
A LETTER.

From Menno Simon to Margaret, wife of Rein Edes.

CHOSEN beloved sister in Christ Jesus, Mercy, grace and peace be to thee! Most beloved sister whom I sincerely love in Christ. From your beloved husband's letter I understand, that during all the winter you have been a sick and afflicted child, which I very much regret to hear. But we pray daily: Father, thy will be done. By which we commit ourselves to the Father to treat with us as is pleasing in his blessed sight. Therefore bear with your affliction resignedly. For all this is his paternal will for your own good; that you may put your trust in the eternal living God alone, and not in any perishable things. Be consoled in Christ Jesus; for after the cold of winter, comes summer; and after death, comes life. O, sister! rejoice that you are a true daughter of your beloved Father. Soon will the inheritance of his glorious promise be due; a little while yet, says the word of the Lord, and he who is coming shall come and his reward will be with him. May the Almighty, merciful God and Lord, before whom you have bent your knees, to his honor, and whom, according to your weakness you have sought, grant you a strong and patient heart, a sufferable pain, a lovely refreshment, a gracious cure or godly dissolution, through Christ Jesus whom we daily expect with you, my beloved sister and child in Christ Jesus.

Secondly, I understand that your conscience is troubled because you have not and do not now walk in such perfection as the Scriptures direct us; on which account I write the following to my faithful sister, as a fraternal consolation, from the true word and eternal truth of the Lord: The Scripture,

says Paul, hath concluded all under sin. There is no man on earth, says Solomon, who does righteously and sinneth not, Eccl. 7. At another place, "A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again," Prov. 24: 16. Moses says, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty," Ex. 34: 6, 7. O, dear sister! Observe, he says, None are guiltless before God. Again, David says, "Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified;" "If they sin against thee (for there is no man who sinneth not);" "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags;" Christ, also, says, "There is none good but one, that is, God;" "The evil which I would not, that I do;" "In many things we offend all;" "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," Ps. 143: 2; 1 Kin. 8: 46; Isa. 64: 6; Matt. 19: 17; Mark 10: 18; Rom. 7: 19; 1 Jn. 1: 8.

As it is plain from all these Scriptures that we must all acknowledge ourselves to be sinners, as we, also, are in fact; and as no one has perfectly fulfilled the righteousness required of God but Christ Jesus alone; therefore none can approach God, obtain grace and be saved except by the perfect righteousness, reconciliation and advocacy of Jesus Christ; however godly, righteous, holy and unblamable he is. We must all acknowledge, whosoever we are, that we are sinners in thoughts, words and works. Yea, if we had not before us the righteous

Christ Jesus, no prophet nor apostle could be saved. Therefore, be of good cheer and be consoled in the Lord. You can expect no greater righteousness in yourself than all the chosen of God had in them from the beginning. In and by yourself you are a poor sinner; and by the eternal righteousness, banished, accursed and adjudged to eternal death; but in and through Christ you are justified and pleasing unto God, and accepted of him in eternal grace as a daughter and child. In this all saints have consoled themselves, trusted in Christ, esteemed their own righteousness as unclean, weak and imperfect, with contrite hearts approached the throne of grace, in the name of Christ, and with firm faith prayed the Father: O, Father, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us, Matt. 6; Luke 11.

It is a very precious word which Paul speaks, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly;" yea, when we were yet ungodly, and thereby he manifests his love toward us. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, Rom. 5: 6, 10. Behold, my chosen, beloved child and sister in the Lord, this I write from the sure foundation of eternal truth. I herewith pray you, and desire that you will wholly commend all your doings outward and inward unto Christ Jesus and his merits; believing and confessing that his precious blood, alone, is your cleansing; his righteousness your piety; his death your life; and his resurrection your justification; for he is the forgiveness of all your sins; his bloody wounds are your reconciliation; and his invincible strength the staff and consolation of your weakness, as we have, in former days, ac-

ording to our small gift, often shown you from the Scriptures. Yea, most beloved child and sister, so long as you find and feel such a spirit in yourself which is desirous of following that which is good, and abhorring that which is evil, notwithstanding the remnant of sin is not entirely dead in you, as also all the saints complained of from the beginning, so long you may rest assured that you are a child of God, and that you will inherit the kingdom of grace in eternal joy, with all the saints. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit," Jn. 4: 13. I sincerely pray that you may, by faith, rightly understand this ground to the refreshment, strengthening and consolation of your conscience and soul, and remain firm unto the end. I commend you, most beloved child and sister, to the faithful, merciful and gracious God, in Christ Jesus, now and forever. Let him do with you and with all of us according to his blessed will. Either in the flesh, yet to remain a little while with your beloved husband and children; or out of the flesh, to the honor of his name and to the salvation of your soul. You before, and we after, or we before and you afterward. Separation must once come. In the city of God, in the new Jerusalem there we will wait on each other, before the throne of God and of the Lamb; there sing hallelujah! and praise his name in perfect joy. Your husband and children I commend to him who has given them to you, and he will do with them justly. The saving power of the most holy blood of Christ be with my most beloved child and sister, now and forever, Amen.

Your brother, who sincerely loves you in Christ.

MENNO SIMON.

