; Psa. 45:6, 7).

There are many other passages and testimonies in the new testament which ascribe and attribute to Christ Jesus all divine honor, might, strength, power, glory and nature, but it is unnecessary to discuss all these here, for from all of the aforesaid it is evident enough who Jesus Christ is, and what he is, inasmuch as the prophets and apostles declare and testify of him that he is the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the almighty Lord, the Lord of hosts (Isa. 9:6), the Holy One of Israel, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth (Isa. 40:28), the Righteous Branch of David, the Lord our Righteousness (Jer. 23:5, 6), the only begotten Son of the Most High and living God (Matt. 16: 27; John 6:69; 1:18), by whom grace and truth has come, in whom are hidden all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Col. 2:3), the Word of God, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (John 1:1), yea, who is himself the wisdom of God and the Word of God (1 Cor. 1:24; Rev. 19:13); the truth and everlasting life; God, whose throne shall endure forever and ever (Psa. 45:6), the Creator of heaven and earth, for all things are made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made; everything exists in him (John 1:3; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:3), and he does what he "seeth the Father do" (John 5:19), therefore he also has divine glory with the Father, and sits with him on his throne at his right hand, and shall be worshiped by all the angels, and all the saints on earth must honor, fear and love him (Rev. 3:21; Heb. 1: 6; Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Pet. 3: 22), even as the Father, and believe in him, even as they believe in the Father (John 14:1).

All this, and whatever else the holy scripture everywhere teaches and testifies of the true divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ we must, above all things, and without any doubt, believe (1 John 3:23), for in no other way can we be saved. For it is the command of God, says John, that we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18). And again: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Further: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:10-12).

Therefore we must believe in the Son of God, or we cannot obtain salvation. And no one can truly believe on the Son of God unless he first acknowledge him as his Lord and God; for it is certain that we must believe in the true God alone, and no one can believe in God, nor come to him, unless he believes that he is God, and a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6). Since we must believe in the Son just as we believe in the Father (as Christ himself teaches his disciples and says: "Ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1), therefore the Son must be the true God with and in the Father, thus also the Father is in the Son, so that they two are one, yea, an undivided, incomprehensible, inexpressible, almighty and living God, and Divinity in everlasting unity, power and working of the one and eternal, true Holy Spirit. Let so much be said in brief of the true divinity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as pertaining to the first part of our subject.

In the second place we must acknowledge the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely, that through the power of the Most High, and by the Holy Ghost he became a man in the virgin Mary, was born of her (Matt. 1:20; Luke 2:7), and was wholly exempt from the bite of the serpent (Gen. 3:1, 15), that is, entirely free from or beyond sin, and was not besmirched or polluted by the poisonous root of sinful flesh and sinful nature, so that he might bruise the serpent's head, and make us, who were enemies of God and the children of wrath, to be children of God and heirs of eternal life (Rom. 5:10; Eph. 2:16). Therefore he did not become a man by the first Adam, who was poisoned and made naked by the serpent, but the Word, which was in the beginning with God and was God (John 1:1), was made flesh, so that Jesus Christ, although he appeared in the form of sinful flesh, was altogether without sin and sinful origin, had a pure body, prepared for him by God, the heavenly Father, by the Holy Ghost (Heb. 5:7; 10:5), and was thus a Paschal Lamb without blemish (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8), and took away our sins, and that we might be sprinkled by his blood, delivered from the Egypt and Pharaoh of sin, that is, from this blind and wicked world, and out of the prison house of Satan, and that he might become our Brother, and that we might be made in the likeness of his image and partake of his being and nature (1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:19).

Thus, then, the only begotten Son of the living God, who was glorified with God before the world was (John 17:5), became mortal man (2 Cor. 8:9), who was rich, yet for

our sakes became poor; he who was in divine form took upon himself the form of a man and a servant, the wisdom that was born (of God) before the beginning of creation appeared upon earth and dwelt among men (Prov. 8: 22, 23); the Word, which in the beginning was with God and which was God, was made flesh (says John), and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father (John 1:14). That holy thing which Mary received, and by which she conceived and which was impregnated in her body, was of the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:31) and came into her through the overshadowing of the divine power, and that which was born of her was called the Son of the Most High. The true bread of life is given to us of the Father (John 6:51) and came down from heaven, which bread is Christ Jesus, yea, his flesh, which he has given for the life of the world. The second Adam, who overcame death for us and has brought us life again, is not of the earth, of which the first Adam is made, but came from God, down from heaven, and is the Lord himself from heaven; he is the first and the last, who lives and was dead, and is alive for evermore (Rev. 1:17). To sum it up: God was made manifest in the flesh, and was seen upon earth. The Lord of Sabaoth came down from his holy place to deliver Zion (Bar. 3:38), and dwelt in the midst of Zion (Zech. 2:10).

How One Must Truly Know Christ, In His Holy Humanity

Then it is necessary for all Christians to consider and to reflect upon the reason why the wisdom of God, the Word of God, and the Son of the Most High thus humbled himself and became man, namely, in the first place, to take away our sin (1 John 3:5); for since Adam had disobeyed God's word, and contrary to the command of God ate of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he died, according to the words which God spake to him: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:17), and with him all his generation to the end of the world, for all descend from this dead Adam (1 Cor. 15:21, 22), and thus death passed upon all mankind (Rom. 5:12).

Now, if this sin was to be paid for, this death removed, the righteousness of God satisfied, and life brought again to dead humanity, Jesus, the Son of the Most High, had to appear, become man, take our sin upon himself, die for us (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31; 2:21; Rom. 8:1; Isa. 53:4-6; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3: 21, 24; 3:18), and by his death and blood triumph over the devil, sin, death and hell, yea, by the one offering of his body, forever reconcile us with God his Father (Heb. 10:10). Therefore John says that the Son of God was manifested to take away our sins; "and in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). And Paul says: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law; being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13), and again: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). This is what the apostle explains in other words, namely, that God "made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin" (which is Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son)—that is, as an offering for sin—"that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

For the sake of this righteousness, that is, that we might be justified. Jesus gave himself unto death, and became the most despised of all men, even as the prophet says: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed," etc. (Isa. 53:2-5).

Christ might therefore well say in the time of his suffering as David prophesied of him: "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head" (Psa. 22:6, 7). And again: "Dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

In this we are given an idea of God's justice. that he so sorely afflicted and humiliated his only begotten Son for the sake of the sins of his people; for how terribly God hates sin is shown in the fact that he could not reconcile himself for the disobedience and transgression of one man (by whom we all became sinners, Rom. 5:12)—for his righteousness (justice) endureth forever—until he had permitted his beloved only begotten Son to be so unmercifully maltreated by the ungodly and heathen {Matt. 27; John 19), his pure and holy body to be thus wounded, to have his head pierced with a crown of thorns, and at last to suffer the bitterest and most shameful death for us on the cross! Oh, how the only begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus, our Lord and faithful Savior, suffered for us all! (John 3:16). He who is the eternal wisdom and truth of God, who cannot lie nor err, him they accused as a liar and a deceiver of the people; he who is the justifier and sanctifier of all believers (1 Cor. 1:30), the innocent Lamb of God, who knew no sin, yea, who taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29), him they numbered with the transgressors; he who is the peace of all Christians, and the reconciliation of all that is in heaven and on earth (2 Cor. 5:19; Isa. 53:4-6; Eph. 1:10; 2:14; Col. 1:20), him they accused and complained of as a turbulent founder of a sect; he who is the brightness of the eternal light (2 Cor. 4:4), a spotless reflection of the divine glory, the express image of the invisible God (Heb. 1:2, 3; Col. 1:15), in whose face the angels of God desire to look, and in whose brightness all the saints of earth are reflected, from him they hid their faces, and called to Pilate: "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Yea, him who is the Lord of the whole earth they rejected and would not receive as their King. He who clothes all true believers and baptized Christians with the robe of righteousness and with the mantle of salvation, him they stripped and nailed naked to the cross, and cast lots over his vesture (Psa. 22:18). He who gives the water of life freely to all (John 4:10; 7:37; Rev. 22:17), him they gave vinegar to drink when he thirsted (John 19:28, 29). He who is the Prince of Life (Acts 3:15), him they put to death. And all this the heavenly Father, the almighty God, laid upon his only begotten Son Jesus Christ on account of our sins', and yet, sad to say, this is so little thought of by the whole world. It

is true many people claim the atoning merits of Christ's death and blood, but few are found who diligently meditate upon and take to heart the suffering of our Lord that they may be bettered thereby, die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Secondly, God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we through him might have life (John 3:16; 1 John 5:12), by which act God has abundantly shown his love and fatherly favor toward us, not because of the good works that any one might have done (for we all have sinned (Rom. 3:23), but because God, who is true to his word, desired to faithfully fulfill his promise to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and the rest of the fathers, and to pour out upon us the riches of his grace and save us, as it is written: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). And Paul writes to the Romans: "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things" (Rom. 8:31, 32).

Herein was the love of God manifested, as John says, that he sent his only begotten Son into the world that through him we might have life. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:8, 9). And God did this for us while we were yet enemies, as Paul says: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). And again: "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Hence we may well say with the prophet, that "God hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Psa. 103:10). Hence we must all confess with Paul: "We all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3). "But," says the apostle, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:4-9).

Now, when we sincerely meditate upon this unfathomable grace and mercy of God the Father which was manifested to us through Jesus Christ, love to God is kindled in our hearts, for how could we but love such a gracious and merciful God in return, who so dearly loved us. Therefore John says: "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). And hereby we confess that we love God, if we keep his commandments (1 John 5:2, 3), even as Christ himself says to his disciples: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." That is, "If a man love me, he will keep my words," "but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:15, 21, 23, 24). By this we know that we love God, if we sincerely love his children, that is, all true Christians; for no one can love God without also loving all who are born of God, as John declares (1 John 4:11-21).

From all of the aforesaid it is now clear what constitutes the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, both according to his true divinity and his humanity, and how we must meditate upon both the justice and the love of God as manifested to us in Christ Jesus: The justice of God regarding sin, which had to be so bitterly atoned for and punished in such an exalted person, that is, in the only begotten Son of the living God (Isa. 53:2-10) ; but the love of God toward us, that the heavenly Father gave his only begotten Son for us, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

On the Immovable, Immutable Doctrine of Salvation by Jesus Christ

This, then, is the true knowledge of Christ Jesus, which is also eternal life, as Jesus himself says: "This is life eternal (O Father) that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). But this knowledge is not a historical information regarding Christ, as many think, but a quickening and powerful work of God in man, whereby he becomes transformed, born anew of God, and enlightened and endued with the Holy Spirit, so that he is of like mind with Christ, whose brother and fellow-heir he has, by grace, become through faith and the new birth (1 John 3:6, 7). Hence not all know Christ who confess him with their mouths; but "hereby we do know," says John, "that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected. He that saith that he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2: 3-6).

From these words it is easily ascertained who truly knows Christ and who does not.

Christ, then, is the only begotten Son of the living God, truly God and man, and him the heavenly Father has given for our Lord and Master, and has shown us from heaven that he is his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, him shall we hear (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; 2 Pet. 1:17, etc.). Thus also the Holy Ghost has testified of Christ Jesus: on the one hand, because all that is written in the scripture of Christ Jesus he has spoken through the apostles and prophets (2 Pet. 1:21; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 3:18, etc.); and, on the other hand, that he came upon Christ Jesus in the bodily and visible form of a dove and remained, showing us that the fullness of the Spirit dwells bodily in Christ Jesus (John 1:32, 33; Matt. 3:16, etc.), for the Father loveth the Son, says John, and "giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:33, 34), but it pleased him that in the Son all fullness should dwell (Col. 1:19)—yea, "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9)—and that in him should be eternal life, and that we should receive of his fullness, and grace for grace, and that through him and from him we should receive eternal life, according to the words which Christ himself spoke to Martha: "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 3:25, 26).

Since, then, life is in the Son of God, and he upholdeth all things by the word of his power (1 John 5:11; Heb. 1:3), and all things are made by him (John 1:3; Col. 1:16, 17, etc.), hence also mankind exists by him and by his word, so long as they by true faith and obedience remain or abide in him, as Jesus himself testifies and says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). And again Christ says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (John 8:51), for the words that Jesus speaks are Spirit, and they are life (John 6: 63). "The gospel," says Paul, "is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18).

The doctrine of Jesus Christ is the word of the heavenly Father (John 7:16; 3:11: 8:28; 12:49; 14:10, 24). The doctrine of the Son and the testimony of the Holy Spirit is above (excels) all the teachings of the prophets, and it contains all that is necessary and conducive to salvation. Nor can the will of the heavenly Father be found anywhere so clearly as in the words of Jesus Christ, by whom he has in these last days spoken, made known his will, and fully expressed it (Heb. 1:2); hence all that is contrary, or not conformable, to the words of Christ, is not God's word or will; for "no other foundation can be laid, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). No other gospel may be preached than that which is preached and left to us by Jesus Christ and his apostles. Yea, Paul writes to the Galatians: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8, 9).

Let every Christian ponder well these words, that an angel of God shall be accursed who teaches other than that which Paul and the other apostles taught. Hence no doctrine is of any value that does not harmonize with the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and man does not live by words which proceed from the will or mouth of man, but alone by the words of God (Matt. 4:4), which have been made known to us by Jesus Christ and his apostles. Here is the bread of heaven; here is the water of life; if any man hungers after righteousness, he will find here the bread of life (Deut. 8:3; Matt. 5:6), and whoever eats of it becomes strong and sound in Christ; his soul will be satisfied, so that he will no longer hunger for the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. If any man thirsts for his salvation he will find here the purest well of water; and he that drinks out of this fountain, in him it shall be a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14; 7: 38), and he will never thirst again for the impure waters of the doctrines of men. If anyone desires heavenly wisdom, let him come to Christ, and learn of him; for he is meek and lowly in heart; and he shall find rest unto his soul (Matt. 11:29); then he shall be taught of God, then he shall obtain true wisdom; for Christ is such a teacher, and his word is of such nature and power, that whosoever receives it with a believing heart and keeps it, shall find in the simple doctrine of Jesus Christ the inexpressible counsel of the heavenly wisdom, he shall find that the preaching of the cross, which at first sight seems simple and contemptible (1 Cor. 1: 18), far excels all human wisdom, no matter how exalted and wonderful the latter may appear to be. Therefore Paul says to the Corinthians:

"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). Every Christian must do likewise, and find all his delight in the gospel (Psa. 1:2), and make it his business by day and by night to familiarize himself with it; for then he will find in it sweetness, so that with David he can say: "O Lord, how sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psa. 119:103).

If it is a fact that the prophet tasted such sweetness in the law (and as he says in another place, that the "judgments of the Lord are more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb," Psa. 19:9, 10), then it is always in order that a Christian taste and find such sweetness also in the gospel of Jesus Christ, in which God reveals to us all his grace and love, all his kindness and benevolence. If the figurative bread of heaven was capable of satisfying the desires of all, and was agreeable to every individual's taste, and every one could make of it what he wished, whether he desired one thing or another, as it is written in the Book of Wisdom (Sirach 17:20), how much more is the true bread of heaven able to satisfy every desire and to give a taste of the heavenly sweetness to all hungry souls who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

But no one may really taste the sweetness and power of the true bread of heaven, except those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and who can say with David: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God" (Psa. 42:1). And again: "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh-longeth for thee in a dry land, where no water is" (Psa. 63:1).

Whoever thus thirsts for the living God, hungers for the bread of heaven and desires the water of life, shall, without a doubt be satisfied, as Christ says: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). And again Christ says: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). And in the Revelations of John it is written: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:14-17).

These are they who believe in Jesus Christ, who live by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God and are fed with the heavenly bread; they shall never lack of the bread of life, and shall hereafter be forever satisfied, when God shall be all in all.

On the other hand it is impossible for those who have once tasted this sweetness of the word of God and the power of the world to come, and have received the Holy Spirit, but depart therefrom and sin willfully—after having confessed and accepted the truth, and in their pride despise Christ and his word—to be renewed again unto repentance, according to the words of the apostle (Heb. 6:4-6); for they crucify to

themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame, yea, they trample the Son of God under foot, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29). Therefore also there remains no more sacrifice for their sins, but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries of Christ and his word, for our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 10:27-30; 12:29).

Therefore it is my brotherly admonition, my friendly petition, and my faithful counsel which I present to all my beloved brethren and sisters out of heartfelt love, that you exercise due vigilance over your treasures and faithfully preserve all the understanding which you have received of God, all of the light of Christ that has appeared in your hearts (2 Cor. 4:6), all that has been given you of God by his Spirit, all that you have tasted of the bread of heaven and drunk of the water of life, out of the well of salvation, and that you continue therein, increase, and thereby grow up and become strong after the inner man, that you may walk with joy in the way of the Lord toward the Promised Land, the heavenly Jerusalem, and that you never long for the fleshpots of Egypt, the leaven of the Pharisees, and the polluted waters of human wisdom (Matt. 16:6; Jer. 2:13; Ezek. 34:19), but that all your desire and hunger may be for the true bread of heaven, and that all your thirst may be for the water of life.

Oh, what a precious table that is which the Lord has prepared for us in the dry desert of this world! It is true, God gave to carnal Israel a figurative bread of heaven to eat, and natural water out of the rock to drink (Ex. 16:16; 17:6; Psa. 78:15-20; Num. 20:11; 1 Cor. 10:3, 4)—and which without doubt was a great miracle of God—but to us God, the heavenly Father, has given to eat of the true bread of life that came down from heaven (John 6: 51) to feed all hungry souls; to us he has given to drink of the water of life, which springs forth from the living Rock, Christ Jesus, for the cooling and refreshing of all thirsty souls. Therefore also Christ said to the Jews: "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world" (John 6:32, 33). And Paul says: "All our fathers . . . did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; . . . but with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (1 Cor. 10:3-5). And Christ Jesus says: "If any man eat of this bread (Christ), he shall live forever" (John 6:51). "And whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). And again Christ says: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37, 38).

The Spirit of God said the same thing before this through Isaiah: 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). Here we hear how those who thirst are invited to come, but to whom shall they come but to Jesus Christ, for he refreshes all who are weary and heavy laden, and to those who come to him he gives the water of life (which is a refreshing unto their souls) freely; to them he gives without price the pure wine of his divine Word for the freeing of their consciences, and

nourishes them with the sincere (unadulterated) milk, that they may grow thereby (1 Pet. 2:2); yea, more than this, he gives them his flesh to feed their souls, as he himself says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me" (John 6:53-57).

How and in what manner Christ is eaten by us, that is, that we eat not the material, natural bread, but the true, living bread which came down from heaven, not eating his flesh in a natural or material sense, but spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood, he himself makes sufficiently plain in the gospel according to John; for after having spoken at some length on the necessity of our eating his flesh and drinking his blood, he said in conclusion: "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever" (John 6:58). And again: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). And of this he says: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

Herewith Christ explains his words which he spoke regarding the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood, namely, that it is not to be understood in a natural, but in a spiritual, sense, and that his flesh which he gives us to eat is really the true living bread of heaven; whoso receives and eats this bread of Jesus Christ, that is, whoever hears, accepts and keeps the words of Christ, and firmly believes in Jesus Christ, the Crucified One, that he has given his flesh for us and shed his blood for us for the forgiveness of our sins (Rom. 3:25; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:13, etc.), he eats in a spiritual sense of the flesh of Jesus Christ, and drinks spiritually of his blood, and by virtue of the spiritual food of the flesh and blood of Christ as the true heavenly bread, he is nourished and strengthened unto eternal life. Therefore every Christian may here well say with the prophet: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psa. 103:1, 2). "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward us?" (Psa. 116:12). But he who despises these inexpressible loving-kindnesses and benefits of Christ Jesus and transgresses his doctrine and does not and will not abide therein, will not escape the judgment of God, even as it is written: "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" (Heb. 2:2-4). And again: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not him that spake on earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" (Heb. 12:25).

Moses perceived in the Spirit that Christ Jesus alone must be heard, and that the judgment of God shall come upon those who despise and transgress the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ, therefore he spoke thus to Israel: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Deut. 18:15, 18, 19; Acts 3:23).

This Prophet is Jesus Christ, as Peter and Stephen testify. Whosoever therefore hearkens to this Prophet, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Most High God, believes in him, and keeps his word, shall be saved; but whosoever despises him and does not receive his word, he already has that which will judge him. "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," says Christ (John 12:48).

Therefore, beloved brethren and sisters and companions in the faith, I beseech you by the mercies of God (Rom. 12:1), that you hold firmly to Christ, and know and confess him as the holy scripture teaches you, and as I have briefly directed you in love, and abide steadfastly in his doctrine, keep his commandments in true faith (John 8:31; 15:4), follow in his footsteps, serve him with your whole heart, love him with all your soul, that when he shall appear we may receive the crown of eternal glory (1 Pet. 2:21; Tit. 2:13; 2 Tim. 4:8). The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Book Four

A Vindication

Against the Accusation That We are Anabaptists and Founders of Sects (Of Which the World, With Gross Injustice, Accuses Us), and Showing, on the Other Hand, That We are One With the True Church of God, Which Was From the Beginning.

Also an instruction on the difference
between true and false worship,
and why a Christian must abstain
from false worship and separate
himself from the fellowship
of idolaters.

Compiled from the holy scripture, by the grace of

God for the benefit of all lovers of the truth,

By

D. P.

Having the same spirit of faith,
therefore we speak, etc. 2 Cor. 4:12.

Flee from idolatry. 1 Cor. 10:14.

I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice,
they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would
not that ye should have fellowship with devils.

Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the
cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers
of the Lord's table, and the table of devils.

1 Cor. 10:20, 21.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye
separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the
unclean thing.

2 Cor. 6:17. 10

The Everlasting Love of God Our Heavenly Father,
the Peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and the
Communion of the Holy Ghost, Be With
All Lovers of the Truth. Amen.

2 Cor. 13:14.

Beloved brethren and friends in the Lord. Inasmuch as we are greatly reproached
by the world, severely accused by the learned and the perverted, and cruelly persecuted

by the tyrants, as though we were an Anabaptist sect and had unjustly and without cause separated from them, we are therefore occasioned and compelled to vindicate ourselves, and to give the reason, from the word of God, for our separation from the world, its false worship, and its unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11) and to discuss the same. We desire to make known beforehand, however, that no one shall construe or understand this our vindication as being an effort at self-adulation, for we well know that to honor and praise one's self is nothing but folly. But because the world so sorely abuses us, men of letters write against us and tyrants rage against us, they compel us to make this brief and simple vindication (defense), just as the false workers (2 Cor. 11:5), who were continually despising and disparaging the person of Paul the apostle (who nevertheless was poor in spirit and lowly in heart) compelled him to defend and commend himself (2 Cor. 11:5). For this reason we also speak against the grandiloquent and eminent divines who with immense conceit and lies of the nature and workings of Satan greatly despise, defame and slander us, while with glozing words, they make a nice show of themselves, yea, boasting and parading themselves as the people of God and the true Christian Church, while at the same time, by their false doctrine and their shameful idolatry, their many ceremonies, and their magnificent churches, with their wicked lives and ungodly walk, they prove the contrary, as everyone who fears God can readily see.

Therefore we desire, according to our humble gifts, to show to all lovers of the truth that we are not Anabaptists nor sect-makers, but that we are in unity with the true Christian apostolic and catholic church, and that for highly necessary and important reasons and with perfect propriety we separate ourselves from all false worship and from the fellowship of idolaters. And we are certain and assured by the sealing of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13) that we are right, and every God-fearing reader who understands the scripture shall also from this our humble defense understand our position if he reads aright and takes it to heart; to which end may the almighty God lend his grace. Amen.

In the first place, so far as the common epithet "Anabaptist" (literally Rebaptizer. —Tr.) is concerned, we have already in our confession on Baptism and of the Lord's Supper made our vindication, and have abundantly shown by the scripture, that infant baptism is neither instituted nor commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ, nor that it was taught or practiced by the apostles, but that true Christian baptism is intended for penitent believers. Hence it is unnecessary to discuss this subject here; for if anyone desires to know our vindication of this point, let him read the foregoing confessions. There he will find sufficient information on the matter (2 Thess. 2: 2, 3; 1 John 2:18, 19; 2 Cor. 6:16) as to why we have rejected and renounced as not being of God, this idolatrous infant baptism, which, administered by the priests of Baal with frightful injunctions of the devil and many idolatrous ceremonies, initiated us into the kingdom of Antichrist, into the temple of idolaters in the time of our ignorance, when as yet we had no knowledge of good and evil (Deut. 1:39); and that now, having by the grace of God, and by his word which was preached to us—and which we heard and heeded—been converted, become penitent and believing, we were baptized into the kingdom of Christ and the temple of the living God, according to the example and command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the teaching and practice of the apostles, by the messengers of God, in the name of.

almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we have not practiced rebaptism, but prove and practice thereby the true, only Christian baptism, which avails before God, which takes place in Spirit and in truth, which is practiced according to the scripture and is received upon confession of faith, the praise for which is not of men, but of God (Matt. 18; Matt. 3:1; Mark 16:15, 16; Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:41; 8:36; 10:47; 16:31; 18:8; 22:16).

Hence if on this account we are called Anabaptists (Rebaptizers) and scandalized as such, it is always done unjustly and perforce; however, it has always been the lot of all pious people from the beginning of the world to be accused and slandered with lies and reproach (Psa. 120:2); therefore also they besought the Lord that he would deliver their souls from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue, and preserve them from evil and violent men; who imagine mischiefs in their hearts, and are continually gathered together for war. "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders' poison is under their lips" (Psa. 140:3), which tongues are bent upon doing mischief, and cut with lies as with shears, who rather speak evil than good, and rather falsehood than truth, who are prone to say that which tends to destroy—with false tongues. Nevertheless they console themselves with the saying that an evil tongue shall not prosper on earth, and that the Lord will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor (Psa. 140:12). With this we also comfort ourselves and rejoice with firm confidence and a living hope in the grace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we will wait patiently for the times which shall bring us refreshing and comfort. "Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labors. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves. This was he, whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach: we fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honor: How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints! Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction; yea, we have gone through deserts, where they lay no way; but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it. What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with our vaunting brought us? All these things are passed by like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by" (Wis. of Sol. 5:1-9).

When this shall come to pass, and the righteous judgment of God shall come upon the world, then shall the world know that we are not Anabaptists, and that we have been rightly baptized not more than once upon the confession of our faith, according to the institution of our Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the pattern of the teaching which we have received from the apostles (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:8; 10:16; 18:22).

In the second place, in our tract on the Church of God, we have described how she may be known and distinguished from all sects, what ordinances she must keep, and thus prove that she is the Church of God. But now let everyone notice carefully among what people such conditions are found (Matt. 3:16; 28:19; John 3:3; 2 Tim. 3), namely a

sincere confession of the one eternal God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, true dividing discernment of the teaching of the law and of the gospel which bears fruit; The true new birth, True ministers of the holy Word, The right use of the sacraments of Jesus Christ, Proper observance of the washing of the feet of the saints (John 13: Matt. 18:3; 1 Cor. 5), true evangelical separation from the world, and, in short, who keep all the ordinances and have all the characteristics of the Church of God. Read the holy scripture and note therein the characteristics which designate and portray to us the Church and measure us by this plummet and test us with this touch-stone, and that shall determine whether we or our opponents are nearer the truth, yea, whether we or they can be considered the Christian Church. If the kingdom of God consisted in high-sounding words, in false, vain boasting, and not in power and truth (1 Cor. 4:20), in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, then the false prophets and false Christians would win the game every time; but the Lord looks upon the heart and upon faith, and not upon outward appearances or man-made ceremonies; therefore he confesses those to be his children who do the will of the heavenly Father (Matt. 7:21), and these he has chosen and separated from the world, as he himself says: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). And in his prayer he says to his Father regarding his disciples: "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14). Therefore Paul says that our Lord Jesus Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God" (Gal. 1:4.).

These and other passages with which the scripture abounds show us clearly that the true Christians and disciples of the Lord are not one with the world, but are chosen and separated therefrom, and therefore can have no fellowship or part in their false worship and evil works (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 10: 14; Eph. 5:11), for God has himself commanded and prescribed for his people a true worship, and so he would have it observed, as he abundantly testifies through Moses and the prophets. For Moses speaks to the children of Israel: "Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:1, 2). And again: "What thing so ever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deut. 12:32).

The first commandment reads: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me," etc. (Ex. 20:2, 3). That is, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10; Deut. 6: 13; Josh. 24:22). God commanded Israel saying: "Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt" (Ezek. 20:7), and that they should not pollute themselves with strange gods, yea, not touch any impure thing, but keep themselves separate therefrom and go out from among the ungodly (Gen. 19:14, 15; Num. 16: 26). God further said to Israel: "Walk

ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols: I am the Lord your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezek. 29:18. See also Isa. 52:11; 2 Cor. 6:17).

From these words it is evident that whatever God has not commanded and has not instituted with expressed words of scripture, he does not want to be observed, nor does he want to be served therewith nor will he have his word set aside, nor made to suit the pleasure of men, as may be seen in his dealings with Saul; for he was disobedient to the command of God, and feared his people, and spared the best of the fatlings and sheep, and the king of the Amalekites, all of which were to be destroyed with the edge of the sword (Sam. 15: 3, 9). Of these he wished to offer sacrifices to God, but with this God was not pleased; for Samuel said to king Saul: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than to the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:22, 23).

Therefore true service consists in serving, honoring and worshiping, fearing and loving God according to his word, abstaining from sin, no longer doing evil, to keep God's word before our eyes, to comfort the widow and the orphan, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1-27; Deut. 4:2, 6:2; 12:32; Sir. 4:1; 33:10; 1 Sam. 15:13).

On the other hand, all sacrifice and work that is according to one's own opinion is false service and idolatry and known as such because God did not command it, but that it is, for the purpose of devotion and with good intention or for other reasons, instituted by man as a substitute for the service and command of God and so observed, as did the Pharisees, to whom Jesus said: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother; and, he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or his mother. It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. 15:3-6). What an adroit effort the Pharisees here made in pretending that they were doing God a service, although it was nothing but hypocrisy! Therefore also Christ said to them: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, his people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15: 7—9; Isa. 29:13).

Thus it is with all the ceremonies, commandments and traditions of the modern Pharisees. Yea, all that human judgment and purpose institutes, according to the Pharisaic way, that is inimical to the worship and the commandment of God, though set up with a beautifully dissembled exterior, as though the real purpose were to worship God therewith, is nevertheless wrong and hypocrisy in the sight of God and he is not worshiped thereby. Therefore all Christians must avoid and shun such things, and for the following reasons:

The commandments of men are instituted and observed as though it were the desire to please God therewith, wash away sin and fulfill righteousness, which is a derogation or disparagement of the grace of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is an unquestioned fact and a fundamental truth, that we are not saved by our own traditions or the ceremonies of men, but by the grace of Jesus Christ and by faith in his name (Acts 4:10; '15:11; Eph. 1:7; 2:4). Now it is evident, and well known by all who fear God, that the world seeks to gain justification and salvation through the commandments, institutions (statutes) and traditions of men, even as the Galatians sought to obtain justification by circumcision and the law, for which Paul so sternly rebuked them and wrote to them that they were foolish and bewitched, that Christ had become of no effect unto them, and that they had fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4) because they sought to be justified by the law. How much more, then, has the world lost Christ and fallen from grace when it seeks justification by the commandments and traditions of men. And if Paul rejected circumcision and the ceremonial law—though both were commanded and given by God—for the reason that they were fulfilled in Christ, and the Galatians sought justification and salvation by them, how much more are to be rejected the commandments, ceremonies and doctrines of men, by which the world means to be saved (Matt. 15:3; 23:3, 4).

The ceremonies and statutes of men do not serve or tend to the benefit or edification of fellowmen, while all Christian activity must tend to and serve this purpose. Hence the former give offence especially to the weak (Matt. 18:6; Rom. 14:14; 1 Thess. 5: 32), and therefore whoever observes the commandments and ceremonies of men, thereby grieves and displeases the Church of God, gives the appearance of evil example for others, which is a great sin, for it is written that evil examples lead astray and destroy the good, one in another, and that evil desires pervert simple minds (Wis. of Sol. 4:12). He who by his evil example leads another astray and destroys the good in him sins greatly against God and his fellowman, as Christ shows in the following words: "Woe unto him through whom offences come. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea, than that he should offend one of the least of those that believe on me" (Matt. 18:6, 7; Mark 9:41; Luke 17:1, 2).

Those who think so little of offending the Church of God, without thinking of how grievously they sin and how severely God will punish such sin, should well consider this and take it to heart. Paul would abstain from eating flesh as long as he lived, if by eating he would offend his brother (1 Cor. 8:13), and gives the reason (Rom. 14:15) as follows: Whoever sins against his brother and wounds his conscience sins against Christ. If, then, Paul would give up his Christian liberty of eating all kinds of food rather than offend one brother, what of those who take liberties which God has not given them, and with this false liberty offend the Church of the Lord (John 8:33)?

The observance of the commandments and ceremonies of men establishes false worship, and gives the world cause to boast against Christians; for it is characteristic of idolaters that they want their idolatry honored and praised by everybody, and compel the people, as Nebuchadnezzar tried to compel the three youths, Shadrach, Meshach, and

Abednego, to honor his image and worship his gods (Dan. 3:14). Antiochus did likewise and forced the Jews into his idolatry, and many acquiesced (1 Mac. 1:43), but those who remained steadfast in the faith, and would not forsake the law of God (1 Mac. 1:13; 2:14-22; 2 Mac. 6:1, etc.) were cruelly tormented and put to death, as the books of the Maccabees show (2 Mac. 7). And this is the devil's work and propensity in the children of unbelief, to thus establish and preserve his kingdom (Eph. 2:2, 3); for by his ruthless tyranny he intimidates many, that they do not believe or obey the truth, causing many to apostatize; then when the unbelievers and idolaters see that others who professed the gospel and faith and rebuked their practices as idolatry and shunned them for a time, but now come back, whether voluntarily or by force, they are strengthened thereby in their false worship, and assume that they are right, and thus boast to the injury or belittling of true worship and to the reproach of all true Christians.

But when they see that Christians separate themselves from them, they think it strange, as Peter says (Pet. 4:4), that these "run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you," yea, they revile, as it is written in the Book of Wisdom: "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. He professeth to have the knowledge of God, and he calleth himself the child of the Lord. He was made to reprove our thoughts. 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, and maketh his boast that God is his Father" (Wis. of Sol. 2:12—16).

That the world may not imagine that the Christians are of one mind with them, but know that they are opposed to the world, Christians cannot have any fellowship in their ungodly ways and their unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11), but much rather must reprove them by departing from them, and thus testify that they are evil.

By the commandments and ceremonies of men gospel truth is obscured and the liberty of Jesus Christ is diminished in this that God's word is disregarded or abandoned, and consciences are burdened with many useless and unnecessary things (Col. 2:16) which through Jesus Christ are made free by faith (Luke 1:69), so that they are no longer bound to the commandments of men, to the things of the world, but to Christ alone, to serve him in all obedience, holiness and righteousness. For Jesus Christ is ruler of the conscience, therefore it must be free from all that is not the service of Jesus Christ.

Care must also be taken that that which is built by word is not destroyed by deed, hence Jesus Sirach says: "When one buildeth, and another pulleth down, what profit have they then but labor?" (Sir. 34:23).^(Another rendering of this passage is: "When one buildeth, and pulleth it down again, what profit is his labor?"—Tr.)

On this matter Paul criticizes Peter (Gal. 2:11) for withdrawing and separating himself from the Gentiles for fear of the Jews which came from Jerusalem, and thus breaking down what he had previously built up, in this that he had made known the truth of the gospel and had fellowshiped with the Gentiles, eating food with them which the

law declared unclean, and afterward he himself does the opposite thing and separates himself from the Gentiles to please the Jews; thus by this separation he broke down the gospel liberty which he had, by his fellowship with the Gentiles, previously built up. By so doing he again builds up the law which he had previously broken down, by which he made himself censurable as he who is unstable in his words and ways, and does not walk according to the truth of the Gospel, and by his dissembling misleads others. How much more then are those censurable who with the mouth profess the word of God, reject the commandments, ceremonies and doctrines of men and call them wrong, and then disregard the word of God, despise the sacraments of the Lord, and to please the world, and to take away the offence of the cross (Gal. 5:11), observe and practice the commandments of men, thereby offending many and misleading some by their hypocrisy. How are they going to excuse themselves? Peter at least separated himself from the Gentiles according to the law, thus doing after the manner of the Jews and in deference to the brethren who came from James; nevertheless Paul "withstood him to the face" for not acting in accordance with evangelical truth and Christian liberty, and thus becoming a stumbling-block to the believing Gentiles. But these do not act according to the law or the gospel, for they observe the commandments and ceremonies of men, which both law and gospel reprove, reject and forbid (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:9; Gal. 1:10, etc.), yea, curse as an abomination to God. And this they do to please men, although they may not please men if they would be the servants of Christ. Therefore they are ever censurable before God and his church.

Christians are in fellowship with Christ and all the saints, and so break the bread and drink the cup at the Lord's Supper as a testimony that they are one body and bread together in Christ (Matt. 26:25; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23). Therefore also they must shun all false worship and the fellowship of idolatry and idolatrous servants and the ways by which idols are served, and not be seen there, even as Paul's words clearly convey when he says: "My dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What shall I say, then? that the idol is anything, or that which is offered to idols is anything? Nay, but I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils. Or would ye provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? Etc." (1 Cor. 10:9, 14—22).

In these words we note how that Christians must flee idolatry because they are in the fellowship of Christ and one body with all the believers and saints, which they testify and confirm by the Lord's Supper, as the priests and the sons of Aaron who in the Israel after the flesh served at the altar and lived thereby were in the fellowship of the altar, that is, they were partakers with Aaron and his sons of all that God had ordained and commanded to be given to the altar. Thus also it is with those who with the idolaters eat

of their bread, and drink of their cup. They are one body with them, and hence are in the fellowship of idolaters, yea, with the devil himself; for the unbelievers, idolaters and ungodly are one with the prince of darkness and of this world, whom they serve; and with the Babylonian whore, to whom they adhere and are therefore one body with her (Rev. 17:1) and have committed much spiritual fornication, that is, idolatry, with her; whoever therefore becomes involved with her and eats of her idol offerings, that is, observes her false worship, has fellowship with her, must expect to share her punishment, yea, upon him shall come the plagues that shall come upon Babylon, and he shall be cast with the dragon into the lake of fire which burns with fire and brimstone (which is the second death) if he does not amend his ways and sincerely repent.

Difference Between True and False Worship, and Why a Pious Christian Must Flee From False Worship

Christians exemplify the living God, as it is written: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 6:16). Hence the apostle declares that Christ served in his own house as a son; "whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6).

Inasmuch then as the true Christians are a temple and a house of God and of the Holy Spirit, they must separate themselves from the temples of idolaters, where people run to the golden calves of Jeroboam, where they serve Baal, where Bel and the dragon are worshipped, whom Moasin honors (1 Kings 12:28; 18:26; Tob. 1:5; Bel and Drag. 3, 23), yea, where so many idolatries are committed that it is a disgrace to mention it and too long to discuss it. Hence also a Christian must shun such idolatrous edifices, cleanse and separate himself from them, as Paul declares: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And 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 live 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).

Examples, Showing How Earnestly a Number of Pious Israelites Avoided Idolatry

We have also a clear illustration and example in the god-fearing Israelites who would not go to the golden calves of Jeroboam, but forsook their homes and departed out of idolatrous Israel (Kings 19:18; Rom. 11:4), living in the cities of Judah and Benjamin

that they might honor and worship the Lord their God at Jerusalem in his temple according to his law given by Moses.

Thus also did the pious Tobit when he was among the captive Israelites in Assyria. He did not forsake the way of truth. When all the others went to offer sacrifices to the golden calves which Jeroboam the king of Israel had made, he alone fled from their company and went to Jerusalem into the temple of the Lord and there worshipped the God of Israel, and faithfully brought his first-fruits and tenths of increase; and although all the rest "ate of the bread of the Gentiles" he was careful not to defile himself by abstaining from eating such food (Tob. 1: 6, etc).

In like manner did the prophets and the sons of the prophets and many God-fearing people in Israel bowed neither knee, nor heart, nor body to any idol, although living among the ungodly and idolatrous worshippers, in the time when Baal and other idols of the heathen were worshipped in Israel (Dan. 3: 12—17; 6: 7—10, etc.); but they worshipped and honored the God of Israel, the Lord of heaven and earth, and hid themselves from the kings and tyrants; yea, God by his grace wonderfully preserved them, as he himself spake to Elijah saying: "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal" (1 Kings 19:18; Rom. 11:4).

Likewise the brave and God-fearing Mattathias could not be forced by king Antiochus to do contrary to the law of God; for although many of the people of Israel had forsaken the law of God, and worshipped idols, Mattathias cried with a loud voice to the messengers of the king: "Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away everyone from the religion of their fathers, and give consent to his commandments, yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the commandments of our fathers. God forbid that we should forsake the law and the ordinances. We will not hearken to the king's words, to go from our religion, either on the right hand, or on the left" (1 Mac. 2:19—22).

Remember also the aged Eleazar. How immovably he adhered to the law of God. How faithfully he shunned all hypocrisy and all appearance of evil, and confessed openly, saying: "It becometh not our age in any wise to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, being fourscore years old and ten, were now gone to a strange religion; and so they, through my hypocrisy and desire to live a little time and a moment longer, should be deceived by me, and I get a stain to mine old age, and make it abominable" (2 Mac. 6:18— 25). "For," said he, "though for the present time I should be delivered from the punishment of men: yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead. Wherefore now, manfully changing this life, I will show myself such a one as mine age requireth, and leave a notable example to such as be young, to die willingly and courageously for the honorable and holy laws" (vs. 24, 25).

In the same manner the seven brothers with their mother suffered with great patience and steadfastness of their faith all the cruel tyranny of the king, and would not act contrary to God's law, but all cheerfully went to their death for it, comforting themselves with the future resurrection and the glory promised and prepared for them by God. (2 Mac. 7).

Note how constant all these remained to the law of God, and would in no way dissemble, thereby leaving us an example, that we should follow in their footsteps; "for," says the apostle, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

Of the Two Fearful Beasts Mentioned in the Book of Revelations

Beside the instances of separation already referred to, the necessity for doing so is sufficiently shown by the two fearful beasts, of which it is written in the Revelations of John: "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13: 6—8). And the other beast came up out of the earth; "and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and had power to cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom, etc." (Rev. 13:11-18).

Now, let him who is wise, intelligent and God-fearing consider and take to heart what this signifies. And let him fear, hear, and take to heart what the angel said with a loud voice, namely: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, etc." (Rev. 14: 7-12). Make note of it.

Of the Abomination of Desolation in the Holy City

It should also be noted here that the Holy Spirit testifies in the scripture that the abomination of desolation has entered the holy place, and that it is time to flee therefrom, that Antichrist shall rise and has already many centuries ago exalted himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped, claiming to be God and doing his work through the power of Satan in them that perish (2 Thess. 2: 4-10); yea, that the great whore of

Babylon is sitting "upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication; and upon her head was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (Rev. 17:3-6); "and she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord who judgeth her, etc." (Rev. 18: 7, 8).

Therefore all Christians are admonished by a voice from heaven which says: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:4).

From all this the indisputable conclusion follows that true Christians must serve God according to his word alone, and that they must not be conformed to the world (Rom. 12:2), nor observe their false worship: nor have any appearance of evil (even as Paul says: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." 1 Thess. 5: 22), as if they were one with the world to have its friendship (which, however, is enmity with God, James 4:4), and to avoid bearing the cross of Christ (in which all Christians glory, Gal. 6:14), and to preserve their temporal life, which, however, it is impossible to do, but is hurtful and forfeits eternal life, as Christ himself says: "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16:25; John 12:25).

**An Explanation of a Number of Beautifully
Embellished False Attitudes or Positions, Namely,
Whether One May Consistently Maintain
Fellowship Outwardly with Idolatry or Sacrilege
While at Heart not Adhering Thereto; Together
with a Treatise on True Love**

The claim which some make—that one may outwardly take part in false worship, only one must not believe in it nor consent to it at heart—is absurd. To this claim we reply that such profession is nothing but deceit, of which Jesus Sirach says: "To be apt in cunning is not wisdom, neither at any time the counsel of sinners prudence" (Sir. 19:22). It is wickedness and idolatry, and nothing but folly, and ignorance; therefore let no man be deceived by such a plea. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10). The bodies of Christians are temples of the living God and his holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16),

and Paul says: "Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid". (1 Cor. 6:16)

Therefore also in a spiritual sense the members of Christ may not be made members of the Babylonian whore, nor the temple of God to be a temple of idols. Hence all that the scriptures teach about separation (2 Cor. 6:17; Eph. 1:11; 1 Thess. 5:22), namely that we separate ourselves from all false worship, from the temple of idols, from all evil works and appearances, and abstain from the same, must be understood as meaning that we must do this at heart, and show it outwardly by our works. This is the light that is not hid under a bushel, but is set upon a candlestick, that it may give light to others (Matt. 5:15). This is the city that is set on a hill and cannot be hid, but is seen by all (Matt. 15:14). This is the glory with which Christians glorify the Lord in their bodies, and in their spirits, which are God's (1 Cor. 6:20). This is the confession with which we confess, and must confess, Christ before this perverse and unbelieving generation, and not be ashamed of him or his gospel (Luke 9:26; Matt. 10:32; Mark 8:38). Those, then, who pretend and teach that Christians are at liberty to play the hypocrite with the world and put on an appearance of evil, lie, and deceive themselves (1 Thess. 5:22), as do those who give ear to them; for the truth is not in them. But this is the glorious liberty of the children of God that by the power of the blood of Christ we poor, miserable, depraved beings are delivered from the devil, sin, death, and hell (Rom. 3:25; 6:5, 17, 18; 1 Pet. 1:2), and are, in the sight of God, free; that the bondage of sin has been removed; that by faith in the Son of God we have been made free from the judgment, free from the charge and the debt of sin, free from the power of Satan and from the wrath to come, have passed from death unto eternal life, and are made free by the truth (Heb. 2:14; 1 Thess. 1:2; John 5:24; Rom. 6:8; 8:2; John 8:32; 16:33; Col. 2:14), in short, that all our enemies have been overcome by the glorious victory of Christ, "and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Moreover all that was figurative and a burden to the conscience under the law, with the many outward ceremonies, confined to stated times, days, and places, was all annulled and absorbed by the truth and the Spirit of Christ, and from which all the saints have been made free by faith, so that we are now no longer under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14; 10:4; Gal. 3:24-26; Acts 15:11; John 1:17); for Christ is unto us the end and the fulfillment of the law, but by his grace we believe and hope to be saved. Nevertheless, if we have been thus made free by Jesus Christ, we have again become servants,—of righteousness and of the Lord (Rom. 6:18) to serve God, our heavenly Father, in all submissiveness and obedience, according to the example of Jesus Christ, to the praise of his holy name and to continue wholly in the doctrine of his Son unto the end, for he himself says that heaven and earth shall pass away, but that his word shall never pass away (Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Isa. 9; Dan. 7; Luke 2:4; 6:4). He is an everlasting King; and his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; he shall sit upon the throne of David and reign in the house of Jacob forever. Therefore whatsoever he and his faithful servants and ambassadors have taught and testified to, by the power of his Spirit, must be rigidly observed, without change or shifting, to the end of the world, by everyone who makes a profession of the gospel and of faith in Christ (Matt. 28:20). This liberty which Christ and

his servants taught and practiced, it is the privilege of all true Christians, by the grace of God, to assume and practice, in the fear of God, for the promulgation of the glory of Jesus Christ and the up-building of his church. But let everyone take heed that he overreach not the bounds set by the example of Christ Jesus and his faithful followers and the teaching of the scripture, and he will not be deceived.

What some people maintain, namely, that out of love and for the sake of peace one may sham with the world, is the real cunning subtlety and the deceitful lies of the old, wriggling, crooked serpent (Gen. 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:3). What genuine love is we learn from these words of John: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him" (1 John 4:16). In other words, "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (Vs. 7, 8). And again: "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3). And Paul says: "The end of the commandments is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned; from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (1 Tim. 1:5—7).

By means of these words genuine love may be recognized, and distinguished from pretense or false love. For where God and the new birth are not in evidence, where the commandments of the Lord are not kept, but much rather despised and wantonly transgressed, where there is no pure heart and good conscience and sincere faith, there love does not exist. God is and dwells with those who are of a contrite and humble spirit (Isa. 57:15; 66: 2), who fear his word and keep it. The new birth or life is where one does right and leads a holy life (1 John 2:29; 1 Pet. 1:22, 23), has a pure heart, a good conscience and sincere faith that cometh by the word of God (Rom. 10:17), for that purifies the heart and seals the conscience, and from this comes faith through the operation of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). For this reason faith looks unto God and his holy word alone (Heb. 11), lightly esteeming every oppression endured for the Lord's sake and for the sake of his word, and heeds no creature who would hinder it; yea, faith leads and impels man to the point where he loves God his Lord above all creatures, and even above his life (Matt. 22:36; Matt. 16:24—26).

This is to be observed and found in faithful Abraham in the great test to which God put him when he said to him: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah: and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Gen. 22:2). Abraham did so, rose up early in the morning, and clave the wood for the burnt offering: then he journeyed thither with his son. And as they were going along together, Abraham carrying the knife, and Isaac the wood, for the burnt offering, Isaac said to his father Abraham, as they were approaching the place of offering: "My father." Abraham answered: "Here am I, my son." And Isaac said: "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham answered: "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." And when they came to the place which God had told him of, Abraham, in his faith, in his fear of, and his love for, God, built there an altar, laid the wood thereon, and

bound Isaac upon it and took the knife to slay Isaac his son for a burnt offering unto the Lord. Then the angel called to him out of heaven and testified to him that he feared God because for the sake of his God he withheld not his only son.

Such manner and degree of faith and love to God is also to be observed and found in the Levites (Exod. 32: 27, 28; Deut. 33:9), who spared neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor neighbor, but punished the worshippers of the idols and of the golden calf according to God's command, regardless of human affections. Phinehas was likewise zealous for the Lord, putting brotherly love in the background in the case where he thrust the Israelite and the Midianitish woman through, thereby staying the plague among the children of Israel (Num. 25:6-8), by which act Phinehas and his seed received from God the covenant of an everlasting priesthood.

This was done to them according to the letter of the old testament as a figure, yet also as a testimony of true faith and sincere love to God, and is written to teach and admonish us (Rom. 15: 4) that we should love God above all creatures, even as Jesus also teaches us in the gospel, that for his sake we must forsake all things; father, mother, brother and sister, wife and children, and even our own lives, and take up the cross and follow him; and that whosoever loves anything more than him (Christ and his gospel) is not worthy of him (Matt. 10:37; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23). For this is the first and greatest commandment, in the old as well as new testament, that we shall love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27), and this love is confessed by keeping the commandments of God, as Christ himself says: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." And "he that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (John 14:21, 24). Hence the apostle says: "Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (1 Cor. 13: 6).

Love, then, is without dissimulation and does not play the hypocrite, nor act deceitfully. Love does not transgress the doctrine and ordinances of Christ; it abhors all false worship, all idolatry, all ceremonies and ordinances of men that are against or contrary to God, and does not seek the friendship of this world, does not desire to please men, knowing well that all that is highly esteemed among men is an abomination to God. Love spares not the flesh, seeks not that which is temporal and perishable, and fears not the cross of Jesus Christ, but rejoices (glories) in it (Gal. 6:14). In short, love manifests integrity of the divine sort, by the power of the Holy Spirit, both toward God and fellowmen; toward God in obedience to the truth and diligent observance of the commands of God (1 Pet. 1:22; John 14:15), and toward fellowmen in seeking and desiring, above all other things, their salvation, by fervent prayer to God, by wholesome instruction, reproof and admonition (John 3:16), and also in showing true friendship and mercy in all temporal need, in all sorrow, sickness and trial (James 1:27; 2:15-17). In all these things Jesus Christ, Moses, Paul, and all holy men of God are a good illustration and example (Deut. 2; Rom. 9).

But because some people have been without this love and are still without it, they indulge in vain pretty prattle about love, of which they boast and write much, and claim

that for love a man may depart from the word of the Lord, transgress God's commandments and be conformed to the world in its idolatrous and ungodly external ways (Rom. 12:2), that is, in its hypocrisy, which however is deceit and lies, and manifestly contrary to God and his word, and contrary to the true nature of Christian love (1 John 3:16; James 2:15-17) which does not consist in words nor in suggestive attitudes, but in the truth and power of God, in diligently keeping the commandments of God, and in serving our neighbor (1 John 5:2). Where this is not done there is no love, but a false profession of love, puffed up (inflated), for which one is none the better, and which is foolishness with God, and a complete misconception and profanation of divine things.

Some people of this kind also have much to say about peace and try to make it a cloak to cover all kinds of hypocrisy, idolatry and unrighteousness. Hence it is necessary to note and to take into consideration what constitutes the real peace of God and Christ, and how Christians are to have peace among one another (Eph. 4; Rom. 12:17-21), and how far they shall seek peace with all men. This is the peace of God that we have peace with God the Father through Jesus Christ the true Peacemaker and Propitiator with God of all that is in heaven and on earth. Paul says to the Romans: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1, 2). And to the Ephesians: "In Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one (or, who out of two hath made one)" Eph. 2:13, 14). And to the Colossians: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven, etc." (Col. 1:19).

This is the true peace of Jesus Christ which he gave unto his disciples, as he says: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth" (John 14:27). Therefore the peace of Jesus Christ is not the peace of this world, but peace of conscience which, by the grace and redemption and reconciliation of Jesus Christ, has peace and joy with God in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17), which the world knows not, but reviles, so that the peace of Jesus Christ is enmity with the world, and, also, that the peace of the world is enmity with Jesus Christ, which he testifies when he says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matt. 10:34-36). Such variance Christ causes by his gospel, therefore Paul says: "If I yet pleased men. I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

From this it can be clearly understood how entirely they have erred and are perverted who would make this peace of Jesus Christ to mean that one should seek to keep in peace with the world by hypocrisy and fellowship in evil works. This is far from true Christianity, for with true Christians it is abundantly enough that they have peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1), and are richly comforted thereby if for righteousness' sake they must be at variance and in discord with the world (Rom. 5:11). For, being reconciled to God the Father by the blood of his Son (Rom. 5:10), and called

into one body with all believers (Col. 3:15), they seek to have peace one with another, as Christ commanded them, saying: "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another" (Mark 9:50, and as Paul admonished the Ephesians: "Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3, and to the Colossians: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15), and to the Philippians: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7).

Christians are also in duty bound to live, so far as lies in their power, in peace with all men as the apostle says: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Rom. 12:18). In other words: "Follow peace with all men" (Heb. 12:14). But this is not to be understood as meaning that we shall, in godly walk and work try, by hypocrisy and the appearance of evil, to seek peace with the world (which lieth in wickedness. 1 John 5:19): for both Peter and John testified before the Pharisees and scribes that we ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 4:19).

Concluding Thoughts on the Foregoing Articles

We have here briefly, in our simplicity, answered and given the reasons why we separate and have separated ourselves from the world and its false worship, although we are now, on account of this separation, abused by the false prophets and persecuted by the tyrants, for which we must find comfort in the Lord our God and rejoice in him; for we know, and are fully persuaded, by the grace of God and the sealing of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, that we are not separating ourselves and have not separated from, the true Christian apostolic church or congregation, which was from the beginning. For we believe in the one eternal, and almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, who made his covenant with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and with all God-fearing people, and promised and gave them his only begotten Son Jesus Christ as a Messiah, Redeemer and Savior, in whom we also believe, and through faith in his name hope to be saved (Gen. 3:15; 9:8; 7:2; 22:15; 28:13; Isa. 9:5; Matt. 1:21; Acts 15:11; Gal. 3:9; Eph. 2:4), and desire also in our weakness to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, to remain steadfast in his doctrine and nevermore accept any strange doctrine (John 10).

And we thank almighty God our heavenly Father, who by grace called us into the fellowship of Jesus Christ and the saints, that we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, that we are of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:18-20); yea, that we have come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Heb. 12:22-24).

This is the fellowship of God and the saints to which we have come through the atonement and election and calling of God, and in which we also desire to remain, and therein to serve God in obedience and in truth, and to keep his ordinances. Thereby we will not separate ourselves from the true Church of God, with which we are one; but we will separate ourselves from all sects and from all false worship, from all traditions of men, all ceremonies that are contrary to God's word, and from all appearance of evil, so that we will not be pretending to please the world. We do this, not because of obstinacy, nor because of pride, nor for revenge, nor for any other carnal reason, but in faith, through the impelling love of God, in the fear of the Lord, for the reasons above given, and by which we shall not be brought to shame. For we know that this is God's command and will, and are convinced that all plants which the heavenly Father has not planted shall be destroyed (Matt. 15:13).

May God, the Father of all mercy (Col. 1:13; 2 Cor. 1:3), who has delivered us from the power of Satan and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son Jesus Christ, preserve us in the same, and gather into it many thousands that they may be saved, and bring us all together in one spirit of faith, blameless before his face, and keep us for his heavenly kingdom, by the power of the Holy Spirit. To this same one, eternal God be praise, honor and thanksgiving forever. Amen (Heb. 13:21).

Book Five

On the Sending

of

Preachers or Teachers,

that is,

Who are True Teachers, sent of God,

and Properly Chosen and Called

by the Christian Church;

**How They are Known, and What Kind
of Fruit They Bear.**

Likewise

How False Teachers May be Known, and How They
are to be Shunned and Not Listened to.

A Brief Admonition
Out of the Holy Scriptures

Together With an Explanation Regarding Several
Contradictions and Slanderous Attacks Instituted
Against the True Ministers of the Gospel
by Railing Malevolents and Libellers.

D. P.

He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.

John 3:34.

Unto all God-fearing lovers of the truth, I, D. P., who by grace am a fellow-citizen in the faith and of the Christian Church, wish true spiritual wisdom and a pure understanding of the divine word, from God our heavenly Father, and from Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Beloved in the Lord, all you who fear God and love the truth:—Whereas there is at this time much dissension and variance on the subject of the sending of ministers, and, further, whereas all teachers, no matter who they are, profess the gospel, and allow themselves to imagine that they are sent of God, whereas this is without any doubt the time of which Christ and his apostles prophesied, namely, that there should be many false prophets and false Christians, and should deceive many (Matt. 24:11; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3, 4; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; Jude 4):

Therefore I am constrained out of brotherly love to give you a brief instruction on the sending of true teachers, that you may know how to distinguish the true prophets, teachers and Christians from the false (Matt. 24:5, 11-13); for it is the nature, business and disposition of Satan to transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11: 14), by which he hides his deceitfulness and hypocrisy, and with which he disguises and cloaks his servants and places them before the world in an agreeable light of piety.

What is there that makes a more engaging appearance than Satan in all pharisaical and spiritless, sanctimonious make-believes, who seek justification by their own works and traditions and parade themselves with a fine display of words and outward show, with many ceremonies and ecclesiastical grandeur? Who is there that is more presumptuous and bolder in the use of boastful language than the false, deceitful,

lying prophets who go about and yet are not sent of the Lord; who prophesy, but not by the Spirit of the Lord? Who is it that prides himself more upon the gospel and Christianity, of true theology and knowledge of the scriptures than do these far-famed wise men of this world and perverted theologians, who vainly imagine that because they have studied in advanced schools (and are therefore, as the old adage runs: The more learned, the more perverted), they alone are teachers and masters of the scripture, when the sad fact of the case is that they have not received or taught the elementary principles of the divine word, for they have never been in the school of Christ, and have not had the true schoolmaster, the Holy Spirit, not even seen or known him (John 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16: 7-11), but they speak of scriptures which they do not understand; or, even if they do understand something, they are not willing to do accordingly.

How False Teachers are Recognized

These are the downright false Christians and false prophets of whom the Lord warns us and whom he so excellently portrays when he says: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:15, 16). And again Jesus says: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (V. 21), and follows with: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (V. 22, 23).

From these words it is evident that the false Christians and false prophets are those who have much to boast about Christ, who chatter nicely about the gospel and make a fine show of themselves, and at the same time walk after the flesh, and, in their wolfish nature, rend the sheep of Christ wherever they can and may.

Against these Christ has faithfully warned us, although there are few who heed this warning of Christ; but the people generally are of the same mind as Ahab, king of Israel, namely, they love lies and hate the truth, and cannot bear to have a Micaiah come and tell them the truth (1 Kings 22: 8, 9) ; therefore also they cannot understand the truth, "for fools," says Sirach, "shall not attain unto wisdom, and sinners shall not see her. For she is far from pride (the proud), and men that are liars (hypocrites) cannot remember her" (Sir. 15:7, 8). Hence Paul also says, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

This is the reason why the false prophets have always been so highly esteemed and readily listened to by the world, while the true prophets were looked upon, defamed and persecuted as deceivers, and it is still the same, for thus can Satan deceive the world, so that it takes the shadow for the substance, darkness for light, and falsehood for truth, yea, utterly rejects Christ because he is essentially offensive to the world, as he says through Isaiah: "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled,

and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; (or, according to another rendering: "so that many shall be offended at him, because his visage was marred more than any man," and because "he hath no form nor comeliness" Isa. 52:13, 14; 53:2). And Simeon said to Mary regarding Christ: "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2:34). And Peter says that Jesus Christ is the corner-stone laid by God in Sion, precious to those that believe, "but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient" (1 Pet. 2:6-8).

Hence spiritual discernment, a keen insight and clear vision are necessary for all believers, especially in our times, so that they may rightly behold Christ, recognize his servants with certainty, and rightly distinguish them from the servants of Satan. For this reason I am moved by the grace of God to point out to all believers, from the word of God, what teachers are sent of God and how they may be known, so that all pious Christians may be strengthened in their faith, comforted in their hearts and refreshed, and that the mouths of all blasphemers may be stopped, who, to cover their hypocrisy, slander the true ambassadors and faithful servants of Christ. To this end may the eternal and alone wise God grant us his grace. Amen (1 Tim. 1:17).

How the True Teachers are Called by God and His Church

In the first place, two ways of calling and sending (by which an individual is called of God to an office and sent forth) are given in the scripture. The first is by God alone. Thus was Moses called by God alone; so also was Aaron chosen of God alone (Ex. 3:10; Ex. 28:1; Num. 12:5; Heb. 5:4), and thus likewise were the prophets called by God alone, and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:21). Thus also were the apostles called and chosen by Christ Jesus alone, and by him sent forth to preach the gospel to every creature.

These were sent forth by God without human instrumentality, to prophesy and to teach, and were moved by his Spirit. But since Satan also sends forth his servants and sometimes drives them exceedingly, though making it appear as if they had been sent by God and were being moved by his Spirit (2 Cor. 11:13, 14), therefore the Lord has left us a certain test by which both the true and the false prophets shall be known. And this is the test:

If a prophet prophesies something, and it does not come to pass, he is false, for thus saith the Lord: "The prophet which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not marvel at him" (Deut. 18:20-22).

These are the express words of the Lord, by which all prophesyings must be measured and judged. Therefore the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah (who made a false prophecy regarding the deliverance of Judah out of Babylon): "The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him" (Jer. 28:8, 9).

Even though the prophet performs signs and wonders, and what the prophet foretold comes to pass; yet, if he at the same time teaches that we shall serve other gods, he is a false prophet, for thus saith the Lord: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, and he say, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 10:1-3).

In these words it is to be seen that although a prophet performs signs and wonders, and that comes to pass which he has said, that is not enough to prove his commission that it is of God, inasmuch as his teaching is not blameless, fruitful and wholesome. And on this Paul says: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8).

The other method of calling is by God and his church. Thus Paul and Barnabas were first called of the Lord, and thereafter this call was confirmed by the church, with the concurrent endorsement of the Holy Ghost, as is shown in the Acts of the Apostles, namely that the Holy Ghost said to the church: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away" (Acts 13:2, 3).

Thus also Paul and Barnabas, with fasting and prayer (by the voice of the church), ordained leaders and elders in all the churches (Acts 14:23).

Thus Paul writes to Timothy: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. 4:14). He likewise commands Titus to ordain elders in every city in Crete, as he had appointed him to do (Tim. 1:5). So also the church in Jerusalem set seven deacons before the apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them (Acts 6:6).

From this it is clear that the apostles and elders, with the church, by the power of Jesus Christ, and the witness of the Holy Ghost, called, chose and ordained teachers and ministers; therefore no one may assume such office of himself unless he is called and chosen of God (as were the prophets and apostles), or by the Church of God, by the laying on of hands (as Timothy, Titus, and others of the apostles and elders, with the consent and voice of the church, were ordained, and also ordained others); for the apostle says: "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" (Rom. 10:15). And again: "No man

taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4). Therefore also the Lord brought fearful punishment upon Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their adherents, because they undertook to assume the priesthood without being chosen of God (Num. 16:1-33), and so the Lord will reject all prophets who go forth without being sent of him, who speak in his name, but are not moved by his Spirit (Jer. 23:21).

Therefore let everyone see to it that he run not of himself before he is called of the Lord or by his church in the prescribed manner. No one is sent by the Lord, however, or rightly chosen by the church, except by the Holy Spirit; he must touch his heart and make him fervent with love to willingly feed, lead and send forth the church of God (John 21:15-17: 1 Pet. 5:2), as it is written of Paul and Barnabas, that they departed, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost. And Paul says to the elders of the churches: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20: 28).

Now, if the true teachers are moved and sent forth and set over the churches by the Holy Ghost, it is evident, from this alone, how that they must be qualified. For it is certain and undeniable that the Holy Ghost does not send forth drunkards, nor adulterers, nor covetous persons, nor worshippers of idols, nor hypocrites, who make a show of piety for the body's sake and make merchandise of the word of God, for it is written: "The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and remove from the wicked" (Wis. 1:5). Therefore Christ also says that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit, "because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him" (John 14:17); for, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). But how can those who do not belong to Christ have an office in his church, or properly fill it? The apostle says that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord (or call Jesus Lord) but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. 12: 3). Much less then can he rightly preach Christ Jesus except by the Holy Ghost.

The sequence therefore comes forcibly that the ministers of Christ, the teachers and leaders of his church, must have the Holy Ghost, by whom they must, first and above all things, be well instructed in the word of God; for the common people must err and walk in darkness if the teachers themselves are ignorant. Why? Because Christ calls the teachers a light of the world, a salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13, 14), and how can the world see aright when those who should be a light unto the world are themselves in entire darkness? That is, how should the world rightly understand and know the holy scripture and the power of God when those who ought to be the salt of the earth have lost the savor of the divine word and do not themselves know what a good Christian ought to know? How could not the world but err when those who by all means should be the city that is built on a hill to show the right way to all are themselves those who mislead?

Therefore I say again that the teachers themselves must, above all things, be thoroughly informed and instructed in the word of God, as it is written: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 2:7). And Paul says: "A bishop must be

blameless, holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:7-9).

Moreover the teachers of God's word must teach true and unadulterated doctrine, as the gospel declares: "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John 3:34). And Paul says: "I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me" (Rom. 15:18); and in another place: "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity; but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (2 Cor. 2:17; 4:1-4). For, he says, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20); "for our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile; but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2:3, 4). The apostle Peter says: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Therefore also the Lord says through Jeremiah: "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. For what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. 23:28, 29).

From these and similar passages of holy scripture it is easy to recognize the true teachers, especially so far as the true doctrine is concerned, namely if they teach the word of God rightly, whereby they seek the glory of God and the salvation of men, if they are spiritually minded, if they have renounced all earthly and perishable things, if they know no man after the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16), if they love God above all else and carry on his work without deceit and hypocrisy; for such ministers God desires, as Moses says: "Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him (or: I see you not); neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law" (Deut. 33:9, 10). Therefore also Jesus chose such apostles and sent them out to preach, who first of all had forsaken all, and had followed him (Matt. 4:19; 19:27; Luke 5:11; 18:28), and who continued with him in his temptations (Luke 22: 28). These the Father gave him out of the world, and to these he first revealed his Father's name, as he says: "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word" (John 17:6). Christ also himself chose and separated these from the world, as he says: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16). These also Jesus commended to his heavenly Father, saying: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:9-14).

