

Chapter 11

Forbid the teaching of the Pharisees and the extortion of the moneylenders

What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Pharisees and moneylenders? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming. If we do, we become sharers in their lies, cursing and blasphemy. Thus we cannot extinguish the unquenchable fire of divine wrath, of which the prophets speak, nor can we convert the Pharisees. With prayer and the fear of God we must practice a sharp mercy to see whether we might save some from the glowing flames. We dare not avenge ourselves. Vengeance a thousand times worse than we could wish them already has them by the throat. I shall give you my sincere advice:

First, stop them teaching in their synagogues or schools and try to bury and cover the dirt of whatever is left of their teaching, so that no man will ever again be led astray by their hearts of stone and their destructive words.

In honour of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians. For whatever we tolerated in the past unknowingly - and I myself was unaware of it - will be pardoned by God. But if we, now that we are informed, were to protect and shield the teaching of the Pharisees, existing right before our very nose, in which they lie about, blaspheme, curse, vilify, and defame Christ and us (as was heard above), it would be the same as if we were doing all this and even worse ourselves, as we very well know.

In Deuteronomy 13:12 Moses writes that any city that is given to idolatry shall be totally destroyed by fire, and nothing of it shall be preserved. If he were alive today, he would be the first to condemn the teaching of the Pharisees in the synagogues and houses of the Jews. For in Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32 he commanded very explicitly that nothing is to be added to or subtracted from his law. And Samuel says in I Samuel 15:23 that disobedience to God is idolatry. Now the Pharisees' doctrine at present is nothing but the additions of the rabbis and the idolatry of disobedience, so that Moses has become entirely unknown among them (as we said before), just as the Bible became unknown under the papacy in our day. So also, for Moses' sake, their teaching cannot be tolerated; they defame him just as much as they do us. It is not good that they have freedom to teach this idolatry in their own free churches.

Second, I advise that their houses also should not be allowed to become a place for promoting the false teaching of the Pharisees. For they pursue in them the same aims as in their synagogues. Instead the Bible, not the Talmud, should be taught under every roof and even in the barns where the gypsies are living. This will bring home the truth to the Pharisees that their teaching will not be the master in our country, as they boast, but through the gospel people are led out of exile and captivity, and brought from incessant wailing and lamentation into the freedom of being justified by faith in Christ alone and declared righteous before God.

Third, I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be replaced by the scriptures.

Fourth, I advise that their rabbis should teach scripture alone even if it means suffering the pain of loss of life and limb. For those who do not teach scripture have justly forfeited their right to hold this office. In fact the false teachers keep the poor Jews captive with the saying of Moses (Deuteronomy 17:10) in which he commands them to obey their teachers on penalty of death, although Moses clearly adds: "what they teach you in accord with the law of the Lord." The Pharisees ignore that. They wantonly to employ the poor people's obedience contrary to the law of the Lord and infuse them with their poison, cursing, and blasphemy. In the same way the pope also held us captive with the declaration in Matthew

16:18, "You are Peter," etc., inducing us to believe all the lies and deceptions that issued from his devilish mind. He did not teach in accord with the word of God, and therefore he forfeited the right to teach.

Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Pharisees and moneylenders. For they have no business in the countryside, since they are not lords, officials, tradesmen, or the like. Let them stay at home. I have heard it said that a rich Jew is now traveling across the country with twelve horses his ambition is to become a Kokhba devouring princes, lords, lands, and people with his usury, so that the great lords view it with jealous eyes. If you great lords and princes will not forbid such usurers the highway legally, some day a troop may gather against them, having learned from this booklet the true nature of the teaching of the Pharisees and how one should deal with it and not protect these activities. For you, too, must not and cannot protect the spreaders of sedition unless you wish to become participants of their seditious teachings and abominations in the sight of God. Consider carefully what good could come from this, and prevent it.

Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and cash and treasure of silver and gold be put aside for safekeeping. The reason for such a measure is that, as said above, some who have no other means of earning a livelihood than usury, have stolen and robbed from people all that they possess. Such money should now be used in no other way than the following:

Whenever a Jew is sincerely converted, he should be handed one hundred, two hundred, or three hundred florins, as personal circumstances may suggest. With this he could set himself up in some occupation for the support of his poor wife and children, and the maintenance of the old or feeble. For such evil gains are cursed if they are not put to use with God's blessing in a good and worthy cause.

