

The Uncovering of the Babylonian Whore

Die Aufdeckung der Babylonischen Hürn, Augsburg ca. 1532

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(Excerpts from *The Triumph Peace and Power of True Christianity*. See online bookshop for complete work.)

“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

All men can see and feel (even apart from the witness of the scriptures) that time is coming to an end and judgment will be upon us. God’s works show this. All creatures have reason to fear and tremble, as they trembled at the word of the prophets who spoke of the great and terrible day of the Lord (Isa. 24; Jonah 2, 3; Zeph. 1, 2, 3). The fact that the lost, perverted, and Sodom-like world is not taking this seriously, nor doing anything about it, is simply another proof that the Lord’s word is being fulfilled. These last days are like the days of Lot and Noah. People eat and drink, marry and give in marriage (without fear), but sudden destruction will come upon them all (Luke 17).

The world overflows with terrible corruption—the kind of corruption that used to stay hidden in secret. Along with this, the worldly church, by uncovering its shame, is revealing itself for what it is, like a woman who has long been playing the whore in secret, but who suddenly drops all attempts at covering up and brazenly comes out into the open with her affairs. Now she puts on her harlot’s attire and does what she can to seduce and deceive men with the thousandfold tricks of her trade. She leads the whole world into error and deception. All nations are drunk with the wine of her adulteries (Rev. 17, 18), and few are left who fear or whose consciences bother them for what they do.

Here and there, where weak Christians gather, the power of God still works. But the clever whore does what she can to splotch up their garments with the stains of error. She walks along beside us with many false teachings and clever sayings to spy out our liberty in Christ, as Paul says (Gal. 2). But blessed are those who do not contaminate themselves with her adulteries, because they have been bought by the blood of the lamb (Rev. 14).

The Whore, The Bride, and The Serpent

We speak, as can be seen, of the old, red, Roman whore (who passed herself off for so long as the bride of Christ, deceiving herself and many with her). This whore the real

bride of Christ—the bride consisting of a new people, married to Christ through his blood and suffering—has thrown out and rejected with all her tricks. But the old serpent is busy.

No sooner did new people of God (the reformed Protestant churches) appear than the serpent came up with new deceptions. Now he sets up another false bride of Christ for the deception of the world (Rev. 20).

Martin Luther and his men use the scriptures to persuade the common people to take up arms and to defend themselves. They get the people to trust, body and soul, in the force of arms, and cause lords and cities to rise up against the emperor. What a terrible shedding of blood when false prophets and their followers begin to fight in the name of God! (Jer. 6; Ezek. 22, 23).

The Lord Christ wants to lead his followers out of all this with no hitting back. He wants to lead them in peace, under the cross, and in the shadow of his wings (Ps. 17, 57). Christ the lamb suffers patiently, allowing men to kill him, until the end of the world (Luke 17; Rev. 13). All the leaders of the world, Pilate, Herod, Annas and Caiaphas, unite to do him harm (Luke 23), but Christ gives himself up to their power and exercises no power upon them in return. He teaches rather that we should give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's (Matt. 22). He teaches that earthly rulers have been given the power to rule in everything except that which concerns the vengeance of God. No man, only God, may resort to vengeance (Rom. 12; Heb. 10).

God has appointed no power or rulers on the earth except Caesar. Caesar and his worldly government will rule on the earth until their time is up, as predicted by Daniel (Dan. 11), when the wrath of God will come upon all men (Isa. 24). Until then all flesh needs the power and control of Caesar.

Jesus Christ, on the other hand, does not rule or judge in earthly inheritances or in earthly kingdoms. No matter whether his followers get treated good or evil, they pay back nothing but patience and love. They are willing to submit everything they have, even their bodies and their lives, to earthly powers. That is everything, except their true faith in Christ. No man may use force or rule over others in matters of faith in Christ, for it is not earthly lives but eternal life that is at stake. God himself will not take eternal life away from any creature in heaven or on earth (Rom. 8; Matt. 10). Because true Christians set their hope on eternal life, they do not demand the right to earthly life (Heb. 11; Luke 10; Col. 3), and many are now choosing this. May God be praised!

