

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF MENNO SIMON, TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DUTCH OF HOLLAND.

Volume Two

Volume 1 Contains Renunciation of Popery, Foundation and Plain Instruction, The True Christian Faith, Concerning the New Birth, Cross of Christ, Pleasing Meditation on the Twenty-fifth Psalm, The Spiritual Resurrection, Excommunication, The Education of Children and Letters.

Volume 2 Contains Reply to Gellius Faber, A Supplication to Christians, Apology, Reply to John A'Lasco, The Triune, Eternal and True God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Christian Baptism, Reason Why, A Confession, Reply to Zylis and Lemmekes, Replication, The Incarnation, Reply to Martin Micron, Jesus, the True Scriptural David, Letters, etc.

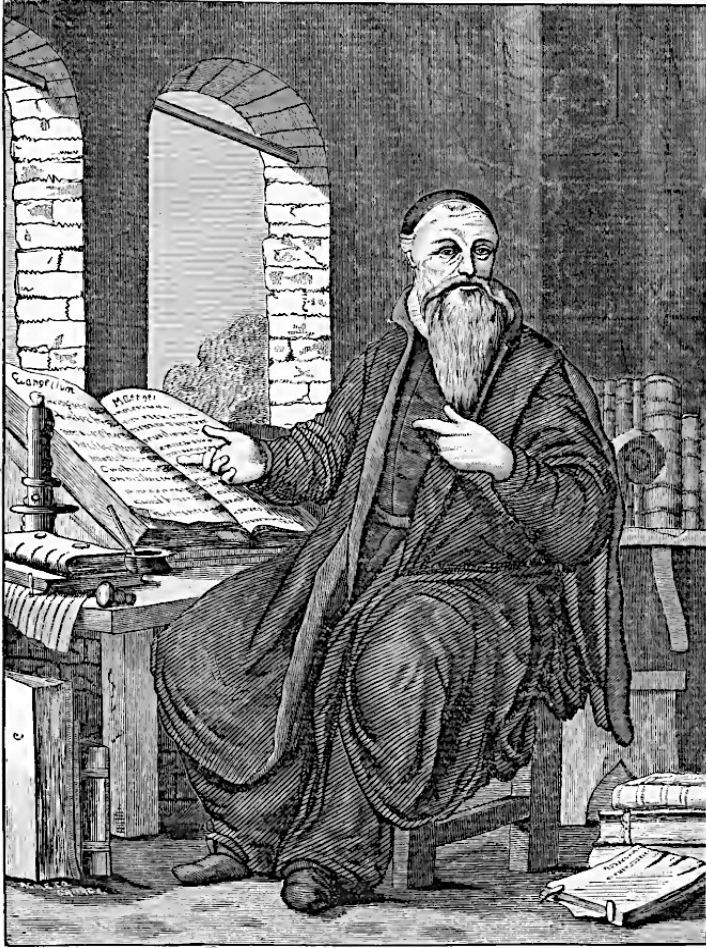
Volume Two.

**“The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,
and his tongue talks of Judgment. The Law of
his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall
slide.” Psalm 37:30, 31.**

**“Remember those who rule over you, who have
spoken the word of God to you, whose faith
follow, considering the outcome of their
conduct.” Hebrew 13:7.**

**Elkhart, Indiana
Published by John F. Funk and Brother,
1871**

**Entered according to Act of Congress,
in the year 1871, by
JOHN F. FUNK & BROTHER,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.**



MENNO SIMONS.

Born in Witmarsen, in Friesland, Holland, in the year 1496, and died in Woestevelt, formerly called Oldeslohe, on the 13th of January 1561, in the 66th year of his age.

The Complete Works of Menno Simon, Volume 2

Menno Simons' prominence as a leader of the Anabaptist movement came somewhat as a result of his prolificacy. Being one of the few Radical Reformers who did not suffer an early martyr's death, he had much more time to write and develop his ideas. His complete works include his *magnum opus*: The Foundation of Christian Doctrine, plus essays, devotionals, letters, and tracts. Even a brief skim of his work can lead to much greater appreciation and understanding of both early Anabaptism and the contemporary Mennonite tradition.

Kathleen O'Bannon
CCEL Staff

Digital Versions
Restored, Corrected and Reset
by
Bruce Armstrong
Central Highlands Congregation of God
Volume 2 Released
18th February, 2024

Published by
Central Highlands Christian Publications
PO Box 236 Creswick Vic 3363 Australia
info@chcpublications.net
chcpublications.net

Digital Edition Foreword

It is almost 500 years since Menno Simon wrote this material, and 150 years since the English translation was printed, but his work remains valuable for God's children to read and understand. From the moment Menno decided to truly walk with Christ, his life was in constant danger, and many of his fellow believers were cruelly murdered for their faith.

This edition began with the CCEL digital version. It has been carefully corrected using the original printed translation and then 'translated' into modern English, as it seems inappropriate to leave it in the archaic King James Bible style English which the 1871 translators chose, rather than using contemporary language and making it more like the Dutch used by Menno. The updates included restoring God's name—Jehovah—everywhere it is used in the original manuscripts of the Bible.

As Menno stressed many times, we too need to hold fast to Christ, study his Word, and follow His Instructions to the end of our days. Menno taught baptism was only for believers, our need for the indwelling of the Holy spirit, non-violence, obedience to Christ first and then to secular rulers, separation from the unbiblical myths and traditions of Catholicism and Protestantism and the exclusion of unrepentant sinners from our congregations. May this version of Menno's work inspire you to deepen and strengthen your faith, especially if you find yourself threatened with the viciousness the early Mennonites faced in the coming Great Tribulation.

Bruce Armstrong
Central Highlands Congregation of God

Contents

GELLIUS FABER,	1
PREFACE	2
REPLY TO A PUBLICATION OF GELLIUS FABER	8
OF THE MISSION OR CALLING OF THE PREACHERS..	30
CONCERNING BAPTISM	76
THE LORD’S SUPPER	130
EXCOMMUNICATION, BAN OR SEPARATION	140
CONCERNING THE CHURCH, AND AN INSTRUCTIVE COMPARISON:	158
THE SIGNS BY WHICH BOTH CHURCHES MAY BE KNOWN	167
The True Signs By Which The Church Of Christ May Be Known	172
The True Signs By Which The Church Of Anti-Christ May Be Known	173
CONCERNING SOME ACCUSATIONS AGAINST US...	197
THE CONFESSION OF THE LEARNED CONCERNING CHRIST	203
CONCLUSION	223
A VERY HUMBLE SUPPLICATION OF THE POOR, DESPISED CHRISTIANS	225
A LETTER OF CONSOLATION, ADDRESSED TO AN AFFLICTED WIDOW	236
Complaint or Apology	238
A BRIEF COMPLAINT OR APOLOGY	239
DESCRIPTION OF A TRUE PREACHER	246
A SCRIPTURAL EXPLANATION OF EXCOMMUNICATION.	248
DEMONSTRATION to JOHN A’LASCO,	279
PREFACE	280

A CLEAR, INCONTROVERTIBLE CONFESSION, &c.....	283
FIRST PART. Reply to John A'Lasco.....	283
SECOND PART. OUR CONFESSION.....	291
THIRD PART. THE CONFUTATION.....	311
SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES UPON THE FOREGOING SUBJECT.....	344
CONCLUSION.....	364
A CONFESSION OF THE Triune, Eternal and True GOD,.....	367
PREFACE.....	368
A CONFESSION OF THE TRIUNE, ETERNAL, AND TRUE GOD,.....	371
The Holy Spirit.....	386
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.....	394
MENNO SIMON'S SALUTATION.....	395
PREFACE.....	397
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.....	405
TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES CONCERNING BAPTISM IN THE WATER.....	415
HOW THE HOLY APOSTLES PRACTICED BAPTISM IN THE WATER.....	462
A LETTER OF CAUTION ON DISCORD.....	483
ANOTHER LETTER.....	485
THE REASON WHY MENNO SIMON DOES NOT CEASE TEACHING AND WRITING.....	488
CLEAR CONFESSION OF THE POOR AND DISTRESSED CHRISTIANS.....	535
PREFACE.....	536
A FUNDAMENTAL AND CLEAR CONFESSION.....	539
HEARING THE PREACHERS.....	547
OF BAPTISM.....	554
INFANT BAPTISM.....	556
THE LORD'S HOLY SUPPER.....	557
THE SUPPER OF THE FALSE PREACHERS.....	559

THE SWEARING OF OATHS.....	562
CONCLUSION.....	568
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.....	570
CONCLUSION.....	580
ZYLIS AND LEMMEKES.....	583
THOROUGH ANSWER,.....	585
JUSTIFICATION AND REPLICATION,.....	607
TO THE READER.....	608
PREFACE.....	608
A HUMBLE AND CHRISTIAN DEFENSE.....	614
CONCLUSION.....	659
SCRIPTURAL DEMONSTRATION to JOHN A’LASCO.....	662
PREFACE.....	664
A TRUE CONFESSION.....	671
OBJECTIONS.....	681
ADMONISHING CONFESSION.....	697
CONCLUSION.....	714
ANTI-CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE of MARTIN MICRON.....	719
PREFACE.....	720
ANSWER TO MARTIN MICRON’S.....	726
HOW THE ‘ENGLISH’ CAME INTO DISCUSSION WITH US.....	727
DISCUSSION BETWEEN HERMAN AND MYSELF..	729
FIRST DISCUSSION WITH MICRON.....	735
SECOND DISCUSSION WITH MICRON.....	746
THIRTY-ONE ARTICLES AND DIFFERENCES.....	766
FORTY-FIVE UNSCRIPTURAL CONFESSIONS,.....	783
CONCLUSION.....	787
FOURTEEN INCONSISTENCIES,.....	788
MICRON’S FOUNDATION AND FAITH.....	793
OUR DOCTRINE AND FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST,.....	797
OF GENESIS 3:15,.....	801
MICRON’S CONFESSION,.....	804

THE SON OF GOD, ABRAHAM AND DAVID.....	807
CONCERNING THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST,.....	813
GOD IS THE TRUE FATHER.....	819
HOW THE DIVINE WORD WAS MADE FLESH,.....	825
CONCLUSION.....	833
A LETTER.....	837
From Menno Simon to Margaret, wife of Rein Eden.....	837
A VERY SINCERE EPISTLE TO MARTIN MICRON.....	842
A HUMBLE PRAYER TO THE READER.....	878
A PLAIN AND CONVINCING PROOF,.....	884
TESTIMONY AGAINST JOHN VAN LEYDEN.....	885
SHUNNING AND SEPARATION.....	914
A KIND ADMONITION.....	915
A LETTER TO A SISTER.....	929
PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCES OF MENNO SIMON....	933
INDEX TO VOLUME 2.....	936

A
REPLY TO A PUBLICATION
OF

GELLIUS FABER,

MINISTER AT EMDEN,

WHICH HE PUBLISHED IN THE YEAR 1562
(IF I MISTAKE NOT), TO SLANDER THE PIOUS
CHILDREN OF GOD, AND TO EMBITTER THEIR
CROSS; TO ENSNARE AND DECEIVE THE
THOUGHTLESS, AND TO COMFORT AND ENCOURAGE
THEM IN THEIR UNRIGHTEOUSNESS AND
CORRUPTION.

BY

MENNO SIMON.

*Duo opposita (inquit Philosophus) juxta se posita, magis
eluseunt.*

(Two facts set opposite to each other, says the philosopher,
become the more apparent.)

SECOND VOLUME.

ELKHART, INDIANA.
PUBLISHED BY JOHN F. FUNK AND BROTHER.
1871.

May God, our heavenly Father, through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, graciously grant spiritual enlightenment and salutary understanding to all the pious and unprejudiced readers of this work, of whatever class, who sincerely seek the Lord and his saving truth, Amen.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by
JOHN F. FUNK & BROTHER,
In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

PREFACE.

PAUL writes to Timothy and says, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trace-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it; from such turn away,” 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Further he says, “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine, for the time will come when they will not endure

sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fables,” 2 Tim. 4:1-4.

Again Daniel says, “There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation,” Dan. 12:1.

Beloved reader, if you will pay close attention to the seeking, teaching and conduct of the preachers of the present day and to the deplorable condition of the common people, you will be convinced that the teachers of whom Paul speaks are here in great numbers and that the abominable time has arrived. O reader, take heed! It is such a time now, that if Sodom was flourishing as of old, it would compare as pious and righteous with the present, miserable world. Yet, through the just punishment and wrath of God, Sodom was turned into ashes and suffered the vengeance of eternal fire.

“Behold,” says the prophet, “this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: Pride, fullness of bread, abundance of idleness, was in her and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy; and they were haughty and committed abomination before me; therefore I took them away as I saw fit,” Ezek. 16:49, 50.

But now the world lives as if they were merely born to ungodliness and sensuality; and as if God was a dreamer and his word a fable. Say, beloved, is it not so? My kind reader, is it not so? Where is he who sincerely fears God and seeks after the truth? Wherever we turn we see nothing but unrighteousness, idolatry, deceit and despising of God. And all this is adorned with the holy name, word, death and blood of Christ; besides, with human weakness and with false freedom, to avoid offence, O Lord, as if Christ were the Redeemer of all the impenitent and Mediator of all perverse sinners. No, my reader, no; this is not the case. Beware! Paul says, “If you live after the flesh, you shall die,” Rom. 8:13.

Inasmuch, then, that the world is so corrupted on every hand, that it has become a double Sodom, no, a confused Babel or

benighted Egypt, under the pretense and name of christian churches; and since the great and merciful God has, in these latter days of unrighteousness, again revealed unto some the precious word of his divine grace in a pure, christian understanding and placed it as a clear light amidst the darkness. He will yet, in everlasting love, assemble unto himself, before the dark day, an obedient and willing church through the revelation of his holy word and the enlightenment of his eternal Spirit. Since he has chosen them as his own peculiar people, [many] from the assembly of anti-christ, through true repentance and a virtuous walk (although in weakness), under the cross of Christ, together with a salutary use of the sacramental signs according to the ordinance of Christ and his apostles and through a free, unfeigned confession of faith in the precious blood of Christ. Therefore all the gates of hell arise and rave, so that, alas, true christians can find but little rest upon earth, as may be seen.

The rulers banish and persecute them, drag them into prisons and dungeons, torture and rob them and in many places deprive them of their manhood, possessions and even life.

This perverse and reckless people always call us anabaptists; heap one shameful lie upon another; point at us with the finger of scorn, as if we so behaved that fire and sword were too merciful a punishment for our bodies and eternal hell-fire too merciful a punishment for our souls.

The preachers and the learned “are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily,” as the prophet says, Psa. 73:8. Although we testify by so many tribulations that we, in our poor weakness, sincerely desire to fear and follow the Lord and that we seek and desire peace with all mankind; yet, we are infamously slandered. We are accused, everywhere, before lords and rulers of cities and countries, that we are ungodly sects and anabaptists; that we are seducing the populace; conspire to raise mutiny and rebellion; and are falsely accused of other criminal intentions; that they may thus obscure and obstruct the precious

word of God, the word of true repentance; the joyous gospel of grace; the true and powerful faith in Christ Jesus; the pious, unblamable life, required by the Scriptures; and destroy the glorious kingdom of Christ and his righteousness; lest their cause and unfaithfulness be made manifest to the world; as may be concluded from their fruits. And on the other hand, so that the corrupt kingdom of anti-christ, the kingdom of this world, may be preserved uninterruptedly and maintained without shame unto the end, in falsehood, impenitence, open idolatry, a carnal, easy life and in unrighteousness, according to the desires of the old serpent.

Behold thus works the “prince of the power of the air, the Spirit that now works in the children of disobedience,” as Paul says, Eph. 2:2. This may, alas, be plainly seen in the case of Gellius Faber,* if we well consider his writings, slanders, bitter, offensive words, his false accusations, his vain boasting and gross garbling and judge them according to the Spirit and word of the Lord.

Notwithstanding that it is well known to many thousands of honest and reasonable people (as I suppose) that we seek nothing else upon earth but that we may in our weakness, willingly walk in the footsteps of Christ, in obedience to his word; that we may again light the extinguished lamp of truth, may call many unto righteousness and that we may save our souls by the assistance and grace of the Lord. On this account we, poor ones everywhere, must endure so much tribulation, misery, anxiety, cross and persecution. Nevertheless, the above mentioned Gellius, who in this case should be our assistant and fosterer (for he claims to be a servant of the holy word), still increases our anxiety and sore

* [CHCoG: Gellius Faber, was, like Menno, a Roman Catholic priest who eventually rejected papism as false. Gellius then embraced the Reformed Church, thus becoming a Protestant. As time passed, he became increasingly critical of the Anabaptists and published a 78 page booklet on this in 1552, now lost, to which Menno is here responding. Menno’s article is a deep criticism of Protestantism as a whole and remains valid even today.]

persecution and the hatred and bitterness against us, by his unscriptural arguments and hostility to our foundation and doctrine, by his covert, malicious complaints to the magistracy and by his infamous slanders which he publishes, through his writings, to the world, to the dishonor of God and his holy word; to the disgrace of all the pious; to the confirmation of his own condemnation and to the deceiving of the simple. Therefore, no well-disposed person will think hard of me, that I, by an open reply, in accordance with the Spirit and word of my Lord, defend, to the best of my ability, the honor of God, the salvation of my brethren, the foundation of my faith and the praise of Christ, my Lord, whose service I entered, unworthily, by his grace and calling, according to his divine will.

I trust, too, with the gracious help of God, that I shall be able to do this so powerfully and clearly, with so many plain reasons and Scriptures, that not only the theologians but also all reasonable and impartial readers and hearers will, by the grace of God, clearly understand that he and the preachers of his class, support deceiving lies; and that we, through the grace of God, support the sure foundation of truth. I, with this, humbly beseech and faithfully advise all my readers, friends and enemies, that they will attentively read, assiduously examine and judge according to Scripture my forced reply and defense, not with partiality, not drowsily or spitefully but with care and impartiality. This matter is of like importance to us all, namely, the praise of God and of Christ and the salvation of our poor souls. Let none imagine that he cannot be accepted.

There is but one road and gate that leads to life, which is a strict road, Mat. 7:13, also, but one doctrine. If we wish to enter with Christ into the kingdom of his glory, we must all walk the strict way and enter in at the narrow gate and be obedient to his word; of this let everyone be aware.

Since, then, it is evident that Gellius and the learned, base their doctrines, sacraments, &c., mainly upon human wisdom, garbled

Scriptures, upon ideas and opinions; and that we base ours upon God's word; that he and his followers walk upon the broad road and that our followers walk upon the strict road; that he is not persecuted, but does persecute by his writings; and, on the other hand, that we are persecuted and do not retaliate; therefore, all right-minded persons must admit that the truth and the true church is not with them, but with us. It is an infallible rule as proven by the word of God and the example of all the pious, that where the true church is, there also are and necessarily must be the saving doctrine, true sacraments, unfeigned love, a pious, godly life and the excommunication or separation of the impenitent and perverse, according to the word of God; as may be clearly concluded, by the grace of God, from the following replication.

I would, therefore, earnestly pray for all the pious, for God's sake, that they would assist me by their ardent prayers to the Most High, that he will bestow upon me, a poor, weak man, together with my beloved brethren and faithful servants in the Lord, the gift of his grace and the power of his wisdom; so that we may silence all opponents, by virtue of true doctrine and an unblamable walk and thus maintain to the end, the house of our God, in pure, godly zeal and christian love, to the honor and praise of his great name, to whom be praise and the eternal kingdom, Amen.



REPLY TO A PUBLICATION OF GELLIUS FABER.

Pure and clear is wisdom; strong and powerful is truth; simple and desirable is righteousness; happy is he who possesses them, for his heart rejoices in the Lord, his mouth speaks what is right and his feet are upon the way of peace.

IN THE *first place*, Gellius adduces the saying of Christ, as a warning to all his readers, where he speaks, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," Mat. 7:15.

Answer. If the reader can rightly distinguish, according to the Spirit and word of God, between the nature of the sheep and the wolves and understands what this sheep's clothing means, with which the ravening wolves are covered, then the saying would, undoubtedly, not be applied to us, but to our opponents; for in what kind of clothing he here appears, with which he keeps the simple in darkness and binds their souls to damnation, will be plainly and clearly shown, through the grace of God, to all the pious and godly readers, in the following reply, if they compare it with his writing.

In the *second place* he adduces Paul and says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there are no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. 1:10.

Answer. If we well consider this saying, we will find that it admonishes all true christians not to live carnally nor to be sectarian; that the one shall not boast of this and another of that;

but points us to the only and true Shepherd and Savior of our souls, Jesus Christ, who was crucified for us and in whose name we were baptized; all of which we, in our weakness, would gladly and earnestly do, by the grace and help of God, as our tribulation, misery, affliction, blood and death abundantly have testified in many different instances.

But Gellius so construes it as to keep his readers from the unity of the Spirit, word, house and body of Christ and to keep them, through his deceitful doctrine, unscriptural infant-baptism, &c., in the unity of the spirit, word, house and body of anti-christ and undisturbedly upon the broad way.

In the *third place*, Gellius has addressed his writing to a nobleman, as is generally customary with the learned; thinking, perhaps, that by this means, their aim will be the easier attained, through the favor and assistance of such high officials; something which the pious testimonies, prophets and teachers of God's truth and word, especially of the New Testament never desired and much less sought.

In the *fourth place* Gellius gives his two principal reasons why he has published his writing. The first is, he says, Because I see that these anabaptists are daily coming into this country, secretly, from the imperial dominion, where they do and can do the most damage and not only sow here anew, their pernicious seed by hedge-preaching, but also by publications, writings and private letters, which we must stop and silence lest the unwary be deceived and that we may yet redeem some of them who have not yet become slanderers, &c.

Answer. These very offensive words, like *anabaptists*, *secretly coming*, *hedge-preaching*, *pernicious seed*, &c., alas, plainly show the disposition of the man who penned them. Yes, my readers, Gellius knows as well as I do, what Christ has commanded concerning baptism and how the holy apostles practiced it. Again, that Paul rebaptized some who were baptized by John (although John's baptism was from Heaven) only, because they were not informed concerning the Holy Spirit; that the worthy martyr

Cyprian and the African bishops, together with the council of Nice, did not acknowledge the baptism of heretics, as baptism, on account of their being outside of Christ's church and without his Spirit and word.

Notwithstanding all this, we must be called anabaptists; never minding that we, in our infancy were baptized, not only without the Spirit, faith, word or divine ordinance, but also without all reason and understanding, with an open, anti-Christian baptism, by such as he and the learned of his class themselves call anti-Christians, apostates, heretics and deceivers, who neither rightly understand God nor his word; who practice open idolatry; who bend their knees before wood and stone; who put their trust in idle doctrines and commands of men; who unrestrainedly walk according to the lusts of the flesh and who worship and honor a creation of God, namely, a piece of bread, as the only and eternal Son of God.

Although we have before us as a pattern, Christ's plain word and the salutary doctrine and open practice of the apostles, besides, Paul and both the councils, as heard; yet, alas, there are no bounds to offensive words, such as anabaptists, &c., which Gellius uses against us.

We may not retaliate, Rom. 12:19, else we might call them infant-baptists with more propriety than they call us anabaptists; for we have the whole Scriptures on our side, but they do not have one word nor one example. But his saying that we do and can do most damage in the imperial dominion, shows, alas, his stupidity and blindness.

All Scriptures teach us that idolaters and carnally-minded shall die and he well knows that in these countries, their (the world's), worship is nothing less than open idolatry and gross abomination and that their life, as a general thing, is nothing but a reckless, impenitent and carnal life, as is the case at Emden and everywhere. Yet he dares to write that there they [we] do most damage. And this he does for no other reason than because they (the pious)

storm the kingdom of hell with the Lord's Spirit, word and power; rebuke open idolatry; teach the true worship; rightly confess Christ; and because they point out the true way to this perverse, impenitent and carnal generation. If this is damaging, as Gellius calls it, then the Scriptures which speak so thoroughly of an unblamable, pious life, have badly deceived us; this you must admit. O, what a wrong judgment.

Behold, thus does the god of this world blind such rebellious and contentious spirits, who so recklessly contend against the word of God and who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, Rom. 2:8, that they become so obdurate and perverse that they call the glorious gain in Christ, attained through his grace, Spirit and power, a loss; and call good, evil and evil, good; woe unto such, Isaiah 5:20.

I would further say that he also says, in other places, that we are the only ones who obstruct them in their doctrine of impenitence and offensiveness, by our doctrine (which is not ours but the sound doctrine of Christ) and by our humble and unblamable walk which results from our doctrine through faith; and that we are thus the cause of their not being so highly esteemed as before and that they cannot continue in their ways, as they would like to do; therefore, perhaps, he complains that we do most damage there. But we say, It is because they serve the world under the semblance of the gospel, only from carnal motives; and flatter the rulers that they may aggrandize themselves with the property, church and cloister, which was intended (though wrongfully), as a sacrifice to the honor of God and that they may maintain the gospel of Christ by force of arms; because they flatter the people with the idea that Christ remitted our sins; that faith alone avails; that they are poor, weak sinners who cannot keep the commandments of God and other like idle consolations; so that everybody lives according to the lusts of his flesh, singing and crying, "The cord is loosed and we are free," and turn the grace of God into unrighteousness, as Jude says, 1:4; because they live in

the old state of sinfulness, without any fear of God, as if they never in their lives heard one syllable of the word of the Lord and as if God would not punish ungodliness and unrighteousness. Therefore the just Lord who righteously judges all things, again takes from them the knowledge which they may have had, because of their ingratitude (for they only teach and proclaim the gospel of his grace according to the lusts of the flesh) and give it to those who will bring forth fruit, as Christ spoke to the Pharisee, Mat. 21:43.

Again, to the unreasonable and offensive word “secretly enter,” I reply: Moses and Christ, the apostles and prophets, as also, natural reason unanimously teach us that we should receive, comfort, help, assist and serve the miserable, afflicted and needy stranger; and it is a fact well known to Gellius that these poor children whom he afflicts, have fled in unfeigned fear of their God to a foreign country for protection, with their weak women and little children, to escape the bloody tyrannical sword. Not on account of crime or roguery, but on account of the testimony of God and their consciences; even as the pursued doves flee from the bird of prey; and that we, through the grace of God place ourselves under the protection of this or that merciful and kind-hearted ruler; and although they, for the sake of divine truth, are bereft of their native country, possessions and earthly comforts, yet they can, through God’s grace, reasonably support themselves, as is promised in Scripture. If he were, in fact, what he boasts to be, namely, a preacher of the holy word, then his inmost soul would be moved to compassion towards these afflicted orphans and innocent hearts; he would be kind to them and assist them as much as is in his power; he would intercede for them before the magistracy, since he may observe in them such a moving spirit and ardent zeal, that they stake their possessions and blood to the praise of their God, as may be openly witnessed. But now, this misery and sore affliction, namely, the flight from the gaping

lion's mouth and from fire and sword, into more merciful countries, must be called by him "secretly entering." O, Lord!

What kind of a preacher and christian he is; how he acts according to love; and how he walks according to the word of the Lord in this respect, all reasonable persons who are not more than half blind may judge from these, his writings together with his daily cries of the same kind.

To the slanderous sentence "sowing pernicious seed," I reply: Every seed brings forth fruit after its own kind, Gen. 1:11.

My dear reader, take heed to what I write. God's word, on every hand, requires a pure heart, a new mind and a penitent, christian life, dead unto sin. John the Baptist says, "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance." Jesus says, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Mat. 3:8; 4:17. Again, I have come to call sinners to repentance, Mat. 9:13 and many other Scriptures of the kind might be adduced.

Inasmuch, then, that the Scriptures, on every hand, require of us true repentance and that also the sacramental signs, as baptism and Holy Supper signify, represent and teach to all true christian believers a penitent, unblamable life; and since, according to the tenor of the Scriptures, no one can be a true christian without true repentance and that every kind of seed brings forth fruit after its own kind, as already said, namely, lies, children of lies and truth, children of truth. It is a fact well known to many reasonable persons that God has, through us and our fellow-servants, in his great power and infinite grace, turned unto the true and living God, many a proud, avaricious, unchaste, cruel, lying, carnal and idolatrous heart and has so humbled, moved, renewed and changed them that they would rather die than act hypocritically, or willingly speak or countenance any falsehood against the well being of their neighbors, as is testified in our Netherlands by the precious blood of so many pious saints. And since the fruits of Gellius' seed, that is, his followers, remain so entirely impenitent in their lives and unchanged in their hearts that they live in pomp and splendor, go

attired in silk and velvet and are adorned with gold and silver; live in all manner of unrighteousness, avarice, carousing, hatred and envy; in short, live according to the lusts of the flesh and would, for the sake of a penny, falsely swear by the Lord or by their soul, &c.; therefore we will let all reasonable and intelligent persons judge who of us bring forth bad fruits, Gellius and his followers, or us and our followers. Whoever sincerely seeks and loves the truth, read and ponder.

O, dear Lord! Thus your holy and precious word, the word of your grace, the word of your love, by the power and grace of which we will live eternally with you, is called by this man and by others also, deceit and pernicious seed; and their open lies, obvious error and unreasonable adulteration of Scripture, of which more will be said hereafter, is called the true doctrine of Christ and the holy word of God. If it be wilful slander and perverseness, then, alas, it is too bad. But if it be ignorant blindness or misconception, then, [may] the gracious Father grant them eyes to see. This is my sincere wish, as the Lord knows.

Again, he writes, “that we sow anew our pernicious seed, not only by hedge-preaching, but also by publications, letters,” &c. To this I reply with holy David: We believe, therefore we speak and must suffer tribulation. For since God, the merciful Father, has given us, poor creatures, the Spirit of faith and bestowed upon us the Spirit of his love from on high, through his Son Jesus Christ and has sprinkled our hearts with the heavenly dew of his love, has opened unto us the seven seals of the book of his knowledge; has disclosed unto us the mystery of his divine word and pleasure; has awakened us from the dead and given us life, a new heart, mind and disposition and has nourished us with the bread of life, so that we, through his grace, have found the beautiful pearl, the precious treasure and eternal peace, which we could not possibly acquire through the deceiving doctrine, subtle sophistry and false consolations of the learned; therefore we would teach, proclaim and imprint on the hearts of all mankind, to the best of our ability,

this manifest grace of his great love toward us, that they may enjoy with us the same joy and renewal of spirit and know and taste with all saints how sweet, good and kind the Lord is to whom we have turned.

We preach, therefore, as much as is in our power, both day and night, in houses and in the open air, in forests and in wildernesses, hither and thither, in this and in foreign lands, in prisons and in dungeons, in water and in fire, on the scaffold and on the wheel, before lords and princes, orally and by writings at the risk of possessions and blood, life and death; as we have done these many years; and are not ashamed of the gospel of the glory of Christ, Rom. 1:16; for we are a living fruit and strongly feel the moving power in our hearts, as may be seen in many instances by the commendable submissiveness and willing sacrifices of our faithful brethren and joint-heirs in Christ Jesus.

We would save all mankind from the jaws of hell; deliver them from the chains of their sins and by the gracious help of God, win them to Christ by the gospel of his peace; for this is the true nature of the love which is of God.

He then accuses us of preaching at night and says in another place "That we secretly enter into cities and towns, from fear of the cross; that we sit with closed doors to treat with the simple; not to convert them to true christianity but to convert them to anabaptism," &c. To which I reply in the first place: It is true that we sometimes have to serve the Lord and preach his word at night (in the dead of night), but I fear that Gellius and the learned are the principal cause of this: For they have so embittered and still embitter all lords, princes, rulers and magistrates against us by their fiendish, unmerited upbraiding, slandering and defaming that we cannot, alas, so much move them, with Scripture, supplications, tears, misery, tribulation, loss of possessions, blood or life, that we can safely go about, verbally to defend the word of God, before these open enemies of the cross of Christ and of wholesome truth; but we must (understand, we teachers)

everywhere conceal ourselves in shops and retired places to escape the persecutors and blood-thirsty, if we do not wish to be, at once, torn up and devoured by the terrible beasts which arise from the sea.

Beloved readers, observe well what I write. Gellius accuses us of “preaching at night.” It was in the year 1543, if my memory serves me right, that a decree was read throughout West Friesland, “That criminals and even manslaughterers were promised pardon, imperial grace, freedom of country (in those times banishing was in vogue) and besides one hundred earl-guilders, if they would betray me and deliver me into the hands of the executioner.”

