

On the Sword

Balthasar Hubmaier

Radical Reformation · Reformation · Treatise

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INTRODUCTION

Writing from Nikolsburg in 1527, Hubmaier answers a charge leveled against many Anabaptists of his time: that rejecting a state church meant rejecting civil order itself. Working through the New Testament passages his opponents used to argue Christians should have no part in the sword or in magistracy, he makes the opposite case, that government is a legitimate, even necessary, ordinance of God, and that a Christian may serve as a magistrate in good conscience. It's a useful corrective to the popular image of Anabaptism as uniformly pacifist and anti-government, and a reminder of how contested these questions were even within the radical Reformation itself.

To the noble and Christian Lords, Arekleb of Bozkowitz and Tzernehor of Trebitz, Chancellor of the Margravate of Moravia, my gracious Lords, Grace and peace in God.

Noble, gracious Lord, your Grace well knows that all those who in these last perilous times hold dear and preach the holy gospel, must not only be deprived of goods, but be tortured in body, yea, must even be wounded in honour {which to men is the most precious jewel on earth) and be oppressed by the godless. Even the weapons of the hellish Satan are here, through which he attempts without cessation to oppress, blot out and burden evangelical teaching and truth. Yet he will not succeed, his head must be bruised. Especially also must it be charged now by such servants of the devil, that all Christian preachers are rioters, seducers, and heretics, since they repudiate magistracy and teach disloyal doctrines. And yet this is not a cause for wonder. The same thing also happened to Christ, although he openly preached, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (when he paid the tribute for himself and for Peter). Notwithstanding, he was compelled to suffer back-breaking pains by liars, since he was reported a rioter and accused as a disturber of the people, whom he had forbidden to give the tribute-money to the Emperor. When the like now happens to us, what difference does it make? The servant is not more than his lord, and the disciple is not more than his master. If they have persecuted the master of the house, much more will they do it to us. But that your Grace may learn and know, what from the beginning I have always and everywhere held concerning the magistracy, how I also openly preached in the pulpit at Waldshut and elsewhere, as well as wrote and frequently taught (without any boast be it said) and how much I suffered for it from my opponents, who falsely charged many other things against me; — I have composed a small book in which your Grace may learn thoroughly my opinion, and elucidated in

general all writings which my antagonists have hitherto with much zeal charged to forbid magistracy among Christians. Such a tract your Grace will receive graciously from me, and briefly note my sentiments concerning Christian magistracy in the contents of the writings. Since I always, in this and my other teachings and deeds, desire justice and right, if I err I will gladly permit myself to be banished and punished, as is just. But, according to the Scripture, let them bear witness against the evil; but if I err not, wherefore do they smite me, wherefore do they brand me? For though my enemies (of whom I have as many as the old scaly serpent) are never willing to let me be justly judged, I am not so. If my God and Lord must suffer that they do offence and violence to his ivord, I must also suffer, yet (God be praised) not as an evil-doer. Let every one judge as he desires to be judged by the Lord. Well! Since it is the will of God, on account of our sins, therefore, I must and will, even against my will, fashion my will. Herewith, your Grace and my especially gracious Lord, I give myself submissively in your service for all time.

Your Grace, farewell in Jesus Christ.

Given at Nikolsburg on the 24th day of June 1527.

Your Grace's obedient Balthasar Hubmaier of Freiburg I have more earnestly held with the Scripture concerning the pious magistracy, than any preacher within twenty miles. But I have also charged tyrants with their crime, whence arises their envy, hatred and enmity.

Marginal note by Hubmaier.

The First Passage: John 18:36

Christ says to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world; if it were of this world my servants would doubtless fight for me, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." John 18:36

From this Scripture many brothers say, "A Christian may not bear the sword, since the kingdom of Christ is not of this world." Answer : If these people would use their eyes aright, they would say a very different thing, namely, that our kingdom should not be of this world. But with sorrow we lament before God that it is of this world, as we testify when we offer the Lord's Prayer, "Father, thy kingdom come." For we are in the kingdom of the world, which is a kingdom of sin, death and hell. But Father, help thou us out of this kingdom; we stick in it clear over ears, and shall not be freed from it till the end; it clings to us even in death. Lord, forgive us this evil, and help us home into thy kingdom! Yet such brothers must see and confess the truth, that our kingdom is of this world, which should cause us heartfelt sorrow. But Christ alone could say with truth, "My kingdom is not of this world," since he was conceived and born without sin, a lamb without blemish, in whom is no deceit, but without sin and any spot. He alone with truth might also say, "The prince of this world has come, and has found nothing in me," which we here on earth can nevermore speak with truth. For as often as the prince, the devil, comes he finds in us wicked lust, wicked desire, wicked longing. Whence also St. Paul, now filled with the Holy Ghost, yet calls himself a sinner [Romans 7:15-25]. Therefore all pious and godly Christians must confess themselves unholy even till death, whatever we may do of ourselves.

The Second Passage: Matthew 26:53, 54

Jesus says to Peter: "Put up thy sword in its place, for he who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword. Or thinkest thou that I could not pray to my Father, and he would send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how would the Scripture be fulfilled, that it must be thus?" Matthew 26:53, 54.

Mark here well, pious Christian, the word of Christ, so will you have an answer to the accusation of the brothers. First Christ says, "Put your sword into its place," he does not forbid you to bear it. You are not in authority; it is not your appointed place, nor are you yet called or elected thereto. "For who takes the sword shall perish with the sword." The sword means those who act without election, disorderly, and of their own authority. But no one shall take the sword himself, except one who has been elected and appointed thereto; for so he does not take it of himself, but it has been brought to him and given him. Now he may say, "I have not taken the sword. I would rather go unemployed, since I am myself not very stern. But since I am chosen thereto, I pray God that he will give me grace and wisdom that I may bear it and rule according to his word and will." So Solomon prayed and was given great wisdom by God to bear the sword well. Besides, do you hear this: Christ said to Peter, "Put up thy sword in its sheath." He did not say, Put it away, throw it from thee. For Christ blames him because he seeks it first, and not because he has it at his side — otherwise he would have blamed him long before, if that were wrong.

It follows further: "Who takes the sword shall perish by the sword," that is, he is brought under the judgment of the sword. Though he may not wish it, he will always be judged by the sword for his fault. Do you mark here how Christ sanctions the sword, that they shall punish with it, and suppress self-constituted authority and wickedness? And that they shall do who are elected for the purpose, whoever they are. Hence it is evident that if men are pious, good and orderly, they will bear the sword for the protection of the innocent, according to the will of God, and for a terror to evil-doers, according as God has appointed and ordained.