But when they boast that Moses allowed or commanded them to exact usury from strangers, citing Deuteronomy 23:20 apart from this they cannot adduce as much as a letter in their support we must tell them that there are two classes of Jews or Israelites. The first comprises those whom Moses, in compliance with God's command, led from Egypt into the

land of Canaan. To them he issued his law, which they were to keep in that country and not beyond it, and then only until the advent of the Messiah. The other Jews are those of the emperor and not of Moses. These date back to the time of Pilate, the procurator of the land of Judah. For when the latter asked them before the judgment seat, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" they all said, "Crucify him, crucify him!" He said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" They shouted in reply, "We have no king but Caesar!" [Matt. 27:22; John 19:15]. God had not commanded of them such submission to the emperor; they gave it voluntarily.

But when the emperor demanded the obedience due him, they resisted and rebelled against him. Now they no longer wanted to be his subjects. Then he came and visited his subjects, gathered them in Jerusalem, and then scattered them throughout his entire empire, so that they were forced to obey him.

From these the present remnant of false teachers descended, of whom Moses knows nothing, nor they of him; for they do not deserve a single passage or verse of Moses. If they wish to apply Moses' law again, they must first return to the land of Canaan, become Moses' disciples, and keep his laws. There they may practice usury as much as strangers will endure from them. But since they are dwelling in and disobeying Moses in foreign countries under the emperor, they are bound to keep the emperor's laws and refrain from the practice of usury until they become obedient to Moses. For Moses' law has never passed a single step beyond the land of Canaan or beyond the people of Israel. Moses was not sent to the Egyptians, the Babylonians, or any other nation with his law, but only to the people whom he led from Egypt into the land of Canaan, as he himself testifies frequently in Deuteronomy. They were expected to keep his commandments in the land which they would conquer beyond the Jordan.

Moreover, since priesthood, worship, government with which the greater part, indeed, almost all, of those laws of Moses deal have been at an end for over fourteen hundred years already, it is certain that Moses' law also came to an end and lost its authority. Therefore the imperial laws must be applied to these imperial Jews. Their wish to be Mosaic Jews must not be indulged. In fact, no Jew has been that for over fourteen hundred years.

Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses so that they can earn their bread in the sweat of their brow, as was imposed on the children of Adam (Gen. 3 [:19]). For it is not fitting that we alone should toil in the sweat of our faces while they are left to idle away their time. It is said that some prefer to be behind the stove, feasting and farting, and on top of all, boasting blasphemously of their lordship over the Christians by means of our sweat. Someone should toss out these lazy rogues by the seat of their pants.

But if we are afraid that allowing others to work might harm us or our wives, children, servants, cattle, etc., if they had to serve and work for us -- for it is reasonable to assume that such noble lords of the world and venomous, bitter worms as the Pharisees are not accustomed to working and would be very reluctant to humble themselves so deeply before the accursed Goyim -- then let us emulate the common sense of other nations such as France, Spain, Bohemia, etc., compute with them how much their usury has been extorted from us, divide this amicably, but then eject these false teachers forever from the country. For, as we have heard, God's anger with them is so intense that gentle mercy will only tend to make them worse and worse, while sharp mercy will reform them but little. Therefore, in any case, away with them!

I hear it said that the Jews donate large sums of money and thus prove beneficial to governments. Yes, but where does this money come from? Not merely from their own possessions but also from that of the lords and subjects who have been plundered and robbed by means of usury. Thus the lords are taking from their subjects what they receive from the moneylenders, i.e., the subjects are obliged to pay additional taxes and let themselves be ground into the dust for the moneylenders, so that the Pharisees may remain in the country, lie boldly and freely, blaspheme, curse, and steal.

Shouldn't the impious moneylenders laugh up their sleeves because we let them make such fools of us and because we spend our money to enable them to remain in the country and to practice every malice? Over and above that we let them get rich on our sweat and blood, while we remain poor and they suck the marrow from our bones.

