

A
HUMBLE AND CHRISTIAN
JUSTIFICATION AND REPLICATION,

CONCERNING THE

BITTER, ENVIOUS LIES AND FALSE ACCUSATIONS OF OUR ENVIERS, ON
WHOSE ACCOUNT WE ARE, WITHOUT ANY COMPASSION AND MER-
CY, SO LAMENTABLY HATED, BELIED, SLANDERED, UP-
BRAIDED AND PERSECUTED UNTO DEATH, AS
MAY, ALAS, BE WITNESSED DAILY IN
MANY CITIES AND COUNTRIES.

BY

MENNO SIMON.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you," Matt. 5 : 11, 12.

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 3 : 11.

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TO THE READER.

May the blessing and Salvation be with the Christian Reader :

Inasmuch, christian reader, as we poor, despised strangers and pilgrims are rejected and despised by all the world; are accounted the off-scourings, and that because we diligently seek our salvation, so that the pious and godfearing heart must tremble and be astounded at the defamation which they unjustly heap upon the righteous, so that some who strive after the truth dare hardly join this ardent people; therefore, christian reader, this book, the band with which we shall tie the arrant liars and their slander, is translated, out of pure love, and to the profit and use of the reader from the eastern tongue, which is not used in this country, into the Holland language, that every godfearing person may stop the mouth of the slanderer. For it is said, *Jacula previsa minus feriunt*. Wherefore we pray you to accept in love this our labor, which we performed to your service. For our sincere desire, wish, striving and laboring is, that many may come to the true knowledge of the truth, and be saved. Fare ye well.

P R E F A C E.

ALL that we sincerely desire, reasonable reader (behold, before God we lie not), is, that by our writing, teaching, living, misery and confiscation of our goods we may once acquire so much mercy from the children of men that we shall be allowed a private discussion with our adversaries, before any number of pious, intelligent, and reasonable men who love and fear the Lord and who can distinguish between good and evil, if it cannot be allowed us in public; and that their lies and accusations shall not be believed, until teacher is confronted with teacher, and the accuser before the accused with equal rights and liberty, as the word of God, christian love and natural reason teach and imply, that thus the ungodly may no longer be protected in their ungodliness, the wicked in their evil doing and that the pious and righteous be no longer condemned and suppressed, that God's holy word, by which our souls must live, may be made manifest, the fearful lying cease and the unmerciful and cruel blood-shedding be stopped, which in itself is nothing but the manifest works of the infernal serpent, as Christ himself says;

and which are, in appearance of true zeal and love of God, made use of without fear, reflection or mercy, by those who boast of the name, Spirit, word, death and blood of Christ, against those who with Asaph wash their hands in innocence. But we apprehend that it will not be allowed us. For in both sacred and profane history we read and find that the pure, wholesome truth, from the beginning of the world has generally been hated, belied and persecuted and that it has, as a general thing, only found shelter with a few in obscure nooks and corners, as a hateful, ungodly abomination. And that it can not be made manifest without tribulation and peril of life.

Because the good, pious Jeremiah reproved the Scribes for their false doctrine and wickedness; admonished the ignorant, confused and evil populace to repent, and threatened them with future plagues, he was called by them a heretic and deceiver, and by the princes a rebel and mutineer. He had to experience much misery although he was chosen of God, a prophet from his mother's womb, and spake from the mouth of the Lord; he had to hear, that on his ac-

count, they had to bear such sore plagues. Ahab, the blood-thirsty and idolatrous king, blamed the pious and spiritual man that it was he who seduced all Israel, 1 Kings 18: 18.

Again King Joram thought that Elisha had entailed the great famine in Samaria, 2 Kings 6.

John, a man sent from God, blessed in his mother's womb, the greatest born of woman, a burning, shining light, the messenger of the Lord, a voice crying in the wilderness, the second and spiritual Elias, was accused that he was possessed of devils, and was at last beheaded because of his reproving a shameful case of fornication, Luke 1: 15; Matt. 11: 11; Jn. 5: 35; Mal. 3: 1; Mk. 1: 3; Matt. 11: 14.

Again, Jesus Christ, the eternal Light and Life himself, was called Beelzebub, a Samaritan, and possessed of a devil, a mover of insurrection, a transgressor of the law, a blasphemer, a glutton and wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; he was deemed worse than a murderer; and, at last, he was rewarded for all his glorious miracles, kindness and love shown to them, by putting on him a mock robe, a crown of thorns, scourging, cross and death, after they had derided and blasphemed him to their satisfaction.

How they treated Stephen, Peter, Paul, James and others, the Scriptures abundantly show, Acts 5, 6, 7, 12, 17, 18, 19, 21.

At the time or commencement of the primitive church, the christians were called swine by some; others called them robbers of God's glory, murderers, infanticides, abominable, unchaste persons, who committed all manner of abominations with their mothers and sisters; and that they in their worship, shed human blood and also offered their children to idols; that they were rebels, and that because of their separation from the priesthood of Balaam, and their occasional night-meetings to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Again, enemies of the human race; unfruitful, corrupted people, because they would not keep company with the wine-bibbers, liars, &c., but led a sober, godly, humble and circumcised life, in the love and fear of God.

Again, enemies of God, accursed melefactors, and rogues, because they kept aloof from the shameful idolatry, and suffered themselves to be exiled and freely gave their goods and life blood for the sake of the testimony of the Lord and true religion and honor of God.

Behold, thus the blind, ungrateful world has ever rewarded and treated those who sought and feared God, with all their hearts, with all their souls, and with all their power, as Cyprian, Tertullian and other historians testify. Darkness can not bear the light; nor falsehood, truth. God's word is an abomination to the ungodly, for it is a treasure of wisdom hidden from them. Christ says, "That light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," Jn. 3: 19. The pious and godfearing are ever an offense and sting in their hearts and are a hurt in their sight. And this is the cause that the world, which in all its doings will ever live unrebuked and unhindered in idolatry, pride, pomp, licentiousness and lust, from the beginning, has so enviously hated, miserably belied and so tyrannically persecuted the pious and godfearing.

O kind reader, thus it is to-day as you can see on every hand. The whole world is saturated with all manner of wickedness. False doctrine, idolatry, unbelief, licentiousness, shame and blasphemy are in the ascendancy; it will not be reprov'd nor admonished. It hates all who would, in pure love, at the cost of their goods and life, gladly deliver them from their wicked and inordinate life, point and lead them in the way of peace and save their souls, if possible.

The wise and learned, who ever have plagued and pestered the pious and righteous the most, as was said in our *Confessions*, heap one abominable lie upon another, lest their unreasonable and shameful gain and false boasting be destroyed. They pretend and cry that we are Munsterites; that we do not want to be subject to and obey the magistracy; that we mean to take cities and countries by force; that like the irrational creatures, we have our goods and women in common; that we say to each other, Sister, my spirit desires thee. Again,

that we claim to be without sin, and that we mean to be saved by our own merits and works, and the like unfounded lies, that they may thus lead from truth, all mankind and particularly the lords, princes and magistrates which they have inebriated by their golden cup, that they may embitter and turn them against all the pious children of God. He is called and considered a fine, evangelical preacher and a competent teacher well lettered, who can only quarrel, upbraid, slander and lie sufficiently to move the magistracy, who perhaps, would be reasonable, kind and favorable enough if they were not spurred on and vexed by this unreasonable generation of vipers, to persecution, so that the innocent, belied sheep that would not injure a hair on any one, are, without a hearing, led captive, and mercilessly exiled from country, city and town, into misery and privation, and chased by the ravening wolves until they are consumed by over-exertion, heat, cold or rain. In this, I think, they fill the measure of their ancestors of whom Christ said, Oh Lord! oh, beloved Lord! how long will these inhuman tyrannies and fearful abominations continue?

Inasmuch as they have so embittered all lords, princes, regents, potentates and common people against us by their fearful cry of murder, and by their slanderous lying that we can not acquire sufficient mercy by all our prayers, beseechings and supplications, by all our innocence, tears, patience, misery, cross, goods and blood that we might be allowed a public conference and discussion with our enviers; and as according to justice and christianity it becomes the magistracy to allow us a fair hearing and trial, and that they do not usurp to themselves, in the judgment seat of the Most High God, to shed innocent blood; and as we are ever slandered by their unfounded lies, and as truth is thus smothered; therefore we are impelled by the urging of the word of God and the love of our neighbors, to publish in writing our excuse and answer with pure, christian truth, that by our defense in writing, since they are so enraged that we can not appear publicly to defend ourselves, the godfearing conscience which would not knowingly act

contrary to the will of God, no matter whether he be a magistrate or citizen, learned or unlearned, may know that by the beforementioned abominations we are innocently slandered and belied by our opponents; or that God would grant that thus the word and truth of the Lord might become more known and manifest thereby, and that the deceit and feigned holiness of the learned and priests, must become discovered and manifest to all the world.

Honorable reader, we humbly beseech you for the Lord's sake, to consider impartially why we so often refer to the preachers, admonish and reprove them of many things which, alas, are not to their honor and reputation. For, as we clearly see that they are those who, for the sake of shameful gain and avarice, so falsely console, retain and bind the whole world in their unbelief, idolatry and impenitent, carnal life; so miserably break the truth and trample it under foot; so miserably murder the poor souls which are so dearly bought, not with perishable gold and silver, but with the precious blood of Christ; so enviously and scornfully hate, slander and belie the pious and godfearing and take their goods and even their lives, which is quite different from the Spirit of the Lord, that they may hold to their shameful gain, lustful, vain and fruitless life, without reproof; and as they do not suffer themselves to be admonished, taught and warned by the word of God, by love, longsuffering, piety and the blood of the saints; therefore the glory of God and the salvation of your souls require us to do so. The Almighty Lord is our testimony, that we aim at nothing but that those who are reasonably minded and yet do not know the mystery of unrighteousness, as Paul calls it, 2 Thess. 2: 9 (as they are yet carnally minded, not born of God and kept back by the preachers), may learn to know the preachers and teachers by such clear and plain discoverings; further reflect upon it and thus become tired of their shameful deceit and seduction; and that all lords and magistrates who dare boast of the name of Christ may know what kind of people and teachers those are who slander us and to whom they give ear and faithfully protect by their arms.

A HUMBLE AND CHRISTIAN DEFENSE.

In the first place, they complain and accuse us of being Munsterites; and warn all people to beware of us and take an example from those of Munster.

Answer. We do not like to reprove and judge those who are already reprov'd and judged of God and man; yet, as we are wrongfully attacked and accused by our opponents, and that without truthfulness, therefore we would say in defense of us all that we consider the Munsterian doctrine and life, in regard to king, sword, rebellion, retaliation, revenge, polygamy and the temporal kingdom of Christ, as a new Judaism, and a misleading error, doctrine and abomination which is not at all in keeping with the Spirit, word and example of Christ. Behold, in Christ, we lie not.

