
FAITH OF THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

Matthew writes that Jesus was in the land of Gennesaret, and says, "Then Jesus went thence and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil; but he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us; but he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to

take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs; and she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said to her, *O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* And her daughter was made whole from that very hour," Matt. 15: 21—28.

Here you again have a fine example and pattern of a sincere, christian faith; for when this woman perceived how powerfully Jesus preached grace, and hearing besides that he could do what he desired, that he manifested love and mercy, and that he sent none away comfortless, she unhesitatingly

approached him, not doubting his grace, mercy, love and power, although she was not heard at the first or second request. She was importunate both in her faith and prayer, with such a desire that she might partake of the spiritual crumb of his mercy, and obtain relief for her poor daughter. Yea, she manifested such a faith, constancy, humility and piety, that the Lord said to her, "*O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*"

Faithful reader, observe; were we with spiritual eyes rightly to look upon this woman's faith and fruits, we would be aptly taught of her, especially in two particulars.

For, as soon as she heard that the Lord taught pure mercy, grace, repentance and reformation, preached the kingdom of God, raised the dead, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the cripples walk, the leprous clean, healed the sick, and cast out unclean spirits; that he reproved the scribes, pharisees and the common people, for their unbelief, perverseness, blind hypocrisy and carnal lives, and testified that he was the prophet and Messiah, promised in the law and the prophets, whereby his fame spread abroad through all Judea and the adjacent countries; hearing all this, her tender heart and mind were so turned to him, through such testimonies, miracles, doctrines and deeds of love, that she did not doubt his mercy, power, goodness and grace; she therefore, went to him with a sincere desire, in sure and true faith, trusting with all her heart, that he would not deny her humble prayer, but that he would graciously hear and grant it; and she also obtained what she desired.

She heard and believed; she saw and confessed. But these insane people imagine that they are christians, but are, according to my understanding, greater disbelievers, blinder, more hardened and worse than Turks, Tartars, or any of the heathens. Their works testify that I write the truth; and they cannot be moved to hear, or obey the truth by godly means and services; neither by doctrine nor exhortation, neither by the unblamable lives nor the innocent blood of saints, which is daily shed before their eyes, as has been mentioned before, when treating of the *faith of the murderer*.

The movement and doctrine of the holy divine word, we have had in Germany a number of years, and have it yet daily more abundantly, in such power and clearness, that they may plainly see that it is the finger and work of the Lord. For the haughty are humbled, the avaricious are made kind, the drunkards become sober, the unchaste made pure, &c., and dare not indulge in a single thought, or word, or act contrary to the will, word and Spirit of the Lord, and they receive it with such an affection, that they do not fear to forsake father, mother, husband, wife, children and possessions, nay willingly suffer death on account of it. For many of them are burned, drowned, killed with the sword, apprehended, exiled, and their property confiscated; yet all this avails nothing with these obdurate people. If it is but reported (when an innocent sheep has been slaughtered), that he was an anabaptist, it is sufficient; they never inquire what he professed and what scriptural grounds he had; what his conduct and life were, whether he injured any one, or not. Neither do they reflect, that it must be a special power and work which restrains one wholly from drunkenness, lasciviousness, pomp and pride, from all vanity, abominable lying, carnal life and from all idolatry; and constrains him to all sobriety, chastity, meekness, piety, truth, and the true worship, on account of which, we have to hear all manner of disgrace, and to endure persecution and misery, and so often endure the loss of life, as you may see.

If a thief is led to the gallows or a murderer is broken upon the wheel, or if a malefactor is punished with death every one inquires what he has done. He is not sentenced by the judges as long as they do not understand fully the ground and truth of his evil deed; but if an innocent, contrite christian, whom the gracious Lord has rescued from the evil, ungodly ways of sin, and placed in the way of his peace, is accused by the priests and preachers, and placed before the judges they deem him unworthy of an impartial examination, in relation to what reasons or Scriptures move him that he will not hear his priests and preachers, nor have his children baptized, nor attend their service, nor longer eat and

drink with them, and serve the devil. Nor do they desire to know why he reformed his life and received the baptism of Christ, or what urges him that he willingly suffers or even would die for his faith. They only ask, *Is he baptized?* If he answers in the affirmative, the sentence is fixed, that he must die.

All who see or hear such miracles of Almighty God that such poor, unlearned men, yea, sometimes, poor, feeble women, or girls, are so fortified in God that they fear neither judge nor executioner; that neither fire nor water, neither halter nor sword, neither life nor death can deter them from their faith. These persecutors do not inquire what they did, whether they are traitors to their country or city, whether they have taken the property of others, or disgraced some one's daughter or wife; or whether they did any thing, not in accordance with the word of God, with common honesty and natural probity? O no! So much discretion and love are not to be found. If they only have the word of the Lord, and believe it and fully obey his commands and ordinances, and gladly regulate their poor, weak lives by the truth; then they are called rebels by the lords; heretics by the learned; and are adjudged by the common people as well deserving such cruel punishments and disgraceful death. Behold, thus has the murderous, blood-thirsty devil deceived the whole world, through his priests and preachers; yea, that I fear, scarcely one is to be found among a hundred thousand, who will lay to heart such a strong faith, obedience, frankness, power, great suffering and ignominious death, so that he would once reflect upon his abominable unbelief, disgraceful wickedness and presumptuous, carnal life, or doubt the doctrine of his teachers, sacraments, their lives and worship. How truly did the prophet say, "The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart," Isa. 57: 1. There cannot be found beneath the wide canopy of heaven, a more hardened unbelief, more perverse, scornful, obdurate wickedness, more accursed madness, more execrated ungodliness, or a worse state of things than that which is related.