About the year 1539, a husbandman, who was a very pious man, named Tjaert Reyndertz, was seized in my stead, because, out of pity and compassion, he concealed me in his house while I was hotly pursued; and was a few days thereafter put on the wheel, after a free confession of faith, as a valiant soldier of Christ, after the example of his Lord; although even his enemies acknowledged that he was an unblamable, pious man.

Also, in 1546, at a place where they boasted of the word, four houses were at once confiscated, because the owner had rented one of them for a short time, to my sick wife and little ones; although the neighbors were not aware of their presence.

What decrees have been issued against some of us and what rewards have been offered for our apprehension, in different dominions and cities; what imperial mandates and Roman condemnations have been resolved against us; and how we are treated on every hand, is well known to Gellius and to the preachers of his class. That they are the very cause and the authors of these things, I unreservedly write and testify without fear. Behold, thus they hate all those who rightly teach God’s word.

Notwithstanding this, Gellius and others are not ashamed to say, “That we, out of fear of the cross, secretly enter cities and towns, sit with closed doors,” &c., as if we were stones and blocks of wood, which neither do nor can fear any deathly evils; while he

and his well know that the chosen men of God, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Aaron, besides the prophets and apostles, no, even Christ himself, so feared to die that they sometimes took to flight.

In the second place, I say that so long as I, a poor weak man, have served the pious with my small talent, I have taught more, by far, in day-time than at night. The Lord is my witness that I write the truth. Yet we must be upbraided by these perverse people as night and hedge-preachers, as if the word of God could not be taught anywhere but in their houses of abomination (who do not know the Scriptures) and as if God was not God of the night as well as of the day. O, perverseness.

Say, reader, was not the night pure unto faithful Moses and all Israel to eat the Passover? Exodus 12:3-8. Did Christ think it wrong to exhort Nicodemus at night? John 3:2. Did he not partake, with his disciples, of the Holy Supper at night, just before his suffering? Mat. 26:26; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23. Did the church not assemble at night, when Peter was delivered from the hands of the tyrant by the aid of an angel, out of fear of Herod and the Jews? Acts 12:7. Did holy Paul not preach the word in an upper chamber at Troas at night and break the Lord's bread with the disciples, just before his leaving? Acts 20:7. Did the saints of the primitive church not sometimes meet at night to break the Lord's bread and drink the holy cup? —For which they were suspicioned and had to hear and bear many hard names. Does not Hilarius write that the apostles met in halls and retired places and that they travelled through many countries and nations, by water and by land, against the prohibitions and decrees of the rulers.

Behold, my readers, whether that which was allowable and free to Moses, Israel, Christ, the apostles and to the primitive churches, namely, the service and preaching of the word of God at night, is free to us or not, especially in these critical times of tyranny, we will let the intelligent reader judge according to Scripture, in the fear of his God.

O Lord! Thus they (the world) seek causes, encumbrances and complaints to offend your poor children more and more and to burden them with the cross, that they may persecute and kill them, in semblance of justice; for they are an obstacle to their works and a smarting to their eyes.

In the third place, I say that I have heretofore twice offered publicly to treat with them on Scripture, under safe conduct, before twenty or thirty witnesses or before a full meeting. But what kind of answer I received, their message, which I yet possess, testifies. Afterwards, in the memorable times of bishop Herman, Elector of Ceulen, at their own request, I offered this same thing again to the learned men of Bon, but my offer was rejected, on account of these kind gentlemen being dissuaded by John A'Lasco and A. H.; by their accusing me of three falsehoods, such as I never thought of and much less said or advised and which I, for good reasons will not now touch upon, for all of which I have the testimony of a manuscript of a preacher named Henricus. But what their intentions were, in regard to this matter, I will leave to him who knows all things. Also, the preachers of Wesel, in the land of Kleef, pretended that they would furnish me safe conduct and treat with me, &c.; but when I signified my willingness, in writing, I received an answer that they would let the executioner treat with me; and other tyrannical and unchristian words.

I will yet speak of what I asked in my "Foundation;" in the "Preface to the Twenty-fifth Psalm," many years ago; also in my "Excuse," in the "Supplication to the Magistracy," and also in my "Message to the Learned and Preachers of the German Nations," who boast of the word, concerning a free Treatise on Scripture, published in the year 1552. And I am still willing and prepared, at all times, so long as breath remains in me, or my intellect does not fail me and so long as I can sit on a wagon or lay in a ship, to appear before Gellius, or anybody else, verbally to defend the foundation of our faith and to testify to the truth of Jesus Christ, if I can do so in safety, in good, christian faith and in sincerity of

heart, to the praise of our God, to the extension of his church, to the promulgation of his holy word and to the salvation of our neighbors. This is the main desire of my heart, that I may preach and promulgate his great, adorable name, teach his word, seek his gain and honor and exalt and defend his praise, to the best of my humble ability.

Since it is manifest that the world is, unjustly, so embittered against us that we are, alas, not allowed to be heard or seen; and that many an innocent, pious sheep, who is not a teacher, is sent hither and thither to be slaughtered by the sword, water or fire, without any mercy; and that we, miserable teachers, are not allowed to live in safety, anywhere under the broad canopy of heaven, not even in a pig-sty (so to speak), if known; but that we, through open mandates, are already judged before we are delivered and condemned before we are seized; something which never, as far as we know, transpired since the apostolic times; therefore, I pray all my readers for God's sake, that they will, in the fear of God, thoughtfully consider what gross injustice Gellius and his followers have done us, by the use of such wrong and bitter words as *night-preaching*, *hedge-preaching*, *conspiracy*, *secretly entering*, &c., when we neither can nor dare do otherwise, as is well known. Besides, we have on our side Moses and Christ, the apostles and also the example of the primitive church; who served the Lord at night as well as in day time, as has been already heard; and we are also prepared, at all times, to render an account of our faith and to defend the truth; if we can do so in good, christian faith, without deceit and shedding of blood, as has been already said.

I say further: It is by far more praiseworthy to teach the genuine, saving truth, at night, in a secret corner, when we can not openly meet in day-time, than to proclaim, in day-time, deceiving lies and a powerless doctrine of impenitence from the pulpit; as has, alas, been openly done these many years before the whole world; this must be acknowledged and admitted; for the disorderly

state of affairs and the impenitent life of this generation testify to it.

At his saying that we should be stopped and silenced, lest we deceive the unwary (single) as he calls them, I reply: A better and surer way than the one we have by the grace of God, nobody can point out; of this we are convinced from the inmost of our soul. For we acknowledge and feel that we have the word of God. Nevertheless, we will always freely accept and willingly follow the instruction of any pious person who can, in the fear of God, convince us by the Spirit, word, example, commands, ordinances, prohibitions and usages of the Lord and not by tyranny and violence and point out anything that would be more useful and better; to greater honor to God, or more to the edification of his church, than we have followed and confessed during several years of manifest truth and to which we have unwaveringly testified in so exceedingly much anxiety, misery, tribulation and persecution. For all things in Christ's church that shall avail and stand before his throne must be judged by the Spirit, word, example, commands, ordinances, prohibitions and usages of the Lord. I trust that those who seek and sincerely fear the Lord will agree with me in this respect.

But with this writing of Gellius he will, surely, not convince us; for it is full of brawling, profanity, defamation, false accusations, tyranny, sophistry, wrong explanations and false doctrines (if I am wrong, rebuke me); so that it does not silence the pious, as was his intention, but makes them still more active; and it will be the cause of strengthening salutary doctrine and truth and thus be the cause of his loss where he intended to make gain. For I trust, when both our writings are compared one with another, that, through the grace of God, a glorious, clear light will be thrown on the church of Christ; while it will expose to the plain and humble whom he intends, by it, to dissuade from our doctrine, what his own nature, works, writings and fruits are, and, by comparing them to Christ's plain word, Spirit, example, ordinances and

usages prove to them how earthly and carnal-minded he and his are; how he exercises his profession; what he seeks; what are the fruits of his doctrine; what sacraments he uses; what ban he practices and what kind of church he holds to, &c.

I would, therefore, faithfully advise and pray to him, not to undertake more than he can accomplish; and not to kick against the pricks, Acts 9:5, for it will not avail him. But he should remember that many a learned man (not that I esteem learning, if at all opposed to Christ), in past times as well as at present, has industriously tried it, as he now does; but what has been accomplished by it, the fruits openly testify. For some of them have become such zealots against us that they have made themselves guilty of innocent blood; they have grossly offended and condemned to the judgment of the devil, so many pious and faithful hearts, who, through fear and love of their God, dared not walk with them on the broad road. They have, besides, written and contended so much for the unity of their churches, that they have brought the poor, reckless people to such a disorderly and wild state that they, generally speaking, lead such a fruitless, impenitent life that it seems as if prophetic or apostolic doctrine had never been taught and as if Christ or the holy Spirit had never appeared on earth.

Had they, now, wisely, obediently and humbly comprehended, listened to and followed the word and ordinance of the Lord, the usage and example of the apostles; had they sincerely feared their God; had they not acted hypocritically with lords and princes and the world in general; but taught the doctrine in true zeal without any respect of persons or favors; had they faithfully, unto death, rebuked the sins of all mankind, of high and low station alike, with doctrine and with life; had they unwaveringly served God and obediently proclaimed the gospel, in such a manner as to have assembled and built up unto the Lord a truly, penitent people, that is, a true church, according to the example of the apostles; had they not sought their own gain and ease; and had they also not

abused and slandered the pious and godly, by their crying and writing; then the precious word, Christ's glorious gospel of grace never would have been profaned so light-mindedly; nor would this poor, unwary people have been degenerated into this wild and reckless state, as alas, may now be witnessed in all parts of the world.

Thus, I fear, it will be with Gellius; for of what use his preaching and church-service have been these many years, toward bringing about a pious, penitent life in the fear of God, I will let the world judge by his disciples, who are the fruit of his seed.

O, that he would take heed and not break God's holy and precious word; that he would not slander the pious and godly, who testify to it with their heart, mouth, life and death; that he would learn to know his own envious, impure and bitter heart; his deceiving, inconsistent and infamous doctrine and his selfish, ambitious flesh; and would humble himself under the mighty hand of God, as the Scriptures teach us to do, for then he might yet be saved. But as it is, I fear that his brawling, slandering and condemning of all the pious; together with his seeking after improper gain, favor and honor of men and the desire of an easy, careless life, will so entirely close his heart and bewilder his senses, that he will not acknowledge or desire the glorious brightness of Christ, nor the wisdom which is from God. God grant that my apprehension is not realized and that he may yet receive grace; this is my sincere wish toward him and all of our opponents, Amen.

Gellius says further, that he has published his writing for the purpose of redeeming some of our followers, who have not yet become slanderers; and he says also that some have been redeemed through their faithful services, who now, with united hearts and spirits adore, praise and thank their Lord and God, at the public meetings of the church of God and Christ (these are his words), because they have been delivered from death and

damnation and now feel a delight in Christ and penitence and peace in their hearts.

Answer. If we, in true, christian zeal and unfeigned love, rebuke or reprove their false doctrine, deceiving, unscriptural sacraments and their reckless, carnal life, with the Spirit, word and life of Christ and point them to the glorious example of the prophets, of the apostles, of Christ and of all the true servants of God, he calls us slanderers. From this it may be observed that our work of love is always interpreted to the contrary. For if we write or speak mournfully, it is called sighing and groaning, if we reprove sharply, it is called brawling and slandering. If we pipe, they dance not; if we mourn, they lament not, as Christ says, Mat. 11:17. It is wrongly spoken, whatever we say to the perverse. Although they commit abomination, yet they are not ashamed, neither do they blush, Jeremiah 8:12.

If the reproof of open sin, in true, christian love, according to the word of God, is slander, as Gellius calls it, then all the saints of God, the apostles and prophets, as also Jesus Christ himself were slanderers; this is incontrovertible; for they called the false prophets and preachers, false teachers, deceivers, dumb dogs, blind guides, hypocrites, thieves, murderers, wolves, cunning devisers, enemies of the cross, servants of their bellies, children of damnation, dry clouds, dead trees, locusts, &c., before the whole world. But no. To openly reprove deceit, transgressions, blasphemy of God or his word and sin in general is not slandering, as Gellius, through perverseness of heart, pronounces it against the innocent; but it is the fruit of the faithful love of those who would oppose evil and do good unto all. I will leave it to the judgment of all pious and reasonable persons, if he is not a profaner of the church, a brawler and a slanderer and guilty of innocent blood, who calls the church of God a conspiracy; the regenerated children of God, apostatical anabaptists; the salutary doctrine of Christ, sectarianism and fanaticism; who slanders and condemns the baptism which Christ commanded and the apostles taught and practiced, as being a heresy; and falsely maintains and practices on

the poor, ignorant people, the baptism of anti-christ, with many high-sounding words and phrases? Who promises grace and peace to the proud, obdurate, avaricious, carnal and impenitent boaster, whom all Scriptures judge unto death; because he can, in appearance, talk of the Scriptures, although without Spirit, power or change of heart; who, without just cause, maliciously slanders, falsely suspicions and unjustly condemns, the poor orphans and afflicted christians who sincerely seek and fear the Lord; and thus delivers them to the magistracy to be put in dungeons and to the executioner to be killed.

But as to his boasting, that some of our brethren have again associated with them and thus others may be yet redeemed by his writing, &c. I answer, in the first place: Christ says, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and many there are which go in that way; because narrow is the gate and strict is the way which leads unto life and there are few that find it," Mat. 7:13, 14. My readers, observe that all who wish to leave the broad way and enter upon the narrow one, must enter in at the narrow gate, must forsake themselves, take up the cross and follow Christ Jesus; must become regenerated christians, dead unto sin; must crucify their flesh and subdue their lusts; must give up, through the power of faith all visible and perishable things, as gold, silver, home and goods, no, wife and children; together with all they are and have, for the victory of Christ, if circumstances and the honor of Christ require it; they must be prepared to endure disgrace, hunger, misery, pillage, persecution, bonds and death, for the sake of the testimony of God and their consciences and must adhere to the word of God, by watching and praying. For all those who are yet laden with the burden of unrighteousness and an evil conscience, as with avarice, ungodly desires, the works of the flesh, &c.; or who feel at all doubtful concerning the word and promises of the Lord cannot enter in at the strict way and narrow gate. Let everyone be aware of this.

In the second place I say that the edification and faith of the true christians is tempted in many and various ways, as both Scriptures and experience clearly teach and testify. Now they are tempted by flesh and blood, which is never at rest, then by the lust of the world and the lust of the eyes, which invitingly tempt the selfish flesh in which no good thing dwells, Rom. 7:18. Again, by the cross and tribulation, which often press heavily; and lastly, by the flattering preaching of peace and the easy doctrine of the preachers who lustily cry, Peace, peace, as the prophet says, Jer. 8:11, by means of which they console the timid in their faithlessness and disobedience to God and make an easy way for those who would enjoy the world according to the lusts of the flesh. It is as Peter says, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption," 2 Peter 2:19. For this reason, some of the seed which is sown by the way side is picked up by the fowls of the air; some is sown on stony places, where there is not much earth and although it springs up in a short time; yet it can not stand the scorching sun of persecution and some is choked by the thistles and thorns and brings forth no ripe ears, Mat. 13:4-7.

Behold, the proper reason why some timid, light-minded, carnal, corrupt and selfish spirits have again associated themselves with them, is because the way was too narrow and the gate too narrow for them and they could not withstand the storming of the flesh. The smiles of the world were too inviting and the tyranny too oppressive. The thousand wiles of Satan, by which all the pious alike are tempted, succeeded; because, alas, they preferred earthly to heavenly things and therefore we could no longer live in unity of spirit and peace with them. For they would not be thus subjected, as the prophet laments, Jer. 2:17; but would follow their own inclinations in every respect and walk without the cross, on the broad way of the flesh, with the world. But by the writings and services of Gellius, they were, surely, not redeemed, as he boasts they were.

Behold, these people of whom he so loudly boasts, were such (we regret to have to say it) as, with Demas, 2 Tim. 4:10, loved the present world and who so lived with us for some time that we, according to the divine word, dare no longer eat and drink with them. They are not regenerated as Gellius claims, but they are degenerated in their faith and act hypocritically, with earthly-minded hearts under the feint of prayer; they have not forsaken the broad way which leads to death but the narrow way which leads to life; they do not delight in Christ but have forsaken him; they have found rest for their flesh, but not for their souls through repentance, as Gellius pretends. For facts prove whose cause is right, theirs or ours; whose actions are hypocritical and whose are not, while our actions sacrifice possessions, blood and even life for their cause; but what theirs do is well known.

This, then, is my conclusion as to his first reason given, why he published his writing; namely, As the angel of darkness can transform himself into an angel of light; as Paul says, 2 Cor. 11:14; can feign love and make great promises; can feign true confession of Christ and can use Scriptures masterly, so also, can his servants do, as may be seen by this. For Gellius says he published his writing that he might redeem some and save others from deceit; to silence the anabaptists, as he calls them; to root out the pernicious weeds; to serve the church of Christ; to keep the weak of the Netherlands in the right understanding of evangelical doctrine and the right use of the holy sacraments, &c. But if we rightly consider it and judge it by the Spirit, word and example of Christ; by the usage of the holy apostles and primitive apostolic churches, we find [his writings] to be nothing but an institution of the flesh; an encouragement to the impenitent; an inducement to the broad way; a defence of the churches of anti-christ; a confusing and blind-folding of the simple; a covert instigation to persecution of the pious; a destroying of the church of Christ; a dextrous encumbering of the godly; an unreasonable, envious defamation of

the saints; an adulteration of the holy word; yes, an open encouragement to unrighteousness, impenitence and carnal liberty.

Behold, this is the effect, fruit and aim of his writing; although he adorns and covers it under the semblance of good intentions and love. If I should at any time yet meet with him and not be able to verify these assertions, by their fruits and by virtue of the Scriptures, then I will be willing to recant them and bear my shame; for I trust that I, through the grace of God, know of what I write.

Another reason, says Gellius, why he published his writing is because a nobleman to whom he addressed it, offered to bear the expenses of printing it, &c.

Answer. Zeal is a good thing and highly commendable, if in a good cause to the service and glory of God. But let everyone well consider how, why and wherefore he is zealous; lest he make himself guilty of innocent blood, which is the most abominable sin next to sinning against the Holy Spirit.

If his honor has done this in sincere zeal and with good intentions, as Paul did before his conversion and meant it to be to the honor of God and to the salvation of his neighbors, then I hope that God will give him more light and make truth more manifest to him. But if he has done it for the sake of an idle name or fame, or for the sake of carnal profit and satisfaction, something which the learned can very adroitly portray to such high persons. But if he contends against the people of God with a bitter zeal, which I trust is not the case, as does Gellius and the preachers, generally, then his action has become such a gross sin and great blindness that I fear he will never be brought to confess Christ.

I would therefore cordially admonish his honor and beseech him in christian love that he no more burden himself with the sin of others; for he and everybody else will have burden enough of his own, at the day of judgment. All misleading of the miserable souls; all unbelief and idolatry; all light-mindedness and liberty of the flesh; together with all uproar and tyranny which are apt to be

the result of his writing will be required, in the day of Christ, at his hands as well as at the hands of the preachers, if not repented of, because he assists and supports them in their abomination with his advice and assistance, with money and material.

Therefore, in my opinion, his honor would have better first considered the matter well and laid out these expenses to the support, assistance, consolation, nourishment and clothing of the needy, especially in these hard times; and not for the purpose of deceiving many unwary hearts and of putting more encumbrances and persecution on the pious.

Again, that Gellius has published his writing under the permission of the said nobleman, has an appearance as if he was one of those who honor and esteem a person according to the measure of his usefulness. But for what reason he has done so; what his seeking and how his heart is in this matter, I will leave to the Lord who knows all things.

Experience sufficiently teaches of what disposition the rich are, namely, proud-hearted, ambitious and covetous of honor. God's wisdom did not say without a cause, "Truly, I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," Mat. 19:24. James also says, "Go now, you rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten; your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as if it were fire," &c., James 5:1-3. Again, Paul says, "For you see your calling, brethren, how not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called," &c., 1 Cor. 1:26.

Since, then, the mouth of the Lord, as also his faithful servants, James and Paul, have so plainly expressed the dangers of the rich and of those of high standing; since experience teaches how proud-hearted they are, as may be concluded from their high titles, houses, shields, medals, clothes, servants, horses and dogs; and since Christ says, "Truly I say unto you, Except you be converted

and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,” Mat. 18:3; therefore it would be more in accordance with evangelical righteousness if Gellius, instead, would industriously teach such proud hearts and high persons the humility of Christ, so that they may learn to forsake themselves; may learn to know themselves, of what they are born, what they are and what they will be; that they may die unto their excessive pomp, splendor, superfluity and ungodliness; may fear God in all sincerity and walk in his ways; that they may faithfully serve their neighbors with their abundance, in true humility of heart and not continually enkindle the fire of pride, fleshly security and light-mindedness, by his flattery or by high-sounding and supplicating phrases; for the inborn ambitious nature of the flesh of Adam’s children is, alas, already too apt to crave such things without being encouraged by flattery and smooth words.

I would, therefore, faithfully advise all to fear God, to strive after truth and to love their neighbors; for the time is coming and is near at hand, that we all shall hear, each one at his time, “Give an account of your stewardship, for you may no longer be steward,” Luke 16:2. I do not dedicate my reply and defense to this or that one, as is the custom of the learned, but dedicate it, in christian humility, “To the pious Reader,” and desire to subject it to the judgment of all the godly and pious.

If anyone under the broad canopy of heaven can teach me with plainer Scriptures or with more powerful truths, whether he is learned or unlearned, man or woman, I will gladly accept such instruction and obey them. But, by the grace of God, we are convinced that we are on the sure and true way which Christ has prepared for us. Blessed are we if we walk in it and enter in at the narrow gate. Let all of understanding minds, who, in true zeal and in the fear of God, seek the praise of their Lord, read and judge that which now follows.

OF THE MISSION OR CALLING OF THE PREACHERS.

GELLIUS complains very much of a bitter and sneering epistle of the anabaptists, as he calls them, in which they are said to have given five particular reasons, as I understand from his writing, why they cannot conscientiously accept the preachers as true and unblamable and cannot use their sacraments as true and Scriptural ordinances, &c. Of which the vocation of their preachers is the first reason. Gellius assiduously tries to maintain that their calling is christian-like and according to Scripture and says that ours is sectarian and not according to scripture.

Answer. How bitter and sneering the said epistle may have been, I do not know, for I have never seen it. But I presume it was not so bitter as Gellius complains that it was; that it was a reproof of his corruption, his deceiving and unscriptural sacraments; something which he always, maliciously, calls brawling and sneering.

Since I did not read the epistle myself, as said, therefore I will not undertake to defend every word of it; but will undertake a defence, by virtue of my ministry of the divine word and because I have been disgracefully treated in regard to it, so far as concerns the five articles in which the preachers are reprov'd or accused, whose vocation Gellius maintains as evangelical and right. And I trust that, with the gracious assistance of God, I will be enabled to defend these articles with such power and clearness of Scripture that all impartial, reasonable readers, on comparing our writings, will, by the grace of God, behold, as in a mirror, that he and all the worldly preachers are not the called preachers and teachers of the church of Christ, to whom the Scriptures point; but that they are the open preachers and teachers of the world, or of the church of anti-christ against whom the Scriptures on every hand warn us and

in many places terrifies us against them. He that has ears, let him hear what the word of the Lord teaches.

Gellius points out a difference between the calling or sending of the prophets of Christ and the apostles and between the calling of the bishops, pastors and other servants of the church and says, "That the sending of the prophets of Christ and the apostles was done without any means of man, solely by God; but that the sending of the bishops and pastors is done by God by means of man."

Answer. We do not contradict this, but agree with him in this respect. But we contradict that the calling of which they boast is done in accordance with the apostolic doctrine and usage; and would say that we should well observe these five following points or articles, according to the Scriptures; namely, by whom they are called; what they are that are called; to what purpose they are called; what fruit the called bring forth; and what the proper desire and seeking of the called is.

In the first place, we must observe that the calling which was done in the primitive, apostolic church, by means of man, was not done by the world but by the true christians and obedient disciples of the Lord and his word. For Luke writes, Acts 14:23, "And when they had ordained elders in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Paul also says to Titus, "For this cause left I you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are wanting and ordain elders in every city, as I have appointed you," Tit. 1:5, &c. Read also 1 Tim. 3:12.

Since the preachers then boast of a calling by God, by means of man, as said, therefore I would ask without all artifice, Who is the Paul or Barnabas, or Timothy or Titus that has called and ordained Gellius and his like preachers to the service? If they answer, the magistracy; then I would ask in the second place, Do the magistracy, who assumes this matter, have the spirit, calling, ministry, ordinance and power of Paul, Barnabas, Titus and

Timothy? If they answer in the affirmative, then I would like to see their grounds proven according to Scripture. If they say because they are part of the church, as Gellius seems to have it, then I would ask in the third place, whether they are actuated by the Spirit of God? Whether they have crucified the flesh with its lusts and in their weakness, walk innocently and christianly according to Christ's example and teaching, with his followers? Whether they have become new creatures? Whether they are in Christ and Christ in them? &c. If they say, God knows and not we, then I would ask in the fourth place, Are you such trees, then, that we cannot judge your fruits and such lights that we cannot see its refulgence? My reader, ponder well on these questions.

Scriptures plainly testify that there is no christian but he who is in Christ and has his Spirit, Rom. 8:9. It is evident that the magistracy does not conform themselves to the example and Spirit of the Lord, as may; alas, be perceived on every hand by their fruits. For they live in every respect according to the lusts of the flesh; seek vain honor, treasure, pompous living, &c. They are earthly and not heavenly-minded; therefore we should consult the word of the Lord whether such people are competent to ordain preachers, pastors and servants for the church of Christ, while their fruits testify that they are yet without Christ's Spirit, kingdom, church and word themselves, as said.

If they should say that they are not called by the magistracy, but by the church, then I would ask in the fifth place, Whether the church which has called them is flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone? Eph.5:30. That is a church which sincerely seeks and fears God; that walks in obedience to his word; loves and serves his neighbor; controls his ungodly lusts; strives after truth with all his heart; leads an unblamable, pious life and who is prepared for the sake, of the will and word of the Lord, to sacrifice and abandon money, goods, blood and life, no, father, mother, life, husband, wife, children and everything else, if the honor of God requires it? If they answer no, which is the true answer, then it is already

proven that they are not the church and people of the Lord; for the church of Christ must be in unity of spirit with Christ, as has already been heard. If, then, they are not of Christ's church, how can they call preachers unto the church of Christ, as Paul, Barnabas, Timothy and Titus and the primitive church have done? If on the contrary they answer Yes, then I say again, their open unrighteousness, slander, godlessness, avarice, pomp, drunkenness, superfluity, unchastity, hatred, envy; unmercifulness, violence, &c., testify before the whole world that the answer is not the true one.

Inasmuch as it is manifest that both the magistracy and the subjects are directly contrary to the Spirit and word of Jesus Christ, to his walk and actions; and do not have a syllable which in this respect agrees with the spirit and actions of Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, or of the primitive church; therefore I am very much surprised that he can be so imprudent and inconsiderate, or so very bold as to boast, in these times of grace in which the truth has become so manifest, that he and the preachers of his character were called and ordained by God by the means of man, as were the elders of the primitive church, by Paul, Barnabas, Timothy and Titus.

O, that God would grant that he would once consider and not compare the faithful men and dear servants of God, together with the zealous, regenerated communities and pious children of the primitive churches to this impenitent, reckless and bad world who wish to be considered the true church; and would no longer blind the poor unwary hearts who little regard the holy word, with such a semblance and quotation of the Scriptures; for it would be of infinite value to his poor, miserable soul, at the time of his dissolution.

I would now leave it to the reflection of all intelligent readers, how the calling, of which the preachers boast, can stand the test of the Scriptures, while those of whom they boast that called them, are found to be not only not regenerated, pious christians, but

besides, open despisers and impenitent contenders against God and his word, as may, alas, be seen, on every hand, by their actions.

In the second place we should observe of what disposition, doctrine and conduct the called servants of the word should be, according to the testimony of the Scriptures; namely, “Blameless, the husband of one wife; vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that rules his own house well, having his children in subjection with all gravity;” not a novice; he must be holy, just, temperate, &c. “Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught; that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.” “Moreover he must have a good report from them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil,” &c. “Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things,” 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1.

My reader, observe, this is not my word but the word of the Holy Spirit, which gives a true pattern of a true preacher, bishop, pastor, teacher and servant who will, in the church of Christ, bring forth fruit which will remain, John 15.

The Holy Spirit points us to such teachers, to obey and follow them. Paul says, “Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy and not with grief,” Heb. 13:17. In another place he says, “We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you and are over you in the Lord and advise you to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake and be at peace among yourselves,” 1 Thes. 5:12, 13.

Such teachers are compared in the Scriptures to the oxen that tread out the corn, which shall not be muzzled. They are the elders worthy of double honor and the faithful laborers, worthy of their hire, Deut. 25:4; Mat. 10:10. But how Gellius and all the preachers of the German nations, whom he esteems as faithful

servants, conform to this I will leave the impartial reader to judge according to the word of the Lord.

Faithful reader, consider well that which I write. They boast that they are called in accordance with Scriptures, as you may hear; although it is obvious and palpable that they lead a life as the [false] ones portrayed by Peter and Jude. Many of them are so fallen in the fullness of Bacchus that they, alas, live night and day as swine in full rest; their tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean, as the prophet says, Isa. 28:8. They fearlessly walk after their own lusts, as Jude says; and they esteem as joy the temporal, lusty life, says Peter; they are spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you.

Some of them, also, are open fornicators and adulterers. How their wives, as a general thing, conform themselves to Scriptures, may be concluded from their fruits. Others are so avaricious that they have become open usurers. They are so intent upon perishable lucre, money and possessions that I dare truthfully say that they, through the easy doctrine of their gospel, have become lords upon earth; yet most of them are loved by the world and highly esteemed by the ignorant. Their pomp, laziness, ease-seeking, vanity, light-mindedness, pride, &c., baffle all description, to say nothing of their tyranny, lying, brawling, slandering, betraying and uproaring against all who seek and fear the Lord.

Reader, it is as I write. O, how willingly would I be silent and close, if the honor of God and his word and the love for your souls did not compel me to speak; but as it is I am forced to touch upon their abominable shame. Their abominations are so gross and terrible that my soul shrinks back at the thought of them, therefore, imagine how [it affects me], if I shall treat and write of them. How [do] their actions and behavior agree with the description of Paul, who teaches us that they shall be unblamable, have but one wife, not given to wine, not avaricious, nor covetous of filthy

lucre; that they shall be temperate, modest and amiable; have a good report from those that are without? This I will leave to all pious hearts to judge in the fear of God, according to the Scriptures. Behold, my reader, since it is manifest that they are quite contrary to the word of the Lord in their walk; therefore it is, in fact, nothing but vain hypocrisy, to call such unfruitful, offensive actions, evangelical edification and such a void mockery, a calling.

But Gellius tries to clear himself of this and lays the blame on those who, according to his writing, lead an unchristian life after the lusts of their flesh, against the ordinance of the apostles, saying that they cannot weaken the cause of the pious by their unrighteousness; I would, in the first place, say, Since he complains of them so much in his book and says that they would better be pastors of swine than pastors of the sheep of Christ; and wishes that they would be ex-officiated, &c.; and since these constitute the majority of them, as may be openly seen; therefore Gellius should admit that, according to the Scriptures, we should not follow such, nor partake of their sacraments, even if they were the true sacraments; for he himself admits that they are useless people and wishes them ex-officiated.

In the second place I say, Since Gellius acknowledges that they are unfit for their offices; and since he and they are of one church, calling and service, why does he allow them to remain in their offices and why does he not, by virtue of his calling, excommunicate them with the advice and consent of his church? Since they are a hindrance to the community and a reproach and disgrace to Gellius and his brother preachers, whom I would were themselves pious and unblamable.

If he says that the magistracy are to blame, he then admits that those magistrates are not true servants and members of Christ, who admit such offensive people, as adulterers, wine-bibbers, covetous, &c., as are met with on every hand, to be preachers, while they ruin the souls of the poor miserable people by their wicked

offensive life, to say nothing of their doctrine; whom they might debar with a single word, without blood-shed. And what is more, Gellius himself is a faithless shepherd and dumb watchman. And the magistracy, which is his elector and companion in church-service, have a contempt for God and slander his word.