Christ's Judgement

To summarize, I want to present you professing “evangelicals,” you teachers and preachers, nothing else but the crucified, patient and loving Christ.

Those who do not preach and teach Christ are against him. It does not matter if they are of the old or the new pope, nor whether they can handle the word of God as well as Christ himself. If anyone preaches anything but the meek and humble Christ whom we learn to know under the cross, it does not matter how “evangelical” they may be, they will fall under the judgment of Christ. They will say in the end: “Lord, have we not cast out

devils, prophesied, eaten, and drunk in your name?" But Christ will answer: "Depart from me you evildoers. I never knew you!" (Matt. 7; Luke 13).

False Evangelicals

These new "evangelicals" use scripture and doctrine to put the sword into the hand of the common man, but according to Jude they will perish with the rebellion of Kore. Stirring up cities and princes to battle, they walk in the error of Cain and will perish in the way of it. Listening to the voice of Balaam's prophets, they will fall into yet greater bloodshed and terror than that of the peasants' revolt. They will perish in the rebellion of Kore, not for the cause of Christ. May the Lord lead his followers out from among them!

I must admit that I learned a good amount, in the past, from the writings and the sermons of these "evangelical" preachers. I used to be a solid Roman Catholic. Their teachings brought me to see that Roman Catholicism was wrong, but it led me only into a freedom of the flesh. Instead of being bound in my conscience as before, I now felt free to eat and drink with such teachers. I thought I must be a good Christian now and set myself against Catholicism with all the writings I could find to serve my cause. Everyone praised this understanding of mine, but it was not what entered the mouth but what came out of the heart that defiled me (Matt. 15).

I gladly accepted "evangelical" positions against auricular confession, papal rules, for this did not infringe on my flesh, and I could do so without the true spirit of Christ in my heart. I accepted many "evangelical" teachings, which were true. But the mystery of the cross of Christ and the narrow gate was not spoken about nor taught, just as it still is not taught in "evangelical" circles. They were totally quiet about this way of the cross that leads from Babylonian captivity back to freedom in Jerusalem. Much more, if anyone had dared to open his mouth about it, he would have been persecuted by them and delivered to the hangman. It is easy to see that these "evangelical" preachers are the evildoers to whom Christ says, "Depart from me" (Matt. 7).

Those who teach a partial gospel are like a hand pointing the wrong way at a crossroads.

The Way of the Cross

The "evangelicals" lose the reality of the cross of Christ when they sit behind the protection of lords, princes, and cities to defend themselves. Only under the cross of Christ may patience be learned and all anxiety overcome. Christ the lamb triumphs in the cross, not like the lion, the bear, the wolf, the dog, and the leopard who fight and tear one another with their teeth (Rev. 17).

Woe, woe to the teaching and kingdom of Antichrist that must be revealed (2 Tim. 3)! Look and listen all who have eyes and ears! Discern for yourself whether the deceivers and troublemakers are followers of the Lamb of God or followers of the dreadful beast! Children of God do not mingle with them. Do not let anyone deceive you. Wish no evil on your enemies, but do good to them, and that from the heart. You have one who judges you, and he is in heaven.

If worldly rulers use their power as God ordained them to use it (Rom. 13), if they use the sword correctly, according to God's command; you are under a measure of protection. But where worldly rulers use the sword in an unjust way, when they punish the good and let evildoers go free, love liars and persecute the truth, all you may do is to content yourself with calling them to conversion. Leave vengeance to the God whom worldly rulers are called to serve. Christ did not give you any other sword or means of self-protection. Whoever teaches otherwise is a liar and a deceiver (1 John 4; 2 John 1).

Possessions and Self-defence

The one, who looks for Christ elsewhere than in patience beneath the cross, will not find him. Just as wooden crosses and road signs direct us on the way, so the cross and hand of Christ direct us on our way to him.

