

A CHRISTIAN

AND

AFFECTIONATE EXHORTATION TO ALL IN AUTHORITY.

*Also to the learned, to the common people, to sects and to the bride of Christ, that it
not a little scorched by the heat of the sun every where.*

We have shown you in the preface, faithful reader, why or wherefore we published these our writings, to wit: on account of the abominable deceptions, and the manifold dangers at this time, for there are to be found so many schisms, communities,

churches and sects, who are all called after the name of the Lord; such as *Romans* or *papists*, *Lutherans*, *Zuinglians*, erring sects, and the christians who are upbraided as anabaptists. Even as in former times among the Jews, were the Chasidim, Zadikin, Essenes, Sadducees, Pharisees, &c., which sacred and profane history mention. Each boasts to be the Church of Christ, and to have the word of the Lord, although the greater part of them not only live inconsistently with the Spirit, word and example of Christ, but they very enviously upbraid and slander, and are inimically opposed to it; and it is just as it was in the beginning, that the pious every where have to suffer much from the impious; as Abel had to suffer of Cain; Isaac of Ishmael; Jacob of Esau, &c., although created by the same God, by nature have one common origin, boast all of one Christ; and in the day of judgment, find the same judge. Anti-christ rules through hypocrisy and lies, with power and sword: but Christ reigns patiently with his word and spirit. He uses no other sword nor sabre. O man! man! Look upon the irrational savage creatures, and learn wisdom. Roaring lions, frightful bears, and all devouring wolves agree among themselves with their respective species; but you, poor, helpless worms; you, who are created after God's own image, and are called rational beings, born without tusks, claws and horns, born with an unsound, feeble nature, senseless, speechless and powerless, yea, neither able to walk nor stand, and have to depend entirely upon maternal aid, which teaches you that you are to be peaceable and not contentious; but when you attain your understanding and manhood, you are so very unsettled, tyrannical, revengeful, blood-thirsty and unmerciful, so much so that it cannot be fully conceived, related or described. Your open works bear testimony to this, notwithstanding you boast yourselves to be christians. O no! my faithful reader, no! Christ teaches, "Peace I leave you, my peace I give unto you," John 14: 27. Paul says, "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. Again, "The Son of man is not come to de-

stroy men's lives, but to save them," Luke 9: 56.

Since there are so many of you who treat the children of God so inhumanly, as we see, we have compiled summarily our *acts*, *principles*, *faith* and *doctrine*, from the word of God, and have published them; so that every slanderous evil speaker and bloody persecutor, may therefrom learn what our undertaking properly is, what we seek and do, and upon what ground the city of God must be built, and which of all the aforementioned congregations or churches is the right and true church of Christ. Even as there was but one Adam and one Eve; one Noah and one ark, one Isaac and one Rebecca, so there is but one church of Christ, which is the body, the city, the temple, the house and bride of Christ, having but one gospel, one faith, one baptism, one supper, and one service; walking in the same way and leading a pious, unblamable life, as the Scriptures teach.

All who have not the pure, uncorrupted word of God, the true, living faith, with the Lord's holy baptism and Supper, in power and Spirit, and walk the broad road of the flesh, are not the community and church of Christ. Here neither name nor boasting avails; we must be in Christ, and Christ in us; we must be moved by his Spirit, and in every respect abide in his holy word, otherwise we have no God.

The children of Israel were not saved, although they were of the seed of Abraham, because they walked not in the way of Abraham. Much less we, though we are called after the name of Christ, if we seek not his promise with all our souls, and not sincerely hear and follow, and be obedient to his holy will.

Since it is well known to all the pious, that we and our forefathers, for many centuries, were under the heavy burden, and in the service of Egypt, deceived by the false prophets, never heard the book of the law, the holy city and temple lay waste, and were under the tyranny and dominion of Babylon, as heard above. The merciful Father had compassion on the pressing misery and tribulation of his people, and raised up to us the true Moses, Zerubbabel, Christ Jesus, through his word and Spirit; now then, it

becomes you, O you highly renowned lords and princes, since you and we boast of the same Christ, gospel, redemption and kingdom, that you no longer obstruct by your mandates and powers, the journeying of the people of God to the eternal promised land; but you should favor them more, and prosper their journey by your gracious permission; that you may hear and read with the venerable and pious Josiah, with a broken, meek heart, in the true fear of God, the lost book of the law of Christ, which has been lost for a long time. Rend your hearts and not your garments; for you are not only led off from the true path, but you are so much bewitched by the man of sin, that you persecute the innocent, pious hearts, who in no wise injure you or any one upon earth.