In the third place, Christ said to his disciples, when they asked him wherefore he was going to Jerusalem when the Jews had wished before to stone him: "Are there not twelve hours in the day? " As if he had said, They will not kill me until the twelfth hour comes, that is, the one ordained of God for my death, which Christ also calls the hour of darkness. But when the same twelfth hour was come, Christ said to his disciples, near the Mount of Olives, "Sleep on and take your rest. The hour is here that I should be given to death, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled." Mark, Peter hears that the appointed and fore-ordained hour of God had come, yet he would oppose, and draws the sword of his own authority. That was the greatest [error]. Therefore Christ speaks: There is no use in protecting and guarding me further. The hour foreseen by God is here, and even if there were twelve legions of angels here they might not help me against the will of my Heavenly Father. Therefore put up [thy sword] ; it is useless. I have already said to you, the hour is here; the Scripture shall and must be fulfilled.

From that every Christian learns that one should not cease to protect and guard all pious and innocent men, so long as he does not certainly know that even now the hour of their death is here. But when the hour comes, whether you know it or not, you can no longer protect and guard them. Therefore the

magistrate is bound by his soul's salvation to protect and guard all innocent and peaceful men, until a certain voice of God comes and is heard to say, Now shalt thou no longer protect this man — as Abraham also heard a voice that he should slay his son, contrary to the commandment, Thou shalt not kill. Therefore the magistrate is also bound to rescue and release all oppressed and persecuted men, widows, orphans, whether known or strangers, without any respect of persons, according to the will and most earnest command of God [Isaiah 1:17, Jeremiah 21:12, 22:3, Romans 13:1 and many other passages] until they are called by God to something else, which they will not need to wait for long. Therefore God has hung the sword at their side and given it to his disciples.

The Third Passage: Luke 9:54,55

“Lord, wilt thou that we command that fire from heaven fall and consume them, as Elijah did. But Jesus turned to them and rebuked them, and said. Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of man is come not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.” Luke 9:54,55

Here my brothers make a great outcry, as if the devil were there, and say, "Now you see, Balthasar, that Christ did not wish to punish with fire. And so we ought not to do it, nor should we use fire, water, sword or gallows." Answer: Look further, dear brothers, where Christ comes to the end, [and see] what was the authority and command given him by God. Consider also therewith what is the power of superiors. Do that and you shall already have an answer. Christ is come, as he himself says, not to judge men, condemn them or punish them with fire, water or the sword. He did not become man for that. But his command and authority was to make men hold with the word; that power he had received when he became man. So he says himself [Luke 12:14], "Who has made me a judge between you and your brother?" As if he had said, You may find another judge. I am not here for that purpose, that I should seize another power and command over you. On the contrary, the power and authority of the magistrate is given by God, that he should protect and guard the pious, and punish the wicked and destroy them; therefore has he hung the sword at their side, and since it is at their side they must use it. Now God always punishes the wicked, perhaps with hail, rain or sickness, and also through certain men who have been appointed and chosen thereto. Wherefore Paul calls the magistrate a "minister" of God. For what God might do of himself he often wills to do through his creatures, as through his instrument.

Yes, and although the devil, Nebuchadnezzar and many other wicked men are also called in Scripture servants of God, still it is far otherwise with an orderly government, when according to the command of God it punishes the wicked for the good of the pious and innocent. But the devil and his crew do nothing for the good or peace of men, but everything to their injury and hurt, in an envious and vindictive spirit. But the government has a special sympathy with all those who have transgressed; it wishes from the heart that it had not happened; while the devil and his followers wish that all men were unfortunate. Do you see, then, brothers, how far separated from one another are these two kinds of servants, the devil and orderly government? How also Christ wished to exercise his power on earth? Even so ought we to exercise our power and calling, whether in government or in obedience, for we must give an account for it to God at the last day.

Can I get in? Yes.# The Fourth Passage: Luke 12:13,14

"One of the people spoke to the Lord, Master, say to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. But he said to him, Man, who appointed me a judge or divider over you?" Luke 12:13,14

Here these brothers of mine cry out to Heaven, but too noisily, and say, "Hearest thou, Fridberger? Christ will not be a judge or divider. Judgment and court are forbidden by Christ; therefore the upright Christian should not be a judge, nor sit in the court nor bear the sword, for Christ did not wish to be a judge or divider between the two brothers." Answer: Hold up on your crying, dear brothers, you do not know the Scripture, therefore you are wrong and do not know what you are crying. Christ says, Man, who has appointed me a judge or divider over you? That is not my office; it belongs to another. Mark that: Christ does not condemn the office of judge, since it is not to be condemned, as will shortly follow. But he shows this, that no one should undertake to be a judge who has not been appointed and chosen thereto. Thence comes the election of burgomasters, mayors, judges, all of whom Christ permits to remain, if with God and a good conscience they rule well over temporal and corporeal affairs. But he was not willing himself to assume it; he did not become man for that purpose, and he was not appointed

thereto. In like manner also, no one should use the sword, until he is regularly elected for that purpose, or called in some other way by God, as Moses, between the Israelites and Egyptians [Exodus 3:10], Abraham for the deliverance of his brother Lot [Genesis 14:14-17], and Phinehas against the unclean [Number 25:7-9].

The Fifth Passage: Matthew 5:40

"If any man wisheth to bring thee before the court, and take thy coat from thee, let him have thy cloak also." Matthew 5:40

The Sixth Passage: 1 Corinthians 6:7,8

"It is already a defect among you that you have law-suits with each other. Wherefore do you not much rather let yourselves be wronged? Wherefore do you not much rather suffer wrong and be defrauded? But you do injustice and defraud, and such things to your brothers." 1 Corinthians 6:7,8

These two passages are announced by the brothers in so lofty and anxious a way, as if they believed they ought to offer themselves to the fire — a Christian may not be a judge. Well, we will search the Scriptures, thus we shall find a good answer. Suits, quarrels, complaints and wranglings before council or court, if one seeks them himself, are not right, as the aforesaid two passages very clearly show. But that, when the parties wish to go to law, a Christian may not without sin be a judge or decide justly between them, is not declared in the sixth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. For Paul writes: "How does any among you, if he has a complaint against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? [that is, before Christians]. Do ye not know that the saints will judge the world? If then the world will be judged by you, are ye not good enough to judge trifles? Know ye not that ye will judge the angels, how much more temporal affairs? If now ye have law-suits over affairs, name the most despised in the church and set the same to judge. To your shame I say that. Is it so indeed that there is no wise man among you, or not a single one who can judge between brother and brother, but a brother permits himself to go to law with another, even before the unbelievers?"