In the third place I would say, It would be well for Gellius to first learn to know from the Scriptures the nature of Christ and his church together with the true church servants, pastors and preachers; to rightly judge all things by the Spirit, word and example of the Lord; and to thoroughly search himself, his brother preachers and his church before contending so maliciously against the pious and accuse them before the whole world, without cause. I would further say, Since (if I understand him aright) he admits that we should not hear the adulterers, wine-bibbers, strikers, &c., nor partake of their sacraments (something which was intended, probably, to make his cause have a good appearance); therefore we are forced to view in a Scriptural light, how he, according to Paul's doctrine, can stand as a pastor of the church and as a servant of Christ.

Paul says, A bishop must be blameless; this applies also to a true preacher, pastor and teacher; and it is obvious that Gellius is not unblamable, but blamable in many respects; that he is a friend of the world, who seeks to please the world, contrary to the word of God and the example of Christ, the apostles and of the prophets, otherwise he would have suffered persecution, 2 Tim. 3:12 and not have exercised his service at ease, for so long a time, as is testified by the example of Christ, the apostles and by all the true witnesses.

Again, he is a hireling who has been hired as a servant at certain wages and a stipend, contrary to the example of Christ and the example of all the true messengers who have been sent by him. He is not only not persecuted for the sake of the testimony of Jesus but he himself persecutes the godly, pious hearts who have neither injured nor harmed him nor anybody else. He persecutes them wilfully by his instigation, advice and writings; [which is] contrary

to the example of Christ and all the chosen, as may, alas, be seen by his writings here cited. Besides this, his doctrine is wrong and deceiving. He is an upbraider, condemner, defamer and backbiter of the innocent who sincerely fear God and are zealous for his word; yes, who would seal it with their blood, something which he does not. This assertion is, alas, made good by his writing in which he, without just cause, accuses and condemns the god-fearing, pious hearts before the whole world as being apostates, anabaptists, conspirers, contrabands, sowers of pernicious seed, excommunicated sects, servants of the devil and his tools; and thus makes them the objects of suspicion, although they sincerely seek the Lord and daily sacrifice possessions and blood for the sake of his holy word.

Besides, he is a supporter and defender of the kingdom of anti-christ, a falsifier of the Scriptures, an abuser of the sacraments, a strengthener of the impenitent, a liar, &c., as will be plainly shown, by the grace of God, each in its turn.

In the third place it should be observed for what purpose the true preachers are called, namely, that they should teach the word of the Lord; rightly use his sacraments; lead and rule in the church of God; gather together with Christ and not scatter; console the afflicted; advise those not ordained; seek what is lost; bind up what is bruised; separate those that are incurable, without any respect of person and should assiduously watch over the vineyard, house and city of God, as the Scriptures teach, Mat. 28:19; 12:30; Mark 16:15.

Behold, my reader, these are the proper reasons why the Holy Spirit has ordained in the house of the Lord bishops, pastors and teachers, according to the precept of Paul, saying, "He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto

a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,” Eph. 4:11-13.

But for what purpose Gellius and all the preachers of the world are called, may be concluded from their doctrine and work; namely, to preach to suit the magistracy and the world. Again, to offer to the two golden calves of Dan and Bethel (understand what I mean); to keep the church of anti-christ, without penance and regeneration in unity and peace of the flesh, on the perverted and crooked road of darkness and death, under the name and semblance of the word, contrary to the Spirit, doctrine and example of Christ; to console the wilful, reckless world, who wish to be called the church of Christ, without regeneration and obedience, in their impenitent and ungodly nature, with the death, blood, baptism and Supper of the Lord; to violently oppose Christ Jesus and his word and Spirit, so that the world may live on in their original state and their unrighteousness unrebuked; that the preachers may continue in their improper gain and careless life; and that the ignorant people, both rich and poor may live on in the lusts of their flesh, pomp, splendor, drinking, carousing, in avariciousness and hoarding, in short, may continue in the broad and easy way of the flesh, unreprieved.

This is made too manifest to be denied, by deeds which speak for themselves; yet their cause is artfully adorned with the Scriptures; they talk much; boast loudly of the grace and favor of God; they use baptism and supper under the appearance of truth, as if they were the church of Jesus Christ; although, in fact, they are nothing but a selfish, refractory, impenitent, earthly and sensual people, as is obvious by their fruits. If I do not write the truth, reprove me.

Since, then, it is clearer than day-light that they are not called to uphold the church of Christ, which is of God and has a divine nature, with salutary doctrines, Scriptural sacraments, an unblamable life; earnest reproving, without favor or respect of persons; with faithful admonition and separation, if necessary; but

are under false pretenses of the name and church of Christ; they are servants of the world; receive their reward from it; honor and love it; speak of it and please it and whom it seeks and loves to hear, for they are of the world, as John says, 1 John 4:5.

Therefore it is, in the third place, an incontrovertible evidence, that they, alas, are not called servants of the church of Christ; as they falsely pretend, but are the servants and supporters of the kingdom of anti-christ, as may be unmistakingly learned from their doctrine, walk and fruits if we closely examine them.

In the fourth place we should observe what kind of fruits they bring forth, for Christ says, "I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain," John 15:16. We confess with holy Isaiah, as does also Gellius, that the doctrine of the holy gospel, if preached in the power of the Spirit, according to the Spirit of Christ, cannot fail to bring forth fruit. "For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven and returns not thither, but waters the earth and makes it bring forth and bud," so, also, is the word that goes forth out of the mouth of Jehovah, Isaiah 55:10.*

But Gellius and we should well consider that the sower should, by the power of true faith and the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, be changed into the Spirit and nature of Christ and should then teach or present to the people the pure, unadulterated seed, which is the word, without all abuse, leaven and hypocrisy, for where there are such sowers, there it will bud and bring forth. The word of the prophet, which the mouth of the Lord has spoken is true and firm. But where there are not such sowers, they arise too early or

* [CHCoG: Jehovah is the true Name of our God, and is used about seven thousand times in the Bible. But most translations are dishonest and hide God's Name, usually replacing it with LORD or GOD in capitals. Our article [*What is God's Name?*](#) explains why knowing and using God's Name is important. We restore it in the Bible quotes in this article, and sometimes also replace the Lord God with Jehovah God when it seems required by the text.]

start out too late; labor and pains will be in vain; for God works not unto repentance but through those who are of his Spirit.

Inasmuch, then, that the word with true preaching does not remain fruitless as we have seen and since we clearly see that the seed of the preachers of the world brings forth no fruit unto repentance, but only hypocrisy, therefore it is an indisputable fact that they do not have the word of the Lord in power; but that they are artful workers and not true preachers, or else the word of the prophet must be false, which says, "If they had stood in my counsel and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way and from the evil of their doings," Jer. 23:22.

Since then, that preachers are known by their fruits and that Gellius and his like preachers have preached their doctrine and sacraments so many years to the whole world (which they may continue to do without fear, while they are not opposing the impenitent in their hypocrisy and uncontrolled life, but rather console and encourage them) and yet do not convert a miser nor usurer to liberality; do not bring forth their disciples further than that they profess in name and appearance. They remain unchanged in their heart, hate and oppose true righteousness, walk upon the broad way and earnestly strive after the world, flesh, money and possessions. The pompous remain pompous; the proud remain proud; and liars continue in their falsehood, as is manifest; therefore their fruitless preaching, vain doctrine and church-service fully prove that their calling is not from God and his word, but from the son of the abyss, anti-christ and of the world, however much they adorn and boast of their cause. The word of Jehovah God is and will remain true, Isaiah 55:11.

Gellius then refers us to his fruits and says, Is not the preaching of the truth and the light of the holy gospel, which we assiduously preach and promulgate both by teaching and writing a good fruit and glorious testimony that our calling is from God and not from the devil; by which the kingdom of the devil is destroyed

and by which the papistical abominations, idolatry, masses, absolutions, vigils, &c., have become a deadly stench?

Answer. If they did not mix the dross with the silver and water with wine, that is, if they would preach the truth, without falsehood and the light without darkness in the power of the Spirit and would testify it before the whole world by a pious and unblamable life, then we would agree with them that it is a glorious light and a noble fruit. But while they practice wrong and pervert truth into lies, the true apostolic baptism into the baptism of heretics, the church of Christ into pernicious sectarianism and conspiracy, &c. and on the other hand pervert lies to truth, the anti-christian to christian baptism and the reckless, wild world to the Lord's church, &c., we say that their doctrine is deceiving, offensive and wrong and is not the true doctrine, as Gellius boasts and pretends.

Yes, my reader, they so preach the word of the Lord that unrighteousness and abuse yet remain in full sway; they so teach the truth that in many respects, false doctrine, lying and deceiving is not yet weakened nor destroyed; they so use and practice divine service that the high places are honored and idolatry is not avoided; they so preach the christian church, that the church of anti-christ remains in full power, as is openly manifested to the whole world both by their work and their tyranny.

In short, it is manifest that they so preach and promulgate the gospel that no repentance follows but that everyone, alas, remains as he is; yes, what is worse, that the people are not only not regenerated but are daily growing more wicked. Neither encomiums, reasoning nor artful demonstrations will avail here, for their fruit testifies that their doctrine is faithless and false, as said before, Jer. 23.

The serpent spoke the truth when he said, "God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," Gen. 3:5. But that which he promised before was a lie, namely, "You shall not surely die." Adam and Eve were by this deceived. Thus, also, do those who

teach the serpent's word. They so teach the impenitent, carnal people, concerning the death of the Lord, by their unscriptural sacraments of impenitence and so console them in their reckless, Adamic nature and life, by false promises (although they do some times speak the truth, as did the serpent, produce Scriptures, partly reprove sin and praise virtue) that there is no body to be found who truly feels sorry for his sins, who sincerely repents of his wickedness, saying, "What have I done," Jer. 8:6. Behold, says the prophet, so they practice falsehood and strengthen the wicked, that none repent of their wickedness.

That some of them have thus weakened the papistical abominations, for this they and we give praises to the Lord. But what does it avail if they renounce the pope and they themselves step in his stead? It is true that many branches of the tree of anti-christ are hewn off, but the roots and body still remain. And although he destroyed some high places, yet they walk in the ways of Jeroboam and have not come to Jerusalem for the purpose of truly worshipping.

Yes, kind reader, had the learned firmly trusted the living God, faithfully adhered to his word and had they not acted hypocritically with the world and had they themselves, in power and deeds faithfully practiced, without fear of the cross and the disfavor of the magistracy, what they have, in some of their writings, pointed out, O, what a noble and clear light would have shone on the world, which now, alas, has become such a pernicious darkness and destruction and a broad way, through the fear of the cross, through hypocrisy, selfishness, desire of ease, ambition and favor of men.

In the second place he says, Is the whole Bible, translated (into the German language) by the memorable D. Martinus, a despicable fruit? Are the songs or hymns composed by Luther and many others a contemptible fruit? Is, also, the constancy, which exists in these times of peril and danger of body and possessions, as it did in the beginning of the gospel, not a noble

and genuine fruit of our calling? But such fruits are of no account in their sight or else they will not see them; although they are the surest and the best fruits, &c. The fruits of the outward life and dealings with men, although often mere hypocrisy, only avail in their sight.

Answer. The deceased translators, authors and composers we will leave undisturbed, for they have already found their Lord and Judge; but we will turn to the living, with whom we have to speak. His saying that writing, translating and composing are the surest and best fruits, is, in my opinion, a very senseless assertion, for such things can be done through learning and skill in languages, without regeneration and change of heart, as he himself well knows. Yes, as the Bible or the Scriptures are read by the greater part of the world, with impure, carnal hearts, so, also, they can, undoubtedly, be translated, through the knowledge and skill of languages, from one language into another, with a carnal, unregenerated and impious heart.

And as hymns are generally sung in God's houses or temples, carelessly and are light-mindedly sung, here and there, in the streets and in riotous taverns; so, also, can they be composed by a light-minded heart without spirit or regeneration? These are, therefore, not the surest and best fruits, as Gellius pretends to say, for they do not remain. But whatever some, in by-gone times may have written, in true zeal, which is Scripture or conformable to Scripture and useful to the regeneration of the pious, we should, reasonably, praise and esteem.

However, the surest and best fruits are to so preach the word of God in power, that many may be born of him and be led to sincerely fear and love him; to cordially serve their neighbors; to die unto flesh and blood; to believe on Jesus Christ with all the heart and tremble at his word; that they may do nothing contrary to it; that they may truly worship God and conform their whole life or walk according to his Spirit, word and example, for such fruits remain.

I would further say, He boasts of the danger and constancy (as he calls it) of some of their number; now, in these times of war, which he calls a time of trial, because, (if we understand him aright), they can no longer uphold and protect their cause by force of arms; and consider it a noble fruit, although they have, perhaps, not been tempted unto death as we daily are; and therefore he so indiscreetly condemns and profanes our cause, which the Lord knows we have maintained and will maintain in spite of sword or any other deadly weapon, something which cannot be truthfully refuted. We have patiently walked according to the example of Christ; sacrificed our possessions and blood which might have been saved by a single, hypocritical word; and at all times, for our invincible constancy, we suffer with fire, water and sword; being defenceless and without any resistance “we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter,” Rom. 8:36.

But we give praise to God, that some of them have sacrificed their blood for the sake of the testimony which they had and with James count them happy; yes, that they are joint-heirs in the sufferings of Jesus Christ; for their deeds have proven that they sought God and were faithful as far as they were enlightened. But what will that avail them, while they close their hearts to the light of truth; contend against the Spirit, word and will of God; preach lies, pervert and abuse the sacraments and console and encourage the wild, wicked world in their impenitent, reckless life? Something which the faithful heroes have not done, for they were faithful in everything which they acknowledged as the truth. If they had acknowledged more they would, doubtlessly, have died for the sake of it as well as for that which they did, at the time, acknowledge.

If our opponents are of the same spirit then they may boast. But their fruits openly testify that that they are, alas, very different.

Again, he writes that the fruits of an outward life alone, avail in our sight, &c. Do not our sore oppression, trials, great tribulation, misery, possessions and blood; besides, our open and frank

confession, openly testify that he makes this assertion without all truth? Yes, that he openly slanders and wrongs us? *O malitiosam calumniam ac perversitatem*, (O malicious calumny and perversity).

My kind reader, observe that all Scriptures and the power of true faith constrain us to zealously teach an upright, pious, godly and penitent life; for Jesus Christ says, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works." Paul, also teaches, "That you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." That we might walk worthy of the Lord and his gospel. Peter says, "Having your behaviour honest among the Gentiles;" and John says that we should walk even as Christ walked, Mat. 5:6; Phil. 1:10; Col. 1:10; 1 Pet. 2:12; 1 John 2:6.

Since Scripture, on every hand, enjoins upon us a pious life, as has been heard; therefore it is reasonable and just, if we believe the word of God, that we zealously follow, in our weakness, that which the Spirit of the Lord has so clearly taught and enjoined in his holy word.

But his assertion that such fruits only avail in our sight comes, alas, from an impure heart. For, I presume, he well knows that we plainly teach that we cannot be saved by outward works, however great and glorious they may appear or that we can thus entirely please God; for they are always mixed with imperfection and weakness and, therefore, through the corruption of the flesh we cannot acquire the righteousness required in the commandments; therefore we point to Christ Jesus alone, who is our only and eternal Righteousness, Reconciliation and Propitiator with the Father and do not trust in our works at all. My reader, I write the truth in Christ Jesus and do not lie.

O, that Gellius would quit his unguarded talk and speak no more than that which is true, for a liar is a disgrace and shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and that he could once feel what a true christian faith is, what it requires in its nature and what it produces

in power. He would then know what it is that brings forth such a pious, penitent and unblamable life, which he has in times gone by so disgracefully slandered and upbraided as devilish fruits, hypocrisy and a new mockery; and, as it appears, would yet upbraid, if it was not for the experience of many and the great quantity of innocent blood which has been shed.

Behold, dear reader, now you can see how they adorn and deck their abominable hypocrisy and fruitless, impenitent church-service with writing, translating, singing, &c., although generally alone, without repentance and regeneration, as heard; and how they basely construe and explain the sincere, pious fruits of true faith which are taught and represented by all the Scriptures, ceremonies and sacraments; that they may daub the wall with untempered mortar and console the poor, miserable people in their disregard of the word of the Lord. But when Lord Jehovah's hurricane, flood and great hailstones shall come with a great noise, then they will break down the wall that they have daubed with untempered mortar and bring it to the ground so that the foundation of it shall be discovered, &c., Ezekiel 13:13, 14.

In the third place, Gellius writes that the office of a preacher consists of two parts, namely, in rooting out, destroying and opposing; also in sowing and building, &c. and boasts that their fruits, especially as regards the first part, cannot be denied in many kingdoms and principalities; and that the Lord Jesus Christ (as he says), has, through their services, planted sincere repentance and such true christian faith in many hearts, that the small community at Emden, in sure expectation of a reward in heaven, willingly supports several hundreds of poor people by their alms, &c.

Answer. We admit that the first part of a preacher's office consists in rooting out, destroying and opposing and the other of sowing and building up and this is a proof for us that they are not the preachers to serve in such capacity. Although they have renounced, in different cities and countries, (for which we praise

the Lord), some abuses and idolatries, which were so gross that they might be plainly noticed, even without Scriptures, to be abominations; yet the root of all deceit remains untouched, namely, the false doctrine and unscriptural sacraments with which they console the world and encourage them in their impenitence and natural state or Adamic heart which is the source of all unrighteousness, as may, alas, be seen on every hand by the fruits.

If, then, they are the true preachers as they pretend to be, let them execute the first part, namely, to break in pieces with the hammer of the divine word the proud, obdurate hearts, the impure, avaricious hearts, the blood-guilty, tyrannical hearts, &c., of whom it is written that they are worthy of death; to humble them by the eternal judgment and punishment of Almighty God; to discover to them their ungodly and corrupt nature and flesh, by virtue of the commands; that they may learn to know themselves, see their shame and thus, with sorrowing and repenting hearts, in the fear of the coming wrath and eternal punishment of the just and great God, sincerely and tremblingly repent and die unto their sins, crucify their flesh, smother their lusts and walk before their God with broken and humbled hearts. Behold, this is the true and principal rooting out, destroying and opposing to which Scriptures say the true preachers are called.

Then let such moved and humbled hearts, such penitent and sighing sinners, who are, with Peter and Magdalene, heart-broken, bitterly weep and with David confess their guilt; then point them to the only and eternal seat of grace, Christ Jesus; teach them the eternal mercy, love, favor and grace of God, according to the Scriptures; console them with the gospel of peace; carefully anoint their wounds, caused by the sharp and smarting wine, with the oil of the joyful promises of Christ, that they may thus, through faith arise with Christ from the death of their abominable sins into the new life of all virtue; that they may, in true faith and in pure, unfeigned love, always walk without all offence, according to the example of Christ and all the pious; and give thanks to the Lord for

his manifest love. Behold, all true preachers who are called by the Spirit of the Lord and are fit for his service thus sow and build.

Dear reader, observe; Since Gellius and the preachers, then, are not such destroyers and builders, rooters and planters, as their deeds testify; but destroy that which is good and build up that which is bad; that they root out truth with their offensive doctrine and plant falsehood with their false sacraments and easy life; therefore our assertion is incontrovertible that they are not the servants of Christ nor his true messengers.

Gellius writes, "that the Lord, through their service, has planted true repentance and such a true christian faith in many hearts, that the small congregation at Emden were comforted in expectation of a heavenly reward."

Answer. If this were true indeed, as he writes, it should be attested by their fruits and manifested by their works. Paul says, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," 1 Cor. 4:20. Let nobody falsely boast; we will be judged by one before whom nothing is hidden. Nobody knows what true, christian faith and true repentance are, but he who has truly received them and felt their power. If God, then, plants repentance in so many hearts, as Gellius pretends, why is he and his like preachers, yet so impenitent, so inimical and refractory to truth and so offensive and blamable in wholesome doctrine? If those of whom he speaks are of the same mind with him, which we trust they are not, then he has not written the truth; this is too plain to be denied.

Those hearts in which God has planted true repentance and an ardent, true, christian faith cannot, especially in these times of manifest truth, long be hidden, nor remain without the cross promised by the Holy Scriptures, if even their own preachers and relations are to persecute them. For if they would testify their faith by a frank confession, by a pious life and by works, which are the fruits of true and ardent faith, they would soon find that they have to bear the cross with Christ, their Lord. However much Gellius may garble it in his writings, the word of Christ is and remains the

word of the cross; all who accept the word in power and in truth must be prepared for the cross; this, both Scriptures and experience abundantly teach us.

This had necessarily to be said, lest we be consoled with a false boasting and idea and lest the word of our Lord Jehovah, spoken to the false prophets, be applied to us; saying, You promise life to those souls to whom you should not promise it, "By your lying to my people that hear your lies," Ezekiel 13:19.

Notwithstanding, many are allowed in their churches who wantonly live in pomp, splendor, carousing, avarice and according to the lusts of the flesh, which service a true and faithful preacher, through which God works, does not allow, if the evangelical Scriptures and apostolic ordinances and doctrine shall avail and are true.

But, as to the alms and support of the poor, I would say that it is a good and praise-worthy work and cordially approve of it. Also, that many pious gentile philosophers, such as Aristotle, Plato, &c., have considered it as right and just. But we contradict that. Sincere and true repentance, or the true seed and foundation of sincere love, which is a fruit of true faith, consists in this; for we may give in hypocrisy, as well as in love, as may be seen by the Scribes and Pharisees, by the open heathens and daily, yet, by the papists.

Paul also agrees with this, saying, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned and do not have love, it profits me nothing," 1 Cor. 13:3. Therefore, let everyone take heed for what purpose and with what heart he bestows his alms. For the love which is of God and of a divine nature hates all boasting and hypocrisy, neither does it know them; of this I am convinced.

If Gellius points to the support and service of the poor, which I deem praiseworthy, as a fruit of true repentance, then I would ask in the first place, whether he finds a lack of alms with our church;

although they are exiled to foreign countries and live in poverty and misery and are partly robbed of their possessions?

In the second place I would say that while he wants to boast of true repentance, he should first commence with the repentance of such faith as brings forth the love and fear of God and not with the alms for the poor. For the Lord's own mouth speaks, That love is the keeping of his commandments; yes that it is the greatest commandment, Deut. 6:6.

Yes, my reader, if he and his could fully comprehend sincere, true repentance and true christian faith, which he thinks has been planted in their hearts, O, how cordially would they fear their God, love and thank him for his favors and loving-kindness and how willingly would they follow and obey his holy word! But how they do love and thank him for his loving-kindness and how they obey and follow his word, their actions and fruits, alas, too plainly testify.

If they love God and if a true, living faith and genuine repentance has been implanted in their hearts, as he boasts, why do they, then, yet walk after the manner of the Gentiles in pomp and splendor, in the lusts of their eyes, embellishment of their bodies and houses, in avariciousness, carousing, &c.? And why do they not heed the words of Paul, namely, "If you live after the flesh, you shall die," Rom. 8:13.

If they love their neighbors, as the Scriptures command and true repentance brings forth, why are they, then, so usurious, avaricious and perfidious among themselves? Why do they litigate? Hatred, envy, lying, deceit, backbiting and defamation still prevail among his followers; besides this, they curse, swear, brawl, fight, war, destroy, rob and some of them are fornicators, perjurers, &c.; to say nothing about their disgraceful upbraiding, profaning and defaming of all those who seek and fear the Lord. What sort of repentance and faith it is, of which he so loudly boasts, you may consider in the fear of God.

O, my kind reader, it never fails that where true faith is, there, also, is the righteousness of faith; where there is unfeigned, christian love, there also is obedience to the holy word and where there is true, sincere repentance there also is an unblamable life. According to the truth; this is incontrovertible.

Is it not a false assertion to say that the giving of alms shows true repentance, since we do not know whether it is done in sincerity of heart or in hypocrisy and vanity while he can plainly see that those who give alms generally are merely of the world and flesh, yes, without regeneration and repentance?

It would be well if he could take to hear what stands written: The alms (gifts) of the ungodly do not please the Most High; and sins are not remitted by much offering. And he who offers from the possessions of the poor does even as if he slaughtered the Son, in the sight of the Father. But to keep God's commandments, is a pleasing offer and to do according to the command, this is an offering which avails. "To depart from wickedness is a thing pleasing to the Lord; and to forsake unrighteousness is a propitiation." Again, "To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken [is better] than the fat of rams," Eccl 35:3; 1 Sam. 15:22.

I would further say that it is my fixed opinion that the before-mentioned alms, of which he boasts, are not the two mites or pennies of the widow's necessities; but only a small crumb of their abundance, riches and wealth. This I frankly assert and I do not have the least doubt that if they would apply, to the support of the poor, their silk damask and the superabundance of clothes in which they go splendidly attired, the ornaments of their houses, the golden and silver rosaries, the useless, costly ornaments, gold rings, chains, silvered and gilt swords, besides the booty of the persecuted which may be found in the houses of some, then the poor would not, in the least, suffer from want.

O, my reader, yet by him, this must be called true repentance and a highly boastful work. If such boasting of outward works

was heard from our side, how soon would we hear that we are work-saints and that we want to be saved by our own merits.

O, Lord! O dear Lord!! Thus the ignorant people are deceived and consoled in their impenitent, reckless life with their own works and merits. I think that such preachers may justly be called peace-preachers, bolsterers and false daubers of the Spirit of the Lord, since they praise such a carnal people as penitent and happy according to the prophetic word, while they are still quite earthly and carnally-minded; as their daily walk openly testifies before the whole world.

My faithful reader, observe the word of the Lord and take heed; for it is not always a true christian faith nor sincere repentance which the children of the world, who are prone to walk upon the broad way, sometimes teach and represent as true faith and sincere repentance. But this is true faith; which cordially accepts all the words of God, the threatening commands as well as the consoling gospel and trusts in them as the sure and true word of God, &c. From such faith, which Paul calls a gift of God, springs the fear of God which drives out sin and the true love which gladdens, enlivens and cheers the heart and leads it into the obedience of the word.

Where there is such a faith which brings forth a new, converted and changed mind; which makes us dead unto sin and leads us into a new life; changes us from Adam to Christ; puts off the old man with all his works and puts on the new man with his works and thus conforms all his thoughts, words and works to the Spirit, word and ways of the Lord, behold, there is true repentance to which the holy prophets, John the baptist, Christ Jesus, together with all the apostles and pious servants have so earnestly pointed us and so faithfully advised us.

All those who would rightly preach this faith and this genuine repentance and would by this bring forth fruits, must themselves first truly believe and sincerely repent; this is too obvious to be denied; and that Gellius and his like preachers do not yet, in power

and truth, believe and sincerely repent, I will leave to be judged by their own writings and fruits, both here on earth and before the throne of God and Christ.

Gellius further writes and says, If it were true that many of our audience turn the preaching of the holy gospel to lasciviousness, as in Jude 4 and that our preaching avails but little, although many pious, penitent hearts incontrovertibly prove the contrary, then the old lamentation of the prophet Isaiah were but verified, that says, Who has believed our report, &c? He also points to the saying of Christ, namely, If they have kept my word they will also keep your word; with which he doubtlessly means to say, as the world has not kept my doctrine, therefore they will not keep your doctrine.

He also refers to the four kinds of seed and four kinds of earth, Mat. 13:8, 19, 23.

Answer. God has never, from the beginning, preached repentance through the impenitent. The mouth and wisdom of God say, “Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles,” Mat. 7:16.

Since it is clear that Gellius and his like preachers remain so earthly and carnally minded and are driven by such an unmerciful, tyrannical and slanderous spirit, which is, properly, the inborn spirit, nature and fruit of the old serpent; how, then, can they rightly preach the penitent, pious life and the fruitful, merciful, amiable spirit, nature and disposition of Christ, which they not only do not acknowledge, but upbraid as hypocrisy and which they sincerely hate in all the pious?

In the second place, I say that the preaching of peace and the making of cushions by the learned, as they do, will bring forth but few truly repentant persons. For although the world is so wicked and wild that we should reasonably be terrified at their very great wickedness, yet they are so comforted and consoled by their preachers, with their infant baptism, supper, alms and with the merits, grace, death and blood of the Lord, that they presume themselves to be the Lord’s chosen holy church and people.

In the third place I would say because he speaks doubtfully, saying, If it *were* true that many of his audience turn the preaching of the word to lasciviousness and little fruit was brought forth by it, something which he however does not admit, &c., the reader should well mark how assiduously they defend the world and the church of anti-christ, saying, If it were true, &c. Yet the whole German nation has degenerated to such a wild and reckless freedom, by the preaching of their free gospel that if we reasonably admonish and reprove them for their open unchastity, carousing, pomp and splendor, cursing and swearing, lascivious and foul words, we must immediately hear that we are conspirators, vagabonds, fanatics, heaven-stormers, anabaptists and other indecent, disgraceful slanders.

But in regard to the complaint of Isaiah and the saying of Christ, If they have kept my saying, &c., John 15:20, with which he wishes to cover and adorn his unscriptural practices and doctrine of impenitence, I would ask him if Christ and the apostles have received those who lived after the lusts of their flesh, such as drunkards, railers, extortioners, avaricious, fornicators, adulterers, &c., as their disciples, so long as they had not sincerely repented?

If he answers in the affirmative, then he speaks contrary to all Scripture. For Paul says that we shall not eat with such, if he does call himself a brother, 1 Cor. 5:11 and that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:11. If he answers in the negative, then I would again ask why they receive them as disciples while they are not disciples of Christ, but are, according to his own words, of the world?

If he answers that they do not receive them, then I would ask him why they baptize their children before they let them partake of the supper? And whether it would not be better if he would separate them, according to the Scriptures from the communion of those whom he esteems pious? If he answers that he does not know of such, which he can by no means truthfully say, then I would, lastly ask if he does not know a tree by its fruits; if he

cannot see a light that shines in darkness, as all true christian lights are called in the Scriptures, nor a city which is built upon a high mountain? Mat. 5:14.

Since Gellius and all the preachers receive and allow such impenitent persons, whom he himself calls of the world, as heard, in the communion of their churches, against the practice of Christ and of the apostles, therefore they must by this acknowledge that Christ's church is of the world or the world is Christ's church; that they, contrary to the apostolic doctrine, ordinance and example, dispense the sacraments also to the world, which according to the Scriptures properly belong to the penitent alone; who have placed themselves in the church of the Lord, in obedience to the word; that they, by this, include the penitent (if such there be) in the communion of the impenitent; and that they are open flatterers and enemies of the cross of Christ, Phil. 3:18, who act hypocritically with the higher class and flatter the world, lest they lose their favors; and thus openly and faithlessly transgress the Lord's word and ordinance, for the sake of their bellies and reject it as powerless and discouraging.

Again, as to his reference to the Lord's parable, I would say that I would have him take a better view of it and not console himself with this; for it has reference to the true preachers and disciples who have been put to the trial of the cross of Christ, in obedience to the word and not to the cross-fleeing preachers and the world, as may be learned not only from the Scriptures but also from experience.

For some reject the received and manifest truth and the sown seed is devoured by the fowls of the air and does not bring forth fruit. Some are withered by the scorching sun of the cross, oppression and misery, which proves them to be wood, hay and stubble, 1 Cor. 3:12.

Others are smothered by the cares of this world and by deceitful riches and the lusts of the flesh, so that the received knowledge dies in them and the lusts and love of this world

prevail, which in our times, as well as in the times of the primitive church, is too often the case with those who, with Demas, alas, again grasp the love of the world.

But the last receive it in a sincere, pious heart and meekly bring forth fruit with patience; although they are much tempted by all kinds of trials, anxiety, oppression and deadly perils, yet they are, by the gracious help of God, so armed with a true faith, love, hope and patience or long-suffering; are so confirmed in God, that neither the fire of tribulation can consume them (for they are gold, silver and precious stones), nor sword and pain can frighten or deter them from the ways of the Lord, Rom. 8:38.

That the before-mentioned parable has reference to such christians and not to the world and its preachers, is too clear to be controverted or denied. And Gellius and his like preachers of the world remain defenders of unrighteousness, comforters of the impenitent and servants of the kingdom of anti-christ, who not only pitifully deceive their own souls but also those of their church and support and defend them in their gross abominations and impenitent carnal lives, by their perversion of Scriptures and useless consolations, to their eternal destruction.