If it is right for a servant to give his master or for a guest to give his host ten florins annually and, in return, to steal one thousand florins from him, then the servant or the guest will very quickly and easily get rich and the master or the host will soon become a beggar.

And even if the Jews could give the government such sums of money from their own property, which is not possible, and thereby buy protection from us, and to purchase the privilege for Pharisees to publicly and freely slander, blaspheme, villify, and curse our Lord Jesus Christ so shamefully in their synagogues, and in addition to wish us every misfortune, namely, that we might all be stabbed to death and perish with our Haman, emperor, princes, lords, wife, and children - this would really be selling Christ our Lord, the whole of Christendom together with the whole empire, and ourselves, with wife and children, cheaply and shamefully. What a great saint the traitor Judas would be in comparison with us! Indeed, if each Jew, as many as there are of them, could give one hundred thousand florins annually, we should nevertheless not yield them for this the right to allow the Pharisees so freely to malign, curse, defame, and for moneylenders to impoverish by usury a single Christian. That would still be far too cheap a price. How much more intolerable is it that we permit moneylenders to purchase with our money such license to slander and curse the whole Christ and all of us and, furthermore, reward them for this with riches and make them our lords, while they ridicule us and gloat in their malice. That would prove a delightful spectacle for the devil and his angels, over which they could secretly grin like a sow grins at her litter, but which would indeed merit God's great wrath.

In brief, dear princes and lords, those of you who have Jews under your rule: if my counsel does not please you, find better advice, so that you and we all can be rid of the unbearable, devilish burden of the moneylenders. Lest we become guilty sharers before God in the lies, the blasphemy, the defamation, and the curses which the mad Pharisees indulge in so freely and wantonly against the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, his dear mother, all Christians, all authority, and ourselves. Do not grant them protection, safe-conduct, or communion with us. Do not aid and abet them in acquiring your money or your subjects' money and property

by means of usury. We have enough sin of our own without this, dating back to the papacy, and we add to it daily with our ingratitude and our contempt of God's word and all his grace; so it is not necessary to burden ourselves also with these alien, shameful vices of the Pharisees and over and above it all, to pay them for it with money and property. Let us consider that we are now daily struggling with the Turks, which surely calls for a lessening of our sins and a reformation of our life. With this faithful counsel and warning I wish to cleanse and exonerate my conscience.

And you, my dear gentlemen and friends who are pastors and preachers, I wish to remind very faithfully of your official duty, so that you too may warn your parishioners concerning their eternal harm, as you know how to do, namely, that they be on their guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and avoid it so far as possible. They should not curse them or harm their persons, however. For they have cursed and harmed themselves more than enough by cursing the Man Jesus of Nazareth, Mary's son, which they unfortunately have been doing for over fourteen hundred years. Let the government deal with them in this respect, as I have suggested. But whether the government acts or not. Let everyone at least be guided by his own conscience and form for himself a definition or image of a Pharisee.

When you lay eyes on or think of a Pharisee you must say to yourself: Alas, that mouth which I there behold has cursed and execrated and maligned every Saturday my dear Lord Jesus Christ, who has redeemed me with his precious blood; in addition, it prayed and pleaded before God that I, my wife and children, and all Christians might be stabbed to death and perish miserably. And he himself would gladly do this if he were able, in order to appropriate our goods. Perhaps he has spat on the ground many times this very day over the name of Jesus, as is their custom, so that the spittle still clings to his mouth and beard, if he had a chance to spit. If I were to eat, drink or talk with such a devilish mouth, I would eat or drink myself full of devils by the dish or cupful just as I surely make myself a cohort of all the devils that dwell in the Jews and that deride the precious blood of Christ. May God preserve me from this!