Hear Paul now, dear brothers, and see. If Christians wish to go to law over affairs, that is, over temporal goods, which is quite wrong, they should yet seek to be judged by a Christian and not by an unbeliever. Mark here, brothers, you have skipped over that. If Christians wish to go to law and not to be at peace with each other, they sin yet more, yea, they doubly sin, if they take their case before an unbelieving judge and not before a Christian. Therefore Paul mocks the Corinthians and says, "If ye will go to law, ye should choose the most despised among you to judge." He says that to them for their shame, since it is reasonable that they should be ashamed if they had not among them any pious and wise Christians, who might decide justly between them, but must run for an unbelieving judge.

Now a blind man can see, that a Christian may properly and with a good conscience sit in court and council, and judge and decide about temporal cases; although the wranglers and disputants sin, yet they sin more if they take their cases before the unbelieving judge. If a Christian therefore may and should in the power of the divine word, be a judge with the mouth, he may also be a protector with the hand of

him who wins the suit, and punish the unjust. For whoso shall judge righteousness ought not to hesitate to execute and fulfil punishment against the malicious. Who soles a shoe, if he dare not put it on? See, dear brothers, that councils, courts, and law are not wrong.

Thus also the judge may and should be a Christian, although the contending parties sin, because they do not much rather permit themselves to suffer wrong. Therefore a Christian may also, according to the ordinance of God, bear the sword, in the place of God, against the evil-doer and punish him. Though he is for the sake of the evil, he is also ordained by God for the protection and defence of the pious [Romans 13:3, 4]. Thus will the Scripture be true where it says: "You have an office not of men but of God; what you judge he decrees above you. Therefore shall the fear of God be with you, and you shall act with diligence, for God cannot see nor forgive iniquity " [2 Chronic;es 19:6,7]. This Scripture is given to us as well as to the ancients, since it pertains to brotherly love. Do you say. Well, but is it not our duty not to go to law? Answer: Yes. We ought not to do anything wrong. Therefore it is always the duty of every Christian, should he ever be appointed a judge, to administer justice to citizens and foreigners. That must follow, or the Scripture must be broken to pieces, which no man can ever accomplish.

The Seventh Passage: Matthew 18:15-17

"If thy brother sin against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone. If he heareth thee, thou hast won thy brother. If he heareth thee not, take with thee one or two, so that all things may be established from the mouth of two or three witnesses. If he will not hear, tell it to the church. If he will not hear the church, hold him as a heathen and publican." Matthew 18:15-17

From this passage the brothers raise a grievous outcry against me and say: "If a magistrate were allowable among Christians, then the Christian excommunication would come to nothing and be disused. For when one punishes the evil-doer with the sword, the church may not use the ban." Answer: Excommunication and punishment with the sword are two very different commands given by God. The first is promised and given to the church by Christ [Matthew 10:14; 18:18; John 20:23], for the admission of the pious into their fellowship and the exclusion of the unworthy, to use according to its will. So, whatsoever sins of men the Christian church forgives on earth, the same are surely forgiven also in heaven; and what sins are not forgiven here on earth the same are not remitted in heaven.

Since Christ delivered, entrusted and committed to his bride, the Christian church, his command to loose and bind in his bodily absence, as he had received it from his Father, therefore the Christian church may and shall in the meantime teach the people all that Christ has commanded her to teach. Also she has the authority and power to sign all men with the water-baptism, if they are willing to receive, believe, and order their lives by such doctrine, and to inscribe and receive them in her holy fellowship. For all that she rules and governs on earth, the same is done, performed, delivered and finished in heaven also. At some distant day this Christ, her Bridegroom, will come again in corporeal and visible form, in his glory and majesty, and will take again in person his kingdom, until he shall deliver it up to his Heavenly-Father, as Paul writes [1 Corinthians 15:24], until God shall be all in all. Even that is the secret [mystery] in Christ and his Church, according to the contents of the letter to the Ephesians, chapter five.

The other command relates to the external and temporal authority and government, which originally was given by God to Adam after his fall, when he said to Eve, "Under the man's authority shalt thou be, and he shall rule over thee" [Genesis 3:16]. If now Adam was set in authority over his Eve, then he received authority over all flesh that should be borne by Eve in pain. In like manner also God entrusted the sword to certain other god-fearing men, for example, to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Gideon and Samuel. After that the wickedness of men increased and became overflowing, yea, the bulk of it became rampant. The people at one time demanded from Samuel a king and abandoned God. The same king, at the command of God, Samuel gave them; and they thereby became bound to endure the royal authority and subjection that the king exercised thereafter, for their sins, since they had despised and abandoned God and had earnestly demanded from Samuel and not from God a king, like the other nations. Such subjection and burden we must and shall now day by day suffer, endure and bear, obediently and willingly; also give and render tribute to whom tribute belongs, tax to whom tax belongs, fear to whom fear belongs, honour to whom honour belongs.

And for this our sins are to blame, as the sins of Eve that she must bring forth in pain, and as the sins of Adam, that he must eat his bread in the sweat of his face. For if we were pleased to be obedient to God and pious, there would be against us no law, sword, fire, stocks or gallows. But since we have continually sinned, it must and will be so, and neither rebellion nor anything else can deliver us therefrom. For God's word is Yea and not Nay. But if we heap disobedience upon disobedience, and increase sins with sins, in his wrath God will give us kings, and children for princes, yea, he will let the effeminate rule over us, and if we try to escape Rehoboam we shall run into the hands of Jeroboam. All this befalls us because of our sins, according to the common and true proverb, "Like people, like king." "A stork gobbles up the frogs, who were not willing to recognise and receive as king the harmless log."

Wherefore, it is most necessary, O pious Christians, with greatest diligence and most earnest devotion to pray Almighty God for a pious, just and Christian government on earth, under which we may live a peaceful and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty. When God gives us such, we ought to receive it with special thankfulness. If he does not give, it is certain that we are not worthy of another and better, because of our sins. Of this case the Bible in the Old Testament gives us many histories as examples.