In the fifth place it should be observed, what the preachers' desire and seeking should be. The Scriptures teach that Moses and Jeremiah, Exo. 4:10, reluctantly accepted of the service when they, Jer. 1:6, were called and sent by God, as Jeremiah laments when the cross bore heavily upon him, Exo. 4:10; Jer. 1:6; Jer. 20:8.

All that the prophets, apostles and faithful servants of God always sought and desired was nothing else than that they might proclaim the name of Jehovah, their God and might point their neighbors to the way of peace. They did not seek money, gold, honor and an easy life, but they executed their office to which they were appointed and which was, alas, not weighed [valued] by the heedless people, under many sore trials, miseries, anxieties, tribulations, beatings, poverty, oppression and tortures and at the risk of life even, as sacred and profane histories, in many

instances, teach. But why the preachers of the world have until now refused and yet refuse the service and what they seek by this, experience and the Holy Spirit plainly teach us, saying that they *promise* death to the pious and life to the wicked, for the sake of a handful of barley or a piece of bread; that they seek the fat and the wool, milk and flesh; that they eat but do not feed the Lord's sheep, Ezekiel 34:3; that they preach peace for their bellies' sake (that is, if well paid) and war if not well fed, &c.

Facts testify openly that it is true that they do not seek the salvation of souls, but a careless, easy life; for we never saw in all our life that the preachers lived where there were no rents or liens. That, also, Gellius does not seek the salvation of his sheep, but the rents, he has testified when he left Norden, where he was called by the same calling and moved to Emden where the annual income was greater; something which the paters, in times gone-by, esteemed as unjust in their councils and decrees and punished with excommunication.

If he sought the salvation of their souls and not the rents, as becomes a good and faithful shepherd, according to the example of Jesus Christ and of all faithful servants, why, then, did he make void his first calling, which was, according to his assertion, divine and leave the first sheep who were no less delivered through the death of the Lord and bought with his precious blood, than the last, of which he now has the charge. O, hypocrisy and feigning!

Again, Gellius says in regard to the sustenance of the preachers, That they have little care as to how the community, of whom the magistracy are a part, provides them the necessities of life, while it is certain that if they serve the gospel, as he says, they shall also live by the gospel; and cites Mat. 10:10; Luke 10:7.

Answer. If Gellius and the preachers were such servants as are referred to in these Scriptures, then it is plain that the sustenance of the gospel was promised to them. But if anybody goes into the service and uselessly destroys and ruins the Lord's goods, if faithless, seeks his own self in all things and does the things which

are contrary to the will and honor of the Lord, should such a faithless servant receive the reward which is reasonably due to the faithful, assiduous laborer? I think you will answer in the negative; and that he should rather receive the displeasure and punishment of the Lord: For he speaks, "Therefore when the Lord of the vineyard comes, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons," Mat. 21:40, 41.

We acknowledge that sustenance has been promised by Scriptures, to the true and faithful servants. But, since Gellius and his like preachers are unfaithful servants who destroy the Lord's goods, steal his gain, scatter his sheep and do not gather them together; who, alas, fearlessly lead to hell his precious treasure, namely the poor miserable souls, in great numbers, as those truly regenerated can scripturally judge by the testimony of their open deeds; therefore their sustenance is not the sustenance of true preachers, but an unreasonable, shameful gain; an unbecoming livelihood and the reward of the deceived souls; this, all of sound understanding must acknowledge and admit.

O, my faithful reader, remember, so long as the world donates such splendid houses and large incomes to their preachers, the false prophets and deceivers will be numerous.

They pretend to vindicate by Scripture all heresy, deceit, idolatry, pomp, hypocrisy, tyranny and drunkenness, together with their unreasonable and shameful service of the flesh and world and make the ignorant and blind world believe that it is right.

But I openly testify, I testify it unreservedly, that the preachers of the world, to take them all in all, are Balaamites, who love the reward of unrighteousness and serve for the sake of a handful of barley and a piece of bread, whereby they profane the name of Jehovah God, Ezekiel 13:19. "Prophets which eat at Jezebel's table," 1 Kings 18:20, servants and defenders of Maaz, 1 Chron. 2:27, who are honored with great rewards of Antioch, that is, anti-

christ; Ahabites, who, for the sake of an acre, stone the pious Naboth, 1 Kings 21, that is, who advise and instigate the world by their speeches, writings, backbiting, complaints and permission to the killing of many an innocent, pious child of God.

Again, they are priests of Jeroboam, who, contrary to the example of Christ Jesus and his holy apostles, hire themselves, for an annual stipend, to an unevangelical service of impenitence, which is practiced, in all respects, without power, spirit, repentance and regeneration, as may openly be seen; their service is vain labor and mockery, besides an unbecoming speculation.

O, how distinctly has the Holy Spirit portrayed them before our eyes, if we would but see, saying, "And through covetousness they shall, with feigned words, make merchandise of you." Again, "there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts."* 2 Peter 2:3; Jude 18 and other like sayings; For that they have sought unreasonable gain and an easy life, from youth and yet seek it, is so obvious, that it cannot, at all, be denied.

Besides, their liens and properties have been obtained from anti-christ, through artful dealings, enchanting roguery and clerical robbery and are yet, daily, thus obtained from those who walk upon the broad way without repentance and who find, alas, no pleasure in the Lord's holy word.

They act hypocritically and flatter the magistrates and those of high-standing; they console the impenitent and persecute the pious; they adulterate the plain word, sacraments and ordinances of Jesus Christ, by which the church should be gathered and maintained in Him. They preach to suit and please the world, that they may receive, under the semblance of the gospel, the blood-reward of the poor and miserable souls, for which they assiduously strive; that they may peaceably possess it and turn it to the

* [CHCoG: Was:"Having men's persons in admiration because of advantage," We could not find this verse. Perhaps it is in the Apocrypha.]

advantage of easy times. Yet they console themselves with the idea that they serve the gospel and therefore should live off the gospel. Behold, thus they give a scriptural shape to all kinds of false doctrines and works and thus they give a fine appearance to hypocrisy.

My faithful reader, I warn you in sincere love, take heed. Again, I say unto you, the true and faithful servants of Jesus did not have such annual stipends, rents and property attached to the apostolic churches; but the greater part earned their livelihood by their own labor; yet served the church of Christ, and, in all love and humility, walked before them with true doctrines and an unblamable life. They have diligently watched over the Lord's house, city and vineyard; opposed all evil and deceiving spirits with the word of the Lord; admonished the disorderly, consoled the afflicted, reproofed the transgressors, excommunicated the disobedient and refractory; served reasonably, left the world to the world and have patiently borne its cross; and what necessities they needed they received, not from the world, but at the hands of their pious disciples, in humility, without avariciousness or in desire of shameful gain. Scriptures allow this much, as said above, for they rightly pastured the Lord's sheep, they faithfully planted the vineyard, assiduously tilled the land and stored the sheaves and fruits in the Lord's barn, as the example of the prophets and apostles points out and the Spirit and word of the Lord command and enjoin upon all faithful servants.

I will conclude my remarks in regard to the calling of the preachers and would yet say, since the Scriptures teach that the servants of the holy word are called either by the Lord himself, or by means of the pious, as has been heard; that they shall be unblamable; able rightly to rule the Lord's church, bring forth permanent fruits, destroy and build up; that they shall not seek unreasonable gain, but sincerely seek the honor and praise of God and the salvation of their neighbors, &c.; and since we plainly see and palpably feel that they, alas, are altogether called by such as

we would wish had the Spirit of Christ; moreover that they are blamable in all things, for they are of an unmerciful, tyrannical disposition and of an earthly, carnal life; pervert the gospel and do not teach it in power and true repentance; wrongly use the sacraments without power, spirit and repentance and dispense it to those who are not disciples of Jesus Christ. They deceive the people; do not bring forth permanent fruits, plant that which is evil and root out that which is good; they do not seek the honor and praise of God but their own profit and gain, the favor of the world and an easy, careless life. I will let their doctrines, sacraments, fruits and life testify to this; therefore I say without any reservation that they are **not** the called preachers and servants of the church of Christ, whom we shall, according to the Scriptures, obey, accept and follow, as they pretend we should, but that they are preachers for the sake of gain and servants of anti-christ, against whom we are, on every hand, warned by the word of God; not to hear or follow them nor their doctrine but to flee from and **avoid** them as deceivers, false prophets, wicked men and faithless servants.

Yes, my reader, what can they say about their calling, preaching and church-service? It is, briefly stated, not possible, according to the sure promises and prophecies of Christ Jesus and the prophets, that a true and faithful preacher, witness or teacher, especially in these evil times and in this wicked and tyrannical world, can faithfully teach and proclaim, without respect of persons, the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, without being exiled, proscribed or killed; much less enjoy life at ease and liberty, as they do, without persecution, yes, receive annual stipends from the world and be highly honored and loved by them.

Peruse all the Holy Scriptures and see if you can find that Christ Jesus, with his holy apostles, true witnesses and followers fared as they do and received as they do; whether persecution, cross, tribulation, anxiety, prison and death were not, generally, their lot and part. Besides experience, yet daily, teaches this abundantly.

If, then, the preachers acted rightly, if they were walking according to the example of Christ and his apostles; if their teachings and dealings were right, as they pretend them to be, then all the Holy Scriptures must be wrong, the word of the cross be fulfilled and Christ and his prophecies must be false, this is incontrovertible. Therefore, all their boasting and artful citations concerning their calling, office, doctrine and church-service, together with their defense are, in fact, wrong, futile, hypocritical, unjust and without truth. “For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s,” Phil. 2:21; their own ease and not the salvation of their neighbors; they are enemies of the cross; they serve their own bellies, Rom. 16. If they would rightly reprove all the ungodliness, idolatry, abuse, pride, pomp, splendor, hypocrisy and unfaithfulness of this world, without respect of persons with the same earnestness, assiduity, heart and mind, &c., as did Christ with his holy apostles and true witnesses and in other respects would not act so freely; if they would hate all unrighteousness of the world as Christ Jesus and his apostles hated it, then they would not long remain at ease in their comfortable houses; they would not have such incomes and they would be little regarded by this reckless, wild world. Of this I am convinced.

But they do differently; they make the garment to fit the man (as the saying is) and they so teach and act that the world may tolerate them and love them and that they may be the friends of the world, so that they may be at ease, not be persecuted and enjoy good times; this is something which is generally well understood and a sure proof that their sending or calling together with their doctrine and church-service is in every particular without the ordinance, Spirit and word of God, as said before.

With this, Gellius’ article on the calling has been replied to. I would earnestly beseech him and all the preachers to reflect in the fear of God, for before the flaming eyes of the Lord, which search heaven and earth, nothing wrong will be hidden, however artfully

it may be covered before man's eyes and however much it may be embellished and adorned with smooth words.

Next, Gellius denies our calling and says before we can agree with the preachers or teachers who claim that they bring forth fruit, they must first be rightly called by a church of God and not from a collection who have been deceived by false prophets; and then come boldly forward and preach; or they must show by facts (as he says) that Christ has done wrong and that he should have rather preached secretly to avoid the cross (as he says we do) than in public, &c.

Answer. The sending or calling of Moses, of Christ, of Paul, of the apostles and prophets was also denied by the perverse. Moses had to hear that he had killed the Lord's people and that he had led them into the wilderness that they might perish through want and misery. Christ Jesus was called a wine-bibber, blasphemer and one possessed of the devil, Mat. 11:19. Paul was called a rebel and an apostate Jew, &c. Behold, thus in their times the sending of the faithful servants of the Lord, no, the Lord and Messiah himself was despised, although testified by many miracles. How much more, then, shall we be despised, who are such weak and insignificant instruments and live in seven fold worse and more wicked times than those in which they lived.

Inasmuch, then, as we are accused by our opponents, the learned, that we are not called by a church of God, but by false prophets, or by a false church, therefore I would briefly advise the reader to weigh well with the Scriptures who, how and what the church of God is. It is not a collection of proud, avaricious, extortionate, vain persons, drunkards and impenitent, as the church of the world is, by whom the learned are called. It is a collection or congregation of saints, as the Holy Scriptures and the Nicene symbol clearly teach and represent, namely, of those who, through true faith, are regenerated by God unto Christ Jesus and are of a divine nature, who will gladly conform their lives according to the Spirit, word and example of the Lord, are actuated by his Spirit

and are willing and prepared patiently to bear the cross of their Lord Jesus Christ.

Behold dear reader, such were they whom the apostles and faithful servants won unto Christ Jesus and added to his church with his Spirit and word, nor does Scripture acknowledge any others. From such and of such they have, with fasting and prayer, chosen and called unto the service of the Lord the pious and unblamable pastors and teachers; and not of the world, as has been heard.

Since, then, the preachers of the world and their congregations are not the church of Christ, but are such preachers and churches as shown, by their spirit, words and deeds that they are of the world; and since the merciful, great Lord in these latter days of abominations, graciously gathers together, by his Spirit and word, many faithful hearts from the different unscriptural sects, both great and small and from different nations and tongues, in one faith. He places them as an admonition to sincere repentance, with their doctrine, life, goods and blood, before the whole world, yes, as a light upon a lampstand; therefore these must be the Lord's church and people; or else the word of God, which is and remains true, must be wrong and false. And some from these and of these are chosen with fasting and prayer and ordained to the service of the Lord by the laying on of hands according to the example and doctrine of the apostolic churches; now, all of sound mind may judge and weigh, according to Scripture, whether such a calling or choosing is consistent with Scripture and according to the usage of the primitive churches; and whether it can stand before the Lord and his church as divine, holy and just.

Further, it is a fact well known to me, that the preachers tell the simple and which Gellius' writing, if carefully read, also insinuates, that I should have received my faith, doctrine and calling from a deceiving, refractory and corrupted sect, by the secession of whom the Lord intends to purge his church. For this reason I am necessarily forced to explain my actions briefly, which

I, under different circumstances, would, for the sake of modesty, remain silent; namely, how I first came to the knowledge of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; and how I afterward, unworthily, became one of his servants; and I by this beseech all my readers, for God's sake to consider well my narration and that they will not think hard of it, nor consider it as vain boasting that I tell it here; for the honor of my God and the love for his church urge me to do so. Let all judge me as they will. He who has created me and has until now graciously delivered me from my enemies knows me; he knows what I seek in this life and what my greatest desire is.

Here follows in the original works of Menno Simon his Renunciation of the Church of Rome. See it in the First Volume, commencing on Page 2.

Again, that Gellius wants us to preach publicly, has been sufficiently replied to above, as I trust, in treating of night preaching. Yet I would propound these three questions.

In the first place, Whether a person would not be guilty of blood, if he would persuade somebody by artful words or force him into a deep water or by such means get him to take poison, if he knew beforehand that death would be the consequence?

In the second place, Since he boasts to be a called preacher and preaches in public, I would ask, Why he is not moved to love and compassion for his own country? Why he does not, among the papists, openly proclaim his faith, sacraments and doctrines, contrary to the emperor's decree, tyranny, persecution and ill-will as he would have us to do?

Thirdly, since he will admit, as I suppose and must admit, if he judges according to the Scriptures, that the avaricious, proud, haughty, drunkards, vain, extortioners, liars, unrighteous, &c., can not inherit the kingdom of God and that they therefore are not

christians; I would ask him why it is that he does not lay aside the fear of the cross (of which he blames us) and separate, without all respect of person, the impenitent of his church, from the communion of his sacraments, according to the doctrine and ordinance of the Holy Spirit, since it is God's express word and ordinance? He would have us preach publicly, notwithstanding that he well knows that we can no more do so without the loss of life, than to go on the water without sinking, or to take poison without dying. For he and the learned have brought about such a state of affairs, by their disgraceful slanders and preaching, that we are, alas, already judged before we are caught. Besides he advises the magistracy to stop our doings; and he well knows how he treated a certain person, about ten years ago, who would gladly proclaim to the people the testimony he had, in sincerity of heart and that he refused me a discussion of Scripture twice, as has been heard. Yet he says, if we are true teachers we should preach in public; while he himself, for the sake of a livelihood and the fear of the cross does not preach his doctrine (whatever it amounts to) in his own place but has moved to another and more safe place and there, although he can freely practice his doctrine and sacraments, he neglects separation, scriptural reproof and the ordinances of God from the fear of the cross. Now the reasonable reader may conclude from all this what kind of a christian, not to mention preacher, he is; since he would have us, miserable ones, to do that which he himself dares not do nor touch, as you may see.

If Gellius could take these three questions to heart and would consider them in a scriptural light and in the fear of God, he would be ashamed all his life that he so indiscreetly attacks us, against all love, reason, intelligence and the Scriptures and that he, under such a semblance, so tyrannically strives after the ruin, blood and death of the pious.

But in answer to his writing that the prophetic and apostolic doctrine and sacraments should not be taught and dispensed in secret, retired corners and shops, but in public, I would say, We

admit that Christ Jesus, generally preached in public, however with such discretion that he sometimes avoided the raving, mad people, after they had resolved upon his death, until the time of his suffering had arrived (which time was known to him beforehand) and the prophecies were fulfilled, Luke 21:32.

Also, that although Jesus Christ sent his disciples to preach the gospel to all people, to Gentiles as well as Jews, he did not command them, nor would he, that they should serve and dispense his sacraments, namely, baptism and Supper to the enemies of his word, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15. Therefore it is obvious that he accuses us of this without any truth or foundation of the Scriptures. He does not only accuse and reprove us but also Christ Jesus, God's eternal word* and wisdom himself; for he has celebrated his Holy Supper at night in a secret place, with a separate people; he also accuses and reproves Paul and the primitive, apostolic church, who oft held their brotherly meetings at night, in retired places, as has been sufficiently adduced above. Observe how openly he speaks against God's word.

He writes further, that our calling is not testified by anything, further than that we not only fill the hearts of many with a mad and irreconcilable hatred of all church ordinances and true servants of the church, however pious they be, but also inspire them with a contentious, envious spirit.

Answer. If animosity and bitterness of heart had not so entirely blinded him and if but a small spark of a true, christian spirit were in him, then he would soon acknowledge the precious fruits of true repentance. But as it is, he has become so blinded that, alas, he calls the glorious fruits of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of the devil and new monkery; and the burdensome, pressing cross of so many

* [CHCoG: There is not even one Scripture which says that Christ is the "eternal Word," but only that He **is** the Word. From here on, this will be indicated by placing eternal in braces as {eternal} Word when Menno uses this phrase.]

pious saints, the cross of evil-doers or heretics. Which is in my opinion an abominable sin and gross slander.

The Pharisees said, "This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub, the prince of devils," Mat. 12:24, although they strongly felt in their hearts that it was the finger and power of God. Christ said that it was blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, Luke 12:10. But what Gellius does against us I will leave to the Lord.

God knows that I wish that I might deliver him and all the preachers from their sore damnation, even at the cost of my own life. Behold, this is how I hate him and all those who seek my life; although we must hear so much evil spoken against us; and I trust that all who fear the word of the Lord will be of one mind with me in this regard. Notwithstanding this, he writes that we fill many hearts with anger and irreconcilable hatred against them, &c. By no means. And this for no other reason than that we in sincere and faithful love, earnestly reprove the hypocritical deceivers, whom he calls the true and pious servants of the church and the unscriptural infant baptism, together with all the abuses which he calls church ordinances, not only by the Spirit and word of the Lord, but also by our possessions and blood and because we point them to Christ Jesus and him crucified, to his Spirit, word, ordinances and to the doctrine and usage of his holy apostles.

I truly believe that a spiteful, envious person has no part in God's city. And if we, who are daily killed for our love, are yet spiteful and envious, then much suffering is in vain. I trust that I write the truth when I say that I am more terrified of hatred and envy than of fire and sword. Yet we must hear that we are spiteful. Behold, thus good is always turned to evil and our love to hatred. What sentence the Scriptures pronounce against such may be seen in Isaiah 5.

He also accuses us That we are not unanimous, but quarrel among ourselves in regard to many articles of christian religion; namely, in regard to obedience to the laws; to the justification of

man; to the Godhead of Christ and his becoming man and in regard to the powers of the magistracy, &c.

Answer. I trust that I can write with a clear conscience that we, who are grains of one loaf, are also of one mind in Christ Jesus. But as in the times of the apostles, false teachers arose in the apostolic church who started and taught false doctrines and who were, after faithful admonition, separated from the communion of their church, if they did not repent, as may be learned from many Scriptures; so also it is in our times. Satan is always at work. Paul says, "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you," 1 Cor. 11:19. And if such be deaf unto truth, reject admonition and start perverse sects, then we may no longer receive them as brethren, as the Scriptures teach us. So long as we continue to do this in obedience to the holy word and in the true fear of God, we are convinced from the inmost of our hearts, that we will be clear of all sectarianism as also of blasphemy and perversity; although we must innocently hear such charges from the world.

Since it is a fact well known to Gellius and his fellow-preachers that peace-breakers and sectarians are not allowed in our communion at all, but are unanimously separated from us, according to apostolic doctrine and usage, Rom. 16:17; Tit. 3:10, therefore it is very wrong of him to call so many pious persons contentious and cause them to be of such bad report with the world, without truth; while they hate discord and strife and seek nothing but that they may humbly follow the crucified Jesus, in the peace of their hearts.

If he should say that he accounts them as of us because they have received the same baptism with us, then I would say again that Peter, Simon, Paul and &c., were also one. Then all papists, Lutherans and Zwinglians besides all thieves, murderous wizards, buggerers, fornicators and rogues are one; for they have received one baptism; this is incontrovertible.

Again, in regard to his accusation that we dispute among ourselves in regard to obedience to the laws; the justification of

man; the power of the magistracy &c., I would say that I trust I can testify before the Lord and his church with a clear conscience, that I never but once to my knowledge, disputed, or as Gellius calls it quarreled with anyone in regard to the justification of man and this one has already ran to ruin. Nor have I ever discussed the questions of obedience to the laws or the power of the magistracy other than by way of brotherly instruction. What our confession and grounds are concerning the before-mentioned articles, may be clearly concluded from our writings.

O, dear Lord, that Gellius would once consider his own words when he writes that the calling of the pious should not be nullified on account of the impious and would have sufficient fear of God in him to feel concerned about the lies, violence and injustice which he unreasonably practices on us. For what else does he but wilfully defame the pious, perhaps against his own sentiments, that he may oppose the word, may uphold his cause by making ours [appear] false and suspicious, lest his pharisaical faithlessness be made manifest. Yes, he writes as if he would say, Judas was a traitor and thief, therefore all the other apostles are traitors and thieves. Again, Simon was a rogue, therefore all the members of the apostolic communities were rogues, &c. For he well knows that we do not, may not suffer heretics, peace-breakers &c. in the communion of the peaceful and pious, as already heard.

O, that he would leave off slandering the peaceable and could rightly see into the angry quarreling, bitter hatred, division, rupture and brawlings of all those who uphold infant baptism; could see how dreadfully they are divided among themselves; that they are so inflamed by envious zeal one against another that they not only slander and adjudge each other to hell by calling each other fanatics, profaners of the sacraments and anti-christians, but that they also take up the sword against each other, as is the way of sectarians; that they utterly destroy countries and inhabitants, cities and towns, against the meek nature, doctrine and example of Christ Jesus and his apostles.

Besides their learned men are so divided among themselves that we can scarcely find five or six in one country who agree in doctrine. One includes everything in the providence and predestination of God, *Quasi necessarium* (as an implied necessity). Another disputes it; the third includes Christ's flesh and blood in the bread and wine; the fourth understands it spiritually; the fifth baptizes the children on their own faith; the sixth on the strength of the covenant with Abraham and its promise; the seventh says that faith is no obstacle to persecution; the eighth denies it; the ninth believes in faith without fruits or work; the tenth says that faith through love shall be active; the eleventh says that the sacraments may be dispensed to the impenitent and perverse; the twelfth denies it; and other like differences exist among them.

Notwithstanding this, they call the godly, pious hearts and peaceable children of God, who are zealous for God and his righteousness, as much as is in their power and who do not countenance quarreling, a contentious sect and ungodly, deceiving conspirators, while they, on the contrary, are peaceable, teachers of one mind; besides they call the impenitent, wicked world the church and people of the Lord.

Behold, so manifestly the Lord "will destroy the wisdom of the wise and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent," 1 Cor.1:18, yes, that to them Christ Jesus is Belial and Belial is Christ Jesus; light is darkness and darkness is light, 2 Cor. 6. Alas, they consider the doctrine, life, power, confession and the sacrifice of possession and life of the chosen as nothing; but they judge everything perversely, unfavorably and with partiality, according to the flesh and thus construe everything to offensiveness. They seek all kinds of excuses to offend the pious, to blaspheme truth and to uphold unrighteousness, that nobody is converted, repents and sincerely seeks and follows the word of the Lord. O, Lord! Grant that this may be made manifest unto them.

He further writes: "Nor is it a desirable fruit, but a shameful disgrace, that they, contrary to the example of Christ and the apostles, constitute themselves a church, desecrate the Lord's Sabbath, leave the open assembly and service, hate and upbraid the servants and not only do not examine the solicitous labors and prophecies of the servants but also boldly despise them, contrary to the command of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of the command of the Sabbath."

Answer. Observe, reader, how adroitly they can adorn lies and how frightfully they can suppress and despise truth under cover of virtue. All the evangelical Scriptures teach us that the church of Christ was and is, in doctrine, life and worship, a people separated from the world. It also was in the times of the Old Testament, 2 Cor. 6:17; 1 Peter 2:9, 10; Exo. 19:12.

Since the church always was and shall be a separate people, as has been heard and since it is as clear as the meridian sun that for centuries no difference has been made between the church and the world, but that they have been indiscriminately blended together in baptism, Supper, life and worship, which is so plainly contrary to all Scripture, therefore we feel ourselves constrained by the Spirit and word of God and not by our own account, to gather together, to the praise of Jesus Christ and to the salvation of our neighbors and not unto us, but unto the Lord a pious and penitent church or community from all the untrue and deceiving sects of the whole world. This is not contrary to the doctrine and example of Christ Jesus and the apostles, as Gellius falsely accuses us, but is according to the Spirit, doctrine and example of Jesus Christ, manifested unto us. Yes, gather them *patiently* under the cross of misery, in spite of all the violence and gates of hell and not by force of arms and persecution as is the custom of the world, but separate them from it, as the Scriptures teach, that they may be an admonition, example and reproach to the impenitent world as has already been heard.

They keep and sanctify the Sabbath which is not the literal, but the spiritual Sabbath, which never ends with true christians, not by

wearing fine clothes, not by carousing, vanity and idleness, as the reckless world do, but by the true fear of God, by a clear conscience and unblamable life, in love to God and their neighbors; for that is the true religion, Heb. 12:1 and in the fear of their God they do not attend the public Sabbath and holiday gatherings which are, alas, not consecrated to Christ, but to anti-christ,* in all manner of vanity and hypocrisy, in pomp and splendor; nor do they take part in their idle church-service which tends to nothing but deceiving [them into thinking] that they may by this attend the gathering of the saints and the true service, convince the erring and thus make manifest, truth and the true doctrine, to the reformation and salvation of all mankind.

We do not hate and envy the open deceivers and false preachers who so miserably deceive the poor people, as Gellius accuses us, but earnestly reprove them in love according to God's Spirit and word, that they may repent and be converted, as the Scriptures teach us.

In short, we do not despise the solicitous labors and the prophecies of the true and faithful servants of Christ, nor the precious gifts of the Holy Spirit, [nor are we] against the commands of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of the command of the [true] Sabbath, as he very wrongly complains we do, but we

* [CHCoG: As indicated in Volume One, the papacy has indeed created their own counterfeits for all of God's Holy Days and added many of their own. Dan. 7:25. However, this does not negate Jehovah's God's real Biblical Sabbaths, as listed in Leviticus 23. Yes, the book of Hebrews teaches us that Christ has replaced the Levitical priesthood and the sacrifice of Christ has replaced all of the animal sacrifices for sin. But God's seventh-day Sabbath, which reminds us that He is our Creator and his annual Holy Days, which outline His entire Plan of Salvation, remain with us and are to be kept forever. Exo. 31:16-17 & 12:24, Lev. 23:14, 21, 31 & 41. Though we do need to live spiritually every day, that is not a substitute for honouring God by keeping His Sabbaths. Read [*The Sabbath in Scripture*](#) and [*God's Holy Days for Christians*](#) for more details.]

shun, at the risk of possessions and life, according to the advice, doctrine and admonition of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of the Sabbath, the false labors and the powerless, impenitent and hired prophecies of the anti-christian servants, who do not serve Christ and the church, as they boast; but serve their bellies and the world; and they dare not hear and follow them because their doctrine and fruits show that they are those whom the Scriptures and divine truth forbid us to follow.

Their priests, says Jehovah, “teach for hire and the prophets divine for money.” They rely upon their Lord and say, Is the Lord not among us? No evil can betide us; therefore “Zion shall be plowed like a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps,” Mic. 3:12; Jer. 26:18. It is also manifest that Gellius and his like preachers have done the very thing of which he accuses us, for they, long before we did, have separated themselves from the papists into a separate church, as is known to all mankind to be incontrovertible. But we are sorry to say that our separation from them was caused by themselves. For if we would have found them to be right we would have remained with them; but as it is, we have, alas, had to leave them. At the cost of life and possessions, as may be seen.

Behold, my kind reader, here you have before you, my brief reply to the main articles concerning the calling of preachers, which Gellius so respectfully brought forward to the defense of his cause and to the detriment of ours.

I have no doubt but that you, by the grace of God, will find a clear difference, explanation and foundation, if you compare his writing with ours and judge according to the word of the Lord by the manifest fruits on both sides; and this is the summary of my writings, that nobody can be a truly called preacher and God-pleasing servant in the Lord’s house and church, without having the Holy Spirit which works in all true christians; without regeneration which transforms the heart from earthly to heavenly things, through faith; nor without unfeigned love, which seeks nothing but the praise of God and the salvation of his neighbor, nor

without the salutary, precious word which cuts and cleaves without respect of person; nor without the pious, unblamable life which is from God.

CONCERNING BAPTISM.

I deem it unnecessary to write much concerning the baptism of the believing in this place. Why we teach that it shall be received and practiced at the confession of faith, we have explained this matter before, by so many plain Scriptures and reasons to the intelligent reader, that he can plainly see and palpably feel the foundation and truth.

Therefore I will refer to the main articles and arguments with which Gellius undertakes to defend his infant baptism as apostolic and christian and will rebut them with the Scriptures; and I trust to be enabled, by the grace of God, to do this with such clearness and power that all attentive, intelligent readers may fully perceive that he can stand before the holy ordinance, word and truth of the Lord, with his infant baptism, as little as he can with his calling.

Before I enter upon the examination of the matter, I would, not without cause, first relate to the kind reader that some years ago, I had a discussion with John A'Lasco, Gellius and Herman; and, as we had a lengthy reasoning concerning baptism and they admitted that all the Scriptures which I adduced, relating to the matter, were spoken by the ancient or believing, we at last got on the subject of infant baptism, which, according to their opinion was also right, although not Scriptural. At last, after having had a lengthy discussion and after they had made many unscriptural assertions, I propounded two questions and asked them for God's sake to answer them Scripturally. The first question was, Has a ceremony any promise which is practiced without the command of God?

They answered that it had not. Then I asked them, in the second place, Is not such a ceremony, which is practiced without the command of God, idolatry? They answered that it was.

When I heard them answer these questions thus unreservedly, I said, Well, dear men, what will become of your infant baptism? They all three simultaneously answered: Yes, dear Menno, if you would ask of us for the command, then show us first where it is commanded that we should baptize the believing. When I heard this I was much alarmed, for I perceived that, in fact, they meant nothing but party and carnality. I pointed them to the sixteenth chapter of Mark, where the Lord speaks, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” Mark 16:15, 16.

But this was no command to them. Then I referred them to Matthew 28:19, where the Lord says, “Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them (or as the Greek text has it: Make all nations disciples and baptize them), in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

This did not avail with them, for it reads, they said, “baptizing” and not “baptize them;” although, alas, they well knew that the surest translation is the Greek text. In the imperative mode, namely, baptize them; something which I had till then never noticed so particularly.