To know Christ and his teaching is to live after the Spirit, not after the flesh. It is to let go of all our possessions when we get born again and die to all earthly things. He who hangs onto his old life and possessions will lose them. But he who gives them up comes to possess eternal life (Matt. 16, 19). He puts every thought of self-defence behind his back, offers to carry the cross for his master and Lord, Christ, and does this faithfully with all meekness, love, and lamb-like patience (Matt. 11).

We protect ourselves against the enemies of Christ by becoming more than conquerors through him. Our triumph, not limited by time, is eternal (Rom. 8; 1 John 5). Christ says, "Rejoice! I have overcome the world" (John 16). Overcoming power never comes from winning in an earthly conflict. Whoever wins a conflict is overcome sooner or later by a stronger opponent who dominates him. That is because earthly conflicts are not won with Christ. It is the flesh that wins them, and the flesh with its triumphs passes away.

Where Christ's teaching and life take over, fleshly rule and power ends. But where people are ruled by the flesh, Christ must leave, just as he had to leave the land of the Gadarenes (Matt. 8). Christ had to leave the land of the Gadarenes because his work affected their business (their hog operation), something that needs to be taken into account if we want to be saved. The two demon possessed men held in the bondage of a legion of demons typify the love of God and the love of man, both of which have been hindered for a long time by Satan. Bondage comes from our love of property, as can be seen when the two men (who had been a great danger) returned with Christ, who had freed them, to the village of the Gadarenes. The Gadarenes, because they suffered damage to their earthly property (the loss of their pigs), begged Christ to leave them.

Possession and Power

The loss of property is a small thing to give up for the love of God and our fellowmen. But it is the fear of losing possessions that deceives the whole world. It is that fear which binds up the love of God and the love of man on the earth.

If Christ must leave, as he left the village of the Gadarenes, unrighteousness takes over. Love grows cold (Matt. 24). Selfishness takes over and all men suffer. It is easy to see how blind, senseless selfishness destroys the whole world, but men would much rather

tolerate it than to tolerate sincere, loving Christians. They hate those who try to free them from the devil's destructive power. Oh blind Gadarenes! The whole world is blind!

Satan, through his prophets, wants to find a good-looking cover-up for the use of earthly power. He wants to mix the use of earthly power with the words of Christ by saying that it serves to protect the faithful (where in fact it harms the faithful). Satan asks: "What will happen to those who are called to be in worldly positions of authority if their subjects do not help them carry out their rule to protect the innocent from the evil? If no one helps them, will not the innocent be in danger?"

In this way, Satan convinces people that Christians may be worldly rulers. In fact, he gets them convinced that the world would be better if our rulers were all true Christians, and many sincere people have been drawn by him into military or police service, into the swearing of oaths and government office in the name of serving Christ. Behind all this lies the innate selfishness of man.

Those who think they possess their goods want the government to protect them. They think it necessary to use force to keep peace, to protect their own possessions and those of others. In fact, all use of force comes from the possession of property. From the holding of property comes all government and force in the world. But the communities of Christ are not based on the holding of property, but on Christ. They are subject to Christ before all else.

Therefore, those who are spiritual concern themselves with keeping spiritual peace, and those who are of the flesh concern themselves with holding onto their possessions in a fleshly peace. Those who are spiritual hold to patience and love in Christ, and obey God the Father, as Christ obeyed him unto death. Those who are of the flesh use the sword to punish the evil and keep order in the world. If they did not do this, there would be no peace among private property holders. All this works together, thanks to God, who in his goodness and mercy desires only what is good for us.

The Place of Worldly Government

God has offered his peace (real peace) to all men, but many have not accepted it. For this reason, he gave worldly power to those who are of the world, to keep worldly property holders from destroying each other. However, the true peace of God is far above the selfish concern for property and can have nothing to do with it.

God only permits. He does not promote the use of worldly force. The use of force does not come from that which is good, but from that which is evil and God tolerates it only out of necessity. God knows that if he would take the use of ungodly force out of the world, society would become totally chaotic. Thus, for the good of his children who must also live in the world, he lets it go.