See now, dear brothers, that these two offices and commands, of the ban and the secular sword, are not opposed to each other, since they are both from God. For the Christian ban frequently has place and authority, as for example in many spiritual offences against which the sword may by no means be used, when according to the occasion of the sin there should be punishment. That Christ teaches us very clearly, when he says to the adulterous woman: "Woman, hath none condemned thee?" She says, "No one, Lord." He answers, "Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more." Mark: Christ says. Woman hath no one condemned thee? As if he would have said. If condemnation had fallen on thee, according to the law of God announced for adultery, I should say nothing to the judge, for it is the commandment of God my Father, that they shall stone the adulterer. But since no one has condemned thee, neither will I condemn thee, for it is not my office. I have not been appointed a judge but a Saviour. Therefore go hence and sin no more. That is my office, to forgive sins and to command that men walk no more in sins. Hear then, dear brothers, how Christ so properly exercises his own office, and lets the judicial

office stand at its own value. So must the Church also do with its ban, and the government with its sword, and neither usurp the other's office.

The Eighth Passage: Matthew 5:38,39, Luke 6:29

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say to you, Resist not evil, but if one give thee a blow on thy right cheek, turn the other also." Matthew 5:38,39, Luke 6:29.

This Scripture is cited by the brothers as proudly as if they meant that according to it magistrates must unbuckle the sword if they wish to be Christians. But make room, don't be in too much hurry, dear friends, and hear, you who wish to handle the Scriptures aright. "You have heard it hath been said [in the Old Testament, that is to say], Eye for eye and tooth for tooth." Therefore, when one comes and accuses another before the judge, that he has struck out an eye or tooth [that such charges were allowed to the ancients you will find in the fifth book of Moses, in the first chapter] the judge must hear the complaint and testimony, and adjudge eye for eye and tooth for tooth, according to the law of God. But in the New Testament it is not to be done in that way, but if one smites thee on the right cheek, do not complain of him, run for no judge, ask no vengeance, as it was permitted to them of old, but turn the other also. For to complain is always forbidden to Christians, as you have heard in 1 Corinthians 6:7. If now you suffer and do not injure, you do the business right, for so has Christ specially taught each one to do. But the magistrate is not therefore to unbuckle the sword. Nay, he is much more commanded [if such mischief or injury should happen among themselves or other people] to protect the pious and punish the wicked with the sword, — for that he is appointed a servant of God, to the good for peace, to the evil for fear. Therein he does the will of God.

Likewise, although the two contestants about worldly goods sin before the judge, the Christian judge does not sin when he judges the quarrel justly. So even if no one makes a complaint, but the magistrate knows that one has done another violence and wrong, he should none the less perform his commanded office, and pronounce just judgment and punish the offender. For so he bears not the sword in vain. Thus there is a higher standard [staffel, position] in the New Testament than in the Old, that he who is injured and damaged does not complain, and yet the magistrate punishes. In the Old Testament the injured complains and the judge punishes. See, dear brothers, how the thirteenth chapter of Romans must correspond with the afore-mentioned word of Christ; for, if we put the two passages together one goes well with the other.

The Ninth Passage: Ephesians 6:14-17

"So stand now, your loins girt with the girdle of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, in addition to all, having grasped the shield of faith, with which ye will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one ; and take up the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Ephesians 6:14-17

The Tenth Passage: 2 Corinthians 10:4,5

"The weapons of our knighthood are not carnal, but mighty before God to the destruction of strongholds, wherewith we destroy the device and every high thing that lifts itself against the knowledge of God." 2 Corinthians 10:4,5

But here the brothers run up and cry very greatly: "There, you see what the harness and weapon of the Christian should be, not made of iron or long wood; but the gospel, the gospel, faith, faith, the word of God, the word of God, shall be our sword and weapon. Paul forsooth is able to scour our harness, to furbish up well our Christian weapons; other preparations are all of the devil." Answer : Stop running, dear brothers, and mark what I will say in entire peace. First, I find it thus in the Scriptures. Paul speaks to us in these words to the Ephesians of one sword, and of another to the Romans, Chapter 13. Now tell me, whether here and there one sword or two are written about? You cannot say with truth, dear brothers, that he has written of one sword. For to the Ephesians and Corinthians Paul speaks of a spiritual sword, and says himself, "It is the word of God, with which one shall destroy that which lifts itself against the knowledge of God." So again he writes to the Romans of a temporal sword, which one bears at his side, with which he frightens the evil-doer, who cannot be frightened or punished with the word of God. Now if there are two swords, of which one belongs to the soul, the other to the body, you must let them both remain in their worthiness, dear brothers.'

In the second place, I beg, for the love of God, that you will read eleven lines before that passage from the Ephesians that you quote. Then you will certainly see and hear that Paul there describes the harness, sword and preparation, which we are to use against the devil, for the protection of the soul, and not the sword that men use against evil men, here upon earth, such as do harm to the innocent in goods, body and life. Now go on to read, and the truth will be disclosed to you from the lesson, when the text says: "Finally, my brethren, make yourselves strong in the Lord, and in the might of his strength. Put on the armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wily assaults of the devil. For we have not to do battle with flesh and blood, but with princes and authorities, with the world-rulers of the darkness in this world, with the spirits of wickedness under heaven," etc.

Mark here, dear friends; if your hearts were right, you would say. There are two kinds of swords in the Scriptures; one spiritual, which we are to use against the wily assaults of the devil, as Christ has commanded us against Satan [Matthew 4:1-11]. That is the word of God. Yes, of that sword Paul speaks here to the Ephesians and Corinthians what Christ himself says, "I have not come to send peace but a sword." [Matthew 10:34]. Besides there is a temporal sword, which is borne for the protection of the pious, and for the frightening of the wicked here on earth. With that the magistrate is girded, that he may with it preserve the peace of the land, and it will also be called a spiritual sword when it is used according to the will of God. These two swords are not opposed to each other.

Thirdly, inasmuch as Paul teaches that we should pray for the government, that under it we may live a peaceable and quiet life with each other in all godliness and honesty, I ask one question of you all, brothers, in a lump: Would a believing or an unbelieving magistrate be wise and skilful to preserve his people in such a peaceful, quiet, godly and honest life? You must, must, must always confess that a Christian magistrate will strive much more earnestly to do it than one who is not a Christian, who has at heart neither Christ, God, nor godliness, but only thinks how he may remain in his power, pomp

and ceremony. You have examples of David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, as contrasted with Saul, Jeroboam and Rehoboam. Therefore get thee behind us Satan, and cease to mislead simple men; under thine appearance of great patience and spirituality, we know thee by thine old conceit.