That you would, with king Cyrus, release the poor captive children from the land of Chaldea, who cry and weep at the rivers of Babylon, that they may again possess the spiritual land of Canaan, and build up the spiritual Jerusalem, the altar and the temple in their ancient city, and establish the spiritual priesthood, and practice the spiritual offering and divine service according to the instructions of the word of God, that they may no longer hear and observe the Babylonian laws, namely, the teachings of men and their commandments; but the law of Israel, God's word and righteousness. Some of you, though alas few! are so far taught, through the grace and word of God, that I trust, you know, that neither usages nor councils, neither learning nor sword, nor mandate, can bend or break the word of the Most High, the word of truth, the word of the heavenly witness, the gospel of the kingdom, for other foundation cannot be laid to all eternity, than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 3: 11.

Therefore, wisdom cries, "Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you," Prov. 1: 23.

Love righteousness ye rulers of the land.

"Be wise, now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling," Ps. 2: 10, for the king that honors wisdom shall rule forever.

Do, therefore, with a meek heart, and in

the fear of God, examine these our faithful instructions, and judge by the Spirit and word of Christ, as much as in you is; compare them with the doctrine and lives of the apostles, with the piety, love, customs, actions, misery, cross and sufferings of the primitive church: I hope, by the grace of God, you may plainly comprehend that our doctrine is the infallible doctrine and ground of the Scriptures. Read this our FOUNDATION, together with other books, appended to this, viz: *the book concerning faith and its power; concerning regeneration or the new creature; of the cross, sufferings and persecution of the saints; of excommunication, ban or exclusion, and other tracts, published from time to time*, and you will then find, by the grace of God, that this doctrine is the pure gospel, which the Lord taught by his own mouth, and which his holy apostles preached through the whole world, and by the power of the Spirit testified thereto with life and death. Ours is no new doctrine, as the preachers without truth, pretend and persuade you; but it is the old doctrine, which was preached and practiced in the church, for more than fifteen hundred years, whereby the church was, is, and shall be borne, till the end.

O you high-renowned lords and princes, turn to the truth of God, and receive reproof, and wisdom; for through wisdom, kings reign, and princes decree justice; observe how far your spirit, faith and lives differ from the Lord's Spirit, word and life.

Think you, dear sirs, that you are born to live merely in splendor and magnificence, and to lead a vain, sensual life? That you may freely continue in your licentious and pernicious lusts, and still be Christians? O no, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. 8: 9.

Solomon says, "As a roaring lion, and a raging bear: so is a wicked ruler over the poor people. The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor," Prov. 28: 15. The poet also well knew this, when he says, *Quicquid delirant reges, plectantur Achivi*, i. e., The mischief which kings do, the common people have to pay or atone for: but a wise king disperseth the ungodly.

Therefore, beloved sirs, see well to it; this is that to which you are called, namely: that you are to chastise and punish, in the true fear of God, with all equitable and just discretion, the open evil doers: such as thieves, murderers, sodomites, adulterers, debauchers, menslayers, the violent, fornicators, sorcerers, robbers, &c., that you give each his portion, execute judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, that you are to prevent, by proper means (understand without tyranny and bloodshed), open deceivers, who so miserably lead poor, helpless souls, by hundreds of thousands into destruction, whether they are priests, monks, preachers, baptized or unbaptized; so that they will no longer derogate from the almighty majesty of God, our only and eternal Savior, Christ Jesus, the Holy Ghost, together with the word of grace; nor introduce those ridiculous abuses and idolatry, under semblance of truth, as has been done to this time; and by this means, in all love and earnestness, enlarge, assist and protect, without violence, blood or sword, the kingdom of God, by your gracious permission, wise counsel, pious, unblamable life.

Behold, beloved lords, this is your calling and your incumbent duty: do not domineer so maliciously over the children of God and his word, as alas, many of you evidently do, and as it is customary.

Such rulers were Moses, Joshua, David, Hezekiah, Josaphat, Josiah, Zerubbabel, &c., they faithfully discharged their enjoined duties, conformed to the word of God, protected their subjects with solicitous concern, obeyed the commands of the Lord, abolished the false prophets and the priests of Baal, with their altars, groves and idolatry, and faithfully kept their people and country, to observe the ordinances of the Lord, his laws and divine service as commanded by Moses; they feared God, and had the book of the law to which they conformed, and by which they judged the people; and always remembered the Lord their God, who set them over his people as potentates and rulers.

They feared God with all their hearts, praised his name, and humbled themselves with all their strength, as David did, when he was girded with a linen ephod, and

danced before the ark of the Lord, yea that he was even despised of his wife Michal; but he said, I will play before the Lord, who chose me, and I will be yet more vile than this, in my own sight.

O you highly renowned, noble lords, believe Christ's word, fear the wrath of God, love righteousness, do justice to widows and orphans, judge rightly between man and man, fear no man's highness; despise no man's littleness, hate all avarice, chastise with discretion, suffer the word of God to be taught in liberty, prevent none to walk in the ways of truth; yield to his sceptre who called you to this high charge, and your throne shall be established for ever.

