
A HUMBLE PRAYER TO THE READER.

It is an old proverb, dear reader, that "Many men have many minds." Every person, generally judges according to his own ideas, whereby many an unjust and wicked sentence is rendered, especially where blind partiality has its sway.

Since I find that our opponents, with their false doctrine cannot stand before the power of the holy, divine word, and since they diligently try so to defame and calumniate us, and so garble our words, that we, with truth on our side, are rejected by the world, and they, with falsehood on their side, are honored by the world; therefore I pray all impartial readers not to be offended at their saying, "Menno has not truthfully written this or that."

In accordance with the doctrine of Christ, I rejoice in being called a liar by the liars. I trust that those who are born of the truth shall not charge me with falsehood; for I have chosen truth for a mother, more than twenty-one years, since. I also desire, in my weakness, to walk in her ways as an obedient, faithful child, without looking back and without offense, so long as I remain on earth. Of this my hand and mouth, my humble life, together with my tribulation, poverty, privation, misery, cross and death shall be witness against my enemies, at the judgment of Christ. Take heed.

I deem it impossible literally to describe those parts of the discussion which Micron

has suppressed or misinterpreted, just as it happened. Nor have the holy apostles and evangelists who described the actions and doctrine of Christ, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, done so. For the one describes the same occurrence this way, and the other that way. It sufficed them to show the foundation of truth; so it does me. I do not desire to wrangle about a word. I only care about showing to the reader that the crucified Christ Jesus is God's first-born and only begotten, true Son; and to show that Micron has given quite an untrue account of the discussion, and that he has deceived his readers by open falsehood.

Secondly, I pray them not to take it amiss that I also referred to John A'Lasco. It was not done through hatred nor disfavor; but zeal for the glory of God and of Christ his Son, and for the honor of eternal truth, and for the sincerely desired salvation of your souls, have urged me to do so; because Micron says, "That they are of one mind in doctrine," and I do not see that one could believe, teach, write, speak, hold, or feel more abominably concerning the crucified Christ than he does in his defense against me. Besides, I hear that he, also, is become a man guilty of blood, notwithstanding he verbally confessed to me that none should be harmed on account of the faith.

But now, as I hear, it is claimed that it was not on account of faith, but on account of disobedience. As the foundation is quicksand so are their assertions. Let the rulers command things in keeping with the gospel of Christ and neighborly love; and if we refuse to obey them, then we are culpable. I will leave it to the judgment of all reasonable rulers, as before God in Christ, whether it is in accordance with, or contrary to the Scriptures, to expatriate the poor souls because they fear God; confess the crucified Christ to be God's Son; receive the holy baptism according to the commandment of the Lord and the doctrine of the apostles; affirm their testimony by yea or nay, in accordance with Christ's command, and because they lead a penitent, pious life in righteousness, &c.

I am aware that there are many unsuspecting hearts who look more to John A'Lasco and to the learned than they do to Christ and his apostles; therefore I have also referred to his errors in regard to this matter that all godfearing readers may see what kind of writers and teachers *they* are who are so highly esteemed and whose names are considered so worthy.

Thirdly, I pray that none will accept my saying that I will no longer solicit a public discussion, in such a sense as meaning that I have no courage to do so. This is not the meaning I wish to impart. But I do not desire, to discuss publicly nor privately with such people as those to whom I referred in my epistle; nor with such as dishonestly adulterate, change, break and misinterpret my words and testimony, and slander us as did Micron from the beginning to the end of his writing. For I generally find myself deceived by them on all hands, as it is the nature which would lead an easy life and not take up the cross of the Lord.

But if any rulers should be troubled at heart concerning the Scriptures and be suspicious of their preachers and teachers, and would ask me to a public discussion for the sake of finding out the truth, it would be as glad a tidings to me as I could hear on earth; nor would I, I trust, be dissuaded nor prevented by the godfearing, to whose hands and counsel I always willingly commend myself. For we are sure that we

have the Scriptures and truth on our side.

Fourthly, I pray them not to take it as upbraiding and slandering that I sometimes handle Micron roughly, according to the truth. It was done for no other purpose than that he and his followers may acknowledge their deceiving, lying spirit, through such earnest admonitions which are in keeping with the foundation of Scripture, that they may take a dislike to their abominable doings, and thus renounce their evil ways; as, also, that all the unsuspecting, good hearts which are bound by their snares of unrighteousness, may be delivered to the praise of the Lord.