These divinely taught, divinely chosen, separated-from-the-world disciples Christ sent forth and said to them: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21;

17:18; 3:16, etc.). How Christ was sent by the Father, how he left all things, how he relinquished all his glory, and how, as a faithful Messenger of his Father, he did not do his own will, nor spake his own words, nor sought his own glory, but said and did what the Father commanded, the holy scripture shows so abundantly, both in the old and the new testament, that we do not consider it necessary to discuss it here (Isa. 53:1, etc.; Jer. 23:5; Ezek. 34:15; John 1:1; 3:11; 5:19; 10:14; 12:49, etc.)

As Christ was sent by his Father, and was entirely faithful in his office and work, so also must all his servants be faithful according to the example of their Lord and Master, count all earthly things as nothing, renounce the world, seek after heavenly things (Heb. 3:1-6), and not their own glory, but the glory of Christ who has sent them. On this point Christ says: "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (John 7: 18). Therefore without doubt those are sent of God who rightly teach God's word, and who with the whole heart seek God's glory and praise, as Paul did; "for," says he, "neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us" (1 Thess. 2:4-8).

In these words it can be plainly seen how the apostle Paul was minded, and what he really sought, namely, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. But no hypocrites and false prophets do this, but they seek their own glory; they are after money and wealth, they preach for hire, and serve their belly, and are enemies of the cross of Christ (Rom. 16:18; Phil. 3:17-19); therefore they can neither do nor preach righteousness, as it is written: "An ungodly man cannot teach aright; for it cometh not from God: for unto right teaching belongeth wisdom; thereunto God giveth grace" (Wis. 15:13).

Since, then, an ungodly man cannot teach aright, and he is really an ungodly man who transgresses and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, as John says (2 John 1:9), it follows incontrovertibly that no one can teach God's word aright unless he himself abides in Christ and in his doctrine. But no one may understand the doctrine of Christ, much less abide therein, except through the Holy Ghost; and no one has the Holy Ghost but those who are no longer carnally minded, but spiritually minded, as Paul says: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:9, 10). Therefore whosoever has not died unto sin, and does not live unto righteousness, has not the Spirit of God. But whoever has not the Spirit of God does not comprehend the word of God, and cannot discern spiritual things. How, then, can he rightly teach God's word or rightly dispense the gift of the Spirit? Therefore let everyone take heed that he assume not the office of the ministry unless he is first taught of God and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, so that he may rightly preach God's word.

Of Two Kinds of Fruit in True Teachers

Furthermore the holy scripture shows that a true teacher must bear fruit; for where the word of God is implanted in the human heart and proclaimed in the power of the Spirit, it must, according to its nature, be effective, active and fruitful. For this purpose also the true teachers are chosen and ordained of Christ, namely, that they go forth and bring forth fruit, and that their fruit remain. Now, the fruit which all true teachers must bring forth by God's word and Spirit are of two kinds:

The first is, that when the word of God is spoken by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 13:3-8; Luke 8:4-8), it is fruitful and not dormant, as the gospel parable of the sower and the seed shows, in which parable the fact is made known to us that his word is not without fruit; for although the greater part of the seed falls upon evil ground and brings forth no fruit (which therefore is not the fault of the good seed, but of the bad soil), nevertheless at least a part falls upon good ground, and brings forth much fruit. By this the Lord would make known to us two facts: (1), That there are always but few Christians upon earth, although many bear the name of Christ and profess the gospel, as he also says: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt, 7:13, 14). (2), That although the greater part remains evil, his word nevertheless is not without fruit; for there is here and there still a good spot, upon which the seed of the word of God is cast, springs up, and brings forth fruit, which fact God has also declared through Isaiah: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth the bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:10, 11).

Inasmuch then as God's word is the seed which is sown by God into the human heart, and good soil is desirable and necessary, it is also necessary that the field of the heart, by the grace of God, be properly cultivated, that all weeds are cleaned out and rooted up, so that the soil may be capable of receiving the divine seed and made fit for the production of fruit, as James says: "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21).

For this purpose (the cultivation and preparation of the field of the heart) the law of God is especially useful; therefore the true teachers must first of all and above all else preach and proclaim repentance to men (as did Jesus and his apostles, Matt. 3:28; Acts 2:38; 24:25, etc.), and from the law teach them to truly know God's wrath and stern judgment against sin, but from the gospel teach them to know God in his eternal love (John 3:16) and boundless mercy, Jesus Christ is his grace and atonement, through the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, that the hearts may be crushed and broken, and by the gospel again comforted and refreshed; for this is the nature, characteristic and power of the word of God when it is properly spoken, and by the impulse of the Holy Spirit, when

hearts as hard as stone will be crushed (Jer. 23:29), cold hearts will be made fervent and sorrowing hearts comforted.

It is also the true teacher's office and work, according to Christ's command, to first preach law, and then gospel; but the false teachers preach to the people, even to the impenitent, nothing but grace and proclaim peace to them, and, as Ezekiel says, they lay pillows under the people's arms and cushions under their heads and shoulders, whereby they strengthen the hands of the wicked, so that they will not return from their wicked ways (Ezek. 13:18-22). This is daily in sufficient evidence. But if no one is converted, then they are not sent of God, nor have they God's word, for thus saith the Lord: "I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings" (Jer. 23:21, 22).

These words plainly show us that those have the word of God and rightly teach and proclaim it who turn people from their evil lives and wicked walk, and that those who do not do this have not the word of God. They may have the letter of the scripture, but they have not the living, powerful, fervent word of God that is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12). They may make many words, but inasmuch as the Lord has not purged their lips with fire, as he did the lips of Isaiah (Isa. 6:7), and put his word into their mouth, as he did to Jeremiah (Jer. 1:9), that they may root up, break down and destroy, and build up and plant, hence they are not sent by the Lord, and will accomplish nothing, as may be seen in many in the present day who pose as evangelical preachers, but who have never yet broken away from the idolatrous ceremonies and institutions of men and accepted the true service and ordinances of God. There may be some who with Jehu go so far as to hate the whoredoms and witchcraft of Jeezebel (2 Kings 9:22) and be zealous against the prophets and priests of Baal, and yet continue to walk in the sins of Jeroboam and allow the golden calves (which were raised up by the ungodly king instead of divine worship) to remain as a judgment against themselves and a stumbling-block and ruin to others. Thus the blind lead the blind until both shall fall into the ditch (Matt. 15:14).

2. The other kind of fruit which a true teacher brings forth is a blameless life, walking in accordance with the gospel. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power of wisdom (1 Cor. 4: 20), which must open the mouth of the teacher in the congregation, and which does not enter into a malicious soul (Wis. 1:4), nor will it dwell in a body that is subject unto sin. Therefore James says: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom" (Jas. 3:13;. This is what Paul did, as he himself says: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:27).

Nothing is accomplished, or is it of any avail, when a man babbles much and is conceited, but, says the apostle, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31; Jer. 9: 23, 24; 2 Cor. 10:17). For he is not praised who praises himself, but he whom the

Lord praises. But the Lord praises the righteous who praise and honor him, as he himself says: "Them that honor me I will honor" (1 Sam. 2:30), "and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." What truly honoring God really is, is explained by Christ in these words: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). And what constitute the fruits of the Spirit, Paul enumerates to the Galatians: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22, 23). Those who constitute his true disciples he describes himself, thus: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32). But no one continues in Christ and in his doctrine except he who walks as Christ also walked (1 John 2: 6), but whosoever does not thus walk, does not abide in Christ; yea, he has not seen Christ, neither known him, as John clearly enunciates in his epistle (1 John 3:6).

Therefore true Christians and especially the teachers must, as disciples of Christ, lead a Christian life and faithfully follow Christ. If men do not do this, then Christ has not sent them, for he says that we shall know the false prophets by their fruits, even though they come to us in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). And he teaches us this by a parable and says: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:16-20).

In these words Jesus likens every good Christian (but especially a sincere teacher, since he speaks especially of the teachers) to a good tree, and a false teacher to a corrupt tree. Now, just as a good tree brings forth good fruit, thereby showing its nature or kind, and supplies man's need and bodily sustenance, so also a good teacher brings forth good fruit, by which he shows his Christian nature or condition, and that he has been sent of God; but to the others, that is, the kind-hearted hearers and lovers of truth, he becomes instrumental in their salvation, as Paul says to Timothy: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16).

Again, just as a corrupt tree cannot produce good fruit, and just as grapes are not gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles, so also a false prophet cannot teach or do right. The false prophet may profess the gospel, but for him to rightly teach or proclaim the gospel, and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit is impossible; leaves he is, and leaves he remains, that is, a useless vocation in fine appearance, in all his teaching, simulation and activity.

Now then, if by special grace of God the gospel (which has keen vision and looks not upon the sheep's clothing, but upon the inner nature, and asks not for leaves, but for the fruit of the tree) has come to light and has been revealed to us, and has given us to know the tree by its fruits out of the word of God, let each one take heed and beware of the false prophets, that he be not deceived by them.

How a teacher is to be qualified, Paul beautifully describes both to Timothy and to Titus. There is given a true description, yea, an explicitly delineated type of the evangelical teacher. And Peter says: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

Peter here gives all elders, leaders and teachers good instruction as to how they shall be qualified, and says among other things that they shall feed the flock of Christ with a willing mind, and not for filthy lucre's sake, for he well knew that the Lord Jesus had asked him three times, saying: "Peter, lovest thou me? Then feed my sheep" (John 21: 15-17). Thus also must all ministers of the word of Christ teach the word of God in its purity because of true love, without desire for debasing pleasures, for the scripture teaches us to shun them.

But how many there are at this time who assume the office of teacher without thinking of these words of Peter! But it is according to the prophet's words, namely that the priests teach for hire, and the prophets for money: yet they desire to be looked upon as those who lean upon the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house (temple) as the high places of the forest" (Mic. 3:11, 12). The prophet also says; in another place, concerning the false prophets: "He that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him" (Mic.; 3:5). In like manner God complains through Ezekiel regarding the false prophets that for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread they would slay the souls that should not die, and save the souls alive that should not live (Ezek. 13:19). That is, they condemn the innocent and those who fear God, and justify the ungodly, and this they do for a handful of barley and a piece of bread. And this still takes place every day, and is in full swing; yea, Balaam, the son of Beor (Num. 22:23, 24), who loved the wages of unrighteousness (2 Pet. 2:15), still has many followers and companions, and although the Lord openeth the mouth of the ass that he might reprove such Balaamites, yet they are so obdurate and blinded that they cannot give up their avarice, and in the face of all this they want to be looked upon as faithful servants of Christ and use the privilege which Christ has accorded to the true ministers of the gospel (namely, that they might live of the gospel to supply their temporal needs (1 Cor. 9:14), as a cloak for their avarice. But it is a shameful thing to seek after money and wealth undercover of the gospel (which everywhere teaches the despising of things temporal). For a man to assume to teach the word of God, without intending to obey it himself, is an abomination in the sight of God. To such the Lord says: "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant into thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers" (Psa. 50:16-18). And Paul says: "Thou art confident

that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest that 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 of the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you" (Rom. 2:19-24).

Reply to Several Adroitly Worded Objections Raised by False Teachers; Beside a Number of Other Refutations and Replies

Oh, that many who assume the ministerial office and yet are avaricious, proud, sacrilegious and live ungodly, would take these words into serious consideration and properly meditate upon how greatly (the scripture everywhere laments over false prophets and shepherds, with proof that the ruin of the people is mostly traceable to them; for the shepherds are to feed the sheep, as Christ commanded Peter, and Peter commanded the elders (John 21:15; 1 Pet. 5:1). But what is to be done when the shepherds trample the precious pasture of the divine word under foot (Ezek 34:18), and then give that which they have trodden with their feet to the flock to eat? The shepherds should draw the water of divine doctrine from the wells of salvation and give it to the flock to drink; but how lamentable it is when the shepherds become Philistines and close up the fountain or the source of the living water by casting in earth; yea, when they themselves are wolves, and do not spare the flock, eat the pasture themselves and scatter and kill the flock (Acts 20:29), that is when they are such as the prophet Hosea describes: "The company of priests murder in the way, and wait for a man; for they commit lewdness" (Hos. 7:9); and as Isaiah says, in speaking of Israel: "His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, so they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant" (Isa. 56:10-12).

O God! how numerous have the false prophets, priests and shepherds been at all times in the world, and of the righteous how few! Opposed to so many hundreds of prophets and priests of Baal after much labor one Elijah is to be found; among all the lying prophets of Ahab there is barely one Micaiah to be had (1 Kings 18:22; 22:5-10). How often, too, the sin of the people deserves nothing better than that God permits a hypocrite and idolater instead of a true shepherd to rule; for when people are disposed to hold wholesome doctrine in disdain, as Paul says, and have such sensitive ears that they would rather listen to censurable teaching than to that which brings fruit, they will choose such teachers as will tickle their ears (2 Tim. 4: 3). And this is done, even as the Lord

says through the prophet: "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5:30, 31). "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). On the other hand, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:11, 12).

Therefore it is certain that the true teachers must be tried by the cross, because in their words and actions they desire to be different from the world. For this reason the world hates them, as it is written in the Book of Wisdom: "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 objected to our infamy the transgressions of our education. He professed to have the knowledge of God, and he called himself the child of the Lord. He was made to reprove our thoughts. 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, and maketh his boast that God is his Father" (Wis. Sol. 2:12-16).

Thus was Christ dealt with, as he himself says: "The world hateth me, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil" (John 7:7). He promises the same to all his disciples, and says: "Behold, I sent you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. 10:16). "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (V. 22). "But if the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me" (John 15:18-21).

To sum it up: How all true prophets and righteous teachers were persecuted from the beginning, and will be persecuted to the end of the world; yea, how the mightiest of all prophets and masters, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, had to suffer, and thus enter into his glory (Luke 24:26), is shown in both old and new testament scriptures so fully that it is needless to further discuss or write about it. Hence those are not the servants of Christ who are so greatly and highly esteemed by the world, who sit in the highest places and persecute others; for it is foreign to Christ Jesus and his meek nature, and it is also foreign to all Christians who have the mind and Spirit of Christ; for it is not Christlike, but tyrannical, to persecute and scatter and kill the people for the sake of the Christian faith and of religion (Matt. 13:28; Luke 9:22), and those who do so are certainly the survivors of the Pharisaic generation, to whom Stephen said: "Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain

them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it" (Acts 7:51-53).

Oh, how many boast at this time that they have received the gospel by the grace of God, and yet do so little, yea, nothing, in accord with it! They want to pose as great masters in the scriptures, and be called evangelical preachers, but they do not know Jesus Christ, the crucified One (1 Cor. 2:2), for Christ himself was poor, and chose poor disciples, who had to deny themselves for the sake of the Lord, and forsake all things for the sake of the gospel (Matt. 8:19; Luke 9:58; 1 Cor. 8:13; Matt. 10:9; 16:24; 4:18-22; 19:21,27, etc.), to become a spectacle unto the world, the world's refuse and off-scouring (1 Cor. 4:9-13). But these are rich and powerful; therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment (Psa. 73:6). Christ said to his disciples: "Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ. He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. For whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:8-12). But these, on account of the gospel and of their ministerial office, allow themselves to be called Masters, Doctors, Reverend Fathers and Lords in Christ. How beautifully (?) this accords with the above-quoted words of Christ! However, these words are of no significance to them; they do not regard them, but they are puffed-up bodies, as the prophet says: "They have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth" (Psa. 73:7-9). "What they say must be understood as having been spoken from heaven, and what they ordain and institute must be authority on earth; for they think and also say: "With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" (Psa. 12:4). But let them take heed of that which shall follow such presumption and pride, and what shall come upon them. The scripture shows clearly that Jezebel, though ruling for a time (Rev. 2:20), feeding her prophets with lavish luxuries and keeping them in great splendor, must at last be brought to shame together with all her followers. And although the whore of Babylon has made all the heathen drunk with the wine of her fornication, and is therefore proud, and says in her heart: "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7), yet therefore shall her plague come in one day.

We have now briefly shown which teachers are sent of God; that is, those who are sent according to scriptural teaching, who teach God's word aright, who are conformed to the image of Christ and his saints, and that what they yet lack they seek with all zeal at the fount of all grace, Jesus Christ. All such are without doubt sent of God.

On the other hand, those who are differently disposed, whose words and actions are different from what is seen in the aforementioned and delineated picture of the prophets, and of Christ and his apostles, are not sent of God, neither can they teach good things, nor preach God's word rightly, for that must be spoken by the Holy Spirit, as Christ says to his disciples: "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:20). And Peter says: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man:

but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Hence all that these Spiritless men preach has no power and brings forth no fruit; yea, and though they could speak with the tongues of angels, it still would be nothing but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal (1 Cor. 13:1).

We beseech and admonish every one, whether he be preacher or hearer, to take due heed of this. The preacher may readily see whose servant he is, by what spirit he is moved, whether Christ dwells and works in him, whether he presents and portrays to the people the living word of God in open testimony of the holy scripture, causes fruit to grow thereby and walks in accordance therewith. Let the hearer take due heed unto himself, that he believe not every spirit, but that he at all times know the teacher by his doctrine and his fruits (1 John 4:1), and prove the doctrine by the plummet of the divine word; likewise note, prove and judge the fruits, not by outward appearance and splendid show, but by the spirit and the real life, and when he recognizes and finds a teacher to be false, let him beware of him and not listen to him, but shun him, as God has commanded through Jeremiah (Jer. 23:16), namely: "Hearken not unto the words of the (false) prophets that prophesy unto you and as Christ commanded in the gospel (Matt. 7:15; John 10:4), viz, that his sheep know his voice, and a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him; yea, that all who enter not by the door into the sheepfold, but climb up some other way, the same are thieves and robbers, who come for no other purpose than to rob, to kill, and to destroy; therefore Christ's sheep fear such thieves, murderers and destroyers.

The claim which some make that the scripture does not forbid the hearing of false prophets with the outward ear, but only with the inward ear, is subtlety and philosophy, yea, an open falsification of the divine word, for it is certain and true beyond a doubt that the scripture comprehends two kinds of hearing; an inward hearing, which is faith, and which comes from the outward hearing of the word of God through the co-operation and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, as may be clearly understood from the following words of Paul: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. But they have not all obeyed the gospel (Isa. 52:7; 53:1), for Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yea, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom. 10:14-18; Psa. 19:4).

The apostle here speaks expressly of the outward ear, by which the preaching of the gospel, the sound of the apostles' voices and their words, were heard by every creature under heaven (Mark 16:15; Col. 1:5, 6), by which also many believed, yet all by grace, through the inward working of God by his Holy Spirit. Now, just as God uses the outward ear as a means by which faith is wrought in his chosen ones, so does Satan work by means of the outward hearing of his false doctrine for the working of unbelief in his children. Hence the holy scripture admonishes us (John 5:24; 8:47-52; 10:27, etc.) to hear God's word, which is to be understood as meaning that we shall hear the word of God

with the outward ear, and believe in it with the heart. That is what it means to rightly hear God's word. To the same extent the holy scripture forbids listening to false teachers (Jer. 23:16; Psa. 1:1; John;10:5; 2; Cor.;6:17), and presents the idea that we should not run after the false teachers into the houses of idolatry where they stand on the throne of pestilence, falsifying God's word, and that we should not hear or believe their words. That is what the scripture calls not giving ear to the false teachers, shunning the strangers and fleeing from them (John; 10:5). On this thought the apostle John says: "They (the false teachers) are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them"; but the true teachers "are of God: he that knoweth God heareth them; he that is not of God heareth them not," and that hereby we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 John 4:5, 6). This we have now said in brief on the subject of sending forth of teachers.

There are, however, many gainsayers here now. In the first place some say that no one may teach and restore again the decadent worship of God unless he is called of God by a living voice from heaven, just as Elijah (they say) did not punish the priests of Baal or restore again in Israel the worship of God which had fallen into decay, until he had received a command of the Lord and was sent to Ahab (1 Kings 18:1), and like as Joshua did not resume the practice of circumcision (which had been discontinued for a time in the wilderness) before the time that the Lord commanded him to do so (Josh. 5:1-8).

Answer

God does not at the present time speak to us in an audible voice from heaven, nor by visions and dreams, as he did in old testament times, but he now speaks to us by his Son Jesus Christ. But Jesus speaks to us by his word, and the word of Christ is Spirit and it is life (Heb. 1:2; John 6: 63). Now, when Christ puts his living word into the heart of some person and thereby calls him, he is without any doubt called of the Lord by his word. But how we may know that a certain person is called of God by the living word and by the Spirit of Christ, we have explained above, viz, if he rightly speaks the word of God (John 3: 34), brings forth fruit, and seeks the glory of Christ and the salvation of souls with all diligence (Isa. 55:11-13; John 7:16).

We have furthermore also spoken above of the fact that the apostles and elders, together with the church by the power of Jesus Christ (Acts 6:1-4), called and ordained teachers and deacons (Acts 13:1, 2). Now, whatever the Christians did in those times that was proper is not forbidden or denied the Christians at this time, but the Christians must now conform and adjust themselves to the practices of the primitive church. Why? Because other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). Therefore as the ruined temple at Jerusalem was rebuilt upon the old foundation, and all worship was re-established and practiced therein according to the law, so also must the house of God, that is, the Christian church, which has fallen into decay, be now rebuilt upon the original foundation of the apostles and prophets (of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, 1 Tim. 3:14; Heb. 3:6; Eph. 2:20), and all things therein must be dealt with and done according to the order established by Christ and his apostles.

Since then the apostles and elders, together with the Church of God through Christ, chose leaders and ministers and ordained and confirmed them in their office, therefore also the Christians of the present time must choose and ordain preachers according to the example of the apostolic church. Necessity demands this, for it is certain and incontrovertible that a Christian church cannot be gathered, built up and established without true teachers, faith and baptism, and furthermore that it cannot be maintained without the Lord's Supper, admonition, reproof, expulsion or separation; for where God's word is not taught in its purity, and the gospel of Jesus Christ is not preached, how shall the people believe? As the apostle says: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14). But where faith that comes by hearing the preaching of the word of God through the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, does not take root in the heart, how can baptism in such case be properly administered and received, inasmuch as baptism is commanded and ordained by the Lord himself to be administered upon confession of faith, and was thus administered by the apostles? (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16). Where Christian baptism is not properly practiced, how can a person be baptized into Jesus Christ, into his death and into the fellowship of his body with the Holy Ghost? (Acts 2:41 8:35 10:47.) How can the dying unto the flesh, the burying of sin and the resurrection into newness of life be properly contemplated and accomplished? (Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 12:13, etc.)

Moreover, where the Lord's Supper is not properly observed, how can his word and command, viz: that in the breaking of bread we shall proclaim his death and do it in remembrance of him—be satisfactorily obeyed? (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14: 22-25; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:22); how can the communion of the body and blood of Christ be rightly comprehended and taken to heart? How can brotherly love and unity be properly manifested and established? Where admonition is not administered in its full strength, there love, both toward God and fellow-man generally grows cold; and where discipline is not properly administered, there one will commit sin with another. Therefore the Lord says: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him" (Lev. 19:17). That is to say, that where expulsion or the ban is not carried out according to the gospel, there one will corrupt another, as Paul says: "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Cor. 5:5).

If the church of God cannot exist or be maintained without all the afore-named requisites—and whatever else the Lord has ordained for the up building and preservation of his church—then there must also be ministers of the word in the church, for it is not every man's office to teach God's word, and to administer the sacraments of Christ, but in this matter it is as Paul says: "As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another; having gifts differing according to the grace that is given unto us" (Rom. 12:4-6). In other words: "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (1 Cor. 12:4-7). And beside this the apostle

says: "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets: and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4: 7, 11-13). And Peter says: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Pet. 4: 10, 11).

From all these passages it is to be readily understood:

1. That God supplies his ministers in his church and administers manifold gifts;
2. How necessary it is to have ministers in the church, and what constitutes their work and ministry;
3. That the church, being one with Christ, has authority to choose teachers and ministers according to the scripture.

But what constitutes the church of Christ which has received from Christ the authority, not only to choose teachers and leaders, but, what is still more, to bind and to loose (Matt. 16:19; 18:18), and to remit and to retain sin (John 20:23), is clearly shown by the scripture in many passages, namely, that it is a congregation of believers, that is, of quickened (Eph. 2:1, 5), holy and regenerated people, who wholly believe the word of God (John 8:30; Josh. 14:8; Jas. 2:10), rightly teach the same and make it fruitful, who properly use the sacraments of Christ, properly keep the ban, walk in love, and in all things deal and do according to the gospel; yea, the church of Christ is the fellowship of saints, elected by the grace of Jesus Christ according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth (1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Thess. 2:13), brought together by the preaching of the gospel, and baptized, united and welded together by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4, 5), so that it is the body of Christ, his bride, taken from his side, made of one flesh and bone, washed in his blood (Eph. 5: 30), sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5:26) and with the Spirit (Col. 1:14); for therefore he permitted his side to be opened and pierced upon the cross, letting water and blood flow there from (John 19:34) that he might gather, purify and save his church. Therefore, also, she is his virgin bride, his chief joy, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, and he illuminates her with the glory of God and of the Lamb (Rev. 19: 7, 8; 21: 2).

This church has power through Jesus Christ (from whom it receives all things) to choose leaders and ministers. Should any one ask: Where is this church? we answer: Wherever God's word is rightly taught, believed and obeyed; for they are Christ's disciples who have, believe and keep his word (John 8:31; 17:6). Where such disciples of Christ are gathered in his name, there he is in the midst of them (Matt. 18:20; Luke 24:14, 15). Now, if Christ is in the midst of them, then they are a church of Christ; and if they

are a church of Christ, then they must also have the power or authority which Christ gave to his church. But the power which Christ has given his church (namely, not only to choose teachers and ministers of the word, but also to bind and loose, to forgive and retain sin,) has already been sufficiently treated and explained above (Matt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23).

Hence we conclude that since the word of God has now come to the light, there must also be a church of God; for the word of God does not remain void (Isa. 55:10, 11). Or, if someone says that there is no church of God, he must also say that there is no believer on earth, yea, that God's word is nowhere on earth: for where the word of God is, there is also a church of God. Whether it be small or great. Moreover the church of God is not invisible only (as some allow themselves to imagine, and thus fancy to themselves an invisible Christian body), but also visible; for the believers know one another and consort with those of their kind, just as the whole animal world does (according to Sir. 13:15-18), and love one another, because they are the children of the same heavenly Father, are born of the same God, are begotten of the same seed, and partakers of the same divine nature, and endued with the same Holy Spirit (John 1:13; 1 John 5:6; 1 Pet. 1:23). From this comes the difference between brotherly love or kindness and universal love or charity (2 Pet. 1:7), and for this reason the apostles addressed all their epistles to Christians, to their brethren and fellow-believers and not to the world, which would not have been the case if they had not known the Christians, nor recognized any difference between the Christians and the world.

The Christian church is also, in one respect, manifest to the world, even as Abraham by his faith, righteousness and excellent deeds according to God's word is manifest to the world (Gen. 15:6; 22:1-12) and has been left to us in the scripture as an example, for our instruction and admonition, that we should follow in his steps (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3: 6, 7; Jas. 2:23), in sincere trust and fruitfulness of works as God commands. Yea, Christ Jesus, our Lord and Master (Matt. 23:8), who opened for us the way and is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2), by word and work manifested himself to the world, and taught and commanded his disciples to do so, saying: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).; Paul also admonishes the believers to so walk that their good conversation might become manifest to the unbelievers, and says: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:14-16). And Peter says that the ungodly and blasphemers know the Christians when they no longer run with them, as in time past, in their abominable, riotous and ungodly ways (1 Pet. 4:3, 4).

Herewith is shown sufficiently that the church of God is not only invisible, but also visible, and in part manifest to the world. Moreover it is not in one particular place or location, like the figurative Jerusalem, which was at no other place but in the land of Judah alone, but the heavenly Jerusalem is everywhere, wherever God's word is rightly taught, believed and obeyed, and the sacraments of Christ are rightly observed according to the word; for the Lord has added the sacraments to his gospel and made them

dependent thereon, and commanded that not only should his gospel be preached, but that his sacraments also should be observed and kept (Gal. 4:26; Rev. 21:2; Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Matt. 26: 26-28; Mark 14; 22-25; Luke 22:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-26). Thus did the Lord ordain, and thus it shall remain to the end; "for," says Christ, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Hence we will yet say that where God's word is rightly taught, believed and kept, and the sacraments of Christ are properly observed, there is the heavenly Jerusalem, there God the almighty Lord and the Lamb dwell (Rev. 21:2; Heb. 12:22), even as Christ himself testifies, saying: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:21, 23). And in another place God says: "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Lev. 26:12; Ezek. 36:28; 2 Cor. 6:16).

In the second place some say that teachers shall give evidence, with signs and wonders that they are sent, as the apostles did.

To this we reply that to require signs, and not to be satisfied with the word, is an evidence of unbelief, as Christ shows in these words: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (John 4:48). Therefore we may well say that those have not the true faith who beside the word of God also demand and request signs. Would that they had such faith as the centurion, who said: "Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed" (Luke 7:6, 7). We repeat: had they such faith, then they would believe the words of Christ, and not demand a sign, but would rest satisfied with the fact that Christ first, and the apostles afterward, sufficiently confirmed the doctrine of the gospel with signs and miracles.

And supposing that they did see signs and wonders. Perhaps they would then do like the Pharisees, namely, ascribe the work of God to the devil, or seek for another reason for reviling God's work. But now, seeing no signs, they say with the Pharisees: "We would see a sign" (Matt. 12:38). But what answer did Jesus give the Pharisees?—"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas" (Matt. 12:39). And what answer did Abraham give to the rich man, who requested him to send Lazarus to his father's house to testify to his brethren, that they might not also come to his place of torment?—"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." But he said: "Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they would repent." But Abraham said: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:27-31). And Paul says: "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:22-24).

From these and similar passages in the holy scripture we may readily note what kind of people they are who demand signs and are not satisfied with the word; also, that

we must rather believe God's word than signs and wonders, and that there is no help for those who will not hear Moses and the prophets. But if there is no help for these, what help is there for those who will not hear Christ and his apostles? But if they will hear, why then do they demand signs?

It is true that the miracles and wonders testify to the gospel and the divine word, and that they confirm and verify the same. Moreover the miracles induced the people to believe, but with this provision, not that the teaching which was already accepted and confirmed, but that all the new doctrine was thereby proven to be of God. Hence signs are not necessary in these times as they were in the time of Christ and his apostles for the reason that Christ, being the end of the law (Rom. 10:4), and a Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 7:11; 8:6; Gal. 3:20; Heb. 12:24), his doctrine had to be confirmed by mighty signs and wonderful works, just as the old testament is confirmed by signs and miracles. But now, inasmuch as the doctrine of Christ has been once confirmed, and no other doctrine is or may be taught, yea, inasmuch as he who teaches another gospel shall be accursed (Gal. 1:9), therefore signs are not necessary. The law was not confirmed more than once by signs (Ex. 19:16), and was testified to by the blood of bulls and goats (Ex. 24:5-8; Heb. 9:13), and when for a time it was obscured and hidden (2 Kings 22: 8) and again found and thus came to the light, it was not reconfirmed by signs. Neither did the godly Josiah, when he heard the book of the law read, demand a sign, but the word of the law was sufficient for him (2 Kings 23:3), and he did and carried out all things according to it and observed the Passover as no king in Israel had done.

Now, inasmuch as the gospel has been confirmed with such glorious miracles, the like of which had never been wrought, and has the added endorsement of the innocent death and precious blood of the spotless Lamb Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:14), and has been obscured for a long time, but has now, by the grace of God, again come to the light, therefore all pious Christians must rest satisfied therewith, and whoever still demands a sign, must hear the words: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matt. 12:39).

We must also re-establish and observe all the ordinances of God according to the gospel. To this end God reveals his word to us, namely, that we might thereby learn to know his will, and be converted to God, abstain from sin, sincerely believe, lead a Christian life, and keep all his commandments, as Christ says to his apostles: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28: 20). But just as we accept and must accept the gospel without signs (Jas. 1:21) if we would be saved, so we must also accept and recognize without signs the teachers who proclaim this doctrine unto us. The work praises the master, as does the blameless doctrine and walk the Christian teacher. But although the teacher is blameless, yet the hypocritical and pharisaical generation will not believe the gospel.

False teachers also can often perform signs and wonders. It is well known how the Egyptian sorcerers withstood Moses, and what they performed with their sorceries (Ex. 7:11, 12; 2 Tim. 3:8). And Christ says that "many false prophets and false Christs shall arise and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible,

they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24). And Paul says that the coming of antichrist shall be after the manner of the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish (2 Thess. 2:9, 10). Therefore a Christian must not look for signs alone, but much more to God's word, which is always sure and true (John 17:8).

But if signs will still be required, they must be required, not of the teachers alone, but of all believers, for Christ says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). And in another place Christ says: "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17, 18). But we do not at this time see any one doing such outward works as these; who will therefore say that no one believes? Far from it. Does not Paul say: "Are all workers of miracles?" (1 Cor. 12:29). Therefore, as outward signs do not at this time follow faith, and nevertheless without doubt faith is found in some people, so also outward signs do not follow those divinely sent; notwithstanding this there are, without any doubt some who are sent forth of God to preach his word, which may be proven and known, not by signs (which are often false and deceptive), but by their wholesome doctrine and by their fruits (which are never found in false prophets and false Christians).

Paul also explicitly describes how a bishop shall be qualified, but he does not say that he must also perform signs. Nor do we read anywhere in the scripture that Timothy, Titus and others, who also were men full of the Holy Ghost, performed one sign (1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:7-9). Therefore a man may be a bishop, and yet not perform any sign. A bishop's office or duty is to preach the gospel, and thus feed the flock of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2). But preaching the gospel is more than dispensing the sacramental tokens, yet Jesus puts one with the other in his command, as shown above (Matt. 28:20; Mark 16:15).

From this it clearly follows that a teacher may be sent of God, preach God's word, serve the church of Christ, and yet not perform any signs. Therefore they err who insist upon signs and want to wait for the coming of performers of miracles. Let them beware lest they accept and receive Satan (who is very cunning and hides all his wickedness under the disguise of hypocrisy) for the Christ (2 Cor. 11:13), and it will be with them as it was with the Jews, to whom Jesus said: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43).

In the third place, some declare that the teacher that is sent of God shall not teach secretly, but openly proclaim God's word before all people.

Answer

The same thing occurred to Jesus, for the evangelist declares that his brethren said to him: "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works

that thou doest. For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world. For neither did his brethren believe in him" (John 7:3-5). This is what the unbelieving and evil world and the backsliding and false brethren say at this time, viz, that teachers, if they are of God, should make themselves known to the world. But what answer did Christ give his brethren who did not believe on him (and therefore desired that he should make himself known to the world)? "My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil," etc. (John 7:6, 7). Likewise must all disciples of Christ now keep themselves quiet and accommodate themselves to time and circumstances (yet not in a manner that is contrary to God's word) and not heed what the perverted and ungodly say; for the world has at all times defamed the work of God, and cannot look upon it with kindly eye. It must always be made to look evil, no matter how good that is which the good Lord Jesus Christ does; therefore he also says in the gospel: "Whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children" (Matt. 11:16-19; Luke 7:31-35).

From this the evil, hypocritical generation may be known, who are ever seeking cause against Christ, and yet never find any. From this it may be clearly seen that the perverted and evil-minded, who hate the gospel, whether sweet (according to Jesus) or sour (according to John), but always give it an evil turn, so that they may revile the doctrine of the gospel. Before the Jews the apostle Paul must needs be found an instigator of strife, and before Festus as insane (Acts 21:38; 22:22; 26:24).

Thus has the world always been perverted, as it still is, and deals in a perverse way with Christians; for, if they make themselves known and come out openly and proclaim God's word, the world above all other things cannot endure it, and reviles them as fanatics and agitators and persecutes them with sword, water and fire; whereas, if they keep themselves hidden and practice their faith in quietness, the world reviles them none the less, and calls them factious spirits, hedge-preachers, and cannot find despicable enough terms with which to revile them. Is not this a perverse generation which thus reviles Christians when they remain hidden, and when they come out in public will not endure a single one? Hence there is nothing for Christians to choose but to be persecuted by the world when they work in public, or to be reviled and despised when they keep themselves hidden. This is what the Lord promised them, as all Christians and those who fear God well know; therefore they do not care what the world and the false brethren say (Matt. 5:10; 10:16; 24:9; John 15:18). However, we will, for the benefit of all well-disposed people and as an answer for our ministers, by the grace of God give further instruction in the matter, and say:

Firstly, that we have given many plain scriptural evidences above, by which a true teacher may be known and be distinguished from a false teacher? Now, whoever is

the kind of teacher as the scripture portrays a true teacher to be, and is always seeking to be conformed to Christ his Lord and Master, yea, whose fervent love to God and fellowman drives him into the ministry, he is without doubt sent of God, whether he teach secretly or openly (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17).

"Yes," some opponent will now say, "Christ and his apostles taught openly."

Answer

Christ was promised to the Jews, and was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6; 15:24); to them he made known his Father's word, and did such works among them as no one else had done, that they should believe on him, or, if not, that they should have no excuse. Moreover Jesus was able to escape from the midst of his enemies (Luke 4:30), yea, by his mighty word he laid them prostrate at his feet (John 18:6), and no one could lay hands on him before his hour was come. Nevertheless he hid himself, not trusting the people; for, says John, he knew what was in man (John 2:24, 25).

The apostles were chosen and sent by Christ to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:16), and to be witnesses for Christ unto the ends of the earth (John 15:27; Acts 1:22). Hence God dealt wonderfully with them; but he does not deal thus with all teachers, for they are not like the great apostles; neither does God propose to accomplish through all teachers what he accomplished through the apostles; and therefore he has not imposed upon all teachers what he imposed upon the apostles.

The apostles were commanded by the Lord to preach the gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:16; Mark 16:15), which, by the grace of God, they did (Col. 1:6). If this were to be followed out, then the teachers now would have to preach not only to the Christians as mentioned (1 Pet. 5:2), but also to the Jews, Turks, and all the heathen. But Paul declares to the teachers and bishops of the church that they shall take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers (Acts 20:28). On the day of Pentecost the apostles spoke with tongues of fire, and everyone understood them (Acts 2:4). This never came to pass before that time, nor has it come to pass since. God also wonderfully delivered the apostles out of prison (Acts 5:19; 12:7; 16:26). Now let him who would say that teachers should preach openly as Christ and his apostles did, remember that Christ could deliver himself from the hands of his enemies whenever he wished, and that God dealt miraculously with his apostles. The one must always be borne in mind with the other, so that without any discrimination every teacher has not imposed upon him what was laid upon Christ and his apostles; but everyone must hold himself accountable—and be so held by the church—according to the measure of the Spirit and of faith which the Lord has administered to him (1 Cor. 12:5), and the special ministry which the Lord has given him.

"Yes," says an opponent, "God's hand is not shortened; he is still mighty to succor his own, just as he did the apostles."

Answer

We know this very well and believe it. The disciples at Damascus also knew that God is almighty; nevertheless they let Paul down from the wall by night (Acts 9:25), so that he thus escaped the authorities of Damascus. So also did the Christians at Corinth believe and know that God is almighty and could preserve Paul from his enemies; yet they would not allow Paul to go among the people to answer for himself (Acts 19:30). But now some would have the teachers thrust out into the midst of their enemies, even when it has been shown before their eyes and they have had evidence enough, how fearfully bloodthirsty the world is, and with what barbarous tyranny it persecutes the teachers unto death. But what manner of spirit such people have may be easily understood from the example of the disciples at Damascus and at Corinth.

Elijah also knew that God is almighty; he also had confidence in his God and Lord, that he could preserve him; nevertheless he feared Jezebel, and fled into the wilderness (1 Kings 19: 3); but Jezebel could not have had a baser purpose toward Elijah than the world now has against all Christians, and especially against the true teachers and preachers of the gospel.

Above all this, Jesus Christ left the land of Judea when he heard that Herod had thrown John into prison (Matt. 14: 13). If, then, Elijah hid from Jezebel, and Jesus from Herod, why may not a true teacher do likewise?

An opponent will say: Elijah showed himself before Ahab and Jezebel and unto all Israel (1 Kings 18:1), and Jesus did not always remain outside of the land of Judea.

Answer

It was God's will that Elijah should show himself; therefore he was impelled to it by the Spirit of the Lord. When God desires that the teachers come out in public, and not fear the murderous Jezebel, the Lord will no doubt arouse and move them to do it.

"Yes," an opponent will now say, "since at this time teachers are not moved by the Spirit of the Lord to show themselves to the world, therefore they should keep silent, and not presume to teach, to dispense the sacramental emblems of Christ, and thus gather together a church."

Answer

If the apostles, for fear of the Jews, came together secretly, and held their meetings behind barred doors, taught, baptized and brake bread in the houses, not by day only, but also by night (John 20:19; Acts 1:13; 2:46; 20:7), why may this not be done now? Or are the apostles to be blamed and censured? Or is it a sin now, and deserving of censure, what at that time was right and beneficial?.

"But," declares an opponent, "Christ says in the gospel: 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God' (John 3:20, 21)."

To this we reply, that these words are not against us, for they are spoken by Christ with the purpose of showing that evildoers hate the light of the divine word and elude it so as not to be reprov'd and put to shame by it. Therefore the apostle says to the Thessalonians: "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night" (1 Thess. 5:5-7). To the Romans he says: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day," etc. (Rom. 13:12, 13).

Therefore the aforementioned words of Christ are not to be understood as meaning that the word of God may not be taught secretly (for there is sufficient scriptural proof to the contrary), but that the unbelievers and evildoers hate and flee from the true light, that is, God's word, for the reason that God's word reprov's and judges, and is, as the apostle says, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight" (Heb. 4:12, 13).

Because the word of God thus pierces, reprov's and judges, therefore evildoers hate the light of the divine word, that they may not be reprov'd and judged by it; for the ungodly hate reproof, and seek a hiding-place to secrete themselves in. They prefer the darkness, and do not like to be seen, because they do in secret what is a shame even to speak of, as the apostle writes to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:12).

Let us note intelligently what it signifies, and what the Lord would teach us by sending Elijah to the widow at Sarepta in the time of famine, and there keeping him safe from Ahab and Jezebel, and with a little meal and oil feeding, sustaining and preserving him and the widow (1 Kings 17:9). The Lord could easily have fed and preserved Elijah, even though he had not sent him to the widow; he could easily have comforted the widow, even though Elijah had not come; but it pleased the Lord to feed Elijah at the home of the widow, and the widow with Elijah, with a little meal and oil, as already said. What this signifies, we will leave to the consideration of all God-fearing people. According to our understanding this example, like all others, is written for our learning (Rom. 15:4), that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope, namely, that God will not forsake his own, but that he helps them in all their troubles, and nourishes them by means of others, so that in quietness and seclusion they may live together according to their belief, preserved from Ahab and Jezebel, and fed and sustained by God and his word and spirit; for "the Lord forsaketh not his saints" (Psa. 37:28), but in the evil time they shall be preserved, and in the time of famine they shall be filled; the rich shall suffer want, and shall hunger (Psa. 34:9, 10), but they that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing (Psa. 121). And what does Christ say?—"I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow" (Luke 4:25, 26). It is the same now. Ahab and Jezebel are now in authority, and have brought Baal into Israel, thereby making Israel sin against the Lord; therefore the

Lord's wrath is turned against Israel, and he has sent a famine— that is, a lack and dearth of his word—upon the earth. As Israel in Elijah's time was in want of the natural bread, and as Elijah alone was sent to the widow at Sarepta, so now but few are found with whom the Lord is pleased, so that they receive comfort and refreshment for their souls from God through his word and Spirit through the co-operation of the servants and ministers of Jesus Christ. That Elijah had to keep in hiding, and that he was not sent by God to many, but only to the widow at Sarepta, was not his fault, but the fault of others. Likewise the fact that teachers must at this time keep themselves in seclusion and are not sent by God into the world is not the fault of the Lord (for the Lord desires that all men should be saved— Ezek. 18:23; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9), nor of the sincere teachers (for they are kindly disposed, and desirous of ministering unto all), but of the wicked world, who will not hear or tolerate them.

Lastly: Since Jezebel so furiously rages and fumes against all servants of God, it is therefore better to serve God in seclusion than to bow the knee openly before Baal; it is better to teach the word of God secretly among those who have a desire for the truth and cause it to bring fruit, than to keep altogether silent; it is better to teach the mysteries of the kingdom of God and to secretly explain, accept and understand them as Christ and his apostles did (Matt. 13:11-14), than to listen to the open misinterpretation of the law from the throne of iniquity (Psa. 94:20). It is also better to observe the sacraments of Christ secretly with the pious and true believers than to publicly misuse or despise them with unbelievers and false Christians, or to abandon them entirely, as do the erring and famed thinkers who fancy and unblushingly say they are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and know not that they are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Rev. 3:17).

The scripture furthermore clearly shows that (we may not speak on the word of God when and where we will, but only when and where the Lord will. Now, the Lord desires his word to be preached where it will bring forth fruit; on the other hand he does not desire his word proclaimed where it will bring forth no fruit. Hence we read in Sirach: "Pour not out words (speak not—Ger. Tr.) where they hear not diligently" (Sir. 32:4). And Christ says to the apostles: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matt. 7:6). These words make it sufficiently known to us that God's word (which is that which is holy, and pearls) is not to be preached to the persecutors of the truth (who are the dogs which gnash at the righteous with their teeth, Psa. 37:12), nor to the impure, who are intoxicated with carnal pleasures (and are the swine mentioned, Matt 7:6). Moreover it is well to note that the Holy Ghost forbade Paul to preach the word in Asia, but sent him to Macedonia there to preach the word (Acts 16: 6-10); therefore the same apostle says: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. 4:29, 30).

Christ himself was not willing to answer the Pharisees' questions or answer one word to all of Herod's questions. Moreover Christ often, spoke to the people in parables,

but the mysteries of the gospel he explained secretly to his disciples (Matt. 13:10, 11; Mark 4:10, 11), to whom he says: "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:11), as it is written, "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel" (Psa. 103:7); and further: "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel" (Psa. 147:19). And Paul says that God's word, that is, the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, is now made manifest to his saints; "to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you," etc. (Col. 1:26, 27). Therefore Christ says: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11:25, 26; Luke 10:21). And again Christ says: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot: Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" etc. (John 14:21, 22).

From all these words it is easy to see that God himself hid his word from the world, that Christ spoke to the people in obscure parables, that the Holy Ghost forbade Paul to preach God's word in Asia, and that God revealed his word to his saints, and not to the world. How then can the ministers of the Word be in any sense justly accused when they are but following these examples in these perilous times, in keeping the mysteries of the gospel hidden and revealing them quietly to the well-disposed, and speaking that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers, that they grieve not the Holy Spirit of God? (Eph. 4:29, 30).

To sum it up: How a teacher shall be proven and known by his doctrine and his fruits has been sufficiently explained above, but the matter of teaching openly or secretly has no bearing on the question; for to teach publicly is good and right according to the opportunity of the time; to teach secretly is not forbidden, according to the circumstances of the hour. Public teaching, if false, is not made good merely because it is public; for what is false must be and remain false, though it were taught a thousand times in public and adorned ever so much with beautiful language. On the other hand, secret teaching is not made false, merely because it is secret; for righteousness must remain righteousness, says the prophet, and they who fear God shall inherit it. And God's word is and remains the truth, whether it be taught secretly or openly. And if it were the case that the true teachers might teach openly, they should still not preach and teach us anything but the same word of God which by the grace of the Lord is revealed and taught us. Hence there is here no room for excuse, no looking about for another gospel, if both men and angels shall be accursed if they preach another gospel than that which we have received from Jesus and his apostles (Gal. 1:8). Therefore let us, according to the word of the prophet, give God the glory and take heed unto the light, before the darkness come, and our feet stumble upon the dark mountain (Jer. 13:16).

It is also plainly to be seen how much more perilous the times are now than in the time of the apostles, for at that time the apostles and Christians could flee from one city

to another, but now nearly all powers and potentates, cities and countries have formed an alliance against us; at that time heathen governments did not concern themselves much about matters of faith and the Christian religion (Acts 17:9; 18:14, 15; 23: 22-24), but now almost everyone would be a ruler of another man's conscience and a judge of faith (which belongs to Christ alone). Now papacy and all it includes persecutes our faith as cruelly as Antiochus ever persecuted the god-fearing Jews. And especially does the surviving generation of Pharisees and perverted scribes, the haughty wisdom and intelligence of this world (Isa. 5:21) rage and rave against us. They are of the seed of Cain, and not of Abel, therefore they persecute and kill the righteous (Gen. 4:8; 1; John; 3:12, 13), and although they have often been warned and instructed from the word of God, both with tongue and pen, yet they remain obdurate in their blindness, wickedness, and hideous tyranny. How then can these scorners and persecutors of the word of God escape the fate that befell the obstinate, wicked and unbelieving Jews, namely, that the kingdom of God shall not come to them, or shall be taken away from them, because they do not bring forth the fruits thereof? (Matt. 21:43).

And why say much more about this? The world absolutely refuses to hear God's word anyway, therefore it is not worthy of hearing it. It despises righteousness, therefore this also has become entirely foreign to it; it persecutes Christ, and will have none of him, therefore also Christ will not have it; the world will not forsake evil, and therefore also will not take reproof from God's word; the world hates the truth just as Ahab did, therefore it is misled by the spirit of falsehood, which is in the mouths of all the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 22: 22). The world will not tolerate the true teachers, therefore the Lord sends to it false prophets in droves, who speak what it loves to hear. In short, it is as Isaiah laments, namely, "that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord; which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us" (Isa. 30:9-11).

Since, then, the world desires such prophets, the Lord sends it such prophets as it desires, but they shall be brought to shame, as the Lord says through Ezekiel: "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him" (Ezek. 14:9, 10). Of this same thing Jeremiah also, in his lament concerning Jerusalem, that it is so miserably deceived by false prophets, and has been brought into captivity, says: "O daughter of Jerusalem, what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee? Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment" (Lam. 2:13, 14).

Thus the false prophets deceived Israel, brought it into Babylon, and landed there themselves; yea, some received terrible punishment for their false prophecies (Jer. 28:12-

17). Thus it will be with the world and its false prophets, if they do not repent. But may the Lord turn them that they may sincerely repent and be converted unto the living God, and come out of darkness into the true light, that they may be saved.

Observe, beloved brethren, that we have in brotherly love written you a little by the grace of God, on the sending of gospel teachers; and we kindly ask you to accept it in good part and test it by the plummet of Holy Writ. We could write much more on the subject, but we hope we have satisfied the reasonable and well-disposed; there is no help for the perverse and wicked, even though an angel from heaven preached the truth. But may almighty God, the Father of all mercy, and God of all grace enlighten, strengthen and establish all true teachers and ministers of his holy word (2 Cor. 1:3; 1 Pet. 5:10), whom he has placed over his church through Jesus Christ by his Spirit, that they may remain steadfast in the evangelical doctrine, showing themselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15), that at the Lord's appearing they may receive the crown that fadeth not away (1 Pet. 5:4).

And you, beloved brethren in the Lord, who were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls, Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:25), continue steadfast in his doctrine, give ear to his voice alone, and follow in his footsteps (John 10:27), and be at peace with your teachers and leaders who rightly instruct you in God's word, that the God of peace may be with you, and that the Lord Jesus Christ may at the last day acknowledge you as his sheep, and place you at his right hand and say to you, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom of your Father, which was prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25: 34). To this end may the eternal God help us all through Jesus Christ. Amen.

D. P.

Book Six

A Loving Admonition

From

The Word of the Lord

In Which is Distinctively and Plainly Taught

and Discussed the Way in Which the

Christian Church is to Deal With Those

Who,

**Having Entered Into The Fellowship of The
Saints,
are Openly Doing the Corrupt Works of The
Flesh,
Into Which They Have Fallen and are Found**

I command you, brethren, in the name of our
Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves
from every brother that walketh disorderly.

2 Thess. 3:6.

If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator,
or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer,
or a drunkard, or an extortioner (robber);
with such an one no not to eat.

1 Cor. 5:11.

The grace of God, our heavenly Father, and the
peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be increased
in you, by the power and operation
of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**An Offering of Thanksgiving to Almighty
God Because the Writer had Heard of the Faith of
the Church, Her Love to God and His Saints; Also
Her Patience and Steadfastness in All Manner of
Oppression and Trouble, and an Admonition to the
Same Church with Many Comforting Words and
Scripture Passages to Remain Steadfast to the End**

Beloved brethren and sisters and friends in the Lord:—I thank almighty God in this that I hear of your faith, of your love for the Lord Jesus Christ and for his saints, and of your patience and steadfastness in all the persecutions you endure, as an assurance of your salvation, which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, who will recompense tribulation to them that trouble you, if they will not amend and sincerely repent. But you he will quicken and refresh 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 be admired in all of them that believe (2 Thess. 1: 7-10), who by the power of their faith have forsaken and overcome the world, who for the sake of the gospel now despise all perishable and temporal things and seek those things which are above (2 Cor. 4:18; Col. 3:1), where Christ sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and who now for righteousness' sake are so unmercifully persecuted and put to death by tyrants and bloodthirsty men. For this is now the time when the heathen are come into the Lord's inheritance, defiling his holy temple, giving the dead bodies of his servants to be meat to the fowls of the heaven, and roasting the flesh of his saints on spits and offering it as prey and game to the wild beasts of the field. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them (Psa. 79:1-3), and all because the great Babylonian harlot thirsts so greatly for the blood of the saints and witnesses of Jesus (Rev. 17:5; 18:24), and cannot be satisfied until she is fully drunken and the number of the servants of God (all of whom must be put to death for the sake of his word) is fulfilled (Rev. 6:11). Then shall the almighty God judge and punish the Babylonian harlot, because she is the mother of all abominations on earth (Rev. 17:5), and the blood of all the saints is found in her (Rev. 18:24); because she has deceived the world with her beautiful appearance (being arrayed; in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of all abominations and gives all her lovers and paramours to drink thereof); and because the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and all nations have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication and sorcery. Therefore God shall punish her, and her plagues shall come unawares, and all who adhere to her and will not separate from her shall not go unpunished. O Lord! how will those then tremble and fear who now so haughtily revile the Lord and take Truth captive (Isa. 59:14, 15), who serve the Babylonian whore so faithfully, protecting her and for her sake put the true Christians to death with fire, water and the sword. On the other hand, how will the servants of the Lord rejoice, who have not received or accepted the mark of the beast, but who are sealed with the seal of the living God on their foreheads, of which it is written in the Revelations of John: namely that John saw a great number of the servants of God who were sealed in their foreheads by the angel with the seal of the living God from among all the tribes of the children of Israel (Rev. 7:2-4). And after this he saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands, crying with a loud voice, saying: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and

four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might,' be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.

"And one of the elders answered, and said unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:9-17).

My dearly beloved friends and brethren, who, for the sake of the truth, have now become the laughing-stock and a byword of the whole world, and are hated and persecuted to death by the monstrous beast (which has opened his mouth to speak blasphemies against God, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell therein, Rev. 13:6); comfort yourselves with these and like glorious promises of God, and await with patience (Matt. 16:27) the glory that shall be revealed in you (Rom. 8:17; Tit. 2:13) at the coming and appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Gal. 1:4), and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life, if so be that we suffer with him (Rom. 8:17), continue steadfast in his doctrine (John 8:31), and with unwavering faith follow in his steps (1 Pet. 2: 21).

And blessed be God, the heavenly Father, the God of all mercies (2 Cor. 1:3), who has chosen and elected you and called you through the gospel to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (Eph. 1: 3; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Pet. 5:10) to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to be members of his church (Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:12; 1 Cor. 1:9). Therefore also be always at peace with the Christian church (Eph. 4:3), and remember that our God is a God of peace in all his churches (1 Cor. 14:33), and that Jesus Christ has left and bestowed upon us his peace (John 14:27), and that the apostle so earnestly admonishes us to peace and says: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 7); or, as he says in another place: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15).

With such and similar scriptures be admonished and instructed by the Holy Spirit to seek the true Christlike peace as far as is possible for you. And take heed that no contention and sectarianism be found among you, one claiming to be of Cephas; another, of Paul; a third, of Apollos; and a fourth, of Christ (1 Cor. 1:13), but that you be of one heart and of one soul with one another in Christ Jesus (Acts 4:32). And beware of wanton and highly lauded spirits (persons) who parade themselves with glozing words and despise others, that they may gain a reputation among the ignorant, no matter what their kind, who revile the church of God among you, and compare the servants of Christ with

the foolish shepherds of whom the prophet says that they shall not seek those that are lost, nor heal that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat (Zech. 11:16; Ezek. 34:4); and this they do because these servants of Christ with the word of God rightly and properly separate the open sinners and carnal men from the church.

O God! how thy holy word is at all times spoken against! And those who know and confess it, keep it before their eyes and obey it, must suffer on account of it and be despised; who stake life and limb, goods and blood and are killed all the day long (Psa. 44:22; Rom. 8:36; 2 Cor. 4:11), yet not regarding all this, so that they may win many souls for Christ Jesus, and yet must hear that they are not seeking the lost. They who desire neither gold nor silver, and do not feed the flock for the milk and the wool, but of a ready mind (1 Pet. 5: 21); they who so zealously apply the bandage and the ointment of the word of God (which is the true healing balm) and the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Jas. 5:14; Rev. 3:18), are derided and decried as those who eat the flesh of the fat, as if they were devouring the sheep just as the false prophets do; yea, what is still more, they themselves who, out of brotherly love, and at the request of the God-fearing people, and even at their own solicitation and request, have so treated these blasphemers and slanderers and so instructed and convinced them out of the scripture that they thanked them for their good instruction, are now reviled by these same persons, not with tongue alone, but also with pen, and their words distorted, perverted and misconstrued. O merciful, eternal God and Father! pity such blindness, if it be thy holy will, and forgive the sins and blasphemies of those who know not what they do. This is my heart's desire and prayer.

The church is admonished to follow christian peace and godly unity, and is warned to guard against all unnecessary strife, for he noticed that disturbers were among them, who ridiculed the ministers of god's word as foolish shepherds, who are not seeking that which is lost, nor binding up that which is wounded and broken, etc., and this for no other reason than this, that they do not endorse the open works of iniquity, or suffer evil and carnal men to enter into the fellowship of the saints, but endeavor and desire with the word of god to keep them outside until they show true

repentance. In the arguments given many beautiful lessons are drawn from both, old and new testament scriptures, in which it is abundantly shown that none of the sins mentioned are permissible or admissible in the fellowship of the saints

But to you, dear brethren and fellow-believers of our Christian faith, I shall by the grace of God give brief instruction from the scripture on what was the divine order in the beginning regarding the punishment of the wicked, and the separation of open transgressors and despisers of the divine word from the church, and how very necessary this separation is, and what true repentance is that avails before God and that is valid before his church according to the scripture.

In the first place, the holy scripture everywhere testifies that God is just, and therefore loves righteousness and hates unrighteousness, that he is gracious toward the penitent and the godly (Psa. 45:7), but stern and full of anger toward the wicked (Psa. 7:11; 9:5); yea, that he visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments (Ex. 20:6; 14:8; Num. 14:18; Deut. 7:9). Therefore John says that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us; from all sin" (1 John 5:7). And again "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby we know that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:3-6). That is: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth, righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother," etc. (1 John 3:4-10).

In order to properly understand these statements of the apostle it is necessary to know what darkneses and sins (which separate us from God) the apostle means. The open works of the flesh, which God judges and punishes with death, are such darkneses

and sins, and not the weaknesses and mistakes which still cling to all men, otherwise the apostle would contradict himself when he confesses and says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1: 8-10).

Hence all these words above quoted must be discriminatingly understood, namely, that all those who are carnally minded, who do the works of the flesh (Rom. 8:5; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:5), and therefore sin against God, have no fellowship with him, do not know Jesus Christ (1 John 1:6; 3:4), and are not of God, but of the devil (Jas. 4:4). Therefore the apostle Paul says: "To be carnally minded is death . . . and enmity against God" (Rom. 8:6, 7), and those who live after the flesh must die, for the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

But if a person through human weakness makes a mistake and is overtaken in a fault (Gal. 6:3), sin is not imputed to him, but is forgiven and covered through the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ (Psa. 32:1; Rom. 4:7; 8:1), as it is written, that Christ is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2; 4:10), and that a man is saved whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered, and that "blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Psa. 32:1, 2); for "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1).

In the second place, God has testified and confirmed that he has instituted an offering for the sin of ignorance and of error (Lev. 11; 12: 13; Num. 15), but willful sinners and evildoers, such as murderers, adulterers, idolaters, blasphemers, sorcerers and like transgressors, be commanded to be punished with death (Deut. 13), and thus exterminated from Israel. No partiality was shown, whether prince or judge, man or woman, nor even for a whole city; but all who did evil, or in the sight of the God of Israel transgressed his law, and served other gods, or committed other gross sins, had to die, and of such wicked people Israel had to be cleansed (Lev. 10; Deut. 17:7).

Besides this, God the Lord presents to us many and varied beautiful symbols of purity in Israel, for they were not to eat any unclean food, nor touch any unclean thing. The people were to be clean (Lev. 11; 12; 13; 14), likewise the houses; and no one was allowed to defile the camp of Israel (Deut. 23); for the Lord walked through their camp; therefore their camp must be clean and holy, that no abomination be seen therein, that the Lord would not turn from them and they die in their uncleanness, even as God spake to Moses and Aaron, namely, that they should warn the children of Israel of their uncleanness; "that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile the tabernacle of the Lord that is among them" (Lev. 15:31). And to Israel God said: "Sanctify yourselves, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God. And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: for I am the Lord which sanctify you" (Lev. 20:7, 8).

Therefore also Miriam, Moses' sister, when she was stricken of the Lord with leprosy because she had murmured against Moses, was shut out from the camp of Israel (Num. 12:15), nor did it avail that Moses himself cried unto the Lord, saying: "Heal her

now, O God!" for the Lord answered him thus: "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again." So Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again (Num. 12:14, 15).

Herein is prefigured and made known to us how holy and pure the church of the Lord must be, even as Peter admonishes us and says: "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:13; Lev. 11:44).

The apostle admonishes us in his letter to the Hebrews that "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" (Heb. 2:1-4). And again: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven" (Heb. 12:25).

These words make it sufficiently plain to us that the transgressors and despisers of the doctrine of salvation and the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ shall much less escape the punishment of God than those escaped who sinned against the Mosaic law; therefore also evil and carnal people cannot be tolerated in the church of Christ, as the apostles distinctly declare; for Paul writes thus to the Corinthians: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9, 10). Thus "the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). Moreover: "This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5). Also: "The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous" (Psa. 1:5). Therefore also the holy scripture says in Revelations that without, that is, outside of the church of God, "are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie" (Rev. 22:15).

Since both the old and the new testament places the above mentioned transgressors and others like them outside the church of God as such that do not belong to

God so long as they live in such sins and have not truly repented of them, therefore they cannot be considered as members in the church, but must be separated therefrom and bear the punishment they deserve until such time as they repent and are reconciled to God and the church, just as Paul sternly rebuked the fornicator at Corinth and by the power of Christ separated him from the church, that his flesh might be mortified thereby, but his spirit saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5). Thereby he teaches expressly that believers shall have nothing to do with one who calls himself a brother, but is a fornicator, or covetous, or idolater (image worshipper), or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a thief with such the Christians shall have no fellowship (1 Cor. 5:7, 9, 11, 13; 2 Thess. 3:6), and not even to eat with them, but they must put them away, and afterward shun them, and this for three principal reasons: First, that the church may not become a partaker of the strange sins, and that the little leaven leaven not the whole lump (2 John 1:11; Gal. 5:9; 2 Cor. 5:5); Secondly, that the person who has sinned may be ashamed and his flesh be mortified thereby, but his spirit saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15); Thirdly, that the church of God be not evil spoken of on account of wicked members in it, and be not censurable on their account before the Lord (Ezek. 36:17-23; Rom. 2:24; Josh. 7:20).

From all this it follows that the wicked and open sinners must be separated from the church of the Lord; for if their fellowship is not with God, if they are banished from, separated, and rooted out of the literal Israel (1 John 1:3; Deut. 13:6-11; 17:2-7; 19:16-21), if they know not Jesus Christ (2 John 1:7), if they have no part in the kingdom of God and Christ (Eph. 5:5), if they are not to inherit or possess the same (Gal. 5:21), and if Christians are to have nothing to do with them (1 Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Thess. 3:6), how then may they continue to be in the Christian church, be called holy brethren (Heb. 3:1), be greeted with the peace of Jesus Christ and the kiss of love? (Rom. 16: 3, 5, 6, 8, 11; 1 Cor. 16: 20; Col. 4:14; 1 Thess. 5:26; 3 John 1:14, etc.). Yea, how can they be the pure bride of the Lamb and members of the body of Christ? (Rev. 21:2; Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:4). Or do we not know that Christians are members of Christ, and their body the temple of the Holy Ghost? (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16, etc.). Or shall whoremongers, adulterers, idolaters and other evildoers be counted as members of Christ and as the temple of God? Far from it, for Jesus Christ has no such unclean members, and the temple of the Holy Ghost is holy (1 Cor. 6:19); yea, the church, which is now his bride, his body, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones (Eph. 5:30), which at one time lay naked and loathsome in her blood, who was not salted at all, and her navel was not cut (Ezek. 16: 4-6; Hosea 2:3, 4), Christ Jesus has in mercy adopted and in his eternal love chosen to be his bride, cleansed her by the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5), washed away all her sins with his precious blood (1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Rev. 1:5), salted her with the salt of divine wisdom (Matt. 5:13), circumcised her with the word of his power (Col. 2:11), anointed her with the oil of gladness (1 John 2:20, 27), and crowned her with a crown of glory, clothed her in the fine linen robe of righteousness and the mantle of salvation (Rev. 19:8), that, being justified by his grace (Tit. 3:7), she might be presented to God the Father blameless and unreprouable (Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22). Hence it is a case of gross ingratitude and a fearful sin for this bride of the Lord to forsake Jesus Christ, the lovely Bridegroom, and commit adultery against him, that is, to fall in love

with the world, live after the flesh, worship idols, and commit other sins which are an abomination to the Lord.

Now, some will say that when a man has committed fornication, or adultery, or some sin of like kind, and laments and repents of it and promises to do better, his sin is already forgiven him by God, and that therefore he should not be excommunicated. To this we reply briefly that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power, as the apostle says (1 Cor. 4: 20). Hence true repentance consists not in words alone, but in three characteristics and evidences by which it may be known. The first is, that the sinner heartily deplores his sin before God, and grieves over his sin, and is in continual distress because of his sin, as the prophet says: "My sin is ever before me" (Psa. 51:3; 32:3-5). The second is, that he confesses his sin to God with a broken and contrite spirit, implores God for; forgiveness, with firm confidence in the grace of God through Jesus Christ, and with the prophet says: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me" (Psa. 51:1-3, 9; 32:5). The third is that he forsakes sin and does righteousness, as the prophet says: "To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation" (Sir. 35:3; Ezek. 18:21, 27; 33:12, 19).

Hence no repentance avails before God that shows no fruits of repentance, as John confesses when he says: "And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the tree: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" (Matt. 3:10).

Furthermore, what does Christ say in the gospel?—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone," etc. (Matt. 18:15). This is not said of or to be understood as meaning open works of the flesh, but of secret errors, wherein one brother transgresses against another, wherefore Peter asked the Lord, saying: "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" To this Jesus replied: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:21, 22), and as often as he penitently asks forgiveness (Luke 17:4), Now, no one who has been taught of God is so ignorant but that he fully understands what kind of sins Jesus here means, namely, such mistakes and shortcomings as often occur through human weakness, and are not accounted as works of the flesh, which are mortal sins.

That Jesus did not condemn the adulteress to death (John 8:1-11), is to be explained by the fact that she was not in the church of Christ, but in the synagogue of the Jews, and the Pharisees would not have her condemned according to the gospel, but according to the law. But Jesus did not come to condemn man and put him to death according to or by the law, but to convert sinners and save them by the gospel and through faith in his name (Matt. 9:13). Therefore he did not institute a ban that required the transgressor of his word to be put to death, but one that demanded his expulsion from the church, and this that he might be bettered and again resurrected into newness of life.

**Several False Arguments (Bolstered Up and
Maintained by Perversion and Misapplication of
Scripture to Strengthen the Evil and Confirm
Them in Their Iniquity) are Answered and Refuted**

But, some will say, the prophet David, the apostle Peter, and several others also sinned, and yet remained in the church of God, and were not separated therefrom.

