
COUNTER ARGUMENTS

OF

BABYLON AND ITS BUILDERS, WITH THEIR REPLICATIONS.

Beloved reader, although we have clearly shown you the difference between true and false preachers, and why we should not hear them, we hope that the god-fearing, who acknowledge the word of the Lord to be true, might fully comprehend this GROUND AND TRUTH; still we find some among those preachers, who partly know that their cause cannot stand the test of the Scripture.

Nevertheless, not being born of God, nor fearing him but seeking unlawful gain, the

world and ease, they have garbled a variety of scriptural passages, by which they persuade the simple, those who dread the cross of Christ, that it is lawful to hear their doctrine and attend upon their church services, and this they do in order to live at ease and enjoy good times.

In the first place, they say that Christ said, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but

do not ye after their works," Matt. 23: 3. From which they conclude, that, as the Scribes and Pharisees were sitting in the seat of Moses, and mingling leaven with the unleavened lump, of which Christ warned his disciples, saying, all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, they also now sit in Christ's seat, although they are in their doctrine and lives not upright and free from guilt: that therefore we are to hear them, so far as they preach the word of God, but not to do after their works.

To which we reply: First we ask them whether they and the Pharisees are one or not? If they answer yes, they must then be their own judges, and decide that they are of those who crucified Christ, stoned Stephen, beat the apostles, persecuted the saints, and they are of those who are threatened with eternal woe; they may well then be afraid and fear the Lord and his judgments. If they answer no, then they can prove nothing with this passage.

Secondly, we reply: If they adduce this passage, *quasi argumentum assimili*, i. e. as it were an argument of similitude, and remark that to sit in Moses' seat, is to rightly preach and attend to Moses' law with its ceremonies. This did the Scribes and Pharisees, they left the law and ceremonies entire and altered nothing therein, although they practiced some superstition with it, as may be seen from Matt. 15: 3. For had they altered the law and ceremony, they would not have been sitting in Moses' seat.

But even as the Scribes and Pharisees did sit in Moses' seat, these will then also have to show that they sit in Christ's seat, that is, they must prove that they preach Christ's gospel, baptism, supper, separation: preach and practice all things correctly, or the *argumentum assimili* cannot stand. If this is the case, we may then ask counsel of the Scriptures; why they suffer the traditions of men to be added thereto? But we well know that the Scriptures are silent on this subject.

Thirdly, we reply: So long as the Scribes and Pharisees were sitting in Moses' seat, and practiced the ceremonies and taught the law which pointed to Christ, as before

related; so long did Christ direct his disciples and the people, at that time, to them; for the law was not fully accomplished; the perfect sacrifice, which was to abolish all typical sacrifices, was not yet offered; the veil of the temple was not yet rent, the figures and shadows were not yet changed into the new and abiding reality. After it had all been accomplished according to the Scriptures, and all things made new in Christ, he did not then send out the Scribes and Pharisees with Moses' law, but his disciples with his own doctrine; and said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark 16: 15, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28: 20.

Since then all things are new in and through Christ; and as the people of Moses were directed to his preachers, by Christ before his death, to those who sat in Moses' seat and rightly taught the law, and ceremonies; in like manner, in the new Testament, are we, after the death of Christ, directed to those preachers who sit in Christ's seat, teaching his words unblamably, and using his sacraments as the Scriptures teach.

But the Scriptures abundantly warn us of those who adulterate Christ's doctrine, misuse his sacraments, seduce the people, lead dissolute and wanton lives; such we are to shun, avoid and abandon, not to admit them into our houses, for they sit in anti-christ's, and not in Christ's seat, as said, Matt. 7: 15.

Secondly, they adduce what Paul says, "Quench not the spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good, abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thess. 5: 19—22.

I answer: Paul himself explains, according to our opinion, of what spirit and prophecy he thus spake. For if it were the opinion of the apostle that we should repair to houses where this open seduction and idolatry are carried on, and there prove their spirit and doctrines, Paul would then have contradicted himself, when he says, that we shall separate, shun and flee from them; for we know of a certainty that they do corrupt the word and sacraments of the Lord, and seek nothing but a good living, and are without the spirit and doctrine of Christ.