The Eleventh Passage : Matthew 5:43-48

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, Love your enemy, speak well of those who speak ill of you, do well to them that hate you, pray for those who injure and persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in Heaven, For he letteth his sun shine upon the evil and the good, and giveth rain to the just and the unjust. For if ye love those that love you, what have you for a reward? Do not the publicans also the same? and if ye act friendly to your brothers who do likewise to you, do not the publicans so also? Therefore you shall be perfect, like as your Father in Heaven is Perfect." Matthew 5:43-48

Here the brothers once more cry out murder on the magistrate, and say, "See there, the magistrate that a Christian is willing to be does not smite the wicked with the sword, but has love for his enemy, does him good and prays for him." Answer: Well now, let us take these words of Christ for ourselves and weigh them, and we shall not err. Christ says, "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy." Mark there precisely who is an enemy, namely, he whom one hates and envies. But now a Christian should hate or envy nobody, but should have love for all; therefore a Christian magistrate has no enemy, for he hates and envies no one. For what he does with the sword he does not perform out of hatred or envy, but according to the command of God. Therefore to punish the wicked is not to hate, envy or act the enemy. For in that case even God were moved by hatred, envy and enmity, which he is not, since when he wills to punish the wicked he does not do it out of envy or hate, but justice.

Therefore a just and Christian magistrate does not hate him whom he punishes; he is sorrowful of heart that he rules over people deserving of such punishment. Yea, what he does he does according to the ordinance and earnest command of God, who has appointed him a servant and has hung the sword at his side for the administration of justice. Therefore at the last day he must give an exact account of how he has used the sword. For the sword is nothing else than a good rod and scourge of God, which he [the magistrate] is called to use against the wicked. Now what God calls good is good, and if he calls thee to slay thy son, it would be a good work. When therefore God wills to do many things through his creatures, as his instruments, which he might accomplish alone and without them, he yet wills so to use us as that we serve each other, and do not go idle, but each one fulfils his own duty to which God has called him. One shall preach, another shall protect him, a third shall till the field, a fourth shall do his work in some other way, so that we shall all eat our bread in the sweat of our faces. Verily, verily, he who rules in a just and Christian way has to sweat enough — he does not go idle.

Now we see again plainly how the above-mentioned word of Christ and the sword so completely agree; wherefore one dare not, for the sake of brotherly love, ungird the sword. Yea, and if I am a Christian and rightly disposed, if I fall into a sin I shall wish and pray that the magistrate may punish me quickly, that I may no more heap sin on sin. Whence it follows that the magistrate may and should punish, not alone from justice, but from the love that he bears to the evil-doer [not to his evil deed] ; for it is good and profitable to the sinner that a millstone be at once hanged about his neck, and he be drowned in the water [Matthew 18:6].

The Twelfth Passage:

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill, but he who kills shall be in danger of the judgment." Matthew 5:21.

Why is it now, dear brethren, that you cry out to Heaven and shout overloud, "It stands written, "Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not kill." Now we have also the command in the Old Testament, plain and clear, that we nevertheless shall kill. Do you say, "Yes, but God commanded them"? then I reply, God has also commanded that the magistrate shall kill and degrade the turbulent. He has for that girded

them with the sword, and not in vain, as Paul writes to the Romans. Do you now ask, pious Christian, how "kill" and "do not kill" agree with each other? Answer: completely:

As be chaste and be married Matthew 19:3-12.

As have a wife and have one not 1 Corinthians 7:25-30

As a testimony is true and is not true John 6:31,32; 8:14

As have all things and have nothing 2 Corinthians 6:10

As to be rich and to be poor 2 Corinthians 6:10

As to preach the gospel to every creature, and yet not cast pearls before swine, Matthew 28:19; 7:6

As to love father and mother and to hate them Exodus 20:12; Luke 14:26

As to see God and not see him Genesis 32:30; John 1:18

As all men shall be saved, and those who do not believe shall be condemned John 1:7-12

As to swear by the name of God and not to swear Deuteronomy 6:13; Matthew 5:34

As not to sin and yet to have sin 1 John 1:8; 3:6

As to sell all things that we have and give to the poor, and yet to give of our superfluity that we come not to poverty Matthew 19:21; 2 Corinthians 8:13-15

As to be poor, and happy to give to him that takes Matthew 5:42

As Christ to be always with us to the end of the world, and yet not to have him always among us Matthew 28:20; John 16:7

As God punishes the wickedness of the father on the son, to the third and fourth generation, and yet the son does not bear the wickedness of the father Exodus 20:5; Ezekiel 28:17

As we should not do good works before men, and yet should do good works that men may see them Matthew 5:16; 6:1

As we do not know the mind of God, and yet he has revealed unto us the secret of his will Romans 11:33; 1 Corinthians 11:7-10

As ask of God all things and receive them, also ask and yet not receive them Matthew 7:7; James 4:2

As beat the swords into ploughshares and the spears into pruning hooks, and beat the ploughshares into swords and the pruning hooks into spears Isaiah 11:4; Joel 3:10.

As we shall not judge and yet judge, and set those inferior to us to judge Luke 4:37; 1 Corinthians 6:2-4

As Abraham was justified by faith, and yet by works Romans 4:3; James 2:21; Hebrews 11:8

As to please our neighbour, and yet not to please men Romans 15:2; Galatians 1:10.