Besides, I can fearlessly challenge any body, that none under the broad canopy of heaven can show and prove that I ever agreed with the Munsterites in regard to the beforementioned articles; for from the beginning until the present moment I have opposed them with diligence and earnestness, both privately and publicly, verbally and in writing, for over seventeen years, and ever since I confessed the word of the Lord and knew and sought his holy name according to my weakness.

I also, according to my small talent, have faithfully warned every body against their error and abomination, as I would that it should be done unto me. And in the mean time I have pointed and returned several of them to the true way, by the grace, assistance and power of the Lord.

I have never seen Munster nor have I ever been in their communion. And I trust that by the grace of the Lord, I shall never eat nor drink with such if there should yet be any, as the Scripture teaches me not to do; unless they sincerely acknowledge their abomination and truly repent, and follow the truth and the gospel in a becoming manner.

Behold, kind reader, this is my under-

standing and opinion of the Munsterites, as is also the opinion of all those who are known and accepted of us as brethren and sisters, that is, those of us who, on account of the false doctrine, unclean pederbaptism and supper of the preachers, are visited with superabundance of misery, tribulation and anxiety, and who assert and testify unto death their pure doctrine of baptism and Supper, with an humble confession and a pious, unblamable life.

But all those who reject the cross of Christ, as did the Munsterites; turn their backs upon the Word of the Lord; again revert to carnality, idolatry and its communion; walk in all pomp, pride and inebriety; in short, all those who are on the broad road, although they may be baptized, we do not know nor accept as brethren and fellows, inasmuch as they do not abide in the word of the Lord. Behold, kind reader, this is the truth and it will ever be found so. The learned may upbraid and garble to their satisfaction, yet they should know that although they are now honored and respected on earth, as the Psalmist testifies, we shall at last appear before a Judge who has no respect of person and who will not judge according to the complaint, nor favor and partiality, but according to the truth.

But if they should say we are one church with the Munsterites, because they and we are baptized with one baptism, then we would reply that if outward baptism has the power to make all those who are thus baptized with one baptism, one church, and that it causes all those who are thus baptized to share in the unrighteousness, wickedness and corruption of every individual, then our adversaries may well consider what kind of a church or body theirs is, as it is evident and well known to every body that perjurers, murderers, highway-men, thieves, &c., have received the same baptism which they have. If we, then are

Munsterites because of our baptism, they must be perjurers, murderers, highwaymen, thieves, &c., on account of their baptism. This is incontrovertible.

O, no. The Scripture does not teach that we are baptized into one body by any mere sign, as water, but that we are baptized into one body by one Spirit, 1 Cor. 12: 13. The prophet says, "The Son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," but "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," Ezek. 18: 20. Paul says, "Every one shall bear his own burden." And if they, now, should say that the transgressors are punished by the magistracy according to the sentence of justice, we would reply, that we also thus judge and punish them with the sword of the Spirit, according to the ordinance and commandment of God, namely, according to the word of the Lord, that is, we separate from us all those who turn away from the truth by any unclean or false doctrine or by any licentious, carnal walk, as was said.

In short, we herewith, testify and confess before God, before you, and before the whole world, that we, from our inmost hearts detest the errors and abominations of the Munsterites, as also all evil sectarianism which are contrary to the Spirit, word and ordinance of the Lord; and that before God, in Christ Jesus, we neither seek nor desire anything more than that we may turn the whole world from its wickedness, to the right way, and that we may, by the word, grace and assistance of the Lord, deliver many souls from the kingdom of the devil, and gain them to the Kingdom of Christ; that we may lead a pious, humble and godly life in Christ Jesus, and that we may glorify his great and adorable name, forever. For we firmly believe and confess that all false doctrine, idolatry, ungodliness and sin are of the devil; and that the reward of sin is everlasting death. Therefore we labor so diligently and earnestly; and would, the Lord knows, be pious and fear God, notwithstanding we miserable men are so shamefully belied, hated and scandalized and often slain, on that account, Rom. 1: 26; 1 Cor. 6; Gal. 3; Eph. 5; 1 Pet. 3.

In the second place they say that we will not obey the magistracy.

Answer. The writings which we have published during several years past abundantly prove that this accusation against us is wrong and untrue. We now publicly confess that the office of a magistrate is ordained of God, as we ever have confessed since we serve, according to our small talent, the word of the Lord. And, in the meantime, we have ever obeyed them when not contrary to the word of God, and we intend to do so all our lives; for we are not so stupid as not to know what the Lord's word commands in this respect. We render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's as Christ teaches, Matt. 17: 22; we pray for the imperial majesty, kings, lords, princes and all in authority, honor and obey them, 1 Tim. 2: 2; Rom. 13: 1. And yet they cry that we will not be subject to and obey the powers that be, that they may disturb the hearts of those that have authority and excite them to all unmercifulness, wrath and bitterness against us, and that, thus, by their continual cries the bloody sword may be unmercifully used against us and never be sheathed, as may be seen, Rom. 13: 7; Tit. 3: 2; 1 Pet. 2: 13.

Inasmuch as they ever excite the magistracy by such gross falsehood; besides, will say yea and amen to every thing the magistracy do, whether agreeable to the Scripture or not; and as they thus by their tickling doctrine lead these souls into condemnation, because they seek not their salvation, but their own enjoyment and gain; therefore love compels us respectfully and humbly to show all high in authority who would do right if they knew it, and had one to point it out to them (since it was concealed from the preachers), how, according to the word of the Lord, they should be minded; also, how they should rightfully execute their office to the praise and glory of the Lord.

Moses speaks thus, "And it shall be, when he (the king) setteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do

them (dear lords, mark, it reads: *to do them*). That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandments, to the right hand, or to the left." "He shall not multiply horses to himself;" "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, nor silver and gold," Deut. 17: 16—20. Concerning rulers Jethro thus speaks to Moses, "Provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers," Ex. 18: 21.

Moses says, "And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's," Deut. 1: 16, 17.

Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, said to the judges, "Take heed what ye do; for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in judgment." O, an important and heroic word. "Wherefore now let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of person, nor taking of gifts," 2 Chron. 19: 6, 7.

Paul says, "Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil (mark ye rulers). Wilt thou, then, not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil," Rom. 13: 3, 4.

Behold, beloved rulers and judges, if you take to heart these cited Scriptures and diligently reflect upon them, you will observe, first, that your office is not your own but God's office and service, that you may bend your knees before his Majesty; fear his great and adorable Name and rightly and reasonably execute your ordained office; and that you may not thus freely usurp the kingdom, dominion and jurisdiction of Christ, and judge and punish by your iron swords that which belongs solely to the eternal Judgment of the Most High God, as

in matters of faith, which also, Luther and others wrote in the beginning. But after they became more exalted they seem to have forgotten it all. Dear rulers, observe how very much Moses, Joshua, David, Ezekiel, Josiah, Zorobabel and others are praised in the Scriptures, because they feared the Lord and faithfully and diligently kept his commandments, counsel and word.

If you lift your hearts above all the mountains, and will not hear what the mouth of the Lord commands you, but only listen to the whisperings of your flesh; if you will not confess that you are the officers and servants of the Lord and that you have received of him country and people to rule, you cannot possibly avoid the punishment of him who has called you to be such exalted potentates, commanders, heads and regents.

Beloved, observe, and beware. Before him Cræsus and Irsus are alike respected. Therefore sincerely fear and love your God; examine the Scriptures and take into consideration how the great Lord in his wrath has, on account of their tyranny, cruelty, pride, blasphemy, disobedience, and idolatry, mercilessly upset and destroyed the thrones of potentates; as of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Sanherib, Antiochus, Saul, Jeroboam, Ahab and others, as may be clearly and plainly read in the Scriptures.

Secondly, you may understand from these Scriptures that you are called and ordained to your offices to punish the transgressors and protect the good; to judge rightly between man and his fellow; to do justice to the widows and orphans; to the poor, despised stranger and pilgrim; to protect them against violence and tyranny, rule cities and countries justly by a good policy and administration not contrary to God's word, to the peaceable and quiet enjoyment of the life of all, and that you should anxiously seek and love the holy word (by which the soul lives), name and glory of God, and promote, protect and maintain the same as much as possible, without bloodshed and uproar.

Behold, beloved lords and judges, this is the proper office to which you are called. Whether you fulfill these requirements pi-

ously and faithfully, I will leave to your own consideration. I think with holy Jeremiah that you have all broken the yoke and rent it in pieces; for you reject and detest, as a venomous serpent, the dear word which you should reasonably protect; the false teachers and prophets who deceive the whole world and whom, according to the word of God, we should shun, are by you kept in high esteem; and the poor, miserable sheep who, in their weakness, sincerely fear and obey the Lord and who speak not a harmful word of any one, because they dare not do aught against his word; who lead a penitent, pious life; make the right use of his sacraments according to the Scriptures; abhor all false doctrine, sectarianism and ungodliness; are exiled from city and country and are often adjudged to fire, water or the sword; their goods are confiscated; their children, who according to the words of the prophet, are not responsible for the transgressions of their fathers, if the fathers were, even, guilty, are sent to wander about naked; and thus the labor and sweat of their parents they must leave in the hands of these avaricious, greedy, unmerciful and bloodthirsty robbers.

O, ye beloved lords and judges, we will leave it to your own judgment whether this is to protect the good and punish the evil, to judge justly between man and man; to do justice to the widow, orphan and stranger, as the Scriptures teach and your office implies. O no, beloved rulers, no. Take heed, the matter is changed. The good are punished and the evil encouraged and protected. For the events of every day prove that it is as the prophets complained of. Perjurers, usurers, blasphemers, liars, deceivers, fornicators and adulterers are in no danger of death, but those that fear and love the Lord are the prey of all the world. The prophet says, "Behold, the princes of Israel, every one were in thee to their power to shed blood. In thee have they set light by father and mother; in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger: in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow," Ezek. 22:6, 7. Read and diligently ponder upon the prophetic Scriptures, and you will find what

terrible threats the holy and faithful men of God have ever prophesied of such evils and abuses. And if you do despise these our admonitions, they, nevertheless, are the firm truth; this you must acknowledge. For it is manifest and undeniable that in our Netherlands the lascivious, unchaste, and vain men whom they call pastors, ministers, masters and teachers, some of whom defile one maiden and woman after another, who openly live in all manner of licentiousness, ungodliness, idolatry, and drunkenness, and who do not rightly live in obedience to the word of God in any particular, rob, by their shameful treason, many godfearing people who, before God and his angels, seek nothing but to lead a righteous, unblamable life, according to the direction of the word of God, of their country, honor, possessions and, even, life; while they (the traitors) live at liberty and ease.