If there is a report of war and warriors, the whole land is in dismay, great and

small, citizens and peasants; defensive armor is provided; they watch and make ready for defense as much as possible. Or if they hear of famine or pestilence, then all tremble, who have come to years of understanding. And, if on the contrary, there is a time of tranquillity, peace, prosperity and weal, then all who hear it, rejoice. But *now*, the trumpets of the Lord Jesus Christ are blowing, and the drums are beating; warning us to tender love, through all his apostles and prophets, to shun the crafty wiles and subtle assaults of satan, and that all who follow and are obedient to him, must die. However, but few are to be found who put on the armor of God; but few who are guarding against the secret encroachments of satan, and preparing to resist him. Both men and women, voluntarily run into his hands and eagerly do the things which delight him; and those who do not, have to await great tribulation and much misery.

Besides, it is manifest that the abominable pestilence of false doctrine will destroy the whole world. The bread of life, which is provided for all the spiritual hungry, is very scarce, in consequence of the envious cry and false writings of the serpent-like preachers; and alas, there are few who weep and sigh on this account.

The eternal grace, mercy, favor, glory, kingdom and joy of Christ are offered unto us. But our ears have waxed dull, our hearts become hardened, and our perverted wickedness, desire them not. But this pious woman did not so; she heard, believed, saw his miracles and confessed his power; and therefore, prayed with confidence and obtained what she desired, for she believed Christ with all her heart and doubted not his grace.

In the second place, she admonishes all pious parents, that they should be solicitous for the salvation of their children, because she so faithfully entreated for her demoniac daughter, not desisting till she was heard. For it cannot be otherwise, that if I am a true christian, all my work before God and my neighbor, are works of love, for God (by whose word a christian is born), says John, *is love*. That the Father and those who are born of him, are alike, of one mind and heart, is as clear as day-light.

If I seek the praise of the Lord with all my heart, and desire the salvation of my neighbors, many of whom I have never seen; how much more should I desire the salvation of my children, whom God gave me, who are out of my loins, and are naturally my flesh and blood? So that the mighty Lord may be praised and be eternally honored by them.

What I write, I consider unquestionably true; I write it from a true testimony of my own conscience, as before Almighty God, before whom I am, that all true, believing parents are thus minded towards their children, that they would far sooner see them set in a dungeon for the sake of the word of the Lord and his testimony, than be with the deceiving priests, in their idolatrous churches, or with drunken, erroneous interpreters in taverns, or in company with scorn-ers, who despise the name of the Lord, and hate his holy word.

Sooner far would they see them, for the sake of the truth of the Lord, bound hands and feet, and dragged before lords and princes, than to see them marry rich persons, who fear not God, neither walk in the ways of the Lord, but pass away time in splendor, with music, in excessive drinking, dancing and singing; sooner far would they see them scourged from head to feet, for the sake of the glory and holy name of the Lord, than to see them adorn themselves with silks, velvets, gold, silver, costly, striped and fashionable clothes, and the like vanity, pomp and haughtiness. Yea, far sooner would they see them exiled, burned at the stake, drowned, or placed on the wheel, for righteousness' sake, than see them live out of God, in all earthly and carnal lusts, than to be emperors and kings, and then be damned.

Woe to all, yea woe to all those who are not solicitous for the salvation of their children. If I so love their bodies that I overlook their sins; if I do not punish the transgressions of the young with the rod, and reprove the aged with words; if I do not teach them the ways of the Lord; if I do not set them an unblamable example; if I do not direct them at all times to Christ and his word, ordinances, commands and ex-ample, and do not seek their salvation with

all my heart and soul, then I will not escape my punishment, for in the day of the Lord, their souls, blood, damnation and death will be required at my hands, as a dumb and blind watchman.

Christianity plainly teaches us that all christian parents should be as sharp, saturating salt, a shining light, and as unblamable, faithful teachers in their houses. The high priest, Eli, was punished because he did not zealously reprove his children.

If I see my neighbor's ox or ass go astray, I must bring him to the owner, or keep him safe, as Moses teaches. If it becomes me thus to do with another's animal, how much more solicitous should I be for the souls of my children, who are so readily misled by the youthful flesh, in which no good dwells.

If I see my neighbor's ox or ass, fallen in a pit, or meet him on the way lying under the weight of a burden, I must not leave him till he is extricated, how much more should I be solicitous for my children, whom I have before me, that they lie not under the burden of their sins; and if they are not earnestly reproved and instructed in grace, they will fall into the infernal abyss of eternal death.

Again, if I see my neighbor's house on fire, and his goods perishing, it is reasonable that I should exert myself to put out the fire, and if possible, to save the goods; but it is much more reasonable, that I extinguish the fire of base desires in my child, with the water of the divine word, and preserve, as much as is in my power, the heavenly goods.

The Holy Scriptures teach, that God purifies the heart by faith; that faith comes by hearing; and by faith we are justified. Therefore, let every one take heed, who truly loves his children, that he rightly and purely instruct them, as soon as they can hear and understand the word of the Lord: that he lead them in the ways of truth, and that he zealously watch over all their doings, that they may from youth, learn to know the Lord, their God, fear, love, honor, thank and serve him; so that the inborn nature of sin may not rule in them nor conquer them, to the everlasting shame of their poor souls.

Moses taught Israel saying, "These words,

which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates;" "that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth," Deut. 6: 6—9; 11: 21.

In another place he says, "And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, what is this? That thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand, the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage," Exod. 13: 14.

Joshua commanded Israel, according to the command of the Lord, and said unto the twelve men, "Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, that this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then, ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever," Joshua 4: 5—7.

Behold, dear reader, thus the Israelites were obliged to teach their children from youth, and to acquaint them with all the blessings and miracles of the Lord, which had been bestowed on them and their fathers, so that they might fear, love and serve the Lord all their days, and thus receive the blessing, and escape the curse which was included in the law.

In like manner with us, if we rightly confess Christ, we believe his word, and we and our children desire to obtain the happy fields and pleasant land, and eternally inherit the grace which he has promised his children; therefore, let us not neglect it, but

lay it well to heart, that we teach our children rightly in the word, and instruct them in relation to his righteous judgments, so that they will learn to fear the Lord with all their heart, and turn from evil.