Now as the sceptre of Christ is an upright sceptre, and teaches, judges and corrects every one, without respect to person, I, a poor and unlearned being must lay aside my diffidence, and grow bold in love, whereby I would desire to save your poor souls, and with Samuel reprove Saul, with Abdia reprimand Jeroboam, with Elias chide Ahab, with Isaiah reprehend Hezekiah, with Nathan and Gad rebuke David for their misdeeds and transgressions, and thus proclaim my Lord's Spirit, word and will, who knows but there might be some one that will regard the fidelity and love of his poor minister; hear his well-meaning voice and christian exhortation, and depart from an ungodly and evil way; thus some of the aforementioned kings heard the reproving word of the mouths of the prophets with fear, and reformed, and meekly received the word.

And were it even so, that my faithful service and love, should be rewarded with death, as I have reason to suspect it may happen, because haughty and proud flesh is unwilling to be reprov'd, but uses at all times its evil nature, however, nothing worse can happen me, than did the pious Isaiah of Manasseh; Zechariah of Joaz; Urijah of Jehoiachim, Abimelech and other priests of Saul; John of Herod; Christ of Pilate and of the Scribes; and as it happened to all the apostles and pious witnesses of the whole world.

I do not esteem my life to be better and dearer than the beloved men of God did their lives. I can only be deprived of perishable and mortal flesh, which must once

die, and return to dust, though I should live to be as old as Methuselah; not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my heavenly father; if I lose my life for the sake of Christ and his testimony, and on account of my sincere love for my neighbor, I certainly know, that I will save it in life eternal, therefore, I cannot conceal the truth; but I must testify and reveal it without hypocrisy in the true fear of God, to my beloved lords.

Beloved, noble lords, learn rightly to know yourselves, whence you are, what you are, and what you will be. All of you, one as well as another, be he emperor or king, are from the same seed that we poor and unregarded are, and you came into this sorrowful world as we did, and you are no more than vapor, frail flesh, a withering flower, dust and ashes, as we all are. To-day you are kings and triumph in great and high honor, to-morrow you are laid low, and must be food for serpents and worms.

O Sirs, my beloved sir, humble yourselves; righteous is he who will examine your case, and mighty is he, who will pass judgment upon you; his name is the RULING LORD; he is the Almighty, the holy, the terrible, the high adorable and omnipotent God, who created heaven and earth, and who has in the hands of his strength all majesty, power and dominion. Learn to know him; learn to fear him. Awaken, look out, the time is not far off, when you will hear, "*Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.*" Luke 16: 2.

Therefore, do not hear those who seek fat prebends and a lazy life, they deceive you, they teach you according to the lust of your hearts; they flatter you for the sake of unlawful gain, they preach to you wanton deception according to their own opinion, and not out of the mouth of the Lord: they fatten their bodies, and have fine times, from the fatness of your poor souls (beloved sir, understand rightly what I mean), although they boast much of the gospel; hear them, who are not like the wind-shaken reed, those, who with John and Elias, are not so much frightened by the wilderness of misery, who suffer daily for the truth's sake, love gold and wood alike, who esteem

all things alike, both praise and reproach, riches and poverty, life and death, who seek only the honor of Christ, and the salvation of their beloved brethren, and preach nothing but the pure, unmixed word of God, and seal it, with spirit, power and work, as it is commanded of Christ, and as it is proclaimed and taught through the whole world by his holy apostles.

I repeat it, hearken not, follow not, and believe not the multitude of the learned, who suffer themselves to be called doctors, lords and masters, for they are sensual and bloodthirsty, but seek and follow the faithful in Christ, who are called the curse and filth of the earth, among these you will find Christ's Spirit, truth, power, works and life. You will also, through the grace of God, find how far you and your spirit, faith, baptism, supper, conduct, church and actions are outside of Christ's Spirit, doctrine, commands, prohibition, ordinance and usage.

Say, O you kings and rulers of the land, Where is your faith and love, with their pious nature? Where is the fear of your God? Your lamp and light? Your humble heart, dead unto sin? And your unblamable, godly life, which is out of God? Is it not all world and carnality which you seek and follow? We generally find in your houses and courts nothing but extravagance, pomp and showy clothing, hardness and presumptuousness of heart, insatiable avarice, hatred, envy, backbiting, betraying, whoredom, debauchery, gambling gaming, eating, drinking, dancing, swearing, stabbing, housebreaking, &c. This is your chivalric custom and court conduct during the whole course of your lives; and you never once reflect on the misery, tribulation, humility, love and righteousness in which the Lord of lords, and King of kings, lived before you, what he taught the children of men, and what pattern or example he left them; the affliction and misery of the wretched reach not your ears; the sweat of the poor we find on your houses, and the innocent blood on your hands; you receive gifts and presents to pervert judgment, and you take counsel together against the Lord and his anointed. The prophets of Jezebel, and the priests of Baal, sensualists and flatterers, are much respected with you, they set

upon soft cushions, and live well. But those who with Micah, preach to you adversity and truth, must expect imprisonment, bonds, and death, and are deserving of all disgrace; yea, it has come so far (may God make it better) that where four or five, ten or twenty have met in the name of the Lord, to speak of the word of the Lord, and to do his work, in whose midst Christ is, who fear the Lord with all their heart, and lead an unblamable life before all the world, that if they be apprehended, and complaint brought against them, they must then be devoured by fire, or be destroyed by the sword, or sink into the depths of the waters.

