

## General Introduction to the Whole

After reading, meditating and praying about Philip's remarkable treatise, I have come to the following conclusions:

1. Dirk Philips placed an strong emphasis and value upon the heavenly system of Jesus Christ as his comments concerning the Church, as the Body of Christ, shows in part two;
2. Philips and Simons, with many others, held to the heavenly Christology and Ecclesiology in opposition to the earthly system of the second beast who supports the great whore;
3. Philips, and the others who were in fellowship with him, held strongly to the essentials of Biblical Theology rather than systematic theology. The articles explaining the Trinity position of the Polish Anabaptists shows this also to be true;
4. These men were much like some of the English Particular Baptists in the 1600s who held to the enlarge Lordship of Jesus Christ unto the entire Kosmos, not just confined to the elect of God, however they were not what we could call Fullerites;
5. These men hold to the doctrines of grace, but did not express them in a systematic manner as the Protestant divines did. They called for a return to simple and Biblical writings and expressions of the faith. If we know what to look for we can find all the essentials of the doctrines of grace and high grace views set forth by many of them. Not all of them were Arminians as they have been falsely labeled. However, one must have eyes to see and ears to hear when reading these men in order to see how they dealt with the doctrines of grace and presented them.
6. They closely resembled their successors in the faith during the 1600s, the English, Welsh and American Particular Baptists in far too many ways to enumerate, but I will list a few:
  - a. They all practiced the Ordinance of Hearing as Dirk Philips opens up in this treatise; and Jane Turner, member with John Spilsbury's congregation did at Wapping, in her *Choice Experiences*;
  - b. They condemned the established ministers and other false teachers as the ministers of Satan;
  - c. Many of them practiced believer's baptism by immersion;
  - d. While they did not hold to the universal, invisible church made by an invisible Holy Spirit baptism, they often spoken of the church in an enlarged sense more than just the local sense; we speak of this as the totality of the elect or the redeemed considered in the ideal sense;

- e. They held that the entire creation manifested or preached the gospel outwardly but that only the true ministers preached it in the true Spirit and Faith of Christ;
- f. They held that the true ministers may be identified by their godly lives, their separation from the world, and all false religions, and their conformity to the gospel in word and deeds.
- g. Many of these men rejected what we call Arminian concepts and their false baptism, just as many today also do. John Spilsbury later said these were false preachers and were of Satan in his personal Confession of Faith in our edition of his *A Lawful Treatise of Baptism*, the second edition.
- h. Men like Dirk Philips and Menno Simons give unto us a spiritual link to men who went before them and open unto us the 1,400s and further back into the true spiritual succession of our faith.
- i. This works further validates the conclusions that Robert Baillie and other Pedobaptists set forth showing the concord and union between the English Anabaptists of the early 1600s and the European Anabaptists of the 1500s.

Two other points, these brethren had to contend with those called Spirituals, who were like the Quakers in the mid and late 1600s and others who were like the Seekers in the early 1600s.

May the Lord bless us as we study together; By one who has been given a Reason to Hope that He is a Debtor to Mercy; R E Pound.

## The Sending of Preachers or Teachers, Part 1

**Subtitle:** *That is, who are the true teachers who are sent by God and rightly chosen and called by the Christian congregation:*

*Whereby these are recognized and what fruits they bear.*

*Similarly, how one may know the false teachers and how one may shun them and not hear them.*

A small instruction out of Holy Scripture with an explanation of some contradictions and blasphemies introduced by the disgruntled blasphemers, and spoken in a mocking manner, against the true ministers (1) of the gospel.

By

Dirk Philips

from The Writings of Dirk Philips, 1504-1568.

Translated and edited by Cornelius J. Dyck, William E. Keeney, and Alvin J. Beachy, 1992.

**"He whom God has sent speaks God's words,"** John 3:34.

I, Dirk Philips, out of grace a fellow member of the faith and of the Christian congregations,

2 wish all God fearing lovers of the truth genuine spiritual wisdom and a pure understanding of the divine Word from our heavenly Father, and of Christ Jesus his only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### Knowing How to Distinguish Between the True and False Ministers

The Text Beloved in the Lord, all you who fear God and love the truth; since some at this time create much controversy and discord concerning the sending [of ministers], and in addition all ministers, be they whoever they are, boast of the gospel and allow themselves to think that they are sent of God, and that also without any doubt, now is the time of which Christ and the apostles have prophesied, namely that many false prophets and false Christians should come and lead many astray, Matt. 24: 11; 1 Tim. 4: 1; 2 Tim. 3: 1; 2 Pet. 2: 1; Jude 4; therefore I was compelled, out of brotherly love, to prepare a brief instruction *about the sending of true ministers in order that you may know how to distinguish true prophets, teachers, and Christians from false ones*. For this is the nature, character, and skill of Satan, that he transforms himself into an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11:14. Therewith he hides his guile and hypocrisy, disguises and conceals his ministers, *and sets them before the world in a beautiful appearance of piety*.

#### Satan and the False Ministers

For what has a more beautiful appearance than Satan in all hypocritical and unspiritual work as saints who seek righteousness through their own works and efforts, and present themselves so splendidly with words and appearance, with many ceremonies and churchly pomp? Who is more presumptuous and audacious with words of high praise than the false,

deceptive, and lying prophets; those who run but are not sent from the Lord, those who prophesy but not through the Spirit of the Lord? *Who pride themselves more of the gospel and Christendom, of true theology and knowledge of Holy Scripture than [do] the highly praised wise [ones] of the world, the perverse scribes who allow themselves to think, since they have studied in advanced schools (and, therefore, according to the common proverb, the more learned the more perverted they have become), so they alone are teachers and masters of Scripture and yet themselves have neither received nor taught the divine words of the first school primer? For they have not yet been in the school of Christ and they have not had the true master teacher, namely, the Holy Spirit, yes, have neither seen nor known [him].* But they speak about the Scripture which they do not understand, and even when they already do understand something, they yet do not wish to act in accord with it, John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7.