Let us also keep before them God's unbounded mercy, love, and services of his grace, so that they may love him and walk in his statutes. Let us imprint on their hearts, Jesus Christ, our only and eternal Savior, with his Holy Spirit, word and example, so that they may rightly know him and follow in his footsteps; and let us set them an example in all wisdom, righteousness and truth; with a pious and virtuous life, so that they may, through such discreet admonition and unblamable example of their pious parents, be instructed in the kingdom of God and trained to all manner of good.

For all who have such a faith as this woman had, and see that the end of sin is death, will not cease to sigh and lament to God, that he would, in mercy, assist their poor children to so resist the impure spirit of the devil that he may not lead them captive at his evil will, to the eternal shame and disgrace of their poor souls.

But that they may, from their youth, rightly learn to know the immortal, eternal God and Father, through Jesus Christ his beloved Son, and in truth serve and submit to his cross; and recount all the mighty works and miracles of the Lord our God, the great mercy, grace, favor and love of the Almighty Father, his blessed word, will, ordinance and life, with all the merits, power and fruit of the death and blood of Christ his blessed Son; also the munificence, wisdom, truth and the gifts of his eternal and Holy Spirit, this to their children, and children's children, and all their descendants, till the Lord Jesus Christ appear in the glorious majesty of his heavenly Father in the clouds of heaven, to the final judging, and where every one will be rewarded according to his works, be they good or evil, 2 Cor. 5: 10.

Behold, worthy reader, thus it behooves true christians to teach, admonish, reprove, and correct their children, to set them an example in all righteousness, raise them in the fear of the Lord, be solicitous for their

poor souls, lest they through their negligence, depart from the true path, die in their sins and finally perish in their unbelief.

The Lord spoke of Abraham and said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment," Gen. 18: 17—19.

Pious Tobit taught his son and said, My son, obey thy father, serve the Lord in truth and be just, and this teach to thy children, that they give alms, always fear God, love him, and confide in him with all their heart.

And when they attain the age of maturity, and have not the power to refrain (but he that has, him I would advise with Paul, that he use it to the Lord), let them not marry to those out of Christ and his church, be they noble, rich, or handsome, as do the proud, avaricious and unchaste of this world; but let them marry those who fear, love, seek, honor, follow and serve the Lord with the whole heart; be they noble or ignoble, rich or poor, comely or uncomely, for they are holy and children of saints, and therefore, it is of the Lord, and must be done in his name.

Let every one beware and do right, lest the wrath and fearful judgments of God be inflicted upon him on account of his lewdness and evil desires, even as the judgments, in the days of Noah and Lot, were inflicted, Gen. 6.

But, alas! how few there are who take this to heart, and sincerely seek the salvation of their children. If they can but provide for them temporally, then their desires are gratified. The priests' ordinances, and church services alone are their faith, hope, and the foundation of their salvation; they neither know nor seek any other.

Their whole life from beginning to end is contrary to the word of Christ. For as soon as they are born they are carried to the idolatrous, false bath (baptism); the holy name of the Lord is mispronounced over them; they are raised in all vanity and blindness, in pomp and splendor, in open

idolatry and false worship, and in the ignorant, unrestrained life of the world.

In and out of their houses they hear and see nothing but unrighteousness, malice, lying, defrauding, cursing, swearing, infidelity, avarice, quarreling, fighting, intoxication, whoring, and all manner of disgrace. They never learn to know Christ and his word, but they hate the truth and persecute righteousness. In short, they show by their actions that they are full of the evil, unclean spirit, and are led by his will, as may be seen.

For as your spirit is, so must also your fruits be. Is the Spirit of Christ in you, which is holy and pure, then are also your whole life and fruit pure and holy. Again, if the spirit of the evil one is in you, then all your ways and fruits will be evil and impure. This is incontrovertible.

Therefore, says Paul, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." Again, those who are led by the spirit of the evil one, are the sons of the devil. Dear reader, reflect well upon this. Yea, if these poor people had but a spark of the Spirit of the Lord, they would a thousand times sooner be seethed in boiling oil, and burned with fire, then hear and see such foolishness, ungodliness and wantonness in their children, much less would they teach them or set them an example in such things. For it is incontrovertible, according to the power of the Scriptures, if they do not be partakers of Christ, that their end will be eternal death.

Therefore, all you who fear the Lord, love your children with divine love, seek their salvation with all your hearts, even as Abraham, Tobit, and the Maccabean mother did. If they transgress, reprove them sharply; if they err, exhort them parentally; if they are child-like, bear them patiently; if they are of good understanding, instruct them christian-like; dedicate them to the Lord from youth; watch over their souls as long as they are under your care; so that you will not lose your salvation on their account; pray without ceasing, like this pious woman did, that the Lord may grant them his grace, that they may resist the devil, subdue their natural depravity by the Spirit and help of the Lord, and walk from their youth up be-

fore God and his church, in all righteousness, truth and wisdom, in a firm and sure faith, in unfeigned love and living hope, in an honorable and holy life, unblamable and without offence, abound in the fruits of faith, unto eternal life, Amen.

In addition to all the aforementioned examples, the diligent reader may also, with a pious and good conscience (mind) seriously reflect upon the faith of the immaculate, glorious mother Mary, of Matthew, of the aged Simeon and Hannah; also of the blind man (Luke 1; Matt. 9; Luke 2: 15, 18; Mark 10), and such like more; and I trust that he will, by the help and grace of God, fully understand how simple, plain, unfeigned, pious, righteous, forbearing, ardent, peaceable, joyous, merciful, amiable, ameliorating, modest, moral, humble, zealous, unblamable and pious a true, regenerating, christian faith is inwardly in power, before God, and outwardly in fruits, before one's neighbor.

Yea, even as a good, fruitful tree, of its own accord, without any compulsion, always brings forth its own good fruits, so also a true christian faith must bring forth its own good fruits. For it is infallible, the righteous must live by faith.

If Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and Samuel, with all the patriarchs and prophets believed the word of the Lord, which was declared to them by angels, or were found so faithful therein, how much more should we believe and be faithful to that word which the Prince of angels, God's only begotten Son, the true witness and Teacher of righteousness, Christ Jesus, who came from the high heavens, from his Father's bosom, brought down and taught on earth.

It will not suffice to say, That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he fulfilled the law for us, that he paid for our sins with his blood, and made reconciliation with the Father, by his offering and death; neither will it suffice to only believe that his gospel is true, his word is right, the wages of sin is death, and that grace is eternal life; but the heart must rightly comprehend it, and the mind must be resolved upon it, otherwise it will not justify. Paul says, "With

the heart man believeth unto righteousness," Rom. 10: 10.

All who believe with their whole hearts, that Christ Jesus is the righteous Branch of David, the righteous, wise King; the true, promised Prophet; the right Way and Truth, and our only Propitiator, Intercessor, Mediator and High Priest, Jer. 22: 5, also believe that all his words are immutable and true; and his offering sufficient and perfect; they, therefore, obey his word, walk in his commands, bow to his sceptre and pacify their consciences by his grace, reconciliation, merits, offering, promises, death and blood. They believe and acknowledge, if they neglect his word and will, and presumptuously transgress his commands, and live according to the flesh, that God will require it at their hands and punish them eternally, with the fire of his wrath, through his righteous judgment. For if those who wilfully transgressed the Mosaic law, were to die without mercy, upon the testimony of two or three witnesses, how much sorer then will those be punished, who trample under foot the Son of God; who esteem the pure blood of the New Testament as impure, and profane the Holy Spirit of grace? Heb. 10: 28.

Yes, kind reader, if we truly believed, and acknowledged it from the inmost of our souls, it would so move our hearts, and enkindle them with the fear and love of the Lord, that although all the tyrants that ever were, would rise in all their dread torture, and blood shedding, and stand before us, they would not in the least deter or hinder us from the word and way of the Lord. Besides, all our impure, carnal thoughts, unseasoned words, and useless, ungodly works would soon die, as Sirach says, "The fear of the Lord driveth away sins," Eccl. 1: 21; and it is impossible, without the fear of the Lord, to become right.

Seeing then, it is very evident, that a sincere, christian faith acknowledges God in his righteousness, and therefore fears his judgment, and thus through fear buries sin and dies to it, as more than once related, and that nevertheless, you live in all aversion, unchastity, drunkenness, wrath, lewdness, blindness, idolatry, and all manner of wickedness, tell us, beloved, where is then

your faith and word of God of which you boast so much? Do you not know that it is written, "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die?" Or do you think that you can trifle with God as with a man? Be not deceived, says Paul, God will not be mocked.

Ah! reader, take heed, I tell you the truth in Christ, Beware! if you do not repent with all your heart and seek God, through Christ, do not hear, believe and fear him, but remain earthly and carnal, and walk after the lusts of your flesh, your sentence already pronounced, will be *death*. As Christ himself says, I judge no man, but the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

I, therefore, faithfully admonish you, as before God, even as I do mine own soul, divest yourselves immediately of false doctrine, of all unbelief, idolatry and earthly, disgraceful lives, in which, alas! you have hitherto walked, lest the wrath of God overtake you in the sleep of your sins.

Awaken! He is still merciful, seek and receive the true doctrine, true faith, true sacraments, the true service, and lead a godly life, as the Scriptures teach, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward," Isa. 58: 8.

Further, I say, If you truly believed and rightly understood that you became, through Adam's disobedience, children of the devil, of wrath, and of eternal death, subjected to the righteous curse and judgment of God, and that now all obstacles and all your sins are taken away and reconciled through the precious blood of Christ; so that you are called from wrath into grace, from cursings to blessings, and out of death to life (not to mention the favors which are daily shown you), then your hearts would sprout forth as the sweet-scented, blooming violet, full of pure love; yea, flow as the living fountain, from which flow forth the refreshing sweet waters of righteousness, and you would, with holy Paul, say, from the bottom of your soul, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Since it can never be, if I am in the bonds of perfection with him, and love him with a pure heart, a good conscience and unfeigned faith, that anything

then can turn me away or separate me from him. For it is my own desire and highest joy, that I hear and speak of his word, and in my weakness, walk as he commanded and taught through his Son, should it even cost money and possessions, flesh or blood, his will be done.

Behold, dear reader, since then it is manifest in the Holy Scriptures, that the true Christian faith through the fear of God, dies to sin, and through love does the things of righteousness, though in weakness, I therefore let you judge whether those believe from the heart, who with the mouth say, that the blood of Christ is the propitiatory sacrifice of their sin, and nevertheless seek and follow up all kinds of idolatry, such as infant baptism, holy water, absolution, auricular confession, masses, gold, silver, and wooden images, wafers, stone churches, and the drunken adultery of the priests. Ah! how well it would be for them to reflect.

I say, As true as the Lord lives, there will eternally be found no other remedy for our sins, whether in heaven or upon earth; neither works, merits nor sacraments, even though they are used according to the Scriptures; neither cross, tribulation, angels, men, nor any other means will avail, but alone the immaculate, crimson blood of the Lamb (Christ), which was, out of pure grace, mercy and love, shed for the remission of our sins, Mark 14: 24.

Hence, it is incontrovertible, that all those who use such strange, idolatrous means for sin, belong not to the believing, grateful church of Christ. Therefore, I will present you with a few passages from the gospel and writings of the apostles, and set them before your eyes as a clear mirror, in which you may view yourselves, and see whether you are believing Christians.

Thus teaches the word of the Lord, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And again, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Prove yourselves with this; if you are born of the pure seed of the holy word, then the nature of the seed must be in you; and if you have become like little children, then

there are no more pride, unchastity, avarice, hatred and envy in you; for the innocent children know nothing of such sins. But if you continue to live in old Adam, and not in Christ, and walk after the base, impure desires of your flesh, then you practically prove that you are not born of God, and have not his faith.