Answer

Ecclesiasticus has well said that an ungodly man will not take reproof, but falls back upon the example of other people to justify his undertaking (Sir. 21). Thus the drunkards have recourse to Noah and Lot; the fornicators and adulterers, to David; which is no evidence of their penitence and piety, but much more of their ungodliness and perverseness. But if one wishes to understand the examples given in the holy scriptures in the way Paul says, namely: "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4), then only are they rightly understood.

Therefore the aforementioned examples of the scripture give us no license to commit sin, or to stand sponsor for others in their sins; but we are to learn therefrom that God is gracious and merciful, longsuffering, and of great mercy (Num. 14:18; Psa. 103:3).

Now, if someone sins as did David and Peter, and repents as they did, and gives evidence of his repentance before God by his fruits, toward him God will, without doubt, be merciful, and the church also will deal with him in love and with Christian discretion. But to compare base, open sinners and carnal men with David and Peter, and therefore not separate them from the church, is an open contradiction of the scripture and command of the Lord, and militates against the power and effect of the evangelical ban, as has been sufficiently stated above (1 Cor. 5:4, 5; 2 Thess. 3:6).

Moreover, one who truly repents will be well satisfied to have imposed upon him by God and the church the punishment that belongs to him and which he richly deserves, just as David was patient when God punished him for his sins. When Shimei cursed him, when Absalom, his son, persecuted him and sought his life (2 Sam. 15:14), David confessed that it was God's righteous punishment that had come upon him, and he was perfectly resigned to God, to return again into his kingdom, or not to return, just as it pleased the Lord. Should then one who has sinned before God and desires to repent not be content that the church of the Lord punish and mortify him a little in his flesh according to the word of the Lord for his sins that his soul may not be destroyed and lost? Does not Moses openly declare that the Lord forgives iniquity, yet by no means clears, or lets go unpunished, the guilty? (Num. 14:18). The ban is a punishment of sin. imposed by God upon the sinner; therefore he must bear it and accept it for his amendment.

Lastly, the idea is this, that if any one commits fornication, adultery or sins of like nature, he is separated from God by the sin, as the prophet says: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isa. 59:2), and as an evidence of this he is put away from the church of God (1 Cor. 5:1-5). On the other hand, when one truly repents he is again in mercy received by God, and as an evidence and proof of this, he is again received and reinstated with joy by the church (2 Cor. 2:7, 8; 7:9-11). This is a fixed rule of God's word, by which none may be deceived.

Therefore, my beloved brethren and friends in the Lord, my companions in the faith, in the kingdom, in persecution, in the patience of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:9), remember that the mighty God with his powerful hand and outstretched arm has delivered you out of the spiritual Egypt and led you through the Red Sea (Ex.;14:14-22) when you were baptized into Jesus Christ, and into his death (Rom. 6:3 Acts 16:31), when you received the gift of the Holy Ghost, when all your enemies were drowned and brought to naught by the glorious victory of Jesus Christ, who by the death of his cross wrought a triumph over the prince of this world and over the powers of darkness (Eph. 2:13; Col. 2:15); remember, I say, what grace the merciful God has shown you herein and how you received the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 2:6), when you bowed your knees before the most high God and received the mark of the Lord (Ezek. 9:4), and the seal of the living God in your foreheads (Rev. 7:3). At that time no persecution could frighten you, you paid no heed to the stern mandates of the tyrants, you renounced the devil with all his works, you forsook antichrist with all his idolatrous ways and false worship, you overcame the world and all that is in it by your faith (1 John 5:4), you crucified flesh and blood with its lusts and affections (Gal. 5:24), you presented your bodies living sacrifices unto God (Rom. 12:1), you exposed yourselves to fire, water, and the sword, for the witness of Jesus Christ, you have made your covenant with God, by denying self (Matt. 16: 24), to serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of your lives, you have surrendered yourselves to the Holy Spirit to be obedient to him and be governed by him. And when this was done how strong your faith was at that time, so that even the gates of hell could not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18), how your hearts then burned with love to God, how your consciences were then comforted with the everlasting comfort of the grace of God, and what joy there was then with God and his angels in heaven and with his saints on earth over your repentance, when you were converted from unrighteousness to the living God (Luke 15:7; Matt. 18:13; 1 Thess. 1:9)., when you forsook the Babylonian harlot and came to your Father, who in mercy took you in, yea, into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, killed the fatted calf (1 Cor. 1:9; Luke 15:23), arrayed you in the best robe, put a ring on your hands and rejoiced with the heavenly host that you who were dead are alive again; and that you who were lost, are found; for the faithful Shepherd Jesus Christ, who came from heaven to seek the lost sheep, sought and found us poor, wandering lambs in the desert (Ezek. 34:22, 23; John 10: 11), yea, he took us upon his shoulders when he bore our sins (Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2: 24, 25) in his own body on the tree, and thus brought us into the sheepcote (fold) of Israel, that is, the church of God.

A Loving Admonition and Brotherly Warning To Guard Against All Sin and Unrighteousness

It is therefore my loving desire and brotherly admonition to you, that you take heed to your calling and regulate your walk according to the gospel, in the fear of the Lord, and hear not the false prophets, of whom the apostle Peter writes: "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb. The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:17-22).

Heed well this apostolic teaching and witness of the Holy Spirit, and beware of sins, yea, beware of sin, as Sirach teaches you, saying: "My son, hast thou sinned? do so no more, but ask pardon for thy former sins. Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent; for if thou comest too near, it will bite thee: the teeth thereof are as the teeth of a lion, slaying the souls of men. All iniquity is as a two-edged sword, the wounds whereof cannot be healed" (Sir. 21:1-3). The apostle admonishes us likewise: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:12-14).

Dear brethren, since we, alas, have in our blindness and ignorance sinned greatly, and have done evil against our Lord and God, so that we may well say with the prophet: "O Lord, remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake" (Psa. 25:7), and God has now pardoned us in Christ Jesus whom we have accepted (Col. 2:6), and hold fast the beginning of his confidence (Heb. 3:6, 14), let us be found fruitful in him; for he says in the gospel: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he (my Father) taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2). And again: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:6). Hence it is a terrible thing not to remain in Christ Jesus, that is, to transgress his doctrine, and not continue therein, as John says: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not (or no) God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9).

Therefore let us remain firm and immovable in Christ Jesus and his doctrine, and not look back, with Lot's wife, toward Sodom (Luke 17: 32; Gen. 19: 26), nor long for the fleshpots of Egypt; and if others do so, and with the stubborn Israelites take a dislike to the bread of heaven (Ex. 16), and with the disciples at Capernaum are offended at the Word of God (which nevertheless is Spirit and life) and call Jesus' words "an hard saying" (John 6: 60) —which is nevertheless full of divine sweetness and spiritual nourishment (Psa. 19:11; 119:103)—and therefore turn away from him; let us say with Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6: 66, 67). What Jeremiah says accords with this: "O Lord ... all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters" (Jer. 17: 13). Therefore Solomon also says that the man that turns aside from the path of wisdom shall remain in the congregation of the dead, that is, in the church in which antichrist rules, where Satan dwells and where the second death dominates (2 Thess. 2:7; Rev. 20:6).

But God, the Father of mercies (2 Cor. 1:3), who hath quickened you from the dead (Eph. 2:5), and hath begun a good work in you (Phil. 1:6), the same will also complete it in you and make you fruitful in all righteousness, and present you unblamable before his face, protect you from all evil and preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom. Amen. To him, the almighty, eternal and only God, I commend you at all times. The love of God the Father, the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost be with you forever. Amen.

Written in brotherly love for the benefit of those who fear the Lord.

February 5, 1558.

D(IRK) P(HILIPP).

J(AN) B(OUWENS).

Book Seven

A Friendly Admonition

and

Brief Instruction

on the

True Knowledge of God

BY D. P.

He that heareth my word (says Christ), and
believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life.

John 5:24.

This is life eternal, that they might know thee,
the only true God, and Jesus Christ,
whom thou hast sent.

John 17: 3.

Greeting

Unto the beloved and faithful brethren and sisters who have obtained like precious faith with us (2 Pet. 1:1), we wish much grace, peace, and mercy, from God our heavenly Father, and from Jesus Christ, our only Lord, Redeemer and Savior, who gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father, to whom be praise for ever. Amen. Gal. 1: 4.

An Admonition on the True Knowledge of God.

I thank the Lord, the most high God of heaven and earth, and rejoice in my inmost soul, that I hear of your faith in God, of your knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and of your love toward all believers (Col. 1:3, 4; 2 Thess. 1:3), and I pray God, the eternal Father, through Jesus Christ, that he would preserve you to the end in the true faith, in a fervent spirit and in pure love, that you may daily grow and increase therein, that you may be unblamable in the day of the Lord, full of all good works and righteousness which are obtained through Jesus Christ, to the honor and glory of God.

I admonish you by the love of the Spirit that you thank God at all times for his unfathomable mercy which he has so abundantly manifested to us. Remember that in time past (Eph. 5:8) you sat in Egypt (that is, in darkness), that you were the servants of sin, led captive by the devil according to his will, and how wonderfully God delivered you. Take to heart the fact that you were so deeply in debt, and could not pay, and that God graciously forgave and remitted all. Remember that with the prodigal son you were long estranged from your heavenly Father (Luke 15:13-24), that you committed much fornication (that is, idolatry) with the Babylonian harlot, and that God in his goodness and long-suffering so graciously received you and made an everlasting covenant with you, gave you Jesus Christ as a free gift, and rejoiced with all the angels of heaven over your conversion.

Therefore take heed to yourselves that you have not received the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1), but remember that you have been called of God out of darkness into his marvelous light (Eph. 5:8), for this purpose that you might walk as children of light, and that therefore many sins have been forgiven you (John 8:11; Eph. 4:32; 1 Pet. 2:24), and that you should no longer sin, and that you have been graciously received by God, the heavenly Father, to the end that you should serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of your lives; for this reason God has chosen, called and accepted you in Christ Jesus. This is also prefigured to us in the gospel by the many whom Jesus healed and commanded to go in peace and sin no more lest a worse thing befall them.

For this reason I have undertaken to admonish you briefly, and to present to you by God's grace the principal articles (fundamental principles) of our salvation, namely the true knowledge of God, true faith, sincere, unadulterated love and a living hope; for, where there is no knowledge of God there is gross ignorance, and there evil predominates (Wis. of Sol. 15:3-14); where there is no faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6); he that has not love abides in death (1 John 2:11; 3:14); and where there is no living hope toward God and of eternal salvation there is a despondent mind and a troubled conscience (1 John 3:20).

How That in the Knowledge of God the Father Three Things Must be Observed

In the first place we must rightly know God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost (John 17:3). In the knowledge of God the Father three things are primarily comprehended:

1. His eternal omnipotence and omniscience, by which he created all things.
2. His eternal, divine justice, by which he so sternly punishes sin in both men and angels (2 Pet. 2:4-6).
3. His unfathomable and fatherly mercy, in that he gave us Jesus Christ as a Redeemer and Savior (John 3:16).

A knowledge of the almighty power and wisdom of God teaches us how we shall at all times trust in God alone (Psa. 33:16-20), from him alone to seek, pray for and desire help, protection, salvation and all good gifts, and not of any creature in heaven or on earth (Psa. 111:2-10), for there is none that can help us but the almighty God alone, who said to Abraham: "I am the almighty God" (Gen. 17:1), "thy shield" (Gen. 15:1), that is, One having all authority, the perfection of goodness, who said to Israel: "I am thy Lord and Savior, the Holy One of Israel, the righteous God and Savior, and there is no God beside me."

A knowledge of God's justice teaches us to fear God, to sincerely repent, to forsake sin, to be terrified at God's wrath and judgment, and to seek after righteousness, that we may not fall into the hands of the living God, for because of this God so openly showed his justice toward his angels in heaven which sinned (2 Pet. 2:2), toward Adam

and Eve in Paradise (Gen. 3), toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24), and toward many others, that he might thereby make public examples of his eternal justice, that we might learn to fear and behold him as a just God and Judge, yea, as an invincible God and as a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

A knowledge of the mercy of God teaches us to love God, because he so loved us, that he gave his only begotten Son unto death for us, that through him we might live forever (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10); "for God so loved the world," says John, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In other words: In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9). In short, God's love is revealed to us from heaven in this that he gave us such a precious treasure, his most beloved Son, as a gift, together with all the heavenly riches as a possession.

How in the Knowledge of Jesus Christ Three Things Need to be Observed

In the knowledge of Jesus Christ also there are three things especially to be noted and remembered:

1. His true divinity, in which he was born of God from the beginning, and is one with the Father from all eternity (Mic. 5:2; John 1:1; 10:30; 14:9, 10; 17:21).

2. His pure, spotless humanity which, of the word, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was made flesh (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35; 2:7; John 1:14), and not by the flesh and blood of any man.

3. His grace, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, redemption and salvation (Jer. 23:6; John 17:23, 24; 1 Cor. 1:24; Col. 2:3).

The knowledge of the true divinity of Jesus Christ teaches us to look upon him as our only Redeemer and Savior, and to believe in him as our Lord and God, that through him we may be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-5; John 14:1; 14-28); for this is the will of God that he that sees the Son and believes on him may have everlasting life (John 6:40); but he that does not believe shall not see life; "but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36; 1 John 5:10). Now, no one can believe in the Son Jesus Christ without a right knowledge of his true divinity; for we may believe in no one but God alone, and without faith there is no salvation (Heb. 11:6; John 6:40). (I speak of adults and intelligent persons). Hence the knowledge of the true divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ is pre-eminently necessary to salvation.

The knowledge of the holy humanity of Jesus Christ teaches us to consider and comprehend the overflowing riches of God's grace, that for us he sent and delivered his only first-born and only begotten Son, his eternal and almighty Word in the likeness of sinful flesh to the most ignominious death of the cross (Eph. 2:6, 7; John 1:14; 3:16; Rom. 8:32; John 1:1; Rom. 8:3; Eph. 2:13-16; Phil. 2:8). He also assures us that through

him we have free access to the Father by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18), since he has become our brother, like us in all things except sin (Heb. 2:11, 12; 5:2), that he, our faithful High Priest, Reconciler and Mediator with God, might succor us and have compassion on us in our human weakness (Heb. 2:17, 18; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:1; 10:19); for we needed such a Mediator who was both God and man, that in his true divinity he might be fully able to help us, and in his true humanity also have patience with our weakness, inasmuch as he is a man, tempted in all points, yet without sin, which he never knew (Heb. 2:14, 18).

The knowledge of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that we cannot be saved by our own works or any other means, nor to seek our salvation otherwise than through the merits of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:4-6); for he is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and eternal life (1 Cor. 2:30); he is our Redeemer, Advocate, Reconciler, Savior, and Mercy-Seat (1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1, 2; Rom. 3:24-27) through faith in his blood (Col. 1:14; 2:13-15); his suffering is our joy, his cross our triumph and glory, his death our life, his resurrection from the dead our resurrection to everlasting glory (1 Cor. 15:22, 23), his ascension our way to the Father; his union with us is our union with the Father and makes us partakers of the divine nature and of immortality (John 17: 21; 2 Pet. 1:4).

In the Knowledge of the Holy Ghost Also

Three Things are to be Noted:

1. His truly divine being, in which he proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 16:13; 14:17; 15:26).

2. His efficacy in all believers; for he comforts, strengthens, and seals unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30); he teaches them to fear God, to believe in God, to call upon him and pray to him as we ought (Rom. 8: 26, 27; Wis. of Sol. 9:17; 1 Cor. 12:3); in short, he bestows all good, spiritual gifts, according to his will.

3. His reproof of the sin of the world, that is, of unbelief, of false righteousness, of the unjust judgment which the world passes upon the children of God and upon all divine things (John 16:8-11).

The knowledge of the divinity of the Holy Ghost teaches us that we shall believe his teaching and his witness, because he is God, who alone is true, and cannot err (Rom. 3:4); therefore all that the Holy Ghost has declared and spoken through the prophets and apostles, yea, through Jesus Christ himself (2 Pet. 1: 21) is the eternal and abiding truth and the testimony of God (Psa. 111:8).

The knowledge of the power and work of the Holy Ghost in all believers teaches at all times to pray to God through Jesus Christ for the Holy Spirit that he would lead us into all truth (Matt. 7:7; John 14:26; 12:16; 16:13; 17:3; 1 John 2:20, 27), make us partakers of all his spiritual gifts, comfort, strengthen and preserve us in the wholesome doctrine of Jesus Christ, in the true faith unto the end and help us to enter into the kingdom of our heavenly Father.

The knowledge of the reproof or conviction of the Holy Ghost teaches us to recognize the unbelief of the world, its false righteousness and its unjust judgment; for the Holy Ghost reproves the world through the children of God and through the witnesses of Jesus Christ, of its unbelief, that it does not believe in Jesus Christ, because it rejects his word, his doctrine and his testament, and accepts, believes and follows the doctrines of men instead.

The Holy Ghost reproves the world of the false righteousness in this that, with the Jews, they seek to establish their own righteousness (Rom. 10:3-6) by such works and ceremonies as have been invented, devised and instituted by men; therefore they will not submit themselves to the righteousness that comes by faith in Jesus Christ, and which avails before God (Rom. 10:3, 4).

The Holy Ghost reproves the world of judgment, because they praise and justify the ungodly, and reproach and condemn those who fear God, because they call good, evil; and evil, good; because they take light for darkness, and darkness for light, so that neither Jesus with his kindness and fellowship, nor John with his sternness and seclusion satisfies them, but they constantly slander and reproach unjustly the godly (Matt. 11:18, 19; Isa. 5:20), condemn and kill them as heretics, even imagining that they are thereby doing God a service. All this the Holy Ghost reproves in his operation, that is, in the pious Christians in whom he performs his work.

Hence we must rightly know the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. 3:16, 17; 28:19; 1 John 5:4-7), that they, are the true, living God, beside whom there is none other, neither in heaven nor on earth. This God has created us, has redeemed us, has taught and enlightened us; he is our fortress and our deliverer, our Savior and our All (Psa. 18:2) in him we must believe. And what true faith is, the apostle describes for us to the Hebrews as follows: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1) That is, faith trusts in the invisible God, and hopes for his grace, and seeks after the things that are not seen and eternal (2 Cor. 4:18; Col. 3:2); for faith has three characteristics by which it may be known and rightly distinguished from all unbelief.

The first characteristic is that nothing but God's word is believed, for faith comes by the hearing of the word of God (Rom. 10:17; Psa. 116:10, 11), and not from the doctrine of men; for faith looks to God alone, and believes him faithful and true in all his words and promises, and all carnal men deceitful (Jer. 17:9); hence faith judges not by the word of men, however plausible and good it might appear to be, but by God's word alone.

The second characteristic is that faith believes all God's words, and makes no exceptions; for all God's words are as a fire (Jer. 23:29), and a shield to all who put their trust in him (Psa. 119:114), and God has so earnestly commanded that nothing should be added to or taken from his word (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Josh. 1:7; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18, 19, etc.), but to do according to all his words and commands. And Christ says in the gospel: "Man shall live . . . by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4; Deut. 8:3; Psa. 104:29). Therefore all words of God must be believed, and not only some, according to our fancy, and the others rejected.

The third characteristic of true faith is that faith seeks God alone and eternal salvation (Col. 3:1, 2), seeks those things which are invisible and heavenly, lays aside everything that is temporal and transitory, knows no man after the flesh (2 Cor. 5:15), seeks not things human, but things divine, and looks not upon man's work and righteousness, but on Jesus Christ alone (Matt. 16:12, 16).

Such faith had Abraham, the father of all the faithful (Rom. 4:16; Gal. 5:6); for he believed God above nature in the birth and offering of Isaac (Gen. 15:6; 22:17; 17:2, 16, 19; 18:10, 11; 21: 1, 2), he also believed all God's words although it was a sore trial to the flesh, as may be noted in the matter of the circumcision, and his readiness to offer Isaac unto the Lord, also that he did not regard temporal things, but left his father's house at the Lord's command, looking for another city, which has its foundations in heaven, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:8-10), as the apostle says.

From this it is evident that those who have true faith reject all the doctrines and opinions of men, and trust in God alone, take his word as truth, and confess all God's word as being right, and obey it, and with all diligence seek heavenly things. On the other hand, those who set the doctrines of men above or on a par with God's word, seek temporal things more than the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. 6:33; 1 Tim. 4:8, etc.), are unbelievers, and however beautifully they may speak of the scriptures and of faith, it is mere vanity and has no weight. From this faith springs love, which is the greatest, highest and first command, both in the law and in the gospel, namely, that we shall love the Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our might and all our strength, and the second is like unto it, namely, that we shall love our neighbor as ourselves; for on these two commands, says Christ, hang all the law and the prophets (Deut. 6:5;. Matt. 22:37-40).

The love of God must have precedence, so that we for God's sake will leave all creatures, all the things that are seen, yea, father and mother, brothers and sisters, wife and children, and even our own lives (Deut. 33: 8, 9; Matt. 10: 37-39; Luke 14: 26), as the scripture very plainly teaches us, both by word and by example; for God, who is a jealous God and a lover also (Ex. 20:5; Deut. 5:9; Psa. 88:18; Jer. 31:3, etc.), will have us love and cherish him thus, because he has thus shown his love toward us, as the apostle says, that Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, died for us ungodly beings, that he gave us his Holy Spirit, prepared his eternal kingdom for us, called us unto the knowledge of his word, in short, has given us all good things (Rom. 5:6; 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2-5; Tit. 3: 4-6; Psa. 84:11; Rom. 8: 32), therefore we must in return love him above all else that is in heaven and on earth. And we must prove this love by diligent obedience to all his commands, as Christ himself teaches in plain words, otherwise it is not love, but a vain pretense of love (John 14:21: 15:10; 1 John 5:2).

Next to this we must love the brethren. Of this brotherly love the scripture, Christ and his apostles teach us so abundantly that it is unnecessary to write more about it. This love is not merely that which supplies a poor brother's temporal need, but that we remember the brethren and sisters in all our prayers, beseeching God in their behalf, and being concerned about their souls, and that when we see someone erring from the way of

truth we shall in meekness of spirit admonish them from the word of God that we may win their souls and save them from destruction (Rom. 12:9-13 Col. 3:12-14: Eph. 5:2; 4:15; 1 Pet. 4:8-10; 2 Pet. 1:7: Gal. 6:5, 6; Jas. 5:16, 19, 20; 1 John 5:16, etc.).

Where this love exists, there all that is good is found, yea, there God is, who himself is love (1 John 4:8); there Christ dwells, there the Holy Spirit abides, there is the lovely gathering of brethren and sisters who are of one heart and one soul (Acts 2:44; 4:32; Psa. 133:1); there the anointment of the holy oil of gladness flows from the head of Christ upon all his members (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9; Psa. 133:1); there the dew of divine grace falls upon Mount Zion, making fruitful in righteousness and holiness all who are pleasing to God; there God bestows his heavenly benediction and gives life eternal; there is true joy, not carnal, but spiritual; there is the beautiful Jerusalem which is above (Gal. 4:26; Rev. 22:2), which is builded as a city (Psa. 122:4), that is, compact together; there the tribes of Israel gather to praise God; there the Holy Spirit brings rest and peace to the consciences and hearts of the believers in true Christian love and unity; there also is found the living hope, whereby the believer hopes for salvation through the grace of Jesus Christ, yea so that he is assured and certain that he is being sanctified, and that he has the witness of the Holy Spirit in his heart (Rom. 8: 16), whereby he is assured that he is the child of God, that Jesus Christ is his brother, and that he has the fellowship of the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. 13:14).

Thereby the believer becomes so light of heart, so comforted and so full of joy, that he is rich in the midst of poverty, that in danger, persecution, prison, yea, in the midst of death, he rejoices and says with Paul: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him (namely the crown of righteousness) against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). This accords with what the prophet says: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psa. 27:1). In other words: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early" (Psa. 46:1-5). And the prophet yet says: "O Lord, . . . whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Psa. 73:25, 26).

This liberty of the mind brings about the living hope in God, and the certain assurance of the grace of Jesus Christ and the sealing of the Holy Spirit unto eternal salvation, by which the heart becomes so joyful that the believer is comforted under all circumstances to be with the Lord, and in the real life to come into full possession of all that he by faith looks forward to in hope, and which he now sees but darkly as through a glass and knows from words more or less dark (1 Cor. 13:12).

Therefore, my beloved and cherished friends in the Lord, and chosen of God in Christ Jesus, take heed to the true knowledge of God, continue steadfast in the faith, love God and the brotherly fellowship of Jesus Christ, and hope for his grace, and you will never be brought to shame. Beware of all false doctrine (Matt. 7:15), all idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14), all appearance of evil (1 Thess. 5:22), do not allow yourselves to be terrified on account of tyrants and persecutors, fear not mortal men, but fear the almighty, living God (Luke 12: 4, 5), who created you, gave you body and soul, and has called you to his everlasting kingdom that shall never pass away. Think of the great joy and glory that shall be revealed in you (Rom. 8:17, 18; 1 Pet. 1:3, 4) in time to come at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Take an example of patience from all the holy people of God who have lived since the beginning of the world (Jas. 5:10; Heb. 12:1) and have suffered, and follow in their faith.

Now the God of all grace, and the Father of all mercy, who has chosen you unto everlasting glory through Christ Jesus, strengthen, confirm and establish you in his eternal truth, perfect you in faith and in all good works and preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom, that you may inherit and possess it with all the saints forever. Amen. (1 Pet. 5:10; Heb. 12:28.) D. P.

Book Eight

A Very Beautiful and True Explanation and Interpretation of the Tabernacle of Moses, In Which Many Beautiful and Necessary Figures of the Old Testament are Discussed and Harmonized With the Spirit of the New Testament.

For The Use And Benefit Of All Lovers Of The Truth,
Who Seek And Desire To Comprehend The
Spirit Of The Letter.

By D. P.

The Lord said to Moses: "See that thou make

all things according to the pattern
shewed to thee in the mount."

Heb. 8: 5.

Greeting

Grace, peace, and the true knowledge of the divine word, be multiplied in all true Christians and lovers of the eternal truth of God, our heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

All brethren and fellow-believers in our Christian faith are in one sense well aware that for some time an unusual and remarkable, yea, even strange doctrine has been taught and introduced by certain persons regarding the tabernacle of Moses, and regarding some passages of scripture, which, according to the letter, seem to be contradictory. These doctrines have, in our estimation, and as we have also ascertained, produced no amendment of life, no love, and no faith, but rather many sects, great errors and grievous offences, both in and out of the Christian church have originated there from. For this reason we shall, according to the grace given us of God, write against this misleading doctrine, not for our praise and exaltation (for he who seeks his own honor is not the messenger of God, —John 7:18—nor a witness of the truth), but to the honor of God alone and to seek Christian unity; for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a God of peace, of love and unity in all his churches, and has declared and left us the doctrine of salvation out of the mouth of the Most High God. This doctrine is the sure way. the eternal truth, and immortal life (John 14: 6). And if so be that we all alike believe this doctrine with the whole heart, continue therein, and diligently keep it, we shall never be brought to shame, yea, the Holy Ghost, which is poured out upon us by the Father, will remain with us, abide in us and dwell among us and will bring and establish peace and unity, and will not depart from us so long as we abide with Christ (John 14:16) and keep his doctrine, for it is the office and work of the Holy Ghost to reveal Christ and to make known his doctrine to man; therefore also he has a desire for those who walk in the peace of God, in real unity of the true faith and the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ and obey it.

But those who are contentious with Christ and his church and introduce heretical or strange doctrines contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ—from such the Holy Ghost departs and has no communion with them (Wis. of Sol. 1:5). Therefore all their plots and plans are unsuccessful, all their teaching is impotent and fruitless, and they will not stand in the judgment of God (Psa. 1:5). Therefore all our desire and prayer to God is that he would give us his grace that we may abide in Jesus Christ, his beloved Son, continue in his doctrine and follow in his steps. He is our Shepherd, and we are the sheep of his pasture (Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:23). He is our Lord and Master, and we are his servants and disciples (Matt. 10:12-14; John 10:26, 27; Matt. 23:8-10; John 13:13), to serve him in all obedience, and to keep his commandments.

Now, since we are all the sheep of Jesus Christ, the only Good Shepherd (John 10:11; Isa. 40:11; Ezek. 34:12, 23; Heb. 13:20, etc.), we must therefore all pass along the same way and follow one Shepherd. If we are all servants and disciples of the one Lord and Master, we must hear his doctrine alone, and keep his commandments only (John 14:21; 15:10; 1 John 2:5; 5:3); for both his word and his command are "Spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63), and "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), and lives according to it (1 Cor. 1:18).

Therefore we must wholly believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ; first of all keeping his commandments, and in the next place not introduce nor accept any strange doctrine, so that true peace may be and remain with us. For hereunto are we called; yea, for this reason Christ reconciled us to God by his precious blood that we might have peace with God and one another in truth and in righteousness (Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:13-16), and for this reason we are all baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). Yea, for this reason Christ is the head of us all (Eph. 4:15), and his Holy Ghost is the life of all, so that we should all alike hold fast to Christ, become conformed to him (Rom. 8:29), move forward in the same one Holy Spirit, speak through him alone, and by him be brought into all true peace and into the fullness of love and unity. But there are at this time many who with the heathen are seeking after wisdom and are not satisfied with the doctrine of the gospel, even though in Christ Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and the knowledge of God (Col. 2:2, 3), wherefore also Paul gloried in not knowing anything but Jesus Christ and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:2).

We also beseech and desire of everyone who professes faith in Christ, that with Paul and with all true Christians he would hold Christ and his doctrine in such regard that he would shun all strange doctrine that is contrary to the gospel, no matter how plausible it may appear to be, and follow after peace (Rom. 12:18; 14:19), not seeking his own honor, but that he might say with the prophet: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory" (Psa. 115:1).

We would also beseech and admonish all brethren by the mercy of God and the love of Jesus Christ (Rom. 12:1) to read our writings with single and sincere eyes and with unbiased heart, and measure them by the plummet of the divine word; for we desire nothing but that all honor be given to God, and that the truth may prevail, and that all eyes may behold the glory of God. May he, the eternal, almighty, merciful and alone wise God, grant us and all our brethren wisdom and understanding to distinguish righteousness from unrighteousness, light from darkness and truth from falsehood, that we may be preserved from all error and be kept in the saving doctrine of Christ.

How God Commanded Moses to Build a Tabernacle

The eternal, almighty and alone wise God (1 Tim. 1:17) commanded Moses, his servant, to build a sanctuary or tabernacle after the pattern that he had seen (Ex. 25:8). This tabernacle was divided into three parts: The court, the holy place, and the holy of holies. This was a figurative way in which God dealt with Israel, a shadow pointing to

things to come (Heb. 10:1); for the law was a shadow of good things to come, but was not the substance itself, as the apostle explains to the Hebrews, and likewise to the Corinthians, that many things happened to the Israelites as examples, but are written for our instruction (1 Cor. 10:11; Heb. 9:9). So also this tabernacle of Moses that was built according to God's command is no doubt a figure and image of the true thing that is typified thereby, for it was not built at God's command in vain or without purpose by Moses, but the Lord desired to make known therewith something special; yea, the truth of the new testament is established thereby, and it is then a firm and immovable foundation when the shadows and declarations of the law accord and agree with the truth of the gospel. Therefore Christ says in the gospel: "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52).

The Explanation of the Tabernacle

But now the figures of the old testament must be carefully examined and be understood, not according to human opinion, but just as they came from, were spoken and given by God through the Holy Spirit, so also must they, by the same Spirit, be revealed, taught and explained (2 Pet. 1:21). Therefore we have no thought of writing anything strange or new on the tabernacle of Moses, but the apostolic interpretation is the foundation upon which we build, and if we explain some things a little further than the apostles did, there is reason for doing so. But the present need, and the misconception in the minds of some brethren occasion us to explain the matter further, although the apostle is our teacher in the matter, and we will follow his explanation, for it came by the Holy Spirit, and by that we desire to abide.

In the first place we will quote the words of the apostle to the Hebrews, in which words he reveals the true conception of the tabernacle, for he says:

"Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:6-10).

Of the Utensils and Furniture in the Tabernacle and Their Signification

These words give us a clear conception of the tabernacle, therefore they must be carefully examined. In the first place, the apostle speaks of two tabernacles, that is, the holy place and the holiest of all. Of the court he makes no special mention, because that

was the entrance to the tabernacle. The first tabernacle, he says, was a figure for the time then present, thus pointing out to us that the two tabernacles signify two eras, viz, the era of the law and the era of the gospel; for, just as the tabernacle of Moses built according to God's command, was one tabernacle and one sanctuary divided into two parts, each having its own vessels, sacrifices or offerings and glory, so also the law and the gospel are one word and one truth of God, even though they also are divided, namely, the law contained the shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10:1), but in the gospel is contained the substance of the things themselves. The law had many figures and ceremonies, which were all fulfilled in Christ (Col. 2:17), but the gospel has the clear, steadfast truth, which shall endure forever. The law is the letter that killeth, but the gospel is the Spirit that giveth life (2 Cor. 3:6; John 6:63; Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 8:2, etc.).

So then the gospel and the law are divided, so far as the figures, shadows and the letter of the law are concerned, which are all done away by the gospel. But it is essential that we take heed to the spirit of the law (for the law is spiritual, as Paul says, Rom. 7:14). We will then find that the signification, purport and real meaning of the law accords and agrees in every way with the gospel, yea, that it is one and the same truth. For, as there is but one God, so there is but one truth, for God himself is the truth; but the letter (in which the truth is hidden) comes to an end. Thus the literal command of the Lord regarding circumcision of the flesh has come to an end, but the command regarding the spiritual circumcision of the heart remains (Rom. 2:25-29 Phil. 3:3 Col. 2:11). Thus all symbols of the law (which are too numerous to speak of here) have come to an end so far as the letter is concerned, nevertheless the true and essential signification of these same figures remains and accords with the gospel, so that the apostle very properly and with due discretion compares the tabernacle of the Lord (which was divided into two parts, and yet was one tabernacle) to the law and the gospel, the two testaments, which nevertheless in spirit are one truth and are connected. Therefore the apostle says that the believing Israelites and we have the same spirit of faith. Thus the apostles and even the Lord Jesus Christ himself many times proved and confirmed the truth of the gospel with sayings and testimonies of the law and the prophets, thereby showing us that the truth of the gospel is embodied in the law and the prophets.

In the second place the apostle says that the priests went always (or daily) into the first tabernacle, for they had to offer sacrifices every day, which signifies the incompleteness of the law, as the apostle says in the same epistle (Heb. 7:18) that the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. But into the holiest of all, says the apostle, the high priest went alone once every year, and there offered a sacrifice. This signifies to us that Jesus Christ made one offering (by which we are reconciled with God), and this offering shall not be made again, for its efficacy endures forever, and suffices for the sin of the whole world, and it is typified by the one offering which the high priest alone made every year in the holiest of all (Heb. 9:7), and in this that none of the priests, Levites and all the people of Israel might enter the holiest of all to make this one annual offering of atonement to God but the high priest alone, who was appointed thereto by God (Heb. 9:7; Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16:2, etc.). Hence no man could reconcile us to God but Jesus Christ alone, the true High

Priest, who was anointed by God his Father with the Holy Ghost, and ordained after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6; Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:17, 21).

In the third place the apostle says that the priests went at all times into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God, but that into the second went the high priest alone, once every year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the tabernacle was yet standing (Heb. 9:6-8). This has reference not only to the one offering of Christ, as already mentioned above, but also to the fact that so long as the law of Moses was in force and took its proper course true gospel grace, while promised through Jesus Christ, had not yet appeared or been revealed; but when it was made manifest the letter of the law of Moses had to make way for, and culminated in, Christ Jesus. For, when Jesus Christ, the true High Priest, came, he entered into the holiest of all and there offered his own flesh and blood unto God for a sweet smelling savor for the sin of the whole world (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 7:27; 9:14), by which offering he has opened to all them that believe in him a new and living way to the holiest of all (that is, into the mystery and fellowship of divine and heavenly riches, even to heaven itself). And while he, by his death, conquered death, and by sin (that is, by his offering for sin, 2 Cor. 5:21) condemned sin (Rom. 5:10; 8:3), he also by his flesh took away the veil from the holiest of all (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). It is to be clearly observed here, that with the death of Jesus the veil of the temple was rent, a sure sign that through Jesus Christ the veil that obscured the face of Moses (2 Cor. 3:7; Ex. 34: 29-35)—because the children of Israel could not endure the shining glory of his countenance—was taken away, and that his death became the portal and entrance to eternal life, to the kingdom of heaven, and that the most precious and glorious of all God's gifts was thereby given to us as a gift and revealed to us so that we now have free access to God, who speaks to us from the Mercyseat, that is, through Jesus Christ, who reconciled us unto God by his flesh and blood, which he offered up in the holiest of all as the true, only and holiest of all sacrifices (1 Pet. 1:18, 19), and all who believe in Christ are come thereunto by faith in his name in the Holy Spirit (Heb. 10:19; 20; 12:22).

Thus in the priests and Levites, and the sanctuary in which they served, we see typified Moses and his law and the era of the old testament; but in the high priest and the most holy place into which he entered once every year and made an offering for himself and for the sins of the people we see typified Jesus Christ, our High Priest, his death and offering and the era or dispensation of grace (Tit. 2:11; 3:4, 5), which has been ushered in by God through Jesus Christ for the everlasting comfort and salvation of all penitent or converted and believing souls.

There was also placed between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar a laver, and in it was put water for washing, for Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet therein (Ex. 30:18; 40:7, 30), for they had to wash themselves when they wished to enter the tent of the congregation or come to the altar, as the Lord had commanded them. This typifies to us that all who would go into the house of the Lord to serve God and make an offering unto the Lord, must purify themselves from all the filthiness of the spirit and the flesh, and must lift up holy hands unto God, and must wash

away all evil lusts and desires, which war against the soul, with the water of the Holy Ghost; for he who would serve God and make an offering to him must do so with a pure heart, and with a good conscience, and with unfeigned faith, yea, in Spirit and in truth, or it is an abomination and a sacrilege to God. Hence it is written: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil" (Prov. 5:1). And "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord" (Prov. 15:8; 21:27). Also "unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure" (Tit. 1:15), and an evil man cannot say or do that which is good (Matt. 7:18).

Furthermore it must be remembered that in the holy of holies was a golden candlestick with its seven branches and with its seven lights or candles, which were continually burning before the Lord and were never put out. This candlestick clearly prefigures Christ Jesus. The pure gold of the candlestick represents (according to our understanding) the Most Holy, both the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ. The seven branches of the candlestick represent the seven spirits resting upon Jesus, of which the prophet Isaiah says: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:1-3).

These seven spirits rest upon Jesus, and are represented by the seven branches of the candlestick. The seven burning lights of the candlestick represent the seven powers of the seven spirits of Christ, as well as the glory or brightness of his divine word, which is an everlasting and true light, as the prophet says (Psa. 19:7; 119:105; Isa. 60:19, 20, etc.). And the fact that this candlestick is an anti-type of Christ, although it stood in the first sanctuary or holy place, indicates to us that in the law there are embodied shadows, promises and prophecies of Christ.

In the first sanctuary was also the golden table, and on the table the shew-bread continually before the Lord, and no one was permitted to eat thereof but the priest alone and the sons of Aaron (Ex. 23:23-30; Matt. 12:4; Ex. 29:32, 33, etc.). This table with the shew-bread represents the holy scripture and God's word, which is the bread of life and food for the soul (Psa. 23:5; John 6:48-58). And that no one was permitted to eat of the shew-bread but the priests and the sons of Aaron alone shows us that God's word is for none but true Christians, all of whom have been made kings and priests unto Christ (Rev. 2:6; 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9, etc), and are given to him of God as children, as he himself says: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me" (Isa. 8:18; Heb. 2:13).

These children of the spiritual Aaron, Jesus Christ, have God's word for food and the holy scripture as a table prepared by the Lord, as the prophet says: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (Psa. 23:5). But those who are not of the generation and seed of Christ have no part at this table or in the shew-bread. Hence Jesus said to his disciples: "It is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:11).

In the first sanctuary there was also the golden altar upon which the high priest offered the costly incense unto the Lord as a sweet smelling savor. This points out to us that Jesus Christ, the true High Priest, offered his precious flesh and blood for us unto God as a sweet-smelling savor (Heb. 5:1; 6:20; 8:1; Eph. 5:2), by the fire of his love, and that by grace we have become a royal priesthood, and that according to the example of Christ we should therefore bring and offer unto God our heavenly Father spiritual and living sacrifices which through Jesus Christ are acceptable to him (Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5).

All these figures were in the first sanctuary, and this for the afore-mentioned reason that through them the law points to Christ, by means of patterns, promises and prophecies, and are the "bringing in of a better hope" (Heb. 7:19).

But in the holiest of all was the ark of shittim (accacia) wood, overlaid with pure gold, and is a figure of the Christian Church, as was also the ark of Noah (Ex. 25:10; Gen. 6:14-16; 1 Pet. 3: 20, 21). In this ark were the tables (tablets) upon which God had written the ten commandments with his finger, and this signifies to us that God has given his law into the hearts of Christians and has written his law therein by the Holy Spirit as upon tables of flesh (Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10). In the ark was also the pot of manna, a figure pointing to Christ Jesus, the true bread of heaven and the everlasting Word of the Father (John 1:1; 6:51; 1 John 1:1), by which the soul shall live (Matt. 4:4). The figurative bread of heaven was in a golden vessel, which signifies to us that the hearts of believers, wherein God's word shall abide, must be pure, clean and unalloyed.

In the ark was also the rod of Aaron, which, among all the twelve rods of the twelve tribes of Israel, was the only one that became green or budded (Num. 17:10; Heb. 9:4), although it had been dead, which signifies and reminds that Jesus Christ was chosen of God as a High Priest above all his brethren and fellows (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9), and that through him the curse of the law was removed (Gal. 3:13, 14) and has been changed into blessing, so that instead of the law, which struck terror and fear into mankind, we have received the comforting and saving gospel (Rom. 3:23).

Upon the ark also there stood the mercy-seat (Ex. 25:17), which was made of pure gold, and is a figure pointing to Christ Jesus, who is given us of God a Mercy-seat and exalted the Head of the Church (Rom. 3: 25; Heb. 5:3; Eph. 1:22; 4:15), the same as the mercy-seat was placed on top of the ark; and over the mercy-seat, between the two cherubims, was the place where God through Moses gave Israel his commandments, which signifies to us that God spoke through Jesus Christ and through him gave his commandments to all Christians and that the doctrine of the gospel originally came from the invisible God through Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1, 2; John 5:30, 37; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10).

The two cherubims, moreover, were made of pure gold and covered the mercy-seat with their wings, their faces looking one toward the other (Ex. 25:20), which signifies the two testaments, which agree one with the other and unitedly point us to Christ, who is embodied in both testaments—the end of the old and the beginning of the new (Rom. 10:4).

Now, whoever will examine into these figures and their signification will clearly understand and know that the two sanctuaries, that is, the holy place and the holiest of all, portray and represent the two dispensations, that is, the dispensation of the law and that of the gospel; yea, the apostle has (as above stated) distinctly represented the first sanctuary and the sacrifices which were offered therein, and yet were imperfect, and therefore could make no one just or perfect (Heb. 9:9), as pointing to the dispensation of the law (Heb. 9:1); but the high priest and the offering made by him once every year in the holiest of all, he represents as pointing to Jesus Christ and to his one offering, from which it follows incontrovertibly that Jesus Christ made his offering in the holiest of all, and that therefore also the holiest of all, without doubt, represents the dispensation of the new testament and of grace.

But there are some who have not examined these figures, and have, moreover, not been satisfied with the apostolic explanation of the tabernacle or tent, but have found and devised a strange explanation, namely, that by the tabernacle they make a distinction between Christians. Some they place into the court, some into the holy place, and some into the holiest of all. For these they have found two names, viz, those whom they place into the court and into the holy place they call the children of Esau, those whom they place into the holiest of all they call the children of Jacob. The children of Esau they call warriors, carnal and firstborn children of God; the Children of Jacob they call conquerors, spiritual and newborn children of God.

But this explanation of the tabernacle is in every way contrary to the sacred scripture and not in conformity with the gospel; for, in the first place, Esau is not figurative of the Christians, but of the Jews or Israelites; but Jacob is a type of Christianity, for when Rebecca had conceived by Isaac and the children struggled together within her womb, and she was troubled because of it, the Lord God said to her: "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 (overcome the other) people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (Gen. 25:23). These words must be carefully noted, namely, what God says of two nations, and that the two nations shall be divided, and that one people should be stronger than (or overcome) the other, and lastly says that the elder shall serve the younger.

In the first place God speaks of two nations, therefore these words are not spoken of Christians only, for the reason that Christians are one united, holy nation, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood (Gal. 3:28; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 4:4; Ex. 19:6), a church having one God, one Lord, one Holy Spirit, one Christian faith, one baptism, the same promise and the same hope of salvation.

Since then there is such unity among true Christians, yea, since they are one body in Christ Jesus (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 10:17; Eph. 1:23, etc.), therefore they cannot be divided among themselves or constitute two separate nations or peoples. But the two nations of whom the Lord spoke to Rebecca are the Edomites and the Israelites, who descend from Esau and Jacob or Israel, between whom there was great and strong enmity.

Hence it is not compatible with truth to call some Christians the children of Esau and some the children of Jacob.

In the second place God said to Rebecca that two manner of people should be separated from her bowels. This is said literally of Esau and Jacob; for the Edomites were the enemies and persecutors of the Israelites, as the prophet laments to the Lord over Edom, saying: "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Psa. 137:7). For this reason God threatens the Edomites through Obadiah, saying: "Thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter, for thy violence against thy brother Jacob" (Obad. 1:9, 10).

Since then matters stood thus between Israel and Edom, how can a Christian be compared to Esau? For Christians are never two separate peoples who hate and persecute one another as Esau hated and persecuted Jacob, but they are called of God to peace (1 Cor. 7:15), yea, they are baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12:13), and are thus knit together, and whoever is not of one heart, soul and spirit with the body of Christ is no Christian. Moreover, of two people, that is, of the Jews and Gentiles, Christ, by his death and precious blood, has made one (Eph. 2:14); he has gathered all his sheep into one fold (John 10:16), which is readily understood to mean the unity of Christians, and that therefore no Christian may be considered an Edomite or a son of Esau.

In the third place the Lord God said to Rebecca that one people should be stronger than (or overcome) the other people. This came to pass in a literal and in a spiritual sense; for, speaking literally, the children of Jacob overcame the children of Esau and ruled over them, as may be read in the Books of Kings and the Chronicles. And, in a spiritual sense, the children of Jacob, that is, the true Christians, have superseded the children of Esau, that is, the Jews; for the royal sceptre is taken from the Jews, their temple is destroyed, the priesthood together with the altar and the sacrifice is all lost (Hos. 3:4). Beside this, because of their unbelief and disobedience, the kingdom of God was taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles (Matt. 21:43; Acts 13:46), who by their faith in Jesus Christ have obtained all the righteousness of the Jews (which they sought to obtain by the works of the law); for the victory of Christians over all their enemies is their pure faith in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:4), and the righteousness that avails before God does not come by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:20-22), and those who have such faith are the true children of Abraham (Rom. 9:7-11; Gal. 3:16), and in the true Isaac, the promised Seed (Christ Jesus), shall they be called and blessed; they are the spiritual Israel, who have for their King Jesus Christ, whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David}, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever (Isa. 9: 6, 7), and the sceptre of his kingdom is an everlasting sceptre (Psa. 45: 6, 7; Heb. 1:8). Thus have the Christians overcome the Jews by their faith in Jesus Christ, who is a King forever, and the sceptre of his kingdom is an everlasting sceptre, that shall not be taken away, as was the sceptre of the Jews (Gen. 49:10).

In the fourth place, God said to Rebecca: "The elder (or greater) shall serve the younger" (lesser) (Rom. 9:12). In a literal sense this became true in the case of Jacob and Esau, but in a spiritual sense it is true of Jews and Christians. According to the letter, and the figure, Esau was the elder and greater, while Jacob was the younger and smaller, or less; nevertheless Esau was made the servant of his brother Jacob by their father Isaac (Gen. 27:37). In the case of the Jews and the Christians, God, the heavenly Father, originally chose the Jews or the children of Israel for his people above all nations of the earth and loved them as a firstborn son (Mai. 1: 2, 3; Deut. 21:15), even as Isaac loved Esau, and adorned them with glory, even as Esau had costly garments (Bar. 4), and confided and revealed his word to them.

But they looked only upon the outward works of the law and the letter of the prophecies, and imagined that they could obtain the promised blessing of God by their own righteousness, not knowing that Jesus Christ is the true promised Seed, of whom God said to the patriarch Abraham: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18). This seed is Christ, as Paul tells the Galatians (Gal. 3:16).

This Jesus the Jews in their materialistic conception of the scripture rejected, and sought to establish their own righteousness, thus not being obedient to the true, divine righteousness (Rom. 10: 3-10), for in their pursuit after the righteousness that is by the law they failed to obtain the real blessing, just as Esau with all his pursuit and catching of game was unable to obtain the chief blessing of his father; but Jacob obtained it and came into the estate of Esau, that is, the Gentiles by their faith in Christ Jesus are accepted and have become the true children and heirs of God. On this matter God says, through the prophet: "It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God" (Hos. 1:10)). And Paul says to the Romans: "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law" (Rom. 9:30-32).

These words clearly testify to the overthrow of the Jews because of their unbelief, and to the choosing of the Gentiles because of their faith in Jesus Christ, whereby they obtained the blessing of God, the heavenly Father; for as Isaac, when he smelled the savory and pleasant odor of the raiment in which Jacob was clothed, blessed him, so also God, the Lord and heavenly Father, however slight the savory odor of the offerings of Jesus Christ with whom the Gentiles, who by their faith and true baptism accepted him, have clothed themselves and have become reconciled, blessed them and made them children and heirs of his kingdom (Gen. 27:27).

From all these words it is evident that Esau was a figure of the Jews and Jacob a figure of the Christians. In order to show this still more clearly we will briefly present three other figures which have a bearing upon and point to the figures of Esau and Jacob.

The first is the figure of Hagar and Sarah, together with their two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Of these Ishmael was the firstborn son of Abraham, while Isaac was born after

him; but inasmuch as Ishmael was born of the bondmaid and Isaac of the freewoman (Gal. 4:22), the elder had to serve the younger; for Ishmael with his mother was cast forth out of the house of Abraham (Gen. 21:14), while Isaac with his mother remained and became the rightful heir.

This figure of the two wives of Abraham and their sons the apostle Paul explains as signifying the two covenants (Gal. 4:24-26), Hagar and her son Ishmael answering to the old testament and the Jews, but Sarah with her son Isaac answering to the new testament and the Christians. Now, just as Hagar was superseded by Sarah and on her account was sent out of Abraham's house, and just as Ishmael, although a son of Abraham, had to give way to Isaac, the true heir, so-also the Mosaic law of figures and shadows had its end in Christ Jesus, and at the advent of the Christian Church the Jewish synagogue had to become the smaller or lesser; just as is the case with maidservant and housewife, so the synagogue had to make way and be put away entirely.

The second figure is that of Pharez and Zarah, the twin sons of Judah. When these were about to be born, Zarah put forth his hand, and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, when he again withdrew his hand, after which Pharez came forth first; hence he was called Pharez, because he parted the middle wall between him and his brother. Afterwards Zarah was born who had the scarlet thread upon his hand which the midwife had tied there. Zarah, who at the time of birth showed himself first, but was born last, represents the Jews who, from being the first, became the last, as Jesus testifies in the gospel, saying: "The last shall be first, and the first last" (Matt. 20:16; 19:30; Luke 13:30). With these words Jesus really meant the Jews and Gentiles, for the Jews were the first, yea, they were the chosen people of God. Therefore also Jesus said to his disciples when he sent them forth the first time: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5, 6).

Thus the Jews were the first, and the grace of God was offered to them first; but they rejected Christ, therefore they became the last (Acts 13: 46). It must also be noted that Zarah, who in his birth had a scarlet thread bound to his hand, signifies to us that to the Jews was given a law that punishes and kills, for according to the law (by which many sins were punished with death, 2 Cor. 3: 6-9) much blood was shed, which shedding of blood and the sternness of the law are represented and prefigured by the scarlet thread which Zarah had upon his hand.

But Pharez represents the Christians, for because of him the middle wall of partition between him and his brother was parted, therefore his name was called Pharez. Thus also for the sake of the Christians the middle wall of partition which was between the Jews and the Gentiles was taken away by Jesus Christ, who of two people made one (Eph. 2:14-17), and as Pharez at the time of birth, from being the last, became the first by breaking the middle wall that was between the two (for so long as it was not broken he could not become the first), and in like manner as the Gentiles accepted Jesus and believed in him were born of God unto the Christian Church, which is the mother of all Christians (Gal. 4:26), and as Christ by his death took away all that separated them from

God, so they, by the death of Christ and by their faith in his name, have, from being the last, come to be first.

The third figure is that of Manasseh and Ephraim, the two sons of Joseph, who, when he brought them before his father that he might bless them, put Manasseh, who was the elder, at Jacob's right hand and Ephraim at the left. But Jacob crossed his hands, placing the right hand upon the head of the younger, and the left hand upon the head of the elder. When Joseph saw it he was displeased and tried to change his father's right hand from the head of Ephraim to the head of Manasseh (Gen. 48:17), and said to his father: "Not so, my father, for this (Manasseh) is the firstborn: put thy right hand upon his head. And his father refused and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he (Manasseh) shall also become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations" (Gen. 48:18, 19).

This came to pass literally and spiritually, for in a literal sense Ephraim surpassed and superseded Manasseh, for the ark of the covenant was at Shiloh, where therefore the worship of God was conducted, and according to the law Israel had to gather there, and the rulership of Israel in the time of the judges was mostly under Ephraim; but because of sin Shiloh was destroyed and Ephraim rejected, and the tribe of Judah was chosen by the Lord, and the temple built at Jerusalem. The same thing, in a spiritual sense, also came to pass with the Jews and the Gentiles, as has already been sufficiently explained above.

Thus these four figures, viz, of Ishmael and Isaac, of Esau and Jacob, of Pharez and Zarah, and of Manasseh and Ephraim, are in complete accord. If one is understood, all are understood, but we have presented them all that the figure of Esau and Jacob might be more easily understood.

**A False Explanation of the Court of the
Tabernacle, by Which it is Sought to Introduce and
Represent Two Kinds of Christians Through the
Figures of Esau and Jacob, Refuted With the Word
of God**

Since we have thus explained the figure of Esau and Jacob according to the humble gift given us of God, we will continue to write a little more on the same, inasmuch as some (we know not for what reason or by what scripture) have divided the Christians into warriors and conquerors, into the carnal and firstborn, and the spiritual and regenerated children of God.

They divide the Christians into warriors and conquerors, but we maintain that by the grace of God all pious Christians are both warriors and conquerors. The warfare of the Christians is of many kinds, for they have to war against their own flesh, against sin, and against Satan and his servants. Of the strife against the flesh Paul writes thus to the Galatians: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit: and the Spirit against the flesh: and these

are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17).

Christians have also to fight against besetting sins (Heb. 12:1), against the world, against Satan and his servants. Of this warfare Paul speaks to the Ephesians, as everyone may there read (Eph. 6:12). Such a strife Paul had when he said: "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (Eph. 6:7-9).

In these words of the apostle we note that God permits his saints to be tempted of Satan, to the end that they may learn to recognize their human weakness, and submit themselves under the mighty hand of God and trust in the grace of God, for then they will be strengthened by the grace of the Lord, and all Satan's temptations cannot harm them. Yea, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to whom be praise forever, himself strove with Satan and overcame him. For, when he had been baptized of John he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. There Satan came to him and assailed him with three kinds of temptation, but the Lord Jesus Christ successfully resisted all the attacks and sophistries of the devil with the sword of the Spirit (Matt. 4:1-11).

This came to pass for the instruction and admonition of all pious Christians, that they may know how they must be baptized with Christ, how they must be led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and how they must strive with Satan and overcome him. Of this victory John writes: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14). And again: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). And in Revelations it is written that the true Christians overcame the dragon and his angels by the blood of the Lamb, and the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 12:16, 17).

Therefore it is to be understood by every Christian that Christians may not be divided into warriors and conquerors, as though some Christians were continually fighting and never overcoming, while others had made a complete conquest and no longer needed to strive. This is not the case, for striving and overcoming rightly belong one to another, for that striving is in vain where there is no conquering, and no one may conquer unless he strive lawfully. In short, every Christian has his temptations (for the life of man on earth is a battle), from the temptations comes the strife, but he that strives manfully and lawfully overcomes, and he that overcomes receives the crown, and shall with Christ inherit and possess all things (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17; 3:21). Further, we have already said that some strangely divide Christians into spiritual and carnal children of God; the carnal they call the firstborn children of God and the spiritual they call the regenerated children of God. To this we say, in the first place, that we do not read or find anything in the scriptures about carnal children of God, for Christ himself says: "God is a Spirit"; "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 4:24; 3:6). Now it is clear and

evident that all Christians are born of God (who is a Spirit), therefore they also are spiritual, yea, partakers of the divine nature, as the apostle Peter says: "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be the partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:4).

Thus then Christians are one in Spirit with God, of whom they are born. But here some raise the objection that Paul writes to the Corinthians (who were also Christians): "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Cor. 3:1-3).

From these words of Paul some would prove that weak and young Christians are and should be called the carnal children of God. But we say that Paul's words are not to be thus understood. The reason why Paul called the Corinthians carnal was because they were in one sense carnally minded, as the apostle James says: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (Jas. 4:1).

Carnal desires and ignorance having been found to exist among the Corinthians and in one respect had prevailed over the Spirit, therefore Paul calls them carnal; nevertheless, so far as the new birth, faith, and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit were concerned, they were also spiritual, according to the words of the Lord: "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3: 6); for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17), and "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). From all this it is readily to be understood that all Christians are spiritual, although they are assailed by the flesh, yea, overrun and assailed with human weaknesses and mistakes.

Further, some (as above noted) make a division of firstborn and newborn children of God. They call those firstborn who are still weak and young in the faith; but those who are strong and manly in faith they call the regenerated children of God. But we contradict this and for this reason: The entire holy scripture speaks of one new birth of God which takes place through the incorruptible seed of God (1 Pet. 1:23), through the power of the Holy Spirit, by true faith in Jesus Christ; for he that believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, as John says (1 John 5:1). This new birth is also called regeneration in the scripture, for the reason that in the first place man is born of Adam in the flesh, and in the Spirit born again of God. Hence it is that the scripture also speaks of an outward and an inner man; the outward is called carnal, earthly, corruptible, being corrupt and sinful in kind and nature (Col. 3:5), but the inner the scripture calls the hidden man of the heart (1 Pet. 3:4), who after God is created in righteousness, holiness and truth, and therefore is spiritual, heavenly, incorruptible, yea, partaking of the divine in kind and nature (Eph. 4:24; 2 Pet. 1:4).

Thus Christians are born (or regenerated) once of God, after which they grow in righteousness until they become men in faith (Eph. 4:13) and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Just as the natural child after the natural birth, by God's blessing and in the course of nature, grows up and increases by means of food and drink, so also Christians are born once of God, after which they grow by partaking of the bread of life, and by the sincere (or unadulterated) milk, that is, the word of God, as Peter says: "Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:1, 2).

Thus the children of God grow, and become continually stronger and more manly in faith and more perfect in the knowledge of God and of his Son Jesus Christ. But they are not born of God more than once, and hence young and weak Christians cannot be called firstborn children of God; for, if we look at and note the letter of the law, we see that in the old testament the first child (in the family) was the greatest in importance, but if we observe the spirit of the new testament we see that the apostles were the firstborn children of God, partly because they were the first chosen by Christ to be called unto faith and the ministry and to come into the fellowship of the gospel, and partly also because they received the first, that is, the most glorious and greatest gifts of the Holy Spirit, as Paul says: "Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit" (Rom. 8:23). And James says: The Father of lights . . . begat us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1:17, 18). We read also in Revelations of one hundred and forty and four thousand who were redeemed from among men, as the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb, and these first-fruits are pure virgins or maidens, in whose mouth was found no guile, and who are without fault before the throne of God (Rev. 14:3-5). From all this it is evident that young and weak Christians are not to be called firstborn children of God, but that this name much more properly belongs to the strong and full-grown than to the weak and immature.

There are some, also, who maintain that after the day of Pentecost the apostles no longer sinned, yea, that they could not sin, and that all who with the apostles have received the Pentecostal Spirit (as they say) and have attained unto the victory and regeneration of God, can no longer sin. To this we answer that the scripture has included all mankind under sin and considers not one (except Jesus Christ alone) as being free from sin, for thus says Ecclesiastes: "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccl. 7: 20). That is, Solomon says: There is not a man that does not sin (1 Kings 8:46). And David says: "Lord . . . enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Psa. 143:2).

But now some think that these scriptures refer only to young and weak Christians who are still new in the faith, and have not yet received a strong spirit of faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ. But against all such opinions, David, the great prophet of God, testifies and declares: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found" (Psa. 32:5, 6). David was a man of God, and was gifted of God

with great wisdom, yea, with a spirit of prophecy; nevertheless even he sinned, confessed his sin before God, and prayed for forgiveness of his sin, and also testified that every one that is godly should do likewise. Jesus himself confirmed this in the gospel, for he taught his apostles a prayer in which they continually, as often as they offered it, had to confess their debt before God the Father and ask him for forgiveness (Matt. 6:12), and this Jesus did to teach all his disciples humility, and to take away all false righteousness out of their hearts; for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5), yea, a broken heart and a contrite spirit that is humbled and grieved because of its sin, seeks grace and mercy of God, doubts self and trusts wholly in God's infinite goodness, is a pleasing and acceptable sacrifice and a sweet savor unto God (Psa. 34:19; 51:17; Isa. 57:15).

Therefore all godly people have thus humbled themselves before God and acknowledged themselves sinners; for the Spirit of God, which is a spirit of wisdom and of humility, put it into them and taught them to do so. By this Spirit the prophet called unto the Lord, saying: "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Psa. 130:3). By the same Spirit the apostles testified (also after the day of Pentecost), as James says: "In many things we offend (or stumble) all" (Jas. 3:2). Moreover, Paul in clear language testifies to Peter's error (also after the day of Pentecost) and says that he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, "inasmuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation" (Gal. 3:11-14), and for this reason he openly rebuked Peter. And John says: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1:8-10).

From these words of the apostle it may be readily understood what evil comes from false and self-righteousness, viz, a man, if he will not confess himself a sinner, deceives, firstly, himself (according to the apostle's word), for he considers himself more pious than he is and does not heed the grace of God; secondly, the truth is not in him, for he lies before God when he says that he has no sin; thirdly, he makes God a liar; for the eternal and true God has testified by the mouth of his saints that all men are sinners, as the above quoted words clearly show.

The scripture then includes all men (except Jesus Christ alone) under sin (Rom. 3:10; Gal. 3:22). Again the scripture says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). Hence it must be remembered that a Christian has two beings in him: a carnal and sinful, which he inherits from Adam, and a spiritual and divine, which is infused and imparted by God through Jesus Christ; for the Lord Jesus Christ himself says: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh: that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit" (John 3:6). Now, since both births take place in all Christians, that is, since they, on the one hand, are born of the flesh, and on the other hand, of the Spirit, therefore they must have both a carnal and a spiritual nature; according to the outward man they are carnally minded, but according to the inner man they are spiritually minded; through their carnal nature they fall and sin; but after the spiritual nature they have a desire for righteousness and to do

God's will. The carnal nature must be overcome by the Spirit of God; yet flesh and blood retains its nature as long as life lasts; therefore, although a man has partaken of the spiritual and divine nature, he still remains weak and sinful, for he remains human, he is flesh and blood, and therein no good thing dwells, as Paul says (Rom. 7:18); for through the disobedience of the first man it is corrupt, sinful and desirous of evil, so that no living man can be entirely innocent before God, and this because of his wicked nature and his carnal lusts which assail him and adhere to him. For this reason even the righteous are reproved by the scripture.

Again, after the justified person is born of God and thus has become a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4), after he is a member of Jesus Christ and is of one Spirit with the Lord, and by faith Christ dwells in the heart (Rom. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:27) and the Holy Spirit has been given him of God as an assurance or seal of salvation (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 6:17), he may no longer be charged thus; for "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33), who is united with God, who has God for a merciful Father, Jesus Christ as an Advocate, Mediator, Intercessor and High Priest, and who is sealed and assured unto God unto the day of redemption? Therefore Paul says: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). Hence, "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:33, 34).

It must therefore be recognized that every Christian has sin, and must confess himself a sinner, that he may humble himself under the mighty hand of God and pray the Lord for his mercy. Thus the scripture remains true and unbroken which puts all men under condemnation and reproves them as sinners; but sin is not imputed to Christians, but has been forgiven them through the innocent death of Jesus Christ and is covered with his everlasting love, by which he offered himself up for us for an everlasting atonement for our sins, taking upon himself our burden, and paying our debt with his bitter suffering, and making us a free gift of all that he has, so that he is one with us and we with him, whereby we are made acceptable unto God, yea, accounted as saints of God. Therefore David says: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Psa. 32:1, 2).

On this subject enough has now been said for those who are kindly disposed, sympathetic and reasonable. We will further explain several passages of scripture (which according to the letter seem to contradict one another), and by the grace of God show Christians for their instruction how scripture must be treated, and not handle it with unclean hands, as some do.

Christ says in the gospel: "He that cometh unto me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall nevermore thirst" (John 6:35). In Eclesiasticus or Jesus Sirach the wisdom of God says: "They that eat me shall yet be hungry, and they that drink me shall yet be thirsty" (Sir. 24: 21).

In order to understand these scripture passages properly, it must be observed that Christ in reality speaks of that satisfying and quenching which all Christians at all times enjoy through God's word and by the Holy Spirit and which they shall hereafter enjoy forever in all fullness; for since Christ is in them, and the Holy Spirit abides in them, they have at all times the bread of life for their soul-hunger, and for their thirst the water of the Holy Spirit; for Christ is the true bread of heaven, and he that eats of this bread, that is, he that believes the words of Christ and keeps them, his soul shall nevermore suffer hunger nor have lack of the bread of life. Christ also gives the water of life as an everlasting refreshing and quickening of souls, as he declared to the woman of Samaria: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13, 14). And again Jesus says: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). But this he spake of the Spirit, as John says, "which they that believe on him should receive" (John 7:39).

Now all true Christians, after having received the words of Christ, which is the bread of life; and the Spirit, which is the water of life, cannot suffer hunger or thirst so long as the word and Spirit of Christ abide in them. But the real, perfect, true satisfying and quenching they will not obtain until they will have been delivered from all tribulation and have entered into the fullness of the heavenly life and God is all in all, as Paul says, and as it is written of them in the book of Revelations (1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 7:14-17): "These (which are clothed with white robes, v. 9) are they which have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. And they shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

From these words it is clear and plain that the true satisfying and quenching shall come to the Christian after his tribulations have ended, when he has entered the everlasting habitation. This is the satisfying of hunger of which Jesus spoke; but Ecclesiasticus speaks of a hunger and thirst which ever remains in the Christian (Sir. 24:21), even though he has taken of the bread and water of life. This is the reason: A Christian who is of the right sort has at all times a desire to hear the word of God, that the gifts of the Holy Spirit may be increased in him, that he may grow in the knowledge of the Lord, and that he may become more righteous, purer and holier. Of such hunger and thirst Christ also speaks (Matt. 5: 6): "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." In line with this thought Jesus says: "He that is of God, heareth the word of God." And in Revelations the Spirit says: "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11). (German rendering: "Let him become more righteous . . . let him become more holy"). So then a Christian always hungers for God's word and thirsts after righteousness, for he finds therein great sweetness and good fruit, as David says: "The judgments of the Lord are

true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Psa. 19:9, 10). Again the same prophet David says: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psa. 119:103).

So then the words of Jesus Christ and the words of Jesus Sirach or Ecclesiasticus agree in this way that Christ speaks of the eternal appeasing of hunger which shall come alone in the hereafter, while Ecclesiasticus speaks of the hunger and thirst which Christians have in this world for righteousness

We will now, by God's help, explain some other passages of scripture, which by some are wonderfully and strangely interpreted and explained.