### Christ's Warnings

These are the genuine false Christians and false prophets of whom the Lord warns us and of their fine image, saying, "*Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits,*" Matt. 7:15 [16]. And at another [place] Christ says, "*Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven*" [Matt. 7:21]. And after this follows: "*On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then I will declare to them, never knew you; depart from me, all you who do evil,' "*" [Matt. 7:22-23]. Out of these words of Christ it is clear that those are the false Christians and false prophets who boast much about Christ, prattle beautifully about the gospel, and portray themselves in a splendid manner and, *in addition, live according to the flesh and have the nature of a wolf in order to destroy the sheep of Christ in every way they can.*

Christ has truly warned us about these, although there are few who heed this warning. The people are generally so minded as Ahab the king of Israel was minded, namely, *they love lies and hate the truth and cannot endure it that a Micaiah should come and tell them the truth,* 1 Kings 22:[8]. Therefore, they cannot understand the truth. "For the foolish, (says Jesus Ben Sirach), shall not find wisdom, and the godless shall not get to see her. She is far from the proud and hypocrites shall not know her," Eccclus. 15:[7-8]. Therefore Paul also says, "*If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only in those who are being lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the exact image of God, does not shine on them,*" 2 Cor. 4:3[4].

## The Good Ministers are Cast Down and Rejected by the World

It is on account of this that false prophets have always had such great respect and attention, but the good prophets, regarded as those who lead astray, are shamed and persecuted. And that is the way it still goes. For Satan can so deceive the world that it accepts appearance for reality, darkness for light, and lies for the truth; yes, completely rejects Christ because his being is an offense to the world as the Lord says through Isaiah: "*Behold, my servant shall deal wisely. [He] shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. And many shall be agitated on his account because his appearance is so marred, beyond human resemblance, and his form beyond that of human beings,*" Isa. [52:13 14]. And Simon spoke to Mary concerning Christ: "*He is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against,*" Luke 2:34. And Peter said that Christ Jesus is the cornerstone of God laid in Zion, which is precious to the believers, but to the unbelievers he is the stone which the workmen have rejected and has become the head of the corner, "*a stone that will make people stumble, a rock of irritation for they stumble because they do not believe the Word on which they were founded,*" 1 Pet. 2:[8].

Therefore spiritual judgment, keen insight, and clear eyes are necessary [for] all believers, particularly in these our times, whereby they may see Christ rightly, rightly recognize his ministers *and distinguish them from the ministers of Satan*. These reasons move me, through the Lord's grace, to show all God fearing persons out of the biblical Scriptures, *which teachers are sent of God* and whereby and through what [they are recognized]. I do this in order that all pious Christians may be strengthened a little in their faith, comforted and refreshed in their hearts, and that all blasphemous mouths who speak blasphemously against the true messengers of God, against the faithful ministers of Christ in order to hide their [own] hypocritical nature, may be stopped. The eternal and omniscient God grant us grace thereto. Amen, 1 Tim. 1:17.

### First is God's Calling or Sending True Ministers

In the first place there are two kinds of calling or sending (whereby God calls anyone to an office) included in Scripture. *The first is from God alone*. Thus, Moses was called by God alone, Exod. 3: 10; Num. 12:6 [ 8]. Thus also Aaron was chosen by God alone, Heb. 5:[4]. Thus also the prophets were called by God alone and spoke, being driven by the Holy Spirit, 2 Pet. 1:21. *Thus also the apostles were called by Christ Jesus alone, chosen, and sent out to preach the gospel to all creatures [Mark 16:15; Rom. 8:19 22; Gen. 9:8 17].<sup>3</sup> These were sent out by God without mediation from any persons in order to prophesy and to teach, and [were] driven through his Spirit*. But because of the [fact] that Satan also sends out his ministers and at times drives [them] powerfully, yet under the appearance that they are

sent by God and driven by his Spirit, 2 Cor. 11: [ 13 14], therefore the Lord has left us a sure test whereby one may recognize both good and false prophets and [it] is this: In the first place, if the prophet prophesies something and it does not take place, then he is false. For thus says the Lord: 'Whenever a prophet presumes to speak in my name [that] which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die. But you say in your heart, 'How can I know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously, therefore you need not fear him," Deut. 18:[20 22]. These are the clear words of the Lord wherewith all prophesies must be measured and judged. Therefore the prophet Jeremiah spoke thus to Hananiah (who prophesied falsely about the release of Judah from Babylon): "The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times, who prophesied in many lands and kingdoms against war, famine, and pestilence or prophesied peace, will be tested whether God truly sent them whenever that comes to pass which the prophet said," Jer. 28:8[ 9].

In the second place, even though a prophet gives a sign or miracle, and it takes place as the prophet said, and the prophet in addition teaches that one should serve other gods, then the prophet is false. For thus says the Lord, "*If a prophet arises among you, or a dreamer, and gives you a sign or a miracle, and the sign or miracle which he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, 'Let us go after other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or to that dreamer; for the Lord your God is testing you, to know whether you love him with all your heart and all your soul,*" Deut. 13:1[ 3].

In these words it is to be observed that although a prophet gives a sign or a miracle and it comes as the prophet said, this is not enough to establish his sending that it is from God, if his teaching is not unblamable, fruitful, and wholesome. To this Paul also says, "*Should it be that an angel from heaven proclaim another gospel than we have received, let him be accursed,*" Gal. 1: 8[ 9].