The word of the Lord teaches again, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here, prove yourselves again, He that believes and is rightly baptized, truly repents, circumcises his heart, dies to sin, rises in Christ to a new life, &c. But if you remain impenitent, your hearts uncircumcised, not dead to sin, but live out of Christ and his word, then is the deed your witness, that you are disbelievers and have not the baptism of Christ. Again does the word of the Lord teach, "If thou wilt enter life keep the commandments." For in Christ, says Paul, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth, but the keeping of the commands of God. And this is his command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Mark 12: 30.

Hereby, prove yourselves again, If you love God, you will keep his commandments, you will do to your neighbor as you would have him do to you; but if you despise his word, do not follow his ordinances in doctrine, baptism, Holy Supper, and separation, and if you do not walk according to his holy, godly commands; also belie, cheat and betray your neighbor; if you take your neighbor's life, disgrace his wife, daughters or servants, and treat him perfidiously; if you mislead the poor, blind souls from the true way and obedience of the Lord, be it through persecution or false doctrine, and thus bereave them of the eternal kingdom, and lead them to hell, then it is more than clear, that you hate the command of the Lord and have not his faith.

Again, the word of the Lord teaches, "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and nar-

row is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find it," Matt. 7: 13. At another place it is written, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." He that loves father and mother, man or wife, son or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of me.

Here prove yourselves again, Have you such a spirit, such frankness and faith, that you, in time of need, are ready to forsake father, mother and your all, for the sake of God's word and his testimony; to take upon yourself the cross of Christ; to deny yourself in all things; to enter, with Christ, upon the way of suffering, and thus enter, with the poor small flock, at the narrow, strait gate; then may the Lord strengthen you. But if you live unto yourselves, reject the cross of Christ, and love father, mother, wife, children, property or life more than Christ; walk on the broad way with the multitude and enter the wide gate, then the mouth of the Lord gives testimony that you are disbelievers and that your end is damnation.

Again, says the word of the Lord, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," Gal. 5: 24. For those who live after the flesh, such as adulterers, whoremongers, incontinent, avaricious, drunkards, gamblers, thieves, hateful, haughty, defamers, blood-thirsty, idolaters, shall die.

Prove yourselves again, If your lusts do not reign in you, if you do not walk in any of these and such like carnal ways, which have been mentioned, but if you can smother them and trample them under foot, through faith, then thank God, fight piously, watch and pray. But if you satiate your lusts, and walk in the impure ways of your flesh, then reform yourselves; for then it is evident that you are not, penitent, believing christians, but impenitent, carnal heathens.

Again, The word of the Lord teaches, "Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the gentiles seek; but seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you," Matt. 6: 31.

Here prove yourselves again, If you believe

that the strong and mighty God, who nourished Israel forty years with bread from heaven and with water from the rock, and kept their clothes from being worn out, and fed Elias by a raven, will not forsake you in your distress, but will provide for you by his grace; this is a true evidence that you have the word of the Lord. But if, through your cares, you are induced or constrained, that you neglect the kingdom of God and his righteousness, seek temporal, more than eternal things, and are so much concerned as if God had more concern for the flowers and fowls than for you and your children, boast not that you believe the promise and word of the Lord.

Again, the word of the Lord teaches, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," John 3: 16—18.

Here prove yourselves the seventh time. If you sincerely believe these words of Christ with the whole heart, that the Almighty, Eternal Father so loved you and the whole human family, that he sent his incomprehensible, Almighty, eternal Word, Wisdom, Truth and Son, by whom he created the heavens, earth, the sea and the fulness thereof, and his eternal glory, into this vale of misery; that he let him become a poor, grieved, miserable man; that he let him, for the sake of all our sins, suffer hunger and thirst; permitted him to be slandered, apprehended, crowned with thorns, scourged, crucified and killed; then it cannot fail that your old carnal mind must become a regenerated, spiritual mind; your thoughts must become chaste and pure; your words must become discreet and well seasoned and your whole life pious and unblamable.

Instantly you should awaken, walk in the right way, keep aloof from all abomination and idolatry, forsake false prophets, preachers and priests; and seek the true teachers, sacraments and divine service; for a true,

sincere, Christian faith cannot be idle; but it changes, renews, purifies, sanctifies and justifies more and more; it makes joyous and glad, for by faith it knows that hell, devil, sin and death, are conquered through Christ, and that grace, mercy, and redemption from sin, and eternal life, are acquired through him. In full confidence, the possessor of true christian faith approaches the Father, in the name of Christ, receives the Holy Ghost, becomes partaker of the divine nature, and is renewed after the image of him, who created him, lives by the virtue of Christ, which is in him; all his ways are righteousness, godliness, honesty, chastity, truth, wisdom, goodness, benevolence, light, love and joy.

He sanctifies his body and heart as a habitation and temple of Christ and the Holy Ghost; hates all that is against God and his word; honors, praises and thanks God with a sincere heart; and there is nothing to deter him, neither judgment, wrath, hell, devil, sin nor eternal death. For he knows that Christ is his Intercessor, Mediator and Propitiator. He acknowledges with holy Paul, that "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. 8: 1. The Spirit of the Lord assures him that he is a child of God, and a joint heir of Christ; he, therefore, wholly dedicates himself to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who called him through grace, drew him by his Spirit, enlightened him by his word, and purchased him with his blood.

Behold, this is the nature of living faith, which has such an urgent, cogent power, spirit, fear, energy and life; which avails with God and has the promise in the Scriptures. Happy he who has such a faith and will salutarily retain it to the end. I repeat it, prove yourselves, whether you are in the faith; in Christ or out of Christ; penitent or impenitent. For in the mirror presented, you may view the whole face of your conscience and life, if you but believe that the word of the Lord is true and right. Here notice how the true, christian faith, through grace, is the only living fountain, whence flows, not only the penitent, new life, but also obedience to the evangelical ceremo-

nies, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper will have to come and follow, not as those compelled through the law, for the rod of the oppressor is broken, but voluntarily, through the free will and submissive spirit of love, which is of a christian nature, and is ready to all good works and obedience of the holy divine word.