The patriarch Jacob says: "I have seen God face to face" (Gen. 32:30). The evangelist and apostle says: "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18). It must be here taken into consideration, in the first place, that God did not himself appear personally to the patriarch Jacob, but it was the angel of the Lord whom he saw and with whom he wrestled, and of whom he said: "I have seen God face to face." And it is commonly known in the scripture that the angels, being messengers and ministers of God, stand in the place of God, and speak as in his person, and this because of their office and work which they perform. Thus the angel of the Lord spoke to Moses by the burning bush: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:6). These words were not spoken by the Lord himself in person, but by the angel, who spoke in the person of the Lord, for thus says Stephen: "There appeared to him (Moses) in the wilderness of Mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush" (Acts 7:30), and spoke to him, and also that the law was given by the disposition of angels (Acts 7:53). Paul confirms this (Gal. 3:19), and yet the scripture says that the Lord descended from heaven upon Mount Sinai with fire (Ex. 19: 18) and gave the law, and said: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Ex. 20:1). The Lord then did not personally come down from heaven, but an angel came in the Lord's stead, and delivered the law to Moses. It was also an angel whom the patriarch Jacob saw, for Moses also saw the Lord face to face and spoke with him (Ex. 33:11), and yet he said to the Lord: "Shew me thy glory." But the Lord said: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." And the Lord said further: "Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock. and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen" (Ex. 33:18-23). For this reason John says that "no man hath seen God at any time." Paul says that God is the "King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in a light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:15, 16).

So now the words of the patriarch Jacob and of the evangelist and apostle agree beautifully; for the one says that he saw the Lord, that is, the angel of the Lord, face to face, while the other speaks of the eternal and invisible God, whose brightness and glory cannot be beheld by the eye of flesh. And what is true of the letter of the afore-mentioned

passages of scripture is likewise true according to the Spirit, namely, as God in times past permitted the shadow of his ineffable glory to be seen by men through his angels, so also in these last times he has revealed his invisible Person and his divine nature through Jesus Christ, for Jesus is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his Person (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). Therefore also he said to Philip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Thus the invisible God is seen and known through Jesus Christ, his image; nevertheless Christians, because of the weakness of the flesh, are hindered and prevented so that they cannot attain to the perfect knowledge of the invisible God and his glory; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (Isa. 64:5; 1 Cor. 2:9). And in the Book of Wisdom it is written: "What man is he that can know the counsel of God? or who can think what the will of the Lord is? For the thoughts of mortal men are miserable, and our devices are but uncertain. For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things. And hardly do we guess aright at the things that are upon earth, and with labor do we find the things that are before us: but the things in heaven, who hath searched them out?" (Wis. of Sol. 9:13-16). Therefore the apostle says: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33) And therefore the same apostle says: "We know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face" (1 Cor. 13:9, 10, 12).

From these words it is easy enough to understand that we shall see and know God more clearly, for it is now coming to pass what John says: "We know that, when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Therefore those err entirely who would try to prove or make it appear from the aforementioned words of the patriarch Jacob that a man may attain to a perfect knowledge of God in this life. They try to verify this by several passages, viz, the words of the prophet Isaiah: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord" (Isa. 54:13; Jer. 31:34, etc.). Also: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: I will put my law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them" (Jer. 31:33, 34; Heb. 10:16). They also say that in Revelations it is written that the city, that is, the heavenly Jerusalem, "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21:23).

This scripture they explain as pointing to the fact that a Christian could arrive at that stage in this world where he would need no more instruction or admonition, but that God's word was written in his heart, and that he is taught inwardly through the Spirit without any outward words. But we say that Christians must hear the word of God continually as long as they live; for God's word forever remains to all believers the power of God unto everlasting salvation (Isa. 40:5; 1 Pet. 1:25; 1 Cor. 1:24; Rom. 1:16); but to

all unbelievers unto condemnation and testimony against them; for "heaven and earth," says Christ, "shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 5:18; 24:15). And David says: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psa. 119:89).

We declare further, that a Christian has always plenty to learn in God's word, for the apostle says we must grow in the knowledge of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:18); for, "if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2), but deceives himself.

Therefore we must not so understand the foregoing scripture, or pervert and distort it as some do; for Christ himself makes the first passage ("they shall all be taught of God," Isa. 54:13, etc.) apply to all believers in Christ; for they must all be taught of God if they would come to Christ, as Christ said to the Jews: "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:45). Following this, Christ explained the passage from the prophets, that they all should be taught of God, for no one may by his own reason or by his natural comprehension believe in Jesus Christ, but he must be taught of God.

The other passage referred to, viz, "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel" (Jer. 31: 34; Heb. 10:16, etc.), some explain in a most remarkable way, as follows: That the teaching of the gospel should already cease in this time or world. But we understand this prophetic declaration to mean that God has written his law with his finger, that is, by his Spirit, into the heart of all pious Christians, just as God, when he gave his law unto Moses, wrote the law with his finger on tables of stone (Ex. 20: 3-17; 31:18). Thus he wrote the gospel, which he gave us through Jesus Christ, by his Spirit in the hearts of all Christians, pouring it therein. Of this Paul says to the Corinthians: "Ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart" (2 Cor. 5:3).

Thus God will not now first write his law in the hearts of Christians, for he has already inscribed it by his Spirit when teaching them to know Jesus Christ. So also God, for the sake of Christ Jesus, who suffered the bitter death for sin and shed his precious blood because of it, will no more remember the past sins and ignorance of Christians. Also, there is among Christians (to whom this passage really refers) no one who does not confess God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost to be the eternal, true and living God, so that no one in this matter may teach his neighbor to know the Lord. Nevertheless Christians, having learned to know the Lord, teach and admonish one another to a good life that conforms to the gospel of Christ, even as the apostle through the power of the Holy Spirit taught men from the word of God to know God and Jesus Christ, but he also admonished and incited them to love and good works, and to steadfastness in the faith. Therefore the words of the prophet, as noted above, are not to be understood as meaning that teaching the gospel among the Christians should already cease in this world, but that God's word shall remain and be taught among Christians until the time of the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:25), as the entire scripture sufficiently testifies.

The third passage, taken from Revelations, as noted above, concerning the glorious city of Jerusalem (Rev. 21:23), speaks, in its proper interpretation, of the glory and splendor of the new heavenly Jerusalem and of the glory which shall yet be revealed; for the sun, the moon and the stars shall not pass away so long as this world stands, but at the second coming of Christ they shall pass away and melt with fervent heat (2 Pet. 3:10), for all things shall be made new; for we look for new heavens and a new earth, says Peter, in which God himself shall be the light, and with his ineffable glory shall cause everything to be glorious, and all the godly and righteous shall shine forth as the sun (Matt. 13: 43), and shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever (Dan. 12:3).

Hence due heed must be taken to the scripture, where it speaks of things to come, that such passages be not explained as referring to this present time, since many are deceived thereby; for, after they had thus misinterpreted several passages in Isaiah and Revelations as referring to this present time and the church on earth, when they really speak of the glory and splendor of the heavenly Jerusalem that shall be (although in the Spirit this condition begins here), they have in their misconception of things to come gone so far as to presume to far surpass the apostles in wisdom. The Lord preserve us from such misconception of the scripture and endue us with true spiritual wisdom and an humble heart to his glory and our salvation. Amen.

Conclusion

We have now declared our conception regarding the tabernacle of Moses, as well as reconciled and explained in part several figures and passages of scripture which according to the letter seem contradictory, so far as it has been given us of God so to do and as was necessary to write on the subject; and we hope we have arrived at the simple truth, and that we have not written more than can, by the grace of God, be proved by the evangelical and apostolic scripture, and we would be glad to see that everyone who professes the gospel would stand immovably by the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles; for God's word is sure and true, but human reason is deceptive, therefore also many have greatly erred, because they have not continued in the apostolic doctrine and explanation of the tabernacle of Moses.

We also beseech all brethren, by the mercies of God, that they would receive these our writings kindly, as written for our common instruction and admonition; for we seek not our own glory, but we look upon ourselves as poor and unprofitable servants of Jesus Christ, and as brethren of all Christian believers, with whom we desire to be in fellowship and unity forever. And that we have written against the strange doctrine and explanation regarding the tabernacle of Moses, was done solely to remove all misconception or want of understanding on the subject and to seek and establish peace among the brethren so far as it lies in our power. But may God, who alone is wise, and who reveals his wisdom to the simple and humble (1 Tim. 1:17; Matt. 11:25), teach, strengthen and comfort us with his Holy Spirit that we may remain steadfast in the truth of the gospel unto the end. Amen.

D. P.

Book Nine

A Brief Admonition and Instruction From the Holy Scripture on Regeneration and the New Creature.

BY D. P.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the
kingdom of God.

John 3:3.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old
things are passed away; behold, all things
are become new.

2 Cor. 5: 3.

Of Regeneration, or the New Creature, in Which the True Power, Manner and Nature of the New Birth are Very Thoroughly Explained, Together With Many Beautiful Lessons and Admonitions

Greeting

The eternal, almighty and merciful God grant you his grace, through Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son (1 Pet. 5:10; Eph. 3:14; Tit. 3:4), our Lord and Savior, and strengthen, endue and renew you after the inner man, by his Holy Spirit, to the glory of his name, and to your salvation. Amen.

Causes Which Impelled the Author to Write This Book

Beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord:— There are many people at the present time who profess regeneration, they babble much about the new creature, and always come forward with the statement of Paul that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:17). But in only a few is found the true regeneration and the nature of the new creature; but the cunning and deceptive Satan, who is able to transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14), manifests himself in great power in his ministers, who make a fine show of themselves, and speak in lofty and arrogant language of divine and spiritual things (though it is all hypocrisy), and glory much about regeneration and of the new creature, and of the true inner life, whereby they present a dazzling appearance to some, for they charm them and blind their eyes with their flowery and embellished rhetoric and with the beautiful appearance of their false piety.

Therefore Christian love constrains me to warn against such false Christians and messengers of Satan, and by God's grace to write you and give you a little admonition concerning regeneration and the new creature, showing that not everyone who professes regeneration and babbles much of the new creature is therefore a newborn creature born of God, but only he that has partaken of the divine nature (1 Pet. 1:3; Heb. 3:14), and of the attributes of Jesus Christ and the power and character of the Holy Spirit and has become conformed to the image of Christ, and serves God in all submissiveness, obedience and righteousness (1 John 4:13; Rom. 9:30). In short, an orthodox Christian is a new man and a new creature in Christ Jesus; hence it is necessary to observe how regeneration takes place, whence it comes, by what means it occurs, how effective it is, and what fruits it will bear.

How Man Was Created in the Image of God, How He Fell, and How He Was Again Raised up by Jesus Christ

In the first place it must be noted that God created the first man in his own image and likeness unto eternal life, as the holy scripture testifies in many places (Gen. 1:26; 5:9;6; Psa. 100: 3; Eccl. 7:29 Acts 17:26, 28,29; 1 Cor. 11:7; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Jas. 3:9, etc.), an upright, immortal and divine being, yea, in the image and likeness of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, for he is the brightness of the eternal light, the brightness of the glory of God, an image of his Person, a reflection of the divine glory, and an image of the invisible God (Wis. of Sol. 7:26; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1: 3, etc.) Therefore when Philip requested of Christ to see the Father, Christ answered him and said: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Hence Christ Jesus is the image of God, after whom Adam was created by God. But man did not remain in his first estate in which he was created (Gen. 3:6), but transgressed the command of God, and there became subject to death and corruption; but God who is rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4), according to his great mercy took pity on fallen and

corrupt man and gave him a comforting promise regarding the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) concerning his only begotten Son Christ Jesus as the coming Redeemer and Savior of the human race, who should deliver from Satan and all his tyrannical power all who believe in him (John 3:16; Col. 1:13; John 11:25).

Through this promise, yea, through this gracious gospel of Jesus Christ, man is again comforted, yea, renewed in the image of God, and is begotten again unto eternal life; for God desired in the beginning, and still desires, to have men who are made in his image, therefore he created man in his image in the beginning, as it is written: "God created man immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity" (that is, of God) (Wis. of Sol. 2:23).

After man was created by God the Father after his own image and likeness, that is, in the image of Christ, and, after the fall in mercy by the obedience and righteousness of the Son of God has been restored and lifted up (Rom. 5:18), therefore every individual (after having come to the age of discretion, and is enabled to distinguish good from evil) must by the enlightenment, operation and manifestation of the Holy Spirit be transformed into a new divine being, yea, into the fellowship and likeness of Jesus Christ, born again and transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, yet all by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18), and thus by the Holy Spirit created anew in the image and likeness of God through Jesus Christ.

Therefore Christ said to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). And again: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Let everyone take these words of Christ well to heart, because he openly and utterly refuses the kingdom of heaven to all who are not born again, that is, who have not put off the old man with his works, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10), and is likewise renewed unto the knowledge and likeness of him who has created him.

But how this regeneration and renewing takes place the testimony of the apostle Peter shows in these words: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Peter 1:23). James accords with this and says: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures" (James 1:17, 18). And Paul says to Titus that God has saved us, "by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost: which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. 3:5-7).

In the words just quoted we learn that regeneration of man takes place by the word of truth, and his renewing by the Holy Spirit in such a way that all who through hearing of the gospel through the cooperation of the Holy Spirit believe in Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of the living God, our Lord and Savior, are born of God, enlightened and taught by the Holy Spirit, and are children of God, as Paul confesses in

these words: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). And John says: "As many as received him (Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1: 12, 13). And again John says: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5:1). And yet again: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4, 5)

From all this it is evident that regeneration is really the work of God in man, by which he is born again of God in the Holy Spirit, by faith in Jesus Christ; for the heavenly Father begets or brings forth the new creature, but the Word of the heavenly Father is the seed from which the new creature is born (James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23), and the Holy Spirit renews, sanctifies and keeps the new creature in the divine life (1 John 3:9; Tit. 3:5); therefore such a regeneration is a mighty and fruitful work of God that emanates from the almighty and most high God through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

Of this power and fruit of regeneration the apostle James says, that the believers in Christ are begotten of God, the Father of lights, with his word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures (James 1:17, 18). But what the word first-fruits signifies is plainly typified or portrayed to us by the figures, in the old testament, of the first-fruits, which were holy unto the Lord; for as in Israel the first-fruits were holy unto the Lord, and were offered up to him, so also, the apostles were the first to be called by Christ Jesus unto the faith and the apostolic office; therefore they also beyond all doubt possessed the most glorious gifts of the Holy Ghost, even as Paul writes to the Romans: "Ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23).

Consequently all Christians are a peculiar people of God (Eph. 1:4), chosen from among mankind, and bought with the precious blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ, sanctified or set apart by the Holy Spirit unto God as a sweet savor and an acceptable sacrifice (Tit. 2:14; 1 Peter 1:19; 1 Cor. 6:12), and therefore they also are called the first-fruits of the creatures of God, as John testifies in Revelations with these words: "I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Rev. 14:1-5).

From all these words it is clear who are the first-fruits of God's creatures, namely those who with Christ Jesus the Lamb of God stand upon Mount Sion, that is, in his

church, marked in their foreheads with the name of the heavenly Father, whom they confess in true faith, whose name they bear (2 Esdras 2:42; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 7:9), whom they praise without ceasing, singing a new song; for they speak with new tongues, and have a new Spirit, they are also virgins or maidens, a pure, virgin bride of the Lamb come down from heaven, radiant with the glory of God; they are also chosen from among all mankind to be a peculiar and holy people of God in Christ Jesus. In short, they are without fault before the throne of God, and this by grace alone, through the atoning merits of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:1; 2:9; Rev. 5:9).

**That all Such Power of Regeneration Cannot
be Attributed to Little Children Without Speech or
Reason, But Only to Adults With Understanding,
and They Must First Hear, Accept and Believe
God's Word, and, on Confession of Their Faith, be
Baptized in the Name of the Lord, Even as
Exemplified by Christ Himself**

Hence regeneration, by which such firstlings are born of God, is a mighty and effectual work of God, and makes man a new creature in Christ Jesus. For this reason such regeneration may not be attributed to innocent and ignorant children (Deut. 1:39; John 4:11), although some do, to whom one may speak in the same definite terms in which the Lord addressed the Sadducees: "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22: 29), for those who ascribe regeneration, faith and baptism to simple, ignorant infant children, that are without speech, cannot know what regeneration is, what constitutes faith, and what baptism is and signifies. Yea, what is written in Wisdom of Solomon may well be applied to them, namely, that they are "most foolish, and are more miserable than very babes" (Wis. of Sol. 15:14), for they must be wholly ignorant who insist that children, who know neither good nor evil, can have faith (Deut. 1:39; John 4:11), seeing that faith and the true knowledge of God the Father, and of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ (John 17:3) is taught and impressed upon men by the Holy Spirit, and this by hearing of the word of God, as the apostle says: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Yea, the apostle says that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). That is, faith is a living hope, a sure confidence in God's grace, and presses forward toward the things that are not seen, that are eternal and heavenly.

Since infants lack understanding and cannot be taught the word of God (for the scripture speaks to those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand),

I therefore ask with the apostle: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14). But if they do not believe, how then are they born of God without faith, in view of the fact that true faith in Christ Jesus is really the work of God in

man? (Eph. 1:19; 2:4; 3:7; Col. 2:12; Phil. 1:6; 2:13; John 1:12) whereby he becomes changed and a new-born child of God (1 John 5:1), so that he is brought to a knowledge of self and learns to realize his sinfulness and unrighteousness, repent of the same and pray for mercy (Psa. 32:5; Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:5; Acts 2:37; 10:30; 16:30; 20:21), and moreover love God as the supreme and greatest treasure, put all confidence in him, and thenceforth by the grace of God shun evil and learn to do good, by which he shows his gratitude to God, and brings forth the sincere fruits of repentance, and shows love toward God and his fellowman, and bears the fruits of the Spirit.

Children without understanding have not this faith, as every one that has been taught of God well knows, seeing that the scripture gives such clear testimony and daily experience gives such clear evidence, that infants have no faith (Deut. 1:39; John 4:11); nevertheless they are saved by grace through Jesus Christ and are acceptable to God in their childishness and simple, innocent state (Matt. 18:1; 1 Cor. 14:20), just the same as adults are by their faith pleasing to God; therefore both Christ and Paul set forth the children as an example and prototype, not that we shall be children in understanding, but in malice, and men in understanding, ever remembering the simplicity and humility of children, that we may conduct ourselves accordingly (Rom. 5:2; Matt. 18:1; 1 Cor. 14:20).

But regeneration, which is of God the heavenly Father and is wrought through Jesus Christ to the transformation and renewing of man by the Holy Spirit, is essentially proper for intelligent beings. They must be born from above, of water and of the Spirit, of the incorruptible seed, that is, of the word of the living God (John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18), they must be cleansed by the washing of regeneration by the word, and transformed by the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5); they must put off the old Adam and be renewed in the spirit of their minds (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:10), and put on the new man, yea, the Lord Jesus Christ; all of which together tells us that when a man has attained to the years of accountability, and to the knowledge of good and evil, he must hear the word of God, amend his life, believe the gospel, and, upon confession of his faith, be baptized in the name of the Lord, receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and be renewed in his mind after the image of him that created him (Col. 3:10; Matt. 3:2; 28:19; 16:25; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 2:38), that is, in Jesus Christ, who is the express image of the invisible God, an example to all Christians, the Beginning of the creation of God (Col. 1:15; Rom. 8:29; Rev. 3:15), through whom also all new creatures, that is, all orthodox Christians, are born of God in the Holy Ghost, that they might be conformed to the image of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Therefore we must take note of and keep in mind how obedient Jesus was to his Father in all his life and labor, how faithfully he did his Father's will (Phil. 2:5; Heb. 5:2) and spake his words, yea, how he fulfilled all righteousness both of the old and the new testament perfectly. He was circumcised according to the law, and for him an offering was made in the temple (Luke 2:21), yea there is not one letter of the law that he did not fulfill according to the intent and will of his Father, as he himself says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For

verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17, 18).

In this respect also Jesus as the true Mediator of the new testament has opened the way for us in which we should walk, namely, he came to John the Baptist, and was baptized of him, and said: "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15).

But if it became Christ to be baptized of John, how much more it behooves or becomes us to be baptized with the baptism of Christ; the baptism of Christ however is this that we are baptized by Christ within with the Holy Ghost and with fire (Matt. 3:11; John 3:33; Matt. 28:19; Mar. 16:15), and outwardly baptized, on confession of our own faith, by a true messenger of Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Therefore they err and miss the true way, both they who believe in the inward baptism alone and reject the outward, and they who look upon the outward sign alone and forget the true figure and inner life; for, as nothing avails before God without faith, without regeneration, without the Holy Spirit, without the true Christian life (Heb. 11:6), so also the outward signs (called sacraments) such as baptism and the Lord's Supper and such other ordinances of the Lord must be practiced in their completeness, and must not be neglected nor belittled, for the eternal wisdom of Christ Jesus has not spoken one word in vain, and man liveth by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). The only begotten Son of the Most High did nothing but what his Father commanded him; yea, all that Christ Jesus taught and commanded is without any doubt the perfect will and counsel of God, which the eternal and alone wise God through Jesus Christ (who is the wonderful counselor) determined, and revealed to us by his Holy Spirit (Isa. 9:5; Deut. 8:3; John 3:11; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10).

Therefore we may neither begin nor finish anything but what Jesus Christ has taught us by word and example for he is the Beginning and End of all things, he is the Captain of our faith unto whom we must look, he is the true light come into the world that we should follow him (Rev. 1:8; 22:3; Heb. 12:1, 2; John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5; 12:48). He is the only way to the Father, he is the true Door to the sheep; whosoever enters by him is brought into the true fold and finds the pasture of eternal life; but whosoever does not enter by him, but climbs up by some other way, the same is a thief and a robber (John 10:1; 14: 6), as Christ himself says. But those who do not enter by Christ, but as thieves and robbers climb in through some opening, try to be saved by some other way and means than by Christ Jesus alone, or who desire to serve God in some other manner than that which they have received from the commands, doctrine and example of Christ Jesus and his apostles, for without Christ Jesus there is neither wisdom nor righteousness, nor holiness, nor salvation, nor truth, nor life. Therefore John says: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). That is: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

**Errors and Mistakes of Both Those Who
Believe in Inward Baptism Alone and Despise
Outward Baptism, and Those Also Who Look Upon
the Outward Sign Alone and Forget the True Inner
Life Indicated Thereby**

I have now briefly said these things concerning Christ Jesus, partly for the comfort and assurance of my brethren and sisters that it is the true grace of God wherein you stand, and the right way, in which you walk so long as you follow Christ; partly also that I may warn my brethren and sisters against the wanton spirits that rise up in these days, making great professions regarding the new creature and yet at heart are thorough hypocrites, puffed up individuals, haughty despisers of the words and commands of Christ, who have forsaken the way of truth and are going in the way of apostate Israel; they serve Baal to please the infamous Jezebel, and they play the hypocrite or run with the world for the belly's sake; for they have no regard for the baptism which Christ himself instituted, and which the apostles so earnestly practiced, and to which the scripture gives such a prominent place (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15). The Lord's Supper, which is a memorial sign of his suffering and death, yea, a spiritual communion of his body and his blood, is of no significance to them (Matt. 26:25; 1 Cor. 10:16). To wash feet, as the Lord Jesus Christ himself did, and which example he so earnestly enjoined and commanded his disciples to follow (John 13:14-17), is by them looked upon almost or altogether as folly. The evangelical ban, without which the church of God cannot continue, is to them disgrace and a mockery (Matt. 18:8, 9, 15-18; 1 Cor. 5:9; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14). And what more shall I say? They despise every saving doctrine and ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are so wise, so intelligent and so smart in their own eyes and consider themselves so full of the true inner life that they think and unblushingly declare that they have no need of observing the outward ceremonies, as they call the institutions and ordinances of the Lord.

Such things they declare, and err, for their wickedness has blinded them so that they know not the mystery of the wisdom of God (which to the ungodly is a hidden treasure (Sir. 1: 25), neither do they see that they have been overtaken and deceived by the devil, yea wholly submerged in pride, as well as in unbelief and in base ingratitude toward God, so that they loathe and are tired of the gospel; they have itching ears and desire to hear something different and new; they are already (so they imagine) judges and masters (Matt. 23:10; James 3:1) of Christ Jesus and of the Holy Ghost, for they despise his doctrine and profess that they have no need of observing his ordinances.

**A Solemn Warning Against False Spirits Who
Despise all Christian Ordinances and Look Upon
Them as Child's Play or Mockery**

O! what condition have these poor, miserable people reached who would set themselves above God the Lord! What will they do, where will they be when the Lord shall come upon them? They may imagine now that they are wise young virgins, and that they have enough oil in their lamps: but when the Bridegroom shall come they will stand as did the foolish virgins who had no oil (Matt. 25:3), and therefore they will not be able to enter with the Bridegroom to his marriage. They think it great wisdom (as is the way of slothful servants) that they bury their Master's talent in the earth (Matt. 25:25), but when the Lord shall come to reckon with them they will have to hear an awful sentence and be punished with a fearful punishment, because they have hidden their Lord's talent and have not put it to usury and have gained nothing with it. They are also like the church at Laodicea, which said: "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Rev. 3:17), and knew not that she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; therefore she was counseled of the Lord to buy of him gold tried in the fire, that she might be rich; and white raiment, that she might be clothed, and that the shame of her nakedness might not appear; and anoint her eyes with eye-salve, that she might see.

These words they might properly and in all sincerity take earnestly to heart who are now in their imagination so rich that they have need of nothing and do not realize their wretchedness and misery. They should also heed the counsel of the Lord and buy of the pure refined gold of the word of God, the rich and precious pearl of evangelical gospel truth that they may become rich in faith (Matt. 13:45, 46; Col. 3:9). They should put off the old Adam and by their faith overcome the world and all that is therein (1 John 5:4) that the Lord might clothe them in white raiment, that at his coming they might not be put to shame. They should anoint their eyes well with eye-salve (Rev. 3:18) that they might see that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power and in action (1 Cor. 4:20), and that therefore all the conceited and high sounding words and all the pretty prattle about the new creature and the inner life is of no avail before the Lord so long as the individual continues and walks in the old life of the flesh. The Jews boasted before Christ that they were of the seed of Abraham, and that God was their Father, but what was Christ's answer to them: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," and "if God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God" (John 8:39, 42).

Therefore it is of no avail, yea, an abomination to God, that these despisers of Christ and his word make a profession of the inner life and the new birth, because they will not do what Christ himself taught, commanded and did; therefore their profession also is vain and false; for if they were new creatures in Christ Jesus they would hold the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end (Heb. 3:14).

But this confidence in Christ is the divine nature and the new life or creature (which is righteousness, holiness, truth, faith, love, kindness, hospitality, and all the higher virtues) which the Holy Ghost brings about in us; but the true beginning of the Christian life in us is that we truly repent, and that we show genuine fruits of repentance, believe the gospel, and, upon confession of our faith, are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 3:8; 28:19; Mark 16:15); for thus Christ himself began to teach and to say: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel; for the

kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:14, 15). He likewise commanded his apostles at his final departure and said to them: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19, 20).

But since these neither do nor desire to do such a thing, therefore what they say about regeneration and the new creature, and what they profess and propound regarding the inner life, is nothing but vain babbling; for, if they were born of God they would not despise the washing of regeneration (Tit. 3:5); if they were baptized within by Christ Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with fire they would not refuse to receive the rite of outward baptism, according to the example, figure, and, beside this, the command of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul was also specially chosen of the Lord, and filled with the Holy Ghost, nevertheless Ananias said to him: "Why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of, the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Also, when Peter preached Christ in the house of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell upon all them which heard the word. And when Peter saw it he said: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10: 44-47).

From these and similar examples and testimonies of the scripture we may clearly see that we are not hindered by the Holy Ghost (who inaugurates the new life in the individual) from water baptism, but that we are in every way impelled and incited thereto, for it is really the office or function of the Holy Ghost to lead believers into all truth and obedience, and glorify Christ, for he shall receive of his. and shall show it unto us (John 16:14).

But this glorifying or exalting of Christ through the Holy Ghost is really accomplished in his disciples who accept and keep his word in true faith, as he himself says: "I am glorified in them" (that is, in my disciples) (John 17:10). Now, the Christ is glorified in his disciples in the same way as the Father is glorified in him; but the Father is glorified in Christ in this that he manifests his Father's name to his disciples, spake his Father's word, did his will, and finished his work, as he himself says: "I have glorified thee on the earth (O Father): I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do (John 17:4). Hence his disciples also must keep his doctrine, do his will and finish his work that Christ may be glorified in them. But this is the beginning and the end of the preaching of Jesus Christ (as said above), that we sincerely repent, believe the gospel, are baptized in the name of the holy Trinity, that is, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and are diligent by the grace of God to observe all that Christ has commanded us (Matt. 28:20).

Therefore whoever refuses to follow Jesus Christ, and disobeys his word, or whoever deals with the ordinances and the truth of Christ in a different manner than he himself taught and did, does not fear God, because he disbelieves and opposes his word (Sir. 2:17), and shall therefore not escape the judgment of God; for whoever despises

Christ and rejects his word, him will the word that he has spoken judge at the last day (John 12:38).

Scriptural Refutation of an Argument Presented by Certain Vain Boasters

But to the objection which some boasters and loose-tongued despisers here raise, saying that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6: 15), I reply, firstly: That the apostle Paul did not write these words with the idea that thereby the words and ordinances of the Lord should be altered or annulled. Far from it! But he does want to make it known that now in the new testament the outward circumcision no longer avails, and that between circumcision and uncircumcision, that is, between Jews and Gentiles, there is no difference with God, as the apostle Peter testified, when he saw that the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also, and said: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35). These words of Peter convey the same sense or idea as do the aforesaid words of Paul, namely, that whether they be Jews or Gentiles, circumcised or uncircumcised, if they fear God, believe in Jesus Christ, and work righteousness, they are children of God, acceptable to him and heirs of his kingdom, according to the promise which God made to Abraham, saying: "In thy seed (which is Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16-18).

Secondly: It is wrong and a false exposition of the words of Paul as already quoted, to make a comparison of one single ordinance and institution of the Lord with circumcision or uncircumcision of the flesh. The reason is this: Circumcision of the flesh was a figure of the spiritual circumcision, and uncircumcision represents the uncircumcised and unbelieving Gentiles who lived in heathendom; hence both circumcision and uncircumcision of the flesh are and had to be changed to a spiritual circumcision, that is, a circumcision of the heart, which is made without hands, by the word of God, by the putting off of the sinful body of flesh. But what our Lord Jesus Christ taught and commanded in the new testament is and remains the eternal, unchangeable truth; therefore Christ himself says, that heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away (Matt. 24:35).

Thirdly: Paul himself explains his statement (namely, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15), sufficiently in the words following: "And as many as walk according to this rule (that is, according to the rule, standard and ordinance of Christ Jesus), peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." And in the preceding chapter (Gal. 5:6) he says: "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." And to those of Corinth he says: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7: 19). But if the keeping of his commandments avails with God; if in Christ Jesus faith which worketh by love avails, and if the peace of God comes upon those who walk according to

the rule of Jesus Christ, where shall they appear who disregard God's commands and the institutions of Jesus Christ, yea, who do as did the Pharisees, to whom Jesus said: "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matt. 15:3).

How We are Despised, Derided and Persecuted, and Why

Thus also do these loose despisers reject every saving doctrine and every ordinance of the Lord Jesus Christ and help to strengthen the traditions and ceremonies of men, even though God will not be served nor honored with them, as he himself says by Isaiah, and which Christ speaks of and confirms in the gospel (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:8). This they do for hypocrisy's sake, to please the world, for they are the enemies of the cross of Christ and would rather be honored of men than of God. Moreover they despise us; yea, they make us a mockery and a byword, because we maintain true views on and confess baptism, the Lord's Supper and other ordinances of the Lord and suffer persecution therefore.

Very well, if one slanders us and another persecutes us, they do it for no other reason, thank God, than because of our faith and the truth of Jesus Christ; but we commend our case into the hands of the righteous Judge and will gladly suffer the mockery of those who are so wise in their own eyes and so smart among themselves that they, with the Pharisees, reject the counsel of God (Luke 7:30). We leave everyone to be wise and smart according to his own opinions, will and idea and let him exalt himself (Rom. 12:16), but we desire to condescend to men of low estate, that that may not come upon us of which the prophet speaks: "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight" (Isa. 5:21). Also, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Prov. 26:12). Hence, "he that exalteth himself shall be abased" (Luke 18:14). Therefore we desire to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, to walk humbly and righteously, well knowing that therein we shall not be deceived, for it is written: "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely" (Prov. 10: 9). Therefore the prophet beseeches the Lord, saying: "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee" (Psa. 25:21). So we also desire of the Lord that in integrity and uprightness we might be preserved in true humility, simplicity and piety and that he guard us against assumed wisdom and self-conceit, yea, that he would give us such a mind that we would gladly be fools here for Christ's sake, according to the words of Paul: "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3:18, 19).

Wherein and Through Whom we Seek our Salvation, and What we Claim to be

We would also rather be persecuted for righteousness' sake and be saved, than play the hypocrite with the world and be damned; for we know that hypocrites have no

part in the kingdom of God and of Christ (Matt. 24:51; Prov. 1:31). Knowing that the commandments and ceremonies of men are an abomination to God, no matter how beautiful they may appear to be (for what is highly exalted among men is an abomination before God, as Christ says, Luke 16:15), we therefore will not play the hypocrite with the world, neither have we any regard for their commandments and ceremonies, and we have no thought whatever of keeping them or helping to establish them. But what Christ Jesus, the Son of the living God, our Lord and Savior has commanded and confirmed by his innocent death and precious blood, that we desire by his grace to do, yea, thereby to live and die, and if because of this the world hates, slanders and persecutes us, we are comforted in God our Savior and Helper.

But although we, as poor, unprofitable servants, desire to be diligent to do God's will by his grace, yet let no one think or imagine nor say of us that we seek our salvation in any other way than in the grace of God and in the merits of Christ alone; for we firmly believe and openly confess that we are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the apostle Peter confessed to the church of Jerusalem (Acts 15:11). Therefore we also, according to the doctrine of the same apostle, place our whole hope in the grace of God which hath appeared unto us in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13), which grace is also called by Paul a saving grace, or a grace that bringeth salvation (Tit. 2:11), inasmuch as it brings to us and works in us everlasting salvation through Jesus Christ.

We confess and know full well, that the holy scripture has concluded all men under sin (Gal. 3:22). Solomon says in his prayer to God that there is no man that does not sin (1 Kings 8:46). In the book of Job it is written: "Shall a mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly" (Job. 4:17, 18). And in another place he says: "What is man, that he should be considered clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?" (Job. 15:14, 15). And the prophet David says: "Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Psa. 143:1, 2).

Therefore we confess ourselves to be poor sinners and unprofitable servants of the Lord, and with the prophets bewail the fact that our sins have risen around us higher than our heads and that as a burden they have become too great for us, yea, more in number than the hairs of our heads, and that if the grace of God had not overtaken our sins and abounded daily still through Jesus Christ, it would be all over with us. But as it is written in the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, 16:5-7 (see also Num. 21:8; John 3:14), that the children of Israel, when they had sinned and were therefore afflicted by the Lord with poisonous serpents, they had a sign of salvation which was given them by the grace of God, namely the serpent which Moses at God's command raised among them; and those who turned their faces toward the sign were healed, not by that which they looked upon, but by the Lord, the Savior of all mankind. So we also confess that we of ourselves are poor sinners, born of Adam according to the flesh (Rom. 5:12), bitten and

poisoned by the serpent, and all who come of him are partakers of his sinful nature, against which poisoning of the serpent and the sinful nature of the flesh the merciful, heavenly Father has given us a true, saving sign, namely, his only begotten and beloved Son Jesus Christ, who has been raised up and exalted above the earth, that whosoever looks upon him in true, sincere faith, shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16; 12: 32). And as no herb nor salve could cure or heal the Israelites when they had been bitten by the serpent, but they had to be healed and restored by the word of the Lord alone (Wis. of Sol. 16:12), which healeth all things, so also Jesus Christ alone makes us whole, and there is no other means of salvation, yea, there is no other name given us under heaven whereby we may be saved (Acts 4:12).

But if Christ Jesus is to heal and save us we must believe in him and obey him, for whosoever will not believe shall be damned (Mark 16:16), yea, he is already condemned (John 3:18) and disobedience, or rebellion, is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry (1 Sam. 15: 23). If Noah had not believed the word of God and had not built the ark according to the command of the Lord he would have died in the waters of the flood with all the rest of the world (Gen. 7 and 8). If the Israelites in the wilderness had not looked upon the saving sign which God in his mercy gave them, they would without doubt not have recovered. If leprous Naaman of Syria had not washed himself seven times in the Jordan according to the command of the prophet he would never have been cleansed of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:10), because he would have despised the Lord's word which he had to believe and obey in order to be cleansed. Had the blind man not desired to go to the pool of Siloam and wash himself, he would have remained blind (John 9:4). The scripture is full of similar examples.

Examples From the Patriarchs

Now all these were not made whole by one single outward thing, but by God's word which they believed. Therefore the Lord says: "Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3; Wis. of Sol. 16:26). But the life of man by the word of God comes by faith, as it is written: "The just shall live by his faith" (Heb. 2:4; John 3:36; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). According with this is the scripture which says: "It is not the growing of fruits that nourishes man: but it is thy word, O Lord, which preserveth them that put their trust in thee" (Wis. of Sol. 26).

Of this power of the word of God, Christ also says in the gospel: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:28); and: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death" (John 8:51). And to his disciples he says: "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). And Paul says: "The gospel ... is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). And James says: "Lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls" (James 1:21).

In short: God's Word preserves men, but only those who put their trust in him (Wis. of Sol. 16: 26). God's word is spirit and it is life (John 6:63; 15:3) and gives us life,

but those only who believe it. God's word cleanses souls, but only those who obey God's word (1 Peter 1:22, 23). Yea, God's word is a divine power and saves, but only those who hear it and keep it (1 Cor. 1:16; James 1:21, 22; Luke 8:21). But he that despises the word despises God himself; he rejects Christ Jesus, he withstands the Holy Spirit who testifies of the word. Now, in order to return to my original proposition and primary intentions regarding regeneration and the new creature, I will say in conclusion that they are the regenerated children of God who are new creatures in Christ Jesus, born of God the heavenly Father through Christ Jesus (John 1:12; 1 Peter 1:23), and renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost; who have become partakers of the divine nature and being of Jesus Christ and the attributes of the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:4; Heb. 3:14); who have died unto sin, and are daily dying more and more, and live unto righteousness; who glory in nothing but alone in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto them and they unto the world (Gal. 6:14; Rom. 6:6); who in true faith walk according to the rule of Christ and follow his footsteps; know no man after the flesh (1 Pet. 1:21; 2 Cor. 5:16); who savor not the things that are of men, but the things that are of God (Matt. 16:23); in short: those who are righteous and do righteousness, as God of whom they are born—(1 John 2:29) is righteous, in whom is the mind which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5), and who are moved by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14).—Where this is the case, there will be seen the kingdom of God, there one enters the kingdom of heaven, there is a new creature in Christ Jesus (John 3:3; Gal. 6:15).

Such new creatures all the saints of God have been from the beginning, e. g. Abel, Seth, Noah, who by their faith made a freewill offering to God and walked uprightly (Gen. 4:4; 6:8, 9), and who were submissive and obedient to God.

Such new creatures were also Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who, at the command and will of God by faith cheerfully left the land of their fathers, going forth and dwelling in tabernacles (Heb. 11:9) and being content therewith, confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, and desiring a better country, that is, a heavenly, and looking for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (Heb. 11:16).

The great prophet Moses was of the same mind, for when he was come to years (Heb. 11:24) he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

Paul was of the same sort. Whatsoever things in Judaism were gain for him, these he counted loss for Christ; "yea, doubtless," said he, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. 3:7-9).

In these pious and holy men of God, and in all pious believers who have lived before us we can learn and plainly see the nature of the new birth and the power of faith, that they knew God in the Spirit and served him in the Spirit, feared him and trusted in him, loved him above all things, despising all transitory things and seeking the heavenly things, for their reward is with the Lord, and in his grace they trusted, well knowing that the Lord is the portion of his saints and that the Most High is their reward, as the prophet also realized when he said: "O Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Psa. 73:25, 26; Wis. of Sol. 5:15).

These are the words of a regenerated man; these are the fruits of the new creature, and we are to take an example there-from and follow it by the grace of God and be thus minded and find our comfort in God if so be that we are born of God and are new creatures in Christ Jesus, and desire to profess the same.

And above all this, I have said and declared above, and say it again, that Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his Person is ordained of the Father to be an example to all Christians (Heb. 1:3; Rom. 8:29) that we might be conformed to his image; for the divine life, after which we must pattern our lives, is shown or revealed in its perfection in him. Therefore all who profess regeneration must have the characteristics and nature of Christ and hold fast the beginning of his confidence unto the end (Phil. 2:5; Heb. 3:14).

**Final Presentation, Declaring Again How
Christ, the Son of Almighty God, is a True Example
and Pattern, Whom all Christian, Regenerated
Believers Must Follow in all Sincerity of Heart**

These then are the regenerated children of God. Born again unto everlasting life, and renewed after the image of God, and sanctified through the Holy Spirit: for God the heavenly Father is holy (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8), and therefore will have holy children. Jesus Christ the Son of the Most High is holy, therefore he will have holy brethren and sisters (Matt. 12:50). The Holy Ghost is holy, therefore he wills that his temple wherein he is to dwell, be holy (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21, 22).

Therefore Paul says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us, with all spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein be hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:3-6).

In these words we hear how holy and blameless the children of God must be. Therefore also the Lord says to his disciples: "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 1 Peter 1:16). And moreover Christ says to his disciples: "Be ye therefore perfect,

even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48). And John says: "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed (of which he is born and is therefore made a partaker of the characteristics and nature of the holy seed, according to the words of Christ: 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' John 3:6) remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (1 John 3:9). Therefore: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18).

Nevertheless this must be understood with due discretion; for that Christians are to be holy even as God is holy, and perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect, can and must not be understood as meaning that Christians can or may become as holy in this temporal life as God is; but that they are to seek holiness with all earnestness, as Paul the apostle did when he said that his whole aim and effort was to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (Phil. 3:9, 11). "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press forward for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14). Likewise also all Christians must with Paul seek to know Jesus, to apprehend him and become conformable to him; they must also with the apostle confess and realize, that they have not yet attained, nor as yet have become perfect.

Furthermore John's words: "Sinneth not," "Cannot sin" (1 John 3: 9) must not be understood that Christians have no sin whatever, for the same John says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar and his word is not in us" (1 John 1: 8-10).

Therefore all Christians are still sinners before the Lord, and must confess their sins, and ask God for forgiveness of sins, as David says: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sins. For this shall everyone that is Godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found" (Psa. 32:5, 6). Hence Christ also teaches us to pray: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). But since Christians are in Christ and Christ in them, sin is not imputed unto them by the Lord, as David says: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity" (Psa. 32:1, 2).

But this blessedness comes upon all those who believe in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3: 22; 5:1); through him they have forgiveness of sins; they are washed in his blood; all their sins and their infirmities are covered by his righteousness (Eph. 2:7; Rev. 1: 6) for Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, as Paul writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:30). And to the Colossians he

writes: "You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard" (Col. 1:21-23). In short: Christ sanctified himself for the sake of his own, that they also might be sanctified by the truth (John 17:19). That is, he made an offering for sin that should endure forever, and with one offering he made those perfect forever who are sanctified: therefore no one may lay anything to their charge or condemn them, even as Paul says: "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall not he with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Rom. 8:31-34).

You see, my beloved brethren and sisters, my companions in the grace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Phil. 1:5), I have according to the humble gift that has been given me by the Lord, written a little concerning regeneration and the new creature and warned you against the evil spirits and despisers of Jesus Christ, and instructed you in the fellowship of Jesus Christ and his word, and I kindly request that you will receive this my humble effort kindly, and that you will use all diligence to guard against deceitful workers and earnestly strive that you may indeed be found genuinely new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Now to Him who from the beginning hath elected and chosen you and hath begotten you by the word of truth and renewed and sanctified you by his Holy Spirit in his unfathomable grace and mercy (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; James 1:18; Tit. 3:5); to the same everlasting and almighty God, our Lord and Savior be praise, glory and honor forever, Amen (Rom. 16:26; 1 Tim. 6:16; Rev. 5:14; 7:10).

D. P.

Book Ten

Of

Spiritual Restitution

That is:

Christ Jesus Has Spiritually

Fulfilled, Restored and Made

Restitution for all the Things

That Were Done From the Beginning

A Christian And Scriptural
Meditation

Compiled From The Holy Scripture
For The Benefit Of
All Lovers Of The Truth

By

D. P.

All things must be fulfilled, which were written
in the law of Moses, and in the prophets,
and in the Psalms. Luke 24: 44.

He shall send Jesus Christ, . . .
whom the heaven must receive until the times
of restitution (or restoration) of all things,
which God hath spoken by the mouth of all
his holy prophets since the world began.

Acts 3: 21.

Old things are passed away;
behold, all things are become new.

2 Cor. 5:17.

Preface

In view of the fact that the holy, divine scripture mentions or testifies much regarding the restitution or restoration, in Jesus Christ, of all things which have come to pass since the world began, as Peter says, that the heaven must receive Christ until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3:21); and inasmuch as many errors have arisen concerning it so that everyone has misinterpreted this restitution according to his own

carnal fancy and reason, therefore I have undertaken by the grace of God to briefly discuss all the things that were done since the world began, that in Christ and his kingdom all these things have been in a spiritual sense restored, to the end that simple minds may be thereby instructed and that they may not be deceived by the false prophets who embellish and disguise their deceptive doctrine with the old leaven of the letter as shadows and figures; for whatever of the new testament they cannot defend they try to prove with the old testament and with the letter of the prophecies. From this fallacy many sects have come, many false forms of worship have been established; yea, out of this same fountain especially have flowed forth the sacrilegious ceremonies and display of the church of Antichrist and the deplorable errors of the turbulent sects which in our time have, under the guise of the holy gospel, of faith and of the Christian religion, done much injury and much mischief.

Therefore, in the same way as we by God's help gave some little explanation regarding the tabernacle of Moses and the things that were therein, and showed their spiritual signification, so we also desire, by the aid of the Spirit of Christ to explain the aforementioned restitution, or at least to give our simple understanding of the matter for the reflection of all Christians, and thus give the honestly simple a little direction on the proper understanding of the scripture, and to consider well all things, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit; for the kingdom of God is not of this world, but is within among all true, upright Christians; for to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (John 6:15; 18:36; Luke 17:28; Rom. 8:6), and the flesh profiteth nothing, but it is the Spirit that quickeneth, and the words of Christ are spirit, and they are life (John 6:63). May the eternal, almighty, alone wise God grant us through Jesus Christ a true and scriptural comprehension in all things, to his praise, to the rejoicing and quickening of our consciences and to the edification of his church. Amen.

**Spiritual Restitution,
How all Things That Have
Occurred Since the Beginning
are Spiritually Restored and Fulfilled**

Christ Jesus is the spirit and the substance of all the types and figures that have passed away, the end and fulfillment of the law of types, figures and shadows, but the beginning of the true substance and completeness (John 6:63; 14:6; Rom. 10:4); for in Christ Jesus, says the apostle, is the truth (Eph. 4:21); in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of God (Col. 2:3); yea, in him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and all shadows and figures are fulfilled in him. He is the bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16), the Sun of Righteousness (Wis. of Sol. 5: 6) that illuminates everything. The brightness that caused the face of Moses to shine (which glory was to be done away, and signified the law) (2 Cor. 3:7) is no glory like that of Jesus Christ and his holy gospel; the veil that hid the face of Moses, and which still veils the eyes and the hearts of the Jews so that they cannot understand Moses and the prophets, is taken away

by Christ, as Paul says (2 Cor. 3:16). Therefore all things are changed in Christ and are transfigured and made new by him, that is, changed from the letter to the Spirit, from the carnal to the real, from the old to the new, from the figure into the true abiding substance and clear reality, and from the transitory to the eternal and heavenly. It is necessary to know this, in order that we may seek all truth, righteousness, holiness, salvation, yea all divine wisdom, gifts, virtues, powers and activity in Christ Jesus alone, and not from any other source (1 Cor. 1:24; Jer. 23:6); Eph. 1:8; Col. 2:3), and that all those may be made ashamed who in these last perilous times have so presumptuously and impudently set themselves up as though they were about to take possession of the kingdom and restore all things to order, which however can nevermore be done by anyone but the Lord Jesus Christ alone, who is the fullness of all wisdom, truth and righteousness, who has a name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9) that can be spoken in this world or in the world to come, who is the Head of all principalities and powers, in short, by whom all things are made and upheld, who with God doth all things, and without whom nothing divine is performed (John 1:3).

Of the Creation of Heaven and Earth

In the first place, in Christ Jesus has been restored the creation of heaven and earth; for God has made new heavens, namely, the believers, in whom God dwells, and especially the apostles and all sincere teachers, in whom Christ Jesus, the Sun of righteousness shines everywhere (Wis. Sol. 5: 6) and enlightens, yea, makes fruitful in all manner of fruits of the Spirit the new earth, that is, the hearts of Christians, into which the seed of the word of God has been sown (Matt. 13:8), and which have been renewed by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Ghost.

This is readily observed from the words of the prophet when he says: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof" (Psa. 19:1-6).

This is a prophecy of the gospel which went forth and was preached in the whole earth, as Paul testifies (Rom. 10:18). Hence these heavens, which declare the glory of God, and in whom a tabernacle has been set for the sun that shines everywhere, are the apostles and all sincere teachers and Christians. who make known the word of God, and in whom God has his dwelling (Eph. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:16; 6:16).

Here is also the new moon, and lights this new firmament, namely, the sure word of prophecy, that shines in a dark place (2 Peter 1:19); here also are the new stars, the righteous, who are instructing others in godliness, who shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars forever and ever (Dan 12:3), here through the brightness of

the word of God, and hereafter, through the transforming power of Christ, in the heavenly realm.

Therefore the church of God is also represented as a woman with child, clothed with the glory of Christ and his word, compared to and represented by the sun, and having the moon under her feet (Rev. 12:1, 2), for the church is founded on the sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19) which Moses and the prophets through, the Holy Spirit testified of Jesus (Eph. 4:11-17), and she has upon her head a golden crown of twelve stars (Rev. 12:1), which stars represent the pure, clear, unadulterated and true doctrine of the holy apostles, with which the church of God is adorned, and she is impregnated or made fruitful by the seed of God, by the word of the heavenly Father (Matt. 13:8) which seed she has received, and which she brings forth with great travail and distress, and is therefore also so sorely persecuted by the dragon (Rev. 12:13-17).

Thus is the creation of the heavens and the earth restored spiritually in Christ, until the time of the consummation of the great change from the corruptible to the eternal, incorruptible and glorified state, and all believers shall inherit and possess the new heavens and new earth (which God will make, and for which we look, and wherein righteousness shall dwell) forever (2 Peter 3:13).

Of the Creation of Man

In Christ Jesus is also renewed the creation of man; for after man had sinned, and thereby the image of God, in which he had been created, was destroyed (Gen. 3:6), a renewing of man, yea, a new creation had to take place, and this through Jesus Christ, by whom God performs all things. But the image of God is the spiritual being of the invisible God, his eternal wisdom, power, righteousness and eternal life (Wis. of Sol. 7: 25-27; 2 Cor. 4:4) which is Jesus Christ, the express image of the Person of his heavenly Father, the brightness of his glory (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:15) and a spotless mirror of the brightness of God, whom Abraham saw, not with natural eyes, but in Spirit, as all believers must behold and know him.

According to this image of God the first of the human race, Adam and Eve, were created (Wis. of Sol. 2:23; Gen. 1:27; 5:1; Sir. 17:3; James 3:9), and were made in the likeness of the divine image, endued with superior understanding and the knowledge of God and all creatures, beside a high degree of righteousness and holiness, in which they loved God, and were endued with a godly and blameless life in Paradise, unto an eternal life in heaven.

But when man did not remain in his first estate, but by his disobedience lost the image of God, man had to be created anew by Christ Jesus, for to this end the Son of God was promised to Adam (Gen. 3:15), and appeared to all men that he might destroy the works of the devil (1 Cor. 15:25, 26; Rom. 5:18; 1 John 3:5) and restore in man the lost image of God, that is, that he might take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), swallow up death (1 Cor. 15:54) and by his resurrection and victory purchase everlasting life for man (Heb. 2:14; Rom. 3:23; 8:3), and by his word and Spirit make new creatures here in this life and hereafter at his glorious appearing in the resurrection prepare perfect

creatures after his image in holiness and righteousness (John 3:3; Gal. 6:8; Phil. 3:21), who shall be glorified and shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13:43; Dan. 12:3), conformed in their nature to the angels and partakers of the divine glory (Matt. 22:30). Thus has a new creation, a new birth of man been brought about through Christ Jesus (John 12:16; 17:2-10).

Of Matrimony

In Jesus Christ matrimony was likewise renewed and restored to its proper relation, which did not continue in the original divine order established in Paradise of one man with one woman, with like persons, that is. such as were created in the image of God and joined together by God (Gen. 2:23; 6:2) but was, through the corrupt nature and the evil lusts of the flesh entirely subverted and abused before the flood by the sons of God, and thereafter (as was the case with Abraham and others (Gen. 16:3) partly because of the sake of the allegory (Gal. 4:24), and partly because of the hardness of heart of the people of Israel the institution of matrimony was suffered by God and by Moses, his servant, to change and degenerate into a wrong way and practice; but now Christ comes and points out to us the original purpose of God, which was in the beginning in the garden of Eden, or Paradise, and says: "Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning, made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh ? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. 19:4; Gen. 1:27; Eph. 5:31; 1 Cor. 6:16).

So then matrimony was restored by Christ to its original form and order, namely, that matrimony is a joining together, by God, of two persons, that is, of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:21; Matt. 19:4-6), so that they shall be one flesh, and that they must both be persons that are created of God after his own image, i.e. they must be born of God (John 3:3), conformed unto Christ, and renewed after the inner man by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10); they must come together in Paradise, that is, in the congregation of the Lord (Rev. 2:7) and God must unite them. This, then, is true matrimony in the sight of God, in which he himself participates, and which is consummated according to his will and in his name. This is what Paul calls marrying in the Lord (1 Cor. 7:39), and to this form Christ has restored matrimony, and whatever is done outside of or contrary to this is wrong in the sight of God, no matter how beautifully elaborate or embellished the ceremony may be.

Moreover the symbolical wedlock between Adam and Eve is also spiritually restored in Christ Jesus; for he is the second and new Adam, and his bride who has been taken from his side, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones (Rom. 5:18; 1 Cor. 15:45; Eph. 5:30) is the spiritual Eve, the mother of all believing Christians, and from this union has sprung a new world, a new race, new regenerated children of God, from his incorruptible seed, that is, born anew by his living and powerful word (1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 5:1; James 1:18).

But like as among the children of the first Adam, envy, malice and wantonness brought about apostasy, that is, that murderous Cain slew righteous Abel (Gen. 4:8),

wickedness prevailed and all flesh became perverse in his sight, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose (Gen. 6:1, 2). The same fate befell the children of the second and spiritual Adam, for the righteous children of God were slain by Cain's seed, that is, by the ungodly and apostates. The beautiful forms of the daughters of men, the wicked lust of the flesh, the externally grand appearance of the idolatrous church, the great Babylonian whore and the false prophets of Jezebel have deceived the children of God (Rev. 17:1; 2:20) and led them into idolatry, and thus the world once more lies altogether in wickedness under Antichrist (1 John 5:19), and everything is made desolate by the son of perdition (2 Thess. 2:3); nevertheless a branch of the righteous children of God has remained who have found grace in his sight, to enter with Noah into the ark and have their souls preserved forever (Gen. 8:1; 1 Peter 3: 20).

Of Noah

In Christ Jesus is also repeated God's dealings regarding Noah and the ark, the flood, and the saving of the few souls (1 Peter 3:19); for Christ is the true, spiritual Noah, the preacher of righteousness, and the members of his household are the children of God (Matt. 12:49), the true Christians; he has proclaimed to the corrupt world the divine wrath that is to come, and has threatened the impenitent and unbelievers with the judgment and condemnation (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 11:20; 23:1-37); he has hereby also built an ark, that is, the holy Christian church for the protection and preservation of all believing souls, and all who willfully despise God's word and have rejected the proffered mercy of God, have closed their eyes to the light of the gospel, and therefore have remained outside of the ark (John 5:38; 8:24), are destroyed by the punishment of God; yea, upon them will come the wrath and indignation of heaven, in that day when God shall judge the world by Jesus Christ (Rom. 2: 8, 9). But as many as have received Christ (John 1:12) in true faith and have entered into his ark, they will be preserved therein unto eternal life, and the covenant of God will be renewed and confirmed to them by the rainbow, which represents Jesus Christ the true sign of grace in heaven, at the right hand of the almighty Father (John 3:36; 6:47; 8:31; 11:26; 14:21; Heb. 1: 3; Gen. 9:13; Eph. 1:3), and they will be blessed of God with heavenly blessings, to grow spiritually (1 Peter 3:9); and to increase, winning many children through the gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26; 4:6) even as the apostle did, converting many thousands to God by the preaching of the word of God and operation of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:41; 4:32; 8:11; 10:44; 16:5). From these again an evil seed sprang up through the mocker Ham (Gen. 9:22-25), a prototype of the false brethren (Dan. 11:24), the Antichrist (a wicked seed remaining in Canaan), who in the time of the apostles went out from the church of God (Rom. 16:17, 18; 1 John 2:18, 19; 2 John 8; 3 John 9) despising, belittling and mocking Jesus Christ and greatly troubling the saints; for therefore Paul says that there must be heresies among Christians, that they which are approved may be made manifest (1 Cor. 11:19). Thus it has been from the beginning, in the time of Adam, Noah, Lot, in the Israel of the flesh, in the church of the apostles and everywhere (Tit. 1:10-13, 16).

Of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

In Christ Jesus, moreover, is repeated in Spirit and in reality God's dealing with Abraham, Isaac and all Israel, for the spiritual Abraham's God, the heavenly Father himself, with his two wives, which typify the two covenants (Gal. 4:24), of which the first was for a long time barren, until the time of promise. Meanwhile the bondservant Hagar, that is, the literal, figurative, subservient synagogue, produces its seed and race, namely, the Jewish race and Levitical priesthood with its imperfect ceremonies and offerings, which could make no one perfect or righteous (Heb. 8:7; 9:9); thereafter the free child Isaac, Jesus Christ, was supernaturally born, God's word was made flesh (John 1:14), the only begotten Son of the Father came into the world, the beginning of the new creation of God (1 John 1:1; Rev. 3:14), the firstborn among many brethren which are born of the free Sarah, of the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26) and in Isaac are counted as the seed of promise, and with whom Ishmael quarrels, derides him, and is therefore cast out (Gal. 4:28-31) and cannot be an heir. That is, the Jews rejected, derided and persecuted Christ and his own and would not receive him (John 1:11; Luke 19:14), therefore also the kingdom of God was taken from them and given to the Gentiles, and they cannot receive a heritage so long as they continue in their unbelief (Matt. 22:7, 13; Rom. 11:25).

But between Abraham and Isaac comes the king and priest of the Most High God, Melchizedek, a beautiful figure of Jesus Christ (Gen. 14:18, etc; Psa. 110:4; Heb. 7:1), of his everlasting kingdom and priesthood; for Melchizedek is described by the apostle as a king of righteousness and of peace, a priest of the Most High, who was greater than Abraham and Levi, for he blessed Abraham, and Levi gave him a tenth; yea, because he prefigured Christ he is described as having neither father nor mother, nor descent, without beginning of days, or end of life, and is likened to the Son of God.

All this is found true in Christ Jesus,—that he is the king of everlasting righteousness and of all divine peace (Psa. 45: 6, 7; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 2: 14; Heb. 1:8; John 8:58); indeed, he is peace and righteousness itself unto all believers; he is greater than Abraham, for he was before Abraham; he took away the Levitical priesthood and has himself become our only High Priest (Psa. 110:4); ordained and installed with a solemn and precious oath, and sits at the right hand of God in heaven (Heb. 1:3; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 10:12). He also is without father, without mother and without descent upon earth, for he came forth from God, his heavenly Father (John 8:42; 16:27; 17:8, 25), was conceived by the Holy Ghost in Mary through the overshadowing of the power of God (Matt. 1:20), became a man, and was born of her a Son of the Most High, the first and the last, the firstborn of every creature, yea, eternal life itself (Luke 2:21; Rev. 1:8; Col. 1:15; John 14:6).

Here also is repeated the manner of dealing with Sodom, the angels and Lot (Gen. 19:1) and his wife; for the spiritual Sodom, by whom the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was crucified, is the wicked world (Rev. 11: 8; 16: 8, 9) full of pride, of abominations and beastly pollution.; out of this Sodom will be led by the angels of God all who with Lot desire to fear God, who are acceptable to him and who are ordained unto eternal life; but the world will pass away with its wicked lusts, desires and works (1 John 1:17) even as Sodom and Gomorrah passed away (2 Esd. 2:41; 2 Peter 2:6), and the

unbelievers, who, with Lot's wife look back, and are therefore not fit for the kingdom, will remain standing, they will be blinded and hardened (Acts 28:27; Rom. 1: 28) and given over by the Lord to a reprobate mind, so that they cannot escape the punishment of the Lord. Therefore Christ says in the gospel: "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32).

In Christ Jesus moreover is also renewed and fulfilled the symbolical sacrifice of Isaac, who carried the wood and the fire up to the mount where his father offered him upon the altar, and yet he did not die (Gen. 22:10), but a ram was offered in his stead, which signifies to us that Jesus Christ remained obedient to his heavenly Father unto death (Phil. 2:8), and because of his fervent love to us bore the wood of the cross upon his body and was offered for us upon the altar of the cross (1 Peter 2:21-24; Isa. 53:6, 7), and yet in the Spirit was not put to death, but died according to the flesh (1 Peter 3:18). And as Abraham received Isaac from the altar as one who had come to life from the dead, as a type or figure of the resurrection, so also Christ Jesus, after he had offered himself up for us to God as a sweet-smelling savor (Heb 1:3), rose from the dead (Heb. 11:19) and became the established and confirmed heir of all the possessions of his heavenly Father Abraham, together with his everlasting seed, that is, with all true Christians.

In Christ furthermore is renewed and restored spiritually the figure of Isaac and Rebecca, as follows: Abraham made his servant swear and exacted from him an oath that he would not take a wife unto his son Isaac from any other but his own kindred (Gen. 24: 3, 4). The servant did so, and brought the willing Rebecca to his lord Isaac, her bridegroom. So also is the spiritual wooing of the bride of Christ (John 3:29), by John the Baptist, by the apostles and by other faithful servants of the Lord; for to this end are the faithful servants of the most high God sent out, bound by a solemn promise that they will seek and bring to Christ Jesus the true Isaac, the rightful heir of all the riches of his heavenly Father, a freewill Rebecca (who by faith and the new birth has become of his kindred, of his kind and nature, Acts 17:28; Eph. 5:30; 1 Peter 2:9), namely, the church which he loved, and which he has gloriously adorned with spiritual gifts, with which church he has propagated the children of the kingdom, born again of the word of God, and therefore also have become his brethren and companions by grace through acceptance into sonship with God (Gal. 3:28; 4:7; 1 Pet. 1:23; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 8:17; Heb. 2:12).

Isaac caused the wells of living water (which the Philistines out of envy had filled up with earth) that had been dug by the servants of Abraham to be reopened and cleansed by his servants (Gen. 26:15, etc.); for this reason the servants of Gerar strove with Isaac's herdsmen. So also God the heavenly Father by his faithful messengers the good prophets has given us the wells of living water, that is, his pure, divine word; but the false prophets with the corrupt doctrines of men and the wisdom of this world stopped them, and corrupted the pure word of God, of which the prophets grievously complain, namely, that the false prophets have trampled underfoot the good pasture with which the flock was to be fed (Ezek. 34: 2, etc.), and with their feet have polluted the clear waters which the flock was to drink, so that the flock ate and drank that which had been trampled and polluted. That is, instead of the word of God, they listened to and accepted corrupt human teaching, and thus have been led astray.

But Christ Jesus, the true Isaac, reopened the closed up wells of holy writ, again brought to the light of day the obscured word of God, and caused the pure and clear gospel to be preached everywhere by his servants and apostles (John 1:5; 5:26; 8: 11,12; 10:9; 14:10; 15:5; 16:28; 17:8; Matt. 28:19, 20; 16:15; Rom. 10:15). But the uncircumcised Philistines, the scribes and Pharisees, who are uncircumcised in heart (Acts 7:51), Antichrist and the false teachers are setting themselves against it and are striving with Isaac's herdsmen, with the servants (ministers) of Jesus Christ because of the wells of living water, which they count as being theirs; for they alone want to, be the expositors of scripture, and proudly say: "With our tongue will We prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" (Psa. 12:4; 73:11). Therefore the strife between the servants of Jesus Christ and the false teachers, who are the real Philistines, and who are the enemies of the gospel and of the spiritual Israel, continues.

Furthermore in Christ is reiterated the patriarch Jacob by many beautiful figures, which have been in part explained in the chapter on the Tabernacle of Moses, for I wrote much in that concerning Esau and Jacob, but I will here briefly state that Jacob was sent by his father Isaac to Laban (Gen. 28:2), the brother of his mother Rebecca. On the way, when the sun had gone down, the Lord appeared to him at Bethel. He fell into a deep sleep, and in a dream he saw a ladder that reached up to heaven, and God stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Gen. 28:13-15). And when he awoke from his sleep he said: "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." And he was afraid and said: "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:16, 17).

This ladder signifies Jesus Christ, who is the only way to the Father and into the kingdom of heaven; through him the believers come to God (John 14:6). Here is also typified the promise of the gospel through the angels on the ladder; for the angels also proclaimed the gospel from heaven (Luke 2:10). Here is the renewing of the divine covenant through Jesus Christ, who is the promised seed, in whom all those shall be blessed who shall follow in the steps of the faith of Abraham (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:9; Rom. 4:11, 12), not the Jews only, but also the Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ. Here surely the Lord is in the midst of his church, here is the house of God, and the gate of heaven, for here is given) the new and comforting promise through Jesus Christ (Matt. 17:4; 18:20) of the glorious spiritual kingdom and heritage, of the blessed rest in the true promised land of Canaan (1 Tim. 3:15) that is, in the eternal kingdom with God in heaven (Heb. 4:9) to which the Lord Jesus Christ ascended, to prepare us a place (John 14:2), a tabernacle, a house, not of this building, but another one, not made with hands (John 16: 25; 17: 24; 2 Cor. 5:1), whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10), and the Lord Jesus

Christ will come again and take us to himself, that we may be where he is, and behold his glory (John 12:46; 14:2; 16:5; 17:24) and become partakers of the same in eternity.

Unto Jacob were born the twelve patriarchs from whom come the twelve tribes of Israel. These twelve patriarchs represent to us the twelve apostles who are born again of the Spirit (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:13) and endued with power from on high: the spiritual fathers who by the gospel (1 Cor. 3:5; Gal. 2:8; 4:19; 6:13) and by faith in Jesus Christ have begotten the Israel of God; for such believing Christians are the true spiritual Israelites and seed of Abraham (Rom. 4:12) whom they have won to Christ by the word of God, these are the fathers as the apostles themselves testify; for they call themselves the fathers, and the believers, children (2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 3:7; 1 John 2:1, 12; 5:21; 3 John 4; 2 Cor. 6:13; Eph. 4:6; Phil 2:22; 2 Thess. 2:11; 1 Tim. 5:1), and this all of God, who is the true Father of all and above all in heaven and on earth as Paul declares.