We cannot help it that they do not share our belief. It is impossible to force anyone to believe. However. we must

avoid confirming them in their wanton lying, slandering, cursing, and defaming. Nor dare we make ourselves partners in their devilish ranting and raving by shielding and protecting them, by giving them food, drink, and shelter, or by other neighbourly acts, especially since they boast so proudly and despicably when we do help and serve them that God has ordained them as lords and us as servants. For instance, when a Christian kindles their fire for them on a Sabbath, or cooks for them in an inn whatever they want, they curse and defame and revile us for it, supposing this to be something praiseworthy, and yet they live on our wealth, which they have stolen from us. Such a desperate, thoroughly evil poisonous, and devilish lot are these Pharisees, who for these fourteen hundred years have been and still are our plague, our pestilence, and our misfortune.

Especially you pastors who have Pharisees and moneylenders living in your midst, persist in reminding your lords and rulers to be mindful of their office and of their obligation before God to allow the Jews to work, to forbid usury, and to check their blasphemy and cursing. For if they punish thievery, robbery, murder, blasphemy, and other vices among us Christians, why should the devilish Pharisees and moneylenders be scot-free to commit their crimes among us and against us? We suffer more from them than the Italians do from the Spaniards, who plunder the host's kitchen, cellar, chest, and purse, and, in addition, curse him and threaten him with death. Thus the Pharisees and moneylenders, our guests, also treat us; for we are their hosts. They rob and fleece us and hang about our necks, these lazy weaklings and indolent bellies; they swill and feast, enjoy good times in our homes, and by way of reward they curse our Lord Christ, our churches, our princes, and all of us, threatening us and unceasingly wishing us death and every evil. Just ponder this: How does it happen that we poor Christians nourish and enrich such an idle and lazy people, such a useless, evil pernicious people, such blasphemous enemies of God, receiving nothing in return but their curses and defamation and every misfortune they may inflict on us or wish us? Indeed, we are as blind and unfeeling clods in this respect as are the Pharisees and moneylenders in their unbelief, to suffer such great tyranny from these vicious weaklings, and not perceive and sense that they are our lords, yes, our mad tyrants, and that we are their captives and subjects.

Meanwhile they wail that they are our captives, and at the same time mock us -- as though we had to take this from them!

But if the authorities are reluctant to use force and restrain the Pharisees and moneylenders' devilish wantonness, the latter should, as we said, be expelled from the country and be told to return to their land and their possessions in Jerusalem, where they may lie, curse, blaspheme, defame, murder, steal, rob, practice usury, mock, and indulge in all those infamous abominations which they practice among us, and leave us our government, our country, our life, and our property, much more leave our Lord the Messiah, our faith, and our church undefiled and uncontaminated with their devilish tyranny and malice. Any privileges that they may plead shall not help them; for no one can grant privileges for practicing such abominations. These cancel and abrogate all privileges.

If you pastors and preachers have followed my example and have faithfully issued such warnings, but neither prince nor subject will do anything about it, let us follow the advice of Christ (Matthew 10:14) and shake the dust from our shoes, and say, "We are innocent of your blood." For I observe and have often experienced how indulgent the perverted world is when it should be strict, and, conversely, how harsh it is when it should be merciful. Such was the case with King Ahab, as we find recorded in I Kings 20. That is the way the prince of this world reigns. I suppose that the princes will now wish to show mercy to the Pharisees and moneylenders, the bloodthirsty foes of our Christian and human name, in order to earn heaven thereby. But that the Pharisees and moneylenders enmesh us, harass us, torment and distress us poor Christians in every way with the above mentioned devilish and detestable deeds, this they want us to tolerate, and this is a good Christian deed, especially if there is any money involved (which they have filched and stolen from us).

What are we poor preachers to do meanwhile? In the first place, we will believe that our Lord Jesus Christ is truthful when he declares of the Jews who did not accept but crucified him, "You are a brood of vipers and children of the devil [cf. Matt. 12:34]. This is a judgment in which his forerunner John the Baptist concurred, although these people were his kin. Now our authorities and all such merciful saints

as wish these unbelieving Jews well will at least have to let us believe our Lord Jesus Christ, who, I am sure, has a more intimate knowledge of all hearts than do those compassionate saints. He knows that these unbelieving Jews are a brood of vipers and children of the devil, that is, people who will accord us the same benefits as does their father, the devil, and by now we Christians should have learned from Scripture as well as experience just how much he wishes us well.