### Secondly, Called from God and His Congregations

The other calling is from God and from his congregations. Thus Paul and Barnabas were first called by the Lord and thereafter by the congregations through the co witness of the Holy Spirit, and were confirmed in the divine call as the work of the apostles indicates, namely, that the Holy Spirit said to the congregations, "*Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and let them go,*" Acts 13:2 [ 3]. Thus Paul and Barnabas also ordained bishops or elders in all congregations (through united voice)

with fasting and prayers, Acts 14:23. Again, Paul writes to Timothy, "***Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you through prophecy when the elders laid their hands upon you,***" 1 Tim. 4:14. Similarly he commands Titus [to do] the same in the cities of Crete, to appoint elders over all as he [Paul] had ordained him, Titus 1:5. Thus also the congregation at Jerusalem set seven deacons before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands on them, Acts 6:6. ***From these [examples] it is clear that the apostles and elders with the congregations, through the power of Jesus Christ and the testimony of the Holy Spirit, called, chose, and ordained teachers and ministers.*** Therefore no one may assume such an office by himself, ***except he is called of God (like the prophets and apostles) or by the congregations of God with the laying on of hands (as Timothy and Titus and others in addition, were ordained by the apostles and elders, with the voluntary consent of the congregations) and thus others also were called and chosen.*** For thus says the apostle, "***And how shall they preach unless they are sent,***" Rom. 10:15. And another passage, "***No one takes this honor upon himself, except he is called by God, just as Aaron was,***" Heb. 5:[4]. Therefore, also the Lord so severely punished Dathan, Korah, and Abiram, and their followers because they wished to take up the priesthood without God's election, Num. 16. [See especially 16:28 35.] ***Thus the Lord rejects all prophets who run of themselves and are not sent by him, who speak in his name but are nevertheless not driven by his Spirit,*** Jer. 23:21.

### The Calling of the Holy Spirit

Therefore, everyone may well see to it that he does not run by himself before he is called by the Lord or by his congregation according to these previously described methods. ***But now no one will be sent by the Lord nor correctly chosen by the congregation, except through the Holy Spirit who must touch his heart, make him fiery with love, in order thus to voluntarily feed, lead, and send out the congregation of God, John 21:15; 1 Pet. 5:2, as it is written of Paul and Barnabas, "they went out sent by the Holy Spirit,"*** Acts 13:4, and Paul said to the elders of the churches, "***Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the congregation of the Lord which he obtained with his blood,***" Acts 20:28.

But because the true teachers must be driven, sent out, and set over the congregation of God by the Holy Spirit, it is clear how these must be prepared. For it is certain and undeniable that the Holy Spirit sends out no drunkards, nor adulterers, nor misers, nor servants of idols, nor hypocrites, who dissemble for the sake of the belly, and make merchandise with God's Word. For it is written: "The holy spirit who teaches rightly flees deceit, and avoids the reckless," Wisd. of Sol. 1:5. Therefore, Christ also says that the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit for she does not see nor

know him, John 14:17. But those who *do not* have the Spirit of Christ do not belong to him, Rom. 8:9. But how can those who do not belong to Christ have an office in his congregations and serve correctly, 1 Cor. 12:8? The apostle says that no one may call "Christ Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit," [1 Cor. 12:3], much less then can he preach Christ Jesus correctly except through the Holy Spirit. Out of this it follows forcefully that the ministers of Christ, the teachers and bishops in his congregations, must have the Holy Spirit through whom they first and before all things must be well instructed in God's Word. The common people will err and walk in darkness if the teachers themselves are unwise. The reason? Christ calls teachers a light of the world and salt of the earth, Matt. 5:[13 ]14. How shall the world see correctly whenever those to whom it belongs to be a light of the world are themselves darkness? Again, how shall the world correctly understand and know the Holy Scriptures and the power of God, when those who should be the salt of the earth have lost the power of the divine Word and themselves do not know what it behooves a good Christian to know? Again, how should the world not err when those who properly and with truth should be the city (built upon a high mountain) and show all erring ones the right way are themselves those who lead astray? Therefore, I say again, that the teachers themselves must before all things be well instructed, and taught in God's Word. As it is written: "*For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, that one may seek the law from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts,*" Mal. 2:7. And Paul says that "*a bishop must hold firm to the sure Word, so that he may be able to give instruction in saving doctrine and to admonish those who contradict it,*" Titus 1:9.

#### True Ministers Much Teach and Preach the True Word of God

In addition, the teachers of God's Word must teach correctly and without falsification, as the evangelist says, "*He whom God has sent utters the words of God,*" John 3:34. And Paul says, "*I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has worked through me,*" Rom. 15:18. And again, "*we are not like some who falsify God's Word but we speak in Christ out of sincerity and out of God, and before God,*" 2 Cor. 2:[17]; 4:2. Likewise, "*we are messengers in Christ's place, God admonishes through us. We beseech you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God,*" 2 Cor. 5:20. Again "*our admonition does not spring from error or uncleanness, nor is it made with guile; but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, to preach it, so we speak, not as though we would please people, but to please God who tests our hearts,*" 1 Thess. 2:3[ 4]. The apostle Peter says, "*If there is anyone who speaks, he shall speak as God's Word,*" 1 Pet. 4: 11. Therefore, the Lord also said through Jeremiah, "*Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him to whom my Word is revealed proclaim it faithfully. For what does chaff have in common with*

*wheat? says the Lord. Is not my Word like fire, says the Lord, and like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces," Jer. 23:28 [ 29]?*