As to hate evil, and yet bless those that persecute us Matthew 18:21; Romans 12:9

As we shall become children, and yet shall not be children Matthew 19:14; 1 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:14

As God wills all men to be saved, and yet whom he will he pities, and whom he will he hardens 1 Timothy 2:4; Romans 9:18

As the yoke of Christ is sweet, and yet impossible to men Matthew 11:20; 19:26

As the angels desire to see the face of God, and yet if his glory appears we shall be satisfied 1 Peter 1:12; Psalm 16:11

As the judgment of God is good, and yet God has given a judgment that is not good, Romans 7:12

As that the king should not have many wives, and yet Rehoboam had fourteen, Abijah as many, David also many, and Solomon 700, besides 300 concubines, Deuteronomy 17:17; 2 Chronicles 11:21; 13:21; 1 Kings 11:3

As God will not keep his anger forever, and yet the condemned must go into everlasting fire Psalm 103:9; Matthew 25:46

As that there is no law given for the righteous, and yet Christ has given us anew commandment 1 Timothy 1:9; John 13:34

As God does not tempt, and yet God did tempt Abraham James 1:13; Genesis 22:1

As the Father and Christ are one, and yet the Father is more than Christ John 10:18,30; 14:6-12

And many similar passages, which appear to be opposed to each other, as the wings of the Cherubim, and yet all alike come to a head in Christ. Therefore one should split the claws of Scripture and repeat it well, before he eats [that is believes], or he will eat death therefrom, and through half-truth and half-judgment will wander widely, widely from the whole truth, and go seriously astray. A comparison: Christ says, "This is my body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me." That is now a whole truth. Who now judges from this a half truth, says that the bread is the body of Christ and errs. But he who judges the whole truth, says that the bread is the body of Christ, which is given for us, but not bodily, in itself, or substantially, but retained in remembrance according to the command given by Christ at the last supper; and that is the whole truth and nothing else is. He who understands that can also see that "kill" and "kill not" may be entirely true and consistent with each other.

Now then we will take the word of Christ for ourselves, and see whether the magistrate is forbidden to kill. Christ says, "Thou shalt not kill," and he goes on to the roots of killing and says, "But I say to you, he who is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment. But he who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is in danger of the council. But he who says, 'Thou fool' is in danger of hell fire." Reading that in addition, dear brothers, you shall more clearly see what killing Christ has forbidden, namely, the killing that goes with wrath, ridicule, and abuse. But the magistrate [I speak of the true magistrate] does not kill from

wrath, is not moved by words of ridicule and abuse, but [acts] according to the commandment of God, who has earnestly commanded him to slay the wicked and to keep the pious in peace.

Wherefore now the magistrate may kill the evil-doer, and in doing this he is guiltless according to the ordinance of God, and himself cannot be judged. And I, or any other required and summoned thereto, am guiltless in helping him; and whoso withstands him withstands the ordinance of Christ and himself will incur the eternal judgment. Do not believe me here, dear brothers, but believe Paul, that you will find yourselves safe. Therefore those whom we call hangmen were in the Old Testament pious, honourable, and brave men, and were called prefects, that is, executors of the ordinance and law of God. Since it is honourable to the judge to condemn with the mouth the guilty, how can it be wrong to kill the same with the sword and fulfil the word of the judge, since the executor of the law strikes or kills with the sword none whom the judge had not commanded him? We read that Solomon commanded the honourable Benaiah to kill Shimei, Adonijah, and Joab [1 Kings 2]. Saul commanded Doeg to kill the priests [1 Samuel 22:18], and David ordered his servant to slay the slayer of Saul [2 Samuel 1:15]. Since neither the judge nor the executioner kill the evil-doer, but the law of God, therefore are the judge, magistrate and executioner called in the Scripture servants of God and not murderers. God judges, condemns and kills through them, and not they themselves. Whence it follows, they who would not kill the evil-doer but let him live, even murder and sin against the command, "Thou shalt not kill." For he who does not protect the pious kills him and is guilty of his death, as well as he who does not feed the hungry.

The Thirteenth Passage : Luke 22:25,26

"The kings of this world," says Christ, "lord it, and those in authority are called ' Gracious lords.' " But you not so." Luke 22:25,26

What great maxim you make there, and especially of the words, "but you not so" I cannot satisfactorily tell. But I take pity on you as before. For you have not well seen either the preceding or the following words, for if you did you would understand them right and we should soon come to agreement. Well, then, we will begin this passage three lines farther back, and the meaning will then appear plain. Thus reads the text: " There arose a contention among the disciples, which of them should be ruler," who should have the authority in external and carnal things, since the secular authority is over flesh and body and over temporal things, but not over the soul. To him according to the divine order the sword is entrusted, not that he may fight, war, strive and tyrannise with it, but to defend the wise, protect the widow, maintain the pious, and to tolerate all who are distressed or persecuted by force. This is the duty of the magistrate, as God himself many times in the Scriptures declares it, which may not take place without blood and killing, wherefore God has hung the sword at his side, and not a fox's tail.

The Last Passage: A Sanction of Magistracy Among Christians

Let every man be subject to the magistrate and power, for there is no power apart from God. But the power everywhere is ordained by God; so that he who sets himself against the power strives against the ordinance of God. But he who strives will receive condemnation of himself. For the rulers do not make the good work fear but the evil. Wilt thou not fear? then do good, so shalt thou have praise from the same. But if thou doest evil, then fear, for authority bears not the sword in vain. He is God's servant, a judge for punishment over him that does evil. So you are obliged to submit, not alone because of the punishment, but because of conscience; wherefore you must also give tribute, for they are God's servants who provide such protection. [Romans 13:1-6.] This passage alone, dear brothers, is enough to sanction the magistracy against all the gates of hell. When Paul says plainly, "Let every one be submissive to the magistrate," whether he is a believer or unbeliever, you ought always to be submissive and obedient. He gives as a reason, "For there is no power but of God." Wherefore this obedience is the duty of all who are not against God, since God has not ordained the magistrate against himself. Now the magistrate will punish the wicked, as he is bound to do by his own soul's salvation; and if he is not able to do this alone, when he summons his subjects by bell or gun, by letter or any other way, they are bound by their soul's salvation also to stand by their prince and help him, so that according to the will of God the wicked may be slain and uprooted.

Nevertheless, the subjects should carefully test the spirit of their ruler, whether he is not incited by haughtiness, pride, intoxication, envy, hatred, or his own profit, rather than by love of the common weal and the peace of society. When that is the case, he does not bear the sword according to the ordinance of God. But if you know that the ruler is punishing the evil only, so that the pious may remain in peace and uninjured, then help, counsel, stand by him, as often and as stoutly as you are able; thus you fulfil the ordinance of God and do his work, and not a work of men.

But if a ruler should be childish or foolish, yea, even entirely unfit to rule, one may with reason then escape from him and choose another, since on account of a wicked ruler God has often punished a whole land. But if it may not well be done, reasonably and peaceably and without great shame and rebellion, he should be suffered as one whom God has given us in his anger, and wills [since we are worthy of no better] thus to chastise us for our sins.