In Christ Jesus is furthermore spiritually fulfilled the figure of Joseph. For as Joseph was sent forth to his brethren by his father Jacob, who in their exceeding envy sold him (Gen 37:28) and he was thus brought into Egypt and because of his piety and innocence was thrown into prison, and by God's providence and because of his wisdom was again delivered out of it and was brought before Pharaoh, and after the interpretation of the dream was set up and exalted to be a ruler over all Egypt; so also according to the Spirit it was done to Christ. He was sent by God his heavenly Father into this world to his brethren, that is, to the Jews (of whom he was born according to the flesh, John 1:11; Rom. 9:5); but they would not receive him, nor suffer him to be their Lord (Matt. 21:39); yea, they hated, persecuted, betrayed, sold, arrested, crucified and killed him (Luke 22 and 23); nevertheless he, the Lord Jesus, by the right hand of God is exalted above all principalities, and powers, and thrones, and dominion (Acts 2:33; 5:31), and is given a name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9) in this world and in the world to come (Eph. 1:20, 21; Heb. 1:4), unto him is given all power in heaven and on earth to dispense spiritual gifts (Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:16) and he has received from his heavenly Father all judgment over the living and the dead that they may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father, and fall down before him and worship him. for he sits at the right hand of his heavenly Father in heavenly glory, one Lord everywhere with his Father and the Holy Spirit.

Here is also to be seen the renewing of the divine covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through Jesus Christ, who is the promised seed, in whom shall be blessed all those who walk in the steps of that faith of Abraham (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16; Rom. 4:12), not the Jews only, but the Gentiles also who believe in Jesus Christ, who are also circumcised, not in the foreskin of the flesh (Rom. 2:14; 4:12; 8:2), but in heart, namely by the circumcision of Christ, which is done without hands, in the Spirit, by the putting off of the body of sinful flesh, the putting to death of the old man and the burying of sin, and the resurrection to newness of life (Col. 2:11; Rom. 6:4).

To these is also given by Jesus Christ the comforting promise of the glorious spiritual, kingdom and heritage, of the blessed rest in the land of Canaan, the eternal, imperishable kingdom, with God in heaven (Heb. 3:18; 4:9; John 14:3; 17:24), where

Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us, a temple, a building of God, a house not made with human hands, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10; 2 Cor. 5:1; 2 Peter 1:13, 14; John 17:24), and from whence he will come again and take us unto himself, that where he is, we may be also (John 14:2), and behold his glory, and become partakers of the same forever.

Beside this we find here also the spiritual Egypt, the land of darkness, just as was the material Egypt long before (Rev. 11:8). For just as the people of God, the children of Israel were grievously burdened and distressed in Egypt by Pharaoh and his servants, and as God in a wonderful way, by the hand of Moses, with many signs and wonders, yea, with his mighty hand and his outstretched arm delivered them from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 3:7, etc.), led them through the Red Sea into the wilderness, by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, and fed them with heavenly bread (1 Cor. 10:4), and gave them drink with water from the rock and finally led the survivors into the promised land, so also we were burdened under the bondage of sin, of unrighteousness and of death under the hellish Pharaoh Satan (Heb. 4:15), but have been delivered by Jesus Christ the true Moses, baptized into his death, in the cloud and in the sea (Eph. 2:1, 2; Col. 2:12; Rom. 5:9; 6:3), that is, with his precious shed blood (with which our consciences are sprinkled and our sins are washed away) and with the Holy Ghost, which is poured out upon us by God through Jesus Christ (1 John 5:6-8; 1 Peter 1:19; Heb. 12:1). But Pharaoh with all his servants, riders and chariots, our enemies and persecutors, that is, the devil, hell, sin and death are all overcome by the blood of the cross of Christ, and by our faith in his name (1 John 5: 4, 5; 1 Cor. 15: 24-27; Col. 2:10), and thus we have come into the wilderness on the way to the promised land.

Of the Paschal Lamb

In Christ Jesus is also fulfilled the figure of the Paschal lamb. That is, as the children of Israel roasted the Passover lamb in the fire and ate it, and with the blood of the Passover lamb sprinkled the lintels and the doorposts of their dwellings that the destroying angel of the Lord, when he saw the blood of the Passover lamb, would pass over and not slay them when he slew all the firstborn in Egypt (Ex. 12:7, etc.); likewise also Jesus Christ our Passover, was roasted for us by his fervent love upon the wood of the cross, and this Passover Lamb we must eat spiritually by faith (1 Cor. 5:4), and with his blood our hearts must be sprinkled from an evil conscience (1 Peter 1:19; Heb. 10: 22), against the wrath of God which is to come upon the blind world (Heb. 12:29). Whoever desires a further elucidation of this subject let him read our confession on the Lord's Supper.

Of the Manna, and the Rock, Which Gave Israel Water. Likewise Also of the Angel of the Lord Who Went Before Israel

In Christ is also fulfilled the figure of the bread of heaven (or manna) with which God fed Israel in the wilderness (Ex. 16:4), which is also called angels' food in the scripture (Psa. 78:25), for Christ Jesus is the true living bread come down from heaven, the bread of God which giveth life to the world, food for all hungry souls, yea, everlasting life, by which angels in heaven and the believers on earth are sustained (John 6:31, etc.; 14:6; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:6, 7).

In Christ is likewise restored or repeated the figure of the Rock which supplied Israel with water when Moses smote it with the staff which he had in his hand (Num. 20:11; 1 Cor. 10:4); for Jesus is the precious corner stone laid by God in Zion (1 Peter 2:6), the living Rock upon which the church is built (Matt. 16:18), from which also by the power of God which is represented by the staff of Moses the living waters of the Holy Spirit flow for the refreshing of all thirsty souls (John 4:11; 7:38).

In Christ is also fulfilled the figure of the angel of the Lord which went before Israel, guiding them by night with a pillar of fire, and by day with a pillar of cloud (Exo. 13:22; Psa. 78:14; 105:39), for Jesus Christ is our Guide who with his divine word shows us the way in the darkness of this world and protects, comforts and refreshes us from the heat of tribulation with the refreshing of his Holy Spirit, so that we are not consumed, and he teaches us at all times what to do and what not to do (Psa. 108:14; John 1:5; 8:12; 12:46; 14:6). Therefore we should not presume to undertake or begin anything without having Jesus Christ before us to guide and lead us with his doctrine, example and Spirit, Where anything is done otherwise he that does it errs in the dark and misses the right way in the wilderness of this world, and cannot find the right way.

Of the Bitter Waters That Were Made Sweet

Here the bitter waters of Mara (that is, the waters of sorrow, affliction and persecution) are sweetened by the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God (Exo. 15:25; Rev. 2:7) that is, by Jesus Christ and by his comforting gospel; for he is at all times with all his disciples in all the dangers with which they meet, and his word is their comfort (Matt. 28:10) and sweetness (Ps. 119:103; 19:10).

Here then begins the spiritual warfare against Amalek and against other enemies surrounding Israel, that is, here we must fight and overcome the princes of this world, the powers of evil, Satan, with the armor of God, the weapons of the Spirit (Eph. 6:11; 2:2) by the uplifted hands of Jesus Christ, which do not become weary (as the hands of Moses became heavy (Exo. 17:12) whereby the weakness and imperfection of the law may be readily understood Heb. 8:6; 9:9; 10:1), namely by the eternal sacrifice and holy, perfect prayer of Christ (Rom. 8:34) who sits at the right hand of the almighty Father making intercession for us. He has conquered all our enemies for us and our faith in his name is the victory that overcomes the world (John 16:33; 1 John 5:4), as John says.

But many transgress and sin against the Lord, therefore they are struck down in the wilderness, even as it came to pass as an example for us in the figurative Israel; that is, many who have been enlightened, who have come to the knowledge of the truth and are delivered out of Egypt, turn away again from the living God. This takes place in many

different ways; for many are overcome with a desire for the flesh-pots of Egypt and become dissatisfied and tired of the heavenly bread (Exo. 16:4; Ps. 78:18), that is, they become carnally minded and desirous of the false doctrines of men which itches their ears; they despise the word of God and the living bread of heaven Jesus Christ; therefore they must perish and be punished by God.

Of the Worshippers of the Calf

Some, moreover, worship the molten image of the calf (Exo. 32:4) desiring visible gods, and forsake Moses who carries on the mountain; that is, they turn away from the living God (1 Cor. 10:7), and from the Lord Jesus Christ who ascended to heaven and is delaying his return, as they imagine; therefore they degenerate into a strange worship, and choose unto themselves gods who are visible (Rom. 1:23) playing and leaping about the golden calf. For whoever loves or honors any creature more than the Creator, or instead of, God; whoever looks upon any doctrine of men as being equal to or above the word of God, and trusts, seeks, or hopes for righteousness or salvation in any kind of false worship which God has not instituted by an express declaration in God's word, without doubt worships the molten calf, and is counted by the Lord as an idolater. However gloriously he may embellish or adorn his idolatry with the appearance of holiness, calling it true worship, before the Lord, it is nevertheless nothing but idolatry (Deut. 5:6; 12:4); for God will be God and Lord alone and acknowledged as such; neither will he be served according to our own notions, but according to his word alone (Isa. 28:9; Matt. 15:2, 3).

Of Adultery With the Daughters of Moab, of the Balaamites, also Dathan, Abiram and Korah

But some commit fornication with the daughters of Moab (Num. 25:1; 1 Cor. 10:8); that is, they allow themselves to be deceived by false prophets and idolatrous churches so that they are overcome by a whorish spirit and sink into a carnal, ungodly life and worldly ways. With Zimri they care not that the church mourns over such sins and abominations and is sorrowful before the Lord, but they wantonly continue therein, that is, in their wickedness; therefore they are punished by the Lord and put out of the church of God, so that the whole Israel of God be not plagued on their account.

The modern Balaamites also existed in the time of the apostles and shortly afterward (Jude 11; 1 John 1:11; 1 Peter 2:16; 2 Peter 2:15), and they still continue unto the present day, namely the false teachers, who love the wages of unrighteousness, and therefore cannot see the angel of the Lord standing in the way with flaming sword; nor will they be turned or rebuked by the ass whose mouth God opened (Num. 22:28); that is, they will not accept the Lord's rebuke from the simple and humble, through whom God speaks and works; but they go ahead, and would gladly curse and pronounce maledictions upon Israel; but God will not hear them, and blesses his people so much the more, so that even the enemies marvel at the glorious dwelling of Jacob and the camp of Israel.

Some raise themselves with Korah, Dathan and Abiram against Moses and Aaron and are therefore swallowed up alive by the earth (Num. 16: 32); that is, they become contentious spirits in the church of God, wanton despisers, mockers, and transgressors of the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ; they cause dissension and heresies, they assume a ministry that has not been enjoined upon them, and they are therefore brought into fearful judgment by the Lord; yea, out of eternal life they go into eternal death, out of the kingdom of God into hell unless they repent, which however in many cases can hardly occur; for a contentious and heretical person, says Paul, "is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Tit. 3:11). Yea, many crucify unto themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:6), and count the blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10: 29), which now, alas, some are known to do. Some murmur against the Lord. They are impatient under trial (1 Cor. 10:10), when they might very properly praise the Lord for it: therefore they are destroyed by the Destroyer. Some tempt Christ, and are therefore bitten by serpents (Num. 20:3), poisoned with deadly sins, so that they must perish unless they repent and again look upon the Symbol of grace, Jesus Christ, with the eye of faith (John 3:14); for the figurative brazen serpent in the wilderness is spiritually restored in Jesus Christ; for as the brazen serpent in the wilderness had the form, but not the poison of serpents, but was a sign of salvation, so that all who looked upon it were restored by the Lord (Wis. of Sol. 16:6), who is the Savior of all; so also was Jesus Christ sent in the form of sinful flesh; yet he knew no sin (Rom. 8:3); but he is the innocent and spotless Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2), he is the true saving Symbol of all grace and of eternal life (John 3:15; 1 Peter 2:24).

Of Those Who Murmured, and of the Twelve Men Who Were Sent to Spy Out the Land

Let us here meditate upon the twelve men who were sent forth by Moses to spy out the land, and that they altogether became fainthearted and were frightened at the strong people of the land, the children of Anak, and at the towering walls of the cities; that is, all except Joshua and Caleb, who remained courageous in the Lord, and encouraged the congregation, therefore the others declared their ought to be stoned. But the people provoked the Lord, and he declared that not one of all those that had murmured against him, and had disbelieved and disobeyed his word, should possess the goodly land, save Joshua and Caleb alone, who had remained steadfast in faith (Num. 14: 30).

By these spies are prefigured the teachers and leaders of the church, of whom, alas, many fall away from God, and will not trust in God, but are afraid of men, and also discourage the rest. Against this condition the god-fearing ministers array themselves and comfort and encourage the church with the word of God,—and are made to suffer many things at the hands of their own brethren. Nevertheless the Lord knows not only how to deliver his own out of temptation, but also how to punish the recreant, and disobedient and unbelieving, as he has given us an example in the case of the children of Israel.

Therefore the apostle says: "With whom was the Lord grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief (Heb. 3:17-19). "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. But we which have believed do enter into his rest" (Heb. 4:1-3).

All God's dealings with Moses, from the tabernacle or tent and its preparation, equipment and adornment, was figurative, to the time of the law, which was present, and to the time of grace and truth which was to come, and which appeared by Jesus Christ, as may be read in the Epistle to the Hebrew's and in our chapter on the Tabernacle of Moses (Heb. 7 and 8).

It must also be noted here, that both Moses and Aaron died in the wilderness, and were not permitted to possess the promised land, because they had displeased the Lord. But Joshua had to lead the people in and divide the land (Deut. 34:5; Num. 20:28; Deut. 34:9). This signifies to us that both the law and the Levitical priesthood, with all their ceremonies, had to cease and have their end in Christ, and could never make the comers thereunto perfect (Heb. 8:6; 10:1), nor take away sin, nor give righteousness, nor save. But the spiritual Joshua, Christ Jesus, the Author of our faith and Perfecter of our salvation (Heb. 12:2) brings us into the true promised land, the everlasting kingdom of God, here in the Spirit, in the power of the new birth, and abundance of spiritual riches, and hereafter into the eternal glory of heaven and the possession of all things incorruptible, when we shall have become like him and see him face to face in the perfection of the life to come (Rev. 2:10; 3:4, 5; 1 John 3:2; 1 Cor. 15: 42-44).

Hence it is also proper to observe here how the promised land and rest must be possessed (Heb. 4:9), namely, that we have to pass through the Jordan, where the great waters are heaped up high, and are fearful to behold. This signifies to us that we have to enter the kingdom of God through many crosses and trials and through the portal of temporal death; for the righteous must suffer much, and die daily (Acts 14:19, 20; Ps. 44:22; Rom. 8:36), at the prospect of which human nature is terrified; but the priests are ahead, standing in the midst of the Jordan with the ark of God, they comfort us with the sanctuary (Josh. 3:17), that is, with the word of God, for it is our comfort and the strength of our life in the midst of death, until we shall leave this world (Ps. 23:4; Prov. 18:10), and reach the haven of the heavenly land, in the blessed rest, where we shall rest with God from all our labors, our cares, and our work, forever.

So then we first come out of Egypt through the sea into the wilderness, as when we are converted from darkness to the light and delivered from the kingdom of Satan, freed from sin, hell and death and placed upon the right way that leads to eternal life (Col. 1:13; Heb. 2:15; Matt. 7:13, 14). Thereafter we pass through the Jordan into the promised land when we depart out of this world and enter into the blessed rest (Heb. 4:9; Rev. 14:13). But that Joshua, at the command of God, circumcised with stone knives the

young Israelites who had been born in the wilderness and were uncircumcised, before they might enter and possess the land (Josh. 4:3), signifies to us that all true Israelites must be circumcised in the foreskin of their hearts with the circumcision of Christ by the putting away of the sinful body in the flesh before they may enter into everlasting blessedness in the kingdom of their heavenly Father.

Of the Figurative Rulership of the Judges, also Samson

Further there follows now the figurative rulership of the judges who delivered Israel many times out of the hands of the Philistines and other enemies, establishing peace in the land and judging the people (Judg. 6:14; 7:21; 13:24, etc), all of which is spiritually repeated or restored in Jesus Christ, for he is the mighty Warrior and Conqueror who delivers his people from all enemies and has made peace in their consciences and is now the righteous Judge in his church (Heb. 12:2, 3; John 16: 33; Rom. 8:37; Eph. 2:14; Heb. 2: 8-10; Rom. 5:1) with his word and Spirit, and at the last day he will judge the living and the dead (Acts 17:31; 10:42; Rom. 2:16; 14:10; 1 Tim. 6:14; 1 Peter 4:5).

In Christ is also restored the figure of Samson. He was a Nazarene of God and a judge in Israel, who took a daughter of the Philistines for a wife. But his father and mother did not understand this, and did not know that it was of the Lord. Samson it was who tore the young lion to pieces; who, with the jawbone of an ass slew a thousand Philistines, who took upon his shoulders the gates of the city of Gaza and carried them up on a hill (Judg. 14:3, 4; 16:4) near Hebron. He also fell in love with other strange women, and on their account lost his strength; he fell into the hands of his enemies, who put out his eyes, and had their sport with him until his hair grew long again and he had recovered his strength, and when the lords of the Philistines had come together to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon, their god, and rejoice because Samson, their enemy, was a prisoner, and had to make sport for them, then Samson grasped the two middle pillars that supported the house, one in his right hand and the other in his left hand, and he bowed himself with all his might, and the house fell down, so that in his death he destroyed more enemies than he had destroyed in his life.

This figure is spiritually fulfilled in Christ, for he is the true Nazarene, the holy son of the Most High (Matt. 2:21; Luke 2:34), and the Judge of the Israel of God, who took unto himself the heathen and choose there-from a church and gathered it by the preaching of the gospel, espoused to him by faith, which the Jews did not understand, not knowing that it had been thus planned and ordained by the Lord (Rom. 11:25; Acts 10:44, 45; 15:14; Gal. 2:8, 9; 1 Peter 5:8, 9; Heb. 2:8; Hos. 2:19, 20). He overcame the young lion, the adversary of Christians, that is, Satan, out of which conquest has come all the sweetness of divine grace, all comfort and refreshing of the soul; with the jawbone of an ass, that is, with his uneducated apostles, who in the eyes of the world were as stupid as asses, he vanquished the uncircumcised of heart (1 Cor. 1:26-28; 3:19), the worldly wise and the scribes, the enemies of the gospel, and out of the humble word of the cross

God gives to all true worshipers the living water of the Holy Spirit that by faith the thirsty soul may be refreshed (Acts 7:54; John 4:11; 7:38).

He destroyed the gates of hell, and led captivity captive; he bore with his own body the sins of the world upon the wood of the cross; he laid aside his divine form and divested himself of his eternal glory and in his love which he had for us Gentiles who walked in all manner of idolatry, he humbled himself (John 1:29; Eph. 4:8; 1 John 2:2; 1 Peter 2:24; Phil. 2:7, 8) and thus in the providence of his heavenly Father and for the sake of our salvation fell into the hands of his enemies, the lords of the Philistines, Annas and Caiaphas, with the Pharisees and Jews and the congregation of the Gentiles (1 Peter 1:23; 4:1; Matt. 26:56; Mark 14:46; Luke 22:52-54), who took him prisoner, blinded, mocked, and maltreated him and rejoiced at his sufferings. Nevertheless the Lord Jesus Christ the faithful Savior avenged himself of his enemies. By his suffering and death he overcame them all, deprived the devil of his power, conquered death, and wrought and brought life and eternal salvation to us, yea, he destroyed death and conquered hell (Hos. 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:54). But the Jews would not have the Lord Jesus Christ to rule over them; he punished them, made their city desolate, dispersed them among the Gentiles, and they must still bear the guilt and vengeance of the innocent and righteous blood which they shed (Luke 19:14; John 1:11; Matt. 27:25).

Of the Figurative Kingdom of David

After this comes the figurative kingdom of David, the son of Jesse who was the least or youngest among his brethren, and the shepherd of his father's flock (1 Sam. 16:11, 12), who was taken from the flocks and was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be a king of Israel, who killed a lion and a bear, who rescued the lost sheep and who killed the giant Goliath, a champion of the Philistines, an enemy, a mocker and a despiser of Israel, with his own sword, whereby great joy was brought to Israel, because their greatest enemy was slain, and for which they praised God with harps and cymbals and tabrets and psalteries (1 Sam. 17:49-18:7). Therefore David out of anger and jealousy was persecuted by Saul, and for a long time had to wander among mountains and caves and remain in hiding; nevertheless he finally became a mighty King over all Israel. All of this figure is spiritually repeated or restored in Christ Jesus. For he is the true root of the stem of Jesse the Branch or Offspring of David, the Plant of righteousness, esteemed the least among the children of men (Isa. 11:1; Rev. 22:16; Jer. 23:5; Acts 13:23; Ezek. 32:1) the only true shepherd of the sheep of his heavenly Father who delivered the lost sheep of the human race out of the jaws of the lion and out of the claws of the bear and is anointed of God with the oil of gladness above all his fellows (John 10:11; 1 Peter 2:24), who overcame the giant Goliath, that is, Satan, by his death and the blood of the Cross (Psa. 44:6; Heb. 1:8). Therefore the Israel of God rejoices that the greatest enemy of Christians, the diabolical Satan, the antagonist of the children of God has been overcome by our spiritual David, Jesus Christ, who by his divine righteousness put away sin, and by his eternal life destroyed death (Col. 2:14; Heb. 2:8; 1 Peter 5:4; 2 Cor. 5:19), and by his saving grace took away condemnation. That is a joyous gospel, full of all comfort, where the Holy Ghost comforts all repentant and troubled hearts (John 1:14; 14:6); for this we

thank God; we sing and play unto the Lord in our hearts with great rejoicing in the Spirit (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:16).

Christ was also persecuted by the ungodly and unbelieving Jews, by the perverted Pharisees and Scribes, and often had to flee from Judea, and hide in the wilderness, and thus escape from their hands (Luke 4:29; John 8:59; 10: 31; Rom. 3: 24; 7: 4); nevertheless he took possession of his kingdom and was installed and established by God his Father a mighty King upon Mount Zion (Psa. 2:6), and God has given him the throne of David, and he shall reign in the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom shall have no end.

He has also come forth as the peaceful Solomon, our peace and hope with God the Father. Through his apostles, who on the day of Pentecost were endued with power from on high, he built the temple in Jerusalem, i.e., the Christian Church, and adorned it with many spiritual gifts, as was the case with the apostolic church, and as the scripture very clearly shows (Acts 2:1-5; 4: 31) that the promise to Solomon is applied by the apostles to Christ. For what God promised David—that the fruit of his loins should sit upon his throne after him (Psa. 132:12; Luke 1:69; Acts 2: 30)—was literally fulfilled, for Solomon became king of Israel in David's stead, as may be clearly seen in the scripture, and as Solomon himself testifies. But spiritually this must be understood of the true Solomon, Jesus Christ, who has a throne that shall endure forever, and he is the King of his Church, over all the spiritual Israel (1 Kings 8:20; Psa. 45:6; 93:2: Heb. 1:8).

Of the Figurative Temple of Solomon

That the figurative temple of Solomon in Jerusalem was dedicated signifies to us that the church of the Lord is sanctified by God through Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit, and is therefore a holy temple, a house of the living God, and a pillar and foundation of truth (1 Cor. 3:17; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Tim. 3:15). In this temple God desires to be worshiped in Spirit, and in truth; here God desires sacrifices to be offered; here are the true priests and Levites, the children and descendants of the spiritual Aaron, our only High Priest, Jesus Christ; here is the sanctuary of our God, the Ark of the Covenant, the pure and holy word of the gospel, with all the gracious promises of God (John 4:23; Heb. 3:1; 5:4; 8:1; 10:1) regarding the forgiveness of sin, reconciliation with God, and eternal life through Jesus Christ. Here is the mystery of godliness, of the symbols of the sacrament, of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which have been left by Christ for all believers (Matt. 26:26; 28:19; Mark 14:24; 16:15; Luke 22:19; 24:25; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23).

Of the Feasts of Pentecost and of Tabernacles

Into this temple we must come to keep the feast of the Passover, the feast of Pentecost and the feast of the Tabernacle, spiritually unto the Lord. We keep the Passover feast when we preach Jesus Christ our paschal Lamb which was sacrificed for us, believe in him, purge out the old leaven of malice and wickedness, and become a new lump, and thus spiritually eat our Paschal Lamb of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:7, 8; John 6:35, 54), remembering our grievous bondage in Egypt under Satan who

is the prince of darkness (Eph. 2:17, 19) and that we have been delivered by the mighty hand of God, and that we have had our hearts and consciences sprinkled with the precious blood of the spotless Paschal Lamb Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:19; Heb; 9:12, 14; Rev. 5:9), and are thus saved and preserved from the punishment which shall come upon the blind world (1 Thess. 1:10).

We keep the feast of Pentecost when we come before God and confess that we have been in bondage in Egypt under the hellish Pharaoh, and that God has wonderfully delivered us and has accepted and chosen us to be the first fruits of his creatures and fellow-heirs of his eternal kingdom in heaven, and has richly endowed and blessed us with heavenly riches, for which we praise and thank God, and offer him the fruits of righteousness, the thanksgiving of our lips which confess his name (Heb. 13:15; James 1:17; Rev. 14:4; Rom. 8:1; Eph. 1:7; Gal. 3:5). And it is very necessary that we sincerely confess through Jesus Christ our ignorance, blindness, and the burden of sin with which we were cumbered, and on the other hand the riches of the grace of God which has been poured out upon us (Eph. 1:3; 2:4; 4:10; 5:14; Rom. 1:7, 8), and that we meditate upon this, that we may praise God, and thank him for his unspeakable gift of which through his loving kindness we have become the recipients (Rom. 11:33).

We keep the feast of Tabernacles unto the Lord when we confess that we are pilgrims in this world and have no continuing city here (1 Peter 1:17; 2:11; Heb. 11:13), but are journeying toward the promised land and have a desire for it, that we might enter into the blessed rest, into the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 4:9; 12:22; John 14:2), into the city of the living God, where Jesus Christ has prepared a place for us, where we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Cor. 15:49), with which we shall be clothed when our earthly tabernacle shall be broken, that is, when we have laid down this corruptible and mortal flesh and shall be clothed with an incorruptable, immortal, glorified body.

Of Solomon's Kingdom and Glory

In Christ Jesus is also spiritually restored the glory of the kingdom of Solomon, in great riches, in superabundance of gold and silver, in peace, in great wisdom, and in many other gifts, so that the servants were called blessed who stood before them (1 Kings 1:34-40; 2:45; 3:12, 13) and heard the words of wisdom from his mouth. All of this is spiritually renewed in Christ Jesus; for through him are poured out upon us the riches of divine grace, through him we have the unadulterated and pure word of God (Eph. 1:2; Psa. 12:6; 119:140; Jer. 4:14), which is compared to gold and silver Psa. 19:10; 119:72; 1 Cor. 3:12; Psa. 119:127), through him we have peace with God in our consciences (Eph. 2:14, 15), he has become our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1:30), and blessed are his servants who minister unto him, who stand before him, who hear his words and keep them (Luke 11:28).

Here are also the twelve officers or rulers in the royal court of Christ, namely, the twelve apostles of the Lord who have authority and dominion in the Spirit over all nations and who supply the household of the King (Matt. 22:3, 8), that is, the Christian

church with the bread and meat of the word of God, and have at the proper time dispensed the food of souls, which was done when they preached the gospel to all creatures, baptized the penitent and believing, and brake the bread of the Lord with those who were baptized, fed the hungry souls with the word of Christ (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Col. 1:24; Acts 2:38; 4:33) and as spiritual conquerors with the weapons of righteousness have destroyed all powers (2 Cor. 10:4, 5; Eph. 6:12-18), and taking captive every thought to obedience, and casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and with the two-edged sword of the Spirit have put to death and slain all enmity and all opposition (Heb. 4:12) and with the sharp arrows of God's wrath have pierced the hearts of penitents and with the chain of the righteous judgment of God have bound unto eternal destruction and punishment the disobedient, the contrary, and obstinate, and thus have occupied the spiritual dominion, yea, filled the royal and priestly office in the peace and power of the Spirit to the end of the world (1 Peter 2:9).

Such princes, priests and ministers the peaceful Jesus Christ had in his government. There were also at the time many Israelite men, warriors and fathers, namely, the glorious company of the apostles, pastors, shepherds and elders who are helpers and builders at the holy temple (1 Tim. 3:8). The cities and villages of the country composing this realm are the spiritual congregations. The goodly land and kingdom that bears all manner of good fruit, and that flows with milk and honey is the renewed people that bring all manner of spiritual sweetness. The good trees in the land are the preachers of righteousness adorned with many kinds of gifts (Psa. 1:3; Jer. 17:8; Ezek. 47:12; Matt. 13:33). There was great comfort and fruit in Zion, not in the flesh, but in the Holy Ghost; there harps were played, and drums rolled, and trumpets sounded, and joyful praises were ascribed to the Lord in the Spirit and in the hearts of all true Israelites (Rom. 14:17; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; James 5:13). There was preparation and adornment with purple and fine linen in honor of Jesus Christ the King with spiritual virtue and gifts, in the power of faith, there they adorned themselves with the oil of gladness, ate and drank the heavenly bread and the best wine in the sanctuary (Psa. 45:8, 9; Heb. 1:3; John 6:35) for the strengthening and eternal quickening of the heart. There also the daughter of Pharaoh and the daughters of other foreign lands, yea, the host of Kings and of women have come to the royal throne and chamber in Zion, which represents the host of the churches of Jesus Christ, of the apostles and teachers from among all Gentiles and races brought to him and united with him (1 King 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:6).

The Song of Solomon and His Bride

Here in Christ and his church is also repeated Solomon's Song, of the King and his bride (Sol. Song 1 and 2). Here the Bridegroom, Christ, kisses his bride with the holy kiss of peace and rejoices at her beauty, and the fine fragrance of her ointments, that is, of the inner gifts, virtues, and anointment of the Holy Spirit with which she is adorned and anointed (Psa. 45:12-15; Rev. 19: 7, 8; 1 John 2:27). Here the full spiritual significance of the figure is brought out in the words of the Bridegroom to the bride: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the

flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with tender grapes give a good smell" (Sol. Song 2:10-13). That is, the dispensation of the law has passed away, the wrath of God is appeased, the punishment of the Lord has been taken away, (Rom. 6:10, 11, 14; 11:25, 20, the joyful dispensation of grace has come, the comforting gospel is heard, the sweet fruits of righteousness are in bloom, the land is fruitful in faith and in the knowledge of God, the plants of the Lord are shooting forth, the branches of the vine Jesus Christ are budding, and give forth a sweet fragrance or savor of life (Isa. 6:13; John 15:2), through the power of Christ which is in them. Thus it was in the time of the primitive apostolic church, and still is every day at this time with all believers.

Here also, in a spiritual sense, are the threescore valiant men of Israel round about Solomon's bed, and every man has his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night (Sol. Song 3:7, 8); that is, round about the chamber of Christ and his bride, where they rest in all sweetness, happiness and love of the Spirit. These are the ministers of the word, the preachers of the gospel (Acts 2:14), who are chosen from among the valiant in faith in Israel, who watch over the flock of Christ and are armed with the sword of the Spirit against the artful attacks of Satan (Eph. 6:13-17; Heb. 4:12) and against the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the arrow that flieth by day, so that they will not be struck by the spirit of darkness (Psa. 91:5, 6). In short, the entire Song of Solomon is repeated in Christ and his church.

Here can also be seen the eternal spiritual and heavenly kingdom of Christ, in the power of God, and in the Holy Ghost, where the true Solomon, the Prince and King of peace, Jesus Christ, reigns in full power in heaven and on earth, and sits upon the throne of his glory at the right hand of God, and reigns upon mount Sion (Psa. 45:6; Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:1; Acts 2:33; Psa. 2:6), that is, in his church, with the unconquerable scepter of his divine word (Eph. 1:19-22), by which he crushes the hearts of the Gentiles and breaks them in pieces (Jer. 23:5), but judges and punishes the unbelievers. And in this great and glorious kingdom the righteous and believers triumph (Wis. of Sol. 3:1), they rest in the true peace of Jesus Christ, and have joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17; 1 John 5:4), as victors through faith, full of all heavenly riches and possessions.

Of the Decline of Solomon's Kingdom

Then, as there was a falling away from the king of Solomon through Jeroboam and he forsook the true worship of God and chose a false worship for himself, setting up two calves, one at Bethel and one at Dan, and ordained and installed priests and Levites from the lowest classes (1 King 12: 31), filled their hands, made an altar, offered sacrifices thereon and thus led Israel astray and caused them to sin until they were carried away captive by the king of Assyria (2 Kings 17: 6, 7); so also in like measure there was, spiritually, a falling away from the kingdom of Christ by a departure from the doctrine and a decline of the faith through Antichrist, who forsook the true worship in the temple of Jerusalem and set up for himself false worship (2 Thes. 2:3); for all that Christ taught and commanded he imitated, in hypocritical manner and in appearance with his priests,

altars sacrifices, worship and with a great show and with abominable desecration of the sacraments of Jesus Christ; and this he has adorned with perverted scripture passages just as if it were true worship, and as if the almighty God of heaven were being served therein. But when it is instituted, it is nothing but abominable idolatry and sacrilege; for all of it is manifestly contrary to the gospel of Christ just as that which Jeroboam did according to his own notions was contrary to the law of Moses. Therefore also those who fear God cannot go to his calves nor worship them, but with all God-fearing Israelites they must shun the humanly devised, false worship of the spiritual Jeroboam, that is, the Antichrist (Tob. 1:6; 2 Cor. 6:14, 15) and journey to the heavenly Jerusalem, up to the church of the Lord, there to worship and honor the Most High in his temple according to his command.

Beside the golden calves of Jeroboam and his false worship in the apostate Israel of the flesh, various idolatries with Baal and other gods of the heathen were set up. Although some of the prophets and kings rebuked these practices so that they were partly overthrown, nevertheless both calves remained until the captivity of Israel (2 Kings 17: 12-23). So also under the reign of Antichrist in time many abominable idolatries and heresies have been introduced, and again opposed and discontinued by some, but the two golden calves of Jeroboam, the shameful misuse of holy baptism, and the desecration of the Holy Supper of Jesus Christ have remained, for even salvation is made to appear as depending upon them, and righteousness is sought therein (Rom. 3: 22, 23), thereby grossly despising grace and the precious blood of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16; Eph. 1:7; Col 1:14).

How Israel was Twice Carried into Captivity and Twice Made Free

As there was a falling away in Israel through Jeroboam, so there was also a falling away in Judah. That is, in the first falling away many pious Christians continued in God and in his word; for this apostasy was evident in the time of the apostles; many antichrists and apostates being at work (2 Thes. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 1 John 2:18), but many continued to hold fast to the house and temple at Jerusalem, that is, to the kingdom of Christ and his true worship. But in time apostasy also entered there, so that all their descendants were led astray, until at last they also were carried into captivity in Babylon among Antichrist. Nevertheless, just as in the time of the apostasy in Israel and Judah there remained some faithful prophets, God-fearing priests, Israelites and Jews who had nothing to do with the false worship, so there are without doubt some remaining in the spiritual apostasy who have not followed Antichrist, as may be clearly understood from the .book of Revelations (Rev. 14: 1; 15:2; 17:8; 19:9; 20:4; 21:7).

Thus has the glorious kingdom of the spiritual Solomon, the beautiful church of Jesus Christ, as it existed in the time of the apostles and afterward upon the earth, been so grievously devastated and blighted, and the Holy City given over into the power of the heathen, the Antichrist, to be represented by him, just as it came to pass literally in the case of Israel and Judah, namely, after the temple was built, after the long sovereignty of

the kings, after many sins, apostasies and abominations which in time crept in, God gave his people into the hands of the kings of Babylon, and the Holy City and the temple were ruined and devastated. This devastation of the Holy City and the temple was accomplished by Antichrist, by the whore of Babylon, who has perverted all divine institutions, who is adorned with purple and silk and scarlet and gold, who holds the golden cup in her hand full of abominations, who is drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus Christ, and who has made all the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication and her sorcery (Rev. 17:2-6); whose merchants have waxed rich through the power of her delicacies, her merchandise and her methods; the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her (Rev. 18:3), and are still doing it; in short, she is the mother of all abominations upon the earth, and all who love their souls and desire to be saved must forsake this whore and depart out of Babylon, as the scripture says: "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Jer. 50:8; 51:6; 2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4). "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities" (Rev. 18:5).

Now, it is necessary to note here that Israel was twice in captivity, twice delivered, and twice entered into a glorious kingdom, also that the temple was twice built in the same shape and on the same foundation. Of the first bondage or captivity in Egypt and their deliverance, of the kingdom of David and of Solomon, of the glory, and of the building of the first temple, mention has already been made. But now we have come to the second deliverance out of Babylon, now we have come to the building of the second temple and the City of Jerusalem, for now God delivers his people every day in a wonderful way out of the spiritual captivity of Babylon, now he delivers his chosen ones from all the abominations of the Babylonian whore with faithful admonitions from the Holy Scriptures, and by his messengers, to come out of Babylon, and touch not the unclean things (Rev. 18:4; Jer. 50: 8; 2 Cor. 6:17), and return with rejoicing to Jerusalem and to build again the ruined temple and the destroyed city, that is, the church of Christ, as may (God be praised) be very plainly seen.

It must also here be remembered that the Jews and children of Israel who had taken unto themselves heathen wives in Babylon, had done contrary to the law of God (Ezra 10:44) and had to put them away again and depart from them and such as were born to them (Ezra 10: 2, 3, 11), that they might be cleansed from the abominations of the heathen. This signifies and teaches two things. In the first place, that all Christians must withdraw themselves from all Babylonian idolatry and fellowship, and cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit (2 Cor. 6:17; 7:1; Rev. 18:4) that they may be a holy people unto the Lord and properly qualified to serve him. This cannot be the case, unless there be first a separation from all the abominations of the Gentiles and Babylon (Lev. 18:30; 19:4, etc.; 1 Peter 2:9). In the second place, that marriage between the people of God and heathen women, entered upon contrary to the law, did not stand before God (Lev. 19). Hence it was broken by Ezra, because it was unclean in the eyes of the Lord (Ezra 10:11, 12), and was therefore so sorely punished by God upon the children of God in the antediluvian world, and thereafter so sternly forbidden by Moses

(Gen. 7:23; Deut. 7:2). In view of the fact that such unclean matrimonial alliances and mixed marriages between the children of God and the unbelievers could not stand under the imperfect dispensation of the law, how could it stand before God and his congregation under the perfect dispensation of the Christian age of the gospel. Let everyone meditate upon and consider this matter.

The temple of our Lord and the city of the living God is now being rebuilt, and as it was literally in the second building of the figurative temple of Jerusalem, so it is now spiritually; for the temple then was built on the same lines and foundation as the first; then the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin wanted to build with Zerubbabel. But Zerubbabel and the chief of the fathers in Israel answered them: "Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us" (Ezra 4:3). The heathen mocked Nehemiah and his brethren and scoffed the idea of building the city (Neh. 2:10; 4:1-3) and were ready to oppose them with violence and break down the walls of the city. But Nehemiah and all the other Jews rose up against them and worked on the walls of the city, half of them standing guard and the other half working on the building having their swords at their sides prepared for strife (Neh. 4: 14-18).

This same condition now exists spiritually, for the temple of the Lord, the church of God, is now being built upon the first foundation (Eph. 2: 20-22; 1 Cor. 3: 9, 10; 4:12; 1 Peter 2: 4, 5; 1 Cor. 12: 28 upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. The living stones which are now lying scattered here and there are again gathered and built together into the habitation of God. There are now true ministers of the holy word, true preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ; all divine ordinances and apostolic doctrines are restored and observed with a thorough restoration and renewing by sincere repentance, faith in God, true knowledge of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost, Christian baptism, the right use of the Lord's Supper, a godly life of brotherly love and fidelity among all the saints, evangelical separation or the ban and all ordinances of God by the power of the Spirit (1 Peter 2:1; Matt. 3:4; Heb. 6:3; John 17:17; 1 John 2:1; Matt. 26: 26, 27; 28:10; Mark 14:23; 16:15; Matt. 18:18). Now there is singing unto the Lord with great joy in the Spirit (Col. 3:16), now there are offered unto the Lord living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices which is a reasonable and right service (Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:12, 13, 16) which is rendered to the God of heaven. Now are brought to the Lord fervent prayers as a sweet smelling savor, and the lifting up of holy hands for the evening sacrifice (Psa. 134:2; 1 Tim. 2:8). Thus the temple of the Lord, the habitation of the living God, now stands upon the first foundation and in the original form and glory.

**Of the Building of the Temple in the City of
the Living God, in Which Work the Enemies of the
Truth Desire to Help, but Which is not Proper for
Them**

The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin who want to build at the house of the Lord with Zerubbabel are those who falsely profess the gospel and make a hypocritical pretense, just as if they also desired to serve God, but their heart is divided and they are not the true builders and workers in Israel, and therefore the sincere Christians have no desire to build with them, for no one is qualified for such work unless he be a Jew or Israelite of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (1 Cor. 3:9-11; 1 Peter 2:6); that is, he must be a newborn man of God, born anew of the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

The heathen also come now and scoff at and ridicule the elders at the thought of this rebuilding of the Holy City of Jerusalem. They consider them far too weak and small; they speak sarcastically and very blasphemously; for to the exalted ones of this world, to the educated and perverted ones, the idea that such a poor, cast-off people should presume to rebuild the devastated and ruined Jerusalem, the church of Christ, and to restore the walls, is a huge joke. They forget that Christ built his church through the instrumentality of simple and uneducated apostles, and brought it into such a glorious condition, neither do they realize that Christ says in the gospel: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matt. 11: 25, 26); and Paul says to the Corinthians that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (1 Cor. 1:20). God testified to that fact through Isaiah with these words: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (1 Cor. 1:19, 20; Isa. 29:14), and at still another place: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts 13:41; Isa. 29:14).

When these mockers of Israel see, then, that their ridicule is not noticed and that the work of the Lord, the building of the Holy City, proceeds in spite of it, they become quite angry (Neh. 4:1) they make a league among each other against the Lord and his church and try to prevent Jerusalem from being rebuilt;—the tyrants by their stern mandates, with water, fire and sword; the learned ones with their philosophy, craftiness and ingenuity in perverting the scripture with writing and preaching and by arousing the government, demanding that the builders of the City of Jerusalem should be dispersed, throttled and killed, just so the Lord's work will be hindered. But against this the Lord's people arm themselves, not with carnal weapons, as unfortunately some, for want of understanding have erroneously done, but with the armor of God. with the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, with the helmet of salvation and the shield of faith, with which to quench the fiery darts of Satan (Eph. 6:14-16), with the powerful two-edged sword of God (Heb. 4:12; Luke 11:11), and with Christian patience, with which to possess their souls, and thus overcome all their enemies (Heb. 12:1; Rom. 12:12), and build the walls of Jerusalem with such equipment for war, with such bold and manly hearts, with the comforting assurance that the God of heaven is their helper in time of need, and that the hand of his Christ is with them, and that the heathen (who have no

part in the house of the Lord nor in the city of Jerusalem), with all their power cannot prevent the building of both city and temple; for the Lord is with his people and will faithfully help his servants. Amen.

The second figurative temple and rebuilt city of Jerusalem remained standing until the first coming of Christ. In the meantime the Jews suffered many trials and persecutions, and were terribly plagued and slaughtered by Antiochus and other tyrants because they would not forsake the law of God nor worship the idols of the heathen (1 Mac. 8, 7). Many also fell away and hypocritically served the ungodly tyrants and authorities. These often became the first and worst enemies, renegades, betrayers and persecutors of the god-fearing Jews, as can be read all through the books of the Maccabees, and as can be found in many well written histories.

In the same way the second, spiritual temple and holy city of Jerusalem will remain standing until the second coming and appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; for unto the people of God under heaven is given an everlasting kingdom, and the kingdom of our Lord Christ has no end (Dan. 7:18, 22, 27; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15). Nevertheless all who would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). Christians are robbed, their houses are burned,, they are ridiculed by the heathen, they are despised, they are looked upon as foolish, their life is considered fanaticism (Psa. 44: 22; Wis. of Sol. 5:3, 4), the bodies of the servants of God are given to the birds of the air for food and the flesh of the saints to the beasts of the earth; innocent blood is shed like water, and there is none to bury the dead. In short, Antiochus is exceeding mad and insane beyond measure toward the godly who believe the gospel, and desire to live according to-the gospel. But those who honor and lead in the worship of his Maosim (Merodach), the unknown idol, the false humanly devised worship, them he raises to positions of honor and bestows rich gifts upon them, as may be readily seen every day.

From all this it is evident that all things are restored and shall be repeated, spiritually, in Christ Jesus and in the time of his dominion until the time of his coming and appearing, as the apostle says (1 Peter 1:5; Acts 3: 20). Therefore we need not expect any other restitution or repetition of all things in any other than in a spiritual sense in Christ Jesus who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all creation (Rev. 1: 8, 11, 17) and the perfection and completion of all the works of God, here in the Spirit and hereafter in the perfect life (1 Cor. 13:10), as that which is renewed and restored and changed and transformed into the eternal as a final reward and rulership of all believers and saints in that place where God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost and with all the holy angels shall be forever and forever (John 14:1-3; 17:24; 1 Thes. 4:17). All that the prophets have prophesied and declared regarding the rebuilding of the house of David, of the kingdom of Christ and its glory (Acts 9:15), of the wrath of God against Babylon (Jer. 50:1-3), and of the rebuilding of the temple and of the city of Jerusalem, in short, the restitution of all things must be thus understood and be changed from the letter to the Spirit. Thereby the foundation of our most holy Christian faith is greatly strengthened and strongly confirmed, as we clearly see and understand that all which we believe and confess is in the first place presented by many beautiful

figures, and thereafter revealed, explained, testified and confirmed by the eternal Truth itself, that is, through Jesus Christ (John 1:4; 14:6).

May the eternal, almighty God, who from the beginning wrought and made provision for all things, firstly in figure or symbol, and thereafter in the true substance by his eternal word, by his only begotten Son Jesus Christ, preserve us in his truth, by his unfathomable mercy. May he renew us in the inner man and preserve us in uprightness of life unto our end (Col. 1:14; Heb. 1:5) that we may appear with joy before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ when he shall come with the angels of his power with flaming fire to execute wrath upon all them who knew not God and who have not been obedient to his gospel, and to be glorified in his saints and gloriously revealed (2 Thes. 1:8-10), and admired in all them that believe (Phil. 3:11), in the resurrection and revelation of the heavenly glory with which they shall be clothed by the power of Christ, that with him they may enter and possess forever the eternal, incorruptible glory in the perfect life (Matt. 13:36).

Soli Sapienti Deo Gloria.

Book Eleven

The Church of God How it was in the Beginning. by What Means it is Known, and Distinguished From all Sects

A
BRIEF CONFESSION

By

D. P.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, . . .

and that the temple of God is holy,

which temple ye are.

1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

Glorious things are spoken of thee,

O city of God.

Psa. 87:4.

Ye are the temple of the living God.

2 Cor. 6:16.

These things I write unto thee, . . .
that thou mayest know how thou oughtest
to behave thyself in the house of God,
which is the church of the living God,
the pillar and ground of the truth.

1 Tim. 3:14, 15.

Christ is set by God his Father above all things,
and is given to be the head over all things to the church,
which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

Eph. 1: 22, 23.

If any man defile the temple of God (that is, the church),
him shall God destroy.

1 Cor. 3:17.

Preface

I, D. P., by grace a fellow-believer in Jesus Christ and a member of the Christian church, wish the Christian reader much wisdom, understanding, peace and mercy from God our heavenly Father, and from Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, in love and truth, as an everlasting blessing. Amen. 2 John 3.

Having according to my humble gift written a simple and brief treatise giving my views regarding spiritual restitution, giving the gentle reader directions by which he may, according to the measure of the Spirit and of faith given him, meditate still further upon the subject and take it to heart, that in Christ Jesus all things have been renewed and restored, yea, that the era of reality has begun (2 Cor. 5:17), the church of God brought

together, established, and brought into a glorious condition (Col. 1:9-11), I must therefore now also write briefly of the church of God, how it was in the beginning, by what means it was established, how it was gathered from all nations, how it may be recognized, and distinguished from all sects, what ordinances it has of God, how the ministers must be qualified, how every member must walk, how beautiful and glorious the church is. For since all mankind is invited into the church of God, and everyone says, "Lo, here is Christ" (Matt. 24:23). "The temple of the Lord, are these" (Jer. 7:4; Mic. 3:11), and all sects presume to be the church of Christ and desire to be known as such, therefore it is necessary for all lovers of the truth to know which is the true Christian church, and that they must ally themselves with this same church if they desire to be saved; for those who now reject the proffered grace of God, who will not repent, believe the gospel nor obey it, despise the ordinances of God and will not enter into the communion of the body of Jesus Christ (Matt. 3:2; 22:7; 23:12; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:4; 1 Cor. 12:12, 13), will hardly be able to escape the judgment of God, forasmuch as Christ himself says that no man can come unto the Father but by him (John 14: 6), and that whosoever abides in him shall bear much fruit; but that whosoever does not abide in him is as a withered branch of a vine (John 15:2-7), and that he that believes not in him is condemned already, etc. (John 3:18). Therefore let everyone hasten to Christ, to the hill of Zion, and go to the house of the living God to hear the law of the Lord and the gospel, that they may be grafted into Christ and preserve their souls unto eternal blessedness. Amen. (John 3:36; 10:38; 1 John 5:10).

How the Church had its Origin With the Angels, and Later With Adam and Eve

The church of God was originally begun by God in heaven with the angels, who were created spirits and flaming fire (Psa. 104:4; Heb. 1:7), to stand before the throne of God praising and serving him, and also that they should minister to and be fellowservants of the believers (Rev. 21:9). For, although they are such high and exalted creatures of God, they are nevertheless one and all ministering spirits, as the apostle says, "sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14). For they guard the children of God, they encamp round about those who fear God (Psa. 34:7). They went before Israel, they led Lot out of Sodom (Gen. 19:16; Psa. 34:22; 91:11; 103:20; Matt. 18:10; Luke 1:19; Acts 12: 7, etc.). In short, they serve the saints and chosen people of God, they preserve them in all their ways, yet always beholding the face of the Father in heaven. Hence the church had its origin in the angels in heaven.

Afterward the church of God was begun in Paradise with Adam and Eve, who were created after the image of God and in his likeness (Gen. 5:2), upright and pure creatures of God, incorruptible and immortal (Gen. 2:7; Wis. of Sol. 2:23), and endowed with a godly nature and divine attributes, and in whom was a true knowledge of God and the love and fear of God so long as they remained in their first estate and bore the image of God (Sir. 10:12, 13).

Therefore the church of God is a church of holy beings, namely, of the angels in heaven and of the believing regenerated men on earth, who have been renewed in the

image of God. These are all united together in Jesus Christ (Eph. 3:6; Col. 1:27), as Paul explains in his epistles, especially to the Hebrews, when he writes: "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Heb. 12: 22-24).

From these words it is to be clearly understood that the innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and the spirits of just men made perfect, together with all believers which have been added thereto, all together comprise the church of God, over which God, the righteous Judge, rules, of which Christ is the Head, and in which the Holy Spirit dwells (Eph. 1:22, 23; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2: 21, 22, etc.).

The First Apostasy Among the Angels, and the Second With Adam and Eve, and its Restoration

The first apostasy of the church occurred among the angels in heaven, who sinned (Job 4:18) and were untrue to their Creator, and were therefore cast out of heaven, and bound with chains of darkness (2 Peter 2:4), so that they can no longer do anything but what God suffers them to do (Luke 9:1), although they are evil spirits and angels, princes or rulers of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), warring against Christians, seeking to destroy them (Matt. 4:2; 1 Peter 5:8; James 4:7, etc.), working in the children of disobedience and unbelief and occupying the world; but they are reserved unto the day of judgment, unto eternal pain and damnation, yea, unto hell-fire, which shall never be quenched (Matt. 25:30; 2 Peter 2:4).

The second apostasy in the church occurred through Adam and Eve in Paradise, who were deceived by the subtlety of the serpent (Gen. 3:6) and corrupted by sin, by which they lost the image of God, the immaculate holiness and their superior understanding, their exalted wisdom and knowledge of God and of all creatures, in which they had been created (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21) and which was fervent in love and obedience to God. From righteousness they fell into unrighteousness, from their uncorrupted condition into corruption and condemnation, and out of eternal life into eternal death.

The first step in the restoration of corrupt man, and renewing in him of the image of God, and the reestablishment of the ruined church of God occurred in the promise of the coming seed (Gen. 3:16) of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head. This seed is Jesus Christ, and he is called the seed of the woman because he was promised to Adam and Eve by God and is, according to the flesh, born of a woman (Matt. 1:25; Luke 2:7). For although Mary conceived him by the Holy Ghost and brought him forth as a pure virgin, she is nevertheless called a woman in the scriptures (Luke 2:5; Gal. 4:4), and

in the same way Christ is also called her seed and the fruit of her womb. And this Jesus Christ is the Crusher and Conqueror of the crooked old serpent (John 16:37), who by his death redeemed the human race from the tyrannical power of Satan, sin and eternal death (Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20; Heb. 2:14).

This was the first preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer and Savior of the world, by whom Adam and Eve were again restored and again received the image of God which they had lost (John 3:36; 1 Tim. 2: 4-6); for they were created anew of God, born anew of him, because they accepted the gracious promise of the gospel in true faith by the power and enlightening influence of the Holy Ghost.

How God Gave Adam and Eve Two Sons, and What They Represent

Of this Adam and his wife Eve came Cain and Abel, two brothers, one godly, the other ungodly (Gen. 4:1, etc.); Abel, a son of God and a member of the Church of Christ; Cain, a child of the devil (1 John 3:12) and having fellowship with him. The godly and righteous Abel was hated by the wicked and murderous Cain and slain because of the envy of his wicked heart. This is a clear demonstration and proof that from that time on there were two kinds of people, two kinds of sons or children, two kinds of churches on earth, namely, the people of God and the people of the devil, the children of God and the children of the devil, the church of God and the synagogue or congregation of Satan, and that the children of God had to suffer persecution, and that the church of God must be suppressed, dispersed and put to death by the church of the Antichrist (Matt. 23:37; John 8:44), which fact God also made known in this that he puts enmity between the serpent's seed and the seed of the woman, and that the serpent's seed would lay a snare for the seed of the woman, or bruise his heel; for Christ Jesus is the true promised seed of the woman, as said above (and I say again, of a promised seed, and not of a natural seed, or else the serpent's seed also would be natural (John 16: 33), and he is the only conqueror of the devil. Beside this all believers are the seed of the crooked old serpent, and that in a spiritual sense. And between the children of the afore-named Eve and the serpent there is an eternal enmity, so that the children of the devil forever hate, envy and persecute the children of God (Gen. 3:25), and on the other hand, that the children of God overcome the serpent and its seed, the world and all that is in it, by the blood of the Lamb, by their faith in Jesus Christ, by their confession and testimony to the truth, and by their steadfastness in the word of God unto death (Rev. 7:14; 12:12; 1 John 5:4).

Further, God gave Adam and Eve another son in Abel's stead, the godly Seth (Gen. 4:25), and from him descended other godly people, until Noah, who found favor with God at the time when God punished with a deluge the children of men with those sons of God who had intermarried with the daughters of men and thus transgressed, thus destroying, removing and annihilating all flesh except Noah and those that were with him in the ark. What this figure signifies however, we have explained in our confession on baptism and in the chapter on Spiritual Restitution.

How God Made His Covenant With Noah and His Three Sons, Also With Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

God made a covenant with Noah and his two sons Shem and Japheth or at least renewed it, and these at that time constituted his church. But Ham, the third son of Noah, though he had been in the ark and came out with the others, mocked his father and was cursed by him, and so, in Cain's stead, became a new progenitor of the synagogue of Satan upon earth, the father of Canaan and his seed, the wicked children, who have always tormented and mocked the children of God and opposed God.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, was a descendant of Shem. With him God renewed and confirmed his covenant (Gen. 15: 2; 17:1; 22:16) —and included therein are all believers and their children in the covenant of God—that in his seed (that is, in Jesus Christ, the spiritual Isaac, the promised Seed of blessing, who proceeded and came forth from his heavenly Father and was promised the patriarch Abraham), all the nations of the earth should be blessed, and that Abraham should be the father of all the faithful, not alone of all those that are born of him according to the flesh and were circumcised, but also of the Gentiles (Sir. 24:8-12) who were uncircumcised, and yet walked in the footsteps of the faith of Abraham and still walk therein, for they are counted for seed, as the apostle testifies (Rom. 4:12; 9:7).

So then the covenant of God with all its gracious promises descended from Abraham to Isaac and Jacob, upon the twelve patriarchs, and afterward upon Moses and Aaron, upon David, and upon all who feared God, who lived then and afterward and who in sincere faith served God. These constituted the church of God, the commonwealth of Israel (Eph. 2:11, 12), the temple of the Lord, the testament and sanctuary of the Most High. Here wisdom had her abode in Jacob and her heritage in Israel (Sir. 24:8) until the time of Christ, in which time there were many devout and god-fearing people among the Jewish nation in Jerusalem and throughout Judea, such as Zacharias and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, the aged Simeon and the aged widow Anna the prophetess, etc.

Beside these there were many god-fearing people among the Gentiles, such as Melchizedek, king of Salem, a priest of the Most High, whose pedigree is suppressed by the Spirit; Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 14:18; 19:2; Heb. 7:1; Gen. 20:9); Job an Idumean, his friends, and many others. Therefore Paul says that "when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:14-16). "Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfills the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one

outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:26-29).

Moreover the promise of God to Abraham was, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed, and that he should become the father of all nations and of the Gentiles. Therefore God changed his name, so that he should be no longer called Abram, but Abraham (Gen. 15:5; 17:3-5; 22:18). There are likewise also many prophecies in the Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Prophets concerning the Gentiles, that they should be called by Jesus Christ into the fold of Israel, and that many should believe in God and obey the gospel (Rom. 11:25; Luke 21: 24; Rev. 7: 9; Psa. 17:44; 66:3; 81:15; Deut. 33: 29, etc.)

Therefore the Jews and Israelites cannot be counted alone as the church of God, but all who truly confessed, feared, honored God, lived according to his will, by the law of nature written by God in their hearts, and all those from heathendom who have believed in Jesus Christ, are in their uncircumcision of the flesh and in their heathendom counted as the spiritual seed of Abraham and of promise (Rom. 2:26; Gal. 3:20). Hence it follows that they belonged to God and to Christ.

Thus the church of God from the beginning existed in Christ, by whom all things are renewed, yea, that there is united into one body all that are in heaven and on earth (Col. 1:16, etc.), by whom the church of God was made more glorious and more numerous, for then shadows, types and figures had an end, but the true realities came into being (Col. 2:9; Rom. 10:4); grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:17). Then were sought the lost sheep of the house of Israel and led by Christ into the right fold (Matt. 10:6; Isa 53:6; Jer. 50: 6, 17; 1 Peter 2:25, etc.). Then did the Gentiles of all nations come unto mount Sion to learn the law of the Lord our God, and to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to walk in the way of the Lord. Then was the prophecy fulfilled that the desolate should be comforted, and the shame and contempt of the unfruitful be forgotten (Isa. 54:1) because her Maker became her husband, his name is the Lord Sabaoth, the Redeemer and Savior of Israel, the Lord and God of the whole earth. Then did Jerusalem arise and shine and the glory of God rise upon her and cause her brightness to shine, so that the Gentiles could walk in her light, and the people of the earth in the brightness that had risen upon her. Then were given to the believers, through the knowledge of Jesus Christ, by God, the most precious promises, that they should be made partakers of the divine nature, if so be that they have escaped the corrupting lusts of this world (2 Peter 1:5). In short, then appeared the true knowledge of God and Christ like a bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16), then grace flowed like a living stream out from the paradise of God, then was the Holy Spirit poured out abundantly by God upon his sons and daughters, then was the new testament begun (Rev. 12:1; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17) according to his promise by the prophet Jeremiah; yea, then was the church extended and the kingdom of God increased throughout the whole world (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15) by the true messengers of the Lord (Col. 1:28), filled and endowed with many precious promises and ordinances, thus becoming a glorious house of the living God.

But how this came to pass, and how the building of the church of Jesus Christ was accomplished the scripture shows us with great clearness, namely by the right teaching of the word of God, and by the faith that cometh by the hearing of the word of God (Rom. 10:17, 18) and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit; for no one can enter into the kingdom of God, into the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the church of Jesus Christ, unless he from the heart amend his ways, sincerely repent and believe the gospel (Matt. 3:2; Gal. 4:6-9); yea, just as God founded his church on earth in Paradise with pure and holy people, who had been created in his image and after his likeness (Gen. 1:26; 2:8), so he still desires such as are created in Christ Jesus and have been renewed by the Holy Ghost in his church; for although the salvation promised to man has been wrought by Jesus Christ the Savior, and although the forfeited life has been redeemed by the blood of the one offering, and is offered to all mankind by the gospel (Tit. 2:13; Heb. 2:2, 3; 3:12-15; 5:1-3; 10:18-20), nevertheless not all men enjoy this eternal salvation and eternal life, but those alone who in this life are born again by the word of Jesus Christ, who allow themselves to be sought and found by the light of the word of God, and who obey the voice of their Shepherd (1 Peter 1:23-25; James 1:18, 19; John 3:3; 8:32; 12: 46), who are enlightened with the true knowledge of God and his will and in sincere faith accept the righteousness that is in Christ.

Jesus testifies of this to Nicodemus and says: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, 5).

Here the kingdom of God is absolutely denied to all who are not born again of God, and who are not created by him anew after the inner man in his image. Hence those who desire to enter the kingdom of God must be born again. (I here speak of intelligent beings).

How Regeneration Takes Place, Namely by the Word of God, and How the Word is Twofold— Law and Gospel

This regeneration is not external, but in the mind, reason, and heart of man; in the reason or intelligence, and mind, in this that he learns to know the eternal, true and gracious God in Jesus Christ, who is the eternal image of the Father (2 Cor. 3: 3-5; Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4; Heb. 1:3), and the brightness and express image of the Person of God. In the heart, in this that man loves this same almighty and living God, fears, honors and believes in him, trusts in his promises; which cannot be without the power of the Holy Spirit, who must inoculate into the heart, as it were, with divine power, giving faith, fear, love, hope and all the divine virtues.

Neither are we regenerated by flesh and blood, nor by any temporal or corruptible things, but— as Peter and James testify—by the word of the living God (1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18).—See chapter on The New Creature.—(D. P.) as we have written

something on Regeneration in the chapter on The New Creature, and everyone who desires, may read there.

Moreover the word of God is twofold, viz., the law and the gospel. The law is the word of command, given by God through Moses on mount Sinai with such terrible noises, quakings, smoke, thunder and lightning (Ex. 19:16-18) that the children of Israel could not bear it, but said to Moses: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex. 20:19). Even Moses himself had become afraid and trembled (Heb. 12:21), which shows the sternness of the law, for it shows to us sin and condemnation, because it demands perfect righteousness in the inner man (Rom. 4:13-15; Deut. 4:1-6; 6:1-3; Matt. 19:17-21), perfect holiness inwrought in the human nature, exalted understanding, full of true knowledge of God, and added to this a holy, pure heart that is fervent in love to God.

Moreover the law condemns the inwardly corrupt nature, that is, the corruption and loss of the inwrought wisdom and knowledge of God and the righteousness which has been implanted in the heart (Psa. 51:6-12; Eph. 2:1-3). It condemns the wicked desires and tendencies that are contrary to the word of God; for whoever reads the law with unveiled face must be terrified at God's wrath (Rom. 3:20; 7:7; 2 Cor. 3:13-16; Ex. 34:33, 35) and be humbled, just as was Israel and even Moses himself.

Therefore the law is given, not that it might bring with it to man perfect righteousness, salvation and eternal life (for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified—Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16; 3:11), but that it might, by revealing sin, teach man to fear God, to know and humble himself under the mighty hand of God, and thus be prepared with penitent heart to accept Jesus Christ the only Savior and by his grace and merit alone seek and hope for salvation (1 Peter 5:6; James 4:10; 1 Tim. 2:6; Eph. 2:13; Acts 14:14, etc.; 15:3).

Inasmuch then as the law teaches the knowledge of sin and as from such knowledge comes the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of all wisdom (Rom. 7:7; Prov. 1:7), without whom no man may be justified, and as from the fear of the Lord comes a broken and contrite and humbled heart, which is acceptable to the Lord (Psa. 51:17), therefore the law serves, or is conducive in part, to the new birth, in view of the fact that no one can be born again or spiritually quickened and no one can believe the gospel, except he first sincerely repent, as the Lord Jesus Christ himself testifies; for he taught the people repentance first of all, and then faith, and so he also commanded his apostles to do (Matt. 4:17; Luke 24:47).

The Gospel is the word of grace. It is the joyful message of Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of God, the only Redeemer and Savior (1 Tim. 2:5; Tit. 2:14, who gave himself for us that we might be ransomed from the power of Satan, sin and eternal death, and made us children and heirs of our heavenly Father, to be a royal priesthood (Gal. 1:4; Heb. 2:15; Rom. 8:14; Eph. 1:5), to be a holy nation and a chosen people and a possession of God in the Spirit (1 Peter 2:9); therefore he also says in the gospel: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. Take my yoke upon

you; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24). "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26). "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned", etc. (John 3:16-18).

This is the true gospel, the pure doctrine of our God, full of grace and mercy, full of comfort, salvation and eternal life, given to us without any merits of our own works of the law, for the sake of our eternal and precious Savior Jesus Christ, who became subject to the law for our sakes and became the end and fulfillment of the law unto eternal salvation for all believers, if so be that we accept it in true faith.

In this doctrine is presented to us as a gift by the heavenly Father Jesus Christ with all spiritual gifts (Isa. 9: 6, 7) with all his wisdom, righteousness, holiness, truth and eternal life (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30), yea, with all that is Christ's and God's, as it is written: "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things," etc. (Rom. 8: 31, 32). And again: "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3:22, 23). And Christ says in his prayer to the Father, that he had given to them the words which he had received of the Father, together with the glory which the Father had given him, that they might be one, even as He and the Father are one (John 17:14, 22), Christ in them, and the Father in Christ; that they might be made perfect in one; and that the world might know that the Father had sent him and loved them, as he loved Christ.

Now, all who from the teaching of the law learn to fear God, get a knowledge of sin, sincerely repent, turn away from their sinful and ungodly life and with penitent heart believe the gospel and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior (Matt. 3:8; Mark 1: 5; Luke 3:8), are born anew of God by his eternal word (1 Peter 1:23) in the power of his Holy Spirit, by whom they are renewed and also sealed unto the day of their redemption, and have free access to God and to the throne of grace by faith in Jesus Christ (James 1:18; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 5: 3; Rom. 3:15).

Here the law, which once condemned, now becomes silent. Here are silenced the peals of thunder, the earthquake, the smoke and the dreadful manifestations on mount Sinai (Ex. 19:16). Here shines the brighter light of the gospel and the Sun of righteousness into the hearts of the believers (John 3:9; 12:46), here is an entirely new man, new in heart, soul and mind or spirit, a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven united with God, born anew of God, strengthened by his power and made ready for everlasting life (Wis. of Sol. 5:6).

And this spiritual regeneration by the word of God, whereby the lost image of the knowledge of God, of his will, and the image of the divine righteousness, is restored in us (1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18; John 3:15) whereby we, through Jesus Christ, are able to stand

before God. And this is the will of God, so the Lord has ordained, that thus we should be born again by the word of God, and grow daily in the knowledge of God, in faith, in love (Eph. 4:15), and continue in all obedience to the word of God, to the praise of the Lord and to our salvation (Matt. 10:22).

That in Regeneration the Pure Knowledge of the One, Eternal and Almighty God, Who is Father, Son and Holy Ghost, is Essential

Essentially connected with this regeneration is a true knowledge of the only God, that is, of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19; 1 John 5:8). The Father is the Source of all good (Ex. 3:6), the Essence of all things, the Creator of all beings, the eternal, invisible God, who dwelleth in light (as the apostle says, 1 Tim. 6:16) which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; neither Moses on mount Sinai, nor John the Baptist at the Jordan, nor the apostle on mount Tabor, nor Paul in the third heaven (Ex. 20:21; Matt. 3:16; 17:5; 2 Cor. 12:1-8); but in a devout and pious condition of mind have the believers always beheld and confessed God in Christ Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his Person, the only begotten of the Father, the Word, by whom all things are made, in whom is life, the Life that is the light of men (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1: 15; Heb. 1:3; Wis. of Sol. 7:26; John 1:3, etc.), and which has come into the world and shineth into the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. This Word was made flesh, was conceived in Mary by the Holy Ghost, and was born of her a Son of the Most High (Matt. 1:18; Luke 2:7), but the world did not comprehend the great mystery of God revealed in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:15), that wisdom has appeared upon the earth (Bar. 3:20-23), and that the Word of life was made man (1 John 1:1), and yet remained the Word of life; for since he was to be the Mediator between God and man. and also make reconciliation between us and the Father (1 Tim. 2:5; Eph. 2:16), therefore he had to be both God and man in one person. Inasmuch as he was to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29) and with his righteousness destroy all unrighteousness and cause death to be swallowed up in victory (1 John 2:1; 1 Cor. 1:29), therefore he had to be the personification of righteousness, eternal life and salvation. Inasmuch as he was to give his flesh for the life of the world, therefore his flesh had to make alive. For this reason Christ himself calls his flesh the bread of life, that came down from heaven (John 6:33), therefore it is not of the earth, nor of the flesh and blood of mortal man.