### Recognizing the True Teachers Sent from God

Out of these and similar words of Holy Scripture, the true teachers may certainly be easily recognized, particularly as far as true doctrine is concerned, *namely, if they teach God's Word correctly, if they seek therewith the glory of God and the salvation of persons, if they are spiritually minded, if they have renounced all earthly and temporal things, if they know no one according to the flesh, 2 Cor. 5:16, if they love God above all and do his work without deception and hypocrisy.* For such leaders the Lord desires to have as Moses also said, *'Who says to his father and mother, 'I do not see you'; and to his brother, 'I do not know him,' and to his neighbor, 'I do not recognize him,' he has kept your Word and preserved your covenant. He shall teach Jacob your ordinances, and your law to Israel," Deut. 33:9[ 10].*

### Christ's Disciples Forsook all Things

Therefore Christ also chose and sent out such apostles to preach *who had first forsaken all things*, Matt. 10:[5], and had followed after him, and remained with him in his temptations, Matt. 4:19; 19:27; Luke 5:11; 18:28; 22:28. *These the Father gave him out of the world and to these he first revealed the Father's name, as he himself said, "I have revealed your name to the people whom you have given me out of the world; they were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your Word,"* John 17:6. These Christ also chose himself and separated from the world, just as he said, *"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain,"* John 15:16. These Christ also commended to his Father and prayed for them saying, *"I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours; all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.... Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one even as we are one,"* John 17:9[ 11]. *"I have given them your Word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,"* [John 17:14]. These [disciples] taught by God, chosen and separated from the world, Christ sent out and said to them, *"Even as the Father has sent me, so I send you,"* John 20:21. *But how Christ was sent from the Father, and how he forsook all things and gave up all his glory and became a faithful messenger of his Father [who] did not do his own will nor speak his own Word nor seek his own honor, but spoke and did as the Father commanded him, the Scriptures, both the Old and New Testament, testify so abundantly that we do not think it necessary to repeat such here,* Isa. 53:1[ff.]; Jer.

23:5[ 6]; Ezek. 34:15[ 16]; John 1: 1; 3:[13]; 5:19; 6:32; 7:16; 8:28; 10: 14 [ 15]; 12:49.

### The Faithfulness of Christ

Just as Christ now sent from the Father *was entirely faithful in his office, so also all his servants must be faithful according to the example of their Lord and Master*, Heb. 3:5[ 6], disregard all earthly things, deny the world, pursue heavenly things, and not seek their own glory but the glory of Christ who sent them. Of such an interpretation Christ said, "*He who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no unrighteousness,*" John 7: 18. Therefore, those are without doubt sent of God who teach God's Word correctly and with their whole heart seek the praise and glory of God, as Paul did. "*For we,*" he says, "*never used either words of flattery, as you know, or a cloak for greed, as God is witness; nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse taking care of her children. Thus our heart was filled with joy for you to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because we had come to love you,*" 1 Thess. 2:5[ 8].

### The False Preachers Teach for Wages

In these words one may clearly see how the apostle Paul was minded, and what he actually sought, namely, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. But thus the hypocrites and false prophets do not do, *but they seek their own honor, they incline toward money and goods, they preach for a wage, they serve their belly and are enemies of the cross of Christ*, Rom. 16:[18]; Phil. 3:18. Therefore, they also can [neither] do nor teach anything good as it is written, a godless [person] cannot teach correctly for it does not come from God. For to the correct teaching belongs wisdom, then God grants his grace thereto, Eccus. 15:14[?].

### A Godless Person Cannot Teach Correctly

Since then *a godless person cannot teach correctly, and he who is actually godless is he who transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ as John says*, 2 John 1:9, it follows there from, without contradiction, *that no one can teach God's Word correctly unless he himself remains in Christ and his doctrine.*

### Understanding Christ and Abiding in His Doctrine

But no one can understand Christ's doctrine, much less abide in it, *except through the Holy Spirit*. And no one has the Holy Spirit except one who is

no longer carnally but spiritually minded, as Paul says, "*But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness,*" Rom. 8:9[ 10]. *Therefore, he who has not died to sin and does not live in righteousness does not have the Spirit of God.* But he who does not have the Spirit of the Lord does not understand the Word of the Lord and *does not experience what is spiritual.* How should he then be able to teach God's Word correctly or correctly distribute the gifts of the Spirit, 1 Cor. 2:14?

Therefore everyone may well see to it that he does not accept the office of teacher before he himself has been taught by God and enlightened with the Holy Spirit through whom he may speak God's Word correctly.

### Must Be Fruit Bearing

Further, so Scripture testifies, a true teacher must bear or bring forth fruit. *For wherever God's Word is implanted in the human heart and spoken in the power of the Spirit, there it must, according to its nature, be active and fruitful.* To that end the true teachers are chosen and ordained of Christ *that they may go forth and bear fruit and that their fruit may abide,* John 15:16. But the fruit which all true teachers through God's Word and spirit must bring forth is [of] two kinds.

### Two Kinds of Fruit

*The first is that whenever God's Word is spoken through the Holy Spirit it bears fruit and is not barren just as the evangelical parable of the sower and his seed testifies, in which parable Christ gave us to understand that his Word is not without fruit,* Matt. 13:31 91; Luke 8:[5 7]; [Mark 4:3 9].

### The Bad Ground

For while most of the seed fell upon bad earth and brought [forth] no fruit (*which then is not the fault of the good seed but of the bad earth*), nevertheless *another part fell upon good earth and brought forth much fruit.* Therewith the Lord teaches us two things. The first, *that there are at all times few Christians upon the earth* although many have the name Christian and boast themselves of the gospel as then he also said to Matthew in the seventh chapter, "*The gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to condemnation, and many walk on it. But the gate that leads to eternal life is small and the way is narrow, and there are few who find it,*" Matt. 7:13[ 14].