Inasmuch as the scale of justice is so very much out of balance; and as you are chosen and ordained of God to judge without respect of person and to deliver from the hands of the oppressor all the afflicted and oppressed strangers; therefore we pray you humbly, most beloved rulers and judges, for the sake of him who has called and chosen you to your offices, that you do not believe these cruel and envious men, who, according to Peter are born to corruption and torture; and who, ever publicly and privately, make us so obnoxious, by their cries, that we are not allowed a hearing and facing—so long as they, in our presence, do not prove (which, we are sure, they cannot do) against us that which they every day from their throne of pestilencies and mockery, so shamefully proclaim to the world, to the shame and injury of great numbers of pious and godfearing children. Beloved rulers, we beseech you for Christ's sake, to fear and love God sincerely. Believe his true word and act accordingly, Isa. 1:23; Ps. 73:6.

In the third place, you will also observe from the Scriptures, that, although you are chosen authority on earth, yet you dare not act according to your own option and opinion. But you are to love your Lord and God sincerely as your Creator, Deliv-

er and Savior, and to fear and obey him as your Head, King, Prince and Judge; ever diligently to follow the directions of his word; not to lift yourselves above your subjects and brethren; and, never to deviate from the ways and commandments of the Lord. Henceforth, beloved rulers, diligently observe that you be christians in actions, works and truth, inasmuch as you boast yourselves such. Water, bread, wine and name make none a christian; but those are christians who are born of God: are of divine nature, are of the same mind as Christ Jesus: led by the Spirit of God, who daily crucify their evil and corrupt flesh; walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; love nothing above God's word; love their neighbors as themselves; lead an unblamable, humble, pious life; who meekly walk in the footsteps of Christ and who are become new, changed and converted men and creatures in Christ. These the word of God calls christians, 2 Pet. 1:4; Phil. 2:5; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:2; Matt. 10:37; 7:12; 16:24.

Beloved lords, observe that we do not read in the biblical Scriptures of proud, carnal, perjurious, adulterous, drunken, pompous, unrighteous, idolatrous and blood-thirsty christians. But that the portion of such shall be eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth, darkness, fire, hell, death and devil. Their portion will be in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21:8; Rom. 1.

Dear lords, take heed, and be no longer deceived. For with God there is no respect of persons. This all the Scriptures teach. It is life everlasting, with the angels around the heavenly throne, or everlasting death with the devils in the bottomless pit; for it must all be judged according to the Spirit, example and word of God. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," 1 Cor. 5:17. "He that saith he abideth in him (Christ), ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked," 1 Jn. 2:6. It matters not whether one be emperor or king.

Beloved lords, this is God's word. This is the price and measure after which you and we should strive. Whosoever does not strive after and conform himself to this measure, cannot be a christian. Therefore

examine your teachers well; earnestly and diligently consider whether or not they point you to this narrow way. I presume that they preach peace to you; make your pillows soft and agreeable, and that they do not severely reprove your court-manners and practices, such as, dancing, drinking, fornication, gambling and debauchery in general. In short, that you build the wall, and they daub it with untempered mortar, Ezek. 13:10.

Beloved rulers, we do not do so; but we teach and direct you in the right way which you should walk if you wish to be saved. We do not point you to the pope, or Luther, or Augustine, or Hieronymus, but according to Scripture, to Christ Jesus, to hear him, to believe and faithfully follow him. For he is the Prophet promised of God; the Teacher sent of God; the Light of the world; the true Shepherd of our souls. Whosoever shall hear, believe, and follow him has eternal life, Deut. 18:18; Jn. 3:2; 8:12; 3:15. He calls to emperor, king and to every one, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" "If any man will come after me (or whosoever will be a true christian), let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me;" whosoever loves any thing more than he loves me cannot be my disciple; and is not worthy of me, and many other passages, Matt. 18:3; 16:24; Luke 14; Matt. 10:38.

Rulers, awake, and learn to know him. He is the Son of the Most High God, the Lord of lords and the King of kings; the eternal power, word and wisdom of God. What kind of pomp, ease and comfort he enjoyed on earth, the Scriptures abundantly teach us. At his birth, there was no room for him in the inn, Luke 2:8. In his preaching, he had not where to lay his head, Luke 9:58. His entrance into Jerusalem was not accompanied with cavalry, guards and knights, but upon an ass. At his death he had neither water nor wine wherewith to quench his thirst. Why was it? Was it that we should live a lustful, pleasurable life? O, no. But, according to Peter, it was that we should die unto sin and live in righteousness, Matt. 21:7; 1 Pet. 4:3; Rom. 6:7; 2 Tim. 2:11; Col. 3:5.

Behold, beloved rulers, behold! This is the court-practice which the heavenly Prince, Christ Jesus, has taught all his courtiers on earth, namely, all christians. O, the narrow way! The strait gate! How few find, and fewer still who walk therein! Matt. 7: 14; Luke 13: 24.

I write this admonition that the princes, regents and lords may take heed, and observe that they are miserably deceived by the preachers, since they preach such easy and sweet things, and point out such a broad way, while the word of God shows us such a strait way. I herewith humbly beseech you, lords, princes, kings and judges, one and all, for the sake of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, with which we are besprinkled, not to think hard of me, poor, miserable, and despised man, that I have thus faithfully shown my sincere love to you. For I would joyfully see that your poor souls were saved. My admonition is general, and I do not mention any particular name. Whosoever is guilty, let him repent; and whosoever is not guilty, let him take heed. God is my witness, that I desire nothing but that you all may be such indeed, that you may be praised and honored by all, by noble lords, and a christian magistracy, that you will stand impartially between us and our opponents, the learned, as becomes your office, that the enchanting, deceiving falsehood may once go down and be destroyed, and that the unadulterated truth which for centuries has been kept back, may be restituted. Beloved rulers, the word of God is truth. Love, embrace and kiss it; for its riches are immeasurable, its beauty exceeding, its fruits precious and its power is eternal life, Jn. 17.

In the third place, they say, That we are rebellious; that we would take cities and countries, if we had the power.

Answer. This prophecy is false and will ever remain so; and by the grace of God, time and experience will prove that those who thus prophesy, according to the word of Moses, are not of God. Faithful reader, understand what I write.

The Scriptures teach that there are two opposing princes and two opposite kingdoms. The one is the Prince of peace; the

other the prince of rebellion. Each of the princes has his particular kingdom and as the prince is, so is also the kingdom. The Prince of peace is Christ Jesus; his kingdom is the kingdom of peace, which is his church; his messengers are the messengers of peace; his word is the word of peace; and his body is the body of peace; his children are the seed of peace; and his inheritance and reward are the inheritance and reward of peace, Heb. 7; Isa. 9; Dan. 2: 7; Luke 1; Isa. 52; Rom. 10; Jn. 14; Col. 3; Zech. 8. In short, with this King and in this kingdom and reign it is nothing but peace; every thing that is seen, heard and done is peace.

Inasmuch as we have heard the word of peace, namely, the consoling gospel of peace, from the mouth of his messengers; therefore we, by his grace, have thus believed and accepted it in peace, and have committed ourselves to the only, eternal and true Prince of peace, Christ Jesus, in his kingdom of peace and under his reign, and are thus, by the gift of his Holy Spirit, by means of faith, incorporated into his body, and henceforth we look with all the children of his peace for the promised inheritance and reward of peace, Rom. 10: 15; Isa. 52: 7; 9: 6; Luke 2: 7.

As such exceeding grace of God has appeared unto us poor, miserable sinners, that we, who were formerly no people at all, and who knew of no peace, are now called to be such a glorious people of God, to be a church, kingdom, inheritance, body and property of peace; therefore we desire not to break this peace, but, by his great power by which he has called us to this grace and portion, to walk in this grace and peace, unchangeably and unwaveringly unto death, 1 Pet. 2: 9.

Peter was commanded to sheathe his sword. All christians are commanded to love their enemies; to do good unto those who abuse and persecute them; if any man shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other, and if he take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. Say, beloved, how can a christian, scripturally, retaliate, rebel, war, murder, slay, torture, steal, rob and burn cities and conquer

countries? Matt. 26: 52; Jn. 18: 10; Matt. 5: 12, 39, 40.

The great Lord who has created you and us, who has placed our hearts in the midst of our bodies, knows, and he only, knows that our hearts and hands are clear of all rebellion and murderous mutiny; and by his grace, they will ever remain clear. For we truly confess, that all rebellion is of the flesh and of the devil, Rom. 1: 30; 1 Jn. 3: 8; Rev. 21: 8; 22: 15.

O, beloved reader, our weapons are not swords and spears, but patience, silence and hope, and the word of God. With these we must maintain our cause and defend it. Paul says, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal; but mighty through God." With these we intend and desire to resist the kingdom of the devil; and not with swords, spears, cannons and coats of mail. For "he (God) esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood;" that we may thus, with our Prince, Teacher and Example, Christ Jesus, raise the father against the son and the son against the father, and that we may cast down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, Isa. 30: 7; Eph. 6: 17; Heb. 4: 12; 2 Cor. 10: 4; Job 41: 27; Matt. 10: 21; Luke 12: 53; 2 Cor. 10: 5.

Behold, reader, such a rebellion we seek and cause; but never, a rebellion of carnality. Not if we were as numerous as the spears of grass and the sand upon the sea shore, which, however, will never be the case, inasmuch as all men have not faith. O, that the way is so narrow and the gate so strait, 2 Thess. 3: 3; Matt. 7: 13; Luke 13: 24.

True christians know not vengeance, no matter how they are maltreated; in patience they possess their souls, Luke 21: 18; and do not break their peace, even, if they should be tempted by bondage, torture, poverty, and, besides, by the sword and fire. They do not cry for vengeance as do the world; but, with Christ, they supplicate and pray: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," Luke 23: 34; Acts 7: 60.

According to the declaration of the proph-

et, they have beaten their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks. They shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, Christ; neither shall they learn war any more, Isa. 2: 4; Mic. 4: 3.

They do not seek your money, goods, injury nor blood, but they seek the honor and praise of God and the salvation of your souls. They are the children of peace; their hearts overflow with it; their mouths speak it, and they walk in the way of peace; they are full of peace; they seek, desire and know nothing but peace; and are ever prepared to forsake country, goods, life and all, for its sake; for they are the kingdom, people, church, city, property and body of peace, as has been heard.