O no; Paul did not write this of such preachers as the Scribes and Pharisees were, neither of the idolatrous priests of Egypt and Babylon (understand well what I mean): but he said this touching the prophets, pastors and teachers in the Church of Christ, that we are not to quench their spirit, but prove their doctrine, and hold fast to that which is good. And if they taught any thing not in accordance with the Scriptures and the true faith, to avoid it. If any man prophesy, let him prophesy according to the proportion of faith, Rom. 12: 6, and this is to what John exhorts his disciples, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God," 1 John 4: 1. And this passage, Abstain from all appearance of evil, may be understood as not properly referring to what is just mentioned.

My good reader, we have proved your preachers so well, both as to their spirit and doctrine, that we may with a clear conscience say, that they are not of God and his word, but of the bottomless pit, of the dragon and of the beast. Say, dear reader, how shall we acknowledge those as teachers who so wantonly fight against the word of God? What communion has light with darkness? What concord has Christ with Belial? 1 Cor. 6: 14. The greater part of their teaching and action is delusion and hypocrisy. My reader, do not pervert these words, for what I write is the truth, and I can prove it to the whole world, from their doctrines, lives and sacraments.

Thirdly, they ask, Why will we not hear them; for the wise men of the East gave heed to what Herod said?

Answer: To adduce this passage seems to me to be so puerile, that it is by no means worthy of reply. For Herod did nothing else than by the instruction of the scribes, point out to the wise men the town in which the king of the Jews should be born, and he did it with a blood-thirsty heart, as the following act shows; he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child, and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also," Matt. 2: 8.

Herod was afraid when he heard that the Jews had a king born, lest he might lose his kingdom and glory; he therefore spoke, out

of pure hypocrisy and slyness, with the wise men, for he was desirous of the child's death, to prevent its becoming a king. But when he saw that he failed in his hypocrisy, he became very much enraged, and showed his fierce, tyrannical, ungodly disposition; he sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, that by the slaying of all the innocent children he might also destroy the born king, as may be seen from Matt. 2: 16.

O my good reader, how justly they do appeal to this hypocritical, lying, ambitious and tyrannical Herod; for the greater part of them are of the same spirit and disposition. They are so much pained that Christ is born again through his word. They practice hypocrisy like Herod; they lie, and say that they are sincere; but they fear their unlawful gain, their rich and lazy life, lest Christ should rule, as Herod feared, lest he should lose his kingdom. And they are ready to destroy the pious, as Herod was determined upon the blood of Christ, as you have heard.

Since then they are manifestly hypocritical liars, and earthly-minded, and also intent upon blood, as may be seen in some places; therefore we will also take for an example in this matter the wise, who, being admonished by a heavenly inspiration, did not return to Herod, and, through the grace of God faithfully observe the Lord's inspiration, counsel, doctrine and admonition, and turn to those who point out Christ in full power and practice, and teach in the truth, according to the spirit.

Fourthly, some of them say, Although the devil should preach the word of God, why should we not hear him?

In the first place I reply to these vain, slanderous calumniators, that it would be well for them to learn rightly to distinguish between the spirit and disposition of the devil, and the spirit and nature of Christ, before they would utter such unseasonable, blasphemous words before the poor people.

The devil was a liar from the beginning, and will undoubtedly always be. Since then he is a liar, and lying his nature, disposition and work, as the Lord says, how can he then sincerely and rightly teach and

preach the word of God, which is truth, and is diametrically opposed to his lying disposition and nature, and though he did teach the truth correctly, and give Christ his praise, still he does so with a false heart; for he is a devil and the truth is not in him.

He confessed Christ, rightly and according to the contents of his word, when he said, Thou art Christ, the holy one of God; thou art Christ, the Son of God. However, Christ did not desire his confession, but reproved him and said, Hold your peace, and come out of him, for his confession was made with a diabolical heart, as said.

Secondly, I say, If any one would hear the voice of the devil, he need not go far; alas! he can hear him every where. All who speak lies, speak of the devil. In the beginning he spoke through the serpent; in Israel through the false prophets, and now through his preachers, in order to deceive the people of the world, and divert them from the truth, that they never can be saved.