Behold, they contended so wilfully against the plain word and truth of God, that they openly denied it to be a command; while they had many times read (also according to the Lutheran translation) that the Lord had commanded it in an express command, saying, “And baptize them.”* When I perceived that they wanted to find an excuse by means of the use of the participle, I proposed the following, If I command my servant and say, Go and plow the ground, sowing it with wheat; as the Lord said, “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them,” &c., have I not, I now ask, commanded my servant to plow the land and to sow it

* A German Translation.

with wheat, although I use the participle sowing, the same as baptizing was used. They answered that this was using philosophy and not the Scriptures. Behold my reader, thus boldly they sought to deny the truth.

Seeing that they, although convinced, obstinately persevered in falsehood and would not receive the powerful and plain truth, as did the Pharisees, I was much grieved and said, Men! Men!! Since I find it to be a fact that you, in perversity of heart, reject God's truth and delight in falsehood, I will be silent and not speak another word with you concerning this matter; for, alas, it is all in vain! Reader, in the day of the appearance of Jesus Christ, before his impartial and eternal judgment, it will be found true as I here write.

Behold, so dishonestly do they deal with God's precious and eternal truth, that they *then* pretended that there was no command to baptize the believing and *now* they have an abundance of commands to baptize the unaware* children. O, God! Thus they mock with the souls of men and they know how much to garble, bend and break the sure foundation of truth, that they may remain on the broad road, without the cross, that they may please the world and that they may lead a careless life according to the lusts of the flesh.

Gellius first says in regard to this matter, That we blasphemously speak against the holy church, because we say that the children cannot believe, cannot repent and cannot obey the word of the Lord, while they (as he says) constitute a great part of the church and that they are referred to in plain and clear words by the prophet Joel, in the preaching of repentance, &c.

* [CHCoG: The original English translation had unconscious. As that today means "not awake and aware of and responding to one's environment." we have substituted "unaware" throughout, which more closely reflects his meaning: that they are too young and immature to understand what christian faith and baptism are.]

Answer. His commencement is unscriptural and his end will [also] be unscriptural. Observe, the word of God shall be our judge. Say, beloved, is it not a great blindness in him to undertake to include unaware children in the preaching of repentance? A little further on he admits himself that they cannot, in their feeble understanding, understand the doctrine, which is a doctrine of penitence. If they cannot understand the doctrine, how can they then believe? If they do not believe, how can they then repent and if they do not repent, how can they be included in the preaching of repentance? If they, then, have neither doctrine, faith nor repentance, which he admits they do not have, on account of their feeble understanding and which is not necessary for them to have, while they are God's own and while sin has not become alive in them to bring forth its fruit, therefore all of sound judgment must admit he reproves himself and acknowledges that he wrongfully accuses us, when he says that we speak blasphemously against their holy church, because we say that the unaware children cannot repent, believe nor obey; for he admits that they, in the feebleness of their understanding, cannot understand the doctrine, from which faith, repentance and obedience originate, as has been already said.

In the second place he writes, That there is one church and one faith, both under the Old and New Testaments, from the time of Adam to the end of the world; and that from the time of Abraham, under the Old Testament, preaching and circumcision was commanded for the purpose of the gathering, edification, growth and extension of the church and under the New Testament, preaching and baptism, without regard to the age of persons.

Answer. I understand that all those who, from the time of Adam to the present time and also hereafter, had, have and shall have the Spirit, mind and nature of Jesus Christ and who did, do and shall walk as obedient children by virtue of such a spirit, in truth, were, are and shall be the Lord's church, kingdom and people. But we would have reasonably expected that Gellius

would have added that each in his time had a peculiar doctrine, ordinance and usage. That from the time of Adam to Abraham no ceremony was practiced on the children because the Lord had not commanded it; and that circumcision was commanded from Abraham to the time of Christ. But now we have Christ, the promised prophet, Deut. 18:15; Acts 7:37, to whom all the Scriptures pointed that we should obey and follow him. He is the {eternal} Word and Wisdom of God; all that abide in his doctrine walk in the truth, for his word is truth and his command is eternal life. What ordinance this wise counsellor has commanded us concerning the children under the New Testament? What he has commanded us and what he has not, concerning them, all pious, faithful hearts may learn from his holy word.

But what he says in regard to them is that in the New Testament no regard is made as to age, but that we should preach to all and baptize them. In my opinion this is so directly contrary to Scripture, common sense and his own words, that he should reasonably be ashamed of the assertion. For how can we teach a little, unaware child repentance according to the word of God? Christ commanded that we should preach the gospel to those who have understanding and those who believe are to be baptized. Nor has he left in his gospel any other command, ordinance or example concerning this matter.

Besides, he acknowledges that the children, on account of their feeble understanding, cannot understand the doctrine, as already heard. Yet he writes, in the face of this plain ordinance of the Almighty God and his own confession, that in the New Testament, teaching and baptizing are commanded, without respect to age.

Behold, thus grossly err all who reject the word of the Lord. Is this not violently rejecting Christ and accepting anti-christ and is it not plainly wrong? I must admit that I have never read a word in the Scriptures with such misunderstanding.

In the third place Gellius writes, That the church should give the seal of the covenant of grace to children according to the

command of God because they are participants in the covenant or promise of God and in the sanctity of the church and in eternal life; for the covenant is not altered and God is no less gracious to our children, who are born under the promise, than to the children of Israel who were born according to the flesh; for it is written, I will be your God and your children's [God] after you; and that therefore, in the gathering of the churches, under the Old and New Testaments the same command obtains, both as regards the preaching and the use of the holy sacraments.

Answer. Gellius does even as all the false prophets have done who miserably deceived the people and pretended that the Lord of lords said so, although Jehovah had not spoken it, as Scripture informs us, Jer. 23 17; Ezek. 13:7.

Say, reader, is it not an intrepid deed and a condemnable boldness, that he dares publish to the whole world that God has commanded it; since eternal Wisdom has not commanded it, neither by word nor deed? Peruse the whole New Testament from beginning to end and if a word can be found that the mouth of the Lord has commanded it, or that the apostles have anywhere taught or practiced it, then we will, by the grace of God, unanimously admit that he is right.

Inasmuch, as it is clear that nothing has been mentioned concerning it in all the Holy Scriptures, as has been said and that he, in the face of this, dares write that they do it according to the command of God, then the pious reader may imagine how abominably he sins against his God, especially since truth is manifest and how lamentably he deceives the poor souls by open falsehood when he writes that God commanded it; since the Holy Spirit, I say, has not expressed it in a single word, nor manifested it unto the church of God by word or practice of the true witnesses of Christ.

His assertion that the command is not altered is so diametrically opposed to truth that we may well wonder at it. The Scriptures clearly testify that God promised Abraham the multiplying of his seed and the land of Canaan as an eternal

inheritance and commanded him that he should circumcise himself, his son Ishmael, &c.; also all male children at the age of eight days; for it was a covenant in the flesh, Gen. 17.

And thus was commanded to Abraham, at the promise of the multiplication of his seed and the possession of the land of Canaan, the blood-sign of the circumcision of the foreskin, on the eighth day of their age, of all the male children and not the female children. But to us the blood-sign of circumcision is not commanded, but baptism in the water. Now, observe the first difference. Not on the eighth day, but when we, through the spirit, in faith, are born of God and have become followers of Abraham. Observe the second distinction. Not only the males, but both males and females, who through the preaching of the holy word, have died unto the old life and have arisen with Christ in newness of life; who are pricked in their hearts; who circumcise their hearts and minds; who put on Christ and who have the testimony of a clear conscience, before God, Rom. 6; Acts 2:37; Col. 2:11-13; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21. Observe the third difference. Not to possess a literal kingdom and land and to become a great people upon earth, as was promised to Abraham and his seed; but to bear all manner of anxiety, affliction, tribulation and misery upon earth, for the sake of the testimony of the word of God; to turn the heart away from all visible and perishable things; to die unto pomp, splendor, the world and flesh and thus to walk in our weakness as Christ has walked in his perfection, &c.

Behold, reader, how openly he adulterates the Scriptures and how grossly he perverts the truth when he writes that the command is unchanged and that the gathering of the churches under the Old and New Testaments are the same and that no different commands are given, both as regards preaching and the use of the sacraments; for it is changed and renewed as may be clearly concluded from the foregoing references. I will leave to your reflections if such a thing may not be called perverting truth into falsehood.

Again, from his saying that the church is no less gracious to our children than to the children of Israel, born in the flesh, I understand him to say, If God will not have our children baptized, that he is less gracious to them than he was to the children of the circumcision; by which he openly testifies that he couples the kingdom, grace and promise of God with that sign.

If God is only gracious to such children as have received, or may receive that outward sign, then it must necessarily follow that God has been ungracious to and displeased with all the children before the law of circumcision; besides to all children who died before the eighth day and during the forty years they passed in the wilderness, together with all the maids and women, because they were not circumcised; then he must also be displeased with all the children under the New Testament, for they are not commanded to be baptized.*

O no, to children belongs the kingdom of God. Not by virtue of any sign, but alone by grace through Christ Jesus, Mat. 19:14. And as to his calling infant baptism a sealing of the covenant of grace, I would reply, If he can show me a place in all the New Testament where the baptism of the believing is called a sealing of the covenant of grace, then I will admit that he is right. But I know to a certainty that he cannot do so. If the baptism of the *believing*, which is ordained by God himself, is not called such, how can infant baptism then be called such, which is not ordained by God, but is merely self-chosen fiction invented by man?

If he should allude to the circumcision, I would say that they are two distinct and different signs and that the first has no relation whatever to the second; for these following reasons: Firstly, because all the signs, before and under the law, given to the patriarchs, as the coats of skins to Adam; the rain-bow to Noah; the circumcision to Abraham; the yearly offering of the high priests, &c., Gen. 3:21; 9:16; 17:10-11; Lev. 16, all unitedly pointed to Christ, who has now appeared and in whom all the

* [CHCoG: This last baptized should perhaps be circumcised.]

preceding signs are fulfilled. Now we have no sealing or assurance through outward signs and symbols, but through the true Sign of all signs, Christ Jesus, as he himself says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life; for God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten son," John 3:14-16. Secondly, because we, now, are not a people according to the letter, as was Israel, but are a people according to the spirit; who, before they receive the sign, are turned to God through the preaching of repentance; who die unto the old sinful life; who receive the light of grace in their hearts; who accept the true Sign of peace, Christ Jesus, through faith; arise with him into a new life and are thus sealed in their hearts, through the promise of the Holy Spirit and the eternal covenant and the grace of God. For if we were not sealed in our hearts before the sign, then we could not truly repent before the sign; nor could we burden ourselves with disesteem, disgrace, anxiety, tribulation and misery which are connected with the cross.

But by the sign, which we accept in obedience to the holy word, we testify that we, through Christ, the true Sign, given to us by the Father and made known to us through the word, have peace with God and that we are assured of the spirit of his grace.

Behold, my reader, here you may now observe that the signs of the New Testament do not seal or assure us, as the learned teach the poor people; but that our only, eternal surety is Christ Jesus; that the sealing of our hearts is the Holy Spirit; and that the signs or sacraments are nothing more than that they are given to the penitent, sealed and assured christians, for the purpose of admonishing and reminding us that we should walk in continual repentance; that we should practice our faith and that we should eternally give praise to the Lord for his inexpressibly great kindness and grace, through Jesus Christ.

All who teach differently and point you to water, bread and wine as a sealing or assurance, as Gellius does, point you away

from the true Being to the sins; from Christ to Moses again. They give you a vain hope and a false surety and cause you to remain impenitent and without Christ all your lifetime; for you console yourself so much with the signs that you remain without the signified truth, as may, alas, be plainly seen by the whole world.

For however drunk, covetous, pompous, vain and given to lies they may be, they still boast themselves christians. They are so consoled with this ungodly sealing of the idolatrous water (I say ungodly sealing because it is so directly contrary to the word of God) and with the bread and wine of the preachers, that they all walk upon the broad road and remain without the word of God.

Behold, this is the proper fruit and effect of the sealing of Gellius, which he so highly praises and so artfully teaches. But, as regards the saying: 'I will be your God and your seed's after you,' from which they conclude that as the children of Abraham were circumcised with him on account of the promise; that also our children should be baptized on account of the same promise, I would reply, Firstly, God promised Abraham to be his God and his children's God. In this promise the females were included as well as the males; this must be admitted. Notwithstanding, Israel did not circumcise the females but only the males, although the females were included in the promise; and that because God had so ordained it. From which it may be safely concluded that the male children of the seed of Abraham were not circumcised for the sake of the promise but for the sake of the ordinance which was commanded to Abraham and his seed. For if it had been done for the sake of the promise and not for the sake of the ordinance, then the females should also have been circumcised, as joint participants and joint heirs of the same promise. This is incontrovertible.

In the second place I would say, That if Israel had followed the doctrine of Gellius and some other preachers, in respect to this matter, then they would also have circumcised the females, notwithstanding they were not commanded to do so; for they were

joint heirs of the covenant of grace, as our children whom they want to have baptized, are joint heirs of the promise.

If they should answer that the ordinance referred to the males and not to the females, although the females were joint heirs of the covenant of grace, then I would reply that their cause is already lost. For as the command of circumcision at that time had only reference to the males and not to the females, although the females were joint heirs of the promise, so also does now the ordinance of baptism have reference to the believing and penitent and not to the unaware children, although they are joint heirs of the promise, as heard.

They further say, If infant baptism is not commanded neither is it prohibited. To this I reply: The circumcision of the females was neither ordained nor prohibited, even as infant baptism is neither ordained nor prohibited; yet they did not circumcise the females and that because they were not commanded to do so. Therefore, all who blame us because we do not baptize our children, who are joint heirs of the promise and are not prohibited from being baptized, also blame Israel because they did not circumcise their female children, who were joint heirs of the promise and were not prohibited from being circumcised.

Thirdly, I would say, since I observe that Gellius only includes the children of believing and not of unbelieving parents in the baptism and since he well knows that the proud, avaricious, pompous, envious, blood-guilty, whoring and idolatrous are not believers, nor, according to Scripture, joint heirs of the promise, therefore I cannot stop wondering at his inattention, that he, against his own belief and doctrine, yet baptizes the children of such parents, whom he must acknowledge as being without God and Christ and therefore having no promise. If he says that he does not know the faith of others, then I would say again, that he then acknowledges, in the first place, that his infant baptism has an unstable foundation, if we, according to his own words, are to baptize them on account of the promise to the parents, while he

does not know whether the parents believe or not; and, in the second place, that such parents are not fruitful trees nor shining lights.

But what shall we say! If Gellius were to tell all his pompous, drunk, usurious and unrighteous members, without respect to person, that they are without Christ and have no promise and would not baptize their children, he would not long remain a preacher at Emden, nor enjoy his easy, careless life in peace.

He further writes, That Paul testifies that baptism has taken the place of circumcision, has the same signification and is called the circumcision of Christ.

Answer. In this instance Paul himself rebukes him, that he has mistaken his word; for he says, “Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ, for in him dwells all the fullness of the God-head bodily; and you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead; and you, being dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses,” Col. 2:8-13.

My faithful reader, observe the word of the Lord; the doctrine of the New Testament and his sacraments treat of none but those who have ears to hear and hearts to understand. For it is a service of the Spirit and not of the letter, as Paul says, 2 Cor. 3:6.

Inasmuch as the preachers always point the poor, simple people to the elementary water, bread and wine and teach that baptism is our seal which assures us that we are heirs of the covenant of grace; that God operates through his sacraments, &c. and, since we find, however, that neither the sealing, surety nor power are found

in their hearts, as the fruits testify, but that they are led by the preachers to a false profession, vain hope and an unstable surety, under the semblance of the gospel; therefore I would faithfully advise all my readers and hearers with these words adduced from Paul, not to be at all deceived by such high-sounding, smooth words of the philosophy and artful fictions of men, nor by the hypocrisy and worldly institutions of the learned, but to follow after the perfect Institutor, Christ Jesus, in whom is embodied the perfection of the God-head, truth, light, power, righteousness, &c. and who therefore does not point to uncertain, deceitful, dark and unrighteous ways, but in him all true christians are perfect and full of his grace, Spirit, love and power.

He is the head of all principalities before whom every knee shall bow and whom all tongues shall confess that he is the Lord and that besides him there is no other, Isaiah 45:23; Phil. 2:10.* Therefore his word shall avail and his command shall stand and not that which the world adds to his kingdom or church, in which all regenerated children, who are of his Spirit, are not now circumcised unto Christ, with hands, as was the case with literal Israel, but the impure foreskins of their hearts are circumcised with the Lord's word, Spirit and power, that they may become in spirit a new, regenerated Israel and people of God, by dying unto their sinful flesh and by smothering the old man through the circumcision of Christ, which purifies and changes their hearts through his word and Spirit. For the penitent are buried with him in baptism, die unto the old sinful life and arise in the new life of righteousness and virtue, by means of faith, through which God operates by the preaching of his powerful word and the inspiration

* [CHCoG: In this instance Menno misinterprets the verses. In Isaiah, it is Jehovah God, Christ's Father, speaking and who declares that He is the only True God. (also Jer. 10:10, John 17:3 & 1 John 5:20) In Phil. 2:10, all will declare that Jesus is Lord, but there is nothing there to suggest that they will also declare that Jesus is the only True God, nor that there is no other god but him. See [*Jesus Christ – Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity?*](#)]

of his Holy Spirit. The faithful God and Father who has resurrected his Son from the dead, has also bestowed his power upon us, poor sinners and has graciously resurrected us, who were dead in so many gross sins and trespasses, into a new life with him; has called us from darkness unto light and has placed us with him in a celestial being, in Christ, Eph. 2:1-6, &c.

Behold, dear reader, this is the proper ground and meaning of the words of Paul, by which Gellius tries to show that baptism has taken the place of circumcision and is called the circumcision of Christ.

Judge now, if you fear God, whether you find a word in the writings of Paul that has reference to unaware infants. That this saying of Paul has reference to the believing and penitent and not to unaware children, all reasonable, to say nothing of spiritual persons, must acknowledge and admit. Notwithstanding, he writes that this saying implies that baptism has taken the place of circumcision and is called Christ's circumcision. He does not, or will not, observe that the circumcision of Jesus Christ to which Paul alludes is done without hands and that he daily serves with his hands the infant baptism which he calls the circumcision of Jesus. Behold, thus lamentably does he satisfy Paul and thus violently break the word of God.

If he seeks an evasion to adorn his cause and says that God works through his sacraments invisibly in the heart, which the sign represents, then the deceit will be more distinct. For how shall God operate through a sign which is an abomination before Him? I say an abomination, because he has not commanded it and because neither doctrine, confession, faith nor repentance precede it, which these signs represent in the New Testament. Then, also, the sign and the signification must be one and the same, which never was nor ever will be the case unless the letter becomes spirit. This is incontrovertible. Yes, my reader, how the baptized children are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ Jesus in the foreskin of their hearts, which is the circumcision of the New

Testament, the deeds and the fruits of the world, alas, plainly show.

In the fourth place he writes, As in the Scriptures, which testify that women are participants in the merits of Christ and are disciples, a command is implied that the Holy Supper shall be dispensed to them, so, also, a command is implied in the Scriptures, which testify that children are of the church of Christ and of the Kingdom of God, [so] that they should be baptized.

Answer. The words of Gellius prove clearly that women are participants of the Lord's Supper; for he acknowledges that they are disciples. If they are disciples, as they are in fact, then it is manifest that they hear the word of God, believe, repent, allow themselves to be baptized and that they are gifted by God in power with the representation of the Holy Supper and that they are participants of his mystery no less than the men. Since they are believing and penitent disciples, as heard, therefore it is reasonable and right that they should partake of the sign, whereby this mystery of faith and of the holy gospel are represented to the believing and admonished to the repenting. As we cannot deny but that the believing, repenting women understand and realize the representation of the Holy Supper—namely, the remembrance of the offering of the flesh and blood of Christ, the love of God and one's neighbors, &c., for which purpose it was instituted by the Lord, therefore they should have a place at the Lord's table, as believing, penitent disciples. Now, Gellius, to make his infant baptism of effect, must prove and show to us by works, Scriptures and truth, that little unaware children realize the effect of holy baptism, namely, faith, repentance, obedience to the word, a clear and peaceable conscience, &c., for which purpose the sign of baptism was instituted by the Lord, as the believing, penitent women realize the signification of the Holy Supper. But if he cannot prove this, then it is sufficiently plain that his assertion and argument are not according to the Scriptures, but that it is deceitful, false and contrary to God's word.

He further says, If such a command to baptize children is not sufficient, as the one he has adduced from the Scriptures, then he wants us to point him out a prohibition (as he says), or sufficiently prove that God wills that we shall not baptize children.

In the first place, I reply: Gellius with this openly betrays that his reference to the command of infant baptism can, in his own opinion, not stand according to the Scriptures. For he turns from the doctrine of commands and wants us to point out a prohibition, never observing that if one wants to partake of anything (that is a ceremony), he must first adduce and point out the command of the institution.

If he wants to make good the infant baptism which he teaches and practices, then he must prove that it is commanded and not ask us to point out or show where it is prohibited.

We practice baptism in a manner as the mouth of the Lord has commanded, for we know that it stands written, "What things soever I command you, observe to do it; you shall not add to it nor diminish from it," Deut. 12:32; Prov. 30:6. Yes, my reader, I would say to Gellius and the learned that if they can find an instance in all the Scriptures where the pious and faithful servants of God have changed a word of the commands and ceremonies and practiced them differently than God had commanded them, then we will further reflect upon the matter. But we know it to a certainty that it cannot be done.

The Lord commanded Israel that they should circumcise their male children on the eighth day; there was no command that they should not do it on the fifth, or on any other day. And they never circumcised a female; nor did they circumcise on any other day but the eighth. For the ordinance and command of the Lord was on the eighth day, to the male children and not on the seventh or ninth; nor to the female children as has been heard.

If they had circumcised the females, or if they had circumcised the males before or after the eighth day, although it was not expressly forbidden, they would have committed an abomination, as Nadab and Abihu did with the strange fire and circumcised

without God's word. By the grace of God, no man can Scripturally convince me to the contrary.

It was also commanded to Israel that they should eat the Passover in remembrance of their deliverance and departure out of Egypt, on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the evening; it had to be a male lamb, without blemish, of the first year, &c., Exo. 12:5. Israel did exactly according to the command and never offered a female lamb, but in every instance a male, although the Lord had not expressly prohibited the offering of a female lamb. But if they had offered a female, they would have offered contrary to the command, which stipulated that it should be a male.

In the second place, I would say that I would refer to the testimony of the Almighty and great God, who says, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him," Mat. 17:5. If Gellius can point to a single word of divine truth and unadulterated testimony of the Holy Scriptures, that this Son of God, Christ Jesus, the eternal Father's Truth and Wisdom, has taught or commanded one word of infant baptism, or that his holy apostles and [faithful] missionaries have taught or practiced it, then I will recall my doctrine, willingly submit to dungeons and bonds, confess my guilt, repent and stand before the whole world conquered and abashed; this I promise in sincerity of heart.

But if he cannot do so, as he never can and still professes that infant baptism is apostolic and right, by this he forsakes the ordinance of Christ and the apostles' doctrine and usage, but consoles the people in their impenitence: then it is manifest that he is a deceiver of the poor souls and an adulterer of the holy word, who [pretends to] be wiser than the Son of God himself; for he says that it is a sealing of the covenant of grace, an embodiment into the church of Christ, &c. And the great Lord has not at all commanded that he should reprove the Holy Spirit which has not manifested unto us in the Scriptures this doctrine and usage; nor the apostles, for they did not at all disclose unto the pious such an important matter, as he says and that they have not given a word in

all their writings, in testimony of it and thus manifested it unto their descendants.

In the third place I would refer Gellius and all his preachers, to Luther, who writes very clearly that we should renounce not only that which is contrary to the word of the Lord, but also that which is beside it and advises everybody, although, alas, he himself did not follow his advice, to follow certainties and not uncertainties; for the Scriptures admit of no addition nor diminishing, by which he has caused quite a rupture in popery. If the Scriptures admit of no additions and we find nowhere a word in Scripture commanding infant baptism, as Luther himself admits, then I would leave it to the impartial judgment of all who have understanding, whether infant baptism is not prohibited.

In the fifth place, Gellius writes, They say that the children have no ears to hear; and cannot distinguish between good and evil. But it does not follow from this, he says, that the sacrament of the embodiment into the church should not be practiced upon children; for the children of the ancient church had no such ears that they could hear and they could as little distinguish between good and evil as our children can.

Answer. If Gellius will show us the command, ordinance or usage of the Lord, that we shall take them in by such sign, then we will consider the matter further. But he cannot do so.

We say with holy Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace," &c., Eph. 1:3-6.

My faithful reader, understand well what these words of Paul mean. This paternal adoption unto membership; this great favor, love and grace through Christ Jesus; this holy, unblamable life in

love, of which Paul speaks, is taught by the gospel. All who rightly believe this and who are, through faith, truly converted, changed, renewed and born of God and have the Holy Spirit, are children of the covenant, are graciously accepted by God and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; even before they have the sign of baptism.

Behold, thus we are, by God's choice through faith in Christ Jesus and through the inspiring power and renewing of the Holy Spirit, embodied into the body of Christ, which is the true church and become flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; and not through any outward sign.

But this rule does not apply to unaware children; for they have no ears to hear nor hearts to understand. They are, however, in grace, children of the kingdom, participants in the promise; not through any outward sign, I say, but in the adoption of Grace through the reconciliation, mediation and merits of the death and blood of Christ, as the Scriptures teach. The New Testament treats those of understanding minds and its sacraments belong to the penitent. Let this be to you a sure and eternal reference and doctrine.

All those who give a different meaning to the signs of the New Testament, by their philosophy and teach you that they should be dispensed before faith, deceive you, however much they may adorn it with choice words, such as, sealing, sign of grace, embodiment, &c., for it is in fact, nothing but human wisdom, deceiving of souls and hypocrisy. If the children under the old covenant were incorporated by circumcision and the children under the new covenant are incorporated through baptism, as he says they are, then we are forced to conclude that the children which died before the eighth day and those who were left in the wilderness, besides, all the females, were not in the Israelitic church and consequently had no share in the grace, covenant nor promise.

The same would also apply to our children which are hindered from baptism, through death. O abomination and blasphemy! If that is not attaching God's selection, grace, favor, love, kingdom, covenant and salvation, to the element water and to works, I will leave to the judgment of all the godly and pious.

In the sixth place he writes and says, We have always received, in return for our assiduity and clear, convincing explanation of the Scriptures, yes, for our solicitous care, to again gain them, nothing but anathemas. For what else do we hear from them than that we are wolves, blood-hounds, deceivers, &c., who run their own course and bring forth no fruit?

Answer. All those who rightly seek our salvation, who rightly teach the word of the Lord and who walk before us with an unblamable life and understand according to the doctrine, Spirit and example of Christ Jesus, are not reprov'd by us, nor by the Scriptures; but we sincerely thank and love them and will by the grace of God, never despise their fraternal assiduity and paternal solicitude, but will, in sincere love and very thankfully, accept them and as much as we, in our weakness, are able to do, follow them. But we are not to blame that Gellius and the preachers are called deceivers, false prophets, ravening wolves, men guilty of blood, &c., by the Scriptures, but they themselves are the cause; because they so lamentably adulterate the Scriptures, reject Christ Jesus and his Spirit, word and walk; because they preach according to their own pleasure, seek improper gain; because they teach and walk to suit the world, destroy the poor sheep by their false doctrine and deceiving practices; and because they upbraid, blaspheme, belie, betray the pious, faithful hearts and thus deliver them to the sword of the magistracy and executioner, as may, alas, be too clearly witnessed at many different places.

Yes, reader, if he cannot bear to be called by such hard names, of which he is guilty, according to the Scriptures, then he should reasonably consider how shamefully he accuses, in his writings and conversations, the poor, miserable souls who are quite

innocent, as being ungodly heretics, apostles of the devil, deceived conspirators, hedge-preachers, sneaks, adulterators, &c. and how he, by his rebellious, fiendish, bloody doctrine, deprives the innocent of their property, welfare, honor, blood and life; and instigates the unmerciful cruel tyrants to robbery, imprisoning, banishing and murder. My faithful reader, reflect and see if I do not write the truth.

In the seventh place he writes, The example of the apostles shows that it is a command; for the Holy Spirit testifies that the apostles baptized whole families; no children are excepted, which, surely, would have been excepted if it were wrong to baptize them.

To this I reply, in the first place, that Gellius by this testifies that there is no command for infant baptism; for he here founds his doctrine and faith upon presumption and not upon imperative words, according to which all things should be judged that are to be a pleasure in the sight of the Lord. In the second place I would say that the Holy Spirit has testified in plain words, that the three families of which the Scriptures make mention in particular, to have been baptized, were all believing persons as may be plainly understood from reading Acts 10:16.

But as to the house of Lydia, it is plain that she at that time had no husband; for the house is called after her name, which is neither the custom of the world nor of the Scriptures, if the husband is alive. Since the New Testament, then, makes mention of but four households in particular, to have been baptized and three of them were believing and the fourth, as it appears, had no husband; as has been heard, how much then should we rely on it, that there were little children in these households, both nature and the Scriptures teach us.

He further writes, That it cannot be gainsayed that the children, all through the Scriptures, are always included in the household, for a household or family includes both young and old;

therefore also children should be baptized because the Scriptures mention that whole households were baptized, which includes children.

I reply: If Gellius proves to us, by the testimony of God's word, that the unaware children have faith, then we would gladly include them in the believing, baptized households and allow them to be baptized. But as he cannot possibly do so, we would faithfully admonish him and all the preachers to take heed, how and what they say concerning this matter; for all they philosophize and teach about it is mere deceit. Besides, I would yet ask, if we can also cause unbelief in small children by false doctrine, or, if we can teach them faith, through God's word? If he answers in the affirmative, then his answer is contrary to all the Scriptures, common sense and contrary to his own words; for he admits that they, through their feeble understanding, can not comprehend the word. But if he answers in the negative, then he admits, himself, that his including both old and young in one household, is contrary to Paul. For Paul says that the vain talkers and deceivers subvert whole houses, Tit. 1:10, something which cannot be done to little children, on account of their not having sufficient understanding, as he himself admits. He also says that we too boldly exclude the children, which the Holy Spirit has not excepted, &c. To this I reply: The Holy Spirit has commanded and ordained that we should teach the understanding and baptize the believing and this ordinance we follow. Therefore, it is not boldness, but obedience to do as the mouth of the Lord has commanded us. But whether the preachers are not boldly opposing the Holy Spirit, who reject his doctrine, advice and ordinance as heretical and sectarian and institute instead a doctrine and ordinance to suit their own taste, of which we find not a single word in the Scriptures, I will leave all the pious to judge according to the word of the Lord.

As to his reference to Tertullius, Cyprian, Origenes and Augustinus, I would reply: If these writers can support their assertions by the word and ordinance of God, then we will admit that they are right. If they cannot do so, then it is a doctrine of

men and condemned by the Scriptures, Gal. 1:8. In the second place I say, Rhenanus annotates on Tertullius that it was customary with the ancients to baptize adults with the baptism of regeneration.

Cyprian left infant baptism optional.

Erasmus writes that the ancients have disputed much concerning infant baptism and never came to a conclusion.

Zwinglius writes, "Although we are aware that the ancients baptized children, yet it was not practiced so commonly as it is in our times. They were openly instructed in faith; and when they verbally confessed their faith which was imprinted in their hearts, they were allowed to be baptized. This doctrine (he says) I wish to have again resuscitated," *Lib. Are. 18*.

Bucer writes that the ancients generally baptized adults and not children.

Oecolampadius writes, "I, in my weakness, cannot yet find Scriptures which command infant baptism."

Luther admits that they have no express command to baptize children.

What Martin Cellarius and others write, concerning this matter, is too lengthy to be reproduced here.

Since it is plain that few children were baptized by the ancients, as the above mentioned Rhenanus, Zwingli and Bucer show; that Cyprian left infant baptism optional and the others acknowledge that there is no express command for it; how can Gellius then truthfully write that they received infant baptism from the apostles; that it is an incorporation into the church and a sealing of the covenant of grace?

Yes, my reader, if infant baptism has the virtues which Gellius ascribes to it, then our ancestors grossly sinned to have baptized so few children; and also because they left optional that which (he says) the apostles practiced and taught to be an incorporation into the church, a sign of grace and a sealing of the covenant of grace.