Beloved reader, I, poor, miserable man (do not think hard of it), in my weakness have been writing these seventeen years; have feared the word of the Lord, and served my neighbors, and, I have unwaveringly borne his scorn and cross, with much misery, anxiety, tribulation and peril; and, I trust by his grace I will to the end continue to testify with a good conscience, his holy, worthy word, will and ordinance, verbally, by writing and at the peril of life, as much as is in me; and should I then yet at heart be a disquiet, rebellious, vengeful and bloody murderer? May the Most High save his poor servant from that!

Again, in Brabant, Flanders, Friesland and Gelderland the godfearing, pious hearts are, daily led to the slaughter as innocent sheep, and are tyrannically and inhumanly martyred! Their hearts are full of spirit and strength; their mouths flow like the rivulets; their fruits scent like holy spices; their doctrine is powerful and their life is unblamable. Neither emperor nor king, fire nor sword, life nor death can frighten or separate them from the word of the Lord! And should their hearts yet be ensnared by bitterness, rebellion, vengeance, robbery, hatred and bloodshed? If so, what vain suffering it would be!

O, no, reader, no. Learn to know what a true christian is, of whom he is born, how he is minded, what is, properly, his intention and seeking, and you shall find that they are not rebels, murderers, and rob-

bers, as the learned accuse them of, but that they are a godfearing, pious, peaceable people, as the Scriptures teach.

The other prince is the prince of darkness, anti-christ, and Satan. This prince is a prince of all evil, as rebellion, bloodshed, uproar and murder, which agree with his proper nature, arts, and doings, Jn. 8: 44, his commandments and teachings and his kingdom, body and church are of the same nature, 1 Jn. 3. Here we need not much Scripture. Seeing, hearing and daily occurrences and experience prove the truth.

Our opponents charge that we are intent upon rebellion; something of which we never thought. But we say, and that truthfully, that they and their ancestors for more than a thousand years have been that of which they accuse us. If we search history we will be convinced of this assertion. All those who placed themselves in opposition to their shamefulness, dishonor and evil-doing, had to suffer for it. Even so today.

For what they have done these last few years by their writings, teachings and cries, cities and countries prove. How wily they have placed potentate in antagonism to potentate and said to them, *Since the sword is placed in your hands you may maintain the word of the Lord thereby*, until they prevailed on them, and have shed human blood like water, torn the hearts from each other's body and made innumerable fornicators, rogues, widows and orphans; have eaten up and plundered the innocent civilian, and destroyed and ruined cities and countries. In short, they have done as if neither prophet, nor Christ nor apostle nor the word of God had ever been upon earth. Notwithstanding, they wish to be called the holy, christian church and body. O, dear Lord, how lamentably is thy holy, worthy word mocked, and thy glorious works derided! as if thy divine and powerful doings in thy church were nothing but reading, crying, water, bread, wine and name; and as if all rebellion, warring, robbing, murder and devilish works were allowable. Beloved reader, behold, and observe and learn, once to know this kingdom and body. For, if they, with such actions and doings, were the kingdom and body of Christ, as

the learned pretend, then Christ's holy, glorious kingdom, church and body would be an inhuman, cruel, rebellious, bloody, robbing, crying, unmerciful and unrighteous people; this is incontrovertible. O, damnable error! O, dark blindness!!

And, yet, it does not suffice that they, by their light minded, licentious doctrine, lead the whole world into corruption and misery, and rob their own members of their property, welfare, doctrine, life and soul; but, besides, in their madness, they must lay hands upon the innocent, peaceable and humble kingdom and body of Christ, which will do no harm to the least upon earth. They continually lie, blaspheme, upbraid, betray and rebel, that we may well say with holy Peter, that they are born to torture and corruption; for their hearts, mouths and hands drip and reek with blood.

O, how exactly the Holy Spirit has depicted them, saying, "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the martyrs of Jesus;" "And in her was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth," Rev. 17: 6; 18: 20.

Behold, kind reader, thus you will observe that they fall by their own sword which they drew against us, as the prophet says. For we may with clear consciences appear before the world (eternal praise be to the Lord) and truthfully maintain that we, from the time of our confession until the present moment, have harmed no one, have desired none of the property of others, much less laid hands upon it; that we have not sought the destruction, or blood of any, either by word or deed; and which, by the grace of God, we never shall do. But what they have done by their rebellious upbraiding, lying, slander, crying, writing and treason we will commend to the judgment of the Lord.

The merciful and gracious Lord grant and give you and them wisdom, that you may learn to know of what spirit and kingdom you are the children, what you seek, what prince you serve, what doctrine you maintain, what sacraments you have, what fruits you produce, what life you lead, and in what kingdom, body and church you are incorporated. This is our sincere wish.

Kind reader, earnestly reflect upon this our brief treatise on the two princes and their kingdoms, and by the grace of God, it will give you no mean insight into the Scriptures.

In the fourth place, some of them charge that we have our property in common.

Answer. This charge is false and without truth. We do not teach and practice the doctrine of having goods in common. But we teach and maintain by the word of the Lord, that all truly believing christians are members of one body and are baptized by one Spirit into one body, 1 Cor. 12: 13; that they are partakers of one bread, 1 Cor. 10: 18; that they have one Lord and one God, Eph. 4: 5, 6.

Inasmuch as they are thus one, therefore it is christian and reasonable that they divinely love one another, and that the one member be solicitous for the welfare of the other, for thus both the Scripture and nature teach. The whole Scriptures speak of mercifulness and love; and it is the only sign whereby a true christian may be known, as the Lord says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples (that is, that ye are christians), if ye have love one to another," Jn. 13: 35.

Beloved reader, it is not customary that an intelligent person clothes and cares for one part of his body and leaves the rest destitute and naked. O, no. The intelligent person is solicitous for all his members. Thus it should be with those who are the Lord's church and body. All those who are born of God, who are gifted with the Spirit of the Lord, and who, according to the Scriptures, are called into one body of love in Christ Jesus, are prepared by such love, to serve their neighbors, not only with money and goods, but also after the example of their Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, in an evangelical manner, with life and blood. They show mercy and love, as much as they can; suffer no beggars amongst them; take to heart the need of the saints; receive the miserable; take the stranger into their houses; console the afflicted; assist the needy; clothe the naked; feed the hungry; do not turn their face from the poor, and do not despise their own flesh, Isa. 58: 7, 8; Rom. 12: 13.

Behold such a community we teach. And not, that the one should take and possess the land and property of the other, as many falsely charge. Thus Moses says, "If there be among you a poor man, of one of thy brethren, within any of thy gates, in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother." Tobias says, "Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked." Christ says, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." Paul says, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies," &c., "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment," Dent. 15: 7; Tobit 4: 16; Luke 6: 36; Matt. 3: 7; Col. 3: 12; Jas. 2: 13; Matt. 18: 33; 25: 33.

Again, this mercy, love and community we teach and practice and have taught and practiced them for seventeen years, so that, glory be to God, notwithstanding our property has to a great extent been taken from us, and is yet daily taken; many a pious father and mother are put to the sword or fire and we are not allowed the free enjoyment of our homes, as is manifest, and, besides, we have dear times and famine, yet none of the pious nor any of their children who commit themselves to us, have been forced to beg. If this is not christianity, then we may well abandon the whole gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, his holy sacraments and christian name, and say that the love-like, merciful life of all saints is mere fantasy and dreams. O, no. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him," 1 Jn. 4: 16.

This I write to shame our backbiters, because of their envy; they are so blinded that they are not ashamed thus shamefully to slander us, and wickedly to convert good into evil. For although we, in accordance with all Scripture, teach mercy and love and serve the godfearing poor by the sweat of our brow, and would not let them suffer for want, yet we must hear *That we teach community of goods; that every person should beware of us; for that we would reach*

into the chests and pockets of others. While they well know that it is written, "He shall have judgment without mercy, that has shewed no mercy," Jas. 2: and, "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death," 1 Jn. 3: 14; and while they also plainly see that we daily, and freely sacrifice our goods for the testimony of Jesus Christ and our consciences.

O reader, it would be well for your souls that you would once take notice and learn to know your preachers. For how can they teach you that which is good, while they can hear no mercy?

Is it not terrible hypocrisy that these poor people boast of having the word of God, and of being the true, christian church, never remembering that they have entirely lost their sign of true christianity? For, although many of them have plenty of every thing, go about in silk and velvet, gold and silver, and in all manner of pomp and splendor, ornament their houses with all manner of costly ornaments, have their coffers filled and live in voluptuousness — yet they suffer many of their poor, afflicted members (notwithstanding they are fellow-believers, have received one baptism and partaken of the same bread with them), to ask alms; and poor, hungry, suffering, old, lame, blind and sore people to beg their bread at their doors.

O, teachers, teachers! Yea, beloved teachers, where are the fruits of the gospel you preach? Where is the signification of the supper you administer? Where are the fruits of the spirit you have received? And where is the righteousness of your faith which you so beautifully adorn before the poor, ignorant people? Is it not all hypocrisy that you preach, maintain and assert? Be ashamed at the vain preaching and bread-breaking of your easy gospel which you have these many years practiced with your doctrine and sacraments which you have preached to your needy, miserable members of the streets, notwithstanding the Scripture plainly teaches and says, "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion for him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Also Moses,

There shall be no beggars among you, 1 Jn. 3: 17; Dent. 15: 8.

Behold, kind reader, thus his charge is false and wrong in fact, as are also their other charges. For although we know that the apostolic churches, from the beginning have practiced it, as may be seen by the acts of the apostles, yet we may observe from their epistles that it went down, in their times, and (perhaps not without cause) was not practiced. Since we do not find that it was continually practiced by the apostles as we said, therefore we also leave it behind and have never taught nor practiced community of goods. But we diligently and earnestly teach and admonish assistance, love and mercy, as the apostolic Scriptures abundantly teach us this. Behold, in Christ we tell you the truth and lie not.

And, even if we did teach and practice community of goods, as we are charged, we would but do that which the holy apostles, full of the Holy Spirit, did in the primitive church at Jerusalem, although afterward abolished, as was said.

But the reason why our opponents charge us with it may be easily imagined. For generally, their hearts are filled with avarice, as Peter says, and they know that their disciples are intent upon the lusts of the flesh, money and goods. They are all covetous, as the prophet says, and therefore they make the charge, that thus the precious gospel, the limpid truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, which now springs up in many places, may become a stench and abomination to all. Behold the arts and wiles of the serpent!

Reader, beware; let not such liars deceive you. Adam and Eve believed the deceiver, and thereby so wickedly sinned against their God. Israel was miserably deceived by the false prophets. And what good things they have done in the gospel times and yet do, their deeds and fruits openly show.

In the fifth place some of them falsely charge, That we believe in polygamy; that we have our women in common; that we say to each other, Sister, my spirit desires your flesh.