Since then, that from the beginning he has been, and still is a lying spirit, an adversary of God, a falsifier of the Scriptures, and a murderer of souls, and will eternally be such, who can neither teach nor endure any thing good, because he is by nature unclean, a liar, and a deceiver, always the enemy of every thing that is good, we will therefore stop our ears, through God's grace, and not hear such blasphemous speaking; turn our backs upon the devil, with all his lying preachers, as the Scriptures teach; and we will sincerely believe the Scriptures, which direct us to Christ to hear him. Christ directs us to his disciples, and they direct us to such teachers who are blameless in doctrine and life, as related. May the merciful and gracious Lord eternally preserve all the pious hearts against this Herodian generation, and against the devil's preachers, Amen.

Fifthly, some also say that we may hear them, if we suffer ourselves not to be deceived by them.

I answer: The reader should observe how the people of God ever were, from the days of Abraham, separated from the world; and especially since the days of Moses, they have had their own particular preachers, teachers, ceremonies, ordinances and ser-

vices, as may be abundantly read and seen in all the books of Moses.

Secondly, that Israel was commanded by God, that if a false prophet were to rise up among them, and though he were to do wonders and signs, he should die, Deut. 13: 4.

Thirdly, Israel was not allowed to teach or to receive any doctrine or worship from any strange nations circumjacent to them, but to keep closely to the law and testimonies.

Fourthly, where there arose some ungodly kings, such as Jeroboam, Ahab, Manasseh and many others, who loved their own righteousness and idolatry more than the word and right worship of the Lord; and when the false prophets multiplied, who turned the people from the Lord and his law, then also did the Lord raise up true prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c., to reprove the disobedient, idolatrous kings and false prophets, and to warn the people faithfully of them, and said, "Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they make you vain; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord," Jer. 23: 16. These prophets all gloriously pointed to Christ, to his kingdom and reign.

Fifthly, that Christ, as well as Moses, ordained and appointed in his kingdom, community, or church, prophets, preachers, teachers, ceremonies and ordinances, which are to be observed by all true christians for ever.

Sixthly, the holy apostles teach, advise, and admonish us, that we are to separate ourselves from those, in doctrine and in worship, be they baptized or not, who agree not with the spirit, doctrine, regulations and examples of Christ.

Seventhly, that the whole world with their spirit, doctrine, sacrament, worship and conduct, are far from Christ's spirit, word, sacrament, worship and example; and, alas! are nothing but a new Sodom, Egypt and Babel, Rev. 11: 8.

Eighthly, that all those who acknowledge God's word, and are partakers of his Spirit, are called on to let their lights shine out of darkness and give light to the world, that they reprove all ungodliness by word, deed,

life and death, confess the Lord's holy name, word and will, and confirm it by a pious and unblamable life, according to the Scriptures.

Ninthly, that "whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me (Christ), it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matt. 18: 6.

Tenthly, that we reflect well, why or for what reason we are not to hear such preachers. If we do hear them, and desire to be taught of them, then we seek the truth among lies, and life among the dead. But if we will not be taught of them, but use our liberty, as they call it, we must confess that such hearing is no hearing, but trifling and hypocrisy, by which we despise the spirit, doctrine, ordinances, counsel, admonition, community and church of Christ: and strengthen the seducing abominations, idolatry, and kingdom of anti-christ, and conform to the world in all appearance of evil, act the hypocrite, grieve and vex many a pious child of God, cause strife among the pious, and esteem lightly the innocent blood which is shed in many places on this account.

Behold, my readers, all who fear the Lord, and rightly examine and judge *these ten articles*, here briefly stated, by the Spirit and word of the Lord, will not halt here, but they will faithfully take heed to the counsel and admonition of the Holy Ghost; reprove the world both by works and doctrine; avoid every appearance of evil, and walk unblamably in the house of the Lord.

But touching the false worship, the light-minded comfort one another, and say, children may be baptized; for the child is clean; the water is clean; to wash and to bathe is also clean, &c. We may also receive the supper of the Lord at the hands of these preachers, although it is in idolatrous houses; christians have no idols any more, they only use bread and wine as such, which is pure to the pure; Paul says, To the pure all things are pure. They appeal to the case of Naaman, the Captain of the king of Assyria; and to the house of Rimmon, and say, We care not for the idolatry of the priests,

but we worship Him who made heaven and earth.