In the third place I answer, If we consider the confession and doctrine of the learned in regard to infant baptism, we find it to be such a Babel that we are forced to acknowledge that it is not of God. For some of the ancients (not the apostles) as it appears, baptized some children, but not a considerable number. Some said they had received it from the apostles; others, again, denied it. Some have and some still baptize them to wash off hereditary sin; others because they are children of the covenant. Some baptize them for the sake of the faith of the church; others, again, for the sake of the faith of their parents. Some on the strength of the faith of the patriarchs; others on the strength of their own faith; and again, others that better care shall be taken of their education. Behold, thus the defenders of infant baptism are divided among themselves.

Inasmuch, then, as they do not teach one doctrine and are not of one mind in regard to infant baptism, therefore it is manifestly proven that they baptize them without the word of God. For if their cause had a foundation in Scripture; then they would baptize to the same purpose or end, according to the same ordinance, rule and doctrine. This is incontrovertible.

In the eighth place he writes "that it is not prohibited at all, in Scripture, nor testified that infant baptism is wrong. And that the Lord Jesus Christ testifies that it is not his word and will, but the will of his Father who is in heaven."

Answer. Peruse all the Scriptures—Moses and the prophets, Christ Jesus and the apostles and diligently meditate upon them and you will find different instances that God was not only displeased at unbidden ceremonies and worship, but that he has often severely punished such. O, dear Lord, what blind reasoning! If they can, with a clear conscience do so because it is not expressly forbidden that infants shall be baptized, then they may as well accept holy water, candles, palms, clocks, confession before a priest, masses, the building of convents, altars, becoming monks, pilgrimages and praying for the departed souls, &c., as just and

right; for there is not a word to be found in the Scriptures which expressly prohibits these works; or which says: You shall not do these things.

If he should say that the circumstances of Scripture and its fruits testify that they are contrary to the word of God; then I would again say: Still clearer do the circumstances of the Scriptures and the fruits testify that infant baptism is contrary to God's word. For the mouth of the Lord has not commanded [doing] so at all. All those who practice it, misuse the name and ordinance of God and act hypocritically and those that receive it, console themselves, when they come to years of understanding, that they were baptized as children, although their whole walk is manifestly, for the greater part, quite impenitent, ungodly, earthly and carnal.

In the second place I answer: Christ Jesus has testified and said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved," Mark 16:15, 16. Behold, this is the express, eternal and unchangeable ordinance of the Lord, which he has commanded and left for his church to follow. Also the apostles have so taught and practiced it.

If the unaware children now have faith, that is, if they are penitent, Rom. 6; have circumcised the foreskin of their hearts by the circumcision of Christ, Col. 2:11; if they have a clear conscience before the Lord, if they have a new mind, which are all the result of faith and which are represented by baptism—then baptism can not be refused to them. But while it is plain that they do not have these before-mentioned qualities, therefore we say that infant baptism is a self-chosen superstition, an abuse of the glorious and holy name of God, an adulteration of the ordinance of Christ, a vain, hypocritical consolation to the impenitent, a sacrament of the church of anti-christ, no, an open deceit, blasphemy and idolatry. Notwithstanding all this, this thoughtless man writes that it is the word and will of the Father and then uses the eternal Father and his beloved Son and Holy Spirit, together

with the chosen, holy apostles, as a cover for his deceitful abomination and wicked blasphemy. O Lord!

In the ninth place he writes: "That they have the promise, that God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a true and living God, is powerful in his command and works; and will, through his power, sanctify the children of the church and bestow on them his Spirit."

Answer. If he could prove that infant baptism was commanded by the word of God, by apostolic doctrine and usage, or by the example of Christ, as he pretends that it was, then we would gladly admit it to be a holy rite and pleasing to God and that it would be a blessed, admonishing, useful, fruitful and powerful thing, for God commands nothing in vain. But since it cannot be proven that it was commanded and since baptism cannot apply to little children, because the signs of the New Testament are applied to the penitent, therefore we say again, that it is not a God-pleasing ceremony, but according to all Scripture, a wicked blasphemy and abomination, as has already been heard. And how powerfully God works through such abominations, may be plainly seen in the cases of Nadab, Abihu, Jeroboam, Uzza and others.

The pious reader should also know that the children of the churches are not sanctified by means of ceremonies, words and water, but solely through the grace, favor, merits, blood and death of the Lord and by no other work nor means, at all. But as to his writing that God bestows upon the baptized children his Spirit, we would say that we would have him consider more deeply and learn to know what the work of the Spirit is, before he teaches such doctrine.

Is it not deeply to be regretted that such people dare take upon themselves the care of souls, while they have not yet learned what is the nature, fruit and power of the Holy Spirit? For wherever the Holy Spirit is, there also must be its fruits; this is incontrovertible. And what fruits we find in children when they begin to become of understanding minds, we may, alas, conclude from their words, works and life.

I would further say that if the Spirit is bestowed upon children, through baptism, as he says and since the Scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit is given to the believing, then it must follow from this, since the children do not believe, that the Holy Spirit is not given to them through faith, but that it is given through the merits of the ceremony of baptism, which the preachers practice. And what is worse, such a spirit is in every respect without knowledge, intelligence, inspiration, power, fruit and work, as may be seen. O, great blindness and error!

In the tenth place he writes: "The Lord Jesus Christ commanded that the children should be brought to him (which the anabaptists do not [do] at all) and that he embraced them, laid his hands upon them and blessed them, that is, baptized them with the Holy Spirit; and all this, done by Christ, is not powerless."

Answer. Here I would ask Gellius and all who practice infant baptism, Firstly, if all the believers brought their children to Christ when he was preaching? If they answer in the affirmative, then they ought to be ashamed; for they can not prove their assertion by the Scriptures. But if they answer in the negative, then they acknowledge that they, in the first place, are wrong to teach that children should be brought to him, that is (according to their understanding), [for him] to baptize them.

In the second place I ask, whether in any part of Scripture *bringing to Christ* is called baptism? If they answer in the affirmative, then [as we know] they can not produce proof. If they answer in the negative then they admit that they, in the second place, adulterate the word of God, by explaining and construing bringing to Christ to mean baptizing.

In the third place I ask whether Christ baptized the children, brought to him with water? If they answer in the affirmative, then I would answer with John, that Christ, himself, did not baptize, John 3:5. But if they answer in the negative, then they acknowledge, in the third place, that it is a false doctrine to try to defend infant baptism on the strength of this bringing to him.

In the fourth place I would ask this, because he says that Christ baptized the children with the Holy Spirit. Is baptizing with the Spirit is the same thing as baptizing with water? If they answer in the affirmative, then Spirit must be letter, or letter, Spirit. But if they answer in the negative, then they, themselves, pronounce sentence against infant baptism: that Christ's action with the children does not teach nor imply it.

In the fifth place I would ask, How we are to understand this bringing to him—in a carnal, or a spiritual way? If they answer in a carnal way, then I would say that it cannot now be the case, since Christ, in body, is taken from us and removed to where we cannot approach him in the body, 1 Tim. 6:16.* But if they answer, in a spiritual way, then I would again ask why Gellius so shamefully abuses the pious, whom he calls anabaptists, by writing that they do not at all bring their children to Christ (something which could not have been written in purity of heart), while many of them are so solicitously caring for the salvation of their children by teaching, admonishing and punishing them and by having a constant solicitude for them, as God's word and the love of their children command and teach all christian parents to do.

O, that God would grant that Gellius and his followers would more deeply consider this spiritual bringing to Christ, as I trust that many of ours do, by the grace of God; and that they would abandon their unscriptural infant baptism, of which they make so much ado. This, in my opinion, would be a very desirable thing. For, as a general thing, they abandon their children, from the cradle on, to the wiles of the devil, by educating them in ignorance, blindness, pomp, splendor, vanity and idolatry, as their fruits plainly show to all of understanding minds. Behold, my reader, from these questions and answers you may conclude whether Gellius and the learned can stand on the strength of the

* [CHCoG: 1 Tim. 6:16 refers to Christ's Father, who is the only being with true immortality, and whom no human can approach nor has he been seen by us. Christ has both died and been seen.]

saying, "Allow the little children to come unto me," with their doctrine and practice of infant baptism, which they practice so indiscriminately and about which they make so much ado?

Observe, too, that Gellius, by his writing that we do not bring our children to Christ at all, not only judges and disgraces us but also Christ Jesus, because he has not commanded us [to do] such bringing to him; he also judges the holy apostles who have not testified nor taught us a word in regard to this matter, neither by word nor practice in the whole Scriptures.

In the eleventh place he writes: Since Luke testifies that John the baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb and leaped in the presence of Christ (which, he says, doubtlessly, was caused by a spiritual movement) and as also Jacob, &c, therefore it is manifest that God also works in the children of the church according to their measure, through his Holy Spirit and that infant baptism is a command and has the promise.

Answer. If these particular miracles of God, which were fashioned in the case of John and of Jacob, are to be a common rule, then these following miracles were also common rules, namely, that Sarah and Elizabeth, two barren women, conceived in their old age and that Balaam's ass spoke, Num. 22:28; and, therefore, all aged, barren women should conceive and all asses speak. O no. That such miracles of God were not common rule things may be concluded from the floating of iron at Helizeum; from the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea and from the standing still of the sun and moon, 2 Kings 6:6; Exo. 14:21; Joshua 10:13.

I would further say, if, according to the doctrine of Gellius, it follows from the case of John, that all the children of the church, or of the believing members, have the Holy Spirit, then the greater part of his fellow believers of the German nation (whom alone, he esteemed as faithful servants and who, with him, are of the same calling, office and service) are greatly despised in their doctrine, faith and usage; for he writes that the children of the holy church

have the Holy Spirit and they believe and teach that they have the evil spirit, for, before they baptize them, they say, Depart you evil spirit and give room to the Holy Spirit.

Behold, thus it is generally with all who teach and practice this shameful doctrine. And, although they are unanimous in the practice, yet they are so divided in opinion as to the grounds of this doctrine that we are forced to say that it is nothing but a vain mask and infernal mockery. Notwithstanding, he writes that infant baptism is commanded and that it has the promise; while he well knows that he cannot advance one plain word from all the Holy Scriptures to show that the wisdom of God has commanded it, or that the apostles have taught or practiced it; or, moreover, that its signification, penitence, regeneration, &c., can apply to children. To say nothing of the author mentioning that the primitive, incorrupt church did not practice it, as has been heard.

Is this not adulterating the word of God, breaking the Scriptures, perverting truth into lies, stealing the honor and praise of God, killing souls and defending the church of anti-christ? I say again, as I did before, I have never read a word in the Scriptures with such misunderstanding.

In the twelfth place he writes: "That, according to Matthew, baptism was not first instituted by Christ. For it was before commanded by John and practiced by the disciples of Jesus Christ; so that we are not obliged to follow one rule."

Answer. Let everyone take heed and observe what the word of the Lord teaches. Gellius, alas, is not at all ashamed to deny the plain word of God and writes: "*That we are not obliged to follow one certain rule in regard to baptism; that Christ did not command to baptize the believing persons alone; nor that his heavenly Father did, when he commanded John that he should baptize; and that it was not Christ's meaning that such and such persons should be baptized.*" Behold, thus the Lord's holy word is perverted.

Inasmuch as Gellius so degrades his Lord's mouth and so lamentably adulterates his word, therefore I will place the words of

Christ, according to Matthew and Mark, before the reader, that he may see what rule and law he has made concerning baptism and what command he has given. Christ says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them (understand, whom you make disciples, by your doctrine) in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Mat. 28:18-20. Again, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes (namely, the gospel) and is baptized shall be saved; but he that does not believe shall be damned," Mark 16:15, 16. Behold, this is the word and ordinance of the Lord, how and when we are to baptize. I think these words are too plain to admit of perversion by fine words and cunning: **Preach the gospel and baptize those that believe!**

But that John taught and practiced baptism before Christ, is evidence for us and not against us, for he practiced it upon those who confessed their sins, Mat. 3:6 and not upon unaware children, as these disobedient, offensive preachers do.

Since John did not baptize any but the penitent before Christ; since Christ commanded it at the confession of faith, the apostles taught and practiced it so and also the primitive church, as heard, therefore, the reasonable reader may reflect, in the fear of God, how miserably and lamentably the poor souls are deceived by these degenerated men who so boldly adulterate the pointed, plain words of Christ concerning baptism and his pleasing, salutary ordinance and thus destroy it and found it upon an unstable foundation and wrong meaning.

But his writing, "That the apostles were commanded to gather unto Christ a church from all nations and to teach them, not that which Moses, but that which Christ had taught," we admit. Yet through no other command nor ordinance than that they should preach the gospel, make disciples through the doctrine, baptize these disciples and thus to gather unto the Lord a peculiar people,

who should walk in Christ Jesus in righteousness, truth and obedience, as the regenerated children of God and give eternal praises to his great and glorious name. And with such a people, who walk in his fear, love, word, ordinances and commands, he will be always, to the end of the world. But of infant baptism not a word is mentioned.

In the thirteenth place, he writes, "That the apostles, some of whom were baptized by John and those who came to him from the cities and from Jerusalem were indiscriminately baptized by John and could not have had much knowledge of Christ, or a true, strong, sincere faith in him."

Answer. If I understand him aright, he would conclude from this, that, as the baptized disciples were not, before baptism, thoroughly fitted in the doctrine, faith and repentance, but had to exercise themselves in continual penitence and to die unto sin, as baptism represents, that also the children, although they have no faith before baptism, will, after baptism, when they become of understanding minds, study the doctrine, repent, die unto sin and walk in newness of life.

To which opinion (if this is his opinion) I would reply: The prophets prophesied of John, Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1. His birth was made known by an angel; Christ testified of him, that he was the second Elijah, a shining light, not clothed in soft raiment and not like the waving reed; that he was the greatest of all children born of woman, &c. From which it may be safely concluded that he was no light-minded nor reckless preacher, but that he earnestly and valiantly executed his office, according to the pleasure of God and that he rightly practiced the commanded baptism according to the ordinance. And, although his disciples were not so thoroughly instructed in all things, yet he did not baptize any but those who confessed their sins, as said in Mat. 3 & Acts 19.

But, as to his explanation of the words: "If you believe with all your heart," which Philip spoke to the Ethiopian, that they mean to believe without deceit and hypocrisy, which he rightly asked of the

Ethiopian; and of Luke, to leave an example to all servants of the church, how those of mature years should be baptized, he has rightly pointed out, since he also had arrived to years of maturity. We say that this is right. We would also state what we desire of all baptizers: That they first examine well the faith and foundation of those who wish to be baptized, before they baptize them, that they, in their work and service, may not prove hypocrites.

I think that this is a plain example that the servants of the church should not ask for the confession of faith from others, but from the very ones who wish to be baptized, as also Otto Brunsu says concerning this: He *does not say* (he writes), If you do believe or answer for your child, it is then permitted to be baptized.

Since Gellius refers us to the disciples and to those baptized by John, and, as it appears, would by this demonstrate that baptism does not require true faith and that it makes no difference whether faith comes before or after; and, since we, also, are called anabaptists by him, therefore I, in my weakness, would ask him, If the command of Christ and the example of the eunuch are not sufficient to show that faith should precede baptism and that baptism requires true faith, then why did Paul re-baptize the disciples of John, who had before been baptized with the baptism of John, even though John's baptism was not of men, but from heaven? Mat. 21:25 & Acts 19:1-5. He cannot, scripturally, answer it otherwise, than that it was done because they had never known that there was a Holy Spirit. Inasmuch, then, as these disciples were once baptized in their years of maturity, with divine baptism and lacked nothing but that they did not have an understanding of the Holy Spirit and were, on that account, re-baptized by Paul—therefore Gellius should consider whether or not true, christian baptism requires true faith and whether he does not wrong us by contemptuously calling us anabaptists because we re-baptize those who were not baptized with a divine baptism, as were the disciples of John, but with an un-christian baptism,

without any knowledge, faith, command or word, as [even] the reckless, ignorant world, in part, can judge and see.

If we, then, are anabaptists because we re-baptize those who received a baptism instituted of man and which was practiced upon those who had no knowledge whatever, how much [more], then, was Paul an anabaptist since he re-baptized those who were of understanding minds and baptized with a baptism which was from heaven and ordained by God.

In the second place I would ask, since he calls us anabaptists, as has been heard, why he still adheres to Cyprian, together with both the Councils—the African and the Nicene, who unanimously resolved: “That heretics have no baptism and that therefore those who have been baptized by heretics should be baptized with the true baptism.” If he says that it is according to the Scriptures and right, then he admits that he was not baptized with the right baptism and that we are right in re-baptizing those who have been baptized by such who are not [standing] by Scripture alone, but also with Luther, Zwingli and the learned, prominent anti-christian servants and the root of all heresy, before the whole world, as we may on every hand see in their writings.

But if he pronounces it offensive and sectarian, then he by this testifies, in the first place, that the church, or at least a great part of it, was at that time offensive and sectarian.

In the third place, That he couples God’s Spirit, word, work, ordinance and command with the anti-christian and heretical service and works.

In the fourth place, That he is an antichristian and heretic himself, since he was baptized with an anti-christian and heretical baptism and that he yet defends it as the true baptism.

O, my reader, that Gellius had but half an understanding of the word of God and could but see a little of the truth, he would, all his life-time lament to God that he has so lamentably profaned the Lord’s express command and ordinance, given through John, Christ and the apostles; that he has so inimically slandered the

pious and that he passes such a thoughtless and ungodly sentence, by his writings that he not only pronounces us, but also Cyprian, all the African bishops, the Nicene Fathers, besides also, holy Paul himself, as open anabaptists; no, as heretics.

In the fourteenth place he writes, "That it is with baptism as it was with circumcision. As God commenced circumcision with Abraham, upon preceding instruction,—and for the purpose of the sealing of the promise, it was practiced upon Abraham's seed and children—so John the baptist and the apostles commenced baptism with those of mature years and it was gradually practiced upon the children, since it could not be otherwise on account of circumcision."

Answer. That it is with baptism as it was with circumcision before, namely, in this respect; that it was commenced on previous instruction—is our ground and doctrine; for Christ Jesus has so ordained it and his holy apostles have so taught and practiced it. But that it should, by the command of Christ and by the teaching and practice of the apostles, gradually have been practiced upon the children, is mere conjecture and is not Scripture.

For if it were so, then the apostles did wrongly that they did not, according to the manner of circumcision, commanded by God, baptize both the believing and the children (something which they did not do), as Abraham circumcised himself and his house together with the males of eight days old after him, according to the command of God and did not gradually institute circumcision, as Gellius maintains and would make us believe, that the apostles should have done with baptism.

But that he writes that this should have been done on account of circumcision is conjecture and not Scripture; for as the apostles and also John served on the believing ones of the Jews the sign of baptism, why not, then, on their children, if God had so ordained and commanded it, as Gellius pretends he did?

No, no, the command of the Lord concerning circumcision expressly applied, first to Abraham and his household and then

directly to the males of eight days old, Gen. 17:14; but this is not so with regard to baptism, for it applies only to the believing and not to the unaware children, Mat. 28; Mark 16. Therefore baptism was not gradually practiced upon the children, as Gellius pretends. It was afterward instituted without the word, ordinance and command of God, by disobedient and self-conceited men, who, alas, have considered their re-shaped ceremony above the Lord's command and its representation, as is generally the case with the learned and worldly minded.

Again, as to his writing "that the promise is sealed by baptism and that it is given not only to the aged, but also to the children"—the reader should observe that the promise of the grace of God and of the eternal covenant, is not sealed, not any more, by the perishable blood of oxen and rams, nor by visible water and ceremonies, but solely by the precious blood of Christ on the cross. Blessed is he who believes it and cordially accepts it. This promise is made to the unbaptized children, no less than to the baptized believing, so long as they are clothed with childish innocence and continue in simplicity. But when they come to maturity and accept the dispensed gospel of grace through faith, then the Scriptures teach us that we should baptize them, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15. But if they reject grace and lead an easy, impenitent life, neither Christ's blood nor death will avail them; much less will word and water avail them. For, "he that does not believe" (the Scripture means those of understanding minds) "is condemned already," John 3:18.

In the fifteenth place he writes, "They err abominably, because they conclude, from the Scriptures and examples which have reference to those of mature years, to a certainty that it is an ordinance of God that the children should not be baptized, notwithstanding that there is not a tittle in the whole New Testament which forbids it. And therefore they are no less wrong than I should be if I would not feed my children that cannot labor, because Paul says, he that does not labor shall not eat, which is

incontrovertibly spoken in regard to those of mature years and not to children.

Answer. In my opinion, Gellius wilfully intends to uphold the things contrary to Christ and truth, that he may execute the office of an anti-christian preacher, according to the pleasure of the world. For, when he *should* write that we act rightly according to the Scriptures and that there is not a tittle in the New Testament that children should be baptized—he writes that we err abominably and that there is not a tittle that forbids infant baptism, &c.

Inasmuch as he so wilfully and violently contends against the Lord and his truth and since he in various ways seeks to give his cause a fine appearance by the use of many borrowed words, lies, conjectures and perversion of the Scriptures and says that we err abominably, &c., therefore I would briefly state: That if he can at any time prove to us by the unadulterated, divine Scriptures and truth, that John the Baptist practiced infant baptism anywhere; or that it was commanded by Christ and taught and practiced by the apostles; or that it was, through the ordinance of the Lord, gradually practiced upon children, as he writes it was; or, that *bringing to him* is called baptism and baptism [is] bringing to him in the Scriptures; or, that Christ and the apostles have baptized the children that were brought to them; or, that Christ baptized them with a spirit that was powerful in works (the Spirit of God is never idle); or, that small children have faith, or that they are penitent, that they bury their sins and are circumcised through faith and by this arise with Christ in newness of life; or, that circumcision is called baptism and baptism circumcision; or, that they have the answer of a good conscience; or, that baptism, anywhere in the Scriptures, is called a sign of the covenant of grace, a sealing of the promise and an incorporation into the church, or that unaware children speak with tongues as the believing members of the house of Cornelius did, of whom Peter says, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we” Acts 10:47, or, that the true, primitive church practiced it by the apostolic doctrine, usage or command; or, that

God is powerful through works which he has not ordained, then we will lay aside our pen, repent and confess before the whole world that our cause is mere deceit and nothing but falsehood, in this respect.

But if he cannot do so and it is impossible for him to do, then I would faithfully admonish and fraternally beseech him to consider earnestly and thoroughly how shamefully he reflects on God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, John the Baptist and the apostles, in this matter of infant baptism; how lamentably he adulterates the plain Scriptures and deceives the poor souls; what gross falsehoods he teaches the poor people; how deceitfully he teaches the accursed abomination and passes it off as a holy, glorious work; and also, how unjustly he accuses us of abominably erring, we, who clearly have on our side Christ's plain word, the apostolic doctrine and usage, the signification of baptism and the usage of the true, primitive churches; while he cannot show by a single word of all the Scriptures, that his infant baptism has any foundation in the ordinance and command of God. My faithful reader, beware; fear God; act justly; search the Scriptures; shun falsehood and follow the truth.

Again, by undertaking to draw the saying of Paul, "That if any would not work, neither should he eat," into his argument, he contradicts himself and is unworthy of a reply. For, as Paul by this commands the idlers and busy-bodies to earn their own bread by honorable labor, lest they become an offense and troublesome to others and since such cannot apply to children, therefore such labor was not by this commanded them. Neither does Paul say, he who does not work, &c., as Gellius writes; but he says, "If any would not work, neither should he eat." So, too, baptism is not commanded to be practiced on unaware children, but it is commanded in the Scriptures to be practiced upon those who believe the word of the Lord, lead a penitent life and who have a sound understanding and comprehension of baptism, as has been said several times.

In the sixteenth place he writes, "That in Christ Jesus no respect of persons or time is made. For the glory of the kingdom of Christ is not limited to any cities, times or persons; so, neither to any age nor generation."

Answer. With this, if I understand it, he would assert that, although, according to his assertion, baptism has taken the place of circumcision and the males only were circumcised in Israel, that notwithstanding this, both males and females are to be baptised now, be they believers' children and born of believing parents or not. If that is his meaning and foundation, then he should know that as the grace, favor, love, covenant and promise of God under the New Testament, extended to both men and women, so, also did it extend to all under the Old Testament. For, if God had coupled his covenant of grace to all the signs, whether it be circumcision or baptism and if those alone were in the church who had received the sign, then the Israelitic women and maids and also the children of the primitive churches, were in a bad situation; since the first, according to the Scriptures, were not circumcised and the latter, according to the ancient authors, were not baptized, as has been already said.

No, reader, no. Abraham and all his seed, I mean both men and women, young and old, were the Lord's people and church. But only the males were circumcised and not the females, the male children of eight days old and not the female children, according to the ordinance of God; yet, they all, both men and women, were members of the church under the covenant of God and were children of the promise, although, I repeat it, only the males were circumcised and not the females.

So it is under the New Testament. The gospel is preached and all who believe it and are baptized shall be saved; be they males or females. They are members of the church of Christ under God's covenant and grace; they are joint heirs of the kingdom of God and children of eternal life; also the children, although they are not baptized, Mark 16:16; Acts 5:14; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:14.

For, as God would have his ceremonies under the Old Testament, such as circumcision, the Passover, sin-offering, burnt-offering, &c., practiced just as he ordained and commanded them through Moses, in the same manner he will have his signs, under the New Testament, such as baptism and Supper, practiced in no other way than he has commanded and ordained through his Son.*

For he says, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear him.” If, now, this Son had ordained infant baptism, then we should practice it, if we would be his disciples; but since he has not done so, we pronounce it, according to the Scriptures, accursed, as said, Gal. 1:8.

I further say, If they now place the children of both believing and unbelieving parents on the same foundation; which, according to my opinion would not be contrary to the Scriptures, then they must recall their doctrine whereby they, before, applied the grace and covenant of God, with many words, to the children of believing parents and admit that their doctrine in regard to Abraham and his seed, whereby they make baptism take the place of circumcision, has no similarity to, nor connection with it at all; for it was not commanded to Abraham to circumcise all the

* [CHCoG: Yes, the Bible tells us that physical circumcision and animal sacrifices are superseded in the New Covenant. However, the Passover provided the critical framework for Christ’s arrest, death and resurrection and it also symbolises our growth as new creatures through Christ. It has not been abolished, but instead enhanced by adding Christ’s actions to it, including the Last Supper at the beginning of the Day of Preparation for the Passover. Luke 22, 1 Cor. 5:7. Jesus died just as the Passover lambs were to be sacrificed and was placed in the tomb at dusk on that Wednesday. He was resurrected exactly three nights and three days later, at dusk on Saturday, Mat. 12:40, at the start of the day of the Wave Offering, which is always on the morning of the Sunday during the Week of Unleavened Bread, Lev. 23:4-14. Christ went to Heaven that day and presented his blood to his Father. John 20:17. Our [*God’s Calendar and the Sign of Jonah*](#) and [*Holy Day Service Transcripts*](#) explain all this and more.]

children round about him who were not his seed, but only those which were of his seed, as may be learned from Genesis 17.*

In the seventeenth place he writes, Would to God that they could once rightly understand the 5th chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, wherein he describes the church, saying, Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water in the word, or as Erasmus says, through the word. Then he goes on and says, This incontrovertibly includes the children along with their parents, that is, the believers and their seed, no, the whole church. How should they, then, be excluded from the word, while it reads, He has cleansed the church with the washing of water by the word?

Answer. I trust that we, through the grace and enlightenment of the Lord, in our weakness, do not misunderstand these words of Paul, but that we do rightly understand the meaning. We offer Gellius and all the learned the use of all the Scriptures, besides all reason and experience, if they can show one tittle in the Holy Scriptures to prove that reason and experience teach that we can teach little children the word of God, from which originates the true cleansing of the heart, or that the Scriptures of the New Testament anywhere apply the word and sacraments to them. If they can, then we will admit that they are cleansed by baptism through the word, or in the word. But, if they can not do so, then it is already proven that these words of Paul are not written in regard to little children.

It is true, Christ has so loved his church that he has given himself for her and has sanctified her through the power and merits of his innocent blood and cleansed her by water, which is a sign of a new and penitent life, but not otherwise than in the word, or through the word, which, preached in the power of the Spirit and

* [CHCoG: Menno should have reviewed this passage, as his claim is incorrect. Abraham did circumcise **all** the males in his house, not just those who were his children and this was exactly as Jehovah commanded him to do in Genesis 17:10-27.]

accepted in true faith, is followed by the ordained baptism as commanded.

Christ said, “You are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you,” John 15:3; not, my reader, that they were clean because it was outwardly spoken unto them, but because they believed that which was spoken unto them. For God does not cleanse the hearts through any literal water, word or ceremony, but through faith in the word; otherwise all who outwardly hear the word and receive the outward sign of the water, would be holy and clean; this is incontrovertible.

In the eighteenth place, He advances an argument and syllogism. Whatever pertains to the church, also pertains to the members of the church. Baptism pertains to the whole church, both old and young—therefore baptism pertains to all the members of the church.

Answer. In my opinion it were better for Gellius, since he boasts himself a preacher of the holy word, to leave his logic to the wise of the world, who, alas, seek their own praise and honor more than they do God’s: and satisfy himself with the true doctrine, foundation and truth of Christ and with the unpretentious, plain testimony of Matthew, the tax collector and of Peter and John, the fishermen, &c., that he does not deceive the unlearned by such cunning reasoning and lead them off the true way.

As to his major proposition (as he calls it), I would say that if Gellius had applied it to grace, reconciliation, promise, eternal life, &c., which were bestowed upon the whole church, young as well as old, for Christ’s sake and not upon the ordinance of the church, then he would have been right; but as it is, he will have to admit that it is wrong and contrary to the word of God. For, as regards the ordinances of which he speaks, in which baptism is included, I would say that all the members of the church are not of one and the same calling, service and work and are not under one and the same ordinance; for the Lord has ordained apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and servants, in his church and all are not, on

that account, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors or servants. Thus it is with the ordinances of baptism and the Holy Supper in his church; we should therefore not serve them to the unaware children, but only to the believing and penitent, according to the Scriptures.

As to his minor proposition, I would say our doctrine, belief, foundation and confession is that our unaware children, so long as they live in their innocence, are, through the merits, death and blood of Christ, in grace and joint heirs of the promise, as has already been heard. The doctrine of the New Testament, which is a doctrine of the Spirit, does not include them with those who are ruled and governed by the word and sacraments of God and who are properly called the church of Christ in Scripture.

That the children should be counted into the church on account of the promise, we consent to, but we reject that they should be included in the ordinances of the church; for this is contrary to all Scripture and common sense, as we will prove by Christ's own words. He also openly reproves Christ and the apostles, together with the Holy Spirit, for he writes, "Baptism pertains to both young and old;" while they have not left us a single example, nor one word in all the Scriptures whereby it is taught or commanded, as may be seen.

Since both his major and minor propositions are not consistent with the word and command of God, as shown, how then, his conclusion, that baptism pertains to all the members of the church, can be consistent with the word and ordinance of God is sufficiently clear to the kind reader.

I would further say that if this, his syllogism, is right and true, namely, Whatever pertains to the church, must pertain to all the members of the church, &c., which, however, is not so, then it would also be true that as doctrine, faith, knowledge of Christ, true repentance, a regenerated, new life, the circumcision of the heart, a clear conscience, baptism, Lord's Supper, the love of one's neighbor, a living hope, ardent thankfulness, &c., pertain to the

church—therefore they pertain to all the members, both young and old.

If he denies this first proposition of mine, then he denies his own, for it is like his. If he denies, besides, the second, because children, on account of their weak understanding, as he admits, cannot understand the word and that they, therefore, cannot repent nor be admitted to the Supper, &c., then he testifies that the children do not belong to the church which is governed by the Lord's word and sacraments; and that his syllogism, with which he includes all the members of the church, both young and old, in one and the same ordinance, is wrong and false, no, contrary to God's word. This is my answer to the argument of Gellius and his fellows. How they can stand with this, according to the Scriptures, you may reflect upon in the fear of your God.

In the nineteenth place, he makes a long discourse in regard to the child which was, according to Mark and Luke, called to Christ; and will by this prove and teach that children believe, or if they do not believe, that they are accounted as believing, be they of whatever age they may be. He further writes that a child of two, three or four years old may be corrupted by bad examples; and that we are too timorous because we dare not baptize those whom Christ accounts as believing (as he says).

