
FAITH OF THE SINFUL WOMAN.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Every one makes an ostentatious display;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The sinful woman sought the company of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

CONCLUSION.

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

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

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

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

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