Because God tolerates the use of worldly force, he also expects his children to obey it, even at the cost of their lives. However, above this, he expects them to give to God what is God's (Matt. 22). That is, he expects his children to give to him their first allegiance and the honor he deserves. We must be true to God although we are also subject as

citizens to our worldly governments, remembering that they are called to govern only in matters of the flesh. Only God may rule in matters of the Word and of the Spirit.

Christ told Peter to pay his taxes (Matt. 17), because God, the God of peace, wants us to live in peace with all men as far as possible. Spiritual and bodily peace are the weapons and heraldry of true Christians, as Paul says in 2 Cor. 10. Our eternal God is faithful.

The Peace of Christ

For the sake of peace among the rebellious children of Israel, God gave the sword to Moses to enforce his laws. Joshua, David, and others were given the sword for the same reason—to keep an outward, temporary peace among unconverted men. But Christ and his followers have another calling. Christ does not bring the peace of Moses, nor an outward peace of the flesh. Rather, he calls his followers to have peace one with another and says: “I give you peace. I leave it with you, not as the world gives” (John 14).

The world does not know the peace of Christ, nor has it experienced peace of heart. Only with peace in the heart can one endure persecution, no matter how severe it may be. Before Christ, no one knew about a peace like this. Christ freed us so that we could have peace, and he left this world so that the comforter might come to us (John 16). Now we go through all manner of earthly tribulations without complaining or protesting, because we have peace in our hearts.

True Christians are those who do not complain or protest, as do those who bring each other to trial for offences among them. Those who accuse each other do not know true peace. They are children of the world. But true Christians have peace in their hearts because Christ is their Lord and judge, and they know that he will finally judge the whole world (Acts 17).

To Serve, Not to Rule

So much higher is the office of Christ than the office of Moses, that his followers can no longer be accused by the law, neither do they accuse others (Hebrews 3, 8; 2 Cor. 3). Rather, Christ and his followers are of a faithful, patient, and meek spirit. Jesus said to his followers: “If you keep to my way of talking, you will be my true disciples. You will know the truth and the truth will make you free” (John 8).

This freedom of Christ is lord over all. All creatures must serve it, but it does not seek to rule. It seeks only to serve (1 Cor. 9, 10). The Lord Most High, Christ Jesus, did not come to rule, force, judge, accuse, or have anyone accused before him. Rather, he came to serve, and to allow himself to be ruled over, forced, accused, judged, condemned, and mistreated. He is the mirror into which we must look if we want to see whether we resemble Christ or not. If we would do so, the question of whether we should take part in worldly government would soon be resolved!

Spirit of Elijah—Spirit of Christ

Those who oppose us are quick to bring up the example of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and others who used worldly force yet were filled with the Spirit of God. They say

that whoever has the Spirit of God must also have the Spirit of Christ. Well, Satan has surely done his best here to defend selfishness and personal property!

What our opponents do not take into account is that back in those days the use of force was necessary (as explained above) because man had fallen and all men lived by the flesh. Without fleshly force and government based on fear, no semblance of peace could have existed, as the case of Cain and Abel already shows (Gen. 4). But when Christ died and triumphed over sin and the works of the flesh saying "It is finished" (John 19), he brought the universal reign of the flesh to an end. Now his followers can walk in freedom of spirit, discerning the difference between the accusing, vengeful spirit of Elijah and the Spirit of Christ that comes to those who are born again.

When Jesus' disciples, who had seen and felt his spirit at work, called on him to kill his enemies like Elijah (Luke 9), he asked them: "Don't you know of what spirit you are?" He told them that the Son of Man did not come to kill but to save. In the same way, his followers cannot kill anyone.

Now, let me ask you: Did the vengeful and judgmental Elijah not have the Spirit of God? (2 Kings 1) Or did Christ, when he differed from Elijah, do wrong (if it is as you say that the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ always works the same way)?

The selfish also try to justify themselves with love for their neighbours. They ask: "Shouldn't we defend our neighbours when they are in danger, if we can do so? Hasn't God made us responsible to do this? God told us not to ignore our neighbours when they are in need, and to treat others like we want them to treat us" (Matt. 7).