But they who have met in the name of Baal, a meeting of all manner of mischief, who exceed Sodom and Gomorrah far in wickedness, where all manner of inhuman things are carried on between man and man; and between woman and woman; as it is in Spain, in Italy, and in the cloisters, in public brothel-houses, theatres, fencing-schools, and the accursed drunken taverns, where many live in open disgrace, and act so shamefully against God's word. Such live unmolested and at peace.

I do not mention the public assemblies of all manner of idolatry, where the most high, blessed and precious name of God is so miserably blasphemed, the blood of Christ despised, the Holy Ghost grieved, the truth disgraced, lies commended, and poor souls deceived. The blind, ignorant people are not only directed to the holy water, bread, wine and the mass, but also to the dumb idols, of wood and stone, as alas! it may be so extensively witnessed.

O my beloved lords, what are you doing? Where is the sword of righteousness which was given to you, of which you boast? You have to acknowledge that you leave it in the scabbard, and in its stead you have drawn the sword of unrighteousness. Yes, beloved sirs, things are so (God better it), that the prophets write and call with propriety, "Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them; therefore saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel,

Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies," Isa. 1: 23, 24.

"Behold, the princes of Israel, every one is wise in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee have they set light by father and mother; in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger; in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow;" they are like the devouring wolves to shed blood and destroy souls for the sake of their avarice, "Behold, therefore," says the Lord, "I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee," Ezek. 22: 6, 7, 13.

"Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away; so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Therefore, thus saith the Lord: behold against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily; for this time is evil," Micah 2: 1—3.

"Hear, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; Is it not for you to know judgment who hate the good and love the evil? Who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and they break their bones and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them, he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings," Micah 3: 1—4.

"Woe to her that is filthy and polluted to the oppressing city! she obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow; her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law, the just Lord is in the midst thereof; he will not do iniquity; every morning doth he bring his

judgment to light, he faileth not; but the unjust knoweth no shame. I have cut off the nations; their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste, that none passeth by," Zeph. 3: 1—6.

There are but few of you, I fear there is scarcely one, who seeks the Lord with all his heart, fears, loves, and serves him; therefore, will also the fury of God be poured out upon you like water, and the sword of his wrath will come upon you, as may be seen daily in many places; God better it.

The wise man says, "Power is given you of the Lord, and sovereignty from the Highest, who shall try your works and search out your counsels; because being ministers of his kingdom, ye have not judged aright, nor kept the law, nor walked after the counsel of God; horribly and speedily shall he come upon you; for a sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places. For mercy will soon pardon the meanest; but mighty men shall be mightily tormented. For he who is Lord over all shall fear no man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness; for he hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike. But a sore trial shall come upon the mighty," Wis. 6: 3—8.

Therefore, beloved lords, take heed that you rightly execute your responsible and dangerous office according to the will of God; for, alas! I fear that many of you, as yet, have paid but little attention to this matter, and hence it is that anti-christ rises up with his wickedness, and Christ is rejected with his righteousness; lay to heart what is written, "Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked," says the Lord, Exod. 23: 7.

Here I well know that we have to hear of Munster, dominions, polygamy, sword, theft, murder and of the like abominations and disgrace, which, you always assert, result from baptism; and under this pretext you reprove every thing the mouth of the Lord commanded, and what the holy apostles taught and practiced, and for this purpose you cite some seditious sects and factions, that the cry of the learned and your blood-shedding may be sanctioned.

No, my beloved sirs, it will not acquit you in the day of the righteousness of God. I tell you the truth in Christ; notice the rightly baptized disciples of Christ, who are baptized inwardly with Spirit and fire, and externally with water, who are baptized according to the word of God; know of no weapons other than patience, hope, quiet, and God's word. Paul says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5. Our weapons are not weapons with which cities and countries are desolated; walls and gates broken down and human blood shed in torrents like water, but they are weapons with which the spiritual kingdom of the devil is destroyed, and the ungodly passions are annihilated, and the flinty hearts are broken, that have never been sprinkled with the heavenly dew of the holy word. We have and know no other weapons besides, the Lord knows, even if we should be torn into a thousand pieces, and as many false witnesses were to rise against us, as there are spears of grass in the fields, and grains of sand upon the sea shore.

Again, Christ is our fortress; patience our defence; the word of God our sword; and our victory is a candid, firm, unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ. We let those take spears and swords, who, alas, regard human blood and swine's blood alike. He that is wise let him judge what I mean.