### The True Word is Not Without Fruit

The second [is that] Christ gives us to understand, that even though the largest part remains evil, *his Word is nevertheless not without fruit*. There is yet perchance a good acre into which the seed of the divine Word is cast, sprouts, and brings [forth] fruit. This [is] what God has also said through Isaiah, "*Just as the rain and snow fall from heaven, and do not return but water the earth, making it fruitful and [bring forth] growth, giving seed to the sower and bread to eat, so shall the Word that goes out of my mouth not return to me empty, but accomplish that which pleases me, and shall prosper in that for which I send it,*" Isa. 55: 10 [-11].

### The Lord Makes the Ground or Heart Good for the Word

But because the Word of God is now the *seed that is planted by God in the hearts of human beings and desires and must have good soil, therefore it is necessary that the field of the heart be properly cultivated through the grace of the Lord*, [that] all weeds be plucked up or uprooted, so then the field will be made receptive of the divine seed and bring forth fruit, as James says, "*Put away all uncleanness and all wickedness and receive with meekness the Word which has been planted in you, which is able to save your souls,*" James 1: 21.

### The Lord Cultivates the Field of the Heart

To that end, namely, in order to cultivate and prepare the field of the heart, the law of God serves [well]. Therefore, true preachers must also first and before all things proclaim and preach repentance to the people (even as Christ and the apostles did) and teach them out of the law God's wrath and severe judgment upon sin, Matt. 3:8; Acts 24:25; but out of the gospel rightly to know God the Father in his eternal love and fathomless mercy, Christ Jesus in his grace and merits, through the cooperation of the Holy Spirit in order that the hearts, *smitten and broken through the law, may again be comforted and strengthened through the gospel*.

### The Place of the Law and the Gospel

For this is the nature, character, and power of the divine Word, that where it is spoken orderly and *through the motivating of the Spirit flinty hearts are smitten*, Jer. [23:29], the cold made fervent, and the sorrowful are comforted thereby. This is also the true teacher's office and work, according to the command of Christ, first to preach the law, thereafter the gospel. But false teachers preach to the people, also to the unrepentant, nothing but grace, proclaiming peace to them, and as Ezekiel says, "*They lay cushions under the arms of the people and pillows under their heads and shoulders,*" Ezek. 13:18. *With this they strengthen the hands of evil persons in order that no one may be converted from their wickedness and unrighteousness as can be seen and found daily. But because they do not*

*convert anyone, therefore they are also not sent from God and also do not have God's Word. For thus says the Lord I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken with them, yet they prophesied. But if they had remained in my council, and had heard my words, then they would have turned my people from their evil ways, and from the evil of their doings,* Jer. 23:21[ 22]. *These words testify to us clearly that those who have God's Word correctly teach and speak it; these are they who convert the people from their reckless living and evil ways. Again, those who do not do this also do not have God's Word. They may well have the letter of Scripture, but the living, powerful, and fervent Word of God that pierces and cuts through hearts and souls as a two edged sword, Heb. 4:12, that they do not have. They may speak many words, but because the Lord has not cleansed their lips with fire, (as the lips of the prophet Isaiah), Isa. 6:7, and has not given his Word into their mouths, (just as into the mouth of Jeremiah) that they [may] pluck up and break down, destroy, build up, and plant, Jer. 1:9; therefore they are not sent from the Lord and they also accomplish nothing, as is seen and felt much in the present day [from those] who want to be evangelical preachers but have not yet discontinued the human idolatrous ceremonies and institutions and again accepted true worship and ordinances.*

But so much some may well do, that they with Jehu hate the harlotry and sorcery of Jezebel and have a zeal against the priests and prophets of Baal. Nevertheless, they themselves walk in the sins of Jeroboam and allow the golden calves (which were erected in the place of divine worship by the godless king) to stand and remain a judgment upon themselves but a stumbling block and destruction to others, 2 Kings 9:22; 10:[28 29]. *Thus one blind person leads another until they both finally fall into the canal,* Matt. 15:14.

### An Unblamable Life

*The second fruit of a true teacher is that he himself leads an unblamable life which is conformed to the gospel. "For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power,"* 1 Cor. 4:20. The wisdom which the teacher [needs] to open his mouth in the congregation, Eccclus. 15: 10, does not enter an evil soul, nor a body enslaved to sin, Wisd. of Sol. 1:4. Therefore James also says, *"Whoever is wise and understanding among you, let him show [this] with his good life and works in the meekness of wisdom,"* James 3:13. Thus Paul also did as he himself said, *"I pommel my body and subdue it, in order that while I preach to others, I myself will not be rejected,"* 1 Cor. 9:27. And nothing is accomplished and leads to no end that anyone praise and chatter at length about himself, but let him who wishes to boast (says the apostle) *"boast of the Lord,"* 1 Cor. 1:[31]; 2 Cor. [10:17]; Jer. 9:23 24. For he is not praised who praises himself but whom the Lord praises. But the Lord praises the righteous who praise and honor

him as he himself said, "*Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed,*" 1 Sam. 2:30. But what the true honor of God is, Christ testified with these words: "*By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and that you become my disciples,*" John 15:8. But which are the fruits of the Spirit Paul told the Galatians, namely, *love, joy, meekness, goodness, faith, moderation,* Gal. 5:22 [ 23]. *Again, who are the true disciples of Christ he himself said, namely, those who continue in his Word, these will know the truth and the truth shall make them free,* John 8:32. *But no one abides in Christ and his teaching except those who walk as he walked,* 1 John 2:[6]. *But whoever does not walk thus, does not remain in Christ,* yes, that one has neither seen nor known Christ as John clearly testified in his epistle, 1 John 3:6.