Using such human logic, Simon Peter took it upon himself to defend Christ. But listen to what Christ did: He reached out and healed the man whom Peter, using worldly force, had struck (Luke 22). Christ does not want the kind of love that causes others to get hurt or despised. Rather, he wants to see us loving and not hating our worst enemies (Luke 6), no matter what they do to us.

The Result of Freedom in Christ

We are all one body under Christ the head. If one member suffers, we all suffer with it (1 Cor. 12). Patience and love rule in this body and motivate us to treat all others with the patience and love of Christ. We cannot do our enemies harm. If we harm them to defend one another, we are not in Christ but in a fleshly union like that of the whole world which says: "If you help me, I'll help you, and so on."

True Christians help those whom they can, whether friend or foe, as long as no one gets hurt by their help. The spirit of brotherly assistance will never be wanting among them. In fact, Christ's followers are so dedicated to help others that they would be ready to die for them. Complete love in Christ reaches out to friends and enemies. It is the result of freedom in Christ and spiritual union with him.

Christ has passed on the gift of love from our Father in heaven. If our spirits become obedient to Christ, our flesh and blood also becomes subject to him, and to become rulers

or to have people subject to us no longer holds any attraction. Nothing attracts us more than Christ, for even though our flesh is weak, our spirits are willing (Matt. 16).

Where fleshly rule is still mixed with the kingdom of Christ, Christ's death is to no avail. In his death on the cross Christ learned and taught the way of obedience, patience, and love toward all men. Christ used no worldly force nor did he come to rule, contrary to what many try to prove with the scriptures. The closer one looks at how Christ handled property and government, the more one comes to realize that he did not have much to do with either of them (Matt. 20).

The Cause of Struggle and Discord

Those who oppose the true Christians accuse them of anarchy, of not paying tithes, of being disobedient individualists who want no one to rule over them, and of being power hungry themselves. They say the Christians call themselves "king of the Jews," and the like. Just listen to what Satan comes up with in his accusations against Christ and his followers!

One question must be put to the world's children and all professing Christians: Is your lust for physical power not the cause of all your struggle and discord? Is it not that you resent the government that is over you, but at the same time want it to protect your private property? The kind of power that is able to keep order in the world is resented by the world because God has given it the right to judge and punish. But its judging and punishing may be either right or wrong.

Pilate, who got his power from God (John 19), sat in judgment on the case of the innocent Christ. But Christ did not appeal to him. Like a lamb, he suffered whatever judgment worldly power pronounced upon him. In like manner, the lambs of God must suffer until the end of the world. Both Peter and Paul (1 Pet. 2; Rom. 13) call upon us to be subject to our worldly authorities unto the point of death, like Christ. We are to endure violence, but we are not to rule over others nor use violence upon them.

Answer me now: Who is more obedient to the government: the one who demands protection for his rights and will not suffer wrong, or the one who claims no rights and suffers everything in the love of God? You blind ones, what can you say to this?

The Way of Christ—The Way of Worldly Power

Those who are deceived take pride in being Christians. They say they are ruled by the Spirit of Christ, but at the same time they are calling for someone else to rule for them—someone who does not have the Spirit of Christ and who will rule with worldly power. They want a king after the manner of the Gentiles, not to tell them what to do, but to protect them.

Hear what Samuel said to the Israelites (1 Sam. 8). When the Israelites asked for a ruler after the manner of the heathen, to protect them, Samuel warned them what that ruler would do to them with his power. But God who knew that the Israelites had rejected him (not Samuel) gave them exactly what they asked for, as a punishment. In the same way,

when Christ's disciples asked to drink from his cup, he patiently handed it to them. It was his cup of suffering (Matt. 20).

The Son of Man governs his followers in a beautiful way, with his Spirit. He said to his followers: "You know how it is among the Gentiles. Everyone would like to be the boss. Those who make it to the top use their power to get what they want. But among you it is not to be that way. Rather, the one who would like to be something should be your slave, and the one who wants to be first should spend his time serving all of you" (Mark 10).