He then who will not aid the magistrate to seek out the widows and orphans and other oppressed, and to punish the outragers and ravishers of the land, contends against the ordinance of God and will come to the judgment, since he acts contrary to the command and ordinance of God, who wills that the pious should be protected and the wicked punished. But if you are obedient, you should know that you have rendered such obedience, not to the magistrate or to man, but to God himself, and have become a peculiar servant of God, just as the magistrate himself is nothing but a servant of God. For that the magistrate has power and authority to put to death the wicked, Paul plainly testifies when he says, "The power does not bear the sword in vain." If the magistrate has no authority to kill, why has he the sword at his side? He then bears it in vain, which Paul will not suffer. He adds also explicitly, "The power is a servant of God." Where are they then that say, "A Christian may not bear the sword"? If a Christian may not be a servant of God, if he may not obey the command of God without sin, then were God not good. He has made an ordinance which a Christian may not fulfil without sin — that is blasphemy!

Accordingly, I counsel you with true love, brothers, turn back, take heed to yourselves. You have stumbled badly, and under the cloak of spirituality and humility have devised much mischief against God and brotherly love. All affairs remain more peaceful where one sees a Christian ruler and his subjects agree in a manly, brotherly, and Christian fashion, and many a tyrant would cease his striving and urging against God and all reason, and sheathe his sword according to the command of God. Yet if God wills that we should suffer, his will cannot be hindered by our protection.

To sum up: no one can deny that to protect the pious and punish the wicked is the strict command of God, which stands to the judgment day. Examine the Scriptures, Christian reader, Isaiah 1, Jeremiah 21, 22, Psalm 61, Micah 6, Nahum 3, Proverbs 3, Zechariah 7, Habakkuk throughout. This command binds the ruler up to the present day, as well as those five centuries ago. For Christ says to you, "Thou shalt obey the secular king and call the ruler gracious Lord. Not only so, but the greatest among you shall be as the least, and the foremost as the servant." If one is conscious that Christ here commands those who would preach his gospel to serve, they ought not to undertake any foreign office, nor entangle themselves with secular business, as hitherto our Pope and bishops have become the first and last in all secular business — yea, even in the business of war. So that when two cocks in Germany or Italy have pecked at one another in a scrimmage, the Pope and his cardinals have taken sides with one of them.' This Christ cannot suffer, and so he says that the preachers of his gospel must be free of secular affairs, as also Paul writes to Timothy. [2 Timothy 2]

In the second place: the text clearly points out that each of the disciples desired the pre-eminence, and they were quarrelling which among them should be greatest. Jesus could not see such a quarrel. It belongs to no Christian, out of lust for authority, to contend to be a ruler, but much rather to flee it. For if there is a frightful post to be found, outside of the sphere of the preacher, it is the post of magistrate and secular ruler. Christ speaks to this effect: "The kings of this world lord it and are called Gracious Lord." [Luke 22:25] But a Christian, if he is in authority, does not lord it. He does not desire to be called Gracious Lord, or Sir; but he considers that he is a servant of God, and is diligent in performing the ordinance of God, according to which he protects the pious and punishes the wicked. He exalts himself above none, but takes well to heart the word of Christ that the foremost shall be as a servant. Do you see, brothers, that here Christ himself points out how the oldest shall recognise and hold himself to be the youngest and the foremost to be a servant? — therefore there must always be, among Christians old and young, masters and servants, or he has given us this rule to no purpose. So, dear brothers, make no patchwork of the Scripture, but putting the foregoing and following words together in one entire judgment, you will then come to a complete understanding of the Scriptures, and you will see how the text does not forbid the magistracy to the Christian, but teaches one not to quarrel, war and fight for it, nor conquer land and people with the sword and force. That is against God. Also we should not greatly desire to be saluted as Lords, like secular kings, princes and lords. For the magistracy is not lordship and knighthood, but service according to the ordinance of God.

The Fourteenth Passage: Romans 12:19

"Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place to the wrath [of God] ; for it is written. Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord. So, if thine enemy hunger feed him, if he thirst give him drink." Romans 12:19

Whoever has attended to the tenth and eleventh passages above cited will easily answer. For as the Christian ruler has no enemy, he hates no one; therefore he desires vengeance on none. But he must do whatever he does according to the command of God, who wills through him, as his work testifies, to punish the wicked and dangerous people. He does this, not in wrath, but with sorrowful heart. But vengeance follows wrath; so, if one wishes to avenge himself because of his own wrath, that is here forbidden. Since vengeance is God's, he will re-pay the evil. [Deuteronomy 32, Hebrews 10 Proverbs 25] Paul gives the reason for this, from the twelfth chapter to the thirteenth: we should not avenge ourselves, because God has ordained the magistracy for vengeance, as his servants, whose duty is to protect, to punish, to avenge.

The Fifteenth Passage: Ephesians 1:4,5; Colossians 1:2

"Christ is our head and we are his members." Ephesians 1:4,5; Colossians 1:2

Here I must indulge myself, for they cry out at me: "Do you not see that our head, Christ, has not striven or fought? Therefore we must not strive, but patiently go to death." First, dear brothers, I fear you do not know what divine or Christlike means, for there is a great difference between them. As to that, if we look at ourselves as we are by nature, Christ is not our head and we are not his members. While he is righteous and truthful, we are wicked and full of lies. Christ is a child of grace, we are children of wrath. Christ never did any sin, we are conceived and born in sins. Do you see how as members we agree with the head?

Second, that Paul nevertheless calls us members of Christ pertains to faith. That is said so many times. If we know ourselves, that we ought to be members of Christ, and yet are not, we confess ourselves guilty and pray God for pardon through Christ Jesus. Through having done this, we firmly believe that God has forgiven us our sins. Now by faith we have become members of Christ, not in nature, that is, in will and works. So far as flesh is concerned, that cannot be obedient to the command of God, but by faith power is given us to become children of God, after the spirit and soul, and to will and work good — though still all our works according to the flesh are blameworthy, evil, and worthless, and not at all righteous in the sight of God.