It was done in the same spirit which actuated the holy apostles and prophets, which actuated Christ himself, in their several reproaches. If any one now should reprove me of pithiness, they must first reprove Christ and his messengers. For it is they who have, in the Holy Scriptures, thus taught me and all teachers who follow and uphold the right.

All those who have a scriptural understanding, know that where we find mention made in the Scriptures of the despising of, and blasphemy against God we also find added the sentence and sharp rebuke of the Holy Ghost.

Inasmuch as it is manifest that Micron is not ashamed to fasten one falsehood upon another, to make a translation to suit himself; to deny the testimony of God, the Father of Christ Jesus, his blessed Son, of the angel Gabriel, together with that of all the other witnesses of the New Testament; to flatter the rulers; to seek the favor of men, and to deceive the poor souls for which the Lord's blood was shed; therefore it surely is not wrong to call him by such names as are applied to him in the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost. The truth must have its course, and does not respect emperor nor king; much less a false prophet or teacher, who advocates the cause of the serpent; perverts the testimony of God into falsehood; and, for the sake of vain honor, and of his lusts, strengthens the ungodly, and troubles the saints. Whosoever has sound judgment and knows the way of the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures, must say that I am right.

Fifthly, I pray that no person will think that I thus write to retaliate Micron's writing. O, no. I leave wrath to him who is judge of all the world. I have done so to the service of Micron and all the erring, that they may be converted, and give becoming praise and honor to Christ, the Son of God, Deut. 32: 35; Heb. 10: 39; 1 Pet. 2: 3, 23; 3: 9. The truth is presented to them, by the grace of God, in such power and clearness that no man can disannul it by virtue of the Scriptures, nor contradict it by virtue of intellect. Therefore it would be well if our opponents would behold it more clearly, that they may, with all the saints, flee from the future judgment, and that they may, in the day of his appearance, stand before the throne of his Majesty in eternal joy.

If they do not, but refuse, remain obdurate and partial; if they repay good with evil, and love with hatred; if they seek assistance from the worldly powers, since they are too weak in the Scriptures, and thus watch for the corruption and misfortune of the pious, by falsehood and ornamented inventions, as has, alas, been the case hitherto, with many, then we must leave them to the Lord, possess our souls in patience, and remember the saying of Christ: "For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," Matt. 5: 12.

Lastly, I would faithfully warn all my readers and hearers, both great and small, rich and poor, favorable and unfavorable, as before God, and sincerely pray them in Christ Jesus, to read impartially this our incontrovertible, thorough answer and explanation; and rightly to weigh it in the balance of the holy, divine word, and to compare it with the fictitious foundation and doctrine of our opponents, that they, enlightened by the truth, may find the true way to life.

Let none believe me; but believe the truth which I have, according to my small talent, placed before you in invincible power and

clearness, according to the pure doctrine of the holy apostles, evangelists, prophets, and of Christ himself. In Christ, beware. Your poor souls are lamentably deceived by the doctrine of our opponents; for it is the smoke from the bottomless pit, Rev. 9: 2, which obscures the bright Sun, Christ Jesus, and the air of his holy word; it is the falsehood of the old serpent; its egg and brood; he that eateth it dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper, Isa. 59: 5; it is the spiritual dung with which Ezekiel had to bake his bread, Ezek. 4: 12. In short, it is the horrible, abominable draught of the golden cup of the Babylonian whore, drunken with the blood of the saints, with which she has made drunk all who dwell in the earth, Rev. 17: 4.

Their doctrine and confession stand clear and manifest, that the crucified Christ Jesus, was not the true Son of God; for they say he had no Father, and is only called so on account of their fictitious union; they reject the baptism of Christ; they rage and blaspheme against it, and institute a different baptism which is neither taught nor commanded them by the Scriptures. The difference between the oath of Christ and Moses they deny, and say, we are allowed to swear to the truth, that it is a holy thing, &c., Matt. 5: 34. Let him who is intelligent, understand what we have explained in both our book and epistle.

John says, "The Word was made flesh," Jn. 1: 14. Paul says, "Great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory," 1 Tim. 3: 16. Because we sincerely confess this testimony, as also all others which confess the visible, palpable, crucified Christ to be the Son of God, to be true and just; therefore we must, alas, be called by the world, sectarians and heretics. It is time to beware. Kind reader take heed. God grant you his grace, Amen. Read attentively and judge impartially, Amen.