We acknowledge, beloved sirs, that some of the false prophets were baptized externally in appearance, with us, with the same baptism; even as thieves, murderers, highway robbers, sorcerers and the like, were baptized with you; but they were not of us; for had they been of us, as John says, they would no doubt have continued with us.

Christ says, "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect; behold, I have told you before," Matt. 24: 24.

This warning of Christ was not given to the ungodly, obdurate despisers, for they are already entangled in the snares of unrighteousness, but is given to the contrite of heart and to the willing souls, so that they may learn to know the Spirit, and not suffer themselves to be led into error; "For the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour," 1 Peter 5: 8.

The craftiness and artifice of the devil, who assumes the appearance of an angel of light, are not known by some, therefore, so many have stumbled and erred, and were led into crooked paths by the deceivers; but this was not through baptism: for the elementary water can neither teach, nor pervert, but it was done through false prophets, of which, I say, we have been so faithfully warned by the mouth of the Lord.

Beloved sirs, fear God, judge rightly; the truth of God can never be changed into seduction and error, through the lies of the devil. O no! the word of our God shall stand forever.

Should the devout angels be unjustly judged, for the sake of Lucifer's arrogance and be punished with his punishment? Or should all the apostles be traitors, for Judas' sake? By no means. Every one shall bear his own burden. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The soul that sinneth *it* shall die," Ezek. 18: 20.

Should we reproach the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, because the father of lies has resuscitated, in the name of Christ, the practice of circumcision as essential to *salvation*? That the dead will not rise in the day of judgment? That Philetus and Hymenius asserted that the resurrection of the dead has already taken place? That some pretended that the great day of the Lord was at hand?

How could the apostle help it, that the Nicolaitans had their wives common, as Eusebius relates? That the Ebionites denied the deity of Christ, and taught that Christ began only to exist in Mary? And that the Corinthians maintained, that the world was created by angels; that Christ was no more than a mere man, and had not yet risen, but shall rise with us in future, and

that he would reign one thousand years in the flesh with his saints?

All these sects arose in the days of the apostles, nevertheless the gospel of Christ remained the true gospel, the doctrines of the apostles, the true doctrine.

The Scriptures teach that we are to flee from, and avoid such leaders of sects and heretics; and we hope to obey willingly the injunction all the days of our lives.

Therefore, my beloved sirs, pass an impartial and rational judgment in this matter, as before God, who will judge you in the great day; this we ask of you for Jesus' sake; for we seek nothing else upon earth (the Lord knows), than the true foundation of the truth, the praise of Christ, the obedience of his word, and that with a good conscience, as we testify to the whole world, with our writings, word, possessions, blood, life and death.

We also write the truth in Christ and lie not, that spiritually, we acknowledge no king, neither in heaven above nor upon earth beneath, than the only, eternal and true king, spiritual David, Christ Jesus, who is Lord of lords, and King of kings.

And if there is one who will declare himself king in the kingdom and dominion of Christ, as did John von Leyden, of Munster, he shall not go unpunished with Adonijah, 1 Kings 1, for the true Solomon, Christ Jesus himself, must possess the kingdom, and sit eternally upon the throne of David.

But, according to the flesh, we teach and exhort to be obedient to the emperor, king, lords and princes, yea, to all in authority, in all their transactions and civil regulations, so far as they are not contrary to the word of God, Rom. 13: 1—3.

We teach and confess that we know of no sword, nor commotion in the kingdom or church of Christ, other than the sharp sword of the Spirit, God's word, as is abundantly shown in our writings, which is sharper and more piercing than any two-edged sword, and it proceeds from the mouth of the Lord, whereby we make the father at variance against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother, and daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law. But the

sword of worldly policy we leave with those to whom it is committed. Let every one be careful and not take the sword, lest he shall perish with the sword, Matt. 26: 52.

We acknowledge, teach, and approve of no other matrimony than that one, which Christ and his apostles publicly and plainly taught in the New Testament, namely, one man and one woman, Matt. 19: 4, and that they may not be divorced except in case of adultery, Matt. 5: 32, for the two are one flesh, but if the unbelieving depart, a sister or brother is not under bondage in that case, 1 Cor. 7: 15.

We acknowledge, teach and seek no other kingdom than that of Christ, which shall endure for ever, in which there is no pomp, splendor, gold, silver, meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; we confess with Christ, that our kingdom is not of this world: we brought nothing into this world, therefore, it is evident we can not take any thing out of it, as the Scriptures say, 1 Tim. 6: 7.

We know of no murdering, much less do we teach or permit it; for we truly believe that a murderer has neither lot nor part in the kingdom of God, Gal. 5: 21. O beloved sirs, how should we desire the blood of any man, since we have to die daily for man's sake? The Lord who created us knows that we seek nothing, but that we might instruct, and be a pattern to all the world, with our doctrine, life, blood and death, that they might reflect, awaken, repent and be saved, for this is the nature of pure love to pray for persecutors, to render good for evil, to love the enemy, to heap coals of fire upon the head; and let him avenge who judges rightly, Rom. 12: 20.