Answer. If Gellius and the learned had received but a little understanding of the nature, power and properties of true faith, they would be ashamed all their lifetime to have such a poor idea of that precious faith which is a power and gift of God. Moses says that the children have no knowledge of good and evil. Deut.1:39. The wise man says that they have no understanding. Paul says, "Brethren, do not be children in understanding," 1 Cor.14:20 and yet Gellius dares write that they believe; as if faith were but a dead thing that has no motive power or work.

O no! True faith, which avails before God, is a living and saving power which is through the preaching of the holy word, bestowed by God upon the heart; that moves, changes and

regenerates it to newness of mind; that smothers all ungodliness; that destroys all pride, ambition and selfishness; that in malice, makes us like children, &c. Behold, such is the faith which the Scriptures teach us and not a vain, dead and unfruitful conjecture, as the world pretends it to be. And that such faith is not to be found in children of two, three or four years old, both the Scriptures and common sense teach us.

O, dear Lord! What great blindness, that this thoughtless man does not observe that he and his like preachers, some of whom have grown already gray, who daily read the Scriptures after their manner, are yet so unbelieving that they dare, for the sake of a piece of bread, adulterate the plain word of God, lead the poor, miserable souls to hell in great numbers, upbraid, slander and hate all the pious and innocently heap upon them slanderous lies and disgraces, incite the magistracy to tyranny and blood and that they delight in pomp, splendor, the lusts of the flesh, avarice, &c., which is such clear proof that they are not only unbelieving, but that they are also quite earthly and carnally-minded; and yet they assert that a child of two or three years of age has faith. O, folly and error!

The reason that Christ called unto himself the child and placed it in the midst of his disciples, was because the disciples were casting about as to who would be the greatest. He set the child as an example to them and said, "Truly I say unto you, Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." And that we must inherit the kingdom of God as a child (in [their lack of] malice, understand), as Mark and Luke write. Paul says, "Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature." 1 Cor. 14:20. Christ says, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven; and whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name, receives me. But whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it would be better for him if a

mill-stone were hanged about his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea,” Mat. 18:4-6. Behold, Christ himself explains to what children we should apply this.

As to his writing that children are accounted believing, [this] is merely a conjecture and opinion which cannot be substantiated by a single word of the Scriptures. Again, as to his assertion that a child of two, three or four years old may be offended, I would say, first, If we were to apply, as Gellius does, this saying, “Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe on me,” &c., to young children (to which I, on my part, do not consent*), then the whole world might well be astounded at these words, from the inmost of their souls. For how they educate their young children and with what ungodly, offensive life they walk before them, their disgraceful ill-manners and roguery, alas, teach us, both in city and country. O, reader, that the world would take to heart the salvation of their children and not, from the cradle on, lead them in the way to hell, by their doctrine and example; what a blessed thing it would be for their souls at the day of judgment!

Second, If the preachers and magistrates would rightly understand this saying of Christ and believed it just and true, then, in my opinion, the offensive, deceiving doctrine would soon be at an end and the tyrannical sword be put into the sheath, by which, now, alas, hundreds of thousands of souls, are offended to everlasting destruction and consigned to the kingdom of the devil. O, Lord! “Woe unto the world because of offences,” says Christ, God’s mouth and wisdom.

To his writing that we are too timorous, because we dare not baptize children, I would say this, that the Scriptures teach us not

* [CHCoG: I can accept that a three or four-year old child would trust Christ and in that way believe in him, just as they trust their parents. But that does not mean that they understand sin, repentance, etc, nor that they, or an infant, is ready for baptism. And I have no doubt that in saying this, Jesus is warning adults to treat children well. And as Menno says, I also accept that Jesus also applies this protection to all his disciples.]

to do that which we see proper,* but that which is commanded us, Deut. 4:2; 12:32.

Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he did not command them to do and a fire went out from Jehovah and devoured them, Lev. 10:1, 2.

Jeroboam was chosen king of the ten revolted tribes of Israel, worshipped in a manner not commanded by God and therefore he was told by the prophet that God would take away the remnant of his house, as a man takes away dung, till it would all be gone, 1 Kings 14:10.

Uzziah was smitten for life because he burned incense upon the altar of incense, to which Jehovah had not called him, 2 Chron. 26:16.

Luther writes in his preface to Isaiah and says, “God will not be told how he is to be served. He will teach and lead us. His word should be our guide; for without his word it is all idolatry and vain falsehood, however fine and pleasing it may appear.” Again, the 3rd chapter of Daniel shows that worship without God’s word is always idolatry.

I would further say, All those who seek God and sincerely fear him, obey his ordinance and word.

Israel never circumcised a female, nor offered a ewe for the Passover; for God ordained that the males should be circumcised on the eighth day and that rams should be offered, Gen. 17:11; Exo. 12:5, as heard before.

Since we clearly learn from the Holy Scriptures that Moses and the prophets and besides, the Father, himself, unanimously point to Jesus, who is Wisdom and Truth, to obey him; and since we surely know, by the grace of God, that he is the true Prophet and perfect Teacher, whose word is truth and whose command is eternal life and since he has not commanded us a single word of infant

* [CHCoG: “See” should perhaps be “think to be”. Indeed, they are described and corrected in Deut. 12:8, “You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes.”]

baptism, nor his true witnesses, the holy apostles have taught it or left an example of it and since we also find that the signification is not applicable to children and besides, that the Scriptures do not admit of strange worship, self-chosen ceremonies, nor addition, nor subtraction and that God has several times punished such self-chosen righteousness and worship, as heard; and further, that the primitive church did not practice infant baptism, as has been often heard, therefore we are so timorous, that we dare not baptize our little children; for these cases to which we have referred, together with the unfeigned love of salutary, divine truth, the sincere fear of our God and the power of our faith, although in weakness, prevent us.

O, reader, would God grant that our opponents could rightly understand what frightful abominations they commit on every hand with their infant baptism and how they practice it to the dishonor of God and corruption of their neighbors, then, I trust, this matter would soon be reformed and by the help of God, be changed to a scriptural usage.

In the first place, they falsify God and the Holy Scriptures by their infant baptism; for they assert that it is God's ordinance, while there is not a single word or example to be found in all the Scriptures that teaches infant baptism.

In the second place, they by this destroy the true church of Christ and establish an anti-Christian one which bears the name and semblance of the christian church; although it hates and despises its doctrine, spirit, ordinances and usages, taught by the Scriptures.

In the third place, they by this console the world in their unrighteousness; for however ungodly, adulterous, perjurious, covetous, pompous, envious, blood-thirsty, greedy, drunk, carnal, idolatrous and hypocritical they be, yet they boast that they are baptized christians.

In the fourth place, they hate and persecute all those who, out of pure, godly zeal, avoid this deceitful abomination, reprove their

damnable worship and point them to Jesus and his word alone. No, they are called apostate anabaptists, apostles of the devil, deceived heretics, offscourings and booty.

In the fifth place, although they and their authors, in the past, have condemned unto hell the institutions and commands of men and have written one volume after another against it, yet they, alas, altogether adhere to this horrible abomination, because they want to avoid the cross and gain the favor of the world. They act hypocritically in all things and do the things which are pleasing to the world; they heap one abominable error upon another; hang crosses upon the child's breast and forehead; they conjure and ask the parents if they believe, &c., drive out devils and commit other disgraceful acts; so that we are forced to say that all the infant baptizers are hypocrites of all hypocrites and that infant baptism is an open incorporation into the church of anti-Christ, the beginning of all deceit and an accursed blasphemy and enchantment, which is not only contrary to the plain word and ordinance of the Lord, but also against all reason, nature and common sense. For who that has read the word of the Lord at all, does not know that a cross made with the fingers cannot help or save a child? That the innocent creature, the unaware child, who is cleansed by the blood of the Lord, is not possessed by the devil and that one cannot insure the faith of others, since it is a gift of God?

Say, kind reader, What worse mockery and hypocrisy could be imagined, than to ask of one in the name of another: Do you believe? Do you renounce Satan, &c.? And on an affirmative answer, to baptize an unaware child that knows nothing of either yes or no, of God or devil, of truth or falsehood, of life or death? O blasphemy and shame!

O, Lord! O, dear Lord! How long shall this gross deceit and vile abomination be practiced? I think it is high time that the world should take heed and learn to know such open deceivers and their doctrine, baptism, supper, life and fruits and that they would

pay more attention to the ordinance, will, word, ways and works of the Lord.

In the twentieth place, he accuses us of a false security, as he calls it, because we, or ours, say that we are assured in our hearts that they err and that we are right, &c.

Answer. Jehovah speaks through Moses, “Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he” (that is Christ) “shall speak in my name, I will require it of him,” Deut. 18:19.

The Father says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him,” Mat. 17:5.

Christ says, “Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” Mat. 28:29.

Paul says, “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed,” Gal. 1:8.

John says, “Whosoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, does not have God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son,” 2 John 1:9 and other like sayings.

Since all the Scriptures point us to the Spirit, gospel, command, ordinance, usage and example of Christ; and since we, in our worship, do not follow conjectures, our own desires, false explanations and doctrines of men, as we are accused of, [but only] Christ’s plain word and command; the doctrine and usage of the holy apostles and of the true, primitive church; and, as they (our opponents) are no more commanded to baptize children than Israel was to circumcise females, or that they should found churches, altars and places of worship on hills, or in dales, or that they should offer their children as burnt-offerings, or that the papists should baptize bells as they are accustomed to and since they call and persecute the baptism ordained by Christ, as the baptism of heretics and esteem and practice infant baptism, which was instituted through hypocrisy, as a christian baptism and since they, besides, boast that they do right by not abandoning this practice;

therefore I would gladly leave it to the judgment of all reasonable and impartial readers, which of us are the Sanherib, Holofernes, Pharisaical and deceiving sects, mentioned as trusting in false security.

Gellius further writes, What else has deceived the anabaptists in the past, that they took up the sword, than just such security. They imagined that they, as the people of God, were marked with the sign, Tau; should subdue the whole world and hang us preachers, who they said knew better, to our own door-posts?

Answer. Reader, observe, What else does he by this say than, Beloved lords, will you yet be merciful unto such an offensive people and wicked heretics? Persecute, imprison, banish and destroy them. They are deserving of it. You may consider and judge whether the Holy Spirit, in the Revelation does not call this the sting of scorpions, Rev. 9:10. Further on he says that our church was originated by me; something which, as will be hereafter shown, I do not admit. He knows very well that I never was found in the company of the rebellious; but that I reproved their doctrines and abominations with the word of the Lord, as much as I ever did those of these preachers. Notwithstanding, he accuses us of their ungodly practices and wicked deeds; that he may by this make us, who are innocent, suspicioned by all the world and deliver us unto the sword of the magistracy. I will leave it to the consideration of all the pious and good-fearing, if this is not seeking the blood of the innocent.

O, that he would have sufficient discretion not to mix the innocent with the guilty. For what else does he seek than to change Simon Peter into Simon Magus and John and James into Judas?

If I should say, I have known some infant baptists who were open perjurers and thieves, therefore Gellius and all the infant baptists are perjurers and thieves, would that not be wrong? O, faithful reader, how justly has holy David portrayed such slanderers, saying, The wicked murder the innocent in secret

places; his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; he lies in wait to catch the poor, &c., Psa. 10:8, 9. For, by such murderous cries, it is caused that in different places, the pious and faithful hearts—men and women, youths and virgins, the gray-headed, the lame and halt are pitilessly and mercilessly imprisoned and robbed, their children sent abroad in the world, homeless and penniless, as the most wicked upon earth. Some are thrown into boiling oil; others are hanged, racked, drowned, strangled, burned, beheaded or tortured by some other heathenish and tyrannical means. Behold, such are, alas, the consequences of the deceiving and false writings of such blood-thirsty preachers in some countries.

Would to God that he and his preachers, together with all the papists and monks who are guilty of innocent blood, may find mercy and grace before the eyes of the great and Almighty God, in the day when the fearful sound of the last trumpet shall sound and that the innocent blood of which they are guilty is not counted against them. This is my sincere wish and prayer. But if they continue in their present minds and do not turn from ungodliness, then, says the Spirit of God, the fiery pool will be their reward and part, Rev. 19:21.

Further, I would say, Just as we hate and reprove (understand this in a gospel-like way) the bitter and inimical heart and the bloody and fiendish crying and writing of Gellius and all the contentions—so, also, do we hate and reprove those that take up the sword, steal, rob, or in any manner wrong anyone on earth, be he friend or foe.

In this we should pay no respect as to persons, be it father, brother, emperor, king, neighbor, friend, great or small, baptized or not baptized. All those who shed human blood against the word of God, who act contrary to love, who wrong, offend or afflict their neighbor can not be our brethren, for they plainly show that they are not christians.

We must always hear that the rebellious and their aiders at Munster, have, in the past, alas, taken up the sword, contrary to God's word, as if we were one with them in that abomination; although we are quite innocent in the matter. But they do not see that they arm whole countries and corrupt them; that they destroy one principality after another, that they use all manner of violence and thus cause affliction, misery and sorrow, everywhere. Yes, this is, alas, called doing right.

Since it is manifest that not only France, Italy, Spain and Burgundy, 'but also all the German nations and the rest of the world who boast of the word are guilty of the same deeds, as regards fighting, warring, robbing and shedding blood; why do they, then, reprove the crimes of the rebellious, while they are so far from being innocent, yes, have done the same criminal deeds as those they reprove? Paul says, "Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whosoever you are, that judge; for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you that judge does the same things," Rom. 2:1.

In the last place he writes, Our eyes have seen better than the eyes of the anabaptists in regard to wilful sinning, because they have made many doubtful and caused some to recede, &c.

Answer. If he aims this at us, then he should know that he has written more than he should have done. For I can say with a clear conscience that I never was troubled concerning this matter by the brethren and that the doctrine has not been broached among us in my time.

I have always taught that all sins which are repented of are pardoned in the blood of the Lord, be they what they may. David's adultery and shedding of innocent blood, is to me a sure testimony. Yet everybody should take heed that he sincerely fears God, acts rightly and that he does not wilfully sin against his God, that he does not pervert falsehood into truth, nor truth into falsehood, as did the scribes. For who knows but that he who wilfully sins against his God, will never truly repent and receive

grace? Christ says, “Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin,” John 8:34.

I fear that if his imperial highness were to present to me many costly gifts and I should ungratefully squander them, or trample upon them, or cast them from me, his imperial highness would, undoubtedly, severely punish me for such ingratitude and would probably not again offer me such favors and costly presents.

Therefore, take heed that you do not wilfully despise and adulterate your Lord’s word, nor walk according to the pleasure of a carnal mind; lest the manifest grace at once be withheld from you and you are led into perverse ways. *Qui timet Deum, recedit a malo*: He that fears God, shuns evil.

As Gellius exerts himself to adulterate, by his false doctrine, the word of the Lord, to render of no avail his precious blood and to harden and console the impenitent, reckless world in their wild and wicked ways, under an appearance of the holy word; so he also exerts himself, in my opinion, to root out the salutary, pure truth from earth and to deliver the pious and godly children into the hands of the executioner, by all manner of false defamations and criminal accusations. If I am wrong, rebuke me.

If the name, “grasping kite,” is not more applicable to him than a gathering hen, by which name he would like to be called, I will leave to himself and the Lord.

But the Lord, who is the shield and surety of all the oppressed, defends them against the ungodly. He destroys the liars. He abhors the bloody and deceitful; “For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is destruction. Their throat is an open grave; they flatter with their tongue.” Psalm 5:9.

Therefore they shall not stand before the storm; their light shall be extinguished and their glory shall vanish. For the Lord is strong, who shall judge them and he will require the poor, deceived souls and the innocent blood at their hands and he will give them their reward.

Behold, dear reader, from this you may see that the doctrine and confession of these preachers in regard to infant baptism can not stand, according to the Scriptures; that it is not founded upon the Lord's command, nor upon the doctrine or practice of the holy apostles, as is the baptism of the believing, but merely upon logic, opinion, conjecture, falsehood, borrowed names and custom. If you are of a reasonable mind, then let the infallible and true word of the Lord and your impartial heart judge between us and the learned.

I would by this, for God's sake, beseech all readers not to think hard of it that I reprove falsehood, according to the Scriptures; defend truth with truth, point out the right way, seek the salvation of your souls, refute the false prophets, expose their deceiving, secret snares and defend the Lord's praise. He who seeks the Lord in sincerity of heart, read and judge.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

WE will very briefly review and reply to the treatise of Gellius on the sacrament called the Lord's Supper, because we have published our foundation and belief of this matter and referred to many Scriptures in the past. Whosoever finds a delight in the truth may read them and reflect on them in the fear of God. Yet we would, in our weakness, remind the pious reader, before we commence our reply to Gellius' publication, that it is written, "For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread," 1 Cor. 10:17. Since we learn from the Scriptures that the Holy Supper was instituted by the Lord as a sign and testimony, not to the world but to the church of God, that all of us who are one bread are members of one body, namely, of the body of Christ; and since we plainly see that both the

dispensers and partakers of the worldly supper are not true members of the Lord's body, because the dispensers are all hirelings, thieves of the honor of God and murderers of our souls, who retain the thoughtless, reckless people in all manner of unrighteousness, blindness and in an unbridled, carnal life, by their promises, philosophy and logic. They deceive all the world and hate, upbraid, belie, apprehend, banish and exterminate the pious, who renounce evil, follow the word of the Lord and always eat of his bread; and because their partakers, generally, are an impenitent, light-minded and vain people, no, worldlings, part of whom not only have little regard for the Spirit, word and knowledge of the Lord, but trample it under foot, as may be seen—therefore we abstain from their supper; for the sincere fear in our hearts, caused by the word of God, prevents us from partaking of it with such dispensers and partakers, lest we also partake of their deceiving actions and abominable abuse, and, at the day of Christ, receive the same reward with them.

He boasts a great deal of his admonition, yet all his admonition is nothing but vain boasting, all without power; for how can he and his like preachers rightly teach Christ and admonish others, while they are yet filled from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet with all manner of unrighteousness, blindness and disgrace?

They would do well to reflect upon the words of Sirach and rightly learn to know themselves, because many of them are as yet such useless people, that they are more fit to be herders of swine than to be shepherds of the sheep of Christ, as he writes. And because Gellius is not only an adulterer of the Scriptures and deceiver of souls, but also a very cruel, profane and defaming man, as may be very clearly concluded from his writings.

He writes that they admonish them in the first place, what should be the qualifications of the partakers, according to the doctrine of the law and especially of the holy gospel.

Answer. Wherever the law is preached rightly and taken to heart, through faith and manifested in Spirit and power, there we

find a subdued mind, a penitent, humble heart and a conscience which trembles before the word and true fear of God and which allays and disperses sin, as Sirach says.

This is the real intention and object of the law: To reveal unto us the will of God, to discover unto us sin, to threaten us with the wrath and punishment of the Lord, to proclaim death and to point us to Christ, that we may, before the eyes of God, be humbled in heart, die unto sin and seek and find the only and eternal medicine and remedy for our souls, Jesus Christ.

It is in the same manner in regard to the gospel. Wherever it is preached in true zeal, according to the pleasure of God and unblamably in the power of the Spirit, so that it penetrates the hearts of the hearers, there we find a converted, changed and new mind, which joyfully and gratefully gives praises to his God for his inexpressibly great love towards us, miserable sinners, in Christ Jesus and thus enters into newness of life willingly and freely, by the power of a true faith and a new birth.

If Gellius would knock at the innermost heart of his followers and of himself, with the hammer of the law and zealously enkindle in them the fire of the holy gospel, so that they would, in true repentance, change their unclean, obdurate hearts and abandon their heathenish pomp and splendor in their houses and clothes, their vain show of gold and silver, their extravagance, avariciousness, drinking and carousing and would enter with Christ into newness of life, then I would admit that what he has written here concerning the Lord's Supper compares well with their walk. But as it is, he consoles the poor with only an empty purse and acts in a manner entirely contrary to that in which he should. For the signs of the New Testament are in themselves quite powerless, vain and useless, if the signification, namely, the new, penitent life, is not there, as has been said above in treating of baptism.

He further writes that they, in the second and third place, admonish them (their hearers) that it is not enough to know and

understand the doctrine, but that it should be, also, manifested in their walk, yes, at the risk of body and life, that they should be prepared for the cross and temptation, that they should patiently and obediently bear it and follow their bridegroom, for the devil dislikes such confession and therefore hates and persecutes them.

Answer. Caiaphas said unto the Pharisees and Scribes, “It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish,” John 11:50.

His intentions sounded right, yet his cruel, blood-thirsty heart did not perceive that it was he, who, through bitter zeal, sought the life of the king of all glory.

We do not refute that Gellius and his fellow preachers sometimes talk of a pious life, according to the Scriptures and admonish their hearers of the cross; but how they love true righteousness, which true doctrine brings forth and how they treat the confessors of it, may, alas, be concluded from their indiscreet and disgraceful writing and crying.

Since he writes that he thus admonishes them, as heard and that it is plainly manifest that he not only hates the true righteousness, power, fruit and obedience which true preaching brings forth, but also crucifies it, I fear, by his indiscreet and disgraceful writing, therefore, the godly, pious reader may consider if he is not like unto the Scribes and Pharisees in this respect, who, although they understood the law, yet so hated righteousness, that they, by their connivance and advice, crucified him who was promised in the law, the Fulfiller, Christ Jesus.

Dear reader, understand what I write. Outward preaching, hearing, baptism and Supper do not at all avail before God; but before him avail teaching and believing, faith and works, outwardly baptism and Supper, according to the letter and inwardly according to the Spirit and truth. Behold, this is what God’s word and ordinance teach us.

So long as such impenitent, carnal people are the dispensers and such vain, pompous, covetous, extortionate, carousing and

drinking people the partakers, so long, I say, it is not the true Supper of the Lord, but it is a supper of the impenitent, an encouragement to the unrighteous and an enchanting mockery, however much it may be adorned and embellished before men, with high-sounding words and praises; for outside of the church of Christ, which is a gathering of the penitent, there is neither baptism nor Holy Supper. Again understand that which I write, Neither water, bread nor wine avail in Christ without true repentance, if they were even served by the apostles themselves; before him avails only a new creature, a converted, changed and broken heart, a sincere fear and love of God, unfeigned love of one's neighbors, a sober, humble, peaceable and converted life, according to the word and example of the Lord. Where there is such a new being, lo, there is true baptism and the true Supper. But to be baptized outwardly and partake of the Supper, according to the letter and not inwardly before God in Spirit and truth, I repeat, is nothing more nor less than a shadow, vain mockery of God's work, no, hypocrisy and deceit.

Is it not a lamentable blindness, that these poor, misled people attach so much value to the outward, visible sign and do not observe that they are, with all their heart, inimical to the invisible signification, for which the visible sign was commanded in the Scriptures? It is as if God had a special pleasure in the mere elements, water, bread and wine and not in the proper signification, which is represented and advised by them.

O no, reader, we can not please nor serve God with mere water, bread and wine; for by his hand, it was all created. But we can serve and please him with the signification of his baptism and Supper, namely, that we by this testify our faith and obedience, that we will walk in continual and eternal penance, that we will remember his inexpressibly great love and blessings, that we are by this advised that he has offered for us his spotless, pure body and that he has shed his precious blood for the reconciliation of our souls, in his ardent love for us; that we will always walk with

him in unity of the Spirit and follow him; that we will love, assist, console, reprove, bear, admonish and serve each other as members of one body; and that we will prove ourselves unto death, as the newly born children of God in all righteousness, holiness and truth. Behold, dear reader, for this purpose the signs of the New Testament were instituted. If Gellius and his like preachers were to use the Holy Supper in such heart and spirit; if the signification, fruit, spirit and power, although in weakness, were found in them and their disciples, as it is represented and taught by the sign, then we would, by the grace of God, soon meet and not dispute about the use of the sign. But so long as they walk on the broad road, practice and uphold infant baptism, defame the baptism of the believing, do not separate their disciples and church from the world and [do not] teach an unblamable doctrine and life, so long we cannot unite with them in doctrine and sacraments, whether this is attended by prosperity or adversity, as God pleases. For we know to a certainty, that the Lord's invincible, strong truth is on our side; and the damnable, weak falsehood on theirs.

My faithful reader, reflect upon what I write. Our separation from the doctrine and sacraments of the preachers is principally for two reasons. In the first place, because we can plainly see from the Scriptures and by their actions and are assured that they are not pastors but deceivers. All the Scriptures teach us that we shall not hear, but shun such preachers. For if we are afraid of thieves, murderers and wolves, according to the flesh, how much more should we fear those who so miserably devour our poor souls, who retain us in darkness, deprive us of the light of Christ and fearlessly lead us to the frightful torment and indissoluble everlasting darkness,* for the sake of a meal of bread. For God's

* [CHCoG: This originally was: "frightful, indissoluble darkness of everlasting and infernal torment." But as the Bible never uses the phrase or concept of "everlasting and infernal torment", this Roman Catholic idea has been corrected to more Biblical concepts. Read more about this in [*The Origin and History of Endless Punishment.*](#)]

sake, dear reader, do not think hard of me. Behold, before God, it is true what I write.

The second reason is that we may, by such shunning, testify to you and all others, by open deeds, that you are outside of the Spirit, word, kingdom and church of Christ, that you walk upon the wrong way and that you are miserably deceived by your preachers—so that you may yet awaken in time, depart from evil, walk in truth and be eternally saved.

If you are of reasonable minds, then consider well what we by this seek and do not think that we are so thoroughly deprived of reason that we walk this narrow way through contentiousness and partizanism. O, how gladly would we save our weak bodies, our wives and small children, our possessions and lives and live peaceably with the world, if we were not constrained by the love of God and the eternal salvation of your souls and our own. But as it is, we should, for the two mentioned reasons, sacrifice all to robbery, and, if the case requires it, to death, in sincere, genuine love. For, as a general thing, truth is maintained dearly; and sincere, faithful love crowned with a crown of thorns. O, Lord!

In the last place he writes, "From this, every pious christian may conclude how unreasonably these people, who accuse us of enmity, contention and discord and who quarrel about the articles of faith among themselves and thus sow enmity, contention and discord, as said, Yes, who never thoroughly searched our doctrine and who have scarcely seen us partake of the Supper, notwithstanding, they reprove us of our Holy Supper and leave the assembly of Christ's church."

Answer. To this I would reply in the first place: The unrighteousness which shuts us out from their kingdom, church, body and Supper of Christ, is not merely included in enmity, contention and discord, but also in all other kinds of works of the flesh, such as pomp, splendor, avariciousness, drinking and carousing.

Although enmity and discord are, by the use of their supper, partially appeased among some of them, as he writes, yet all the other abominable sins and unrighteousness remain untouched, as may be very plainly and publicly seen by their fruits. The heathens, too, conclude peace among themselves, when they are at variance with each other, yet they are not the right grains of the Lord's bread and the true members of his body. Let everyone of sound mind reflect upon what I say.

In the second place I say, He can not with truth substantiate his accusation against us, that enmity, contention and discord exist among us.

But as he and his fellows berate our christian doctrine and faith, our sacraments and actions before the whole world, cause much trouble and affliction; and we, by the grace of God, do not treat them inimically, but patiently bear with them, teach, reprove and admonish them; maintain truth with truth; and in sincerity of heart, show and point out to them the right way, at the risk of blood and life, for which they so hate us, so also, some raise up among us, as was the case in the times of the apostles, who would rather follow their own opinion than the Scriptures; who again return to the broad road, seek honor and a name and therefore make unscriptural pretensions. With such we entreat and reason, admonish and reprove them, as the Scriptures teach us and I trust we do this reasonably and in love. If they allow themselves to be taught, change their ways and strive after peace, then we thank the Lord for his blessing. But in cases where they despise fraternal admonition, remain obdurate in their ways and cause contention and discord, then they cannot be our fellows and brethren, until they acknowledge their faults and return to the Lord's people in peace, 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 2:17; Tit. 3:11. If this should be called causing contention, enmity and discord about the articles of faith, or whether it should be called purification of the house of the Lord, all the right-minded may judge, both by their common sense and the Scriptures.

In the third place I say, the reason why we do not hear their doctrine and do not see their partaking of the supper, as he complains, is because we have for a long time witnessed by their fruits, that their doctrine is vain and powerless and their sacraments are not according to the word. For of what spirit both their preachers and disciples are, may, firstly, be concluded from the dishonest, infamous, bitter, false, spiteful and invictive writings of the preachers, and, secondly, from the abominable show of clothes, the extravagance about their houses and from the superfluous, carnal life of the best of their disciples. What does their fine appearance, their ornamental logic avail, while they, in fact, forsake the Scriptures and the signification, fruit and power of the holy sacraments, no, hate and persecute it? If I do not write the truth, reprove me.

In the fourth place I would say, Gellius accuses us that we forsake the church of Christ. But I say that we, according to the teaching of the word and ordinance of God and to the example of the holy, apostles, forsake the world and their false prophets and that we, through the Spirit and grace of God, rid the church of Christ from snares, faithfully admonish her members and in our weakness, establish and edify them, according to the command of the holy word, Isaiah 52:11; 2 Cor. 6:17; Acts 2:40; Rev. 18:4. What shall this poor man say and boast of the church of Christ, while she is yet quite unknown to him? I voluntarily make this offer: If they allow me a discourse with them under safe conduct, either privately before witnesses, or publicly, before a full assembly and if I cannot prove or maintain, by the power of the truth that their preachers, in general, are deceivers and not pastors and that their pompous, avaricious, extortionate swearing and cursing disciples, are of the world and are not christians, then I will publicly acknowledge before all the world, that we not only have forsaken the church of Christ, but also lamentably destroy her and cause many a pious heart much misery, affliction and trouble, in vain.

But, as we can substantiate these assertions by the power of the truth, why, then, must we yet hear so many evil words? It is, indeed, high time that these preachers would quit their deceiving, that they and their disciples, who, where and what they be, would awaken, that they would tremble at the wrath and punishment of God, would repent, conform themselves to the Spirit, word and example of the Lord and establish a true christian church, in accordance to the command of the Scriptures and that they disclaim and abjure their borrowed names and false boastings, as evangelical teachers, faithful shepherds, soul-savers and preachers of the holy word, which they, to the dishonor of God, merely claim in appearance.

Behold, reader, I write to you the truth and do not lie. I seek nothing before my God, but that I may gain Gellius and all these preachers, wherever they may be, to Christ, by the Spirit and word of God; or that I may be vanquished by them and stand abashed before all the world as an open deceiver. If they are of christian disposition and preachers of the holy word who are desirous of unity, as they pretend to be, then let them agree to what I desire they should do, namely, have a free discussion of the grounds and doctrines of both sides; that by this the pure, saving truth of Christ may be maintained and the impure, damnable falsehood of anti-christ be destroyed.

But if they refuse this, as they have before twice refused me and continue their infamous defamation and upbraiding as they have always done before and accuse us with all manner of accusations before the common people: that we forsake the church of Christ; that we are a misled, deceived people and that we pervert good into evil; what else can we then do but leave them to the Lord and his judgment; and willingly submit to the cross, as we have done, possess our souls in patience, advise those of unperturbed hearts as much as possible, minutely consider what kind of preachers and pastors they have, what great injustice they do us poor miserable ones; how scornfully they reject truth and

maintain falsehood, since we, in all humility and true love, invite them to this free, christian discussion of the Scriptures, to the praise of Almighty God and his eternal truth and to the beneficial refreshment of all the oppressed and afflicted souls. But they refuse us this and besides, slander and defame us by their infamous publications without discretion and without all foundation and truth and thus disgracefully accuse us before the whole world and cause many pious, innocent children to be deprived of their possessions, honor and lives, even, as may, alas, be witnessed in many different localities of the Netherlands.

EXCOMMUNICATION, BAN OR SEPARATION.

BEFORE I commence a reply to Gellius' excuse, why they do not practice Excommunication, Ban or Separation in their church, I would briefly refer the kind reader to different passages of the Scriptures to show that the Excommunication, Ban or Separation was not always practiced in the same manner, nor according to the same ordinance, by the Lord's people. The ban of Moses was punishment with death, Deut. 13; Lev. 16; Numb. 31; Josh. 7. This ban was in force until the Roman domination [of Israel]. At that time a change was made; for, under the Roman scepter, they were not allowed to put the law in force, in regard to capital punishment, as before. But they separated those who disobeyed the law; that is, they ejected them from their synagogues and assemblies, shunned their daily interaction, neither ate nor drank with them, as may be learned from many of the Scriptures of the apostles, Luke 15:2; Mat. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:6-14.