The one who does not let the Spirit punish and correct him, and who does not listen to the counsels of the word of the Lord is no Christian (Heb. 12). Therefore, he must still be subject to the law (Gal. 3).

The word of the Lord alone is the Christian's judge and sword (Eph. 6; Matt. 10). True Christians will use nothing more in self-defence. Whoever despises this fact despises Christ, and whoever despises Christ despises the Father who sent him (Matt. 10), just as the Israelites despised not Samuel, but God. In Christ we have more than Samuel, Moses, the patriarchs, and the prophets (Matt. 12), but the people reject him.

Those professing Christians who ask God for leaders who use worldly power must learn that such leaders govern harshly. Even those Christians themselves will govern harshly if they get the chance, because they are not choosing the way of Christ, but the way of worldly power.

On One Level in Christ

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6 that there is a fault among Christians who claim their rights, and that before unbelievers. He asks: "Is the wisdom of Christ not among you? Are you not able to admonish one another in love and patience? The most simple person among you should be able to do this if he is filled with the patience of Christ. But you go and quarrel before unbelievers!"

Brotherhood in Christ is patience and love. It functions without bosses or chiefs, and it needs no underlings. In this brotherhood, all are on one level in Christ. Where there are no chiefs, there can, in fact, be no underlings, yet all true Christians are under the control of the will of God in Christ. All Christians are under Christ because he set them free through his living power from the fear of the law—the law that stayed behind, with its sceptre and power structure, with the tribe of Judah into which Christ was born (Rom. 1, 9; Rev. 5; Heb. 7).

Fleshly Rule—Rule Over Flesh

Jacob the Patriarch had already told Judah that the sceptre would not depart from him until the hero should come before whom the people would fall (Gen. 49). Also, according to the words of Jacob, the natural people of God would hold the sceptre until it would be passed on to the Gentiles, that is, to the swineherds of the kingdom of God. All earthly kingdoms and estates are nothing but pens full of pigs to God—pigs that root up and destroy his vineyard (Psalm 80). And all those who rule over, protect, and manage these

pig pens are nothing but swineherds, because outside of Christ there is no faith, neither among Jews, Gentiles, or professing Christians (John 15; 2 John 1; 3 John 1).

The one who refuses the discipline and instruction of the Word of Christ is not a Christian. In the same way, whoever judges or punishes others according to the letter of the law and with the use of worldly force is not a Christian. Christ's way is gentle and not proud. It is the way of patience and love. To Christ was given the power to rule over all flesh (Matt. 28). But he does so with his Spirit (Rom. 8), which brings the flesh into total subjection.

Christ gives life, not death (John 8; 2 Cor. 3), like the sword of Moses' law. Moses, God's slave, handed over his sword when he died and pointed to Christ saying one should stand up among his brothers whom the people should hear (Deut. 18). To this, Christ himself testifies: "If you believe in Moses, you should also believe in me. Moses prophesied about me, and we know that salvation is of the Jews" (John 5, 4). Since Christ has come, we no longer listen to Moses who knew only the sword of the law, but not the law of the Spirit. Now we listen to the word of Christ, which is a double-edged sword that divides between right and wrong (Heb. 4).

To the evil world belongs the evil sword. Evil rulers in the world must rule in their evil way to protect the evil of private property. In this way, a semblance of peace is maintained among the ungodly, for Christ can have nothing to do with Belial (2 Cor. 6). But the peace of Christ is something totally different. It has nothing to do with satisfying the flesh or hanging onto property. Rather, it is that which allows us to live in great joy and peace in the midst of our friends and enemies, no matter how things go. This is the peace of Christ of which he spoke: "I give you my peace, not as the world gives it."

The world has peace only as long as property "rights" are not disturbed. But when people's private possessions are in danger, their peace is already disturbed.