For all the truly regenerated and spiritual conform in all things to the word and ordinances of the Lord; not because they think to merit the propitiation of their sins and eternal life; by no means; in this matter they depend upon nothing except the true promise of the merciful Father, graciously given to all believers, through the blood and merits of Christ, which blood is, and ever will be the only eternal medium of our reconciliation, and not works, baptism or Lord's supper, as said above.

For if our reconciliation depended upon works and ceremonies, then it would not be grace, and the merits and fruits of the blood of Christ would be void. O no! it is grace, and will be grace to all eternity; all that the merciful father is doing or has done for us grievous sinners, through his beloved Son and Holy Spirit, is grace. Hence it is that they hear the voice of the Lord, believe his word, and therefore they should willingly observe and perform (although in weakness), the representation of both signs, under water, and bread and wine, set forth in obedience. For a truly believing christian is thus minded, that he will not do otherwise than that which the word of the Lord enjoins and teaches; for he knows, that all presumption and disobedience, are like sins of witchcraft, and the end thereof is death.

Yes, good reader, the true christian belief, as the Scriptures require, is so lively, active and powerful with all those, who have rightly received it through the grace of the Lord, that they do not fear to forsake father, mother, wife, children, money and possessions for the word and testimony of the Lord; to suffer all manner of scorn, disgrace, fatigue, hardship and prison, and finally to have their poor, weak bodies, which are so fearful of suffering, burned at the stake, as may be frequently seen in the pious children and witnesses of Christ Jesus, especially in these our Netherlands.

Alas! how many did I know before, and know the greater part of them now, both men and women, men and maid-servants (would to God that they be increased to many hundred thousands), who, from the inmost of their souls, seek Christ and his word, and lead, in all meekness, a pious, unblamable life before God and man; sincere and holy in doctrine, full of the fear and love of God, ready to help one another, merciful, compassionate, meek, sober, chaste, neither refractory nor seditious; but quiet and peaceable, obedient to the magistracy in all things not contrary to God; and who have, nevertheless, for a number of years, not slept in their beds, and even do not now; for they are so much hated by the world, that they have been persecuted, betrayed, taken, exiled and slain like highwaymen, thieves and murderers, and that without mercy; and for no other reason, than that they, out of true fear of God, dare not take part in the abominable, carnal life, and with the accursed, disgraceful idolatry of this blind world; neither dare they hear nor acknowledge the unchaste, drunken, lecherous priests and deceiving blind preachers, as the true apostles and teachers of God; they dare not receive the bread with the avaricious, envious, proud, drunkards, whores and rogues, from their hands, nor carry their children to the anti-christian washing and baptism, but seek such preachers and teachers, and also such a baptism, supper, church and life, which are in accordance with the Scriptures, and may stand according to the word of the Lord.

Behold, before God, I write the truth, indeed they are such a people, if I otherwise know them rightly, hypocrites excepted, who, in the flesh, weep more than they laugh, mourn more than they are joyful, rather give than receive; who are ready not only to sacrifice possessions, and their all, but also body and life for the praise of the Lord, and to the necessary service of their neighbor, according to the command of the Scripture, as much as in them is. No matter how much the poor children are harassed, they are still so much strengthened in God, that they can neither be moved nor deterred. They possess their souls with patience, waiting for the joy which is promised. Truly

said Christ, "Ye will be hated of all men for my name's sake," Matt. 24: 9.

Since then it is evident from all this, that the true evangelical faith is of such a nature, as said, and is the only means and tree, which, through the grace of God, bears and propagates all manner of good fruit; therefore, it is considered, in Scripture, the most precious, and greatest work, and all things are ascribed to faith, such as miracles, and the power to become the children of God, and be justified; be blessed and saved; purified and sanctified; and have eternal life, as we have related when treating of the Malefactor's faith.

Not, dear reader, that we believe that faith merits this on account of its worth; by no means; but because the pleasure of God, through his word, has given his promise through true faith; then it must also by virtue of that word follow faith. For the Scriptures plainly teach, that all things, visible and invisible, must hear, yield, serve and follow the powerful word of God, as when he said, Let there be heaven and earth. Heaven and earth sprang into existence at these words. For God's word, says Esdras, is his perfect work. God also says to Israel, If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, all these blessings shall come upon thee; but if thou wilt not hearken, the curse shall be upon thee; and it also happened, as it was told Israel, "For God," says Balaam, "is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent." For these reasons the promise must follow true faith, or else it cannot be denied that God, who is a God of truth, must be untrue and faithless. O no! all that he wills must be done; what he promises must be fulfilled, and not otherwise than he has promised, for he alone is true, and we are all liars," Rom. 3. Paul says, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself."

Since then faith so firmly acknowledges that God cannot break his promise, but must keep it, because he is the truth and cannot lie, therefore, does he make his children free, joyful, and glad in spirit; though they are confined in prisons and bonds, have to suffer by water and fire, in chains and at the stake; for they are assured in

the spirit, through faith, that God will not withdraw his promise, but will fulfill it in due time; for they believe on Christ in whom the promises are sealed, and through him also acknowledge his grace, word and will; notwithstanding that they, in former times, lived so ungodly, and walked according to the flesh.

They hope with faithful Abraham, where nothing is to be hoped, and wait for things invisible, as though they saw them, and with full confidence adhere to the assurance, truth, faithfulness and power of the heavenly promise, which is made to us by the infallible, true mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, without any previous work or merit, through the gracious choice and will of his merciful Father in his true word. And this regenerating, justifying, converting, penitent, active and confident faith, which comes from the Father of light, by hearing his holy word, is the only faith that avails with God, and which has the assurance of the promise of grace in the word, through the Holy Ghost; besides this, the Holy Scriptures know of no other faith.