I answer: Can a single passage be adduced from the Scriptures, that uncleanness, sin, falsifying the ordinances of God, idolatry, disobedience to the word, and hypocrisy are all pure to the pure, that is, to the true believers; then we might consider a little on it. But we know certainly, that not a single passage can be advanced.

O my reader, if the men of God had thus understood the Scriptures, as these poor people do, the three valiant young men would have by no means suffered themselves to be cast into the fiery furnace. The upright Eleazer, the God-fearing pious mother with her seven sons, the holy prophets, apostles and pious witnesses of God, would have saved their lives, would have escaped the cruel tortures and pains, and said, To the pure all things are pure, we will cheerfully comply.

O no! my good reader, no: the clean are not to touch the unclean. Touch not the unclean thing, says the Spirit of God through Isaiah and Paul, that is, what the Scriptures forbid. He that washed himself, after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing? Is it not folly for any man to wash his clothes, and afterwards tread them into the mire again? The Scriptures plainly teach, that "the just shall live by faith," and that a "good tree brings forth good fruit." We certainly know that an humble, lowly-minded soul will never magnificently array itself in gold, pearls or other costly apparel; that those who fear the Lord, will be honest, chaste, sober; they will not talk, drink, sing and dance with dishonorable women: for the knowledge, fear and love of God and his word forbid them: and should one do so, we would know that his light is darkness, and his conduct not agreeable to the Scriptures. And so it is unbecoming to those who boast of the word, and would reprove seduction, the idolatry and abominations of preachers by the Scriptures, and yet associate with them in their doctrine, sacraments, false service, for words without actions profit nothing. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," Eph. 5: 11.

It is true, that to the pure all things are pure, which are not contrary to the Spirit and word of God. For none are called pure in the Scriptures, except those who conform to the Spirit and word of the Lord. All who agree with the word, to them all lawful, pure things, are pure, such as eating, drinking, clothing, houses, manors, land, gold, silver, wives, children, goods, food, to wake, to sleep, to speak, to be silent, and all things which God has given us as necessities; because they are pure, they will also use all lawful, pure things purely; namely, in the fear of God, with thanksgiving and moderation, to the praise of God and to the service of their fellow man; to which end, these things were given of God, for the use of men.

All things prohibited of God, such as hypocrisy, unfruitful works, conformity to the world, living in affluence and splendor, and living in idolatry, are by all means, impure to the pure, to the faithful, obedient children of God; and the pure can never use things impurely through all eternity, according to the will of God; for the Spirit of God and his word forbid them.

Adam was allowed of God to eat of all the vegetables and fruits of the earth, for his subsistence, except of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; for if he should eat thereof, he must die. All the fruits and creatures allowed of God, were pure to pure Adam, but one tree was impure to him through the command of God; he ate thereof, and he, with all his seed, fell under the power of death.

And even as all things are pure to the pure, and are for the good of the pious, so also to the impure all things are impure, and to the evil all things are evil; because they are impure, they use all the creatures of God impurely. They eat and drink to excess; they dress gorgeously; and indulge in lewdness; they raise their children to idleness; they avariciously hoard gold, silver, houses and lands, and there is nothing they use purely according to the will of God; for they are impure, sensual, disobedient to the word, and are earthly-minded, as the Scriptures say.

Further; it is also an abominable calumny and slanderous seduction, what some pretend and say: outward idolatry cannot de-

file and make impure, if not sanctioned by the heart.

My good reader, if that were true all the passages would have been spoken to no purpose, which say; neither be ye idolators as were some of them; have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; avoid all appearance of evil, &c., then would also the offence of the cross have been ended. No, no, it becomes a true christian to be wholly pious, to glorify God, both in body and spirit.

Aaron, a high priest called of God, a type of the Lord Jesus, when he was constrained of the people to make gods for them which should go before them, he was overcome through the weakness of the flesh, that he yielded to the idolaters, and made them a golden calf. Aaron did not worship it in his heart; for he well knew it was not the God who led them through the red sea, but that it was a creature made of gold. Nevertheless this guilt was charged to Aaron, for Moses said, "What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" Ex. 32: 21; yea, the Lord would have destroyed him had not Moses interceded for him, Dent. 9: 20.