In this great work of redemption, by which God redeemed the lost human race there is shown us and set before our eyes the picture of divine majesty, wisdom, righteousness, mercy, and kindness, i.e. in this that God sent his only begotten Son, who was in the form of God (Phil. 2:6), in the form of sinful flesh, made him subject to the law, made him to be sin and put him under the curse, and he who was immortal, yea, he who rules all things by the word of his power became weak and mortal (Gal. 4:4; Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 1:3), nevertheless he rose again from the dead, and by his divine power he overcame all his enemies (Rom. 4:25; 2 Cor. 15:25).

This is not the wisdom of the world, nor yet of the angels in heaven, but is the wisdom of God, hidden in mystery, which was preached by the apostles, not with words of human wisdom, but with such words as the Holy Spirit taught them (1 Cor. 2:6, 7). It is also the stern, exalted, and valorous, yea, eternal justice of God, that he punished and expiated our sin (which could be atoned for and taken away by no other means) in his own beloved Son. That is not human love and mercy, but it is God's eternal love, God's fathomless grace and mercy, that Jesus Christ died for us when we were sinners, ungodly, and enemies of God (Isa. 53:5-11; 1 Peter 2: 24; Gal. 1:4; Rom. 5:8, 10). This is the mystery of godliness that is so great and so wonderful, of which Paul writes (1 Tim. 3:16), which cannot be apprehended except by the Holy Spirit, which searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. And since the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit (as Christ says, John 14:7, because it sees him not, neither knows him), therefore also it does not understand the mystery of Godliness in its power, it does not rightly know Jesus Christ, and does not believe in him, as the scripture says; but some deny his true divinity, some argue against his holy, spotless humanity, and some reject his doctrine of salvation.

The Holy Ghost is the third name, person, power and agency in the Godhead, one Being with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19); for he proceeds from the Father through the Son and with them was an active agency in the creation, and he is the Spirit of truth, a Comforter of the conscience (1 John 5:8; John 16:13), and a Dispenser of all spiritual gifts, which are poured by God the Father through Jesus Christ into the hearts of believers (1 Cor. 12:11), by whom they are enlightened, renewed and sanctified (Tit. 3:6; 1 Cor. 3:11) and become a possession of God (Eph. 1:14), and new creatures in Christ, and kept unto everlasting life, and without whom no one knows God, nor believes in Jesus Christ; for all good gifts come from the eternal Father (2 Cor. 5:16, 17; Jas. 1:17; 1 Cor. 4:7), and are divided to us by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 7:11).

The Father, Son and Holy Ghost, then, is the only true and living God and Lord (Isa. 40:28; 42:5), beside whom there is no other God and Lord, neither in heaven nor upon earth; the first and the last, the only, eternal, wise and just God, Redeemer and Savior (Rev. 1:17; 22:13). And this knowledge of God must exist in connection with the new birth, in a good conscience with true faith in the word of God (John 3:36), comprehended by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, of which we have written at more length at another place. Of such regenerated people and new creatures Jesus Christ has gathered his church, and for them he has established a number of rules or ordinances, and given them a command that they must keep them, and thereby be known as his church.

The first rule of order is that the church above all other things maintain the pure and unadulterated doctrine of the word of God (Matt. 28:19, 20) and along with this have true ministers who are properly called and chosen by the Lord and the church. What the true and plain word of God is, and that it is twofold, namely, the law and the gospel, we have already explained above; likewise the manner in which the calling, choosing and ordaining is to be done is taught by the scripture very clearly, where it speaks of the calling of the prophets by God, the sending forth of the apostles by Jesus Christ, and the ordaining of the elders by the Holy Ghost and the Christian Church, by the united, common voice of the church, over the flock of God, to feed and care for them (Matt.

10:9; 20:22, 23; Acts 13:2, 3; 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:2-7; Tit. 1:6). In our booklet on the Sending of Ministers we have written and explained, and will here again say briefly, that the true ministers of the word of God are easily recognized by the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, by their godly walk and by the fruits which they bear, and moreover by the persecution which they must suffer for truth's and righteousness' sake; for whoever speaks the word of God is sent of God (John 3: 34), and he that doeth righteousness is born of God (1 John 2: 29), and he that converts men from unrighteousness to the living God remains in the counsel of God and declares to the people the word of God (Jer. 23:3, 4). and he that is persecuted because he teaches and bears witness to the truth fares just as the scripture says, and as all good prophets and apostles, yea, as the Lord himself fared (Matt. 5:11, 12; 10:22-25; 12:14; 21:46; John 15:19, etc.).

Ordination of Ministers and Signification of the Same

How the ministers are appointed or ordained and how they must be qualified may be readily observed and understood from the old testament figures of Aaron and his sons. When they were about to be ordained as priests of the Lord, Moses was commanded to first wash their bodies with clean water, offer sacrifices for them, and take of the blood of the sacrifice and put it upon the tip of the right ear (Ex. 29:20), and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and he put closefitting garments on them and girded them with girdles and bound bonnets upon their heads and took the anointing oil and the blood upon the altar and sprinkled it upon Aaron and his clothes, and upon his sons and their clothes, thus consecrating Aaron and his garments, and his sons and their garments (Ex. 29:7, etc.). Upon Aaron he put the yellow coat and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and upon the breastplate the symbols of light and perfection (Ex. 28:36), and set the mitre upon his head, and upon the mitre the holy crown. This was done to Aaron and his sons as a figure or symbol, pointing to the reality, to the teachers in the church of God, especially so far as the sons of Aaron are concerned: for Aaron is really a figure of Jesus Christ, our only High Priest (Heb. 2:17; 3:7; 8:1; 10:11). Nevertheless, in view of the fact that Christ sends forth his ministers, even as the Father sent him (John 20: 21) it follows that the ministers of his holy word must be conformed to his image (Rom. 8:28, 29). Hence the figure of Aaron and his sons may properly be understood, according to the Spirit, to mean that the ministers of Christ who preach his word and proclaim his gospel must be washed with the pure water of the Holy Ghost and sprinkled with the precious blood of the spotless Lamb Jesus Christ who offered himself for us (Heb. 10:18-22; John 1:29; 1 Peter 1: 22, 23), first on the right ear, that the ears of their understanding may be opened to hear what God speaks to them; secondly, on the thumb of their right hand (Heb. 12:12, 13) that they may lift up holy hands to God (1 Tim. 2:8), and thirdly, on the great toe of their right foot, that they may walk uprightly before the Lord, in the way of righteousness. They must be clothed with Christ Jesus (Rom. 13:14; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; 5:5; 6:11), girded with the band of love and of truth, and adorned with the pure linen of righteousness (Rev. 19:8), the breastplate of light and righteousness (Urim and Thummim), and the twelve precious

stones must be hung upon them, that is, they must have the treasure of the word of God in their hearts, for they are ministers of the Lord (Gal. 6:14-17) unto the spiritual Israel, to teach Jacob the law of God, and Israel his judgments (Deut. 33:10). The mitre with the gold crowned frontlet is upon their head, that is, they rightly divide the word of God between the old and new testaments, between the letter and the Spirit, with a clear understanding of the mystery of Godliness (Matt. 13:52; 1 Tim. 3:9; Eph. 6:19). They have also a living hope of salvation, and there is laid up for them the crown of righteousness for that day (2 Tim. 4:8). They enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer the living sacrifices for the church of the Lord (Rom. 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5), and their prayers tinkle and are heard by the Most High, so that he remembers his church. The anointing oil is poured upon them, for they have received the anointing of him who is holy, and they are thereby sanctified (1 John 2:27).

Ordinances of the Church of God, Whereby it is Recognized and To be Distinguished From All

Sects

The First Ordinance (Ordination of Ministers)

Such are the ministers whom Christ has chosen and sent forth to make known his word, to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins unto all who believe the gospel (Luke 24:46; John 20:23) and obey it. But faith must be genuine, that is, of such nature and power, and may be recognized in this that every word of God is believed, all doctrines of man are rejected, all hope is, with the whole heart, placed upon the grace of Jesus Christ, all earthly things are cast aside, self is denied and heavenly things are sought after with all diligence (Deut. 4:1, 2; 12:32; 1 Peter 1:3; Heb. 12:10; Col. 3:2; Phil. 3:20; 2 Cor. 4:18), and out of pure fear of the Lord they hate sin and love righteousness (Psa. 45:7; Heb. 1:9), and thus show forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Where this is the case, there is true faith; but where this is not the case, there is a vain and false profession of faith (Gal. 6:1-9).

The Second Ordinance (Baptism and Lord's Supper)

The second rule or order which Christ established in his church is the proper, scriptural use of the sacraments of Jesus Christ, that is, of baptism and the Lord's Supper. For the penitent, believing and regenerated children of God must be baptized, and for them the Lord's Supper is ordained (Matt. 3:15; 28:19; Mark 1:9; Acts 2:41; 8:12; 10:48; 16:15; 18:8; 22:16). These two symbols Christ gave and left behind and subjoined to the gospel because of the unspeakable grace of God and his covenant, to remind us thereof with visible symbols, to put it before our eyes and to confirm it; in the first place by

baptism, to remind us that he himself baptizes within and in mercy accepts sinners, forgives them all their sins, cleanses them with his blood (Matt. 3:11; John 3:5), bestows upon them all his righteousness and the fulfilling of the law, and sanctifies them with the Spirit (Rev. 1:5; 1 Cor. 3:23). In the second place, by the Lord's Supper, which testifies to divine acceptance and redemption by Jesus Christ (Matt. 26: 26-28; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19), namely, that all believing hearts, who are sorry for their sins, hasten to the throne of grace Jesus Christ, believing and confessing that the Son of God died for them and has shed his blood for us (Rom. 3:25; 4:25; 8:3), obtain forgiveness of sin, deliverance from the law, everlasting justification and salvation, by grace, through Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:13; .Eph. 1:7; Rom. 11:6).

These two symbols are left us by the Lord that they might admonish us to a godly walk (Col. 2:6; Rom. 16:18), to a crucifixion of the flesh, the burial of sin, a resurrection into newness of life, to thanksgiving for the great benefits which we have received of the Lord, to a remembrance of the bitter suffering and death of Christ, to the renewing and confirming of brotherly love, unity and fellowship (Matt. 26:26 Mark 14:23; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 10:17; 11:25); in other words, that they shall distinguish the church of God from all other sects, who do not make right, scriptural use of the symbols of the sacrament of the Lord Jesus Christ, although they have the appearance of doing so, and in their hypocrisy profess much about it, and commit shameful sacrilege with it; for they do not use the sacraments of Christ according to his word, nor according to his command and example, nor according to the precepts and practices of the apostles, but according to the world's traditions and the ideas of men. Beside this they remain impenitent in the old sinful life, full of unrighteousness, covetousness, corruption, pride, envy, slander and all manner of wickedness, which is a sure evidence that they have not the pure word of God and the true faith, the proper use of baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the scripture. For, wherever the holy gospel that is testified to with such solemn vows of God, confirmed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and sealed by the Holy Spirit, is rightly taught and believed, and the sacraments of the Lord are thereupon received with true faith in heartfelt devotion and meditation upon the mystery which is hidden therein, as this should be done, there the Holy Spirit will enter the heart, there he renews daily the lost image of God, he imparts the knowledge of the Father in his image, Christ, he increases faith, hope, love, patience, and all the divine virtues (Heb. 6:3; Gen. 15:28; John 3:16; 5:43; Acts 2:46; Tit. 3: 5; Eph. 4:23; Rom. 3:24; Gal. 4:5; Gal. 5:22).

He comforts the consciences, cleanses the hearts and makes them fruitful in the knowledge of God and Christ and endows them with all manner of spiritual wisdom and understanding in heavenly things, he gives boldness to the mind to call upon God and to address the exalted majesty of God, saying, Abba, Father (Col. 1:9; Rom. 8: 9-11; Gal. 4:5, 6). He teaches true humility, meekness, patience, kindness and speaks the peace of God to the conscience (Gal. 5:22, 23). Here, then, the adversary, the devil, must flee, here the flesh is crucified with its lusts and desires (Jas. 4:7; Gal. 6:14, 16); here by the power of faith in Jesus Christ the world lies prone under foot (1 John 5:4). Where this does not take place and cannot be seen, there is neither God, nor Christ, nor Holy Spirit, nor

gospel, nor faith, nor true baptism, nor the Lord's Supper, in short, there is no church of God.

The Third Ordinance (Footwashing)

The third ordinance is the washing of feet of the saints, which Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to observe (John 13:4-17), and this for two reasons. First, he would have us know that he himself must cleanse us after the inner man, and that we must allow him to wash away the sins which beset us (Heb. 12:1) and all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit (Ezek. 36:25; 2 Cor. 7:1), that we may become purer from day to day, as it is written (the literal translation is here given. —Tr.): He that is righteous, let him become more righteous; and he that is holy (or pure), let him become more holy (or purer) (Rev. 22:11), and this is necessary, yea, it must be done, if we would be saved; therefore Christ says to Peter: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8). Then Peter answered: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." To this Jesus replied: He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, and is clean every whit" (John 13:10).

By this Christ makes it evident that the washing of feet (wherewith Christ washes us) is very necessary, and what it signifies, inasmuch as those whom he does not wash shall have no part with him, and that those who have been washed by him need no more than that their feet are washed, and they are clean every whit or wholly clean, for it is Christ who must cleanse us from our sins with his blood, and he that is sprinkled and washed therewith needs have no more than that the earthly members, the evil lusts and desires of the flesh, be put to death or mortified and overcome for him, and by grace he is wholly clean and no sin is imputed to him (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:4-7; Col. 3:5; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5; Rom. 8:13).

The second reason why Jesus instituted the ordinance of foot-washing is that we shall humble ourselves among one another (Rom. 12:10; Phil. 2:3; Peter 5:5; James 4:10, 11), and that we hold our fellow-believers in the highest respect, for the reason that they are the saints of God and members of the body of Jesus Christ, and that the Holy Ghost dwells in them (Rom. 12:10; Col. 3:13; 1 Cor. 3:16), which Jesus teaches us in these words: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well: for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy (or blessed—Gr. tr.) are ye if ye do them" (John 13:13-17).

Now, if they are happy or blessed who know and do this, how void of blessing those remain who profess to be apostles or messengers of the Lord and do not know these things; or, if they know, do not do them nor teach others to do them. But their heart is altogether too proud and puffed up, so that they will not humble themselves according to the command and example of Christ. They are either ashamed to do so, or else it appears like folly to them (exactly as the wisdom of God has always been looked upon by the

world as foolishness, 1 Cor. 1:18-21: 2:14). But they greatly prefer to have the honor of men; they love to be called Doctors, Masters and Sirs (John 5:11); for the honor that comes from God, and which is obtained by genuine faith and a holy life they do not aspire to, yet they want to be the church of Church and be so known, yea, held exclusively as such. But God, who resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5; James 4:10), knows them well, and will at the last day make it evident what kind of a church (or one might more properly say sect) they have been.

The Fourth Ordinance (The Ban)

The fourth rule or ordinance is evangelical separation, without which the church of God cannot stand or be maintained. For if the unfruitful branches of the vine are not pruned away they will injure the good and fruitful branches (John 15: 2-6). If offending members are not cut off, the whole body must perish (Matt. 5:30; 18:7-9; that is, if open sinners, transgressors and disobedient are not excluded, the whole body must perish (1 Cor. 5: 9-13; 1 Thess. 5:14), and if false brethren are retained in the church we become partakers of their sins. Of this we have many examples and evidences in the scripture (1 John 1:10; 2 John 1:10).

In the book of Joshua we have the terrible example of Achan who had stolen some of the condemned or accursed goods in Jericho and hidden them in his tent (Josh. 7:1). Because of this the Lord's anger was stirred against Israel, so that he permitted a number in Israel to be slain in battle, and among other things he said to Joshua: "The children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you" (Josh. 7:12). Therefore Achan and all that belonged to him were destroyed and rooted out of Israel, Joshua saying to him: "Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day" (Josh. 7:25). And all Israel stoned him with stones.

We have likewise in the book of Numbers a notable example in Dathan, Abiram and Korah, who set themselves up against Moses and Aaron, and many of the most prominent or righteous in Israel took their part. But Moses said to the congregation of the Lord: "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins" (Num. 16:26).

From such and like historical incidents and examples given in holy writ it may be easily observed and understood that no church or congregation can be maintained before God that does not properly and earnestly exercise the ban or separation according to the command of Christ and the teaching and example of the apostles, but that they will fare according to the old proverb that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump", and that "one black (or scabbed) sheep will mar the whole flock" (1 Cor. 5:6); yea, "like people, like priest" (Hosea 4:9).

Separation or exclusion must also be practiced for the reason that thereby the offender may be mortified in the flesh and be made ashamed, and so may repent that he may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5), which is the highest love, and the

best remedy for his poor soul, as may be observed in the case of the Corinthian fornicator. Moreover necessity demands that there be a separation from apostates and wicked persons, that the name of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ and the church of the Lord be not on their account put to shame (Psa. 50:21; Ezek. 36:20-24; Rom. 2:24).

Now, what those sins are which must be punished with the ban are shown us by the evangelists and apostles in express words (Matt. 18:13-17; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit. 3:10; 2 John 10), and we have also in our confession regarding the evangelical ban carefully explained it. And what the church of the Lord thus passes judgment upon by the word of God, the same is judged before God, for Christ gave his church the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19) that they might punish, exclude and put away the wicked and receive the penitent and believing. What the church thus binds upon earth shall be bound in heaven, and, on the other hand, what she looses on earth shall be loosed in heaven. This must not be understood as meaning that men have power to forgive sins or to retain them (John 20:23), as some imagine, and therefore deal with the confessional and absolution as with merchandise. No minister of Christ is to do this, neither is the church of the Lord to admit any Simonites (Acts 8:9, 13, 18), for no prophet or apostle on earth has presumed to forgive sin, to hear confession and to grant absolution to the people, although Christ said to his disciples: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose so ever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:22, 23). The holy men of God did not assume divine honor, but were perfectly conscious of the fact, through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, that God alone forgives and can forgive sin, as the scripture unanimously testifies. But the church has received the Holy Ghost and the gospel from Jesus Christ (Matt. 9:6; Psa. 51:4) in which is proclaimed and promised forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and eternal life to all who truly repent and believe in Jesus Christ; on the other hand, disfavor, wrath and damnation are threatened and promised toward all unbelievers, disobedient and perverted ones. These words, together with the Holy Spirit, are the judge in the church against all false brethren (Rom. 16:17, 18; 1 Cor. 5: 3-5; 2 Tim. 2:3; Tit. 3:10), against all heretics and all disorderly and disobedient persons who after sufficient admonition do not repent; and on the judgment day no other sentence will be pronounced, as the Lord himself says; and this word the church has received from God, by which, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit she testifies, judges, receives and expels, and what she thus binds or looses on earth with the word and Spirit of the Lord, is bound or loosed in heaven.

The Fifth Ordinance (Love)

The fifth ordinance is the command of love which Christ gave his disciples, saying: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love to another" (John 13: 34, 35; 15:12, 17). From this it is easy to understand that pure brotherly love is a sure sign of genuine faith and true Christianity. But this is true brotherly love, that our chief desire is one another's salvation, by our fervent prayers to God, by scriptural instruction, admonition and rebuke, that thereby we may instruct

him who is overtaken in a fault, in order to win his soul, and all this with Christian patience (Gal. 6: 3; 2 Thess. 1:11; James 5:19; 1 John 5:16), and thus having forbearance toward the weak and not simply pleasing ourselves.

Then again brotherly love is shown in this that among one another we cheerfully bear one another's burdens, not only in spiritual matters, but also with temporal gifts, which we have received from the Lord, that we minister to the necessity of the saints (Rom. 12:13), and give liberally according to our ability; yea, that it be done among us as it was done in the Israel of old, namely, he that gathered much manna had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack (Ex. 16:18; 2 Cor. 8:15). So then the rich, who have received many temporal possessions from the Lord, are to minister to the poor therewith (Rom. 15:27; 1 Cor. 8:10) and supply their lack, or minister to their needs, so that the poor in turn serve them as they may have need of their services. Therefore Christ says in the gospel: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (Luke 16: 9). And Paul writes to Timothy: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. 6:17-19). And John writes in his epistle: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3: 16-18).

How necessary love is, the apostles show us everywhere in all their writings, especially Paul to the Corinthians, when he writes: "Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing". (1 Cor. 13:1-4)

From this it may be easily understood how widely those differ from the genuine faith and Christianity who do not love one another, who do not show their love toward one another by their works, but allow their poor to suffer want and openly beg for bread, against the command of the Lord (Deut. 15:4; Rom. 12:13; 2 Cor. 8:14; Gal. 6:8), contrary to all Christian nature and contrary to brotherly love and fidelity. And, what is worse, they quarrel, hate, envy, backbite, scold, blaspheme, persecute, throttle and kill, one another, as is plainly seen before our eyes and their deeds show; and although they do this, nevertheless they want to be called Christians and the church of God. But if they do not repent they will find out, on that day when they appear before the judgment seat of Christ, what fine (?) Christians they have been; for where love is not, God is not (1 John 4:8), seeing that God is love, as John says: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). But he that dwells not in love "is in darkness, and walketh in

darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (1 John 2:11).

The Sixth Ordinance (Keeping all the Commands)

The sixth ordinance which Christ has instituted for his church is the keeping of all his commandments (Matt. 28:20), for he demands of all his disciples a godly life, that they walk according to the gospel, openly confess the truth before men (1 Cor. 7:19; Phil. 1:27; Matt. 10:10; 32), deny self, and faithfully follow in his footsteps, voluntarily take up his cross, forsake all things and earnestly seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. 16:25; 1 Peter 2:22; Matt. 6:16, 20), the unseen heavenly things and eternal life. He also teaches his disciples to be poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3), have godly sorrow, meekness, purity of heart, mercy, peacemaking, patience in persecution for righteousness' sake and to rejoice in conscience when they are despised and rejected for his name's sake (Luke 9:23; 17:33). He also instructs his own in true humility and warns them faithfully against all spiritual and carnal pride. Moreover he holds before them the fact that they must hear and keep God's word, hunger and thirst after righteousness, beware of false prophets (Luke 8:14; John 8:47; Matt. 5:6), not follow the hireling and flee from the strange voice (Matt. 16:6; John 10:12); also that they are to fast, and to pray without ceasing, that they are to guard against gluttony, drunkenness, and anxiety regarding bodily food and raiment (Matt. 6:5; Luke 21:34); that they must watch, and prepare for his appearing (Matt. 24:32; 25:13), that they, must beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy (Matt. 16:6), so that they will not glory in their own works and seek a false righteousness therein; that they shall not watch for the mote in their brother's eye and not be aware of the beam in their own eye (Matt. 7:3); also, not to swallow camels while they strain at gnats, etc. Yea, he prescribes to his own the rule of perfection, to "love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good unto them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44), and from the heart to forgive them their debts; not to avenge themselves, but to leave the matter to God, to whom all vengeance belongs (Rom. 12:19). Also, that they are not only to guard against the works of the flesh which are manifest, such as murder, adultery, false swearing, etc. (Matt. 5:22), but also against anger, evil speaking, inordinate lusts and desires of the heart, and that they are to guard against all kinds of swearing (Matt. 5:34), and not to do this in any manner, on pain of hell-fire, as may be seen in the gospel according to Matthew. The apostles likewise teach in their epistles that Christians must in all things show themselves obedient children of their heavenly Father as the elect and chosen ones of a holy God, (Col. 3:12; 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Cor. 6:4), as the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the instruments of the Holy Ghost, as a royal priesthood, as a chosen generation (1 Peter 2:9), as a people owned by God, a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Eph. 5:27; Tit. 2:14), as the children of light, who must walk no longer in darkness, but in the light, having been called out of darkness into the wonderful light that they might declare the power of God, and are therefore delivered from the hand of their

enemies to serve God in holiness and in righteousness all the days of their lives (Luke 2:70).

This is the philosophy of heaven, which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, received of his Father, brought down from heaven and taught his disciples, This is the counsel and will of God, the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:27), and the testimony of the Holy Spirit; and in all this the Lord Jesus Christ is to his own a Master sent of God, whom they must hear (Matt. 3:17; 17:5); a Shepherd or Prior, whom they must follow (1 Peter 2: 25); an Example, to which they must conform themselves (Rom. 8:29). This is the rule of Christianity, of which Paul writes: "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). But those who will not walk according to this rule are not Christians, let them profess what they will.

The Seventh Ordinance (Suffering and Persecution)

The seventh ordinance or rule is that all Christians must suffer and be persecuted, as Christ has foretold and promised them; saying: that the world shall have joy, but "ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33): "but be of good cheer," for "your sorrow shall be turned into joy." "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake" (Matt. 24:9); yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). Paul concurs with this and says: "If so be that we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together," and inherit our heavenly Father's kingdom (Rom. 8:17; Tim. 2:12). "Yea, all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12). Thus Paul and Barnabas testified in all the churches that they must through much persecution and suffering enter the kingdom of God (Acts 13:50). In short, the entire holy scripture testifies that the righteous must suffer much, and possess his soul in patience (Luke 21:19). Where there is a godly Abel there does not fail to be a wicked Cain (Gen. 4:1, 2, etc.); where there is a chosen David there is also a rejected Saul to persecute him (1 Sam. 18: 11); where Christ is born, there is a Herod who seeks his life (Matt. 2:16); where he openly preaches and works, there Annas and Caiaphas, together with the bloodthirsty Jews, gather together and hold counsel against him (Matt. 26:3, 4; Mark 14:1; Luke 22:1; Acts 4:6), nor can they cease until they have killed him, and force Pilate to do their will.

Thus must the true Christians here be persecuted for the sake of truth and righteousness, but the Christians persecute no one on account of his faith. For Christ sends his disciples as sheep in the midst of wolves (Matt. 10:16); but the sheep does not devour the wolf, but the wolf the sheep. Hence they can nevermore be counted as a church of the Lord who persecute others on account of their faith; for, in the first place, God, the heavenly Father has committed all judgment unto Jesus Christ (John 5:22), to be a Judge of the souls and consciences of men and rule in his church with the scepter of his word forever (Luke 2: 68-79). In the second place, it is the office or work of the Holy Spirit to reprove the world of the sin of unbelief (John 16:8). Now, it is evident that the Holy Spirit through the apostles and all pious witnesses of the truth did not administer this reproof by violence or with the material sword, but by God's word and power. In the

third place the Lord Jesus Christ gave his church the power and established the rule to separate from her, avoid and shun the false brethren, disorderly and disobedient, contentious and heretical people, yea, all in the church who are found wicked, as has already been said (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 5:13; Tit. 3:19); what is done over and above this is not Christian, evangelical nor apostolic.

In the fourth place the parable of the Lord in the gospel proves clearly to us that he does not permit his servants to pull up the tares so that thereby the wheat be not pulled up also; but they are to let the wheat and the tares grow together in the world until the Lord shall command his reapers, that is, his angels, to gather the wheat into his barn and cast the tares into the fire (Matt. 24:30).

From this it is evident that no church may exercise dominion over the consciences of men with the carnal sword, or seek by violence, to force unbelievers to believe, nor to kill the false prophets with sword and fire; but that she must with the word of God judge and expel those in the church who are found wicked; and what is done over and above this is not Christian, nor evangelical, nor apostolic. And if someone ventures to assert that the powers that be have not received the sword in vain (Rom. 13:1), and that God through Moses commanded that the false prophets be put to death (Deut. 13:5), I will give this answer in brief: The higher power has received the sword or authority from God, not that it shall judge therewith in spiritual matters (for these things must be judged by the spiritual, and spiritually, 1 Cor. 2:13), but to maintain a proper policy and good order among its subjects, to protect the good and punish the evil. And God's command through Moses to put the false prophets to death is a command of the old, and not the new testament. Contrasted to this we have received another command from God that we are to take heed of false prophets, that we are not to give ear to them, that we are to shun a heretic, and thereby commit them to the judgment of God (Matt. 7:13; John 10:5; Tit. 3:10). Now, if, according to the old testament command, false prophets were to be put to death, then this would have to be carried out, first of all, with those who are looked upon as false prophets and antichrists by almost the whole world. Likewise the higher powers would be obliged to put to death not only the false prophets, but also all image worshippers, and those who serve idols, and who counsel other people to commit sacrilege (Deut. 13:1; Ex. 22:18), and all who blaspheme the name of the Lord, and who swear falsely by that name, all who curse father or mother and profane the Sabbath (Ex. 20:7-10; Deut. 27: 17); for they are all alike condemned to death by the law as well as the false prophets are.

It is therefore nothing but an effort to sew fig leaves together to hide their shame, on the part of those who would decorate their tyranny with scripture and propose that they do not put Christians to death, but only heretics, and that God thus commanded through Moses. The world even looks upon the most pious Christians as the most wicked heretics, just as all good prophets were always looked upon by the world as liars, agitators, fanatics and deceivers (Jer. 11:21; Amos 2:9; Matt. 5:11; 23:30; Acts 6:14), and Christ himself was numbered with the transgressors (Matt. 26: 55), and the apostles are set forth as the least, and as it were appointed unto death, made a spectacle unto the world, as a byword, reproach and the off-scouring of the world (Psa. 44:13, 14; 1 Cor.

4:9), and this is still the case with all genuine Christians; but they are comforted herein, for they trust in the Lord their God, and comfort themselves with the glorious promise given them by God, namely, that they are blessed or saved, Matt. 5:10-12), that theirs is the kingdom of heaven, and that the Spirit of God rests upon them when they are persecuted for righteousness' sake, when men say all manner of evil against them falsely and for the sake of the name of Christ, if they have become partakers of the sufferings of Christ and for his sake are despised, knowing that they shall also be made partakers of his glory (Matt. 5:12; 1 Peter 4:14; Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12).

I have now briefly pointed out and discussed what the church of God is, how and by what means it is built up, what ordinances and rules are included, by what symbols it is portrayed, how it may be recognized, and how distinguished from all sects: for in all false and antichristian churches these things are not found, namely, no real new birth, no real distinction between law and gospel, that brings forth fruit, and by which people truly repent and are converted from unrighteousness unto God (Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:8), no true knowledge of the only and eternal God, who is life eternal, the fullness of wisdom and of righteousness, that is manifested by the keeping of the commandments of Christ (John 17:3; Wis. of Sol. 15:3), no true knowledge of the pure, holy, and spotless humanity of Jesus Christ, no faith that produces fruits, no scriptural baptism or Lord's Supper, no Christian washing of the feet of saints (John 13:5-17) in the quietness of true humility, no key to the kingdom of heaven, no evangelical ban or separation, no shunning of the temples of idolatry and of false worship, no un-dissimulated brotherly love, no god-fearing life, no keeping of the commands of Christ, no persecution for righteousness' sake. All these ordinances and evidences of true Christianity are found in no antichristian churches in true form and condition, but everywhere the reverse, as may be clearly seen in these days, if so be that a man has eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand (Matt. 13:9; Rev. 2:7; 3:6).

That the Church of God is Readily Known by the Description of the Same, Namely That it is the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, Etc

Furthermore the church of the Lord is easily recognizable from its description, namely, "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2), "having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel" (Rev. 21:11, 12); and the budding of the wall of it was of Jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones" (Rev. 21:18, 19); and the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there; and a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielding her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, yea, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he dwells with them, and they are his people, and he himself with them is their God, and the glory and honor of the nations shall be brought into this same city. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. And his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads; and they shall reign forever and ever."

This is a description or lifelike portrait of the Christian church, as she exists here in Spirit, and hereafter in the perfection of heavenly existence. For, in the first place the holy city is the church, whose citizens are the Christian believers and members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19), and it is called a city for the reason that as in a city there must be concord, the citizens must hold firmly together, living and acting according to the same policy, ordinances and law, if the city is to continue to exist, so it must also be in the church. There must be unity of spirit and of faith (1 Cor. 1:9); 10:21; Rom. 12:16); there the same rule of the divine word must govern the walk and conversation of its members, and the divine policy which this city has received of God must be concordantly observed. Therefore also the prophet declares that Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together (Psa. 122: 3), whose citizens are united, whereby there is portrayed to us the unity of the church of God, of which the scripture says much (Psa. 128:6-9; Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:16; Gal. 3:28; John 17:11, etc.)

In the second place the church is the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2); because all things have become new through Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:6); the oldness of the letter and of the flesh has passed away, and the newness of the Spirit has been ushered in by Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5-17). Jerusalem is as much as to say a vision of peace, and therefore the church of the Lord is the true Jerusalem, for it is at peace with God through Jesus Christ, and peace is within her walls, and no disturbers or those who cause contention against evangelical teaching may be suffered to remain therein; for God is a God of peace in all his churches; Christ is the Prince of peace and has given and left with us his peace; the Holy Ghost gives peace and joy to the consciences of believers, and the apostles admonish us to this peace in all their epistles, that it rule and reign in our hearts (Rom. 5:3-8; 16:16; Tit. 3:12; 1 Cor. 14:33; John 15:6; Rom. 14:8; 12:19; Heb. 12:15; Eph. 4:4; Col. 13:15; Phil. 4:1).

In the third place this new Jerusalem has come down from heaven, for the Christians are not of this world, just as Christ also is not of this world (John 17:14), but

they are born from above, therefore also they are not carnally, but spiritually minded and by faith seek those things which are above (John 3:6; Rom. 8:5; Col. 11:2), where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father. With Abraham, Isaac and Jacob they are content to dwell in tents, and to be strangers here on earth; for they seek for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (1 Peter 1:1; 2:11; Heb. 11:11). Those who by the grace of the Lord and by the power of their faith are thus minded are the church of God, the Jerusalem that is above, of which Paul writes to the Galatians (Gal. 4:16).

In the fourth place the church is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; for by faith she is espoused and wedded to Jesus Christ, and is the glorious, beautiful bride of the Lamb, adorned with many godly virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost (Hos. 2:19; 2 Cor. 11:4). Here is the great mystery of Christ and his church, of which Paul writes to the Ephesians, namely, that "Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23; 1:22), flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones; therefore he loved it and gave himself for it, and cleansed it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish, yea, partaking of the divine nature (Eph. 5:25-32; 2 Peter 1:4), if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end (Heb. 3:14). Therefore also the church in turn must love Christ and surrender herself wholly to him, for his sake forsake everything and cleave unto him alone, fleeing all spiritual adultery, that is, shunning all idolatry (Matt. 10:17; 16:24; 1 Cor. 6:18; 2 Cor. 10:14).

In the fifth place this holy city has in it the glory of God, and she has no need of the sun nor moon to give light unto her, for the glory of God lightens her, and her light is like the most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it (Rev. 21:11, 12, etc.); that is, the church is a kingdom of the Most High, exalted above all the kingdoms of the earth, in which the saints shall have spiritual dominion (Dan. 7:27), and are the victory over the whole world by their faith, and Jesus Christ, the brightness of the everlasting light, the express image of the Person of God; is the light of his church, which is enlightened by his appearing, yea, with the glory of his word, so that she needs no other light, and the Gentiles which shall be saved are called from darkness to this light, and walk in this light, as children of light, and shine as lights in the world in this that they hold fast to the word of life (1 John 5:4; Wis. of Sol. 7:26; Heb. 1:3; 1 Peter 2:9; Eph. 5:9; Phil. 2:15). Therefore also Tobit says in his song of praise: "O Jerusalem, thou holy city, thou shalt shine in glorious brightness, and all generations shall praise thee with great joy" (Tob. 13:9-18).

In the sixth place this city of Jerusalem has walls great and high, and the building of the wall is of Jasper, and the foundations of the wall of the city are garnished with all manner of precious stones (Rev. 21:12, 18, 19). This represents to us that the church is built upon the precious foundation of the apostles and prophets, of whom Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19); and this same church has had from the beginning many glorious ministers, preachers of righteousness (1 Cor. 3:5; 1 Peter 5:1), adorned with exalted spiritual gifts, which are like a wall round about the city of God to protect them from her enemies, and as a fence round about the vineyard of the Lord, because of the

little foxes, that is, to keep out of it the false prophets who would creep in, so that they destroy not the vineyard of the Lord (Isa. 5:1; Sol. Song 2:15).

In the seventh place, there are twelve gates to this city Jerusalem, and twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, which indicates to us that the church of the Lord has the doctrine of the twelve apostles, which leads to the heavenly Jerusalem, and that there is entrance by no other way; for the apostles have preached to us the true gospel, and beside this no other may be preached (Gal. 1:9). And if we would enter into the church of the Lord we must enter in through these gates, for Christ is the only way to the Father, the only door to the sheepfold, that is, the only means of entrance into the church, and into the kingdom of God (Luke 13:22; John 10:7; 14:7). And in view of the fact that the apostles preached Christ, proclaimed the gospel, and thus brought the people to Christ, they are therefore called gates, by which one enters into the holy city. They are also angels, and the messengers of the Most High, the sealed servants of God, and the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel are written upon them (Mal. 3:1; Psa. 103:20), for to them they were sent first by Christ, and they were first called to the fellowship of the gospel, they had the preference, and from them came the apostles of the Lord.

In the eighth place this city is of pure gold, as it were transparent glass, and there is no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. This reveals to us the fact that the church of the Lord is pure and clean, purified by much tribulation (Sir. 2:5; Wis. of Sol. 3:6), even as the scripture points out to us that God tries his saints, as gold is tried in the fire, with many trials, that the trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:7). Neither does the church need any external temple made with hands, which does not avail before God, and therefore none is found in the church, but the tabernacle of God is with them (Acts 7:48; 17:24), and the dwellings of the Most High are therein (Psa. 48:14; Rev. 21: 22). Moreover the church herself is the temple of the living God, as it is written; "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19, etc.).

In the ninth place the gates of the city shall not be closed by day; and there is no night there. That is, the entrance to the church of God is always open to penitents and believers; for them the door of grace is always open, for them the day of salvation always shines (2 Cor. 6:2), and there is no darkness; for God, who dwells in light, and in whom is no darkness nor variableness, nor shadow of turning, is in his church and enlightens her with his divine glory, here in the heart, by his word and Spirit, which is accepted in true faith, and hereafter in the eternal kingdom, in which the righteous shall shine as the sun forever and ever.

In the tenth place a stream of living water, clear as crystal, proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the midst of the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem, and on either side of the stream are the trees of life, which bear fruit every month, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. This clear stream of living

water represents the Holy Ghost which proceeds from the eternal Father (John 15:26) through the Son and is a Spirit of the Father and the Son, and he is in the church, he quickens and comforts the believing souls with the everlasting comfort of the grace of God, and by this same Spirit Jesus Christ is glorified (1 Peter 1:11, 12; John 16:15), the word of life, the comforting gospel is proclaimed, which becomes fruitful in the hearts of the believers, and is conducive and profitable for eternal salvation to all who have been converted from heathendom to God and received into his church (1 Cor. 2:10).

In the eleventh place into this holy city shall be brought the glory and honor of the nations. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, nor maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. 21:26, 27). That is, the Gentiles who through the hearing of the gospel that was preached to them (Rom. 10:17) have, by the power and working of the Holy Spirit believed, have praised God (as the prophets testify in many places, Rom. 15:9; Deut. 32:43) and have made the church of God glorious, because many thousands of Gentiles have been added to the church; but the impure and liars, and those that work abomination cannot enter into this holy city; for the ungodly, says the prophet, shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous (Psa. 1:5). Yea, they shall have their part with the dragon in the lake that burneth with fire, as it is written: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21: 8). O Lord! where shall those appear who now with such proud and haughty words profess to be the church of the Lord, and yet are wholly intoxicated with carnal pleasures and are openly the worshippers of idols, and liars against the truth and commit all manner of abomination before God?

Lastly, the servants of the Lord in this holy city serve the Most High, and his name is in their foreheads, and they shall see his face, and shall reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:3-5). These servants are the true Christians who serve the Lord faithfully in his church, who have yielded their members servants to righteousness unto holiness (Rom. 6: 19) and in the end have everlasting salvation for their souls (1 Peter 1:9). These have the mark on their foreheads, the name of their God; they openly confess the truth as those whom the Holy Spirit has sealed, and rejoice in the mercy of the Lord and are not ashamed of their faith (Sir. 51:29); they do what God has commanded them to do, with sincere confidence. Therefore God will reward them in due season, and the Lord Jesus will glorify them, and they shall be like him, for they shall see him face to face, in the resurrection of the just, and shall reign with him forever and ever (John 12:28; 17: 5; 1 Cor. 13:13; Phil. 3:21).

Thus has the Holy Spirit portrayed to us in the scripture the church of Jesus Christ, from which we may understand how the church here must be qualified, how glorious she is, and how she shall be eternally in heaven, when all these things shall come to pass and be fulfilled in the fullness of power and glory. And now, in whatever church this is begun and may be seen and found, there is the true church of the Lord, the city of the living God, the new Jerusalem, come down from above. Blessed are they that do his

commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city, "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie". (Rev. 22:14, 15)

May God, the Father of all mercy, who by his grace has called us into the church of his dear Son preserve us therein and strengthen us unto his heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Deus est, qui operatur omne quod bonum est in omnibus.

The First Epistle

Three Well-Grounded
Admonitions or Epistles
Written in Brotherly Love
to the
Church of God

For the strengthening and comfort of their minds,
that they walk steadfastly in the voluntarily
confessed and accepted truth, in true faith,
and in firm confidence, in a pious,
blameless and godly walk void
of offense unto the end.

By

D. P.

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always
in remembrance of these things,
though ye know them,
and be established in the present truth.

Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle,
to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.

2 Peter 1:12, 13.

An Explanation of the Chief Ground for the First Epistle

Greeting

The unfathomable grace, love and mercy of God our heavenly Father; the peace, righteousness, holiness of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the almighty and living God; the comfort, joy and power of the Holy Ghost; the communion of this only and eternal God, with all his spiritual gifts and blessings with which he endues and blesses all true Christians who believe in his name, who fear and love him, be with you all evermore, Amen. 2 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 2:4; 1 Cor. 1:3; Rom 14:17; 1 Peter 1:3.

Evangelical and Apostolic Greeting, Followed by Thanksgiving to God, Etc

Beloved friends in the Lord, cordially beloved brethren and sisters in the Spirit, my companions in the grace of God, in the fellowship of the gospel, in faith, in suffering, in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ: With the apostle Paul I thank my God (2 Thess. 2:13) that "he hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and in belief of the truth, to which he has called you through the teaching of the gospel (Tit. 2:11, 12) to the possession of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. O what grace has appeared to you from God! (1 John 3:1). O what love the heavenly Father has shown you in Christ Jesus! O what a treasure God has given you! (Matt. 13: 44). O how precious is the pearl which you have found! Well worth losing all things for the sake of it. You can now say with the prophet: "O Israel, how happy are we; for things that are pleasing to God are made known unto us" (Baruch 4:4). Remember in what ignorance, blindness and darkness you once walked, in what gross wickedness, unrighteousness and shameful idolatry you lived (1 Peter 4: 2-4), how your course was directed toward eternal damnation, and the way in which you walked led to the abyss of hell, and how graciously the merciful Father overlooked the time of your ignorance (Acts 17:30), and called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9), made you alive from the dead, delivered you out of hell and set you into heavenly places, and thus had abundant mercy on you in Christ Jesus, whom he hath set forth to be a propitiation forever by faith in his blood (Rom. 3:25; Rev. 1:6), with which he has washed away your sins, restored your souls, healed all your diseases and borne all your sins in his body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 4:10), and still bears them daily (Heb. 9:12; 10:11) and makes propitiation before the Father by the offering of his body and blood, and with his incessant intercession; who constantly feeds and satisfies your souls with his word through faith, and renews you after the inner man by the power of his Spirit, so that you are born anew of God, become partakers of the divine nature (John 3:3; 2 Peter 1:4), transformed into the immortal, heavenly life, and have come into eternal life (John 3:16; 5:24; 6:40; 8:51; 11:25; 12:50).

**How Graciously God Overlooked the Time of
Our Ignorance. For This Reason the Church is
Admonished to Give Thanks. For This
Inexpressibly Great Grace and Mercy, and to
Remember to What We Have Been Called and Why
Jesus has Called and Accepted Us to be His
Disciples**

Thank God therefore, for his inexpressible grace, and remember whereunto you have been called of God, upon what condition Christ Jesus has accepted and chosen you as his disciples, namely, that you suffer and die with him, that you may be glorified with him (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12). And now is the time, as I hear, when your faith must be examined, your love tested, your patience manifested and verified. Now is the day of temptation, which will make every man's work manifest, which will refine and purify the gold, silver and precious stones and burn the hay, straw and stubble; now is the time of joy, that all those who at this time suffer persecution and shame for the word of God, and for the testimony of Christ (1 Cor. 3:16; Matt. 5:11; Luke 6:22) may rejoice in the Spirit that they are worthy to suffer for the Lord's sake, for great is their reward in heaven. Now is the day of salvation, in which all are saved by grace who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (Matt. 5:10), when the chosen of God will be made manifest, and they are purified as gold in the fire (2 Esd. 16: 73). You will now fare according to the word of the Lord, according to his promises and prophecies; for he says to his disciples: "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. 10:16), "and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake" (Matt. 10:22). "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:1-3). Now is the time of which Christ says to his disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy" (John 16:20). For whosoever suffers with Christ here shall rejoice with him forever. He that loses his life here for the Lord's sake shall find it in eternity.

O my beloved in the Lord, be comforted, and remember the comforting words with which God comforts his people and says: "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that

strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of naught. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (Isa. 41:8-14). And again: "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flames kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior" (Isa. 43:1-3). And this is what the prophet says: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken" (Psa. 34:19, 20); for the body (says the apostle) which is here sown in dishonor, contempt and pain shall be raised in glory, incorruptible, and be made like unto the glorified body of Christ (1 Cor. 15:43, etc.). Therefore also Christ says in the gospel that the righteous in the resurrection shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43). And in the Revelations of John it is written that they which are arrayed in white robes "are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. And they shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 7:13-17).

**Many Loving Admonitions and Comforting
Scripture Passages Necessary for All Anxious and
Fearful Children of God, That They Remember
How Faithfully God has at all Times From the
Beginning Stood by His Chosen Ones and
Strengthened and Comforted Them in all Their
Troubles**

With such and like comforting passages of holy scripture comfort and admonish one another, and do not allow yourselves to be terrified by the tyrants and persecutors (1 Thess. 2:2), but remember the words of the apostle that unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, and that you must have the same conflict which the Lord and all his followers have had (Phil. 1:28-30). Now, when you look at the suffering of our Savior Jesus Christ, your suffering is not to be compared with his; for he was rich (as the apostle says), yet for our sakes he became poor (2 Cor. 8:9; Matt. 8: 20); that he had less than the birds of the air (Luke 9:58), and

the foxes of the earth, that we through his poverty might become rich. What wonder is it then, if we for his sake forsake all things, and lose our temporal possessions, if we have a better possession in heaven. Christ was in the form of God, and made himself of low degree, and took upon him the form of a servant, and became the most despised among men; he humbled himself, was obedient to the Father, even to the death of the cross (Phil 2: 6-8). Why then should his disciples be otherwise minded, and not become conformed to his image? (Heb. 1: 3; Wis. of Sol. 7:26). Christ was glorified with his Father as the Brightness of the everlasting light, and the express image of the Person of the Father, the brightness of the glory of God, and a spotless mirror or reflection of the divine glory, and he was brought to such humiliation and contempt that the prophet by his Spirit, in his person thus laments and says: "I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head" (Psa. 22:6, 7). And Isaiah prophesies of him: "We hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isa. 53:3).

Why then should the world highly esteem his disciples? Or, why should his disciples seek and desire the honor of men? Christ is the peace of all Christians, the wisdom of all who fear God, the righteousness, redemption and salvation of all believers (Eph. 2:14; 1 Cor. 1:21); moreover the Pharisees and scribes with the Jews so blasphemed him, calling and charging him with being a turbulent deceiver, fanatic, Samaritan, that is, one who had been excluded from their society, a chief or prince of devils, that is, Beelzebub; how then can these modern Pharisees and perverted doctors of divinity treat the true Christians differently? (Matt. 12:24; John 10:20, 21; 8:48). They will ever come up to the measure of their fathers. Christ so loved the world that he came down from heaven to save it, and showed all kindness, love and mercy toward it; but in return for this the world hated him, persecuted, martyred, crucified and killed him, and so the blind world still does, it still treats all true Christians the same, dispersing and destroying them wherever it can and may.

Notice, moreover, the conflict and suffering of all saints from the beginning of the world, from the time of righteous Abel up to the present time, and you will find how all god-fearing people had to suffer much, as the apostle writes to the Hebrews, namely, how other pious people of God were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy): they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth (Heb. 11:35-38). "Wherefore," says the apostle, "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the

exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:1-6; Prov. 3:12).

Dear brethren in Christ, the time has now come when the heavenly Father reveals his love and paternal nature in this that he tries and chastens you as he has done with all his children and those dear to him. Now, "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 are ye bastards, and not sons" (Heb. 12:7, 8). Therefore you may well rejoice in your chastenings, which are an evidence that you are the friends and children of God, and receive them patiently, fully conscious that they are for your good, and that the Father of all mercies and the God of all grace chastens you for your profit, that you might be partakers of his holiness, and live. For, if it is grievous to the flesh, it is joyous to the Spirit, as the apostle testifies and says: "For which cause (namely, in our suffering for the cause of Christ) we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which, are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:16-18). On this thought Paul also writes to the Hebrews: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11).

**On the Brevity of Human Life, Together With
an Instructive Example of the Courage and Piety of
the Aged Eleazar Who Would Not Play the
Hypocrite for a Brief Moment of His Temporal
Life; Also Other Beautiful Lessons**

Remember how brief and uncertain human life is. Why then should you seek to preserve this temporal life to the forfeiture of the eternal life? For the Lord himself says that he that loves his life and desires to keep it,—that is, he that loves his own life more than Christ and the gospel, as all hypocrites and backsliders do—must lose it forever (Matt. 10:39 Mark 8:35 John 12:25). Therefore it is necessary here to always remember what the Lord says: "I say unto you my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God" (Luke 12:4-8). Therefore do not

be deceived by the love and desires of this temporal life, for you do not know when the Son of man will come and you must pass from hence; and although the world promises you life, you are not certain of your life for one moment. The aged godly Eleazar recognized this fact, therefore he would not preserve his life by hypocrisy (2 Mac. 6:18-31), and said to his adversaries, as he desired them straightway to send him to the grave: "It becometh not our age in any wise to dissemble, whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, being fourscore years old and ten, were gone to a strange religion; and so they through my hypocrisy, and desire to live a little time and a moment longer, should be deceived by me, and I got a stain to mine old age, and make it abominable. For though, for the present time I should be delivered from the punishment of men; yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive nor dead. Wherefore now, manfully changing this life, I will show myself such a one as mine age requireth, and leave a notable example of courage to such as be young, to die willingly and courageously for the honorable and holy laws" (2 Mac. 6:23-28).

Take an example from this godly, courageous and manly Eleazar, and learn from him to disregard this temporal, perishable life, which is so brief, and which is assured or certain for not even one hour. Sirach declares that although a man lived a hundred years, yet even a thousand years are to eternity what a drop of water is to the sea, or a grain of sand in comparison to the sand of the sea (Sir. 18:9, 10).

Consider herewith how your life is in the hands of God and no one may touch or harm you without his will, without the permission of your heavenly Father, as Christ himself declares in the passage already quoted. The prophet declares the same fact: "I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind: I am like a broken vessel. For I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me" (Psa. 31:11-15). And in another place: "The wicked plotteth against the just and gnasheth upon him with his teeth, etc. But the Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged" (Psa. 37:12-33). Hence: "If the Lord had not been on our side, now may Israel say; if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up alive, when their wrath was kindled against us", etc. (Psa. 124:1-3).

From these and other words of the scripture it is evident that men may not do anything whatever against Christians unless the Lord permits it; all depends upon that; therefore also the Lord alone is to be feared, and not men, who are dust and ashes, and perish like the grass, and are eaten up of worms and moths (Sir. 10:11; 11:15; Isa. 49:6; James 1:10). Moreover be not terrified at the pangs and pains of death, at the torture (although they are horrible) which the tyrants and ungodly may bring upon you; if it is the providence and will of God. But comfort yourselves, dearly beloved, with the thought that the Lord will be with you in all your extremities (Isa. 43:1-5); goes with you into prison, fire, and water, suffers with you, is with you in life and death, and will never

forsake you; so that you can say with the prophet: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psa. 27:1). Hence, though "my flesh and my heart faileth: yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Psa. 73:26). And Paul says: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? as it is written (Psa. 44: 22): For thy sake are we 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, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).

I hope, my cordially beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, that such love to God is hidden in your hearts, therefore be not afraid of oppression, torture, rack, butchery and death and all that the godless, tyrannical men can do to you, when the Lord permits them to do it (Heb. 10:31); but think how terrible it is to fall into the hands of the living God, and how excruciating is the fire of hell (Matt. 25:42) which is prepared for the devil and all his angels, and all unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, and all who do not remain steadfast in the word of the Lord (Rev. 21:8), but who depart from it and again cleave to the Babylonian harlot and the world; they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Rev. 12:8), and upon such the angel of the Lord pronounced judgment with a loud voice, saying: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand (that is, sanctions idolatry, or confesses it to be right, has anything to do with it or practices it), the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev. 14:9-12).

Therefore take heed and look not upon the slight pangs of temporal death, but upon the horrible agonies of eternal death and of the lake of fire; yea, of that a man may rightly be terrified and take an example of the rich man, who, when he was in pain and torment, lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and cried, saying:- "Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, but thou art tormented" (Luke 16: 23-25). Think of, and suffer a little with poor Lazarus here, so that, when you depart out of this world, you may go to Abraham's bosom and have eternal joy and comfort, and love not, with the rich man, the perishing lusts of the flesh, so that you are not with him compelled to suffer and pay for it eternally in hellfire (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:42; 2

Esd. 9:9), and be tormented therefore in outer darkness where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

Over against this, picture to yourselves the ineffable glory of the eternal kingdom which God has prepared from the beginning for those who love him. Ever bear in mind the word of comfort which says: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7). "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving him that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17). "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power to rule over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star" (Rev. 2:26-28). "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but will confess his name before the Father, and before his angels" (Rev. 3:5). Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write him my new name" (Rev. 3:12). "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Rev. 3:21). To sum it up: He that remains steadfast and faithful unto the end and unto death, shall receive the crown of life, which he shall possess. The righteous shall live forever, and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand (Wis. of Sol. 5:15, 16). Lastly: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," as the apostle writes to the Romans (8:18).

**A Warning Against False Prophets, Who
Preach to the People an Easy Way, Pleasing to the
Flesh, Whereby They Mislead the People and Teach
a False Liberty, Together With a Beautiful
Admonition, Showing What True Christian Liberty
is**

Be diligent therefore, my most beloved by the grace of God, to bear the cross of Jesus Christ with patience, and look with the eye of faith to the joy and glory which is prepared for you. Walk continually worthy of the gospel and of your calling, according to the rule of apostolic doctrine, in one Spirit and mind, and beware of the false prophets, which preach to you smooth things and lead you into all manner of carnal license by which the offence of the cross is removed, and observe what is true Christian liberty, namely, as Jesus says in the gospel: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31, 32).

There is then no Christian liberty outside of the truth, which is God's word. Now this is the real true Christian liberty, firstly, that Christ Jesus by his suffering and death freed us from the devil, hell, death and sin, as Paul says: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15). We should therefore "give thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:12-14). And in the Revelations of John it is written that "the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests", etc. (Rev. 5:8-10).

Thus we are in the first place delivered by Christ from Satan, hell, death and sin, if so be that we truly believe in him and continue in his word. In the second place we are made free from the law to everyone that believes in him (Rom. 10:4). Therefore Paul declares that we are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14). Paul very beautifully teaches this liberty to the Romans and Galatians when he speaks of Abraham and his two sons (Rom. 9:7; Gal. 4:24), of whom one was by a bondwoman and the other by the free woman Sarah, the one born after the flesh, the other after the Spirit. And these two wives of Abraham, Paul says, signify or represent the two testaments; the two sons the two races of both testaments: Ishmael, the Jews, and Isaac, the Christians. To this Paul adds: "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 4:31; 5:1).

This then is the liberty of the children of God, into which they have been placed by God through Jesus Christ, and this liberty is nowhere except where there is the sonship of God and the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore this liberty does not consist in license to commit sin or to walk after the flesh or to be conformed to the world, but to serve God and neighbor. For this Christian liberty, of which we now speak, is really that of serving God and neighbor, as the apostle Peter says: "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God" (1 Peter 2:15, 16). And Paul, says: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6:16). Hence Christians must serve one another, as the apostle says: "Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). Thus Paul himself did, as he says: "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more" (1 Cor. 9:19). Therefore, "give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor

to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:32, 33).

From all this it is evident what real Christian liberty is, of what it consists, how through love, it is a service to God and fellowman, and that there is a false liberty which seeks opportunity according to the flesh for occasion to sin, for its own profit, and in short, something different to that which concerns God and fellowman—the salvation of the soul and conscience. It is therefore a base error, a gross ignorance, and a horrible deception that so many think Christian liberty stands for license to go into the temples of the idolaters and give ear to the false prophets, and not separate from the false worship outwardly, but only at heart, which is wrong and false. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," as the apostle says; "and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10); for God must be glorified in body and in spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. 6:20). And if we desire to rightly understand Paul's words: "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, . . . and touch not the unclean thing," etc. (2 Cor. 6:16, etc.), we must recognize his own explanation, when he says: "Ye are the temple of the living God" (1 Cor. 3:16); as God says, "I will dwell in them and walk in them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." And in another place: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19). In other words: "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12:27).

**How Fearfully Those Err Who Imagine That
They May Go to the Temples of Idolatry and Hear
the False Teachings Taught There, Just so One Does
not Believe Them at Heart or Adhere to Them**

Now, from this it may be easily deducted and clearly understood that there must be a separation from the temple of idols, from all ungodly preachers when they stand in the pulpit and pervert the word of God; and from all false worship, not in heart and spirit only, but also in body. Therefore those who profess such false liberty, as above referred to, lie against the truth, deceive themselves and others. These are they of whom Jesus Sirach says: "Woe be to fearful hearts, and faint hands, and the sinner that goeth two ways! Woe unto him that is faint hearted! for he believeth not; therefore shall he not be defended" (Sir. 2:12, 13). These are they of whom Peter says: "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption" (2 Peter 2:17-19).

Those are inconstant and apostate Israelites who try to carry water on both shoulders and swerve from side to side (1 Kings 18:22), who try to partly serve God and

partly Baal. And thus they are led astray by the splendor and lecherous spirit of the priests of Jezebel. They persuade them that sin is not sin, that unrighteousness is no unrighteousness (Rev. 2:20); but let everyone take heed and beware of these priests of Jezebel. Let no one be deceived by them; for the Lord will cast all them who have committed fornication with her into extremest torment, if they do not repent, and the whole church shall confess that he is the Lord, who will reward every man according to his works.

A Faithful Warning Against Those Who Sow Strife and Contention and Cause Offenses, and do not Avoid or Shun Apostates

Therefore take due heed in the fear of the Lord your God that you use no carnal license in your church attendance, and sanction and accept no hearing of the false teachers. The seducing spirits will approach you with great craftiness and conceit, especially at this particular time of distress (2 Cor. 11:13-15), to draw you away from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 11:3); but as you love God and the salvation of your souls, beware! Mark also them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles regarding the ban and will not shun the backsliding brethren and sisters according to the scriptures, but continue to maintain outward fellowship with them. But I testify to you by the Lord, from his clearly expressed words which he himself spake by the mouth of his apostles and faithful messengers, with the power, operation and impulse of his Holy Spirit, that those who, after sufficient scriptural admonitions, have, by the power of Jesus Christ by his word, been separated from the church of God and placed into the ban, must be shunned by you; you must avoid their person in eating and drinking, in dealings and in walk, and if any one does differently and despises these commands of God, let him take an example of Achan (Josh. 7: 20), who had secretly taken a little of the accursed goods of Jericho, and see what befell him. And let no one imagine that he should escape the punishment of God, whether it fall upon him here or hereafter; for if Achan was so severely punished because of a little of the accursed goods which were found with him, what shall overtake the willful despisers of the ordinances of God, who act toward excluded members contrary to the scriptures? And those persons who have been excluded are no less an abomination before God than are accursed goods; hence to deal with a person in the ban contrary to the rule of God's word is no less, but rather more, sinning against God than Achan did who stole some of the accursed goods, and whoever does this becomes a partaker of his evil deeds (2 John 11), and has fellowship with the evil works of apostates, yea, he defiles the whole church, according to the example of Achan and according to the words of Paul, namely, that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5:6). Now, as you love Christ and his church and your salvation, beware of expelled, apostate, false brethren and sisters, keep yourselves from their fellowship, and commend them unto the Lord to the time of their repentance.

I have written this brief admonition out of brotherly love, because you are my brethren and sisters in the Lord, and we have one fatherland both in heaven and on earth, and I cordially love you in Christ Jesus. I trust also that you will accept my admonition in love, although you have yourselves been taught of God (2 Pet. 1:12) and are confirmed by God in this present truth. May the God of all grace (1 Pet. 5:10) fill you with all spiritual wisdom and prudence and preserve you from all evil, that you may be fruitful in all good works (Col. 1:6) and walk blameless, and thus appear at the last day before the judgment seat of Christ. The Lord be with you all. Amen.

The Second Epistle

**The Second Admonition or Epistle,
Written in Brotherly Love to
the Church of God,
By D. P.**

A Brief Explanation of the Contents of This Letter

May grace and peace from God, our heavenly Father, and from Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, increase among you by the power of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**After the Greeting and Thanksgiving the
Author Describes his Great Joy and Happiness
Which his Visit to the Churches in the Fatherland
Afforded Him**

Blessed be God and Father of all mercies, that according to his unfathomable grace and everlasting love he hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation (2 Cor. 1:3; 2 Thess. 2:13), and ordained you unto eternal life, and now in these last times hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, yea, chosen you to be his children and accepted you as heirs of all his riches in Christ Jesus, whereby the merciful God has so abundantly shown his fatherly love toward you and you have received such benefits from him that you may well say with the prophet: What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits unto us? And while I was with you I had great joy and my soul was refreshed in the Lord when I saw your fervency and steadfastness in faith, your love to God and his truth, your Christian peace, your brotherly unity, and the good order observed among

you, and that God's word there is so fruitful and so many are added to the church of the Lord, so that it seems to me as if a special blessing had come from God upon my fatherland. Who would in time past have thought or imagined that Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22), which John in the Spirit saw descending from heaven, should have been established there, that the tabernacle of God with men and the sanctuary of the Lord should be set up there? Yea, like Bethlehem, the little town in Judah, became so glorious because the Prince in Israel was born therein and came there from, so also is the little despised country, insignificant as compared with the greatest kingdoms and principalities, come into great favor and glory before God because of the chosen ones who are therein (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:6).

Therefore I thank almighty God for you, my beloved in the Lord, and rejoice because of my fatherland. I rejoice thereat from the bottom of my heart for the rich blessings of God in heavenly riches, namely that the peaceable fruits of righteousness grow there, that there the vineyard of the Lord is blooming and emitting a fragrant odor (Sol. Song 2:13); the roses are pushing forth in the valley, the lily stands so beautifully among the thorns, the honey and milk of the unadulterated truth flows there. In short, all plants of all manner of fruits of the Spirit are there, and not there only, but also in the adjacent countries. Oh, what great blessings of God! Oh, what a change and difference, that such a barren waste has become such a fruitful land, such a blessed country, yea, such a garden of the Lord and a paradise of God! Where once there was no water, streams of living water now flow (Isa. 44:4); where once nothing was known of God, there it is now full of the pure knowledge of God; where once men ran after dumb idols, the living God, the Lord of heaven and earth, is now worshipped (1 Thess. 1:9); where men once lay in bondage under Antichrist, they are now free under Jesus Christ; where men were once driven by false shepherds, to eat and drink that which had been trodden under foot and made foul (Ezek. 34:18, 19), there the one good Shepherd, Jesus Christ himself, now feeds his sheep (John 10:11) and leads them to the fountains of living water; where formerly men were forced to drink out of the cup of the abominations of the Babylonian harlot, which is full of all fornication and sorcery, Jesus now pours out freely to all who thirst the pure wine of his divine word and the water of life (Rev. 18:3; 22:1; John 4:10).

An Earnest, Thoughtful Prayer for the Church That They Remain Steadfast in the Truth

Therefore I again thank the Most High God for his inexpressible gifts, and beseech him in all humility in the name of Jesus Christ that he would pour out his blessings yet more abundantly upon you, and increase your growth in righteousness, to the praise of his holy name, and to the salvation of your souls. And although I trust in the mercy of God, and have all good confidence in you people, yet I cannot, because of a feeling of duty and brotherly love toward you, abstain from writing a little to you and to admonish you, whereby you will recognize the sympathetic state of my mind toward you people; for God knows what a place you fill in my heart, and that I remember you people in my prayers, and by God's grace shall not cease to pray for you in my weakness, that

the merciful eternal Father would preserve you from all evil, and preserve you in the true faith, and keep you for his heavenly kingdom (1 Thess. 5: 23). I am concerned for you with godly concern; for I have in many years seen and experienced, that is, ascertained, that the wicked Satan is very industrious in his efforts to scatter and destroy the church of God by many false doctrines and heresies which he propagates and sets up (2 Cor. 15:18; Col. 2:18), and all this under the charming guise of the specially elect ecclesiastics, whom he adorns with perverted scripture; for it is his nature, art and disposition to adulterate the word of God and make it a covering for his lies (2 Cor. 11:12, 16). He does not appear as Satan in his messengers and servants, but as an angel of light, clothed in an outward show of false piety and devotion. He sends his priests forth in sheep's clothing, but within they are ravenous wolves (Matt. 7:15), who seek for nothing but to devour Christ's sheep. Therefore they come with great swelling words and give the impression that they are full of the Spirit, and that all true Christians, who have been taught of God and oppose them, are but novices and apprentices, so blind are they in their spiritual pride, which is the origin and beginning of all destruction, and I hear that they are given a hearing by some and are doing harm, and this is such a pain and anguish to my soul that I cannot describe it to you. What are the miserable people thinking who allow themselves to be so lamentably deceived by Satan (Heb. 3:15) that they turn away from the living God, that they depart from the way of truth, because it is narrow, and the way of the cross (Matt. 7:14), and enter upon the broad way that leads to damnation, and do not once take to heart the fact that it is written: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12; 16: 25) ? He that turns and errs from the way of wisdom, shall remain in the congregation of the dead.

Now, I know very well that all sects claim to be right, and are industrious in their ability to pervert the scripture according to the way of Satan, in order to embellish their evil things and hide their wickedness, and do not see the blindness of their heart with which they are stricken by God, that they deny the confessed and accepted truth, that they despise and change the unchangeable counsel of God, revealed by Jesus Christ in the gospel and witnessed by the Holy Spirit, that they seek altogether the friendship of the world, which yet is enmity with God (James 4:4), that they try to preserve the temporal life, and therefore, according to the Lord's own word, must lose eternal life (John 12:25), that with Esau they sell their birthright for a morsel of meat (Heb. 12:16), and shall possibly never afterward be able to obtain it, yea, that they are again in their former uncleanness, which Jesus Christ had washed away by his blood and by the washing of water by the word (Rev. 1:6; Eph. 5:26), and that the common proverb applies to them: "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:22).