Before now, I have read in some books, which they have written, that there is but *one* good work which saves us, namely, FAITH, and but *one* sin which will damn us, namely, UNBELIEF. This I will leave as it is, and not find fault with it; for where there is a sincere, true *faith*, there are also all manner of sincere, good fruits. On the other hand, where there is *unbelief*, there are also all manner of evil fruits; therefore, is salvation properly ascribed to *faith*, and damnation to *unbelief*.

Faithful reader, pay attention. Since we plainly perceive that the whole world, Papists, Lutherans, Zuinglians, Davidists, libertines, &c., walk the broad road of sin, and lead a carnal, vain life, and do not abide by the pure, salutary, perfect, doctrine, sacrament and unblamable, pure example of Christ; therefore they are themselves witnesses, that they reject the corner stone, Jesus Christ, and believe not his word and truth, though a few of them write much of faith and speak of the Scriptures. Say, beloved, did you ever read in the Scriptures, or did you ever hear, that a truly believing, regenerated christian, after repentance and

conversion, remained proud, avaricious, unchaste, greedy, hateful, tyrannical and idolatrous, and continued to live after the base desires of the flesh? You must say, *no!* If you speak of Peter and David, you must observe how short or how long a time their fall lasted, and what penance they did. Turn yourselves to the east or west, south or north, and you will find ungodly, vain, pompous, foolish actions and conduct, with all those who boast of faith, so that we shall have to say with Christ and John, They are, with few exceptions, of the devil and not of God. For the devil, from the beginning, was proud and haughty, so are they; he was a liar, so are they; he was a falsifier of the word of the Lord, so are they; he was disputatious against God, so are they; in short, he is a revengeful murderer, an abominable, blood-thirsty tyrant, so are many of them. The way in which they use those who seek Christ sincerely and believe, fear, follow, serve and call on him, has been more than once fully related.

Yea, alas, they are so wrathful and enraged at them, that they will scarcely call them by their right names, but they call them anabaptists, fanatics, rioters, factionists, hedge preachers, deceivers, heretics, new monks, knaves and miscreants, although they seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness with all their hearts, which God knows, who tries the reins and hearts of men, and wish no evil to any one upon earth.

This they all do through the ignorant, defaming of the envious, inhuman, lying, crying and writing of their learned priests and preachers, who ever since the blasphemous beast of anti-christ ascended his kingdom and glory, have always been the true cause of the tyrannical shedding of innocent blood in the past and present; for they are those who instigate the magistracy to murder, and the thoughtless, reckless people to defame and blaspheme, and, I fear, that they will continue to be the cause till the end.

Nevertheless, the chosen are to awaken, repent and obey the voice of the Lord; for idolatrous, blood-thirsty, confused Babel shall sink, and be desolated; and fair Jerusalem, the city of peace, shall increase, and through the power of Almighty God

must be built up in glory. Of this all rejoice, who are called to the marriage of the Lamb, and whose names are written in the BOOK of LIFE with God. Here is the understanding, wisdom, faith and patience of the saints; let him that has understanding, observe, that the word of the Lord is true. Blessed are they who are ready to meet the coming of the Lamb.

Behold, such a faithless, impenitent, tyrannical, idolatrous, refractory, disobedient, blind, carnal people they are, who imagine that they are the believing church, and the lawful bride of Christ. These poor children do not observe that all under heaven is spoiled, even as the prophet complains that "there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; by swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood," Hos. 4: 1, 2. The world, says John, lieth in wickedness. If we come to the lords and princes, there we find such pride, arrogance, pomp and wantonness, such banqueting, eating and drinking to excess, with some, such adultery and whoredom, and such unreasonable, blind idolatry, and with many, such unmerciful, raging tyranny that they are in truth more like proud Nebuchadnezzar, drunken Belshazzar, and Nabal, and blood thirsty, vain Antioch, Nero, and Maximinus, than christian, believing lords and kind princes. If we come to the judges and rulers, to each in his station, with some we find only violence and injustice, with some nothing but avarice, astonishing practices; they steal honestly and rob honorably; pass sentence for gain and gifts; honor the high and despise the poor, do not justice to the poor widow, orphan and the oppressed stranger, execute their office and power with rigor, and not fraternally; serve princes and not God, as the prophet Micah laments, What the prince desires, the judge does, so that he will again reward him. Alas! where shall we find one, who loves God with all the heart, hates avarice, seeks the truth, who will defend the godfearing, and do him justice?

If we come to the priests or monks, there we find such insatiable avarice, that they offer and sell prayers, psalms, matins, vespers, masses, sermons, baptism, Lord's Sup-

per, absolution, and all their church services, together with their own souls; take rents and gold from the deceased, will go six or ten miles, from one place to another for a guilder; where they find the most milk, wool and meat, there they prefer to be among the sheep; like to be flattered and honored by the world; suffer themselves to be called doctors, lords, masters, abbots, provosts, priors, fathers, guardians, commanders and presidents; like to wear long garments; seek to be greeted at the market, and take the first seats at the table and in the church, as Christ said of the scribes and pharisees, Mark 12: 39. Besides, the greater part of them live in such whoredom and sodomy that the angels are astonished and blush; they defile one woman after another, also one virgin after another: they defraud and corrupt the whole world, both temporally and spiritually; they have all their joy in a temporal, carnal life; study by day and by night, how they may pamper their proud, idle, lazy flesh; eat and drink, saying, as it is written, "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant," Isa. 56: 12. They betray the faithful, pious hearts, who with all their powers seek Christ and eternal life; they warn every one of the truth and its followers, and cry, Hear us, we are your teachers and pastors, we will pledge our souls for you in the judgment of God; and thus encourage the malicious, lest they be converted from their wickedness. Promising liberty to others, and are themselves servants of corruption. I do not know how they could make it worse; nevertheless, those unblushing, abominable men, who according to the law of Moses, would have been stoned, and who according to the Scriptures must be eternally cursed and condemned, unless they repent, alas, are called the pastors and teachers of this poor, rude people. Behold, thus the world is corrupted.