We would, that all founders of sects and erring spirits, whose rejection of the cross, ease, carnal minds and hypocrisy, is cloaked under the semblance of the word of God, would reflect well upon the history of Aaron; I trust they would no longer conceal their nudity and disgrace with fig-leaves; but would clothe themselves with the true coat of skins, with Jesus Christ, made of God; for they comfort and encourage the poor, rude people in their idolatry and faith, by their ungodly dealings, which they call liberty, grieve the pious unto death, discourage and offend the poor, wavering souls of whom it is written, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him, that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea," Matt. 18: 6.

What christian liberty is, and how it is to be used according to the will of God, is fully explained in Rom. 14.

Say, beloved, how can we include in christian liberty, that which is so openly com-

mitted against so many passages in the Scriptures against brotherly love, and contrary to all the examples of so many saints, as said?

O, were they pure in heart, who introduce such subtle arguments, and would they but love Christ supremely over every thing, how soon they would then know that that which they maintain is contrary to the spirit and word of God. But I fear they are those concerning whom it is written, "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness," Prov. 30: 12.

Touching Naaman, we have to notice attentively the following passages.

First, that Naaman was neither a Jew, nor a proselyte, but a foreigner, who was not included in the doctrine, ceremonies, ordinances and righteousness of Israel, although he would no longer serve idols, and would serve and offer to God, he had not yet received the sign, viz., circumcision.

Secondly, that he was the servant of his master, upon whom the king depended; and therefore had to attend to the service of his master when the king worshiped in the house of Rimmon, and would worship none other than the true God who had cleansed him.

Thirdly, that we cannot conclude with certainty from the answer of the prophet, how far he did, or did not comply.

Fourthly, that the house of Rimmon, and the service thereof, and our temple with its services, are not the same; for in the house of Rimmon the name of God, the laws, the ordinances and ceremonies, were not abused, for they were not known there. But what abuses, disgrace, scoffings, abomination and blasphemy, are carried on in our temples under the name of Christ, all rational men may determine by the Scriptures.

But if any one says, Why do you concern yourselves about the doings of the priests? Worship God as Naaman did, this sounds to us thus, "Behold your pious father will be often slanderously mocked, insulted, reviled and much abused; let such things not move you, or confound you, but be unconcerned and contented. Submit quietly, but in your heart honor your father, &c." Say, beloved, what rational and upright child

could bear to see his father thus assaulted, and yet keep his silence?

Since then, we see with unclouded eyes, how miserably they treat our eternal Father, who loved us so greatly, in their houses of abomination; and how they behave towards his son, Jesus Christ, who bought us with such a precious price. Again: How they quench his Holy Spirit, hate his will, his word, and abuse his sacraments, reject his ordinances and commands, revile and reproach his children, deceive poor souls, and rob Christ of his glory; and with all this, they desire us to unite with such open enemies of God: to act the hypocrite with them, to listen to their ungodly seductions and abominations; if we should, we would be very ungrateful children, and without love. This is incontrovertibly true.

No; such is not the way of pious christians; but as Christ defends his church, is not ashamed of her, and enlightens her by his Holy Spirit and word, comforts her in all her distresses, strengthens her in sufferings and endows her with power and wisdom, before lords and princes, wise and learned, and before the whole world, that all have to be silent and ashamed in presence of a poor, humble christian; and in the day of judgment acknowledge her before his Father, and will bestow upon her the eternal kingdom; and so do the spirit and love of Christ also demand of us, that we confess before men his divine honor, word, will, ordinances and commands, and besides, we are to testify it by our works, possessions, blood, life and death, and not clandestinely frequent such houses of abomination, where his great and adorable name is so miserably dishonored and slandered; and where we hear not the truth, nor learn any piety. For it is nothing but hypocrisy which they teach; although they disguise it with the word of the Lord, as may be evidently observed by their works.

All, teachers and hearers, run, says the prophet, like a frantic heifer, they all hate reproof and instruction, and live imprudently according to their own lusts. They desire not God's word, therefore, I fear the scourge is ready, and the avenging sword of the Lord is drawn; that soon one ungodly man will eat another, so that many of them

will be destroyed, for these foolish people will be punished.