We know of no theft, much less do we teach or permit it, but we are ready before God and man, with all our hearts, to bestow our possessions, gold, and all that we have, however little it may be, and in addition thereto our sweat and labor, to meet the necessities of the poor, as the Spirit and word of the Lord, and true brotherly love teach us. We well know that theft is expressly forbidden in the Scriptures, Eph. 4: 28, and that it will be punished by death*

* In some countries theft was formerly punished by death.

according to the laws of the land, and if not repented of, with eternal death according to the word of God.

The Almighty merciful Lord, through his paternal grace, Spirit and power, will undoubtedly keep and preserve, inoffensive to the end of the world, all the pious, god-fearing, and faithful who acknowledge him, and are sincere, from all such terrible errors and ungodly abominations.

And should it be the case, that one remained among us who uses violence (which is quite unknown to me), and would do that which is from the devil, my beloved sirs, know you that such an one was not of us from the beginning, and will for ever not be of us, except he be thoroughly converted, repent sincerely, and become one with the Spirit, doctrine and example of Christ, as the Scriptures teach. May the gracious Lord grant that they may awaken, overcome their drowsiness, learn to know their works, see their nakedness, and be extricated from the snares of the devil, by which the poor, miserable people are so lamentably led captive at his will.

Therefore, beloved lords, beware that you be not, in judging faith, like the reckless and senseless, who persist without any knowledge of the matter, in their own opinion and wantonness, like irrational creatures, upbraid the good, and praise the evil, persecute and condemn what they understand not. Again, I say, be not like those blood-thirsty, raging and malicious men; but examine the Scriptures with trembling, with Solomon pray for wisdom, look to the Spirit, word, doings and example of Christ, and pass an impartial righteous sentence, according to the truth, as it is enjoined upon, and commanded unto all the princes and judges in the Scriptures, as is heard.

O beloved sirs, take heed. If our faith, doctrine, sacraments, transactions and doings are not of God, as we are every where slandered, then are we the most miserable of all men upon earth; if whilst we are to be every one's deceiver, heretic, anabaptist, knave, footstool and prey; have to endure the stocks, gallows, wheels, sword, water, fire, and all manner of misery; our poor souls must nevertheless be the property of

the devil, and brands of hell, although in our weakness we so cordially seek the Lord, and are so sincere, as may be seen. O no! my beloved sirs, no; the Spirit, doctrine and life of Christ will not deceive us; for his word is truth, and his commands eternal life. The promises of God stand sure and immovable; and they will not fail to the pious.

Therefore, we pray and admonish you, yea, we counsel and desire that you would contrast our seeking with your seeking; our spirit with your spirit; our doctrine with the doctrine of the learned; our conduct with your conduct; our poverty with your riches; our rejection and reproach with your seeking of honor; our affliction and tribulation with your voluptuousness and luxurious living; our patience with your tyranny; our hard bonds and reproachful death, with your ungracious fury and unmerciful fierceness. I speak of the guilty; if you should then find that your doctrine, faith, life, seeking and doings are more in accordance with the Spirit, word and life of the Lord, and are better than ours, then instruct us with a paternal spirit; we will willingly hear it, and be obedient, for we do desire to obey the truth unto death.

But if you can not reprove us by the Scriptures, and see that our doctrine is the best, it would then be heathenish, ungodly and tyrannical, to force us out of life into death, thrust us from heaven into hell, by the sword and violence; this you will have to acknowledge and confess. But I am afraid, so much discretion will not be manifested to us wretched children, that the matter be weighed in the balance of the holy word, and determined by the plummet of Christ. But the upbraiding, betraying and tumult of the priests and your unmerciful edicts must be our scriptures; and your rackers, hangmen, wrath, torturing, water, stocks, fire and sword, O God, of which we, grieved children, hear in many places, must be our instructors, which we at last must pay with our possessions and blood. Beloved lords, with christian discretion, love and friendship, reflect upon this how it agrees with the Spirit, doctrine and life of Christ? We well know that all bloody preachers who teach and advise such things, and all

the rulers who practice and uphold the same, are not the disciples of Christ; the hour in which you shall have to render accounts, when you depart this life, will teach you this truth. It can never be, says Cyprian, that such lion-like fury and lupine ferocity should dwell in the heart of a Christian. O how good it would be for some of you, yea, how good it would be if you had never been born; for there are so many of you who neither regard law nor gospel, heaven nor hell, God nor the devil; but the evil flesh will follow its propensity.