Oh, it were better that they had never known the way, that they had remained in ignorance, that they had never come to the knowledge of the truth. But now they have come to it, now they have been enlightened, now the unclean spirit has departed out of them, and because he has found the garnished house still unoccupied (I say unoccupied in regard to the true faith, true love to God, the pure fear of the Lord and other virtues with which the house was formerly adorned), he has again entered with seven other evil

spirits, and the last estate of that man is worse than the first. Therefore I bow my knees to God the Father, and before the throne of grace (Col. 1:3; Eph. 3:14), praying and entreating for you, as the apostle did for the Colossians and for all Christians, that you may be filled with all spiritual wisdom and understanding, that you may prove and know what is the good, and holy, and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:3), and that you may remain steadfast in the truth of the gospel. And beware of the bombastic and honor-seeking spirits, by whom the exalted majesty of God is blasphemed; for whoever speaks in his carnal mindedness and human wisdom (which is foolishness with God, 1 Cor. 1:18) against the wholesome doctrine of Jesus Christ, and despises his ordinances, despises God himself, even as Christ says: "He that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me" (Luke 10:16). And again: "He that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (John 13:20). Moreover Christ says: "He (the Holy Ghost) shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:14). From this it follows inevitably that he that despises God, rejects Jesus Christ, and opposes the Holy Spirit, breaks the divine ordinances, changes them and acts contrary to them; therefore John says in his epistle: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

Notice and understand what an abomination it is and how ungodly before God, to transgress the doctrine of Jesus Christ and not to remain therein. Therefore take heed to yourselves that you be not influenced by the frivolous, wavering and apostate and fall away from your steadfastness, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and remember what the apostle writes to the Galatians: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8); "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). Upon this foundation you people are framed, upon this substructure you are built; now take heed that in the day of temptation you be not found built upon hay, wood or stubble, but much rather upon silver, gold and precious stones, even as I also hope of you by the grace of God.

In the second place I admonish you with the apostle Paul, "that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (Eph. 4:1); always pleasing unto the Lord, and that you are fruitful in all good works; for it behooves those who have been enlightened of God, and have been called to the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, to walk worthily of the gospel and of the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1), and to remember that the believers are, as the apostle Peter writes, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification and enlightenment of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:2). Thus also the beloved Paul writes to the Corinthians: "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:11). Now, inasmuch as you have attained unto this grace, take heed that you have not received it in vain. Remember the apostle's words (Heb. 6:7): "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned" (Heb. 6:7, 8). Therefore take heed to the grace of God and to the

gifts of the Holy Spirit which you have received, and take to heart what is written (1 Cor. 7:19), how that in Jesus Christ nothing avails but the keeping of the commandments of God; for the faith that worketh by love, and a new creature that despises all earthly things and seeks only heavenly things, who with Paul counts all earthly things but loss compared with the pure knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with Moses despises all the pomp and glory of Egypt and would rather suffer affliction with the people of God (Gal. 5:6; 6:17; Phil. 3:7; Heb. 11:25); for a new creature and regenerated man of God who is renewed and created by the Holy Ghost by faith, after the image and in the likeness of God, is spiritually minded, he is united with God, and has become a partaker of his nature; therefore also he does not sin, just as John says: "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2:29), "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil" (1 John 3:8-10).

From these words it may be readily understood who are the true Christians, namely, those who do righteously; they are believers, they are born of God, they do not sin, for after the inner man they are in God, and are ruled by the Spirit of the Lord, yea, led into all truth and obedience (Rom. 8:19), and therefore they hate all unrighteousness, as Joseph in Egypt hated adultery, Daniel and the three youths in Babylon, idolatry; yea, all God-fearing people have hated and shunned the works of the flesh, and everything that is contrary to God's word, not alone with the heart, but also with the body; for a Christian cannot be one within only, but he must show himself a Christian outwardly and everywhere (John 16:13; Gen. 39:10; Dan. 3:17; 6:10). A Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; a Christian's members are the members of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:23; 6:19; John 3:7); a Christian is born of the Spirit to a spiritual being and united with God who is a Spirit. Therefore his nature is like God's nature, he loves that which God loves, and hates what God hates, for he is not his own, but belongs to God (2 Pet. 1:2); he lives unto God and not unto himself; he remembers and takes to heart how holy, how righteous, how godly one must live in this evil world (2 Cor. 5:15; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pet. 1:16), looking for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us (Tit. 2:12), that he might redeem us from all unrighteousness, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous unto good works, with the mind set upon heavenly things, that seeks God and his righteousness (Col. 3:3; Matt. 6:33) above all other things, remembering how all Christians must lead a holy life inasmuch as they profess a holy God, and after whom the saints are called (Isa. 6:3; Rom. 1:19). Therefore the angel says to John: "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11). For how would it be possible for anything that is unclean to enter, much less, remain in, the new Jerusalem, which is so beautiful, where the streets are of pure gold, and the walls and gates of precious stones, where the throne of God is, where the Most High lights the city with his glory, where the streams of living water flow clearer than crystal from the throne of God, as John openly testifies (Rev. 21:21 22:1). Therefore let everyone cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and Spirit (2 Cor. 7:1) in the fountain that is opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for all

uncleanness, to wash them therewith, and be made a people acceptable to the Lord, that his exalted name might thereby be praised.

**An Earnest Petition and Humble Request to
Walk Faithfully in the Truth, Because Satan is Now
Unbound to Deceive the World and to War Against
the Elect With Many Kinds of Tyranny, and How to
Guard Against the Same**

In the third place, it is not only my faithful admonition to you, but also my heartfelt petition and desire to God that you may be strengthened in the Spirit by the mighty working of God, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness (Col. 1:9); for the strengthening and power of faith is very necessary for all pious Christians in this grievous time in which Satan is unbound, as it seems, to deceive the whole world and to trouble those who fear God (Rev. 20:3). He gathers all the heathen together to wage war against the holy city, to destroy it. No Nebuchadnezzar could have made his mandates more binding to worship his image (Dan. 3:6); no Antiochus was more vengeful against the Jews who remained steadfast in the faith (2 Mac. 6:10); no Babylonian and Egyptian dealt more mercilessly with the people of God (Ex. 4; 5; 6: 7) than many tyrants with persecution and all kinds of horrible martyrdoms have for some time been raging and are still raging against the Christians, so that one may well say with the prophet: "O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem," etc. (Psa. 79: 1-7). The chiefs of the people had to mourn and weep over their children, the priests and Levites who carry on the true worship of God in the temple, who burn incense before the Lord, and prepare the sacrifices and make offerings upon the altar, are captured and killed, the congregations are robbed of their faithful ministers. O Lord God, have mercy and strengthen thy servants; go thou before thy tabernacle, and lead thy people through this bleak wilderness, that all who fear thee and put their trust in thee may come into eternal rest (Heb. 4:11). And you, my most dearly beloved in the Lord, pray diligently to almighty God in behalf of all the dear brethren and companions of our most holy faith, that God would strengthen them with his Holy Spirit, and give them patience in the hour of suffering; "for ye have need of patience," says the apostle, "that, after ye have done the will of God. ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10: 36-39). It is a great privilege to suffer a little here with Christ (Rom. 8:18), to be patient and cheerful in it all, that hereafter we may become partakers of his eternal joy and glory (1 Pet. 4:13). Therefore the cross of Christ is the glory of all Christians, who say with the apostle: "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" (Gal. 6:14). And while the cross of Christ is at this time not everywhere alike heavy (Matt. 11: 29), yet according to the will of God it may come suddenly. Therefore my admonition to all you who have bowed the neck under the easy yoke of Christ (Matt. 11: 30) is, that you be at all times prepared to suffer, and possess your souls in patience, for no one shall succeed in persecuting Jesus of Nazareth in his members and kicking against the pricks (Acts 9:5); therefore be strong and of good comfort in the Lord. And further, do not allow yourselves to be frightened by opponents and apostates, but resist manfully as those well equipped with the armor of God (Eph. 6:14), for they cannot accomplish anything. What was ungodly Jeroboam with all his off scouring and ungodly host able to do against Abijah and Judah? "Ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord," said Abijah among other things to Jeroboam and Israel, "in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods. Have ye not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? So that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests which minister unto the Lord, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business: and they burn unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shewbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the Lord our God; but ye have forsaken him. And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper" (2 Chron. 13: 8-12).

Thus also may we glory in the Lord against all sects, namely, that the true and pure gospel of Jesus Christ is with us, the true priesthood with its true worship of God, the true ordinances of God, as those that have come down from heaven, given by God 438 Admonitions and Epistles. the Father, taught and commanded by Jesus Christ, testified to and confirmed by the Holy Ghost (Matt. 3:17), and practiced and declared by the apostles. But with our adversaries and the apostates are the golden calves of Jeroboam and his priests (Rev. 3) which he made contrary to the command of God. There offerings are made in the high places, there Baal is worshipped, the priestess Jezebel reigns with her false doctrine, there the doctrine and way of Balaam is followed, who raised up an offence before the children of Israel, so that they committed fornication with the daughters of Moab, and worshipped Baal-peor (Num. 25:1-5). So also do these modern Balaamites, who practice hypocrisy to please the world and to mislead others, and use all diligence to destroy the church of God. Therefore let us sound the trumpet as one voice, and blow the trumpets of God, and the enemies shall be terrified when they shall hear the sound of the trumpets of God (Judges 7:19-23); yea, then will the cake of barley bread tumble into the host of Midian and overturn their tents and destroy them, if so be that we sound the trumpet and break the earthen pitchers in pieces and let our light shine and strive manfully for the truth of God; then all who oppose the truth or depart from it and grieve and oppress the church of God must come to shame. For, because Pharaoh

oppressed the children of Israel he was drowned in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:23). And because Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses (2 Tim. 3:8; Ex. 7:11), they were brought to shame. And how many tyrants have been punished by God because they tyrannized over God's people; and how many false prophets who set themselves against the true prophets have been brought to shame! "They shall proceed no further," says the apostle, "for their folly shall be made manifest unto all men" (2 Tim. 3:9). Again, "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." And "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again, with rejoicing" (Psa. 125:2; 126:6). All those then who believe the truth and remain steadfast and immovably by it, and love the church of God shall be forever blessed (Psa. 118:7-15). For the reason that the ark of the covenant was in the house of Obed-Edom, God the Lord blessed him and all his house (2 Kings 6:10). Therefore the psalmist says: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee" (Psa. 122:6).

In the fourth place I admonish you to a Christian thanksgiving, that you thank God for his unspeakable gift which he has bestowed upon you; firstly, that he has made you "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12); yea, that you (I say it with the apostle) "who in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Pet. 2:10), and are called children of the living God; so that you may well say with John: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:1, 2). Therefore Paul says that Christians are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:3, 4).

Now, therefore, thank almighty God at all times with the patriarch Jacob (Gen. 32:9, etc.), that he would preserve your going out and your coming in, and protect you from the hand of Esau; also that he has richly blessed you with heavenly riches in Christ Jesus. And never forget this goodness of God. Say with the psalmist: "Bless the Lord, O, my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O, my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Psa. 103:1-5).

All this the Lord has done for you. He has forgiven you your sins, he has healed your souls with his heavenly medicine, he has redeemed your lives from everlasting destruction (Rom. 3:5, 8; Matt. 9:13). He has given you eternal life (Rom. 6:13; Tit. 3:6); the crown of righteousness is prepared for you; your food is the finest of the wheat, the living bread of heaven that is full of divine sweetness (John 6:52; Wis. of Sol. 16:20), and is angels' food, and the life of all believers; your youth is renewed in regeneration, the old life of the flesh is put away, and the new life of the Spirit in Christ has come into you, of which it is written in the epistle to the Hebrews: "We are made partakers of Christ, if we

hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14). That is, we have become partakers of Christ, as members of his body, as branches of the vine (1 Cor. 12:12; John 15: 5), and have received of his Spirit, and his life (that is holiness, righteousness, godliness, love, peace, patience, goodness, mercy, and all the divine virtues) has begun in you since you through the hearing of the word of God, by the power and enlightenment of the Holy Ghost, have believed. If you remain constant herein you now belong to Christ; you have also become partakers of Christ and all his heavenly riches (Rom. 10:10), of his grace and truth, his eternal life, his divine nature and glory, here in the Spirit by faith, and hereafter in the resurrection and renewing of all things we shall become partakers of the same in all its completeness (2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Cor. 15:53; Matt. 13:53); for our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Phil. 3:20, 21).

Thus, you see, the believers have become partakers of Christ, and shall be like him, and shall appear with him in glory, if so be that they now remain in him as members of his body, as branches of the vine, and are not through unbelief and apostasy from God's word cut away from it. Therefore take heed to the admonition of the apostle: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 2:6, 7), with the prophet thanking God always that he has so wonderfully made you, preserved you from earliest infancy, and yet more wonderfully redeemed your lives from this present evil world in these perilous times, and has called you out of so many thousands into the fellowship of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:4), and shown his "fatherly love in you (1 John 3:1), and bestowed upon us the exceeding riches of his grace, for which praise be to his name forever, Amen (Eph. 2:7).

A Friendly Request to Stand Fast in Christian Peace and Brotherly Unity

Lastly, I beseech and admonish you, my dearly beloved and desired in the Lord, through the crucified Jesus Christ, who reconciled us unto God, and has wrought everlasting peace with his Father, and left us the same (Eph. 2:15; John 20:20);—I beseech and admonish you, I say—to be at peace one with another in Jesus Christ, and remember that you are children of one heavenly Father, who is God, the true Father of all (Eph. 3:15); and of one mother, who is the spiritual Sarah, the new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb (Eph. 4:3; Isa. 30:2; Gal. 4:26-31). Therefore let this regeneration be actual and powerful in you, and be diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace; and undertake nothing without the word of God, and without the counsel of the Holy Spirit; and do not rate your wisdom or understanding too highly (Rom. 12:3), but fear God and ask him for true wisdom; search the scriptures diligently, understand them thoroughly, measure all things by the gospel plumb-line, prove all spirits by the character, nature and spirit of Christ, and you shall easily discern which spirit is of God, and thus

you will never have contention; for it is impossible, wherever the new birth—that comes by the word of God and by faith—has taken place, where through his birth the divine nature has been partaken of, where the fear of the Lord has implanted in the heart the beginning of wisdom, and where brotherly love is without dissimulation (John 1:14; 1 John 5:2; 2 Pet. 1:4; Eccl. 2:7; Rom. 12:9; Gal. 2:13), for any carnal contention and dissension to be found there. Therefore prove by your Christian peace, by your brotherly love and unity, that you are Christians (John 15:9; 1 John 4:6); and the God of peace, who is the embodiment of love, will be with you forever. Amen.

A Concluding Explanation of How Deep the Love was That Prompted the Writing of This Epistle

As above stated I have written this out of pure love as a friendly greeting and memorial that you may know thereby how my heart and mind turns to you all as to my dearly beloved brethren and sisters, and to my fatherland, yea to all who fear God; and if I could do more for you God knows what is in my heart. You are my chosen ones, yea my most beloved with all others who fear God in Christ Jesus. I should indeed write especially to several acquaintances, but they must have patience, for I have much that concerns me, my work in the church is not unknown to you, cross and suffering, anxiety and distress likewise keep pace with other things. God be thanked that he esteems me worthy of these things; within is labor and anxiety; without is strife and persecution, by the world and by my enemies, so that I may well say with the Psalmist: "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God" (Psa. 3:1, 2). And again: "Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred," that is, vindictiveness, wickedness and envy of heart.

Therefore I make this friendly request to you to remember me and all ministers in your prayers, that God would graciously look upon us, strengthen and comfort us with his Holy Spirit that we may strive valiantly for the truth, finish our course in the fear of the Lord, keep the faith and receive the crown of righteousness from the Son of God upon Mount Zion with all who confess God and overcome (2 Tim. 4:5-8; 4 Esd. 2:43). Pray also for those in authority and for all men, that God according to his good will would have mercy upon them and enlighten them that they may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved.

Herewith I commend you all to the almighty eternal God. May he strengthen you and me and all who from the heart desire it, in his truth, make us fruitful in all good works, and preserve us unto his heavenly kingdom. Amen.

And as I wrote in my letter to the church in H., so I also write to you, namely: If so be that the Lord will take me out of time, and deliver me out of this evil world (let his holy will be done), I herewith take Christian leave of you all, rejoicing that I have seen your faces, and hoping to see them again with joy in the kingdom of our heavenly Father.

But if the Lord should so direct that we should meet again in this life, it must be in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to his praise and to the joy and refreshing of us all in the Lord. All the elders of our church greet you with the peace of God, as does also my co-laborer who is well known to you. The grace of Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The Third Epistle

The Third Admonition or Epistle.

Written in Brotherly Love to

the Church of God,

By D. P.

**An Evangelical Greeting, With Thanksgiving
to Almighty God for the Love Manifested Among
Them, Together With a Heartfelt Wish That They
Might Continue so to Walk Faithfully Unto the End
Because of the Grievous Times and the Many False
Prophets and Antichrists, and Boasters and
Vainglorious Spirits Who are Present Everywhere,
Who Oppose the Doctrine of Christ, and Break and
Despise His Ordinances**

Grace, peace, mercy, Christian wisdom, and a true understanding of the word of God, unfeigned faith and steadfast mind in the truth I wish unto all the chosen saints, our beloved brethren, friends and companions, from God, our heavenly Father, and from Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to whom be blessing forever. Amen.

With the apostle Paul (2 Thess. 1:3) I thank the Lord, my God, because I have not only heard, but have been an eye witness, of your faith in God and in the Lord Jesus Christ, of your love to all the saints, of your patience in all manner of anxiety, trouble and persecution which you are suffering for the sake of the gospel, and of your courage and constancy in the faith. The eternal almighty God be praised and his holy name adored that he has thus endued you through Jesus Christ with the power of the Holy Ghost, and begun the good work in you (Phil. 1:6; 2:13). I rest in the hope of his unfathomable grace that he will also fulfill the same in you to his praise and your everlasting salvation. This is all the desire of my heart before God that it should thus come to pass. And inasmuch as

these are perilous times, and so many false prophets and antichrists arise, so many haughty and honor-seeking spirits are abroad who proudly vaunt against the Holy Scripture, who deny Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God, that is, contradict his own truth, break and alter his divine ordinances, and beside this introduce their false and blasphemous doctrine and carnal license, I cannot forbear as an obligation of Christian love, and desire of the mind, to warn you against all such conceited spirits and to admonish you with the word of God, although I have this confidence in you that you are taught of God, and are firmly and immovably rooted and grounded in the saving doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Of the True Foundation of Christian Faith

Nevertheless I must, according to the humble gift that is given me of God, cite you anew to the foundation of our Christian faith, to the covenant of God, and how we should lead a godly life in the same, to the praise of the Lord, and to several evidences and proofs that we believe and are born anew of God, by faith in Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost; for it is my greatest joy to hear and see that the church of the Lord stands firm in the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, and rightly confesses his truth, forasmuch as there is given us no other name under heaven whereby we may be saved but his name alone (Matt. 24:12; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; 2 Pet. 2:1; 3:5; Jude 1:18; John 1:12; 3:3; Gal. 3:22; 1 John 5:1; Acts 4:12). There is likewise also no other truth than that which Jesus brought out of heaven and for which he besought his Father (John 17:17), that his disciples might be sanctified thereby. For this reason, first of all, my faithful and earnest admonition to you comes from my inmost soul, and I beseech you by the mercies of God that you do not allow yourselves to be moved or turned away from our most holy faith (Rom. 12:1) by any one's proud, vain and great swelling words (Jude 1:16), but believe the scripture, and remember that it is written there that God, by whom the Holy Scripture is given by inspiration and from whom it comes, alone is true (Psa. 116:11; Rom. 3:4; John 3:33), and that all men (who speak of themselves and not the word of the Lord through his Spirit) are liars. And since the true God has given us his only begotten Son Jesus Christ as a Lord and Master, Redeemer and Savior, set him as an example, and testified of him saying: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5), therefore do not think that a Christian should believe and do otherwise than that which Jesus taught, yea, brought out of heaven from his Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (John 14:6-14) and did himself. He is and remains the only way to the Father (John 14:6), and the only truth through whom all believers are sanctified by God. For as the glory of God the Father is that he is an eternal, almighty, self-existent Being, the fountain and head from which all good springs, from which all that is good has its origin, being and source, that he is the eternal Light and the Father of lights (Ex. 3:23; Jas. 1:17; Matt. 19:17; 1 John 1:5), from whom all good gifts come and are bestowed, so also it is the glory of Jesus Christ that he is the Word, the wisdom and the power of God (John 1:1; Rom. 1:16), the truth and the life, the image of the invisible God, and the express image of his Person (1 Cor. 1:16; Heb. 1:3), the brightness of the everlasting light, and the spotless reflection of the divine glory which has its origin from the beginning and from everlasting from God the Father, the only begotten Son of the Most

High and living God (Micah 5:1); therefore also he has received from the Father a name that is above every other name, not only in this present world, but also in the world to come; for his name is God's Word, namely the Word of whom John writes: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1; Rev. 19:14; Eph. 1:21; Phil. 2:9). From this it follows incontrovertibly that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the almighty God is one and inseparable with his Father in divine existence, and therefore in his name every knee must bow, every tongue must confess that he is the Lord (Phil. 2:10), all nations must praise him and fall down before him; yea, he is worshipped by all the angels, and, like his Father, truly honored with divine honor by all creatures under heaven (Heb. 1:6; John 5:21; John 15:8); and he is honored and likewise his heavenly Father glorified, in this that we become his disciples; and those are his disciples who abide in his doctrine and continue in his Word (John 8:31), who deny themselves, take up their cross and follow the Lord in regeneration by a true faith, through which they receive and obtain the promised salvation. For it is the nature and power of faith to believe with the whole heart and rest assured from God's word and promise, through the seal of the Spirit, that Jesus Christ, though he was in the form of God (Phil. 2:5), rich and glorious with the Father before the beginning of the world, was, in the providence of God the Father (1 Pet. 1:20), through the working of his Holy Spirit, made man in the virgin Mary (Matt. 1:20; Luke 2:7; John 1:14), and born of her, a Son of the Most High. Therefore he is a heavenly being, and not of earth, yea, he is the living bread come down from heaven, as he himself declares (John 6:51), he is the bread of God, and gives life to the world. For he himself says, in the Gospel by John: "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). Oh, what a holy and heavenly, yea, divine and life-giving flesh is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God! And this because it originated in the Word, as the evangelist testifies and says: "The Word was made flesh" (John 1:14). Christ confirms this testimony of John in the words already quoted, namely when he says that he is "the living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:51).

Now it is forever true without a doubt that God's Word is this living bread of heaven, this spiritual manna, which God permitted to come from heaven as meat for all believing souls (John 6:53-56). This manna and bread, I say (which Jesus Christ calls his flesh), is from heaven and not from the earth, like the mercy-seat which stood upon the ark of the covenant was of pure gold, while the ark itself was of shittim-wood (Ex. 25:10-24), and overlaid with gold. That the ark is a symbol of the church, all those who have been taught of God know. The shittim-wood is a symbol of human weakness, in which the church (since it also has flesh and blood from sinful Adam) is enveloped; the gold signifies the pure word of God, and the power of the Holy Ghost, with which the church through the new birth of God is adorned and clothed from on high. For "that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit" (John 3:6), as Christ himself says. And Paul says: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6:17). Understand, with the Lord.

Thus the ark, that is, the ark of the covenant, was made of two substances, as an exemplification of the fact that the church also is composed of two different materials. That is, it is of the earth through the natural birth that is of Adam; and it is from heaven,

through the second birth that is of God (John 3:5; 1 Cor. 15:43; Eph. 5:8; Song of Sol. 2:1-3); it is weak and infirm in itself, and it is glorious and beautiful by the grace of Jesus Christ. But it is not thus with the mercy-seat, for it is one substance, and that is pure gold, and the Father thereby represents to us Jesus Christ the head of the church and the true mercy-seat (Rom. 3: 25; Heb. 5:3) by faith in his blood, as the apostle says, through whom God speaks to us. This is the pure word of God within and without, through and through; therefore also his flesh did not see nor suffer corruption (John 1:2 8:40). John expressly declares this in his epistle and says: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (1 John 1:1-3). In like manner the brazen serpent, which Christ himself signifies and explains as pointing to himself (as a figure to the true substance, and as the letter to the spirit), was made of one kind of material and was a saving sign of the grace of God (John 3:14). Who can truthfully contradict this? Yea, who can doubt? After such and like mysteries, figures and definite words, it is so evident that Jesus Christ is the only Christ and the indivisible Son of God, not half heavenly and half earthly, not half of Adam and half of God, yea, not half holy and half sinful, as many educated (I might well say perverted) people have falsely and in shameless manner claimed; but he is entirely heavenly (John 3:13; 6:62), entirely of God, entirely holy, who also by the one offering of his spotless flesh and precious blood (Heb. 10:14) has sacrificed for and made perfect all those who believe in his name; for it behooved him or became him to pay with his innocence for all the debt of the transgressor Adam (Rom. 5:1), destroy all our unrighteousness with his righteousness, swallow up death by his life, and as the one innocent Lamb of God, take away the sin of the world (John 1:29; 1 John 2:2; 3:5) and fulfill the wonderful work of our redemption. Who, after this, can doubt that he must be a divine being, yea, true God and man in one person; for in his divinity he was able to help us, and in his humanity he was able, as the one High Priest, anointed and ordained by God after the order of Melchizedek, to offer himself for us through the Holy Spirit and burn the precious incense with the fire of his unfathomable love to us upon the altar of the cross (Heb. 5:1; 9:11) as a sweet savor unto the Father and for our reconciliation with God (Eph. 5:1) and for the forgiveness of our sins. Likewise who can doubt that in him who revealed to us the utmost will and the whole counsel of God, opened to us the treasury of divine mysteries, and prepared the way to the holy of holies, must lie hidden all the mysteries of wisdom and of the knowledge of God (Col. 2:2), that in him must dwell all the dullness of the God-head bodily, that he out of the fullness of his grace and truth could bestow the same upon all those who seek such things of him or desire them of him (John 1:16; Col. 1:19; 2:9). Hence two things are readily seen in him, namely (1.) that he is the Redeemer of the human race, our Propitiator, our Righteousness, Sanctification and Peace, our Mediator and Advocate, our High Priest with the Father, our Throne of grace, our Mercy-seat, the Horn of our salvation, and the Hope of our life (Matt. 1: 21; 1 John 2:2; Heb. 5:1; 7:22; 8:1; 9:11; 10:11); (2) that he is the true Teacher of the truth, a witness of heavenly things which he has seen and heard of his Father, a

living example of the nature and attributes of his Father in all his words and works (John 3:2; Heb. 1:3). With his grace he suffices for our salvation, and with his truth he shows us the way to everlasting life (John 1:16; 14:6; Rom. 8:32).

And like as they are cursed who build upon and trust in their own works, merits and false righteousness, so also all those are accursed and excluded who preach or accept any other gospel than that which our Lord Jesus Christ brought from heaven and sealed with his blood (Gal. 1:8). To all this the scripture testifies very clearly, and faith also comprehends it all, which faith is a work of God in man, whereby he is born again of God (Eph. 2:8), as it is written: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God" (1 John 5:1): and he that is born of God is one spirit with God (1 John 3:6); yea, God is in him, and he in God, Jesus Christ dwells by faith in his heart, and he is sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:17). Therefore he rejoices in this grace and mercy of God, which he by faith confesses, and his heart is kindled with divine and brotherly love when he remembers and considers that God so loved us and gave his only Son for us unto death (John 3:16), that we through him might live, and that Jesus Christ offered himself for us that we through his one offering might be sanctified forever (Heb. 10:11; John 17:17). Because of this—I repeat—the Christian's heart is moved to respond in love to God, because he so dearly loved us, and also to serve our fellowmen, like as Jesus served us. And this is a true faith, which is at all times fruitful, active and operative in love, both toward God and toward neighbor, otherwise it is no faith (Gal. 5:6). To this belong the commands and ordinances of the Lord; for they attest to and confirm faith. Nevertheless faith looks upon Jesus Christ alone, comforts itself in his grace and merits, for this is an undeniable and true word, that shall not pass away; it is the firm foundation of God, that shall stand forever: it is also the greatest comfort of all Christians, their highest joy and safest refuge, that they are saved by grace (Eph. 2:7), and that Jesus Christ is our Savior, and that there is no other name given under heaven whereby we may be saved. and that he is our Guide, the only good Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (Matt. 1:28; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 10:1; 1 Pet. 2:25), whose voice we must hear, and whose steps we must follow. Whoever will not believe and do this, shall never come unto God. This is my belief and confession before almighty God, and before Jesus Christ and his angels, and before all people on earth, especially before those who from the heart desire to fear God and to walk in his ways.

Of God's Covenant

Further, I must write to you a little concerning God's covenant (Gen. 17:2), in which all believers are included (in which is shown us the grace of God the Father and of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ—faith, love, the fear of the Lord, obedience to his word, and the keeping of the commandments of God are demanded and desired of us), for the reason that God's holy writ speaks much of it and sets before the eyes of all who fear God what really is God's covenant. Hence it is necessary for all Christians to know what is God's covenant, namely, that God covenants and unites himself with us, promises us all that is good, that he will be our God and Father, and that we shall be his people, his sons and daughters, the sheep of his pasture, and receive blessings from him through Jesus

Christ. And this covenant was instituted when God said to the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head" (Gen. 3:15). This covenant was afterward renewed and confirmed by God with the patriarch Noah and his sons, to whom God said: "Behold, I establish my covenant with you" (Gen. 9:9). Moreover, God spoke of and established this covenant with Abraham, to whom God said: "I am the almighty God," that is, an overflowing sufficiency and fullness of all good; "walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee." And God talked further with him, saying: "Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:1-8).

With this are included all the promises of God— his grace, love, faithfulness, mercy, kindness, and of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, through whom are vouchsafed the blessings (in spiritual and heavenly riches), the forgiveness of sin, and eternal salvation (Gal. 3:9; Eph. 1:3). "And this is the first article in the covenant of God, so far as God is concerned, and is embodied in the promises of God. The second article therein concerns us, namely that we accept the proffered grace of God by faith, that we fear, love, honor and worship God, serve him and obey him, and remain firm and steadfast in his word, continuing therein with firm resolve, and with the help of God walk according thereto; and that is the answer of a good conscience with God through Jesus Christ. And to this end all the commandments of God serve, teaching and commanding us as to what relation we should maintain and manifest toward God.

How Baptism and the Lord's Supper are to Remind all Christians of God's Covenant and the Love We Owe to God

To this end also the two rites or signs of the Lord—baptism and the Lord's Supper—are instituted, namely to testify to and remind us of this covenant. For although the real and true saving sign of the gracious covenant of God is Jesus Christ (John 3:14; 1 John 4:13), and the Holy Ghost is the sealing of all the promises of God (Eph. 4:30), nevertheless the almighty God at all times gave testimony to and confirmed his covenant with outward signs. For when God comforted Adam and Eve with the promise of the coming Savior and Conqueror of the serpent he gave them a coat of skins and clothed them therewith (Gen. 3:21), and this signifies that Jesus Christ is the cloak of righteousness and the mantle of salvation, with which all believers and baptized Christians are clothed and their sins covered, Gal. 3:24), that they might be assured of the grace and promise of God. For the fact that God yet covered their nakedness and shame after they had sinned, was a sure sign, and God thereby openly showed that he had not turned his fatherly heart away from them, but that he still nourished and provided for them in his fathomless mercy and love, even with bodily clothing, that they might ever find their refuge with such a gracious God. In like manner God gave Noah the rainbow and Abraham circumcision as a sign of his covenant (Gen. 9:12; 17:9), and both these signs picture to us Jesus Christ, who is an evidence of our peace, in heaven, at his

Father's right hand (Eph. 2:15), and his circumcision is the true circumcision made without hands (Col. 2:11), with the stone knife of the divine word, in the foreskin of the heart, by the laying off of the sinful flesh, that is, all evil desires, lusts and works that come from the flesh. Therefore Paul says: "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom. 2:28, 29).

In like manner the almighty God instituted, gave and left baptism and the Lord's Supper for us Christians, that we therewith and thereby might be admonished and reminded of the divine covenant, and of our debt which we owe to God; for the gospel which is taught us prior to baptism presents and pictures to us the overflowing grace of God and the death of Jesus Christ, namely that God has chosen us to be his children, and has graciously forgiven all our sins through Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 3:23; 5:1; 8:1), with whose blood he has sprinkled, washed and cleansed our consciences (1 Pet. 1:18; Heb. 9:12; 12:2). And this is declared to us from the gospel, for the reason that we should repent, cease from sin, confess them before God, believe the gospel, and be baptized on confession of our faith, not only within by Jesus Christ himself, with the Holy Ghost and with fire, but also outwardly by a minister of the Lord, in his church with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as in the name of the one God and Lord, as a testimony that we are then recorded and counted in the number and fellowship of the saints and the saved, whom God the Father has accepted as his children, whom Jesus Christ has redeemed with his innocent death and bought with his precious blood, and enlightened by the Holy Ghost, has brought unto eternal salvation (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 8:16; 2 Cor. 6:18; 1 Pet. 1:18). Therefore as the chosen children of the heavenly Father, as the holy brethren and companions of Jesus Christ (Heb. 3:1), as those who are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and marked with the sign of the living God, we are under obligation, from the time when we received baptism in the most praiseworthy and adorable name of God, to serve God as the Lord gives us grace, in his covenant with a good conscience, die unto sin, bury the old Adam, and go forth in newness of life (1 Pet. 3:21). And this is what the apostle means when he writes to the Romans: "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6:3). The apostle means that believers and penitents are baptized into the fellowship of the death of Christ; firstly, in this that they become partakers and beneficiaries of his suffering and death, and all that he thereby wrought with God his Father and accomplished for our salvation; secondly, that they die with him and become conformable to his suffering, and walk in a new, spiritual and Christian life.

Thus also the Lord's Supper is a token of the love of God to us (Matt. 26: 25), and a commemoration of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ and reminds us of the great love and of the exceeding great riches of the grace of God the Father, that he gave his only begotten Son as a propitiation for our sins (John 3:16; Rom. 8:32; 1 John 3:16). It also portrays to us the bitter, innocent suffering, the shameful death and the agonizing torture of Jesus Christ, with admonition and portrayal of how we should in return love God our heavenly Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and be thankful for all benefits.

Moreover we are also admonished by the Lord's Supper to brotherly love, loyalty and unity, and that with all true believing Christians we must live in harmonious, peaceable, loving and friendly relations in the covenant of God, in the church of the Lord, serving and loving one another, even as Jesus Christ served and loved us.

These things I presented to you when I was with you, and I rejoiced in spirit when I saw how many were added to the church of God, and that with such Christian unity you broke the bread of the Lord with us. May the God of all mercy and the God of all grace give you strength through his Holy Spirit to continue in the good work and remain constant therein unto the end. And ever remember the first love and fervor of your hearts (Rev. 2:4; 3:15), how love to God and his church glowed in you, how fervent you were in Spirit when you entered into covenant relation with God, when you united with the Lord and his church, and there made a promise to the Most High God, upon the bowed knees of your hearts and bodies, and expressed in full confession with your mouths that you would serve the Lord in his church with all Christians in peace and in one spirit of faith (Eph. 4:9; Gal. 6:16), and walk uprightly according to the one rule of the divine word, as becomes all regenerated children of God. And for this reason I have said this regarding the covenant of God that you might ever remember the inexpressible love of God, by which he chose you to be his children and made you his heirs, through his beloved Son Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3), and has given into your hearts the Holy Spirit as a pledge of the promised salvation, and how that you should at all times thank God for such glorious gifts and benefits, and walk and live with all those who fear God in godly unity.

A Loving Admonition to a Christian and Godly Walk

Therefore, my most beloved, since you have been called of God to the true knowledge and fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, and have by grace become allied with God, I beseech and admonish you that you seek with all diligence to prove yourselves in all things, that is, to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, or as becomes your calling (Eph. 4:1; Gal. 6:16; Phil. 1:27, etc.). And remember how faithfully the apostles of the Lord admonished all Christians to a holy life that is conformed to and worthy of the gospel, and say: "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to him that appointed him" (Heb. 3:12). And: "I, Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3). And again: "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving for the faith of the gospel" (Eph. 1: 27). Moreover the apostle Peter, after first speaking of the kindness of God, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, admonishes us with these words:

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:13-16). The apostle John likewise admonishes us and says: "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7). And so the entire holy scripture admonishes us to a godly life, and shows us that God's kingdom is not in word, but in power (1 Cor. 4: 20), and that those alone who believe are Christians, and that those shall be saved who do the will of God, as Jesus Christ himself expressly declares in the gospel.

Therefore, my cordially beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, I beseech and admonish you yet again, by the mercy of God, that you diligently heed these and like admonitions of the apostles that you as orthodox and baptized Christians may walk with a good conscience (1 Pet. 3:21) in Christian peace and in brotherly unity, and always remember the words of the apostle James, who says: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (Jas. 3:13-18).

The apostle here means the peace of God, and not the peace of this world. Therefore beware of all unstable and frivolous spirits who give freedom and indulgence to the flesh against the gospel and apostolic admonitions, and even against the whole divine truth, and with hypocritical pretense seek peace in the world. Beware of them, for they are the enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil. 3:18); they serve their belly, and they are carnally minded. But take an example of all the holy people of God who lived from the beginning and note how they avoided all false worship, all hypocrisy and all appearance of evil and the fellowship of idolaters. Think of this, take it to heart and note the end of the godly (Heb. 13:7), and follow their faith, and the God of all grace will be with you forever. Amen.

Many Comforting Sayings and Passages Regarding Oppression and Persecution

Lastly, my beloved in the Lord, inasmuch as I heard that after our departure, persecution and anxiety came upon the Christians at several places. I cannot forbear writing you a little about it, that you should be comforted in the Lord and be strong through the power of God which he has manifested in you in this that he resurrected you

from the dead, made you alive, and set you in heavenly places in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:3). Now, show that you are grounded firmly as Mount Zion (Psa. 124:1) and therefore may nevermore be moved from the foundation of the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:19).

Remember now the words of Jesus Christ: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). You know very well, and are taught, not only by the scripture, but also by experience, that all who would live godly must suffer persecution, and that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God, and that the Father chastens all the children whom he loves (2 Tim. 3:12; Acts 14:22) and whom he embraces in his arms, and that all who are without chastisement, such as all true children receive, are bastards and not sons (Heb. 12:6). Therefore every Christian should cheerfully take upon himself the cross of Christ and be satisfied with God's will and remember that all persecution comes upon Christians unexpectedly, but is, through the unwavering counsel of God, permitted and laid upon them by the grace and love of God, and that all the ungodly tyrants can of themselves do no harm to those, who fear God; for Satan could not attack the pious and sincere Job without God's permission (Matt. 6:27; 10:28; Job 1). Christ said to Pilate: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19:11).

In how many instances has not God shown this fact in his saints whom he delivered out of the power of death and out of the hands of the tyrants! (Dan. 3:23; 6:19)—the three youths out of the fiery furnace in Babylon, Daniel out of the lions' den, Susanna out of the greatest need in shame and death, the city of Bethulia from the haughty Holofernes through the devout Judith, the Jews from the ungodly Haman through Esther, and Jerusalem from Sennacherib through the angel, who in one night slew so many thousand Assyrians (Susan. 44; Judith 12; 13; Esth. 6; 7). And this is what the prophet David means when he says: "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Psa. 33: 10, 11).

The Ziphites brought information to Saul regarding innocent David (Sam. 26:1), that they might perform a courtier-service to the king; but the Lord provides unto all the way of escape. Therefore the holy scripture comforts all the godly who suffer persecution here and says that though "the wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth, the Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming. The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their word shall enter into their own hearts, and their bows shall be broken" (Psa. 37:12-15). The Lord will break the teeth of the ungodly (Psa. 3:7). "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be" (Psa. 37:10). But the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God (Psa. 92:13).

Observe, my chosen friends, how comforting God's word is to all who fear God, and how altogether nothing all devices and persecutions of the tyrannical people are that

are conducted and directed against the church of God; for in the end they are brought to shame and come to naught who strive against the Lord's will, who rage against and do evil against him (Isa. 43:1). The time will come when they shall see and feel whom they are persecuting and whom they have pierced and the apple of whose eye they have touched (Zach. 2:8). But you, my beloved brethren and companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, be of good cheer and waver and swerve not, for your salvation and deliverance is near at hand (Rev. 1:9; 7:14), so that you who are now tempted in various ways and must suffer much because your robes have been made white and your garments have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, yea, because you bear in your foreheads the mark of the living God, and therefore may not worship the abominable beast nor receive his mark; that you, I say, shall be delivered out of all tribulation and enter into everlasting joy, where you shall never more hunger nor thirst, and where the Lamb is in the midst of the throne and shall feed them and lead them to fountains of living water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes (Rev. 7:16, 17). Herewith comfort one another, so that no one may become discouraged or despondent (Rev. 2:25; 3:11), and that no one may lose that which he has and another receive your crown. And now I commend you all to the Lord and to the word of his grace, and greet you all with the peace of Jesus Christ, from the full desire of my heart that peace may remain with you and rule always in your hearts (Eph. 4:3; Col. 3:15), and that you may increase and grow in faith, in love, and in all the virtues, to the praise and glory of God and the salvation of your souls.

Written out of pure brotherly love and given as a valedictory or Christian adieu. If I should not see you again in this flesh, I herewith take a godly departure from you all out of this world, and hope to see and to find you with joy in the resurrection of the just at the right hand of our Lord and only good Shepherd Jesus Christ, as the sheep of one fold (John 10:11; Matt. 25:32, 33). But if it be God's will that we should meet once more in this life, I hope in the grace of the Lord that you will find me as I have presented you out of God's word according to my humble simple gift, and that I shall find you as you were in my presence, namely, that you desire with all your hearts to fear God in one spirit, with one heart and stand with us in unity of soul and mind, and help us to strive for the truth of the gospel, and not be terrified by the adversary, which confidence I have in you. The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Reply and Refutation of Sebastian

Franck

A Reply to and

Refutation of Two Letters

by Sebastian Franck

Briefly Compiled From the
Holy Scripture

BY

D. P.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark
them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.
(For many walk, of whom I have told you often,
and now tell you even weeping, that they are the
enemies of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose
God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame,
who mind earthly things.

Phil. 3:17, 18.

As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do
these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds,
reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed
no further: for their folly shall be manifest
unto all men, as theirs also was.

2 Tim. 3:8, 9.

Foreword
to
the Christian Reader

By grace, a companion of the faith in Jesus Christ wishes to all devout readers
and lovers of the truth, peace, mercy and a spiritual insight into the word of the Lord,
from God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the power and enlightenment of the Holy
Spirit. Amen.

I cannot conceal from my beloved brethren and all who fear God that a book
written several years ago by Sebastian Franck has come into my hands. This book is sent

to me by several bishops and brethren for the reason and with the idea that I should by the grace of God write something against it, and for the sake of the simple and sincere answer the same. Therefore, although because of my weakness and want of opportunity I am poorly fitted, and because in other of my writings, and especially in my "Reply" I have (in my opinion) clearly answered and given reasons why one must separate from all false worship and hypocritical doings, and do that only which the Lord has commanded; yet at the same time for the explanation and confirmation of all this, and for the instruction of all sincere hearts who desire to thoroughly consider the matter, I wish, as above stated, at the request of my cordially beloved and chosen friends, to reply briefly to this book, so far as God shall grant me grace. Amen.

**Reply to
the Preface of the Printer on Two
Letters by Sebastian Franck**

In the first place the printer prepared an introduction to the book in question, in which he speaks of how necessary in these perilous times are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Isa. 11, (to-wit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, judgment, strength, tact or knowledge and the fear of the Lord,) in every Christian, in order to distinguish the many and varied opinions in Christian doctrine and religion. I endorse this confession of the printer, with this distinction, that Isaiah in the passage referred to really spoke of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. For his words are as follows: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins" (Isa. 11:1-5).

That this prophecy applies entirely to Christ, no one can doubt who has been taught of God; none the less Christians must also have the same Spirit: for while all the gifts of the Holy Spirit rest upon Jesus Christ in the fullness of their perfection, as is also described (Matt. 3:16) that the Holy Spirit came down upon him in the bodily form of a dove and abode upon him, and the oil of joy was so abundantly poured out upon the spiritual Aaron. our only High Priest, by God the Father that it ran down upon his beard and garments, hence it is readily to be understood from this that the Spirit of the Lord which rests upon Jesus Christ without measure and in all divine fullness, also comes upon all his Christians, and in formal order first upon his ministers, through whom he speaks, and his word is in their mouth; and thereafter follow all his members which are united to the Head, for the Holy Spirit divides unto them his gifts according to his will. But the

gifts of the Holy Spirit of which Isaiah speaks are mentioned above, and of these I desire by the grace of God to give some instruction to all who fear God.

The first gift is wisdom, which comes from the fear of God (Sir. 1: 14 Prov. 1:7). This gift distinguishes good from evil, the sweet from the bitter, light from darkness, yea, this gift teaches us to rightly know Christ (Col. 2:2) and to understand that in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, that from his fullness we receive grace and truth, whereby we recognize the Everlasting Light and God himself, and therefore set aside all worldly and human wisdom, philosophy, reason and opinion (John 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18-30), and count it foolishness as against the divine wisdom, which teaches us to recognize Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of the Father, as he is made unto us of God, wisdom (that is, that we recognize and know God, his power and truth, which knowledge is perfect wisdom); and righteousness (that is, that we by faith in his name are justified); and redemption (that is, that through him we are redeemed and made free from sin, hell, the devil and eternal death, Luke 2:30; Eph. 5:26; 1 Cor. 6:11); and sanctification (that is, that he has washed us with the washing of water by the word), and has sanctified us by his Spirit (which is the true wisdom which God through Jesus Christ bestows upon all Christians in the Holy Spirit).

The second gift of the Holy Spirit is understanding, which comes from the fear and the wisdom of God, so that the individual takes heed to God's word, and diligently gives attention to the impressions or suggestions of the divine will through the Holy Spirit, that no error or deception enter in beside the truth, for Satan is able to transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14, and his servants have learned the art and mastery from him, so that they come transformed as apostolic messengers, and the wolf covers himself with sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15), that he may the more readily accomplish his evil and ravenous desires upon the innocent sheep and lambs of Jesus Christ. Therefore it is necessary for all Christians to understand the word of God, beware of the wiles of Satan, know the mind of Christ, and always put their understanding captive under the mind and obedience of the Lord, and they will remain undeceived.

Of these two gifts of the Holy Spirit the apostle Paul writes to the Colossians (Col. 1:9), giving them to understand that he was praying God without ceasing for them that they might be filled with all spiritual wisdom and understanding, which clearly portrays the fact to us that wisdom and understanding belong together (Sir. 18:27-29), although they differ a little; for wisdom is to know God truly and from the heart to fear him; but the fear of the Lord, says Jesus Sirach, will cause a man to be wise in all he does, and the word of God teaches him to be wise in all his acts. Cunning is not wisdom, and the frivolity of the ungodly is not sagacity, for it is wickedness and sacrilege, and vain error, and not wisdom. Understanding is that which puts to proper use the divinely received wisdom, and makes a prudent investment of the Lord's talent and makes it productive, so that we may receive the divine plaudit of being a faithful servant (Matt. 25:21, 23).

On the contrary, worldly wisdom and understanding is ignorance or folly, vanity and despising of God's word. To those of this kind of wisdom and understanding Christ speaks in his thanksgiving, when he thanked his Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, that he had hid the mystery of faith from the wise and prudent, and according to his divine will and good pleasure revealed it to the humble and simple (Matt. 11:25), for by the grace of God they are qualified or fitted to teach wisdom and discipline, understanding, prudence, righteousness in simplicity and sincerity, as Solomon in the preface to his proverbs says (Prov. 4), they are ready to receive counsel (understand, from the word of God), that they comprehend the sayings and their explanation, the teaching of the wise and also the opposite.

Hence there follows from this the third gift of the Holy Spirit, and it is advisable to know that the wise and prudent are reasonable and circumspect in all things, especially asking counsel of God, and doing nothing without divine counsel. Of this we have many beautiful illustrations and examples in the old testament, how the God-fearing patriarchs, when they were about to begin or do something special, first asked counsel of God. To this end also the mercy-seat was ordained of God and set in the most holy place (Ex. 25:17), that God himself might speak and answer there. So is Jesus Christ our mercy-seat now set forth unto us of the Father in the most holy place, that is, in the time of grace (Rom. 3: 25; Heb. 5: 5-9; Col. 3:1: 1 Pet. 3:22), yea, in heaven itself at the right hand of the majesty of God who through him has spoken to us and has given him a name that is called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). That the name given the Son by the Father includes that of Counselor or Counselor signifies that this Wisdom counseled with God in the creation of all creatures and the arrangement of all things, (Prov. 8:12-31) and that God through his wisdom made and appoints all things well and good. Hence it is always proper that all who fear God and love righteousness and truth, counsel with this Wisdom and accept nothing but that which this Wisdom (which is Jesus Christ) has taught and commanded, for in him are included and concluded all things, and it is the Father's pleasure that in him all fullness should dwell (Col. 1:19; 2:9; Eph. 4:3), and that no one can come unto God but by him. Whoever ponders this rightly has counseled with God in Christ Jesus by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Whoever does differently, will fare as this Wisdom declares to us and threatens those who despise him, namely, "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then (says Wisdom) shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord they would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices" (Prov. 1:27-31). From this it is easily understood how the despisers of Wisdom will fare and how they shall come to everlasting shame. Although they are wise in their own eyes and think they have understanding, this will not help them; they are to be compared (especially those who at one time confessed and accepted the truth) to the foolish and unwise virgins; those who think they will enter in through the door of grace will find it shut, because they have neglected and rejected the grace of the Lord or received it in vain.

The fourth gift of the Holy Spirit is power, that is, the individual is strengthened by the power of God in the inner man. Of this power the holy scripture speaks and testifies in many places, both in figures and in realities. In figures it is often portrayed, especially in the examples of the children of Israel (Ex. 16, etc.), and of Elijah; for, as the children of Israel were fed with the figurative bread of heaven for many years in the wilderness and strengthened thereby, entered the promised land, and as the prophet Elijah in the strength derived from the food (which had been brought him by the angel) traveled through the wilderness for forty days and forty nights (1 Kings 19) until he reached Horeb, the mount of God, so also will the true Israelites be strengthened by the living Bread of heaven (John 6:51), and by the baked bread which the angel of the Lord laid by Elijah's head, and by the cruse of water, that is, by the gospel of Jesus Christ (which is held in small esteem by the self-conceited and the wise of this world, and even despised by them), and by the power of the Holy Spirit, to enter into the promised blessed rest of the kingdom of God.

In this connection mention may be made of the figure of the sixty valiant men who stood about the bed of Solomon (Sol. Song 3:7). "They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night." This signifies that round about the church of Jesus Christ stand those who are strong in faith, who are clad in the armor of God to protect the church with the help of the Lord against all the terrors of the night, that is, against all errors and spirits of darkness that are secretly bent on deceiving the guileless.

It is further necessary to note here and to consider that there are three stages in the new spiritual birth, namely, childhood, youth and adult age (1 John 2:12-14). Childhood signifies Christian simplicity, of which Jesus Christ speaks in the gospel, and says to his disciples: Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

In accord with this is what Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Cor. 14:20). And the apostle Paul calls the Christians the newborn babes or first born children of God (1 Pet. 2: 2) who desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. Youth signifies the power of faith, as the apostle John says: "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one" (1 John 2:14). Adult age or the age of manhood signifies the experienced mind which is inclined to know and prove or discern good and evil, of which the epistle of Paul to the Corinthians and that to the Hebrews makes mention and testifies (Heb. 5:14; Eph. 5:17, etc.).

Hence these three grades or stages must be found in every Christian, that is, childlike simplicity or innocence as regards evil, the power or strength of youth in faith in the truth, and manhood's wisdom and experience in discretionary knowledge and discernment or judgment.

The fifth gift of the Holy Spirit is knowledge, namely to recognize and know that all good gifts come down from above (Jas. 1:17) from the Father of the Everlasting Light,

through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Ghost, and is therefore brought again to its First Origin, yea, to the Fount of all good, that is, to the eternal and only God, and must be ascribed to him alone (Jer. 2:27-30). This is as much as to say and mean that the knowledge of the Spirit consists in this that to God alone all honor is given, and that no creature accept or assume any, but God alone, and the word of his grace, but that one ever says with the prophet: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory" (Psa. 115:1). It is also the true function of the Holy Spirit to know God in his eternal wisdom and order through opposition or the opposite, that is. by contrasts or contrarities, namely, by contrasting good with evil, the Spirit with the flesh, righteousness against unrighteousness, light with darkness, faith against unbelief, Christ with Belial, and the temple of God with the temple of idols, and discerning or distinguishing one from the other (2 Cor. 6:14-16). This is especially necessary in these perilous times, because so many spirits of error are abroad who throw everything into a confused mass and mixture, without sense, reason or difference. Hence a Christian can do no better than to lay everything upon the troy-weight scales of the Holy Spirit and test it thereby to see what is right or wrong, in accord with or contrary to truth, for in this way alone will he remain undeceived.

The sixth gift of the Holy Spirit is the fear of the Lord. Of this the holy scripture gives abundant testimony. Ecclesiasticus especially in his Book of Wisdom writes much about it (Sir. 2), all of which may be comprehended in the summarized statement that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and is in its true reality in the righteous and believers. The fear of the Lord is true worship. It preserves and makes the heart godly and happy, .brings joy and everlasting blessing. To fear God is the wisdom that enriches, and brings with it all that is good; it fills the whole house with its gifts, and all chambers with its treasures. The fear of the Lord is a crown of wisdom, and gives abundantly peace and happiness. This wisdom makes men truly wise and prudent. To fear the Lord is the true root of wisdom, and its branches bloom forever. The fear of the Lord drives out sin; but he that is without fear does not please God."

But the true fear of the Lord is earnest inquiry into, contemplation of and seeking after the good, holy and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:1, 2), and a careful watchfulness of self in all one's thoughts, words and actions, that he may be pleasing to God, for the nature and inclination of the fear of the Lord is to shun the evil and to follow after that which is good. Such fear of the Lord brings the unadulterated, pure knowledge of the only and eternal almighty God and his divine nature, attributes and existence, that is, that man truly knows God the Father and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and his Holy Spirit in name, power, offices and workings. From such knowledge comes faith, that is that happy, delightful and firm trust in God and in his word, a certain comprehension of heavenly and unseen things (Heb. 11:1; Gal. 3:6-12.; Eph. 4:13-15), by which faith we become children of God, made in his image, by Jesus Christ, in the Holy Ghost, and become partakers of his divine nature. And when we have become thus united with him, we must love him as the most precious treasure and greatest riches (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37), in certain assurance and living hope, that God is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6).

The fear of the Lord therefore is truly the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10) and teaches man to deny himself (Matt. 16:24), and with childlike reverence, veneration and obedience serve God in holiness and righteousness which is pleasing to God (1 Pet. 1:14), and in all resignation place his entire confidence in the living God, patiently awaiting anything that God may will or do, even as Abraham did (Gen. 22; Heb. 11:8, 17), when, because he feared God he offered up his son unto the Lord in his faith, in the unwavering hope that because of the promise of God he should receive him again. Therefore he is also given us by God as an example of the resurrection, with the testimony that he truly feared the Lord, because he spared not his own Son for the Lord's sake. From all this it may be easily observed what great good the fear of the Lord accomplishes.

Whoever has the gifts of the Holy Spirit as above mentioned is always spiritually minded (1 Cor. 12:3, etc.), and is therefore enabled also with God's word and Spirit to judge all things, so that the crooked old serpent, no matter how crafty it may be, cannot deceive him or turn him away from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus; for where this is the case, there the word of God is written with his finger in the table of the heart and imprinted with the Holy Spirit, there the candle is lighted and is set upon the candle-stick (Matt. 5:15), and before its brightness the darkness must flee. The mustard seed is there planted in the garden or court and has grown so tall that the birds of the air can build their nests under its branches, and dwell in safety (Matt. 13: 31); there the pearl of great price has been bought at the expense and forsaking of all temporal things (Matt. 13:46), and hence it can never be given back again; there is the treasure hid in a field among the seeds of God (Matt. 13:44), which preserves the regenerated man from all evil (1 John 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23). In short, there is the man that is united with God, taught of God, returned unto Jesus Christ, the only Shepherd and Bishop of our souls (1 Pet. 2:25), whose voice he well knows, and can distinguish from the strange voice, yea, from the howling of the wolf (John 10:5)—I mean the false scribes, teachers and dreamers by whatever names they may be known who adorn their work with high sounding and covert allusions and pervert them with dark sayings. Therefore neither Sebastian Franck nor any other crafty or sophisticated spirit can easily mislead a true Christian; for his confidence rests in God, he sits under the shadow of the Almighty (Psa. 91:1) and dwells in the secret place of the Most High. Truth is his shield, so that he is not afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday, nor for the devil, that is, for the self-appointed ecclesiastics with the assumed form of holiness that has a beautiful outside appearance and yet is an abomination before God.

I have desired with Christian well meaning intent to present this much as an introduction to the preface of the book for the benefit of the simple and kindly disposed reader, so that what follows might be better understood. May God add his grace. Amen.

**Reply to Two Letters by
Sebastian Franck.**

Before beginning a reply to this book it is (according to my understanding) very necessary to have a true test by which to prove all things (1 Cor. 1), a measuring rod by which to measure everything, yea, to lay a good foundation, upon which everything may be well built and grounded (1 Cor. 3:11). But the only touchstone and the only measuring rod is God's word, and the only foundation is Jesus Christ; therefore for the man who seeks and desires salvation there is nothing better or safer than to confess and believe from God's word, that saving grace, the steadfast, immovable truth, and a righteous and perfect life is embodied in and comes from Jesus Christ (John 1:17; Tit. 2:11), and that therein there can be no change whatever, for his words are Spirit, and they are life (John;6:63 ;15:3). And in this manner God the heavenly Father has revealed his inner will and whole counsel to us, and nothing else (that is contrary to or not in conformity with the doctrine of Jesus Christ) may ever be brought forth either by men or angels or it will be accursed, as Paul expressly declares (Gal. 1:8). Beside this no misuse of the ordinances of the Lord can wholly remove or stay it; for "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away," says the Lord himself in the gospel (Matt. 24:35).

Therefore what Sebastian Franck professes is wrong and erroneous, namely, that after the primitive and apostolic church fell into decay and Antichrist destroyed everything and perverted everything into abuse, all ordinances of the Lord (or ceremonies or sacraments, as Sebastian Franck calls them) should therefore cease or be no longer regarded. To this I reply in Christian simplicity that I properly hold these proud invectives of Sebastian Franck's in much less regard than he erroneously and in puffed-up self-conceit rejects and despises the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ and testifies to with the Lord's own words. Besides this it is well to note that in the beginning God blessed all his work and called it good (Matt. 5: 17-19 Gen.;1:31 2:3), and while through the devil's cunning and envy abuses have been introduced and found their way into the work of the Lord (Wis. of Sol. 2:24), so that it was destroyed or rendered unclean in part, yet not wholly taken away, for man also is the work of the Lord (Gen. 2:7), originally created in integrity by God, in his own image and after his likeness, but through the serpent's guile man was deceived and brought to destruction; nevertheless God did not on this account cast him off entirely, nor leave him in his ruined estate, because he is his handiwork, but after the first creation he created him anew by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, through faith, in the regeneration, so that after the inner man he is once more made in the image of God, in righteousness and truth (Eph. 2:1-10 John 3:3 Tit. 3:5; 1 John 5:1).

The Real Signification of Symbols

Circumcision was likewise given by God to Abraham as a sign of his covenant (Gen. 17:2, 9-14), yet afterward through ignorance and Jewish superstition or conceit it was not properly practiced nor understood; for they sought to obtain righteousness by it, as the prophets complain so often, and as the epistle to the Romans testifies (Rom. 2:24-29). Nevertheless circumcision remained and was practiced according to the original purpose of God by the believing Jews upon their children; for it is clearly evident that

John the Baptist, and even the child Jesus himself, were circumcised on the eighth day, according to the will and ordinance of God (Luke 2:22-27). Therefore no ordinance of the Lord should be rejected or allowed to fall into disuse merely because of misuse, but it should be rightly observed according to the command of the Lord in its original form. For if circumcision (which was figurative) continued to be properly practiced among the God-fearing Jews (as above stated), until Jesus fulfilled the law and took away the figures, types and shadows and replaced them by instituting the true essential, how much more must the ordinances of the Lord (which are true) be perpetuated and remain unbroken, inasmuch as after Christ no one will come with authority to change one jot or tittle in his doctrine, work and commandments; for, says the apostle, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines" (Heb. 13:8, 9).

For such reasons baptism and the Lord's Supper have, by the grace of God, been restored according to the former divine institution, and it becomes all penitents and believers to receive it just as John and Christ accepted circumcision. There is also that in the book which is more horrible, yea, it rises out of the depths of the pit as a fuming smoke that hides the brightness of the sun, namely Sebastian Franck's idea that the ordinances of the Lord, especially baptism and the Lord's Supper, are babythings and child's-play (for these are his own words), and that no more was taken from the children than dolls and child's-play, with which they had been playing long enough, and that God had permitted, yea, even given these outward signs as baby-things to the infant church; not that they were necessary for the kingdom of God, but that because God himself had for so many years baptized with his own Spirit, therefore it was unnecessary to use longer these weak elements.—Thus far Franck.,

To this I reply: I am grieved in the depths of my heart that I am obliged to reply to and deal with such coarse blasphemy, yet if perchance I may by God's grace be of service to someone, I desire with the help of the Lord to make a brief reply.

In the first place it is certain and undoubtedly true that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the living God, the brightness of the everlasting Light, the image of God, and the express image of the divine glory; for the Father has implanted the express image of himself in his Son, and demands to be seen and known through him (John 1; Heb. 1; Col. 1: Wis. of Sol. 1). Therefore did the Lord say to Philip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

This Jesus Christ has been set forth to us by the Father as a mercy-seat and example unto whom we are to be conformed; him has the Father given us as a Lord and Master, and testified of him that he is his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; him shall we hear as the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and of whose fullness we have received, and grace for grace (Matt. 3:17; John 1:14-16).

This is the first-born of all creatures, Lord of all principalities and powers, who are created by him, the Head of his church, the Light of the world; whosoever follows him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of everlasting life.

For this reason the apostle Paul in his epistles has dwelt at such length upon the fact that the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ Jesus (Col. 2:9; 1:9; John 1:14), that he was from the beginning, that all things are made by him, that he is the Savior of his body, and the Author and Finisher of our salvation. By this he makes known that neither angels nor men, nor any other creature is able to do anything against the Son of God, the Word, Wisdom and Power of the almighty Father; for all things are made by the Son, he is from the beginning, as stated above, he rules and preserves all things with the word of his power. Therefore there is no wisdom, nor truth, nor righteousness, nor help, nor comfort or hope of salvation to be sought or found outside of him (John 16:3-7; 1:12, 13; 1 Cor. 1:9; Heb. 1:2-4).

This Jesus Christ also himself says that he is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man can come unto the Father but by him alone. From this it follows that no one can come to God, nor be saved, unless he accept the Lord Jesus Christ, believe in him, and follow in his footsteps; for he is the way that with his holy life and example teaches and directs us to be his followers. He is the truth in his wholesome doctrine, which he brought out of heaven from his Father (John 17:8; Col. 1:15, 16, etc.; Eph. 1:9). He is the life by means of his grace, by his merits, yea, by his innocent death (which is our life), and by his precious blood, by which we obtain forgiveness of sins.

Herewith there is proof and evidence sufficient that Sebastian Franck speaks as a man that is indiscreet and lacking in sense when he says the signs and sacraments of the Lord are baby-things and child's-play. More than this, he says that inasmuch as the outward services and sacraments (through Antichrist, who destroys and ruins everything) were not wholly observed after the apostles, but were misused and contaminated, therefore God through his spiritual churches, by the Spirit of truth, began to put all things into proper order, which were simply indicated by the foregoing signs that had been instituted by the Lord, and permitted the external devil to have his will regarding the outward and misused sacraments.

Where has ever a God-fearing man who has been taught of God and received his anointing, spoken or written so shamefully and blasphemously of the holy commandments and ordinances of the Lord as Sebastian Franck does here? Or where did God ever permit the "external devil" to carry out his wanton will with the external and misused sacraments? Or where did God ever give permission, because his ordinances had been profaned and misused by Antichrist (1 Cor. 6; Gal. 5; Rev. 11), that; a Christian should therefore be allowed to take part in such profaned use or practice or have fellowship therein? What does the scripture say regarding the idolaters and wicked, who play the hypocrite for the belly's sake? Will they not have their part in the lake of fire, that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death? And now I am certain that many years ago I saw and read a letter from Sebastian Franck which had been written to one of his particular and especial friends, from which I understood readily that he exonerated infant baptism and hypocrisy with the world, all because of the fear of man, that is, in order to maintain peace with the world, although it is impossible to please both God and men at the same time, or to have the peace of God and of the world, as Christ himself says to his disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as

the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). And in another place he says to his disciples: "In me ye . . . have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). And the apostle James testifies in express words that the "friendship of the world is enmity with God"; and that whoever "therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4:4).

But this is entirely contrary to the opinion of the arrant Sebastian Franck, who lays pillows under the people's heads and cushions under their arms: he strengthens the hands of the wicked, so that none will repent of their unrighteousness; he proclaims peace to those who have no peace and promises life to those who shall not have life unless they repent of their idolatry, dissimulation and other unfruitful works of darkness, which they have done (Ezek. 13:16, 18; Jer. 6:14; Eph. 5:11). He teaches men a wide and broad way, and he opens and leads the way himself. It is pleasing to the flesh, it is true, therefore he has many adherents, readers and pupils, whose ears itch after such false liberty and who seek pasture according to the desires of the flesh. But what does Solomon say? "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12; 16:25). Both Ecclesiasticus and the Lord Jesus himself testify to this, and Solomon further says that there is a generation or class that thinks itself pure and yet is not cleansed of its impurities. These are the false prophets of whom the apostle Peter writes that they "speak great swelling words of vanity," who promise liberty to others, while "they themselves are the servants of corruption," and draw or allure to themselves the wanton, those that "were clean escaped from the corruption of the world," and are again entangled therein and overcome, so that the common proverb may be applied to them: "The dog is returned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:18-22). Alas, how many in our time have fared thus!

But now comes the cunning serpent and professes—in order to cover up the carnal life of comfort with beautiful words, and to spare the cross abhorring flesh—that God does not require any outward things, but accomplishes everything in the Spirit of truth, baptizes and nourishes all with Spirit and Word, and that the children are deprived of nothing but their dolls, with which play has now proceeded long enough.

Reply to Franck's False Claim That Outward Symbols, Such as Baptism, are No Longer Necessary

I confess indeed that God is a Spirit, and that he who would worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth; but here follows the question: Are not the words of Jesus Christ Spirit and life? Now, if the word of the Lord is Spirit and truth, it follows that it is all spiritual and true (John 5:32-39) what the word of Jesus Christ teaches and that that is right which is done according to it: for that which comes of the Spirit, must be spiritual, and that which the truth of the new testament presents is true and abiding.

Was not John the Baptist, the forerunner and messenger, filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb? Did he not go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to

put things in order and prepare the way of the Lord, convert the hearts, that he might prepare a people that would be pleasing unto the Lord? He was also sent by God to baptize with water unto repentance (Acts 1:5 Matt. 3: 1-6), and to teach men to believe in the Lord Jesus. Was not even Jesus Christ himself baptized by John? And his apostles likewise, whom he so earnestly admonished to baptize those who repented and believed, and to teach those who were baptized to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them? (Matt. 28:19, 20 Mark 16:15, 16). Was the Lord Jesus not the teacher, baptizer, sustainer and nourisher, and all in all in and with the believers then the same as he is now, or may be at any time? Did not the apostles lay their hands upon the baptized believers and they received the Holy Spirit? Did not the apostle Paul command those to be baptized again who had already been baptized by John, but had not known or received the Holy Spirit, that they after being baptized might, by the laying on of hands, receive the Holy Spirit, as the apostle Peter testifies? (Acts 2:38; John 1:33; Matt. 3:11; Col. 2; Rom. 8, etc.) But why are many words necessary when Jesus himself, in whom dwells the fullness of the Spirit, and his messengers who were the first recipients of the Spirit, and were clothed with great power from on high, received the sacramental tokens of the Lord, practiced the same and commanded the believers to practice them.