Fifthly, we have to observe, that in the New Testament we are only directed to the Spirit, word, counsel, admonition and usages of Christ; what he allows us we may do, but what he forbids we dare not do; it becomes all true Christians to conform thereto, and not according to such doubtful histories and obscure passages, from which we can draw no sure ground, and which teach the very reverse of what the Lord's apostles publicly taught.

Here I would faithfully admonish the sincere reader, that he would not suffer himself to be deceived with such words: but at all times to keep and abide in the unchangeable and sure ground, which the faithful witnesses of Christ, the holy apostles have left us, which they taught us plainly in their writings; for the deceivers seek but to confound the way-ering, and to be free from the cross of Christ.

But, say they, We esteem it to be better to do so sometimes, in order that we may administer to our wives and children, and serve the poor, than that we should wholly abandon the preachers, and thereby make all our possessions a prey.

To which we reply, in the first place: The first command teaches, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Where the name of the Lord is profaned, and where his word is violated, there it behooves you in all love, to reprove such things with an unblamable life, by the word of God, and to defend the praise of God, as much as in you is; reflect upon what the Lord says, Whosoever loves father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, possessions and life more than me, cannot be my disciple, Luke 14: 26.

Secondly, that all who believe that God made heaven and earth, and sustained Israel forty days with bread from heaven, and water from the rock, sent Elias his necessary food by a raven; who gives the birds in the air, the fishes in the water, and the reptiles upon earth, their food; they will not doubt the goodness, power and promise of their Lord Jesus Christ, who says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added

unto you," Matt. 6: 33, for if the countenance of his grace is in this matter over those who reject him, how much more over those who fear him and keep his commandments.

Thirdly, that the Almighty, bountiful God, God Almighty, who is all-sufficient to support the poor and needy without any idolatry, hypocrisy and service of the devil; because he has no delight in such offerings and gifts of unrighteousness; as the prophet says, Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams; for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. 1 Sam. 15: 22, 23.

All, therefore, who say that they do this on account of their wives and children, and for the sake of the poor, ought to know that they love their wives and children more than God, and lessen the arm and power of God, and lie unto the Lord; they should know that they only cover and adorn their indolence, their dislike of the cross, their unbelief, earthly-mindedness and hypocrisy under such pretense. Let every one take heed to himself and fear God, who has eyes like flaming fire, which penetrate heaven and earth, and cannot be blinded by fair words.

Again, they further pretend that Paul purified himself according to the custom of the Jews, and Timothy was circumcised. This is quite different, for these were things which God had commanded, although they ended in Christ. The reason why Paul consented thereto was, that he might preach the word with more freedom to the Jews, as he says, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law," 1 Cor. 9: 20.

And since these works did not originate with anti-christ, but from God, with which Paul would not offend the weak Jews; as explained; how can we then show by them, that we are at liberty to hear false preaching, receive the baptism and enjoy the supper of anti-christ; and to take part with the world in open idolatry and blasphemy? Although this may not be done with the heart, it is at least so in appearance. Or we must consider the works of the law, which were of God, to be as unclean and ungodly as the works and abominations of darkness, which

are of the devil; and esteem the renunciation of the cross of Christ as highly as the zeal with which Paul undertook to teach the Jews the Gospel of Christ.

O my faithful reader, if you would not lose your poor soul, do not then dishonor Christ, rightly seek his praise, obey his Spirit, doctrine, counsel, admonition and example, and you will never be made ashamed; you will soon discover that the purification of Paul, and circumcision of Timothy, are different from the doings, abominations, idolatry and blasphemy of anti-christ, which have been practiced from time to time, in the name of Christ, even to the present day. May the gracious, merciful God grant that you may all come to the knowledge, and walk in his truth, Amen.

Lastly, they say, That we are yet prisoners in Babel, and that we may therefore do in semblance the works of Babel; and assert the sayings of Baruch, "Ye shall see in Babylon gods of silver, and of gold, and of wood, borne upon shoulders, which cause the nations to fear: beware, therefore, that ye in no wise be like to strangers, neither be ye afraid of them, when ye see the multitude before them and behind them, worshipping them; but say in your hearts, O Lord, we must worship thee," Bar. 6: 4, 5.