Answer. As to polygamy we would say, The Scriptures show that before the law,

some of the patriarchs had many wives. Yet they did not take the same liberty under the law and before the law. For Abraham, who was before the law, had his own sister for wife, as he himself testifies before Abimeleck, the king, saying, "And yet she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother;" Gen. 20: 12. Jacob had two sisters for wives, Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban, his mother's brother, Gen. 22. These liberties to marry their own sister and to marry two sisters at once, were afterwards strictly forbidden Israel under the law, Lev. 18.

As each period has had its particular liberty and usage according to the Scriptures; and as we now, under the New Testament, are not pointed by the Lord to the usage of the patriarchs before the law nor under the law, in the matter of marriage, but to the beginning of creation, to Adam and Eve (which word we sincerely desire to obey); therefore we teach, practice and consent to no other than the one which was in the beginning in Adam and Eve, namely, one husband and one wife, as the Lord's mouth has ordained, Matt. 19.

We say one husband and one wife, and not one husband and two, three, or four wives, and these counted as one, as many, alas, charge us without any truth. These two, one husband and one wife, are one flesh, and cannot be separated from each other, to marry again, otherwise than for adultery, as the Lord says, Matt. 5: 19; Mark 10; Luke 16.

Behold, this is our proper foundation, doctrine and practice concerning marriage, as we here confess by the Holy Scriptures, and by the grace of God, it will ever remain the foundation of all pious souls, no matter what false charges and slander may be preferred against us. For we know and confess truly, that it is the express ordinance, command, intent and unchangeable, plain word of Christ.

But as to the charge of the shameful licentiousness of having our wives in common, we reply with Solomon: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to

his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit," Prov. 26: 4, 5.

Kind reader, I am heartily ashamed to touch upon such accursed charges of licentiousness and roguishness before the ears of blushing, pious persons. For they are not only in opposition to the Scriptures but also to all rationality, intelligence and virtue. But as they not only charge us hereby with shameful roguery and knavery, but also with the worst of doggery, and as the pious, virtuous hearts who, if possible, would rather die ten deaths than commit such abominations, may see how they are spit upon by some indiscreet slanderers; therefore it is no more than reasonable to do so for the purpose of defending our reputation in a christian manner to the praise of the Lord, and to ward off such slander from us, to the extent possible.

We hereby testify, now and forever, in this place, before God, that we, with the angel of the church of Ephesus, hate the words of the Nicolaitans, which, also, God hates, Rev. 2. We teach, as from the mouth of the Lord, "That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart," Matt. 5: 28. And with Paul, That the adulterers and fornicators cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6.

As we are thus so plainly taught by the Scriptures, and as, by the grace of the Lord, we not only believe so, but also teach others so by virtue of the divine word, and besides, as we are in constant danger of apprehension, prison and death; are tied to the stake by threes and fours, by sixes and sevens; are tortured, burned or drowned, and thus unmercifully murdered, therefore judge whether we would yet practice such terrible abominations and shame, at which every reasonable person should stand astounded, and which, according to many Scriptures, are rewarded by everlasting death and eternal, unquenchable, hell fire. O, what miserable men we should be! It is shameful slander! No, no. We trust, that in our weakness, by the grace of the Lord we have reared our bodies and members for a temple and dwelling place of the Holy Spirit, according to our received gift. We trust, by the grace and assistance of the Lord, that we

shall never commune with adulterers and fornicators, understand, if they do not repent, Rom. 1; 1 Cor. 6; Gal. 5; Eph. 5; Heb. 13; Rev. 21.

But how our slanderers and backbiters are minded; into what body they have incorporated their bodies and members, and by what kind of spirit they are urged, their intolerable lies and slander plainly show. Christ says, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matt. 2: 34. Every tree beareth fruit after its own kind. Seneca says, "As the man, so is his word." Yea, if these vain men were christians, and if they had but a little of the Lord's word and a spark of his Holy Spirit, as they boast of having, they would never think of such abominable slander against their neighbors who, as is plain, sincerely seek and fear the Lord, much less would they mock and deride them.

O, Ye indiscreet slanderers (I mean all those who are guilty of the shameful), Do you think that we are irrational creatures? and that there is no rationality left in us? Be ashamed of your inhuman lies and slander. This disreputable report and bad repute is saddled upon us who are innocent, by many who are guilty of this very thing. If my writing is wrong, then I am willing to bear the punishment. It is manifest and undeniable that many of your fellow-believers miserably defile their own members. For, by their deception, sleekness of tongue, promises and gifts, they seduce many a young maiden, who is, by one baptism, faith and supper incorporated into one body with them. In your brotherhood, many an honorable man's bed is defiled! many a shameful adulterer is found! many an unsuspecting soul is deceived! and many an illegitimate child is born! We will leave it to the judgment of all pious persons if that is not adultery, and a desire to have the women in common.

Beloved reader, judge aright and know the truth. Is not your church full of such debauchees, defilers, perjurers, and adulterers? are there not others that are keepers of houses of prostitution? Can we not hear and see unchaste women sing and drink, throng and act indecorous in allies and streets? Do they not live in city and coun-

try in open prostitution? Your answer must be, yes; for it cannot be denied. And all these are your fellows in faith, members of your body; grains of your bread. O, vain doctrine and faith! O, fruitless baptism and supper! O, unclean body and church!!

Behold, kind reader, if you are reasonably minded you must admit that our slanderers are guilty of the things with which they charge us. My friend, beware lest you commit violence against the godfearing, with these slanderers. Syrach says, Whosoever accustoms himself to evil saying and whoring will never reform. For as we hate all abominations which are contrary to the word of God, and not only reprove them by our teaching, but also at the risk of life, how much more, then, this abomination? For it is not alone contrary to God's word, but also contrary to reasonableness. O, dear Lord, thus are those slandered who sincerely glorify thy name, who walk in thy ways, and sacrifice property and life for the sake of thy holy word.

In the sixth place they falsely charge, That if one, after he has made confession and received baptism, again falls into his sins, we refuse such an one all penance and grace.

Answer. This charge, if true, would be a fine excuse for the licentious to persecute the truth. But, happily, it is false and wrong in fact, as are their other charges, and can never be substantiated.

Inasmuch as the charge is false, and as there might be some among the pious who are not acquainted in the matter, therefore I will present my foundation and confession, as taken from the word of the Lord, of the nature of different sins; which will be forgiven and which are unpardonable. And thus present it to the pious and godly reader, to ponder diligently upon it.

In my opinion the Scripture speaks of different kinds of sin. The first kind is the corrupt, sinful nature, namely, the lust or desire of our flesh, contrary to God's law, and contrary to the first righteousness, which is inherited at birth by all descendants and children of corrupt, sinful Adam; and is not inaptly called inherent sin. Of this sin, David says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Again, the Lord said unto

Noah, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Again, Paul says, "We were, by nature, children of wrath, even as others," Ps. 51: 5; Gen. 8: 21; Eph. 2: 3.

Yea, kind reader, as we are all stained by this evil, we would all have abided in death, if the righteousness, intercession, death and blood of Christ Jesus were not given us as a reconciliation to God our heavenly Father, Rom. 5: 8. But now, for Christ's sake, it is not accounted as sin, Rom. 3: 5, 6, 8.

The second kind are the fruits of the first sin, and are not inaptly called actual sins, by the learned. They are these: Adultery, fornication, avarice, debauchery, hatred, envy, lying, theft, murder and idolatry. These are also called works of the flesh, by Paul, Gal. 5; and that, because they have their origin in the flesh which is born of Adam, corrupt and sinful, Rom. 5; Eph. 5.

But if inherent sin which is the mother, and actual sin, which is the fruit, are connected together, there is no forgiveness nor promise of life; but there wrath and death abide, unless they are repented of, as the Scriptures teach.

If this inherent sin is to loose its effect, and actual sin be forgiven, then we must believe the word of the Lord, be regenerated by faith, and thus, by virtue of the new birth, by true repentance, resist the inherent sin, die unto actual sin, and be pious.

For, as the carnal birth which is of Adam, is unclean and sinful and begets all evil and unrighteousness unto death, at the instance of the devil—thus, on the other hand the heavenly birth which is of God, is clean and pure, and begets all righteousness and piety unto life, according to the will of God, Rom. 5; 1 Jn. 3: 5.

The third kind are human frailties, errors and stumblings which are yet daily found among the saints and regenerated; such as untempered thoughts, careless words and rashness in our actions. These although they spring from those sins mentioned, as the sins of the unbelieving and impenitent, are yet not of the same kind; and have this difference: the unbelieving which are yet unchanged in their first birth, commit sin unrestrainedly and fearlessly,

because of the blindness of their corrupt nature they do not realize the wickedness of their sins; and besides, they do not consider their actions sinful. For sin is not made manifest unto them by the law, because of their unbelief.

But those who are born from above are fearful of all sin; they know by the law that all which is contrary to the first, righteousness, is sin, be it inwardly or outwardly, important or trifling; and therefore they daily fight, in spirit and faith with their weak flesh; sigh and lament about their errors, which they, with Paul, sincerely abhor. For, they know them to be contrary to the first righteousness and God's law, and are, therefore, sins; they daily approach the throne of grace, with contrite hearts, and pray: Holy Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. And thus, they are not rejected by the Lord on account of such transgressions, which are not committed willfully and intentionally, but contrary to their will, out of mere thoughtlessness and frailty. Yea, even as Peter, although he thrice denied the Lord; for they are under grace, and not under the law, as Paul says. The seed of God, faith in Christ Jesus, the birth which is of God, and the unction of the Holy Spirit abide in them. They exercise themselves continually in warring against their flesh; die unto their lusts; watch and pray incessantly and, although they are such poor, weak children, they are rejoiced in the sure trust of the merits of Christ, and praise the Father for his grace, Heb. 4; Matt. 6; Luke 12; Rom. 6; 1 Jn. 3: 5; Job 7; Eph. 6; 2 Tim. 2; Gal. 5; 2 Cor. 6; 1 Pet. 5.

Behold this deficient and weak nature all the saints have ever lamented; and hence John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," 1 John 1: 8, 9.

The fourth kind is, that after one is enlightened in his heart by the heavenly lustre of the everlasting truth; has received the true knowledge of Christ and his holy word, has tasted the heavenly gifts, the kindness of the Lord, and the enjoyment

of the future world, has partaken of the Holy Ghost and is born of God; he again, by stubbornness, malice and willfulness, contrary to his heart, mind and spirit which is in him, renounces all knowledge and grace; rejects the Spirit and word of God; ejects the sweet, new wine; hates and blasphemes all truth willfully with the Pharisees and scribes; ascribes it to the devil, notwithstanding his conscience convinces him that it is the will, word, power and work of God; returns to the broad way and says at heart with all evil disposed, I will not submit. What kind of sin this is, I will leave to the sentence of the word of the Lord, Num. 15; Matt. 12; Mark 3; Luke 12; 1 Jn. 5; Heb. 6.