### Following Christ Faithfully

Therefore, true Christians and primarily the teachers must themselves as disciples of Christ lead a Christ like life and faithfully follow Christ. But if they do not do this, then Christ has not sent them. For he said that we would recognize false prophets by their fruits even though they come in sheep's clothing, Matt. 7:15[ 16]. He taught us this through parables saying, "*Can one gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? So, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A good tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore, you will know them by their fruits*" [Matt. 7:16 20].

In these words Christ compares every good Christian, *but in particular an honest teacher (for he speaks primarily of the teachers) with a good tree and a false teacher with a bad tree. just as now a good tree brings good fruit and therewith shows its good nature and serves humanity in its necessity and feeds the body, so also a good teacher bears good fruit; therewith he shows his Christian nature and that he has been sent of God.* But the others, that is, the goodhearted listeners and lovers of the truth, he thus serves to their salvation, just as Paul said to Timothy, "*Take heed to yourself and to your teaching; remain in it, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers,*" 1 Tim. 4:16. Again, just as a bad tree can bring no good fruit, and just as one can pick no grapes from thorns and no figs from thistles, so also a false prophet cannot teach nor do right. The false prophet can indeed boast himself of the gospel, but that he should accurately teach or speak the teaching of the gospel and bear the fruits of the Spirit, that he does not do; his leaves are and remain leaves, that is, a useless noise beautiful in appearance all that he teaches, and hypocrisy all that he does.

If then now through the particular grace of God, the gospel (which has sharp eyes and looks not upon the sheep's clothing but upon the inward

nature, and does not inquire about the leaves but about the fruits of the tree) has come to the [light] of day and been revealed to us, and has given to us [the ability] to know the tree by its fruits out of God's Word; therefore [let] everyone pay attention to that and guard himself before the false prophets that he be not deceived by them.

Likewise, how a teacher should be qualified Paul describes very beautifully for us to both Timothy and Titus. There one has a true description, yes, an express example of an evangelical teacher. And Peter says, "So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the suffering that is in Christ, and also as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed. Feed the flock of Christ that is in your charge, care for them, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but with a compassionate spirit, not as those who domineer over the inheritance but being examples to the flock. So shall you (when the chief Shepherd reveals himself) receive the imperishable crown of glory," 1 Pet. 5:1[-4]. Here Peter gives all elders, leaders, and teachers a good lesson, that is, how they should be qualified, and says among other words, that they shall feed the flock of God out of a willing mind and not for the sake of shameful gain. For he knew well that the Lord Christ had asked him three times, saying, "Peter do you love me? Then feed my sheep," John 21:15[ 18]. Thus also all true ministers of the Word of Christ must teach God's Word unfalsified out of true love without desiring shameful gain. For this is called feeding in the Scripture.

But how many now at this present time accept the office of teacher who do not reflect upon this teaching of Peter, but it takes place even according to the words of the prophet, namely, 'Its priests teach for reward, its prophets prophesy for money; in addition they want to be seen as though they rely upon the Lord and say, 'The Lord is among us, no evil can come upon us.' Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; and Jerusalem shall become a heap of stones, and the mountain of the temple a wooded height," Mic. 3:11[ 12]. The same prophet also says in another place [that] the false prophets "declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths," Mic. 3:5.

### **Ezekiel's Warnings and Balaam**

God complains similarly through Ezekiel over the false prophets who proclaimed death to souls who should not die and affirmed life to souls who should not live; that is, they condemn the innocent and pious and justify the godless, and they do this for a handful of barley and a piece of bread, Ezek. 13:[18 ]19. And this still happens daily and proceeds in full power. Yes, Balaam, the son Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, he still has many followers and companions, Num. 22:5. And even though the Lord had opened the mouth of the ass to punish such Balaamites, they are yet so stubborn and blinded that they cannot

discontinue [their] greediness, Num. [22:21 35]; 23; 24; 2 Pet. 2:15. And then above that they still wish to be regarded as though they were true servants of Christ, and take the liberty which Christ has given to the true ministers of the gospel, (namely, that they may live off of the gospel and have seemly necessities), as a cloak for greed, 1 Cor. 9:14.

But this is a shameful thing that one under the guise of the gospel (which after all teaches scorn of all temporal things) seeks money and goods, Matt. 10:37[ 38]. This is also an abomination before God, that someone who undertakes to teach God's Word does not himself live according to it. To all such the Lord says, *"What right have you to proclaim my statutes, or take my covenant in your mouth? For you hate discipline and cast my words behind you. If you see a thief you run with him, and you keep company with adulterers,"* Ps. 50:16[48]. And Paul says, *"You presume to be a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the unwise, a teacher of the simple, you have the form to know something, and what is right in the law. Now you teach others but do not teach yourself? You preach against stealing but you steal? You say that one must not commit adultery, but you do commit adultery? You abhor idols but you rob God of his own? You boast about the law but you dishonor God by transgressing the law? 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,' "* Rom. 2:19 [ 24].