Third, since we now know that only by faith are we children of God and members of Christ, we have not all one duty. So that one should take the lead in teaching, another protects, a third tills the earth, a fourth makes shoes and clothes. Yet these works all proceed from faith, and are done for the benefit of our neighbour. Paul also writes further: "Wherefore you must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. " [Romans 13:5] What does that mean? It is this: the secular power is ordained of God for the peace of society — even if there were no Scripture about it to make us obedient to the government, our own conscience and knowledge tell us that. We should help, protect, defend the government, and pay service and taxes, so that we may remain in worldly peace with one

another; for to have peace in this world is not contrary to a Christian life. Otherwise Paul would never have taught us through Timothy to pray for kings, princes, and governors; but to keep peace with all men, as much as in us lies, that is right and Christian, [1 Timothy 2, Romans 2] But if God pleases to send us the exact contrary, we must receive it with patience. Do you see now, dear brothers, that your own conscience compels you to recognise that it is wise and helpful to punish the wicked and protect the good? That is called, in good German, "a general land-peace." So, says Paul, to further and preserve this peace we must pay taxes, customs and tribute.

Here mark you, dear brothers, if government is so unchristian that a Christian may not bear the sword, wherefore do we help and preserve it with our taxes? If we are not under obligation to prevent wrong to our neighbour as well as to ourselves, why do we choose a magistrate? Or are those in the magistracy not our neighbours? If we desire to live in peace under a heathen government, why not much more under a Christian? Since we are under a Christian government, the ordinance of God should appeal much more to our hearts than under a heathen. To what conclusion does that lead, dear brothers?

But Paul takes us farther and says: "The power is a servant of God," who shall use his protecting power for the good of our neighbour and the preservation of a general land-peace. Where is it written then that a Christian may not be such a servant of God as fulfils the command of God to the good of all men? Or that he may not undertake such a divine work (as Paul himself calls it) according to the ordinance of God? God surely wills that we should share his grace with all, until we come to the real prohibition of his Holy Word; and that we should remain and persist in the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord. The peace of God be with you all. Amen.

TRUTH IS IMMORTAL

Rejoice, rejoice, ye Christians all,

And break forth into singing! Since far and wide on every side

The word of God is ringing. And well we know, no human foe

Our souls from Christ can sever; For to the base, and men of grace,

God's word stands sure for ever.

O Adam, Adam, first of men,

What future did fate send you? After your fall in Paradise

How did your God befriend you? His holy word from him you heard,

That word which faileth never, To tend 'rest age, to hoary sage,

God's word stands sure for ever.

O Noah, Noah, man of God,

Thy God hath thee selected And sworn to thee an oath, since thou

His word hast not rejected: " With flood again to drown all men

My wrath shall hasten never ' ' ; To swollen pelf, to want itself,

God's word stands sure for ever.

And Abraham believed his God,

And so, for his devotion, His faith became his righteousness,

His seed like sands of ocean. Thus has God done for every one.

Who trust him perish never; To every one who builds thereon

God's word stands sure for ever. And Lot, devout, God-fearing man,

Two angels came to find him, And lead him out from Sodom safe,

Nor should he look behind him. God's fiery flood therein withstood

No living thing whatever; All men, like Lot, must pay their scot,

God's word stands sure for ever.

O David, David, king and lord,

A man of God's own choosing, God's truth he hid within his heart

Beyond all fear of losing. From David's seed Christ should proceed,

He swore who changeth never; In heaven and on earth the same

God's word stands sure for ever.

Jesus the Christ, of Mary born

And of the Holy Spirit, What all the prophets promised

We shall in him inherit. " Hear him," the call of God to all.

To save us his endeavour; To him all praise and honour raise —

God's word stands sure for ever.

Now hear, now hear, and mark with care

What else for us is written, And learn from his new Covenant

What more to do we 're bidden. And what of old has been foretold

Of Christ our Lord and Saviour; To latest hour, in vaster power,

God's word stands sure for ever. Matthew, the first evangelist,

From Roman service taken, Has now become chief counsellor

And has his sins forsaken; Hears Jesus call, who says to all,

" Follow with best endeavour." In ample fame, always the same,

God's word stands sure for ever.

And Mark, yes, Mark, the second is,

And richly he has taught us The knowledge of that mighty power
Wherewith our Lord has brought us To faith in God, to which is owed
All goodness whatsoever; For all men's tears, for all men's jeers,
God's word stands sure for ever.

Luke also follows in the train

And tells the gospel story: The wondrous works of Christ, and how
From heaven the God of glory To men undone has sent his Son
That men might perish never; Believe we must, or bite the dust,
God's word stands sure for ever.

And John, the fourth evangelist,

A youth of wondrous beauty, Reveals to us the Word divine
And teaches us our duty. With faith and love your calling prove
And seek no other lever; It gives no aid to hoe or spade.
But God's word stands for ever.

And Saul, God's chosen vessel he,

His early sin repented: He stormed and strove against the saints
As if he were demented. In vain the age 'gainst us shall rage,
Our souls from Christ to sever; In time of ill our stronghold still,
God's word stands sure for ever.

O Paul, O Paul, what fruit of all

Thy writings in their season! The truth thou hast declared shall stand
Against all human reason. Sin is o'erthrown by faith alone.
And, though the great and clever Were all employed to make it void,
God's word stands sure for ever.

And Peter, Jude, and James, all three

Do follow in this teaching; Repentance and confession they
Through Christ our Lord are preaching, In him men must put all their trust,

Or they shall see God never; The wolf may tear, the lion, bear, —
God's word stands sure for ever.
Ah, man, blind man, now hear the word,
Make sure your state and calling; Believe the Scripture is the power
By which we 're kept from falling. Your valued lore at once give o'er.
Renounce your vain endeavour; This shows the way, no longer stray,
God's word stands sure for ever.
O Jesus Christ, thou Son of God,
Let us not lack thy favour, For what shall be our just reward
If the salt shall lose its savour? With angry flame to efface thy name
In vain shall men endeavour; Not for a day, the same for aye,
God's word stands sure for ever.
Praise God, praise God in unity.
Ye Christian people sweetly. That he his word has spread abroad —
His word, his work completely. No human hand can him withstand,
No name how high soever; And sing we then our glad Amen!
God's word stands sure for ever.

Source: From Balthasar Hübmaier: *The Leader of the Anabaptists*, ed. and trans. Henry C. Vedder (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, Knickerbocker Press, 1905), pp. 279-310.

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Translation: Author died 1528 (executed at Vienna). Vedder's 1905 translation is public domain (pre-1923 publication). Verified via near-verbatim match of the dedication ("To the noble and Christian Lords, Arekleb of Bozkowitz and Tzernehor of Trebitz...") against the Vedder edition.

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