Kind reader, understand me. I do not speak of such persons as are overtaken in a fault, even though their transgressions were as great as the fall of David (from which the great Lord save all his), who was so miserably deceived by the lusts of the flesh, but I speak of those who, out of mere petulance, willfully trample upon the Son of God, deem the blood of the New Testament unclean, and profane the Spirit of grace.

O reader, kind reader, take heed, and remember that it is written, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10: 31.

And although such willful blasphemy and sin had no offering in Israel, Num. 15, and the sinning against the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness, as Christ says, Matt. 12; Mark 3; Luke 12; yet I would advise all the godfearing, as far as I am able, that if any should revert to the works of the flesh and of death, after his confession and baptism, wisely to consider the matter and not make a mistake in such a case by an unseasonable and undue sentence; for the Lord, to whom nothing is concealed, knows what sin he has committed; whether he has sinned against the Holy Ghost or not; but let them admonish such according to the word of the Lord. If he be converted, if he show true fruits of repentance according to the Scriptures; if he again receive a broken, contrite and penitent heart, and besides, a peaceable, joyful and cheerful mind, then it is manifest that he did not sin against the Holy Ghost. But if he remain unrepentant, continue in his perverseness, and this unto the end,

willfully despise Christ and his word, then his work shows what sin he has committed, and that his end and reward will be death, Rom. 1: 8; 1 Cor. 6; Gal. 5; Eph. 5; 1 Jn. 3: 5; Rev. 21: 22.

Behold, kind reader, thus we believe that all sins, both outward and inward, have their reconciliation in the merit and power of the blood of the Lord, if truly repented of, according to the Scriptures.

Let every one take heed that he walk in the fear of the Lord and accept the grace, lest he be given to the wrong spirit, fall into the judgment of the Lord, and the penance, which avails before God, be refused him. For Christ says, "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Peter says, "Of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." Let therefore none be overcome of sin, else he will be the servant of sin. This is incontrovertible. Jn. 8: 34; 2 Pet. 2: 19.

I think that this our confession and also the ban or separation, which the Scripture teaches and which we practice, by which we seek the scriptural shame of the degenerated to their reformation, fully prove that we are villified by our opponents in this regard. Yea we testify before the Lord and before you that we desire nothing upon earth more ardently than that we may return a poor, erring sinner to the right way.

But this we say, That the promises of God of eternal salvation, as preached by the gospel, are not made to the unrepentant sinners, hypocrites, avaricious, earthly-minded, mockers, nor perverse; but they are made to those who, with all their heart, hear, truly believe the lovely word of our Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby become new men born of God; become dead unto this fearful world of ungodly pride, pomp, vanity and lustfulness. For the unrepentant would boast of the Scripture and console themselves thereby, while their life is contrary thereto, and is open blasphemy. Christ says, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed," Jn. 8: 31. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," Jn. 15: 14; for the vine bears after its own kind.

In the seventh place they slander us and say, That we are vagabonds, sneak-thieves, deceivers, new monks and

hypocrites; that we claim to be without sin, heaven-stormers and work-saints, who want to be saved by our own merits and works; that we are an ungodly sect and conspirators, murderers of the souls of infants, anabaptists, profaners of the sacraments and possessed of the devil.

Answer. These and like slanders, Christ Jesus, together with the holy apostles, prophets and saints of the primitive church, had to hear many times, as was said in the preface. "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more they of his household?" "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord." Yet we trust that it is known to all honorable, pious and reasonable men that all these slanders are spoken against us by our opponents without any truth, out of mere hatred and envy, that they may thus hinder and oppose the course of the word and afflict the innocent, Matt. 10:25,24.

Reply to the charge, Vagabonds. Vagabonds are rogues, evil-disposed and idle persons, and evil-doers, who on account of their criminality, wander from place to place without a home. But we are poor, miserable pilgrims, and, according to the flesh, strangers, who, not on account of any crime, but for the testimony of Jesus Christ and our consciences, must flee, with our wives and children from before the tyrannical, bloody sword, to save our lives, and thus we have to earn our bread in foreign lands, in anxiety and tribulation, hearing many scornful and abusive words, we who, agreeable to Scripture and reason, should be received in love, and provided for and protected, and not be so unmercifully rejected and slandered as we are, at present, on every hand, 1 Pet. 1; 1 Cor. 4; Ex. 22:24; Isa. 58:6; Jer. 7:5; Zech. 7; Matt. 25; Rom. 13; 1 Pet. 4; Heb. 13.

Reply to the charge, Sneak-thieves. Sneaks are thieves and murderers, who secretly enter houses for the purpose of taking the property or lives of others. Also perjurers, adulterers and fornicators who are intent upon defiling the houses of their neighbors. For such wait for the darkness, and say, "No eye shall see me; and distinguish his face. In the dark they dig through houses," Job 24:15,16. But this is not the case with us. Yet it has gone so far by the lying, upbraiding and cries of the learned,

that alas, one cannot publicly say anything about the word of the Lord, although it is the only bread whereby our souls must live; and as we learn and understand from the Scriptures that Moses and all Israel ate the passover at night, Ex. 12; that Christ admonished Nicodemus at night, Jn. 3:2; that the church assembled at night to pray, Acts 12:12; that Paul taught the word of the Lord all night, Acts 20; and that the primitive church assembled at night to break the bread of the Lord, as the Scriptures mention; therefore we confess that it is admissible to preach the word of the Lord at night as well as in day time, to the praise of the Lord; and thus we oftentimes assemble in the fear of God, without injury to any body (the Lord knows) at night in a christian manner, to teach the word of the Lord and to admonish and reprove in all godliness; also to pray and administer the sacraments in a manner as the word of the Lord teaches us.

Reply to the charge, Deceivers. Deceivers are those who call impenitent, carnal persons, christians, and console them in their blindness, avarice, pride, pomp, splendor, debauchery and idolatry, with water, absolutions, bread, wine and ceremonies; who so shamefully adulterate the word and sacraments of God and lead the poor, miserable souls into death for the sake of a meal of bread or a handful of barley, all of which, before the Lord, we are innocent, by his grace. For we teach the word of the Lord unadulterated and with a good conscience, without respect of person. We seek the salvation of every soul and not their favor and gifts. We administer the Lord's baptism and Supper according to the direction of his holy word. And although we are poor, weak, miserable, and of evil, unclean flesh, and diseased sinners, yet we would gladly, in our weakness, act rightly and be pious and live unblamably before the world.

We seek and desire, by the grace and assistance of the Lord, according to our small talent, to re-establish that which is fallen; make right that which is wrong; seek that which is lost; humble the high-minded; direct the hungry into the right pasture; lead the thirsty to the true fountain and the blind in the right way, that we

may thereby sow the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in many hearts, to the praise of our God, and publish his great and adorable name, Ezek. 34; 2 Cor. 10.

Reply to the charge, New Monks. We would consider those to be new monks who formerly established churches, cloisters, human statutes, and the easy epicurean life, in the semblance of zeal, which they have abandoned and in its place accepted a more lustful, pompous and carnal life, without change of heart and remained in their sins, and these placed the firmness of their faith, hope and salvation, from the beginning upon human choice, opinion and flattery. It is the manner and custom of monks to follow human statutes, commands and institutions, and not the word of God. They have their abbots, priors and pursers or procurators, and are called by their founders and masters, Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans, Bernardinians and Jacobins.

Not so with us. But we trust, by the grace and mercy of the Lord, that we are children of God and disciples of Christ. We know of no other Abbot than him on whom all true christians call in spirit and truth, and say, "Abba Father," Rom. 8: 15; Gal. 4: 6. Our head or Prior is Christ Jesus, Col. 1; Eph. 1.

Our procurator or purser who distributes his gifts to every one, is the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12: 11.

Our profession is, the sincere, frank and fearless confession of faith, Matt. 10; Rom. 10: 9, 10.

Our statutes and laws are the express commandments of the Lord, Matt. 19: 17.

Our cap and cloak are the garments of righteousness, with which we would gladly clothe ourselves, Matt. 22: 11.

Our cloisters are the assemblage of the saints, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, Heb. 12: 22; Rev. 21: 2.

Our easy, monk-life and pleasure are daily expectation of prison and fetters, fire and water, and to be exiled with our wives and children, to suffer hunger, tribulation, anxiety and pain, for the testimony of Jesus.

Behold, kind reader, this is the monkhood which we confess and practice, and none other. By the grace and power of the Lord, we also hope to abide therein un-

changeably, all our lives. O, indiscreet slanderers and blasphemers! Jn. 4: 23.

Reply to the charge, Hypocrites. According to the Scriptures, hypocrites are those who, for the outward world, put on a holy appearance by words and gestures, such as the Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. 23, and who are inwardly full of all unrighteousness, avarice, hatred and deceit, as our opponents are, who pretend to be christians, talk much about the word of the Lord, boast much of the gospel and christianity, claim that they practice the true doctrine of Christ and that they are his holy church; while at the same time, they adulterate the word of God, call the wholesome administering of the sacraments, heresy; hate all the pious, and practice the works of the flesh, openly, as may be seen. We will leave all intelligent persons to judge whether such are not the companions and fellows of the Scribes and Pharisees.

The reason why we are accused as hypocrites, and why we are thus belied that we claim to be without sins, is because we teach penitence according to the Scripture; because we testify with holy Paul, that perjurers, adulterers, idolaters, wine-bibbers, avaricious, liars and unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6: 10; Gal. 5: 21; Eph. 5: 5; that those who are carnally-minded shall die, Rom. 8: 13. And with John, that those who sin (understand, willfully) are of the devil, 1 John 3: 8, and that we, therefore, in our weakness, abhor such works; although with Moses we have often confessed, verbally and in writing, as we ever will confess, that none is clear before God, on account of the inborn nature, Gen. 6: 5; 8: 21; with Isaiah, that we are all as the unclean; with David, that there is no living man righteous before God, Ps. 14: 3; with Paul, that nothing good dwells in our flesh, Rom. 7: 18; with John that if we say, we are without sin, we deceive ourselves and no truth is in us, 1 John 1: 8, and with James, that in many things we offend all, Jas. 3: 2.

Behold, kind reader, this is why the preachers call us hypocrites who claim to be without sin. Such abominable lies are told by those who pretend to preach the word of God!