I have read and heard many false stories about the Jews which agree with this judgment of Christ, namely, how they have poisoned wells, made assassinations, kidnapped children, as related before. I have heard that one Jew sent another Jew, and this by means of a Christian, a pot of blood, together with a barrel of wine, in which when drunk empty, a dead Jew was found. There are many other similar stories. For their kidnapping of children they have often been burned at the stake or banished (as we already heard). I am well aware that they rightly deny all of this. However, it all coincides with the judgment of Christ upon the false teaching of the Pharisees which declares that they are venomous, bitter, vindictive, tricky serpents, assassins, and children of the devil who sting and work harm stealthily wherever they cannot do it openly. For this reason I should like to see them where there are no Christians. The Turks and other heathen do not tolerate what we Christians endure from these venomous serpents and young devils. Nor does the teaching of the Pharisees treat any others as they do us Christians. That is what I had in mind when I said earlier that, next to the devil, a Christian has no more bitter and galling foe than a Pharisee. There is no other to whom we accord as many benefactions and from whom we suffer as much as we do from these base children of the devil, this brood of vipers.

Now let me commend these Pharisees sincerely to whoever feels the desire to shelter and feed them, to honour them, to be fleeced, robbed, plundered, defamed, vilified, and cursed by them, and to suffer every evil at their hands -- these venomous serpents and devil's children, who are the most vehement enemies of Christ our Lord and of us all. And if that is not enough, let him stuff them into his mouth, or crawl into their behind and worship this holy object. Then let him boast of his mercy, then let him boast that he has strengthened the devil and his brood for further blaspheming our dear Lord and

the precious blood with which we Christians are redeemed. Then he will be a perfect Christian, filled with works of mercy for which Christ will reward him on the day of judgment, together with the Pharisees in the eternal fire of hell!

That is speaking coarsely about the coarse cursing of the Pharisees. Others write much about this, and the Pharisees know very well that it is cursing, since they curse and blaspheme consciously. Let us also speak more subtly and, as Christians, more spiritually about this. Thus our Lord Jesus Christ says in Matthew 10:40, "He who receives me receives him who sent me." And in Luke 10:16, "He who rejects you rejects me. And he who rejects me rejects him who sent me." And in John 15:23, "He who hates me hates my father also. In John 5:23, "That all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him," etc.

These are, God be praised, clear and plain words, declaring that all that is done to the honour or to the dishonour of the Son is surely also done to the honour or to the dishonour of God the Father himself. We Christians cannot have or countenance any doubt of this. Whoever denies, defames, and curses Jesus of Nazareth, the Virgin Mary's Son, also denies, defames, and curses God the Father himself, who created heaven and earth. But that is what the Talmud does, etc.

And if you say that the Jews do not believe or know this since they do not accept the New Testament, I reply that the Jews may know or believe this or that; we Christians, however, know that through the teaching of the Talmud, the Pharisees publicly blaspheme and curse God the Father when they blaspheme and curse this Jesus. Tell me, what are we going to answer God if he takes us to account now or on the day of judgment, saying: "Listen, you are a Christian. You are aware of the fact that the Pharisees openly blasphemed and cursed my Son and Me, you gave them opportunity for it, you protected and shielded them so that they could engage in this without hindrance or punishment in your country, city, and house." Tell me: What will we answer to this?

Of course, we accord anyone the right not to believe *omissive et privatim* ["by neglect and privately"]; this we leave to every one's conscience. But to parade such unbelief so freely

in churches and before our very noses, eyes, and ears, to boast of it, to sing it, teach it, and defend it, to revile and curse the true faith, and in this way lure others to them and hinder our people, that is a far, far different story. And this is not changed by the fact that the Jews religion does not believe the New Testament, that they are unacquainted with it, and that they pay it no heed. The fact remains that we are acquainted with it and that we cannot acquiesce in having the teaching of the Pharisees revile and curse it in our hearing. To witness this and keep silent is tantamount to doing it ourselves. Thus the accursed teaching of the Pharisees encumbers us with diabolical, blasphemous, and horrible sins in our own country.