### The Many Ungodly and Proud Teachers

Oh, that many (who accept their teaching position and yet are so selfish, haughty, unrighteous, idolatrous, and lead such godless lives) would earnestly observe and consider well what great complaint is in all Scripture over the false prophets and shepherds with the implication that the corruption of the people has most of its origin from them. For it behooves the shepherds to feed the sheep, just as Christ commanded Peter and Peter commanded the elders, John 21:[17]; 1 Pet. 5:[2]. But how is this to take place when the shepherds trample *the precious pasture of the divine Word with their feet and then give the sheep to eat the same which they have trampled with their feet*, Ezek. 34:18[ 19]? It behooves the shepherds also to dip the water of divine teaching out of the fountain of salvation and give the sheep to drink; but how lamentable is it when the shepherds become Philistines and stop up the spring of living water by throwing in earth. Yes, when they are wolves who do not save the flock [but] feed themselves and scatter and strangle the sheep, Acts 20:29 [ 30]? Again, whenever they are such, as the prophet Hosea says, *"The bands of priests are just like robbers who murder on the streets and lie in wait for the people on the way to Shechem. For they complete all villainy,"* Hos. 6:[9]. And as Isaiah says, *"Your watchmen are all blind and have no knowledge; they are all mute dogs who cannot punish, they are lazy, sleepy, lying down, and snoring, loving to slumber. They are unashamed dogs who have*

*a mighty appetite, they never have enough. Similarly the shepherds also have no understanding; they each look to their own way, each to his own gain in his own place. 'Come,' they say, 'let us get wine, let us drink ourselves full and do tomorrow just like today, yes, and much more.'* " Isa. 56:10[ 12]. Oh, God, why have the false prophets, priests, and shepherds always been so many in the world and the pious ones so few? Against so many hundred prophets and priests of Baal, it is scarcely possible to find one Elijah, 1 Kings 18:22. Among so many lying prophets of Ahab, it is scarcely possible to get one Micaiah, 1 Kings 22:5[ 23]. *Thus also sometimes the sins of the people deserve that God allows an hypocrite and idolator to rule in the place of a shepherd.* For since the people are so minded that they hold good teaching in contempt, as Paul says, and have such weak ears that they desire more to hear what is pleasing than fruitful teaching, therefore they choose such teachers for themselves, after whom their ears itch, 2 Tim. 4:3. And it then happens just as the Lord said through the prophet, *"It is horrible and dangerous in the land: the prophets teach lies and the priests rule in their office, and my people like to have it that way, but what will you do when the end comes?"* Jer. 5:[30 31]. Therefore Christ also said to his disciples, *"Woe to you, when all speak well of you, for thus they did to the false prophets who have been before you,"* Luke 6:26. Contrary to this you are blessed *"when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they did to the good prophets, etc."* [Matt. 5: 11 12].

Therefore it is certain that the true teachers must be tested with the cross. And this comes because they desire, speak, and do other than the world; therefore the world hates them as is written in the book of Wisdom: *"Let us lie in wait for the righteous one, because he is of no good to us, and is contrary to our works, and blames us that we sin against the law, and calls our being out to sin. He claims that he knows God and boasts of being a child of God, punishing us for what we have in our heart. He is grievous for us to look at, for his life is unlike others, and his being is a very different being. He holds us to be unfit, and avoids our doings as defiled, and claims that the justified shall be rewarded at the last, and boasts that God is his father,"* Wisd. of Sol. [2:12 16].

Thus Christ was treated and opposed as he himself says, *"The world hates me because I testify of it that its works are evil,"* [John 7:7] This he also promised all his disciples and said, *"I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be as careful as serpents and as innocent as doves,"* Matt. 10:16. Continuing, he said, *"You will be hated by all people for my name's sake,"* [Matt. 10:22], but *"if the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, and I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A*

*servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all this they will do to you for my name's sake, because they do not know him who sent me,"* John 15:18 [ 21].

## **Persecution from the Beginning of the World to the End**

In summary, how all good prophets and true teachers have been persecuted from the beginning, and shall be persecuted to the end of the world, yes, as even the most high prophet and master, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God had to suffer and thus enter into his glory, Luke 24: [26], the Scripture, both the Old and New Testaments, testifies so openly and abundantly that it is unnecessary to discuss and write more about it.

*Therefore then they are not ministers of Christ who are so great and highly regarded by the world, who are seated on high and who persecute others purposely.* For that is far from Jesus Christ and from his gentle, divine spirit, Matt. 13:28. It is also far from all Christians who have the mind and spirit of Christ. It is not Christ like but tyrannical to persecute, to expel, to strangle the people because of faith and religion.

## **Resisting the Outward Ministry of the Holy Spirit's Word**

Those who do this are certainly a remnant of the pharisaical race to whom Stephen said, "*You stiff necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the righteous one, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it,"* Acts 7:51[ 53]. *Oh, how many pride themselves now at the present time that they have received the gospel out of the grace of God and yet do so little, yes, nothing according to it!*

## **The Worldly Ministry None of Christ's**

They want to be great masters in the Scripture *[and] be called evangelical preachers, but Christ Jesus and him crucified they know not,* 1 Cor 2:2. For Christ himself was poor and also chose poor disciples who had to deny themselves for the sake of the Lord, who forsook all things for the sake of the gospel, Matt. 8:[20]; Luke 9:58; Matt. 4:18[ 19]; 19:27; 1 Cor. 8:9, who were a spectacle to the world and the refuse of the world, and the offscouring thrown out by all people, 1 Cor. 4:9[ 13]. But these are rich and powerful, therefore also, according to the word of the prophet, their pride or haughtiness must be a costly thing and their cruelty must be called well done, Ps. 73:6.

## The True Minister and Humility

Christ said to his disciples, "*You are not to let yourself be called rabbi, for one is your Master, Christ. The greatest among you shall be your servant. He who exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted,*" Matt. 23:[8 11]. *But these allow themselves because of the gospel and their ministerial office to be called masters, licentiates, doctors, yes, worthy fathers and lords in Christ.* How splendidly does that accord with these previously mentioned words of Christ? Yet these are of no avail to them, they pay no attention to them but puff up their person, as the prophet says, "*They do only what they think; [they] speak evil of the devout, blaspheme the truth, and what they say must be spoken from heaven; what they propose and institute must prevail upon earth,*" Ps. 73:7[9]; for they think and also say, "*Our tongue shall take the upper hand. We have the authority to speak. Who is he who can master us,*" Ps. 12:[4]?<sup>4</sup> But what shall follow and happen to them after such presumption and pride, let them be aware of The Scriptures testify clearly that Jezebel, *while she indeed ruled for a period of time, feasted her prophets lavishly, and kept them in great splendor, yet finally had to be brought to shame together with all her followers,* Rev. 2:20. And although the harlot of Babylon has made the heathen drunk with the wine of harlotry, [Rev. 18:3], and has become proud and says in her heart, "*I sit, and am a queen. I shall be no widow, mourning I shall never see,' so nevertheless, her plagues shall come in a single day,*" Rev. 18:7[8].