It is therefore an unendurable blasphemy for Sebastian Franck, a scorner of God and his ordinances, in the presumptuousness of his heart, to write that the children are deprived of nothing but their dolls or rag babies, to look upon the primitive apostolic church as children who played with dolls or rag babies, while he assumes for himself the wisdom, courage and perfection of manhood, as if there had been no spirit of truth neither in John, Jesus Christ himself, nor in his apostles, nor in the primitive apostolic church, because they used these outward signs. Are then these tokens of the Lord so utterly nothing and powerless, that there is neither Spirit nor truth in them, insofar as they are rightly observed in connection with true faith and all that belongs thereto? What abominable conceit, presumption and blindness! What does not dust and ashes presume! Faithful and God-fearing Abraham feared to speak with the Lord in prayer and supplication, because he recognized his own nothingness as against the most high divine Majesty; but this Sebastian Franck is wise in his own eyes, yet before God and all who have true understanding he is foolish. The man who criticizes every one but does not see his own shortcomings and weaknesses, will not be afraid to contradict the Lord Jesus Christ, and reject his ordinances or look upon them as child's play. Oh, vain presumption! Oh, what foolishness of heart!

Furthermore, Sebastian Franck's book declares that the church of the Lord declined immediately after the time of the apostles, and that thereby Antichrist had destroyed everything; but that no one should undertake to restore the worship of God to its primitive state, unless he have a special call from God to do so (Matt. 24:36; Acts 1:6; Matt. 24:3, etc.). And since in his opinion no one has been called to this, he is therefore to continue in the antichristian and idolatrous misuse of the sacraments, and let the devil have his way in the matter.

Reply to Franck's Claim That True Worship Cannot be Restored Without a Special Call From God

That the church of the Lord became corrupt after the time of the apostles I readily confess to you, for the holy scripture testifies of this in many places (2 Tim. 3; 2 Pet. 2; 1 John 2; 4; Acts 20; Psa. 18; Deut. 4; 12, etc.). But that because of this, false worship should be perpetuated and practiced is wrong and a root of idolatry. The reason is this: What God has commanded he also wants to be observed, as it is written that God has given strict orders regarding the ordinances which he has commanded, and that nothing shall be added thereto nor taken therefrom, from which it follows that God permits no misuse of his ordinances and that no Christian is to have any part therein (Prov. 30: Eph. 5), because the misuse is contrary to the word and command of God, that is, it is wicked. "He that is not with me is against me," says the Lord in the gospel, "and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30). In other words, "no man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other" (Matt. 6: 24). It is vain to try to serve God with the doctrines and commandments of men, yea, it is an abomination to God, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination before God. Now, the doctrines, traditions and commandments of men are highly esteemed by the world, for on their account is the word of God set aside (Matt. 15), as the Lord showed to the Pharisees; therefore they are an abomination to God. The history of Saul, as well as do other biblical and scriptural accounts, bring clear testimony on this matter, therefore it is unnecessary to write much about it.

Further as regards the divine calling, my simple reply to Sebastian Franck's position on the subject of whether a teacher is sent of God or not, is, that it must be known and seen whether he is properly called by his church, whether he is fervent in love, and cannot keep silence, whether he teaches God's word aright, causes it to bear fruit, and in his weakness by God's grace walks according to it, as I have sufficiently shown, from God's word, with the help of God the Almighty, in my book on the Sending of Preachers; therefore I shall let that suffice, for sensible people are satisfied with the simple truth, but you can do nothing that will be agreeable to the contentious, obstinate and perverse. Therefore I let them go, and say with the prophet: "Let them perish who will perish," and as it is written in Revelations: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. 22:11).

Elijah is mentioned several times by Sebastian Franck in his writings, how; that he did not restore the corrupt worship in Israel without a special command of God. To this I reply that Elijah did no more than to show and testify to apostate Israel that God the Lord, that is, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was made manifest, and that they were under obligations to serve him alone, as he had commanded them. Now in the time of Elijah it was a matter of outward offerings and sacrifices, which were instituted by God to prefigure the true substance. This worship Elijah restored, and no other, and thus

testifies and proves to Israel that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the only true and living God and Lord, and that Baal was an idol, and that all his prophets and priests were false.

All those therefore who in godly zeal and calling follow the example of Elijah, seek the honor of God and the salvation of souls. How can anyone with any scriptural discretion and truth look upon and consider these otherwise than as being sent of God and impelled by the Spirit? Has it ever been heard of or found, from the beginning of the world that a false prophet who went forth of his own accord, taught aright, and sought the honor of God therein? Does not the Lord compare the false prophets to ravenous wolves, who come in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7; John 10), that is, with a pretense of piety, and yet seeking nothing else than to rend the sheep? "For a thief," (that is, a false prophet), says the Lord, "cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10). In short, a false prophet's purpose is and ever will be, to turn the people away from the living God, and to turn them to idolatry. On the other hand the true prophets are bent on tearing down and rooting up all plants which God the Father has not planted, and to plant and rear again all that God has commanded (Jer. 1; Matt. 15:13).

Lastly, he would have the church of God invisible among all people, that is, scattered under the name Christians, Jews, heathen and Turks, and admonishes those of Campanum and the Eyfel that they take every one who fears God, among all people, as a brother, even though he has never even heard the word baptism, and even nothing of the history or scripture of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let anyone who will, read the words of Sebastian Franck for himself, for it grieves me to speak of them, because they are to me abominable, and I make this brief reply thereto:

The church of the Lord, although existing in spirit and in truth, is nevertheless also visible, as I explained in my book on The Sending of Preachers, and still declare. The reasons are as follows: 1. The name church or congregation indicates that it is not only invisible, but also visible, for the term used is "ecclesia," that is, a gathering or meeting or congregating together, and the term applied to the person addressing the congregation is "Ecclesiastes." Hence Solomon is called "Ecclesiastes" (preacher), because he spoke to the congregation or church of Israel. Now, it is certain and incontrovertible that as Solomon was, as a preacher, visible, so the church also was visible to whom he addressed his words. 2. Christ Jesus himself chose his apostles (John 15:16), and gathered them together as a church, and was not always invisible in Jerusalem and Judea. 3. The apostles, according to the command of the Lord, through the preaching of the gospel, in faith and truth, and by proper Christian baptism, and the power and unity of the Holy Spirit, gathered a church out of all nations (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16). This was not an invisible body, for they did not write nor send their epistles in a general or indiscriminate way to all people, but specifically denominating the believers and God-fearing people, and designating many places and calling many persons by name. How is it possible for all this to be invisible?

Furthermore several gospel parables bear testimony to all that has already been said, namely that of the seine or net, that was cast into the sea and enclosed all kinds of

fish (Matt. 13:47), and of the King who made a marriage for his Son (Matt. 22:2), and sent forth his servants to call so many people (good and bad), so that his house might be filled; also that of the nobleman who, when about to leave for a distant country, called his servants and delivered to them his goods (Matt. 25:14), and said to them: "Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). One of the servants, however, was indifferent or negligent, and a knave, and hid his Lord's money in the earth. Also of the ten virgins, of whom five were wise and five foolish (Matt. 25:1, etc.).

Now, since Jesus Christ himself likens or makes comparisons of the kingdom of heaven, that is, declares or indicates the preaching of the gospel, the church and the entrusted grace of God, in the aforementioned parables, it follows incontrovertibly, that not only the God-fearing, but the wicked also, are found in the church; but these latter will not remain in the church, for they are separated and excommunicated here on earth, so far as the church can accomplish it, and hereafter this will take place in its completeness when the sheep shall stand at the right hand and the goats at the left hand and shall hear the sentence or judgment that differs so widely for the two. Therefore the church of the Lord cannot be invisible, because the wicked are separated therefrom and the good remain therein.

Above all this, the almighty God sent his only begotten Son Jesus Christ into the world (John 3:16; 1 John 3:6, etc.), that whosoever believes on him shall be saved and have everlasting life; but that whosoever does not believe in him is condemned already, and shall not see life, because the wrath of God abideth on him. Read the gospel according to John, yea, the entire holy scripture of the new testament (for to treat all of which would be too lengthy) and it will be found that no one can come to God and be saved, but alone through Jesus Christ, that is, by true faith in his name.

From this it follows that it is nothing but foolish presumption for Sebastian Franck to profess and advise, that heathen, Turks, Jews and even all those who have no historical or scriptural knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, be acknowledged as brethren if they fear God. Dear reader, how shall a man who does not know God fear him? Or how shall or can a man fear God the Father who does not believe in Jesus Christ whom the Father gave as a Savior and Propitiator? (John 1; 1 John 5) Or how can a man be born of God except by faith in Jesus Christ? Or how can a man become our brother and fellow-member in Christ Jesus (1 John 2) who is not born of God? For this birth cannot take place in any other way than in the way already mentioned, namely, that to as many as received the Word and Light, Jesus Christ, to them gave he power to become the children of God (John 1:12). And again: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ (and the Son of God) is born of God" (1 John 5:1).

From all this it may be readily understood, that the two epistles by Sebastian Franck are nothing but blasphemies, entirely contrary to truth and faith, full of deadly poison and woven together out of many crafty and subtle artifices by a self-exalted spirit that would soar above all others.

The Substance of the Reply to Franck

Finally, this is the sum and substance of all that has been said:

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the real truth and the only foundation, upon which everything must be grounded and built (1 Cor. 3:11). Beside the truth and this foundation there is nothing that will stand before God.

Faith and the true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ consists in this that a man obeys his commandments and walks even as he walked, and that he continue in his doctrine (John 17; 1 John 2; 2 John 2); for whosoever transgresses and abideth not in the doctrine of Jesus Christ has not God.

Jesus with his doctrine, life and example is our Teacher, Leader and Guide, him we must hear and follow; he is the true light that has come into the world; whosoever follows him shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of everlasting life (Luke 12; John 14; Matt. 15; John 18).

The words of the Lord Jesus Christ are spirit and life, therefore they show their nature in all believers, bring the Holy Spirit into the heart (John 6) and give eternal life, for the Spirit quickeneth, and in the Word there is life, and the Life is the light and salvation of mankind. If a man accept the Word, he is enlightened thereby of God, he is saved and blessed, and is an heir of everlasting life.

The church is a congregation of penitent, God-fearing, believing and regenerated people of God, who obey the Gospel of God and are baptized by one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12; Gen. 3): the spiritual Eve, of the heavenly Adam; the free Sarah who receives the seed of the divine word from God the Father, the true Abraham (Rom. 5; Gal. 3), from which the children are born through true faith in Jesus Christ, without which faith it is certain and true that no man can please God, nor be saved.

Herewith I commend my writing to all God-fearing readers, my beloved brethren and friends in the Lord Jesus Christ, and kindly request that my simple reply to the two scandalous letters by Sebastian Franck will be received in good part and read with devout heart (1 Pet. 5; 1 Tim. 3). May the God of all grace, and the alone wise God grant wisdom and understanding in all divine things unto all who from the heart desire it. Amen.

D. P.

Christian Matrimony

**As Instituted and Commanded by God
and as it Must be Maintained and Practiced
According to the Scripture by Believers.**

A Scriptural Proof
For the Use of all Believers Against all Who Oppose
and Contradict the Truth.

Also a Posthumous Treatise
on the
Evangelical Ban and Shunning.

Written by
Dietrich Philip

Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?

Shall I then take the members of Christ,
and make them the members of a harlot?

God forbid.

1 Cor. 6:15.

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth;

but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married

to whom she will; only in the Lord.

1 Cor. 7: 39.

Preface

To all believers and those who fear God in Christ Jesus, our cordially beloved brethren, sisters and friends in the Lord and companions of our Christian faith and partakers of the fellowship of the gospel (Rom. 16; 2 Thess. 1; 1 Cor. 1), we wish much grace, peace, mercy and a spiritual insight into the word of God, ears to hear and hearts to understand what is God's will, and this all from God the heavenly Father, from whom all good gifts come; and from Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is the Word, wisdom and truth of the Father, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (Matt. 12; Jas. 1; 1 Cor. 1; John 14.)

We thank almighty God for you, dear brethren and friends, for we hope that we have, according to the providence of God the Father, come to the knowledge of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ (Rom. 8). We also beseech the eternal God for you and for all believers, that you might altogether continue steadfast therein, and that the Most High

God would preserve you and us in these perilous times from all evil, and especially protect us from the same (Matt. 24), and that he would keep you in his grace and truth forever. For it seems and has the appearance as if there were neither bound nor end to dissension, variance, hatred and strife, wandering and turning away from God's word on both sides, that is, to the right and to the left, yea, that the words of Jesus Christ are in full effect, namely that if it were possible the very elect would be led astray (Matt. 24); for he himself asks (Luke 18:8): "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Daily observation and experience shows this to be the case that many are called (but it is greatly to be feared that according to the Lord's own words, Matt. 22:14), but few are chosen and shall be saved. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power (1 Cor. 4:20), in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17). Whoever serves Christ therein is pleasing to God and worthy of the esteem of men. Many, however, profess to be in the kingdom of God, and yet know little of it. Many also imagine that they are earnestly serving God, yet it is to be feared that many of them are of those of whom the Lord speaks in the gospel, namely: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24), and this because they do not begin their service in the right way, and are much less able to finish or perform it; for whoever desires to come to the Lord Jesus Christ must first of all hear and know the voice of God the Father, and must hunger and thirst after righteousness (John 6:27; Matt. 5:6), and seek nothing but the glory of God and his own soul's salvation; and whosoever comes to the Lord in this way, him will the Lord accept and cause to enter through the right door into the fold and lead him in and out, so that he will find the pasture of everlasting life, that is, accept the pure, clean and unadulterated word of the gospel by faith (John 10:1, etc.; 1 Cor. 1:18, etc.) in the power of the Holy Ghost, which is his salvation and everlasting life. Oh, that all who profess to be Christians were thus minded! Oh, how well and how pleasant it would be then in the church of the Lord! But it is a matter of anxiety and fear that there are many at this time, as well as in the time of the apostle Paul who seek and love self more than they do Jesus Christ (Phil. 2), and that their own honor is dearer to them and more sought than the honor of God and the welfare, advancement and edification of his church, for they would like to introduce and uphold a strange and false liberty, outside the ordinance and church, as regards matrimony.

If that which they try to uphold would continue, then the church would go to rack and ruin, and would perish. Hence we cannot readily refrain from writing our inmost reason and understanding on the matter, and reveal, make known and explain to all who are kindly disposed and who love the truth, what it means when a brother or sister takes and marries a person of the world. For we have during the time of our ministry had many great trials, difficulties and sorrow in connection with this matter, and have suffered much because of it, and have, together with seven ministers, with and by the word of God been concordantly decided on this matter for more than twenty years, and it is still our view today, as we hope by the grace of God hereafter to explain more fully. We humbly beseech and admonish all who fear God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Spirit, that you would accept our plain and simple writing in good part, and interpret and understand it according to the unadulterated love and scriptural truth (Rom. 12:9),

and exclude all human opinion, reasoning and subtlety, and take counsel with the word of God alone, as we hope all who fear the Lord will do. For God knows that we wrote this with a pure heart and with a burdened mind and conscience, inasmuch as we see that among some unrighteousness is increasing, which we by the grace and help of the Lord would like to prevent, and seek to defend righteousness and truth. Beside this we are aged, infirm and ill in the body and are looking to the Lord for our deliverance that we may enter into the blessed rest. We have discussed this subject many times, and spoken of, confessed and given admonitions regarding it in our congregations, and have also written on it many years ago, so that no one can imagine or say that we have but recently accepted or professed this point of doctrine. Therefore we believe and hope it is the will of God, and that he will give us understanding, power, and strength once more before our death to bring this subject and tenet thoroughly into the light of day, and to reveal our mind and clear our conscience before God and to testify to the truth. With this we desire to appear before the judgment bar of Jesus Christ, and we do not doubt that we shall be able to stand therewith at his coming by his grace, for God knows, that we seek nothing but his glory and the salvation of his church. To this end may the most high and alone wise God help us through Jesus Christ, with the power and working of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

God's Original Plan and Purpose Regarding Matrimony

It is well to note, first of all, how and in what manner God himself instituted and commanded wedlock between two persons in Paradise, namely between one man and one woman, both of whom had been created in the image of God. God united these two and blessed them and made them fruitful (Gen. 2), and it is still his will today that wedlock be begun and maintained according to the first example, for God does not want man through carnal mindedness to break or hinder the fulfillment of his commandments and ordinances, and to do so is an abomination to him (Matt. 15). And this is what God means when he says through Moses and in other places, that nothing shall be added to his words nor anything taken therefrom (Deut. 4:12), but that all and everything that God has commanded and prescribed shall be kept and that alone (Prov. 30), that a man be not punished nor be found untrue.

Three Points Necessary to Know in Connection With the Ordinance

Hence it is very necessary that in connection with the ordinances and commandments of the Lord the following points be well noted and taken to heart:

1. How he is who commanded and instituted the ordinance.
2. What the ordinance in itself is.
3. Why God ordained this relation.

By these man must abide. There must be no change, for it is a truly Pharisaic disposition (Matt. 15) to change the institutions, ordinances and commandments of the Lord, and set them upon a strange basis and order. Nothing but evil can result therefrom, for by such changes good would be changed to evil, light into darkness, the divine to the human, and the spiritual to the carnal, and thus make misuse of everything, and misuse destroys all that is good. Observe in the ordinances of the Lord what has come to pass through misuse, yea, what abominable idolatry is practiced therewith. Therefore let everyone take heed and remember that the almighty and eternal God will be commanded by no one nor have his ordinances altered or broken, for he is alone wise, Teacher and Judge. And the same God is alone Author and Institutor of this ordinance of matrimony, of which we are speaking. This ordinance is a wedding or uniting together of two persons who are born pure and holy of the Father through faith in Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 1; John 6; Heb. 12) and by the Holy Ghost. The reason for this ordinance is that by the blessing and benediction of the Lord there may be growth and increase. This then is true Christian wedlock, which is consistent with the laws of God and his church, for thus it was instituted in the beginning in Paradise by God himself. The fact that gradually, in the course of time this good, divine ordinance was changed into a gross misuse is chargeable to carnality (Gen. 6), as will presently be shown.

The Beginning of Misuse

In the second place, the abuse of the ordinance of God regarding matrimony began when the sons of God looked upon the daughters of men, that they were fair and beautiful of form, and "they took them wives of all which they chose," and heeded not the ordinance of God as originally instituted by God with Adam and Eve in Paradise, but looked much more upon the beauty of the daughters of men, for they had become carnally corrupt, therefore they followed the wanton instincts of the flesh. Now, when God saw this (Gen. 6), he said: "My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3). Again, when he saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart, he said: "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them" (Gen. 6: 5-7). "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." This shows plainly what a great abomination it is before the Lord to break his ordinance and to set it at defiance. And it is astonishing that with such open, notable and awful examples and testimonies in the holy and divine scriptures of God's anger and displeasure against the violators of his divine ordinance, there should yet be any one who claims to be a Christian that does not heed this, but wantonly, proudly and insolently opposes God and his word, and this because of the evil desires of his selfish, stubborn flesh, and commits such offence, and so grieve and distress the church of the Lord as a true, God-fearing Christian, brother or sister never can do, and which for all that is under heaven he should never want or be able to do, but rather with the help of the Lord die, remembering how awful it is to cause offence in the church of God because of his guilt. Hence it may well be said that the man who does this

and allows himself to do so wantonly is already sufficiently forsaken of and separated from God (Matt. 8). Yea, we may well complain, mourn and sigh as we ask such persons: "Where is now your fear of God? Where is your faith in Jesus Christ? Where is now the promise which you made to God? Where is now your love for the church of the Lord with which you united and promised allegiance, and in which you resolved to walk in peace, love and unity of the Spirit all the days of your lives? Where is your concern for your own soul and salvation? How shamefully you, with carnal Esau, are selling your birthright for a mess of pottage?" (Heb. 12) If these and other things were more thought of and taken to heart it would never come so far that anyone who is called a brother or sister would take and marry an unbelieving person in the world, if there were still any thought of being saved in the person who might be inclined to do such a thing.

In the third place God still further revealed and confirmed all of the matter already spoken of by his faithful servant Moses, who, at the command of the Lord said to Israel: "Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his (that is, the heathen inhabitant of Canaan's) son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be turned against you, and destroy thee suddenly" (Deut. 7:3, 4).

Foreign Alliances Wrong

From these words it is ever clearly to be understood how great a sin it is and how greatly souls are endangered when a believer accepts a heathen, that is, an unbelieving person; for God himself says expressly through Moses that the unbelievers, the heathen daughters, shall overcome and mislead the believers, who once confessed and accepted the truth, and were counted with the number of the saints, so that they would be turned away from the living God to idols.

It is also clear that the children of Israel, whom their Moabitish wives had brought so far that they served and sacrificed to Baal-peor and subjected themselves to him, clearly showed thereby that they had become one flesh and one people with the Moabites, and that they had the same form of worship, which is another terrible example to those who seek unbelieving persons, outside of the church of God and carnally unite with them. Let them use this example as a looking-glass for their own benefit.

In the fourth place all that has already been spoken of is still more vividly shown by the fact that when Ezra heard from the chief men that the people of Israel were not inclined to turn away from the heathen abomination (for they had taken their daughters for themselves and their sons and thereby made the holy seed common and impure with the people of the land, 1 Ezra 18), he rent his clothes and plucked out the hair of his head and beard. He mourned and wept bitterly before the Lord his God, and among other things which he implored he said also the following words: "And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land, with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now therefore give

not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth forever," etc. (Ezra 9:10-12).

Here one can see and hear how the pious and God-fearing were affected at heart and grieved that anyone who claimed to be a believer or bore the name of Christian should take unto himself an unbelieving person against God's expressed word; for it is an open rejection of the ordinances of God, and a wanton transgression of his holy commandment; and the way in which, sad to say, some highly esteemed and notable persons have been deceived and have turned away from God, we will let everyone take to heart and contemplate for himself in the fear of God.

We have now presented this our ground regarding matrimony outside of God's people, with strange and heathen people, from the old testament, and have proven by the authority of the scripture, how God the Lord himself instituted and commanded matrimony in Paradise (Gen. 2), and it is still his will that matrimony be entered upon according to his ordinance and institution, in his fear and in faith, by two persons who are of one mind in Christ Jesus, after the example of Adam and Eve, as God himself set before us in Paradise. Then, too, we are shown how severely God punished the transgressors of his ordinance (Deut. 7), that is, how God confirmed his ordinances with an express command by his servant Moses, and of the transgression of which Ezra so bitterly laments and complains, because the children of Israel took to themselves heathen wives (Ex. 9). It is well to consider and remember in this connection the valuable and instructive example of Tobias and Sara (Tob. 3), who were also under the law. They stand even today a beautiful pattern and example for all husbands and wives, as to how they should enter upon and maintain the marriage relation. Beside this it is well also to reflect upon what God permitted to come upon the seven men who in their wicked, carnal passions desired Sara, and had utterly shut God out of their hearts, and what power Asmodeus had over them. Let everyone who seeks and loves his salvation meditate well upon this; for it is for the third time a terrible example to those who commit and have committed this sin of matrimony outside of the church. And those who marry outside of the church shall not go unpunished.

However, that no one may say that we maintain this aforesaid position on the authority of the old testament alone, and have no other evidence in the holy scripture, we hope also by the help of God to prove this matter regarding matrimony by the new testament.

Christ Corrects Wrong Views and Practices Regarding Matrimony

In the fifth place, then, Jesus Christ points us to the first creation of a man and woman who were united by God (Gen. 2), and this as a sure evidence that we must ever look upon the first example, and that matrimony among believers may and must not be entered upon in any other way than that in which God himself began, inaugurated, instituted and commanded it. Along with this it is also well to remember that if transgressions in this respect could not be tolerated under the old testament law, which

was imperfect (Heb. 8:10), how much less can it be valid or allowable now under the gospel dispensation? (Matt. 6). For the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us in all certainty and perfection, decidedly and truly, that a man may be perfect and qualified for every good work. And since the Lord Jesus Christ points to matrimony in its original institution and form, how it was ordained and instituted by God the heavenly Father in Paradise from the beginning, and is now again placed and restored or reformed to its original form, therefore no other marital relation can be accepted or entered upon than that which is in accordance with the first marriage, which was first instituted by God in Paradise, and afterward renewed and confirmed by his beloved Son Jesus Christ, that is, between one man and one woman (Gen. 2; Matt. 19), namely, between two believing persons whom God himself Joins together. This then is true wedlock, and from this everyone who fears God may understand how improper, how wrong, yea, how utterly ungodly it is to act so vainly and wantonly upon the impulse of flesh and blood against the pure, good and holy ordinance of the Lord, that is, of the eternal heavenly Father and of his own, only begotten Son Jesus Christ. And when it is done, the attempt is made to cover the gross sin and shame with a fig-leaf, that is, to embellish and adorn the wicked, sinful thing with perverted scripture and distorted words. Here cunning, craftiness and subtlety must be brought into requisition, and yet all this accomplishes nothing, for truth triumphs over all (Eph. 5); for all that is to stand before God and his church must be pure (Col. 1.) Nothing that is impure, or that maketh a lie or is abominable, shall enter into the new Jerusalem, but only those which are written in the book of life; and none shall dwell with the eternal and consuming Fire but those who from the heart fear the Lord and have his word before their eyes, and have a humble spirit (Isa. 55; 57; 66; Acts 19). Read Psa. 15 and Micah 6 and many other passages in holy writ, for it is a mistake to deal scornfully and insolently with God's word, for God is a righteous judge and an avenger of sin and wickedness in this life and hereafter eternally, and let everyone know and learn to govern himself accordingly. Whatever each man sows here (as the apostle says), that he will have to reap (Gal. 6). He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. All those who are carnally minded and live after the flesh, always sow to the flesh (Rom. 8), while those who are spiritually minded, and by the Spirit crucify and mortify the flesh with all evil lusts and desires (which war against the flesh), sow to the Spirit (Gal. 5).

In the sixth place we claim or adduce as proof the words of Paul to the Romans (Rom. 7), namely, that the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband to marry and enter into wedlock with whomsoever she will, but only in the Lord (1 Cor. 7). This apostolic word we set down as a sure and certain foundation for the matter under discussion; yea, we hold it as an incontrovertible testimony to the truth to which we cling, and as an unconquerable argument, proposition and point against all who gainsay us.

This is the reason: The apostle gives liberty to persons who are free and not bound by the law governing matrimony to change their state and to marry again; but with

this reservation, that it be done "in the Lord"; and that which is done "in the Lord" can and may not be done contrary to his word and will.

To this point the words of Paul to the Corinthians apply as deserving of note and our earnest consideration (1 Cor. 6), namely, that we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, etc. Read these words and understand them well. The apostle likewise admonishes the Ephesians, and writes among other things the following words: "Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be ye not therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth); proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," etc. (Eph. 5: 6-11).

This accords and agrees with what the apostle writes to the Romans: "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:12-14). Now let everyone who fears God, and who has the glory of God and the welfare and upbuilding of his church at heart, remember how openly and wantonly these and similar other faithful admonitions and warnings of the apostles regarding matrimony with those outside of the church are disregarded (1 Thess. 4). And if the truth be confessed, what else is sought and looked for in matrimonial alliances outside of the church?

The Cause of Unholy Alliances

And what else is the purpose than to yield to the evil, wanton flesh, which does not want to be obedient to the Spirit of God? And this for the reason that it is not sufficiently disciplined and mortified, but is nurtured too much in wantonness and is allowed to yield to the unseemly lusts. And what can result therefrom but often offences and evil examples?

The Lord Jesus says in the gospel (Matt. 18; Luke 17; Mark 9): "Whoso shall offend one of the least of these that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." From this it is to be gathered that if it is such an awful and punishable sin to offend one of the Christian believers, even though it be one of the least of them, how much greater the abomination when by contracting a marriage with one outside of the church not only one, but many pious hearts are offended, grieved and troubled unto death? Beside this, the scripture says (Wis. of Sol. 2) that evil communications (examples) corrupt good manners and pervert innocent hearts. Then when brethren and sisters who have been in the faith for some time do such a thing and unite with unbelievers without God, does not this open the door and clear the way for young brethren and sisters to commit such sins and transgressions before the Lord? The aged Eleazar took this fully into consideration (2

Macc. 6) and therefore he would not play the hypocrite, but would rather die than offend the younger brethren and leave behind him a bad example for posterity.

Let everyone consider this well. And this is really the idea, namely that there is no liberty among Christians to enter upon matrimony in any other way than that prescribed by Paul (1 Cor. 7), that is, in the Lord. Now, whatever is done in the Lord is done and must be according to his divine will. Again, whatever is done without the Lord is not right, and all unrighteousness is sin and of the devil; for he sinned from the beginning (1 John 3:8). But the Son of God was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin, and whosoever abideth in him sinneth not (1 John 3:5, 6). But he that committeth sin hath neither seen him nor known him, as John clearly testifies.

In the seventh place we set forth as an immovable foundation of truth (1 Cor. 3:11) that which the apostle declares (1 Cor. 6:19): "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" And again: "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Cor. 6:15). From this it follows most conclusively that a Christian is not the master of his own body to take the same from the Lord and give it to an unbeliever. Inasmuch as the body of a Christian belongs to the Lord, and is a temple of the Holy Ghost, how then can it be given to an unbeliever out of Jesus Christ, without his word and will, and without or out of the church? And the above quoted words of the apostle clearly declare that a Christian's body is the Lord Jesus Christ's body, and it is also evident and manifest that he is by faith united and espoused to the Lord, as is very clearly shown and proved by many beautiful accounts, figures and passages in both old and new testament scriptures (Hos. 2).

But why multiply words? The church is, in its entirety, the virgin and the bride or wife that is given in marriage to the Husband, the bride and wife of the Lamb; so also is every pious Christian individually. Now, a wedded virgin, bride or wife has no power to give her body to another, for, according to the words of Paul, "the wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband" (1 Cor. 7:4); how much less, then, has the Christian. But the Lord has; for a Christian belongs to the Lord, and is his with all that he has received of God (Eph. 1: 23; 1 Cor. 7), for the Lord Jesus by grace received him when he was miserable, and naked, and blind, and poor (Rev. 3); the Lord spread over him the cloak or robe of righteousness and salvation, when he lay in the blood of his sins; by faith he was espoused to him (Hos. 2), yea, he redeemed and purchased him and helped or succored him out of all the unrighteousness of this world, according to his Father's will, and took him unto himself as a chosen bride (1 Pet. 1).

Hence the bride has no power against the will of her Bridegroom, of herself, or to give her body to a stranger and unbeliever; for whoever takes from the Lord what belongs to him does him violence and an injustice (Rev. 1; Eph. 5). For if a man be deprived of that which is his own, it is counted for violence, and is punished; how much more deserving of punishment is he who takes that from the Lord Jesus which belongs to him and gives it to a stranger, yea, a heathen! Let everyone consider this well.

But a believer may rightly, in the fear of the Lord, take for his wife one who believes and give her his body; for the spiritual union between Jesus Christ and his bride does not take away the liberty between two believing persons to be wedded, but allows it to remain a Christian liberty or privilege. But carnal and wanton waywardness that seeks strange and carnal companionship is forbidden in the sternest terms.

How to Deal With Infractions of God's Law Regarding Matrimony

And for the further and fuller explanation and confirmation of all that has been said and referred to here and heretofore, we present this also as an incontrovertible foundation and argument on our subject of matrimony with those outside of the church, that it is wrong and impure in itself, that the punishment of the ban must be imposed. And why is it punished with the ban? Is it not because of the transgression of the divine command of God? And wherein lies the transgression? Is it not in this that believers unite with unbelievers, and thereby, contrary to God's ordinance, become one flesh with them? And so long as the transgressor continues to be and remain one flesh with the unbeliever, and deals and does as if she were his true and lawfully wedded wife that has been given him of God, when God has nothing to do with it, how shall such a one be able to truly repent, while he continues to lie in sin and unrighteousness? Therefore he is justly punished by God and his church with the ban and exclusion.

Miriam, Moses' sister, could not be permitted to return to the camp of Israel until she was first cleansed of her leprosy (Num. 12). And although the insinuation is made to us that the transgressor by repentance and confession of sorrow and regret, and acknowledgment of his guilt is already cleansed, we reply that no one can truly repent and still live in sin (Rom. 16); and this is the reason (Ezek. 18): True repentance always includes the following points and characteristics (called proprieties), namely, a sincere sorrow and regret for the sins that have been committed (Matt. 3; Psa. 33; Rom. 3; Heb. 5), and afterward an open, sincere confession of sin, groans, tears and prayers to God; falling down at the throne of grace and with true faith imploring forgiveness of sins, and with firm confidence in God's fathomless grace and mercy. But above all there must be a firm resolve to sin no more and to quit sin entirely. This, then, is true repentance that avails before God, namely, that there be a quitting of or turning away from sin: yea, this is true worship and service, which is pleasing to God; and to cease from unrighteousness is the true sin-offering. From this we conclude that if the transgression of uniting in matrimony with one outside of the church is not so great that it is necessary to exercise the ban, then the transgressor may not be excommunicated; but if it deserves the ban (as all God-fearing hearts must acknowledge and confess), then it is impossible for the apostate to come again into the church of God, if he continues to remain in his sin and uncleanness (for which he is punished and excommunicated) and is not cleansed therefrom.

Dear friends, brethren and companions of our faith in Christ Jesus, you who fear God and love the truth: here you have our inmost understanding, our sincerest opinion

and open confession regarding the wooing and marrying outside of the church; and by this we desire by the grace of God to live and die, and hope, without any doubt, to stand thereby at the great and terrible day of the Lord Jesus Christ, by his help and support.

Reply to Opponents

Now we desire also to present, discuss and, as the Lord gives grace, reply to the points, arguments and opposing statements or objections of our opponents.

In the first place, our opponents claim that the children of God took to themselves the daughters of men for wives whom they would (Gen. 6:2), because of their beauty. Herewith they introduce and try to verify the Lord's declaration in the gospel (Luke 17) of how the people in the time of Noah ate, drank, married and were given in marriage, etc. By this they would conclude, verify and prove that when a brother takes an unbelieving person as his wife (although it is against God's will and ordinance), she is nevertheless his wedded wife, and with the aforesaid scripture, that two unequal persons, a believer and an unbeliever, who have come together in unrighteousness, must remain together, for they are husband and wife, and comfort the people in their unrighteousness, and so strengthen the hands of the ungodly, that no one will turn away from his wickedness and sin (Ezek 13).

To this we reply simply that since our opponents themselves so openly confess that it is an unrighteous and unclean union, we are greatly surprised that they try to prove, verify and justify an unrighteous thing that is also unclean, whereby they must certainly be brought to shame. If it is wrong it cannot stand before the righteous God, who hates all ungodly things and is the enemy of all unrighteousness (Psa. 7; 44; Heb. 1). Therefore the apostle John writes: "If ye know that God is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2:29). "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Therefore whatever is unclean cannot be maintained or allowed or introduced in the church of the Lord, for the church is pure and holy.

It is therefore a great surprise to us that brethren should be found who use every artifice, worldly wisdom and cunning to defend the sinful, wicked thing, yea, who would call wrong right and uncleanness clean (Eph. 5), that is, they profess that the children of God took the daughters of men as wives, choosing whoever they would. With this they try to say and prove that that is still matrimony which was first commanded by Moses and afterward by the Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 6; Luke 17); that it is therefore a union and wedlock, and must therefore remain. O Lord! The kind of union and wedlock that this was is amply shown by the terrible examples and the terribly severe punishment of the Lord which came upon all flesh and destroyed them. If such union could have stood in the eyes of the Lord, then it would not have been so sorely punished by God, but it was punished by the Lord for the reason that it was to him an abomination. And that the picture of the times of Noah regarding marrying and giving in marriage is presented or set before us by Jesus in the gospel, simply means that as the world in the time of Noah was corrupt and that but few righteous people remained who were preserved in the ark, so

also will the world be corrupt in every form and manner at the coming of the Son of man, and that but few Who are righteous shall be found then (Luke 17; 1 Pet. 3; Luke 18).

Carnal Alliances Harmful

And although much is said and great importance placed upon the term marriage, although very presumptuously and wrongfully, we declare on the other hand, that Esau took of the daughters of the Hittites to be his wives (Gen. 26:34), "which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebecca," because they were both disobedient, so that Rebecca said to Isaac: "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" (Gen. 27:46). It is true that every one readily hears and understands from this that Esau took the daughters of Heth to be his wives, but the kind of union which this was, and the kind of example Esau would be is plainly shown by the epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 12), where the apostle writes and says: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." From this it is easy to understand what God, as well as Isaac and Rebecca, thought of this union which Esau made when he took daughters of Heth to be his wives. What is set forth and contended regarding Herodias, Philip's wife, and that John the Baptist rebuked Herod (Matt. 14) and said to him: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18), we do not contradict, for we leave the conjugal alliances of this world as they are, as Paul wrote concerning them to the Corinthians; we are not discussing that subject, but we are discussing the matter of how one shall be dealt with who at this time, while in the faith and brotherhood, takes to himself an unbelieving person and joins himself to her— what repentance is necessary for them and what is necessary to be done.

In the second place our opponents declare (although without reason), in their effort (according to their own ideas and confession) to defend wrong and unclean conjugal union, how Jesus says in the gospel that in the beginning God created one man and one woman (Matt. 19:4; Gen. 1:27; 5:2), and that a man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh, etc.

To this we reply we acknowledge all this to be right and to be true; but we are heartily grieved that the holy ordinance of God is made and degraded into an entirely carnal and ungodly transaction. Is not this sacrilege? Let everyone soberly reflect upon this, for the Lord Jesus says in the same passage just referred to (Matt. 19: 6): "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Now, if any one will venture to say that this carnal transaction—namely when a believing person takes an unbelieving person in conjugal union—that it is a joining together by God, let him come forward and answer this. We think, however, yea, we are very sure, that no one can ever truthfully do that; but we confess openly before God and all God-fearing people, that it is

no union wrought by God, but a carnal joining together and union, with which God the Lord will have nothing to do, for it is an abomination to him, even as he (God) showed in the antediluvian world by means of the deluge.

Beside this it is well to remember what the apostle writes to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7:10): "Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." From this it is easy to understand that the Lord speaks of two believing persons, and to make it appear as if the aforesaid words of the Lord had reference to the union of an unbelieving person with a believer or to make his words the basis for this argument so as to make the two cases appear parallel—when the fact is that these words refer only to the union of two believers and do not point or apply to an unbeliever and apostate—is a gross misconception. The Lord grant that no willful perversion be found at any time.

To compare the union entered upon in the time of unbelief and ignorance between two unbelievers according to the manner and custom of the world, with the union between one who calls himself a brother and a worldly person, is to wrest or distort the scripture. For it cannot be proven in the whole new testament scripture even with one word or passage that there is anything more than the matrimonial union between two believers of which the Lord speaks, and the union that is contracted in unbelief and is consummated according to the manner of the world, but where after a while one of the two becomes a believer, that the believer may then continue to dwell with the unbeliever yet with the proviso or condition enunciated by the apostle (1 Cor. 7:12-16), who acknowledges it as a union that is consummated in unbelief. But of such a union as the one where a believing person takes an unbeliever the whole new testament says nothing, and it is nothing but human imagination, cunning and reason, and an open perversion of holy scripture, and we hope not to endorse such a view all the days of our life.

In the third place our opponents claim that the betrothal or mutual promise alone constitutes matrimony, and they try to prove it by Deut. 22: 23-29, namely that if a man lie carnally with a betrothed damsel he is punished, as an adulterer. Another proof of theirs is the fact that Mary the virgin was betrothed to Joseph, and yet it is considered wedlock (Matt. 1; Luke 2).

Reply: We do not, and cannot, truthfully contradict this; but it is well to note that the mere betrothal or mutual promise does not constitute matrimony, for unknown conditions may exist that would render such betrothal void or invalid. We do acknowledge, however, that matrimony consists, above all, in this that the hearts and minds of both persons are inclined and directed thereto, and if they, with fasting and devoutness, have prayed to God, and they commit themselves no farther to each other than about this, that if it be pleasing to the Lord and his church, then they are mutually content, with this reservation, that in the meantime, before the union and joining together by God, they remain in Christian tranquility.

To understand this better, this comparison or parallel must be noted: A person who desires admission to the church of God and hopes to be identified and to unite with

the same will not act or conduct himself, in all things that are contrary to God's word and the faith, different than he would if he were already received. Likewise also a person that is betrothed or espoused will not do differently than she would if the bond between her and her future husband were already confirmed or formally consummated. For as an applicant is not reckoned as a fellow-believer or a member of the body unless he have first received the sacred rite, and has been formally received as a fellow-member with the hand and the kiss of peace and of love, so also the betrothal in part constitutes the marriage bond and is the beginning thereof, and without the mutual promise or betrothal the marriage bond is not confirmed or established.

Fully consummated wedlock is really the cordial consent or acquiescence of both persons with promise and proviso, as above mentioned, and confirmed by the clasping of hands, together with all that the Lord has included therewith, and for which purpose the Lord has instituted the ordinance of matrimony. This takes all the force out of the statement that the promise constitutes wedlock. And even if this were true, and we acknowledged it, our opponents are not thereby strengthened in their position, although they profess and say: That was in Israel and Judah, that is, in the church of God, and therefore does not originate with the daughters of the heathen. What similarity or comparison is there then between the representations and objections in the matter under discussion?

However, Solomon says that he that is inclined to sow dissension finds something to condemn every day, and sets himself against everything that is good (Wis. of Sol. 18); but he that walks in simplicity and sincerity walks safely. When a man has opposed God's word it is usually as Sirach says, namely, that a man would rather do his worst than lose his honor, and he does it for the sake of ungodly people. Therefore let everyone take heed that by the grace of God he walks uprightly, and he will not need to play the hypocrite to please the ungodly and apostate.

In the fourth place our opponents claim and declare that Paul acknowledges to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7) that a believer may dwell with an unbeliever if the unbeliever is willing to live in peace with the believer, that is, so that the conscience of the believer may not be troubled or violated, and that the unbelieving husband or wife may be sanctified by the believing partner. With this they want to draw the conclusion that when a brother or sister marries an unbeliever, then the unbeliever is or will be sanctified by this apostate who willfully acted in opposition to God and the church and afterward deplores it, expresses sorrow and promises to amend, etc.

We refute this as a false position, on the following ground with this evidence, namely, that Paul here wrote nothing more than this: that when two persons, a man and a woman, have, in the time of ignorance and unbelief, come together, agreed or consented to wed, have married and lived together as husband and wife, they shall not separate because of the gospel and the faith, nor break their troth which they have mutually plighted (although in unbelief), nevertheless always with the aforesaid understanding and provision.

But the case of where a person calling himself a brother or sister in the church of the Lord takes an unbelieving person in the world, is very widely different from that which the apostle says or means in the aforesaid words—in fact, the very opposite; for what is done in ignorance, the Lord ascribes to ignorance; but what is done after confessing and accepting the truth, and committed willfully against it, is an abomination before God. We do not believe that any one is so void of understanding that he does not know and understand this unless he would willfully speak or act in direct opposition to God's word, against that which he knows is right and against his own conscience.

From this we conclude and decide that it is a wrong and an unscriptural comparison and representation to compare these cases as said above. That the unbeliever is to be sanctified by the believer is to be understood as meaning nothing more than conjugal association or relation and communion before God, as all those who fear God, well know, and are taught therein of God that it can nevermore be made to signify or indicate that an unbelieving person who is taken in the world by a brother or sister should, in this manner, be pure and holy, after an act that is so manifestly contrary to God's word; for in all the new testament we have not more than two kinds of matrimony, namely, that between two believing persons who have come together in the faith, whom God has joined together, and that of two persons who have come together in unbelief, and of whom one of the two becomes a believer.

How this is to be looked upon or reconciled by the church, and that the bond be not broken because of the faith, but shall continue (Matt. 19), is shown by the apostle, yet always with this understanding and meaning, as he writes. Finally this is the idea: As little as an apostate wife, or a brother who is her husband, is pure and free because of her apostasy, so little is an unbelieving and worldly person pure and free from or to him who took her in the time of unbelief, and if he would truly repent he must cease from all that which he has begun and done contrary to God's word, and sin no more; for that which is not properly begun in the Lord can hardly come and be brought to a good end.

It is further claimed by some that they have a suggestion for consideration, namely: When one in the time of his apostasy still further trespasses and takes a worldly person, it may not be compared with this as though both had taken place in the time of unbelief.

Reply: To sin still further in the time of apostasy does not excuse the apostate or backslider, but only makes his apostasy greater, because one sin cannot make another sin less or better, but makes it so much greater and worse, for it is written in the book of Wisdom that to sin once is much. Sin is to give rein to the will against the most high and righteous God, who is displeased with all ungodly life and ways (Psa. 7), who hates all unrighteousness and loves all righteousness (Heb. 1; Psa. 44). Therefore sin has, from the very beginning, been an abomination to God, and still is (2 Pet. 2), and was severely punished (Gen. 2), in heaven among the angels, as well as upon earth among men, although they were created in the image of God. But to sin twice is much worse, and to sin three times brings punishment. From this let a Christian remember and take to heart

that backsliding from God and his word is a great and terrible abomination (Sir. 23)); and to sin yet more during the back-slidden state is still more abominable.

This is to be clearly observed in the figurative Israel. When they had been disobedient and stubborn before God so many times, then they desired a golden calf; then the manna was innutritious and unpalatable food (Ex. 32); then they followed the ungodly faction of Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16); then they wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb because they opposed the other spies (Num. 14); then they murmured against Moses and Aaron. And along many similar lines they sinned, to mention all of which is unnecessary (Ex. 16; 17; Num. 11, etc.).

When they, above all these things, took to themselves the daughters of Moab and had carnal intercourse with them (Num. 25), they were committing so much the more wickedness, and all this before the Lord, so that they were the more severely punished by him.

When Balaam was pleased with the presents of King Balak and therefore journeyed along to the land of Moab with evil purpose, his way was perverse and his heart had departed and turned away from God. But when God thwarted Balaam's evil plan, and changed his intended curse into a blessing, he (Balaam) yet at his departure gave the wicked, false advice as to how Moab should deceive Israel (Num. 22; 24; 31), and for this he had to die, and, at the command of God through Moses he was put to death by Israel.

From this it is to be observed that his last misdeed was not less, but, in our opinion, greater than the first were. Saul, the first king of Israel, turned away from God at Gilgal (1 Sam. 13), when he made an offering, because he feared the people would fall away from him: for he did not wait for the prophet Samuel. That was the beginning of his apostasy. After this he departed still farther away from God in this that he did not accomplish and obey the word of the Lord regarding the Amalekites, and this was so much worse, because he played the hypocrite before Samuel (1 Sam. 15), being desirous of retaining his honor with the people. We might mention many similar instances, from all of which it can be readily understood that apostasy from God produces all that is evil and nothing that is good, and that one sin follows another, as daily experience teaches us.

There is still another objection and contradiction from our opponents, namely: If a person, while a believer, transgresses by marrying a worldly person and afterward repents and is sorry, and heartily desires to make amends, but is unable to bring this about on the part of the unbelieving partner, nor bring said partner into the church, what course shall the penitent backslider then be advised to take?

Reply: We confess before God, and have frequently declared before this, that during all the time we have believed and been in the ministry, so far as our knowledge and consent is concerned, no one who has thus strayed into the world and taken a conjugal partner, that is, that he, while a member in the church, and taking a worldly partner, came again to the church of God and was received into her communion, except where the unbelieving partner was first converted and was also received as a fellow-

member in the faith. Inasmuch as we have seen and heard nothing different from this in the church of God we might well have right and reason for rejecting or curtly dismissing such unprofitable, idle questions.

What is sought or intended by asking such questions God knows, and those who fear God also may well conjecture. There would be time enough to speak of it if such a case were in hand, and even then to wait until help, comfort and counsel had been sought of God the Lord, and thereafter united prayer was offered by all the bishops, teachers and ministers that could be gathered, in order that by discussion and counsel it might be decided what should and must be done in this matter. But for a few brethren, or a few ministers to perform this according to their own way of thinking is censurable, for it does not compare or accord with the scripture, but much more looks like vanity, haughtiness and self-conceit (Deut. 17). So long as the church of God did as mentioned above, according to the example shown us in Israel, and according to the example of the apostolic church, integrity prevailed, and there was peace in large measure (Acts 15). But when one or several congregations presumed or undertook to manage some difficult cases, without the bishops, teachers, ministers and other congregations, all manner of offences and sorrow began and came therefrom, even disturbance, division and destruction of the church of God, as must be seen today with weeping and sorrowful eyes, that so many have come short in this matter, that it should be high time just now to meditate, take an example, and reflect.

Let us now return to the former article or proposition, namely the question raised by our opponents, which is this: If the unbeliever is stubborn, refractory and will not obey or live peaceably with the penitent conjugal partner, whether the penitent should then remain outside the church for all time? Whether his penitence should be subject to the unbeliever? Etc.

Reply: There may be such true, enduring and consistent repentance found and felt in him who has thus gone astray, that his request to be received cannot be consistently prevented or refused, yet always on this condition: that he leave the person whom he has taken contrary to God and his word, make himself a eunuch* for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matt. 19:12), have no liberty to take another, care for and support the one from whom he has departed, and faithfully and devoutly pray to God for her, that it might yet please God some time to open her eyes that she might rightly know the truth and be converted to the living God (2 Tim. 2). * *This expression and the passage to which it refers must be understood as Jesus meant, namely, that the person in question abstains from all carnal relation or conjugal alliance, the same as the class of beings of which Jesus speaks, because incapable.—Tr.*

And if perchance someone might attack us at this point and assume that we herewith confess or acknowledge that this is matrimony which these two persons, that is, a person called a brother or sister, and an unbelieving person have entered into, we reply that this has been sufficiently answered and explained above, and that our own denomination and their opponents themselves confess that this is a wrong and unholy union. But if anyone will be captious or sophistical, let him remember that all the wisdom

and craftiness of men are foolishness and lack of judgment in the sight of God. If anyone thinks that he knows something, let him remember the apostle's words (1 Cor. 1:18-31:8:2), that he does not yet know what he ought to know. If anyone desires to exalt himself, we desire to place ourselves on the plane of the humble and those of low estate, and say with Paul (Rom. 12) that we are determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified, whose footsteps we desire to follow and according to the distinct rules of whose divine word we desire to walk (1 Cor. 1). To sum it up, if any man desire to be contentious (1 Cor. 11:16), let him know that we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.

Observe, these are the principal arguments and chief articles, so far as we have retained them, on which our denomination and its opponents, in the aforesaid matters, desire to maintain their ground, regarding permission or the prohibition of marriage out of the Lord and his church with an unbeliever. But we hope that by the grace of the Lord we have so clearly elucidated and pointed out the matter and established and confirmed it by holy and divine scripture, and also so answered the arguments and propositions of our opponents, that everyone who fears God can and will be satisfied therewith. But the reason why we have not been able to do this so fully and completely as we desired, is because of physical illness. God may, in his own good time, make these matters more clear, either through us, or through other persons; although we hope that we have satisfied all God-fearing lovers of the truth and fellow-members of our Christian faith.

Finally, the sum total and conclusion of all that has been said is, that matrimony is a pure, good and holy ordinance of God, and cannot be otherwise entered upon, accepted and maintained than according to the express word of God (Gen. 2:5; Rom. 7; Eph. 5, etc.), and according to the testimony of holy scripture, yea, according to the example presented by Christ, who accepts no bride but the believing one, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone (1 Cor. 6), and who, spiritually, is of him. Thus also a brother may take to himself no other person than one who with him is a member of the body of Christ, and, as a sister, like him, according to the Spirit (Eph. 5), in faith of one mind with him in the truth, and as he by acceptance of the eternal Father has, in the knowledge and confession of his Son Jesus Christ, by grace become a son of God, so he must also in the fear of God take to himself a God-fearing sister for his wedded wife who is a daughter of the almighty heavenly Father.

This, then, is what it means to be "married in the Lord," and beside this there is no matrimony that is valid before God. Therefore the apostle Paul allows the union which he calls the marriage of this world (1 Cor. 7), namely, that of two unbelieving persons, who in their unbelief have come together, and allows it to remain a union; yet with this condition and provision, that the unbeliever is willing to live in peace with the believer, not to rule over his faith which God has wrought in him, but leave him therein unenvied, unupbraided and unhindered. Thus there may be cohabitation, for then the unbeliever is to the believer pure and holy, so far as conjugal fellowship and association or relation are concerned: and in such an unbeliever who conducts himself or herself with such propriety and becoming behavior there is still hope that by the grace of God he or she may become a believer.

But we challenge any one to bring forward one single passage from the new testament by which this third matrimony (as our opponents would be pleased to have it called matrimony) is declared or established as free, pure and in such manner as is matrimony between a believer and an unbeliever who have come together in unbelief and united in marriage. And to thus distort the words of Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor.. 7) is to openly do violence to the scriptures, and is no more authoritative than the claim which the Paedobaptists make and hold forth that because whole households were baptized by the apostles, they would gather evidence therefrom that there were infant children among the number and were baptized. But the evidence on which the false foundation or ground on which infant baptism is based as against the foundation of truth regarding true baptism of penitents and believers remains as powerless as is the effort to prove by the words of Paul to the Corinthians regarding matrimony between a believer and an unbeliever, that when a believing person takes an unbelieving person this cohabiting together and conjugal relation is pure. But if the backslider, who through his transgression is separated from God and his church, desires to repent and to give evidence of it, he must cease from everything in which he has sinned against God's word and will, as has been explained above.

In further explanation of all this, let everyone remember that the whole matter regarding matrimony outside of the church is in itself so wrong, so impure, and so ungodly, that it is punished with the ban by the church of the Lord. How then shall the transgressor be able to repent so long as he continues in sin and transgression? Therefore if he on this account is justly punished with exclusion by God and by his church, has not true repentance these following characteristics, namely, a sincere sorrow and lamenting because of sins committed (Matt. 3; Acts 2), afterwards honest confession of sin, praying to God and making supplication at the throne of grace for forgiveness of sins (Psa. 33), with firm trust in God's mercy, and with a settled purpose not to sin any more, but to cease from it?

True repentance and worship, then, is to cease from sin and to cease from doing unrighteousness (Sir. 35). From this it follows incontrovertibly that if the transgression and iniquity of marrying outside of the church is so great in itself as to deserve the punishment of the ban, it must be necessary to first put away the accursed relation and life before there can be evidence of true repentance, and the backslider may again be received into the church, if he still continues to live in his defilement and sin. Beside this, let everyone remember the words of Paul, that no one may marry but only in the Lord (1 Cor. 7; 1 Cor. 3 and 6), and that a Christian has not power of his own body, but the Lord. Let everyone ponder these words well in his heart.

And herewith we close our writing on this matter and contents of the aforementioned subject, and admonish the God-fearing reader to read prayerfully all that we have under great difficulty and bodily illness written by the grace of God, take it to heart, weigh it upon the minute scales of the word of God and thus prove and examine it, to see whether it accords with the simple truth and is the safest way upon which to walk in order to reach a blessed end; for there is a way . . . but the end thereof are the ways of death (Prov. 14). Again, there is a way that is level and open, and he that travels thereon

travels in safety. May the almighty God grant you and us all understanding and wisdom (Prov. 10), according to his holy and divine will to always do that which is right and pleasing in his eyes.

Written and completed the 7th day of March. 1568,

by D. P.

The Evangelical Ban and Shunning

By

S. G. and Dietrich Philip.

After a Translation From the French by C. B. M.

and From the Low Dutch Into German by A. L.

Teach them to observe all things whatsoever
I have commanded you.

Matt. 28: 20.

To this end also did I write,
that I might know the proof of you,
whether ye be obedient in all things.

2 Cor. 2: 9.

A Plain Presentation of the Evangelical Ban and Shunning,

By Dietrich Philip.

It is fitting and proper that the Christian church give diligent heed to the word of God and to have it always in mind that in all things in which it passes judgment it may be directed thereby. This must also be done in the matter of excommunication, and wherever and upon whomsoever the punishment of excommunication is imposed, there the sin must first be clearly proven and shown with the holy scripture.

In the first place Christ says, Matt. 18:15: "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" (Lev. 19:17; Luke 17:3). "If

he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established" (2 Cor. 13:1; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; John 8:17). "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (1 Cor. 5:9). The apostle Paul likewise writes to the Romans after this manner: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). The apostle Paul teaches Timothy and Titus the same thing (1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 3:5; Tit. 3:10), and John in his epistle (2 John 10). And again the holy apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, admonishes them and says: "If any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an extortioner, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard; with such an one no not to eat" (1 Cor. 5:11).

Paul also says to the Thessalonians: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6). "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. 3:14, 15). This is a plain and universal rule of the holy scripture, by which Christians must govern and guide themselves, without opposing it. for it is of the Lord, and given and commanded by his apostles. In it lies a great responsibility, and upon it much depends, as may be plainly noted in the foregoing passages, therefore it must be observed and accepted by all believing Christians. But there must be important reasons why this exclusion is instituted and must be observed among believers.

The Twofold Purpose of the Ban

That the church or the congregation of the Lord should not be defiled by the unrighteous or unjustified, for it is not the Lord's will that the diseased, infected, scabbed sheep should remain in his fold and among his flock, that the whole flock be not infected and become scabbed. Of this we have a plain pattern and example in the Book of Joshua (Josh. 7) and in Numbers (Num. 16), and likewise in the epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 5): "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" And so also, the apostle admonishes the believers and says: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is a partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10:11).

That the sinner or the transgressor may be ashamed, humble himself, come to himself, and repent, as Paul teaches in his first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 5), and in the second epistle to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 3). When this evangelical exclusion and ban are rightly exercised and observed they are very beneficial and necessary, and this for two reasons: (a) Because by this means the church of the Lord is kept pure, and (b) That the sinner who desires to repent, may thereby amend his ways.

It is also a medicine or remedy that is very strong and penetrating in the healing of infected and foul, festering sores which cannot be healed with mild plasters and

poultices; but because of its foulness the whole body might be destroyed. And though care were taken with the application of this strong remedy or medicine, yet it needs to be mixed with such sweetness and mixture as the holy scripture teaches us, otherwise it might do more harm than good. Therefore due heed should be given to the rule, which has been given us by the word of God.

Jesus Christ instituted and commanded separation, and wants those who have been separated to be looked upon as heathen and publicans. Now, the manner in which the Jews avoided these was not to eat and drink with them, they even did not go into their houses, as may be sufficiently seen in the holy scripture, for it holds them as heathen, as indeed they were so long as they continued in unbelief; for Christ said to the Canaanite woman (Matt. 15) that it was not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs (V. 26), by which children the Lord would have us understand that the Jews were meant, and the dogs, the heathen (Rev. 22). Likewise the Holy Spirit also calls those dogs who are outside of the Christian church. The woman of Samaria also said to Christ Jesus: "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" (John 4:9); for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Now the apostles sufficiently explain to us the aforementioned words of Jesus Christ regarding exclusion or excommunication, how they teach and expressly command us to withdraw ourselves from every brother or sister that deals and walks disorderly and unseemly, no not to eat with them, not to receive them into your houses nor have fellowship with them, nor to greet them or wish them God speed (2 Thess. 3; 1 Cor. 10; 2 John 10). By this injunction we must be governed and directed, without making the way longer or shorter or making the task heavier or lighter than as prescribed and taught.

On this point some say that one may deal with an excommunicated and apostate member in friendship and love, converse with him and eat and drink with him, that he may come to repentance.

To this we reply that we can readily concede and agree in the matter of speaking with a backslider, and to admonish him with the word of God; for the apostle, by God's word and Spirit, teaches us to do this; but to eat and drink with an excommunicated member (2 Thess. 3), or to have dealings and fellowship with him, we do not allow, for the reason that there is not one word in the entire holy scripture by which this can be proven consistent. When the apostle says that we are to have no fellowship with such an one, nor to eat and drink with him, the apostle says therewith that the kingdom of God consists not in eating and drinking, but in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14; 1 John 3; 2 Cor. 7). And Christian love does not consist in eating and drinking, but in deed and in truth. And the apostate and excommunicated person is not moved to repentance by eating and drinking, but by a sincere disapprobation of and sorrow for his sin. This withdrawing from them causes a true distress, sorrow and a preying on the conscience because of sin, which sin is disapproved and reprov'd by the word of God. Therefore the apostle says: "Let him not be to you as an enemy, but entreat him as a brother"; but he does not say: Eat and drink with him; for that is merely the human idea of propriety and reasoning; yea, such love must be considered false, for it does not accord with the truth and conflicts with evangelical excommunication. Whoever therefore

desires to walk according to the love of God and his neighbor, let him observe God's word, and seek his neighbor's salvation; then he will at once see that it is a command of God to put away from the church wicked men and those who do unrighteousness. For love to God consists in obedience to the commands of God, and true brotherly love really consists in promoting and seeking by every possible means the welfare and salvation of one's brethren. Hence excommunication of sinners serves to make them ashamed, that they may realize what they are, and repent. And to this end also the instruction which God's word enjoins regarding him, for the admonition of his soul, which soul is not comforted with food and drink.

Further, the question is asked whether help and support may not be rendered to an apostate and excommunicated brother who through misfortune becomes needy or infirm and suffers want.

To this we answer according to the understanding given us of the Lord by his holy word, that the separation or exclusion is instituted and commanded by Jesus Christ, not for the purpose of destruction, but for repentance (1 Cor. 10; Matt. 12). Therefore Christians must not use the ban in the manner that the Jews of old exercised the law regarding the sabbath (Matt. 2), who would have allowed a man to perish rather than help him out of his need on this day; for we no longer serve according to the letter, although they of old broke the sabbath to prevent injury or harm to themselves. And hence Christians do not break the law regarding the ban as instituted and commanded by Christ, if they render assistance to an excommunicated person in need and hunger; for to practice and show love and mercy, and to show kindness to the poor is not prohibited, but much more commanded, and, as many passages of scripture show, approved and enjoined. In short, if someone would help an excommunicated brother in the church in the time of his need, and would have fellowship with him as the Samaritan did with the man who fell among thieves (Luke 10), we believe that such an act must be pleasing to God; therefore we would rather show mercy to the poor as did the Samaritan, than pass by as did the priest and the Levite.

The Extent to Which the Ban is to be Exercised Between Husband and Wife

Furthermore we are also asked whether, in case two believers who are living together in matrimony and one of them departs from the faith and because of the transgression committed is excommunicated, the one remaining steadfast must withdraw from and shun the one who is excommunicated.

To this we reply that excommunication is a universal rule in the church, which must be exercised rightly according to the scripture without respect of person, so that father, mother, son, daughter, husband and wife sanction and assist in pronouncing judgment; for a Christian and member of the church cannot look upon relationship or friendship; he can spare nobody in this matter.

Should someone contradict this or even admit that the husband, on his part, passes judgment by the word of God against his guilty wife and aids in putting her without the pale of the Christian congregation, but would nevertheless want the church to grant the husband the liberty to maintain the same relation and companionship with his wife as before, when she was not excommunicated, we answer that the church separates and excommunicates the sister that has sinned or become apostate, by the power vested in or bestowed by Jesus Christ, and in such a manner indeed that there shall be no outward fellowship with her until the time when she, upon true sorrow, repentance and amendment is again received into the church. And the husband must, under the same conditions, be dealt with in the same way, for the reason that he is not his own, but the Lord's and his church (1 Cor. 6 and 3), to whom he must be obedient and devoted and render or show more love than he does to his own wife.

If to this it be said that by marriage the husband is bound and united to his wife, because he is one body and one flesh with her, which he is not with the church, we reply that if the believing husband is united by marriage to his wife, so also is he spiritually united to Christ, the true Bridegroom of the church. And moreover, inasmuch as the believer is one body and one flesh with the church in Christ Jesus, therefore this spiritual bond and union with Christ is and must be firmer, stronger and more binding than natural or carnal matrimony (Eph. 5).

Again, if it should be said that the husband may be united to Christ and yet remain with his wife, even though she has fallen away from the truth, the answer is that this cannot be, because it is against the teaching and command of the Lord and his apostles, because by so doing he does not observe excommunication as instituted, for whence should such liberty come to him? Should it be simply because she is his wife? No, certainly not, for, as we have said above, carnal marriage and union cannot destroy, supersede and render invalid evangelical separation.

But someone might ask and say that the law regarding separation is not broken in this that the husband treats his wife as his wife, and not as a sister in the church, even though he live with her and have fellowship with her.

To this we reply and say that even though the separation of the persons were to be understood in a spiritual sense only, and outward fellowship were not forbidden, this might be admitted, but we have shown above that it is to the contrary.

If someone says that separation according to the Spirit is sufficient, and that this does not demand nor permit outward withdrawal or separation, we answer that it is not permissible to break the evangelical separation by or because of carnal fellowship, as we have pointed out and shown above, for the command regarding separation is more than that regarding marriage. Note this, because one concerns man, and the other God; and herein is proved or tested what kind of faith and love we have toward God, when we for the sake of his word and commandments are to withdraw ourselves from our wives; for it is an express command of God that the church must put away, separate and exclude all apostates and transgressors of the truth (2 Cor. 5; 1 John 1) without respect of person, before which the command regarding the marital relation and union must make way

(Deut. 17 and 13). Of this we have the example and testimony of the holy scripture, inasmuch as God commanded the Israelites to stone their wives who invited or induced their husbands to go to strange gods and worship them; nor were they to be spared or excused by their own husbands, but they had to cast the first stone at her. From this we see that marriage and carnal union cannot stand against or in the face of figurative separation. The Israelites could not even spare their wives with or by the suspension of the marital relation when the wife had sinned, but had to enter complaint, bring information, accuse, and pass judgment against them according to the law. Likewise also to observe evangelical separation Christians must also temporarily shun their wives until they return again and come to true repentance and sorrow for the sins that have been committed. This punishment is far easier to bear than the punishment which was imposed in the law of Moses. Beside this we must note that God had commanded that father and mother should be honored (Ex. 20); yet this commandment also must make way before the other word and command which says that a man should forsake father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and that they twain shall be one flesh (Gen. 2; Matt. 19). Now, observe that this union was higher and stronger or more binding; yet so also must love for wife and marital union make way and give place to love of Christ and the gospel.

If any one disputes this and says that a man does not really and truly forsake his wife except only when he drives her away, persecutes or imprisons her on account of the faith, and not when for the name of God, for the love of Christ and the gospel he simply withdraws himself from her on account of excommunication.

Reply: Is it not the word and command of God that those who are separated and cut off from the church are to be to the members as the heathen and publicans, and that no dealings and fellowship are to be maintained with them, no not even eating and drinking (1 Cor. 5) ? Now, if for this reason a man withdraws himself from his wife, does he not do it for love to God and for the sake of the gospel, just the same as when he forsakes her because he does not want to fall into idolatry or transgress a single commandment of God?

Are the foregoing words of Jesus Christ and his apostles not also considered as the word of God and the holy scripture, or are they untrue? If to this the reply is made that Christ has forbidden the husband to leave or forsake his wife, except only because of fornication, let it be carefully heeded and observed that Christ's purpose was to prohibit and prevent the separating from and putting away of wives as it was customary for the Jews to do with their wives, for every trivial reason as whim might dictate, or as they might desire, in order to marry another, which the Lord suffered them to do (Deut. 24) because of the hardness of their hearts. But such separation from the wife was not instituted nor allowed by God in the beginning (Gen. 2). Hence the Lord desired and commanded that men should do this no more, except in case of fornication, which is the only and true reason or cause for which a man may leave or put away his wife and take another (Matt. 19 and 5). Now therefore believers do not act contrary to the command of Jesus Christ, when because of excommunication they withdraw themselves from their wives; for it is not for the purpose of taking another as was the case with the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts, but the believing Christians wait with patience,

with longsuffering, with prayer, fasting and supplication to God for grace to abstain until the time when the conjugal partner that is separated from the church comes again to true repentance, sorrow and amendment and is again received by the church, for thus she is then again received and accepted by her believing husband or wedded companion. And thus the matrimonial bond is neither broken nor dissolved, except only during the time of separation (as has been sufficiently stated above), for which the believers are not the cause or the transgressor, but those who have fellowship with sin and transgression, and because of which they were excommunicated for the preservation of the church in her purity, that others might fear (Num. 12), and that after sufficient and satisfactory amendment they should again be received into the church of the Lord.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. 1 Cor. 2: 14, 15.

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