The Mystery of Iniquity

Neither sword nor worldly force was used by the first Christians from the time of the Apostles until the days of the emperor Constantine. Christians did not believe in using the sword, and Christ had not given permission to use anything more than the sword of the Word. Whoever went beyond that in the days of the early church was considered a heathen or an infidel. But the pope, as a servant of the church, married the church to the Leviathan of carnal power—supposedly doing Christ a service. Then the Antichrist was born and the mystery of iniquity began to appear (2 Thess. 2), which had long been hidden previously.

For a long time the fallen church posed as a spiritual body, quoting scripture and leaving the impression of good works. But like the new Antichrist of today [the Protestant church], these false shepherds did not own the sheep, and they had to crawl into the fold through the roof to make havoc among them—to eat them, to ravage them and to kill (John 10). Like the devil who is a murderer from the beginning (John 8), this swordbearing crowd falls upon its victims with worldly power to plunder and steal. Indeed, no human tyrant has ever murdered and choked to death like this most

abominable beast that gobbles up, stamps to death, and devastates its fellowmen. To this extent the mystery of iniquity has been revealed.

A few of the most sincere among Pilate's sons ask if Christ is a king. But when one answers with the words of Christ in John 8 that his kingdom is not of this world, and when one explains how Christ came to rescue his followers from the false Jews (that is from those who falsely profess to believe in God), they say they do not want a king like that. They want a king whose kingdom is a visible one in this world. In this they are doing right, because they are the world's and not God's children. They are on the side of the Regent of this world, as Paul says (Eph., 6) that fights against Christ, and it is only right that they should also be ruled by him and not by Christ, who appears to them as a foolish king. When the people wanted to set him up to rule for their material advantage, he fled from them (John 6).

We should still flee from the false prophets who want to marry the patient and loving Christ with the sword of worldly power. Where this takes place, a new Antichrist is born. But I trust the Lord will keep us from this and protect his own from becoming pigs and swineherds that root up his vineyard (Ps. 79, 80). I trust that he will keep us as sheep with shepherds to build up his vineyard, and that we may stay close to Christ our chief shepherd from this time on into eternity. Amen.

Good Grain and Weeds

In closing, I present a parable of Christ to all those who would like to unite the kingdom of Christ with worldly force—to all those who want to tear good and evil apart with means other than through the Word and Spirit of God (Matt. 13): The kingdom of heaven is like a man who planted good seed in his field. But while he slept, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the grain. When the crop grew and came to head, lo and behold, it was full of weeds. The man's workers came to him and asked, "Didn't you plant good seed? Where do all these weeds come from?" He answered them, "An enemy has done this." His servants asked him whether they should go and pull out the weeds, but he said: "No. Leave it alone, lest you pull the grain up with the weeds. Let them grow together until the time of the harvest. Then I will tell the reapers to bind the weeds in bundles and throw them out to be burned. Then we will gather the good grain into the barn."

When Christ's disciples heard this parable, they asked him what it meant. You should listen now to that answer and decide for yourself whether Christ gave to his followers the sword of worldly power to get rid of evildoers before the end of the world.

Jesus said to his disciples, "The one who sows the seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world. The good seeds are the children of the Kingdom, and the weeds are the children of iniquity. The enemy who sows the bad seed is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. Like the weeds were gathered up and burnt, so it will be at the end of the world. The Son of Man will send his angels to gather up from his kingdom all the evildoers and will throw them into the fire where there will be howlings and grindings of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their father's kingdom. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Take note from this how the Lord Christ now works as a Saviour and not as an avenger. Now he calls everyone to repentance before the time of judgment when there shall be no time for repentance anymore. He allows worldly men to judge that which is outward and temporary, but he does not want us to judge what is inward and eternal, so that the grace of God may not be cut short, until the day when the wheat is gathered up. If it were not this way, Christ would not have spoken this parable.