Answer: Here we have first to observe, what is shown by the Babylonian captivity; when the Israelites did not serve God aright in their own country, they were scattered according to the prediction of Moses, by the righteous and gracious judgment of God, among the heathen nations, and were led captive under the dominion of Babylon. So it is with those who boast themselves as being the spiritual Israel; because they became unfaithful to the Lord, and rejected his word, and turned their ears to preachers of lies, the Babylonian king, anti-christ, has taken advantage of them and deprived them of the true doctrine, ceremonies and services, and led them captive under his dominion, and has bound them miserably with the cords of error and idolatrous abominations.

But all those who are again enlightened by the Spirit and word of the Lord, born of God, and die unto the old man, sin; forsake all human misleadings, and rightly use the holy sacraments of the Lord, his ordinances

and divine services, they are freed from spiritual Babylon, that is, from sin, hell, death, devil, from the doctrines and commands of men, from all idolatry and abominations, as 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; for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death, Rom. 8: 1, 2.

All, then, who say that they are yet captives of Babylon, testify that they have not been set at liberty by the Cyrus (Jesus Christ), from their sins, and have not come from Chaldea to Jerusalem, Isa. 24: 28; Ezra 1: 1—4.

Secondly, that Israel is not commanded here to conform themselves to the gentiles; but when they saw them carry their idols, even as we may see on the days of papistical processions and abominations, although we are not in their temple, then they should worship God only, and give him the honor: for if God had commanded them to conform in all things to the Babylonian idolatry, and only serve the Lord with their heart secretly, then Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego acted foolishly in refusing to worship the great golden idol, on account of which they hazarded their lives. O no! the miraculous work, shown of God to them, testifies that they acted rightly. All, then, I say, who teach that true believers are not released from Babylon, do thereby deny the merits, death and blood of Christ, deny faith with its power, and the Holy Ghost with his liberty, and despise wholly the innocent blood of the free witnesses of the free children of God, which is shed so abundantly.

Let every one see well to what he believes and teaches; for I fear that both the shedder of blood, and the despiser are alike guilty. My good reader, examine the Scriptures well, and you will find, that to the free children of God here upon earth, there is no liberty promised as to the flesh, for Christ says, "Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake," Matt. 24: 9. Again, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me," Matt. 16: 24. Again, "Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service," John 16: 2. "All that will live godly in

Christ Jesus," says Paul, "must suffer persecution," 2 Tim. 3: 12. And "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God," Acts 14: 22. For the liberty of the spirit is to be maintained with much misery, tribulation, persecutions, bonds, fear and death. "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord: it is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord," Matt. 10: 24.

Behold, beloved sirs, friends and brethren, here you have the leading parts, and chief articles of a CHRISTIAN GROUND AND FOUNDATION, with a plain instruction and exposition of the anti-christian abominations and Babylonian acts, whereby the true apostolic foundation, for a long time, was corrupted and razed to the ground; and we have contrasted light with darkness, truth with falsehood, that the whole truth by our seeking, doctrine and belief, undertaking and weak attempts, may be made manifest.

And I hope by the grace of God, that you will readily receive it, if you are at all honestly disposed, read it with a sincere heart, fear God, and acknowledge Christ as the true head; and see that we are grounded upon the only eternal corner stone, that we walk in the right way, although in weakness and to have the plain truth, and that there is no other ground or way, and truth to be found in the Scriptures, that can stand before God, other than this, which we have

pointed out, and which we on every occasion maintain and defend in so much tribulation.

I have served you all with this small gift, as I received it from my God. I gladly would that I could serve you longer with great and abundant grace, to the praise of the Lord. Therefore, have I renounced praise, honor, ease, and forsaken all, and willingly submitted to the pressing cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, which oftentimes weighs very heavily on my weak flesh. I seek neither gold nor silver (the Lord knows this), but am ready, with faithful Moses, to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: and I esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for I know what the Scriptures have promised us, and this is my only joy and desire of my heart, that I may extend the borders of the kingdom of God, publish the truth, reprove sin, teach righteousness, feed the hungry with the word of the Lord, lead the stray sheep into the right path, and win many souls to the Lord through his Spirit, power and grace, and so act in my weakness, as he taught me who purchased me, a miserable sinner, with his crimson blood, and gave me this mind, by the gospel of his grace, namely, Jesus Christ, to him be praise and glory, and the eternal kingdom, Amen.