If we come to the preachers, who boast of the word, we will find, that some are open liars, others drunken sots, some usurers, some wanton and gay, some defamers and slanderers, others persecutors and betrayers of the innocent; how some of them live, how they came to get their wives, and what kind

of wives they have, this I will commit to the Lord and to themselves. They teach secretly that there are *two sons* in Christ, the Son of God, and the son of Mary, and that he who died for our sins, was not the Son of God; they also teach and practice a baptism which is not commanded in the Scriptures, and a supper, in which they consider the *bread* the *body*, and the *wine* the *blood* of Christ; they have, and hold no other BAN, than the gallows, and the wheel; lead an unconcerned, easy life; they live of mere flattery, deceit and the booty of anti-christ, and preach just as much as the worldly, carnal magistracy desire to hear; promise peace to the poor impenitent, although there is no peace.

If we come to the common people, we find such an unbecoming, carnal, blind, uncircumcised horde, that we are astonished; they know neither God nor his word. If nature teaches anything reasonable, that is all their piety; but of the Spirit, word, ordinances, will and life they indeed know but very little. In short, it has come so far in the world, that we may lament and say with the holy prophet, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth," Jer. 5: 1.

Not one stone has remained upon another; all is desolated which Christ and his faithful messengers taught us of faith, love, baptism, Supper, reconciliation, sin, repentance, regeneration, separation, teachers, deacons and of true, divine service, nevertheless, they are called the church of Christ by their blind priests and preachers, even as if Christ and the Father were to be satisfied with names, bread, wine and water. O no! the chosen of God are the church of Christ, his saints and beloved, who washed their clothes in the blood of the Lamb, who are born of God, influenced by the Spirit of Christ; who are in Christ and he in them, who hear and believe his word, who follow him in their weakness, in his commandments, walk in his footsteps with all patience and humility, hate the evil, and love the good, earnestly desiring to apprehend Christ as they are apprehended of him, for all who are in

Christ, are new creatures, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, and members of his body. How you and the rest of mankind conform to this, I will leave you and all reasonable readers to reflect upon, in the fear of God, both according to your understanding, and according to the Scriptures.

Since, then, all things are desolated through the righteous wrath and judgment of God, because (as Paul says) they delighted in unrighteousness and lies, by the false prophets and ravening wolves, so that nothing salutary has remained according to the true sense and ground of Christ and his holy apostles, and since we find nothing in the whole world, among all the great sects, only vain boastings, mere names, false doctrine, false sacraments, vain unbelief and an impenitent, carnal life, and this under the name and semblance of Christ and his holy church, therefore, I am constrained, by true, christian love, to make known the power and ground of the holy Scriptures, according to my small gift, given me of God, and through this to show which is the *true, christian faith*, having the promise; namely, the faith which changes man from evil into good, to a divine nature, both inwardly and outwardly, and makes him, as said, holy, righteous, obedient, new, pious, peaceable and joyful; in order that all good, pious hearts, who desire to walk in the right way, but who are hindered therefrom by their blind priests and preachers, may read or hear this my faithful EXPOSITION and INSTRUCTION, and that they may thereby be instructed in the truth; that the indifferent and drowsy may be awakened, and that all hypocrites may be ashamed, and reform; and that all those who love God sincerely, may be more instructed and taught in the faith, if they do by any means acknowledge this as the sure FOUNDATION of God, as it is, and will be, for ever. Lord, grant that many may read and understand it, and thus receive and obey it, that they may sincerely repent and be saved, Amen.

And since I do it out of a sincere heart, and labor not with any other view, of which the great God, the Searcher of the hearts and reins of men is my witness, than that I may teach repentance to the ignorant, rude world, which knows not Christ, lead them

to Christ and his doctrine, sacraments and example, that many might be saved; and as we plainly see there are many profligates who have reformed their sinful, carnal lives, and commenced an upright, penitent, pious life in the fear of the Lord; then it is gross ingratitude, yea, hardened, ungodly tyranny, to hate me and my faithful co-workers so enviously, and recompense us so shamefully, who manifest such great fidelity and love towards them in our manifold sufferings and trials.

But thus they treated all the prophets and faithful servants of God from the beginning, who preached to them the word and will of the Lord with great fidelity, reproved their sins, sought their salvation till death, with all their powers, with many tears, watchings, prayers, labors, cares and sorrows; therefore, it is not strange, and no wonder, that they will treat us so; for Christ says, "For so persecuted they the prophets, which were before you," Matt. 5: 12.

I hereby entreat and desire, through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, all my readers and hearers in general, of whatever name, office, station and condition, that you be pleased neither to defame nor to reject my labor, as long as you have not read it impartially, heard it rightly and understood it. Therefore, separate the doctrine, sacraments and life of Christ, from the doctrine, sacraments and life of the priests and preachers; separate faith and unbelief, spirit and flesh, righteousness and unrighteousness. Seek after the truth, strive zealously for your salvation, believe that God is true, that he will reward the good and punish the evil, that his word is, and will for ever remain truth. Fear his judgment, love his bounties; then you shall know, by the grace of the Lord, that the aforementioned is the true Christian faith, which avails before God, and has the promise in the Scriptures, as we have so abundantly testified and shown to you by the word of God, and with such strong and incontrovertible reasons, Scriptures and examples, without deceit and fraud, as it were before, in Christ Jesus.

May the Almighty, eternal, merciful God and Father, through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, lead you all, one with another, into

his holy, divine knowledge and evangelical truth, and make your faith so fruitful and active, that you may, with sincere, new hearts, patiently submit to his cross in every trial and affliction, and that you may walk, with unfeigned love, be peaceable and joyful in spirit, as the unblamable, pious children of God, before the Lord and his church all the days of your lives, and ultimately obtain the promise of grace, the end of your faith, and the salvation of your souls, Amen.