The Gospel and Patience

As long as a man is alive he can be convicted by the patience and love of Christ to repent, and some may not turn to Christ until the twelfth hour of the day, as Christ himself says in John 11. But if we would kill him for his evil deeds before this, he would have no chance. For this reason the meek and humble Christ asks his followers (in John 13 and Matt. 11) to learn from him and to wait patiently upon all men. With the above parable he asks us also to wait, and he never calls upon us to take the sword to judge or rule over men. Nearly the whole chapter of Matthew 5 treats this matter of how we should not force others nor try to lord it over them or twist their arms in matters of faith. We need to learn to offer them the gospel with patience. Those who do it otherwise are of the world and not of Christ. They are unbelievers and not men of faith. Those who fight with the sword will be judged by the sword as John describes in Revelation 13 and Matthew 16.

In Christ, the only sword we know is the sword of the Word. It is the sword through which we judge and are judged, and it is the only sword we are commanded by Christ to use. We are to avoid and separate ourselves from those who do not believe the Word until they repent. Then we are to receive them in love and patience. This is the true Christians' judgment in this time. They are not asked by Christ to judge in any other way.

True Christian Liberty

True Christians never use their liberty to rule over the godly nor the godless. They use no kind of force, but rather allow themselves to be ruled over. They suffer force and violence with patience and love until the end of the world. They remain servants of Christ their Master who did not come to be served but to serve, and who did not come to rule but to let others rule over him.

True Christians need not to worry about government. There are governors enough in this world. They focus instead on staying Christian, and they struggle to gain the triumph of the Lamb to the praise of our Father and of Christ, to whom alone belongs the glory, the majesty, the praise, and the honour from now into eternity. Amen.

Is it not a wonder that Christ and the Apostles (especially Saint Peter after the conversion of thousands in Jerusalem) did not ordain some head man to rule over the church? According to the new "evangelicals," Christ and the Apostles must not have been thinking very far.

Why did God give the Levites no inheritance in Israel, and why did he give them neither property nor civil rule (Deut. 18; Josh. 14)? If the Levites were not to be involved in these things, how much less should the spiritual and kingly priesthood of Christ, of the order of

Melchizedec, be involved! All the works of the flesh and fleshly rule are to be brought to nothing under them, and the types of the priesthood are to be fulfilled in them as Paul writes in Hebrews 7, 8, and 9, and as Christ says in Luke 9. Christ said the Son of Man owns no place where he can lay his head.

The first council of the Holy Spirit, given through the Apostles, was sent by Judas and Silas to Antioch and throughout the churches. It was a message that ran as follows: “It has pleased the Holy Ghost and the Apostles to lay no burden of laws upon you other than the most necessary things. That is, to keep yourselves from *idolatry*, from *blood*, from *strangled things*, and from *fornication*” (Acts 15).

Regarding these four things in our time, the Spirit of God testifies to the fact that the Popish and Anti-Christian idolatry of today is worse than all the pagan idolatry of the past. Like Paul says in 1 Corinthians 10, if anyone confesses that the food he eats has been offered to idols, he would not eat of it. In this it is easy to see that the Pope’s idolatry is not only idol worship but the idol itself, for the Antichrist and his followers try to force us to eat from it. It is no wonder that the Spirit of God warns us to stay away from it.

As far as keeping ourselves from blood and strangled things, we see how necessary that becomes in these last times when worldly power is being joined to the kingdom of Christ. Professing Christians shed the blood of other men, something clearly forbidden to us by the Holy Ghost, and something that comes from taking part in that which is strangled.

What strangles, according to Christ, is the love of property, the riches and the glory of this world. Where the good seed falls among thorns, it is choked out and strangled before it grows up and dies without fruit. It is this choked out Word upon which the Antichrist’s kingdom is built, and nearly all men eat of it, contrary to the warning of the Holy Ghost.

In the third place, the matter of fornication signifies more than fleshly sin. It signifies spiritual fornication with the great whore (Rev. 17 and 18) with whom all the kings of the earth and all men have joined themselves and are still joining themselves as is now apparent. (This whore is the apostate church, formerly the bride of Christ, who has left her first husband to live with the man of worldly power.) It is necessary that all children of God watch out and stay away from her. If we do so, we do right. May it go well with you in the comfort of the Holy Ghost!

Amen.