Reply to the charge, Heaven-stormers. Henceforth, because we teach from the mouth of the Lord: That if we would enter into life we must keep the commandments, Matt. 19, 17; Mark 10: 19; Jn. 15: 10, that in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avail; but the keeping of the commandments of God, 1 Cor. 7: 19, and that the love of God is that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous, 1 Jn. 5: 3, therefore we are called by the preachers *heaven-stormers* and *work-saints*; and that we want to be saved by our own merits; although we always have confessed, and by the grace of God, ever will, that we cannot be saved by means of anything in heaven nor in earth other than by the merits, intercession, death and blood of Christ, as has been amply demonstrated above, Jn. 14: 3; Acts 4: 12; Phil. 2: 10.

Behold, thus the best of these perverse people have been changed to the very worst, and do not observe that the whole Scripture, condemns, all licentious, obstinate despisers and transgressors of the commandments of God, to death, who plainly prove by their deeds that they do not confess the saving grace of God; do not believe in Christ Jesus, and, according to Scripture, abide in damnation, wrath and death, Jn. 3: 36. For whoso doeth unrighteously, sheweth by his works whose disciple he is.

Reply to the bitter slander, Ungodly Sects and Conspirators. So far as regards the bitter, envious slander and charge that we are a perverse, ungodly sect and conspirators we answer: If we were allowed an impartial hearing with our opponents before a tribunal of persons who understand the word of God, we would soon be cleared of the infamous charge and they would be found guilty. For what kind of conspirators they are, this Scripture testifies, "There is a conspiracy (mark, conspiracy) of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof," Ezek. 22: 25.

All may find a place in their sect who will but keep their ceremonies and acknowledge them to be the true preachers and

messengers no matter what kind of life they lead if they but steer clear of falling into the hands of the executioner. No drunkard, no avaricious or pompous person, no defiler of women, no cheat or liar, no thief, robber or shedder of blood (understand, by going to war), no curser or swearer so great and ungodly but he must be called a christian. If he but say, I am sorry. It is all ascribed to his weakness and he is admitted to their supper; for, say they, he is saved by grace and not by merits. He remains a member of their church notwithstanding he remains in all his doings an unrepentant, obdurate and ungodly heathen; to-day as yesterday; also, to-morrow as to-day notwithstanding the Scripture so plainly testifies that such shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Rom. 1: 32; 1 Cor. 6: 10; for they are of the devil, Jn. 8: 44; 1 Jn. 2: 11.

O, preachers, preachers! learn once to know your own sect and conspirators, we pray you for Christ's sake. You boast that you are the true, christian church, but we fear you are a new Sodom, Egypt and Babylon. Oh! oh!! For many years we have drank from the same goblet with you and walked in the same Spirit; we have received one crisma and anointment with you, we know very well; but we have received mercy, and spewed out the inhaled abomination and willingly entered into the lovely communion of his saints, into the house, kingdom and body of Christ; who hate all ungodliness and sinfulness, and with all their strength, strive after and desire righteousness and godliness. Although they are called by you and all the world an ungodly sect and conspirators, yet, they are peaceable and joyous in spirit, and are assured in their consciences that truth is on their side; and that they are not an ungodly sect and conspirators, but God's own peculiar people, church and body, 1 Cor. 12: 13; Eph. 1: 5; Col. 1: 18; 1 Pet. 2: 10. O Lord, how lamentably thy small flock is ever slandered! Rom. 12: 4; Eph. 1: 23; 5: 27.

Reply to the slander and false charge, Murderers of the souls of Infants. In the same manner we must often hear from these poor, blind people who seek the salvation

of their children in the baptism of their preachers, that we murder the souls of our infants, because we believe the word of the Lord that the kingdom is promised them by grace, by the election of God our heavenly Father through the merits of Jesus Christ, as he says, "Suffer little children and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven," Matt. 19: 14; Mark 10: 14; Luke 18: 16; and that we therefore do not suffer to have them baptized with the baptism of anti-christ. For not the baptism of anti-christ but the promise of Jesus Christ assures us of the salvation of our little children if they die and depart from here. But if the good Father suffer them to grow up and grant them his grace, then we would educate them in the instruction and fear of the Lord as much as we are able. When they can understand God's word and believe it, the Scripture directs them to be baptized, Matt. 28: 19; Mark 16: 16. But those who practice such manifest hypocrisy and anti-christian works, banish the devil from the innocent vessels which are cleansed with the blood of the Lord; they conjure, salt, anoint, and consecrate them, baptize them on the faith of others, while they find not a single commandment to practice such flummery and mockery, in all the Scriptures.

The parents console themselves with the thought that they are now christians; and thus they are, from the cradle on, raised in all manner of blindness, pomp, splendor and idolatry, without the fear of God, so that when they become of understanding age they have no information of the word of God, and walk all their lives, trusting in infant baptism, upon a crooked and dark way, without confession, faith and new birth, without Spirit, word and Christ. What such do to the souls of their little children I will leave to their own consideration and to the sentence of the word of the Lord.

Reply to the base charge of being Anabaptists. We must also be called anabaptists by the learned, because we baptize at the confession of faith, as Christ commanded his disciples to do, and as the holy apostles taught and practiced, as did also the worthy martyr Cyprian, all of the African

bishops; and besides, because we, with the Nicene Council, cannot accept the heretical baptism which is of anti-christ, as christian baptism; and because we are also informed by the Scriptures that St. Paul rebaptized some of those who were baptized with the baptism of John which was from heaven, because they did not acknowledge the Holy Ghost, Acts 19: 3. Inasmuch as we but baptize according to the command of Christ and according to the teaching and practice of the holy apostles; nor do any more than Cyprian did, together with the council of Carthage and Nice, in this matter (although we acknowledge that we do not believe in all their doctrine); and, inasmuch as we rebaptize those who are not baptized with a divine baptism (as were those who were baptized of John), but with the baptism of anti-christ, and had at the time of their baptism no knowledge of divine matters, as both nature and the Scriptures teach, since they were yet unconscious infants, and as we are for this reason called anabaptists by the learned; therefore, indeed, Christ and his apostles, Cyprian and his bishops, the Nicene Council, the holy apostle Paul also must have been an anabaptist. This is incontrovertible.

Reply to the blind charge that we are profaners of the Sacraments. Again, some of the learned, also, call us profaners of the sacraments, because we do not believe that the bread and wine of their Supper is the actual, real flesh and blood of the Lord; or, as some have it, because we do not believe that we, through the wine and bread, actually partake of the flesh and blood of the Lord; notwithstanding that we reverentially administer the supper to the penitent (as far as man can judge), as a figurative or sacramental sign, with fear and trembling, also with thanksgiving and joy, according to the Scripture and according to the practice of the fathers, such as Gregory, Augustin, Chrisostom, Tertullian, Tyrril, Eusebius, &c., and, in our weakness, diligently strive rightly to commemorate and fulfill the holy, glorious mystery, the Lord's death, love, peace and the unity of his church and the communion of his holy flesh and blood which by this sign of bread and wine are symbolized to all true christians.

The poor slanderers do not observe how fearfully they profane the sacraments of the Lord, if we call those sacraments, which they administer. Although they believe that they distribute the actual flesh and blood of the Lord, they yet esteem it so trifling that they distribute it to known drunkards, avaricious, liars, impenitent, &c., as if the Lord's Supper were to be partaken of by the penitent and impenitent alike. Whether this is not profaning the sacraments you may judge according to the Scriptures.

Reply to the pharisaic charge that we are possessed of the devil. We consider those of the devil who speak his words, who teach falsehood instead of truth, Gen. 3: 4, steal the glory from God and miserably deceive souls. But we trust, by the grace of the Lord (eternal glory be to God), that we hate the word of the devil from our inmost hearts; and that we are very desirous for the words of eternal truth, and of the fruits of the Spirit, according to the talent received, which is a decided proof that we are not of the spirit of the devil, but of the Lord. For if we were of the devil, as we are charged, we would walk upon a broader road and be befriended by the world, and not so resignedly offer our property and blood for the cause of the word of the Lord. Yet it is but just that the disciple be not above the master. The Father of the house himself had to hear that he was of the devil, Jn. 10: 20; 8: 48. The Pharisees and Scribes must manifest their nature and Spirit. For if they can not stand with their foolish wisdom before the power and truth of the Lord (for the spirit of Belial must ever give way to the Spirit of the Lord), they break forth in madness, heap falsehood upon falsehood, upbraid and lie with all their might, and ascribe it to the devil, although their consciences testify that it is the Spirit of the Lord. By what kind of a spirit such are urged their words and works sufficiently testify.

Behold, kind reader, here you have our reply to the principal slanderous charges with which we are greeted by our backbiters, opponents and persecutors. With such slander their writings are filled and their mouths overflow. We are pictured in

such colors (the Lord forgive them) that we will quite likely be considered a perverse, ungodly people, by the great mass who walk upon the broad way, so long as the world shall stand. O, perverse nature! "O, generation of vipers (says Christ), how can ye, being evil, speak good things," Matt. 12: 34. I fear that they are members of the awful beast which arose from the sea, which was like unto a leopard, whose feet were as the feet of a bear and whose mouth as the mouth of a lion; and which opened his mouth to blaspheme the name of God and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven, Rev. 13: 2, 6. For what is there which is holy and right according to the Scripture which they do not trample with their feet and blaspheme, with their mouth as an ungodly, accursed abomination? O, dear Lord, save all thy beloved children from this lying, deceiving generation, forever!

Eightly and lastly, they say, Well, if truth is on their side, let them come before the public.

Answer. We would faithfully admonish the reader to consider well from what motive and with what intention they say so. For most of them say so from motives of mere envy and blood-thirstiness, we are sure, thinking that if we would do so it would soon be brought to an end. Others, perhaps, through simpleness and ignorance; thinking that we cannot defend it by virtue of the Scripture, since Christ and his apostles, as also the prophets, generally preached in public before the people, and were also sent for that purpose. To those that do so from motives of blood-thirstiness, we would say that they, with the Pharisees and Scribes, have burdened themselves with the blood of the innocent; and are counted as murderers, Matt. 23: 34; Jn. 10: 16; Luke 11: 49.

But to those who do so through ignorance (if there be such, which we hope there may be), we would say in all love, diligently to search all the Scriptures to see if they will find any passages to show that the apostles and prophets went forth publicly to preach when they were sure, beforehand, that it would cost them their lives, as we know to be the case if we would publicly go forth. No, no. If I mind aright, they ever avoided

the places and cities which they were sure would seek their lives; or else they kept themselves concealed, as did Baruch and Jeremiah, when king Joachim had commanded that they should be taken, Jer. 36: 19.

They have all feared death and fled from it however much they were gifted with the Spirit of the Lord. "Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me," Exod. 17: 4.

Jeremiah says, "O my lord the king, let my supplication, I pray thee, be accepted before thee; that thou cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there," Jer. 37: 20.