### Considering Those Ministers Who are Sent of God

Thus we have now briefly indicated which teachers are sent of God, *that is, those who are thus qualified, just as the Scripture testifies, speak God's Word rightly, and are conformed to the image of Christ and his saints.* And what they yet lack, they seek with [their] whole zeal at the fountain of all grace, Jesus Christ. *Whoever is such an one is without doubt sent of God.*

### Those Ministers Not Sent of God

Again, those who are otherwise minded, speak and do other than what is seen in this previously described and presented mirror of the prophets of Christ and his apostles, these are also not sent from God. They can also teach nothing good nor speak God's Word correctly, for that must be spoken through the Holy Spirit, as Christ said to his disciples, "*For it is not you who speak, but it is the spirit of your Father speaking through you,*" Matt. 10:20. And Peter said, "*No prophecy ever came out of the will of humans, but the holy people of God, moved by the Holy Spirit, have spoken,*" 2 Pet. 1:21.

Therefore all that the spiritless people say, that has no power and bears no fruit. Yes, and if it were possible that they could speak with the tongues of angels, yet it is nothing more than a sounding brass or a tinkling bell, 1 Cor. 13:1.

### Concerning Hearing the False Teachers

We also urge and admonish every individual, be he teacher or listener, that he heed it well. The teacher may well see whose servant he is, of which spirit he is motivated, whether Christ is and works in him, whether he portrays the living Word of God in open testimony of the Holy Scripture to the people, images it, bears fruit with it, and himself walks according to it. *The listener may well take heed to himself that he not believe every spirit, but that he at all times recognize the teacher by his teaching and fruits,* 1 John 4:1. And the teaching must test and measure right according to the plumb line of the divine Word.

Similarly, observe, test, and prove fruit not alone according to their external and splendid appearance, but according to the Spirit and true reality. *And whichever teacher he recognizes and finds false, him he himself watches and hears him not, but turns from him, just as God commanded through Jeremiah and Christ through the gospel, namely, that one should not hear the words of the false prophets, that one should beware of them,* Jer. 23:16; Matt. 7:15, *that his sheep hear his voice, and follow him and the stranger they do not follow after but flee from him for the reason that the voice of the stranger is unknown to them. Yes, all those who did not enter into the sheepfold through Christ Jesus, as through the true door, but have climbed in through another way, these are thieves and murderers who come nowhere except to steal and to kill and to destroy,* John 10: 4 [ 5]; [8 10]. Therefore the sheep of Christ fear for themselves before such thieves, murderers, and destroyers.

### Concerning External Hearing from False Teachers

But that some suggest that *Scripture does not forbid the external hearing of the false prophets,* but the internal hearing only, *this is craftiness and philosophy, yes, an open falsification of the divine truth.* For this is certain and undoubtedly true, *that two kinds of bearing are included in Scripture, one the internal hearing which is faith, that which comes through the external hearing of the divine Word through the cooperation and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, as may clearly be seen in the following words of Paul: "How shall they call upon him in whom they do not believe? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have never heard? How are they to hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach when they are not sent? As it is written, 'How lovely are the feet of those who proclaim peace and words of Paul: "How shall they call upon him in whom*

*they do not believe? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have never heard? How are they to hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach when they are not sent? As it is written, 'How lovely are the feet of those who proclaim peace and preach good news!' But they are not all obedient to the gospel, for Isaiah says Lord, who believes our preaching?'*

*So faith comes from hearing, but the hearing is through the Word of God. But I say to you, have they not heard? Indeed their voice has now gone out to all the lands, and their words to all the world," Rom. 10:14[ 18]; Isa. 52:7; 53:[1]; Ps. 19:4.*

Here the apostle speaks *expressly about the external hearing through which the preaching of the gospel by the apostles' voices and their words were heard by all creatures under heaven*, Mark 16:15; Col. 1:6, through which many have also come to faith, *yet all out of grace through the internal working of God and his Holy Spirit, as God now through the external hearing of his Word creates faith in his elect, as through a mediator. Thus Satan also creates unbelief in his children through the external hearing of his false doctrine.*

Therefore Holy Scripture also admonishes us to hear God's Word and that is to be understood that we shall hear God's Word *with external ears and believe thereon with the heart*, John 5:24; 8:51; 10:27. This then is called to hear God's Word aright. *In like measure the Scripture forbids us to hear false teachers, Jer. 23:16. Ps. 1: 1; John 10:[51] and this is the meaning, that we should not run to the false teachers in the house of idols where they stand upon the stool of pestilence and falsify God's Word, nor hear their words nor believe them, 2 Cor. 6:[14 15]. This the Scripture calls not hearing false teachers, to shun the strange ones and to flee from them*, John 10:5. On this opinion the apostle John also says that false teachers are of the world; *"and what they say is of the world, and the world listens to them. But true teachers are from God. Whoever knows God listens to them, but whoever is not of God does not listen to them. By this one knows the spirit of truth and the spirit of error," 1 John 4:5 [ 6].* This is what we have now said in brief of the sending of teachers.

**Finish**