Think you, beloved sirs, that the Almighty God and Lord, who holds the heavens and the earth in the hollow of his hand, who kills and makes alive, the ruling Lord over all, who upholds all by the word of his power, who creates and destroys, the consuming fire, before whose presence the hills melted like wax, Ps. 97: 5, that he will yield and give away to sensual minds and earthly hearts? No! no, before him the great and small are alike; the rich and the poor; the strong and the weak; the learned and unlearned; the wise and the foolish, are all alike. He is no respecter of persons, all who fear him not, and conform not to his counsel, doctrine, Spirit and example, be he emperor, king, doctor, or licentiate, he must suffer eternal punishment and be under his judgment and wrath.

Beloved sirs, fear God, do right, learn wisdom and truth, cleanse your hands, which are wet and imbrued in innocent blood, and reflect how the righteous God will punish in due time, all unrighteousness, malice and violence; and how severely he ever did, and will avenge and require the innocent blood, torture and death of his saints, of those blood-thirsty tyrants.

The blood-thirsty Cain had to be an accursed vagabond and exile in the land all the days of his life, because he so miserably murdered his innocent brother Abel.

The unmerciful, arrogant murderer, Pharaoh, with his whole host, was destroyed in the Red sea, by the righteous judgment of God, on account of his tyranny and cruelty, which he exercised towards the children of Jacob, God's people.

Joash was slain by his own servants to

avenge the innocent blood of Zachariah, whom he slew between the temple and the altar, 2 Kings 12; 2 Chron. 24: 20—22.

Manasseh was led captive on account of his great abomination and idolatry which he practiced; and on account of the innocent blood with which he filled Jerusalem, 2 Chron. 33: 1—18.

Ahab was shot through with an arrow, and his blood was licked up by the dogs at the waters of Samaria, 1 Kings 22: 34—38, and his wife Jezebel was thrust out of the window, and was trodden under foot of horses, and her flesh was eaten of dogs, 2 Kings 9: 33, to punish her for her ungodly deed, and the blood of Naboth, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah, the Tishbite.

Sennacherib must leave Jerusalem with disgrace, on account of his slanderously pompous words, by which he blasphemed the Most High. The angel of the Lord slew, in one night, one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in his camp, and he was thrust through with the sword by his own children, in the temple of his idol, Nisroch, 2 Kings 19: 35, 37.

Nebuchadnezzar, on account of his pride, was rejected by the people, for the space of seven times, or years, his dwelling was with the irrational creatures, he ate grass like oxen, his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws, Dan. 4: 32, 33.

Belshazzar caroused with his mighty men, princes, wives and concubines; they were merry, drank out of the holy vessels which Nebuchadnezzar, his father, had plundered out of the temple at Jerusalem; and being in full glee and joy, praising their gods of gold, silver, brass, iron, and of stone, the impenitent and obdurate tyrant was punished of God without mercy, that he, the same night was deprived of his dominion, nation, body and life, Dan. 5: 23, 30.

Antiochus, the Great, a king and prince of all wickedness, a tyrant of tyrants was punished of God with such a plague, that worms crept from his bowels when yet alive, and pieces of flesh fell from his body, and the stench was so intolerable, that no one

could endure it, yea, he himself could not abide his own smell. The righteous wrath of God laid hold upon this ungodly miscreant, and he had thus, under unheard of pain and sufferings, to end his proud, blood-thirsty, unrighteous life, and depart from this world, 2 Macc. 9: 9—12.

Herod, arrayed in his royal attire, seated upon his throne, through the flattering applause of his people, on account of his eloquence and wisdom, exalted himself against God, in his heart, and in that very hour he was smitten by the angel of the Lord, was eaten of worms, and, according to the writings of Eusebius, departed this life in such a way that all the proud, haughty tyrants may look at themselves in the case of Herod, as in a mirror, and fear.

In short, as it happened to Pilate, Nero, Domitian, Maximinus, Diocletian, and generally to all malicious, blood-thirsty tyrants, and what kind of death they generally died, who rose up against Christ and his saints, may be read both in sacred and profane history.

What kind of death and with what conscience some of these blood-guilty of our day, departed this life, I will not write for certain reasons; I will nevertheless say this much, that neither emperor nor edicts, upon which they relied all the days of their lives, could neither quiet nor pacify them in the hour of their death, but oftentimes were troubled in their hearts, and with lamentations, painfully bewailed the innocent blood, which they shed in the emperor's name, and said, O we poor, miserable men, what will become of us?

O God, what counsel? Beloved sirs, what counsel shall be given you? How will your poor souls fare, in the day, "In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up?" 2 Peter 3: 10, when we must all appear before the judgment seat, and stand before the impartial judge? when every one shall be rewarded according to his works? he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep, "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb. 10: 37.

Therefore, desist from touching the apple of the Lord's eye; for he that touches his saints, touches the apple of his eye. Take pity on your own souls, which must suffer for it with eternal death, if you do not turn to God with all your heart, and no longer shed the blood of the innocent; for they daily call to him, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Rev. 6: 10, they call, I say, and their cries are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, avenging he will avenge, and the blood of his servants he will require at your hands.