David fled before Saul from one mountain to the other, and from one wilderness to another.

Urijah of Kirjath-jearim, a prophet of the Lord, fled from before the sword of the king of Judah, into the land of Egypt, Jer. 26: 20, 21.

Elijah, the spiritual man of God, fled to the wilderness, before the threats of Jezebel, 1 Kin. 19: 3. From fear of those of Nineveh, Jonah wanted to flee into Tarshish, Jonah 1.

When Paul knew that they were laying in wait for him he was let down by the wall in a basket, by night, Acts 9: 24, 25.

Behold, kind reader, thus the exalted men of God have feared and avoided death, and did not, generally, go where they feared violence, until they were admonished to do so by an oracle or by a revelation from angels.

So also Elijah appeared before king Ahab, after the long drought and famine, 1 Kin. 17. Thus the apostles freely spoke the word of the Lord in the temple, after they were led from prison, by an angel, Acts 5: 19; 12: 7; 26: 20.

Thus Paul preached at Corinth one year and a half after the Lord, in a vision, spake unto him, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city," Acts 18: 9, 10, and other like Scriptures. We are aware, beloved reader, that God has the power to save his own, if it be his will. For

he smote the Syrians with blindness, who wanted to take Elisha. He sent Jonas through the turbulent waves, in a whale, to Nineveh. He took from the fire its power, and shut the lions' mouths. He delivered the apostles by the aid of angels. He is the Lord who lives unchangeable in his power and glory, 2 Kin. 6: 18; Jonah 1: 17; Dan. 3: 27; 6: 22; Acts 12: 11.

But as these are particular miracles of God which are not shown to every one, and as no Scriptures direct us to go there where we surely know that we shall die or be imprisoned for life, but as we are admonished in plain words to flee from the tyrants; and as the faithful men and servants of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, have done the same, as was said; therefore we simply say (and that with a good conscience) that we will not now, nor at any future time, publicly go forth unless it is proven to us in sincerity of heart, by Scripture (which we know, is impossible), that we should do so before we are urged as were the apostles and prophets by the power of the Lord, be it by a revelation from angels or by the urging of the Holy Spirit, as was heard. But in such a case we are at all times prepared to do the will of the Lord, and publicly to teach his holy word and administer his sacraments, at the peril of our lives, Matt. 10: 23; Jer. 1: 7; Matt. 2: 13; 4: 12.

It is also well known to the honorable reader, and to all who are acquainted with us, that we are called rebels and mutineers every where by the learned, notwithstanding that we are ever quiet and act justly with all mankind; and, if we now, should publicly teach the word of the Lord in the face of the upbraidings of the learned, of the mandates, of the rulers and of the mad cries of the populace, some of them would cry, rebels! rebels!! although we are, thank the Lord, clear of all rebellion and bloodshed, as has been heard.

Others would say, and not unjustly, that we killed ourselves by unlimited zeal, as we were well aware what was, in places, resolved against us, and we yet in the face of it publicly taught our doctrine.

We further desire the reasonable reader to take into consideration that a true teacher who preaches the word of the Lord un-

blamably cannot, at the present time, safely dwell in any kingdom, country or city under heaven, so far as our knowledge goes, if he be known. If he be not allowed to dwell safely, how can he safely preach and teach?

Besides, we plainly see that the innocent sheep must suffer and be led to the slaughter though they are no teachers, and should the teachers then, who are blamed for all, and who with Christ are hated above all evil-doers, yet go before the public in these mad, fearful times of all evil and tyranny? It would be foolishness; for to do so is not taught by common sense nor by the Scriptures.

And although we do not teach at public meetings where all classes assemble, yet the truth is not kept silent but is preached here and there both by day and by night, in cities and country, verbally and in writing, at the peril of life. This is testified to by judges, tormentors, prisons, fetters, water, fire, sword and stake.

Also must Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Gelderland, &c., confess at the last judgment that the word was preached to them, for they, on account of the word being preached, have shed innocent blood like water; it is so preached in these countries that we may well say with holy Paul, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," 2 Cor. 4: 3, 4.

Besides, I have, about the year 1545 or 1546, asked of the preachers of Bon a public meeting and discussion, under bishop Herman of Cologne, on condition of safe conduct.

I have also twice asked this in writing of those of Emden, and once of those of Wesel, on the same condition.

But, although those of Bon, and also those of Wesel had offered this to some of the brethren, still, when they found that I was willing to do so, it was, under a false pretense of necessity, refused by those of Bon as also by those of Emden.

Those of Wesel wished that the devil might treat with me.

Again, I have also offered to discuss with

them for many years, in print; but it was not accepted.

Behold, kind reader, thus we have from the beginning of our service, been prepared and ready to give an account of our faith to every person who desired it in good faith, no matter whether he were ruler or citizen, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, man or woman. And we are to-day ready to do so as far as possible; we are not ashamed of the gospel of the glory of Christ. If one desire to hear from us, we are prepared to teach; if one desires to know our foundation, we sincerely desire to explain it clearly, if our writings do not suffice. If any one desires to discuss with us, no matter who he be (except those who have renounced us after scriptural exhortation was exhausted in their case), in sincerity of heart, the matter of our faith, without philosophy, flattery and garbling, and according to the unadulterated, evangelical doctrine and truth, the commandments, prohibitions, usage, Spirit and example of Christ and of his disciples, and that without any trickery, deceit or roguery, as did, in their time, Hilarius and Augustin and others, with some who were suspected in their doctrine; we will not, by the grace of the Lord, refuse to do so, if we possibly can before a public meeting or before twenty or more impartial, reasonable witnesses. For our most ardent desire is that the truth may be made manifest. But the bloody murder of anti-christ must be omitted; for it is devilish and unbecoming in a christian, Rev. 17: 18; Jn. 8: 44.

Inasmuch as our adversaries and opponents make our life and doctrine suspicious with many, by saying, that if truth be on our side we should come out in public (although they say so out of mere vindictiveness for they know very well that we can not do so, as there are tyrants and blood-shedders every where, as may be seen); therefore we give them this discreet answer.

Further, I would say, that if the truth be on the side of our opponents and not with us, as they claim, and, as they can freely go abroad before the whole world (understand each sect in its way) to preach their doctrine, faith and life; and, as we have to be subjected daily to suffering and tor-

ture they should, therefore, show enough of reason and love toward us, poor creatures, to obtain liberty for us from the magistracy whom they have, by their crying and slander against us, caused to be so bitterly opposed to us (something which does not become reasonable men, not to say christians), that we may thus, in their presence, before a public assembly or before twenty or more impartial, reasonable witnesses, as was said before, cause our foundation, doctrine and faith to be heard and explained according to the sure and true testimony of the Holy Scriptures. If they, then, have any thing to advance against our foundation, doctrine and faith, let them do so in the name of the Lord. Truth shall bear the crown. If not, let them lay their hands upon their mouths and keep silent and never more blaspheme that which is right and just.

Kind reader, if this could be accomplished many hard words would be saved; many

miserable souls which are now kept by them in such accursed blindness, would be delivered from the snares of hell; and the noble, glorious truth, now so very much hated and despised by the world, would be made manifest in splendor and beauty. But so much discretion has not been found up to the present time.

As we are not allowed a public discussion, in a christian manner, as we have anxiously, and at different times asked of them, and as the ignorant and unversed yet cry, *If they be right why do they not come out publicly*; therefore we will leave it to the consideration and judgment of the intelligent reader, from what motives they thus cry; what kind of faith, love, gospel and truth they have, and by what kind of a spirit they are urged. For, whosoever has the truth will never come to shame; for truth is great, stronger than wine, kings and women.

CONCLUSION.

Here, dear reader, you have our defense and discreet reply to the bitter, envious falsehoods and slanders of our enviers by which we will live or die, and appear before our God at the judgment day, for which, perhaps, I shall not be thanked by many. Yet, since they, on every hand, by such inhuman falsehoods and slanders, rob us of our honor and reputation; so lamentably adulterate and suppress the precious, worthy word of our Lord Jesus Christ; maintain and uphold all the earth in their impenitent, ungodly being and cause so much misery to many a pious child; therefore we have written this in this emergency as a reasonable defense and christian reply of all pious and godfearing persons, that thereby all intelligent and reasonable readers, who cannot hear our verbal defense, may rightly judge between us and our opponents, may see the innocence of us all, and may learn to confess the poor, despised truth which is so lamentably stolen from them by their preachers; and we would

herewith place in the hands of the Lord, this and all other shameful charges and accusations which are so enviously published against us, and leave them to his last judgment.

They may prove the nature of their father and fill the measure of their blood-thirstiness, for they will not do otherwise. We trust, by the grace of the Lord, to possess our souls in patience, and not turn our faces from the spies until the coming of him who shall come. Then shall they see him whom they have pierced, Rev. 1. And I would herewith sincerely pray the readers and auditors, be their station high or low, learned or unlearned, for Christ's sake to accept this my labor in love and to rightly interpret it; for I have performed it for no other purpose than to the praise of my God and to the service of all well-disposed persons; and with the intention that the rulers (I mean those who are reasonably minded, and would not willfully act contrary to the will of God) may be warned against pro-

testing this ungodly state of affairs and against heaping upon themselves the innocent blood, that the preachers who err unwittingly may no longer serve and protect the kingdom of hell by their falsehood, slander, upbraiding, ungodly doctrine, sacraments and lives; that the common people may place their trust in the word of the Lord, seek the right way, fear the Lord, die unto their sins and reform their sinful life.

Cordially beloved reader, be not repulsed if it should taste bitter to your flesh. Behold, in Christ, it is the truth, to which we have here testified; nor will there ever be found any other foundation, doctrine, way, light and truth.

Therefore I desire that it be not kept hid from any reasonable persons; but that it may be read by or to every one, no matter who or where they be, if it might be of use to them, and they be not intent upon the corruption or blood of any one, that thereby the saving truth of Jesus Christ may be

extended and the accursed falsehood of anti-christ be destroyed.

May the Almighty, eternal Father, the Creator of all things, the God of heaven and of earth, grant all my hearers and readers the heavenly gift and power of his Holy Spirit that they may hear and read this my humble treatise in the true fear of God, and with pure, impartial hearts, may wisely examine, well understand and accept it with true faith, and humbly fulfill it in willing obedience, to the praise of their God and the salvation of their souls, by his beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord. To him be the honor, praise, kingdom, power and glory for ever and ever, Amen.

“Lying lips are abomination to the Lord: but they that deal truly are his delight,” Prov. 12: 22; 6: 17.

“Devise not a lie against thy brother: neither do the like to thy friend. Use not to make any manner of lie: for the custom thereof is not good,” Eccl. 7: 12, 13.

MENNO SIMON.