Do not excuse yourselves, beloved sirs, and judges, that you are the servants of the emperor; this will not acquit you in the day of vengeance. It availed Pilate nothing that he crucified Christ in the name of the emperor. Serve the emperor in imperial matters, so far as Scripture permits, and serve God in divine matters, then you may claim his grace and call yourselves after his name.

Do not interfere with the right and kingdom of Christ; for he alone is the Ruler of the conscience, and beside him there is none other, let him be your emperor, and his holy word your edict, in this matter; and you will soon be satiated with raging and murder. You must heed God before the emperor, and obey God's word before the word of the emperor, if not, then you are the judges of whom it is written in Micah, They all lie in wait for blood; they hunt every man his brother with a net. "That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; the day of thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh; now shall be their perplexity," Micah 7: 2—4.

Therefore, fight no longer against the lamb and his chosen, it will be hard for you to kick against the pricks.

But you will, with all scoffers, say in your hearts, when is the promise of his coming? O beloved sirs, do pay attention, we have

known so many who have made as ostentatious a display as you, in silk and velvet, with gold and silver, and sat in exalted seats, and passed sentence upon innocent blood, but now they are no more; we inquire for their places, and they are not to be found.

The day will usher in as lightning, and the hour shall come upon them like a tempest; beware and reform. We see that the tree buds, that the summer is nigh at hand, and our Redeemer is hastening, who redeems all the troubled souls from their afflictions, and he will recompense all proud scoffers according to their demerits.

Yea, the day is coming, and is not far off, when "the righteous man shall 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 have we 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 there 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 those things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by," Wis. 5: 1—9.

Then will the terrible, intolerable judgment pass upon all who know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be adored by all them that believe. Then the wicked will hear, "Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. 25: 41.

Then shall your laughter be changed into weeping, your joy into sorrow, your sumptuous, temporal lives into everlasting death, your luxury into everlasting woe, your pride into dust and worms, your violence into suffering, your pomp into stench, and your cruel and unmerciful tyranny be retributed with unquenchable hell-fire.

My beloved sirs, with him nothing will be concealed or forgotten. He is the judge that searches the hearts and tries the reins, who penetrates the heights of heaven and the depth of the abyss, and the length of the earth, who will not only judge and punish evil works, and every idle word, but also every unclean, carnal thought.

O dear Lord! O Lord of lords! where then will be the emperor and his edicts, the false prophets, and their deceiving doctrine? Then they will howl and weep, and cry in anguish of soul, O ye mountains fall upon us, ye rocks hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Then, there you will see, that it was nought but lies and wind with which you comforted yourselves, as said, Rev. 6: 16.

Beloved lords, awaken! It is yet to-day; do not boast because you are of the royal family, and are called gracious lords, for it is but smoke, dust and pride; but boast and rejoice when you are born of God, when you become a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light," 1 Pet. 2: 9.

Boast not that you are mighty upon earth, and have great power, but boast rather that you rule your land in the true fear of God, with virtue, wisdom and righteousness, to the praise of the Lord.

Boast not that you can subdue lords, princes, cities and countries; but boast if you subdue your earthly mind and can overcome carnal temptations by the power of faith, and die to ungodliness, and triumph through Christ, and be taken in the kingdom of glory, with all the pious soldiers of God, and receive the promised crown at the hand of the Lord, for if you be

such kings, then you are not only kings according to the flesh, but also according to the Spirit; those who love the prince of all kings, who are cleansed of sin by his blood, who have made God and his father their kings and priests, those reign and conquer with all the children of God, the world, flesh, blood, sin, death, devil, false doctrine, and the infernal gates; they rejoice not because their names are enrolled in the register of the kings of this world: but they rejoice because their names are written in the book of life, in heaven.

O you high-renowned noble lords and princes, O that you would in all love and meekness receive this simple, plain, but true instruction of your poor servant, and not despise it, whereby I have so fully, and with a good heart, admonished all your worthy highnesses.

Look not upon my weakness nor to my little understanding, but look to the Spirit, word and example of Christ, which I have recommended and taught in sincerity of heart to you and to all men, according to my weak abilities.

Do sincerely repent, so that you stand before God; wail and weep with David; put on sackcloth and raiments of hair; scatter ashes upon your heads; humble yourselves with the king of Nineveh; confess your faults with Manasseh; die unto your ambitious flesh and pride; fear the Lord, your God, with all your powers; judge in all wisdom with fear and trembling; help the oppressed; grieve not the distressed; promote the just cause of the widows and orphans; protect the good; punish the evil in a christian manner; discharge the duties of your offices properly; seek the kingdom and country that will endure forever; and reflect that you, however highly esteemed, upon earth are only pilgrims and sojourners in a strange land.

Obey, believe, fear, love, serve and follow your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for he it is before whom every knee shall bow; he is the eternal word, wisdom, truth and Son of God. Seek his honor and praise in all your thoughts, words and actions, and you shall reign in eternity.