To this shunning, rule and usage, the doctrine and example of Christ Jesus and the holy apostles unanimously point us; and these two following benefits are derived from them.

In the first place, that we are not deceived by the erroneous doctrine of false spirits and weakened by their carnal, vain life, 2 John 1:10. "Do you not know," says Paul, "that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Purge out, therefore, the old leaven," &c., 1 Cor. 5:6, 7.

Yes, my reader, wherever this excommunication, ban or separation is zealously and earnestly taught and maintained in the fear of God, without respect of persons, there, doubtlessly, the church of the Lord will be maintained unprofaned, in salutary, pure doctrine and an inoffensive life. But where this is neglected, we find nothing but vanity and worldliness, as may be plainly observed by all the churches and sects which are not of us:

Reader, observe, so long as the literal Israel, in this respect, followed the Ordinance of Jehovah and punished those deserving of the ban, according to the word of the Lord, they remained upright and pious; but when they neglected it, inclined their ears to falsehood and gave way to false prophets, they deviated from the way of life and degenerated into all kinds of wickedness and idolatry, as the prophetic Scriptures, on every hand, complain and testify.

It was also the case with the primitive church; for so long as the pastors and teachers strictly required a godly, pious life, served baptism and Supper to the penitent alone and rightly practiced separation, according to the Scriptures, they remained the church and community of Christ. But as soon as they commenced to seek an easy, careless life and to shun the cross of Christ, they laid aside the rod, preached peace to the people, gradually abandoned the ban; and thus established an anti-christian church, a Babel or worldly church, as may, alas, be noticed, to look back over the last several centuries. Yes, my reader, if we had not until now strictly maintained this means ordained by God, then we and ours, at this

day, would have been a reproach and curse to the world, while now, I trust, they in their weakness, will be, by the grace of God, an example and a light to many men; although the world will not acknowledge it. In short, a church without ban or separation is like a vineyard without an enclosure and trenches, or a city without walls; for the enemies have free ingress into it to sow and plant their pernicious tares unhindered.

In the second place, that the wicked, by a reasonable admonition and separation from the pious, may, at heart, become ashamed, humble themselves and sincerely repent before God and the church. Therefore Paul delivered the Corinthian unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5:5. He also thus delivered Hymeneus and Alexander, that they might no longer blaspheme, 1 Tim. 1:20. At another place he writes, "If any man does not obey our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet do not count him as an enemy, but advise him as a brother," 2 Thes. 3:14, 15.

Behold, reader, here you have it briefly stated of whom, how and to what purpose the ban or separation is ordained in the house and church of the Lord. Judge, now, if you fear God, if it is not an especially noble and necessary institution of pure love, which is ordained by the God of love to a service of love, although the unenlightened and refractory judge and consider it as enmity. For its ultimate design and fruit is that the church may remain sound in doctrine and unblamable in life; and that the erring, either in doctrine or life, may be converted and again return to the pasture and flock of the Lord. But how far, yes, how very far, are all the preachers and churches of the world from this God-pleasing ordinance and very necessary practice.

His first excuse for why separation is not practiced in their church is, That the papistical abomination has so abominably destroyed the ordinance of the churches and the right usage of

the ban, by their abuse, that it cannot be immediately re-established.

Answer. If we diligently search the writings of the historians and compare the actions of the church to which they refer with the Scriptures, then, I think, that we surely find that there was not among all the German nations, a true, apostolic, christian church which stood right in doctrine, sacraments, ordinances and life; but that they were all founded upon the papistic foundation and abominations and remained so, these many years.

Since, then, their church is not founded by the apostles upon the foundation of Christ, but is founded by the Pope, upon his own foundation and is in every respect a papistical and not a christian church and since it is palpable that it has at this hour, neither teachers, communion, life nor sacraments conformable to the ordinance, doctrine and example of Christ, therefore he can not practice the ban until he separates himself, because he is an adulterer of the Scriptures and deceiver of souls and then all the church, because they are generally impenitent in life and outside of the command, ordinance and word of Christ in doctrine, as may be plainly noticed. *Cogita quæ dico, Qui male facit, non videt Deum*, 3 John 11. Remember that it is spoken, “He that does evil has not seen God.”

In the second place he writes, “We admit that in many churches negligence is found, which we cannot commend; which is caused in some places by the punishment of all open transgressions by the magistracy, so diligently that the pastors esteem it unnecessary to put the ban in force.”

Answer. In my opinion it is high time that these preachers would quit their trifling with the souls of men; that they would unreservedly acknowledge that they are not the church of the Lord, but a poor, erring and worldly flock; and then would earnestly commence to learn to know [the truth] themselves and next, to preach rightly the word of sincere repentance, in the power of the Spirit. All those who would accept it in sincerity of heart and truly

repent, should serve the sacraments of the Lord, according to the ordinance of God and those who would stubbornly reject it, should, by virtue of the holy word, be excommunicated, without respect of persons; *then* they might gather a church unto Christ and rightly practice the ordinance of the Lord, according to the Scriptures.

But so long as they baptize unaware children, esteem all those who are [thus] baptized as christians, dispense the bread to the impenitent and admit all the avaricious, extortionate, pompous, drinking and carousing into the communion of their churches, the world will be their church and their church the world. In such a state of affairs they may preach and admonish all their life-time about separation and the true church ordinances, but will never establish them, since it is evident that all their doctrines and sacraments are nothing but a vapor, vain and powerless, for they are not the rightly called preachers, their sacraments are not the true sacraments and their disciples are not the Lord's church and people.

Say, beloved, how shall a house be built without workmen, timber, iron, stone and mortar? *Qui sanicordis est, cogitet quæ dico.* He who is of sound mind, may ponder on what I say.

I would further say that if Gellius rightly understood Christ and his word, he would be ashamed all his life-time; and for these two reasons:

Firstly, because he undertakes to excuse the neglect of the pastors, by saying that the magistracy punish open transgressions, as if therefore it was not necessary. I think that hundreds of pastors can be found in Germany who never in their life knew that the avaricious, drunk, adulterous, &c., should be excommunicated; no, what is worse, that the greater part of them are themselves guilty of such infamous doings.

In my opinion it is as clear as day-light that his covering up and decking this ignorance, no, negligence and disgrace, with the

excuse that the magistracy punish the transgressors is nothing less than to wilfully defend falsehood and oppose truth.

Secondly, because he complains that the magistracy do not grant authority or hearing to the pastors. Say, kind reader, where, in all the days of your life, did you read in the apostolic Scriptures, that Christ or the apostles requested the authority of the magistracy to punish those who would not hear their doctrine or obey their words? Yes, reader, I know to a certainty that wherever the magistracy is to maintain the ban by the force of the sword, there is not the true knowledge, Spirit, word and church of Christ. If this is not rightly called by the papists, *Invocare brockium seculare*, that is “invoking the assistance of the world,” I will leave to the judgment of the discreet reader.

Also, observe here his hypocrisy and his pernicious flattery of those in high standing; for where do we find, alas, more ungodliness than among those in authority? Notwithstanding, he wants the ban to be maintained by them, as if they were the true and faithful members of the church of Christ and children of his community; and he never observes that if the pastors would rightly judge, according to the holy word, the magistrates, next to the preachers themselves, would be the first who should be, according to the Scriptures, separated and excluded from the communion of the pious.

Since he, in this instance, so openly wheedles the magistrates and those of high standing and thus flatters them, against all the Scriptures, therefore I cannot neglect to advise all magistrates and subordinates and in faithful love warn them to consider how miserably they are deceived by the preachers. Beloved lords, observe. You all boast that you are christians and have the word of God, while it is manifest that so many of the lords and princes daily shed human blood like water by their ungodly warring and tumult; that they rob many innocent people of their homes and property, that they cause many afflicted orphans and helpless children to be made; and that many of them drink and carouse day

and night; abusing the creations of God above measure, namely, wine, beer, victuals, clothes, &c. They are all deserving of excommunication and can not stand the test of the Scriptures, as I presume, many of the learned and preachers themselves well know; yet they connive at such, [for they] desire their authority and assistance. They act hypocritically with them, they talk to please them and do not separate and punish them, however wickedly they behave. [They even] dispense to them the bread and wine as if they were members of the body of the Lord and brethren of his church. By this they so comfort and encourage them in their wickedness that they never stop to inquire into the ways of the Lord and [learn to] fear; for it is all peace, peace, whatever they preach, as the prophets complain, Jer. 8:8; Ezek 13:22. Beloved lords, take heed; they lead you straightway into the abyss of hell; therefore, beware. I tell you the truth in Christ Jesus, they deceive you. Again, I say, beware, they deceive you.

On the other hand, they hate and upbraid above measure all those who seek the Lord sincerely, who strive after his holy word in their infirmity and who would gladly, in their weakness, lead a pious, godly life in the fear of the Lord; because they point everyone to Christ; and in true, godly zeal and brotherly love, reprove and admonish them, for their own good, of their false doctrine, false sacraments, hypocrisy and indifferent life, according to the teachings of the Scriptures. But we are called apostles of the devil, apostates, anabaptists, conspirators and heretics by them.

Behold, thus they connive at and flatter those of high standing, although they, generally, are upon the broad way; and thus they shamefully upbraid the innocent who never harmed them and who would gladly lead a pious life. Yet they boast that they are preachers of the gospel and teach the word of God.

In the third place he writes: The disrespect to the servants of the church, has, everywhere, become so prevalent, through the doings of these devilish conspirators and heretics, that few

churches submit themselves, in unity of spirit, to their pastors, which is necessary.

Answer. That the disrespect to the preachers has become so prevalent is caused by nothing else but their own exceeding wickedness, deceit, avarice, blasphemy and shamelessness, as the prophet says, “Behold, I will corrupt your seed and spread dung upon your faces, &c.” “You have departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says Jehovah of hosts; Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as you have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law,” Mal. 2:3, 8, 9.

Yes, dear reader, they have become so sinful and have so trafficked with the souls of men, that the just and great God could no longer endure it. He therefore graciously inspired some pious hearts with the Spirit of his divine knowledge, in his great love and has exposed to them the adorned Babylonian woman, the preachers and their churches, with all their fornication, abominations and blood-guiltiness and thus made manifest their ungodly* disgrace. And these [faithful ones], on account of their warning all, in unfeigned love, against the deadly, enchanting poison of her cup, by doctrine, life, example, blood and possessions, by which they seek nothing but the praise of God and the salvation of their neighbors, are called devilish conspirators and heretics. O, Lord! O! Never heard-of blasphemy! O disgrace of all disgrace!

Ah, my reader, my faithful reader, if we could reason with them, how soon would it be shown who are the devilish conspirators and heretics! But what does it avail? The Scribes and Pharisees sat upon exalted seats, but Christ had nowhere to lay his head. Besides, he had to hear that he was possessed by the devil and fashioned his miracles in the name of Beelzebub.

* [CHCoG: This was ‘inhuman’, but that seemed insufficient.]

Is it not a perverse, lamentable hypocrisy, that this man undertakes to blame us for their not practicing the ban, while it is known and manifest to the whole world, that the greater part of the preachers are such an indifferent, blind and carnal people, that they neither [truly] acknowledge God nor his word and seek nothing else than that they may satiate their carnal appetites and continue in their careless easy life? What kind of christians their churches or disciples are, what knowledge they have and how they fear God, may, alas, be concluded from their words and works, in city and country.

In the fourth place he writes, It is a fact well known to the whole community (he refers to the community at Emden) that we have for several years, assiduously labored to again establish the christian ordinance of the ban.

Answer. The world acknowledges no ban except when such a transgression has been committed that the executioner bans them with the sword, noose or fire for the sake of their evil-doing. But if one sincerely repents and returns to God, abolishes the wicked, sinful life, in true fear and puts on the new life of true repentance, then they, along with the papists, often deprive such a one of honor, possessions and life, or exile him and thus drive him into the mouth of the gaping lions.

But that they should, according to the Scriptures, shun the misers, drunkards, fornicators, &c.; that they should neither eat nor drink with them, they do not know, since they are, as a general thing, unchanged at heart, earthly-minded and full of all manner of avarice, pomp, extravagance and carnal works.

Therefore I say again, they will advise all their life-time concerning the ban, but never establish it according to the word of God; for how can one avaricious person shun the other, one drunkard the other and one deceiver the other, according to the Scriptures and separate him from the communion of the church, while they are altogether earthly-minded and without the communion, Spirit and word of the Lord, as has been heard.

In the fifth place he writes, "The example of the anabaptists frightens us, who so practice the ban with discord, hatred and irreconcilable anger one against the other, that it tends more to the destruction than to the edification and gathering of the church among them."

Answer. All that I read and see of him is a benighted vision, wrong judgment, wheedling of those of high standing, upbraiding and slandering the pious, excusing perverseness and adulteration of the Scriptures.

O, how little does he, as it appears, fear God; for here he undertakes to cover up his fleeing from the cross and his disobedience by citing the example of others. Reader, remember that the word of God should teach and govern us; that some refractory persons take offense at us, we cannot prevent. We act as the word of God has commanded us.

All those who once enter into the obedience of the word and afterwards live or teach contrary to it, can not be permitted to continue with us as brothers and sisters, if they will not hear our admonitions. In this case, neither greatness nor littleness, riches nor poverty avail. With God there is no respect of persons; they must all bow to the Spirit, word and scepter of Jesus, or else they cannot remain our brethren.

Since it is manifest that the Spirit of the Lord becomes extinct in such as seek the broad road and are desirous of the freedom of the flesh, of money and possessions; and that they offend the pious by their light-mindedness or self-conceit, therefore, they should, though reluctantly, be separated from the interaction of the godly, when there are no hopes left of their reformation. If they take offense at this, because they hate to bear this shame, which is visited upon them in love, for no other purpose than for their reformation and therefore slander and upbraid us, as also the preachers do because we dare not hear their teaching and partake of their sacraments, we cannot help this; nor can we prevent that

some of them become Davidists* and Epicurians† (as Gellius calls them), in spite of all our faithful admonitions, assiduity, labor and brotherly service.

The fact is, the seed did not fall on the right kind of soil, but by the wayside, on rocky ground and among thorns, Mat. 13:5.

I repeat it. We have applied to them the faithful service of our brotherly love, from our inmost hearts; admonished and entreated them and have patiently borne with some for one or two years, still waiting on their reformation and in truth have not hastily separated them, as he accuses us, without all foundation. Since we follow and practice the ordinance of the Lord in this respect, if he feared the Lord, he should reasonably commend our action, because we do rightly, following the commands of God at the risk of possessions and life and because we act according to the Scriptures, without any respect to persons; and he would acknowledge the truth if he confessed that not our example frightens them, but the fear of the cross. For if they would justly act and treat with kings, dukes, lords and princes and also with their drunkards, misers, vain-showers, &c., then it would be quite a different thing with them; this I dare unreservedly say and could prove it by facts.

* Davidists are the followers of David George, a sect of quiet mystics in the sixteenth century, who were accused of very erroneous sentiments. [CHCoG: Usually referred to as David Joris these days. Menno's dismissal of him is likely based on David's acceptance of polygamy, his claim that Satan is merely an allegory, elevating his own 'dreams and visions' to almost the authority of the Bible and his belief in dispensationalism. David later joined the Reformed Church, presumably accepting most of their beliefs and practices.]

† Followers of Epicurus, an ancient [pagan] Greek philosopher.- Webster's Royal Octavo Dict. [CHCoG: The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines it as this: "Epicurus' ethics is a form of egoistic hedonism; i.e., he says that the only thing that is intrinsically valuable is one's own pleasure; anything else that has value is valuable merely as a means to securing pleasure for oneself."]

In the sixth place he writes, "If they think that they do much good by their banning, toward the edification of the church, then let them point out from the several hundreds which they have banned, not ten, but only five, whom they have banned in love and reformed through their brotherly love, or whom they have brought to order and saved by their banning."

Answer. He seeks all kinds of causes to blaspheme the word and work of God, that he may give some appearance of reality to his cross-fleeing and hypocrisy. Inasmuch as he says that separation tends more to destruction than edification, therefore the reader should know that we daily find, by experience, that the following benefits are derived from separation among us: Firstly, that we by this obey God's word. Secondly, that we by this rid the community from false doctrine, discord and offensiveness, as has been said. Thirdly, that the disobedient are by this daily advised to reflect, repent and return. Fourthly, that we by this testify that we do not consent to, nor unite with the Munsterites and other rebellious sects. Fifthly, that we by this admonish all preachers and their churches, that they are without the ordinance and word of God in this respect. Sixthly, that by this the whole world may learn from us that the advice, doctrine, ordinance and command of God should be maintained and obeyed.

Behold, dear reader, these are the fruits which true separation daily brings forth, by the grace of God. But these [fruits], these preachers, alas, do not regard. [Even] if it were true that few are reformed by this, as he imputes, they must still admit that these before-mentioned results are obtained by this.

Reader, take notice that however we may act, it is of no avail with the perverse; for if we had disregarded this means and divine ordinance, as these preachers do and had left everybody to follow his own mind, from which the great Lord always preserve us, how loudly would they cry that we were rebels and Arians.* But while

* Arians, followers of Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, about 315, who maintained that the Son of God was totally and

we separate them, according to the Scriptures, from the communion of the church, it is called a destructive means and a hasty ban. Behold, thus they seek, on every hand, to destroy truth and uphold falsehood.

In the seventh place he writes, "It is better not to use the ban, than to abuse it, to the destruction of the church.

Answer. If it were true as he asserts, then, still a good thing should not be abandoned for the sake of some.* If the ban is a means of destroying and rupturing the church of Christ, then Christ and the apostles have very much deceived us in this regard, having taught us this ordinance, openly, both by word and example, as may be read in the Scriptures. But what does it avail? He might briefly state his point thus: We do not separate and ban, for we are, as a general thing, all led by an erroneous spirit and members of the body of anti-christ.

In the eighth place he writes, "None have proved a greater obstacle to us in re-establishing the ban than the anabaptists, who have caused a disturbance in the edification of the Church of Christ and in its right course; who have brought the servants into

essentially distinct from the Father; that he was the first and noblest of those beings whom God had created—but inferior to the Father in nature and dignity: also, that the Holy Spirit was not God, but created by the power of the Son. — Buck's Theol. Dic. [CHCoG: With the exception of the spurious claims that Jesus' essence was distinct from his Father and that Jesus created the Holy Spirit, the latter which we have not seen attributed to Arius elsewhere, Arius' claims are supported by many Scriptures, while the Roman Catholic's co-equal, co-eternal three-persons-in-one Trinity are not supported. See [*Jesus Christ: Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity?*](#) for details.]

* [CHCoG: Surely the main response here is that it is the elders' responsibility to ensure that the ban IS NOT ABUSED, rather than not used at all, which is just a different abuse of the Ban. Indeed, Menno's article on this in Volume One is dedicated to ensuring that the Ban is used correctly; neither too readily, nor too infrequently.]

disrepute and have, under the semblance of truth, drawn many zealous hearts from the church (on whom it was to be practiced) and led them into falsehood."

Answer. If I had not learned to know Gellius from his other writings, this excuse of his, in regard to the ban, would more than clearly teach me what kind of a man he is. O, dear Lord! It is nothing but hypocrisy, falsehood and deceit, whatever he says! He writes that we obstruct the ban; yet, if he would confess the truth, he would be forced to admit that we do not obstruct him, but his own unbelief, carnal-mind and his cross-fleeing flesh [obstruct him], as said before.

He writes that we have disturbed the edification of the church, while it is manifest that we point out to all the churches of the world, by doctrine and life, by the perilling of possessions and blood, the right way to true worship and ordinances and that they are those who, with all their strength, disturb the course of the edification of the church of Christ, by their light-minded doctrine, false sacraments and vain life.

He writes that we have brought the servants into disrepute because we reprove them, in unfeigned love and direct them by [our] doctrine and life to Christ's example, Spirit and word, while he acknowledges above that some [of them] are more fit to be herders of swine than shepherds of the sheep of Christ.

He writes that we have, in the semblance of truth, drawn many zealous hearts from the church and led them into many errors; while the facts show that we do not separate them from the church but from the world and that we lead them, by the hand and help of God, into eternal truth.

I would further say, Their doctrine has been preached for over thirty years in Germany and there are whole kingdoms, principalities and cities where not a single anabaptist, as he calls us, is to be found. Who is it that obstructs the pastors there in re-establishing the ban? In all the time that they have preached and taught their doctrine, they have never yet banned an adulterer, drunkard, miser, &c. and excluded such a one from the

communion of their churches; notwithstanding he writes that we obstruct and hinder them. O, dear Lord! Thus are the pious everywhere evilly spoken of, although they seek God sincerely and would gladly see a christian church true in doctrine, sacraments, ordinances and life.

In the ninth place he writes, “For two reasons we could not so soon establish it (he means the ban) as the anabaptists did. Firstly, because our gatherings are open and consist of many hundreds, whom we cannot all know; while their gatherings are secret and consist of but few. Secondly, because we do not establish sects, as they do, which is a work of the flesh and befriended by the devil; but we establish an eternal church unto Christ, which is beguiled and robbed by the devil.”

Answer. Above he has partly acknowledged that many of their hearers are of the world. Here he writes that their gatherings consist of many hundreds and that they gather an abiding church; yet they never came to the point that they separate their disciples and church from the world and conform to the divine ordinance. The reason is because they are of the world.

But to his writing that their assembly is large and kept in public and that ours is small, I would, with the word of the Lord, reply in this manner, “Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction and there are many which go in that way; because narrow is the gate and strict is the way which leads unto life and there are few that find it,” Mat. 7:13, 14.

Yes, my reader, if you attentively read the Scriptures you will find that the number of the chosen ones was always small and the number of the unrighteous was always great. The pure and true gospel of Jesus Christ, the true knowledge of eternal truth, was never so appreciated by the world that the true believers can be counted by many thousands in any country or city. Christ Jesus and his eternal truth must always abide with few, in retired places; but anti-christ and his falsehood can go abroad undisturbedly and in public and count his followers by thousands.

Again, by his writing that they cannot know all, on account of their great numbers, he testifies that brotherly love is very scarce with them; for where is there a christian pastor who does not know his sheep? And where is the christian brother who does not know his neighbor? If the preachers do not know them all, on account of their great numbers, still one brother should know the other; they should teach, advise, comfort and reprove each other; they should seek each other's salvation; for this the word and unction of God teach us.

Reader, observe. He pretends "that they cannot possibly know them all;" and I, who am most of the time keeping myself in retired places, could point them out in great numbers. Let him once travel through city and country where they boast of the word and let him take a close observation and he will find out how they dare heap one falsehood upon another and one ungodly act upon another; how they dare swear by the Lord's sacred flesh, blood, death, wounds and sacrament and how they are adorned with different, vain ornaments. Let him take a view of the taverns, fencing-schools, the houses of ill-repute, &c., of which there is no lack in Germany; let him examine the courts of kings and princes; and [look] into the ways of the nobility and I presume he will find thousands doubly deserving of separation. But an earthly mind and perverse heart has, alas, little regard for the ordinance and word of the Lord.

Again, to his assertion that they do not establish sects, as he says we do and that it is a carnal work, I would reply thus: I do sincerely wish that Gellius and all the Papists, Lutherans, Zwinglians, Davidists, &c., could appreciate this matter, for it is written of heresies and heretics, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

It is a small matter to us to be called heretics by the world; for the children of God, in the apostolic times, were also called the same. Notwithstanding, we, in our humility, would say this in regard to this matter, that we point to Christ Jesus, God's eternal

Wisdom, Truth and Son; for he is the One on whom to rely and we unreservedly refer to his doctrine, ordinance and usage. If anyone under the whole canopy of heaven can convince us with the infallible truth that we are wrong and act contrary to his word, then we will gladly hear it and obey the truth.

But if they cannot do so, they must confess that we are the apostolic christian church and that they are the deceiving, carnal sects.

But that sectarians are raised amongst us and not among them, is also a strong proof that we are the church and that they are not. For Paul says, "There must be also heresies among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you," 1 Cor. 11:19. John says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us," 1 John 2:19.

Say, beloved, why should Satan beguile these with heresies, who are already heretics and his adherents? But those that turn to Jehovah, such he beguiles and seeks to devour them, Gen. 3:15; 1 Pet. 5:8.

In the tenth place he writes, If they only said that we do not teach the ban, it might insult us and many teachers and churches and they might almost be disgraced by this. But they say that we neither have, hold to, nor practice it.

Answer. In my opinion it would be well for him not to ridicule these things, but to closely observe the word of the Lord. Before God, the literal teaching does not avail; but before him, avails action in power and truth. If they should say that this would cause a disturbance, then I would ask what kind of protectors and shepherds they are, if they neglect the will and word of God on account of the disturbance of the world. Let all the right minded judge this according to the Scriptures, Mat. 10.

In the last place he writes, But, admit it to be true that this failure exists in all of our churches, although the contrary is true of many of them, for in the German church in London, England, one

is banned; and it is not altogether neglected here in Emden. Would the church on that account lose its name and henceforth, as they say, be no longer the church of Christ? Then, truly our body, to which the church is likened, would lose the name of body on account of some blemish or wound.

Answer. I think this is *posuimus mendacium spem nostram*, “to make lies our refuge.” For he says the contrary is true of many churches; yet he can point to only one of the many kingdoms, principalities, cities and towns, who is banned, namely, at London, England. I have never, in all my life-time, heard of a more ridiculous assertion. How manifestly does the great Lord turn their wisdom to foolishness and their understanding to nothing, 1 Cor. 1. Yet the blind, ignorant world does not see it.

Reader, reflect and see if these are not the mockers of which Peter and Jude prophesy, 2 Pet. 3:3; Jude 8. The whole German nation or people, no, all countries, are so replete with ungodliness, abominations and wickedness that we should stand dumb-founded. Yes, that the righteous, who fear the Lord, are as scarce as the grapes of a vintage which has been diligently gleaned and in which few are left to pluck and use, as the prophet laments, Mic. 7:1; and out of so many hundreds of thousands, he points to one who was banned at London, that it may be said that they practice the ban and thus that they thus may give a semblance to their disobedience.

I think that they act so awkwardly that the whole world must see that it is nothing but hypocrisy, falsehood and deceit. O, Lord, how long will this mockery be endured! But to his writing that if the church should lose her name on account of an error, that then, also, our bodies would lose its name on account of a blemish or wound, I would reply: If this was the only error in their church, then there would yet be hopes of a reformation; but their failures and short-comings are so numerous that they would be better compared to a dead body, than to a body that has but one blemish or wound, as he pretends to say.

I think that in this instance the cunning of the fox which destroys God's vineyard (which he, in his writing imputes to us) is plainly discernable here. For how cunningly they flee from one latibulo (hiding-place) to another, lest they be caught, may, alas, be clearly concluded from this frivolous excuse of the ban.

CONCERNING THE CHURCH, AND AN INSTRUCTIVE COMPARISON: HOW WE MAY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH OF ANTI-CHRIST.

Gellius complains that we destroy and leave the church of God and that we are devilish sects and conspirators; and, on the contrary boasts that they gather an abiding church. Therefore, in my opinion, it is necessary, in the first place, to compare the churches with the requirements of the Scriptures, that the pious reader may know the difference and see which and what the Church of Christ is and also what the church of anti-christ is; how long they both have existed; of whom they are; of whom they are brought forth; to what purpose they are begotten; of what disposition or nature they both are; what their fruits are; and by what signs they may be known, lest he is deceived by the preachers and mistake the church of Christ for a heresy and conspiracy and the church of anti-christ for the church of Christ.

In the first place, it should be taken into consideration that the community of God, or the church of Christ, is an assembly of the pious and a community of the saints, as is represented by the

Nicene symbol; who, from the beginning have firmly trusted and believed in the promised seed of the woman, which is the promised Prophet, Messiah, Shilo, King, Prince, Emmanuel and Christ; who accept his word in sincerity of heart; follow his example, are led by his Spirit and who trust in his promise in the Scriptures, Deut. 18:18; Gen. 49:10; Jer. 23:5 & 33:15; Isaiah 7:14.

Such are now generally called christians or the church of Christ, because they are born of Christ's word by means of faith, by his Spirit and are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, as the children of Jacob, on account of their natural birth, were called the house of Israel, Rom. 9:7-9.

On the contrary, it should be observed that the church of anti-christ is a gathering of the ungodly and a community of the impenitent, who reject the aforementioned seed, Christ and his word and oppose his will and for that reason are called the anti-christian community or church, because they, through the spirit and artifices of anti-christ, although in semblance of the word and in the name of Christ, teach, believe, act and establish a strange worship, contrary to the Spirit, word, example and ordinance of Christ.

In the second place, it should be observed that the church of the pious is from the beginning; yet, it had not always the same ordinance; nor was it always called by one name in the Scriptures. For, before their departure from Egypt, they had no particular written law;* yet they feared the great and powerful God, faithfully

* [CHCoG: Though widely believed, this is incorrect. As one example, in Genesis 26:4-5, Jehovah God says to Issac: "I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws." This was clearly a very particular, multi-level system of law, and there is no reason to doubt that Abraham had it as a written code which was passed on to Issac. And Noah knew which were clean and unclean animals many centuries before the re-giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai. Gen 7:1-2.

served Him, offered burnt-offerings and walked in his ways, as may be seen in the case of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and others. They were, at that time, called God's children. Abraham was commanded to circumcise himself and his household and all the males after him, on the eighth day after their birth, Gen. 17:10. About four hundred years after that, Moses gave the law; and from that time they were generally called the people of God, or the house of Jacob and Israel. At last Christ Jesus, the Messiah of all the world appeared, to which all the Scriptures point. All those who hear him, believe his word and follow him, are now called christians, or the church of Christ, as heard, Isaiah 58:2, 4; Jer. 23:5; Acts 11:26; Rom. 16:16.*

Although at different times she was under different ordinances and usages, and, although the church is called by different names, as said, yet all, before, under and after the law, who, in sincere, true fear of God, walked and continue to walk according to the word and will of God and trust in Christ, are one community, church and body and will always remain so; for they are all saved by Christ, accepted by God and gifted with the Spirit of his grace. It should also be observed that the church of the ungodly, which is the church of anti-christ, commenced first with the ungodly, who were inspired with the spirit of the devil, which is envious of all good things; and will be unto the end. For the anti-church has generally existed, from the beginning, side by side with the christian church and is the most numerous; and till the deluge, it is

Another example, also prior to Mt. Sinai, is in Exodus 16:1-23, in which Jehovah reconfirms His Sabbath with the manna and reproves them for not obeying His commandments and laws (vs 28). The Mosaic laws were based on what Abraham and his predecessors, likely including even Adam, had been given, but included additional sacrifices and the setting up of the Levitical priesthood.]

* [CHCoG: It is only called the Church of Christ in Romans 16:16. Eleven times it is called the Church of God, or more accurately, the Congregation of God, some examples being Acts 12:5, 1 Cor. 1:2, 2 Thes. 1:4, 1 Tim. 3:15, etc.]

spoken of in the Scriptures as the “children of men,” Gen. 6:2; John 8:44. But from the flood until the circumcision of Abraham the ungodly are called Gentiles.* After the time of the circumcision they are called Gentiles or uncircumcised, Gen. 17:11; Rom. 15:9.

They did not know the true and living God, but they worshipped and served the handiwork of men: wood, stone, silver and golden ‘gods,’ as well as dragons, serpents, oxen, fire, the sun, moon, &c., until the apostles preached the gospel unto all the world and gathered a church unto Christ, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Rom. 10:17; Col. 1:23, which church has been in the meantime so [nearly] destroyed by anti-christ, that the greatest number have degenerated into open Gentiles and idolaters, although in appearance they call themselves christians; for they bend their knees to rods and blocks,† and require the assistance of the artificer. Others and these are the best minded of them, seek consolation and their salvation in man-made ceremonies, water, bread, wine and absolutions; so that we are forced to say that they are the church of the impenitent and the church of anti-christ.

In the third place, it should be observed that the christian church is of God, as Paul says, “For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified, are all of one,” Heb. 2:11. For as Christ Jesus, who is the true Savior, is of God, yes, God’s only begotten and first-born Son, so also are all those who, in sincerity of heart, believe his word and are actuated by his Spirit. John says, “But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” John 1:12, 13. Again, “Everyone that loves is born of God,” 1 John 4:7.

* [CHCoG: They were called *Goyim*, which is Hebrew for *the nations*, indicating the non-Israelite nations. That usage generally continues throughout the Bible.]

† [CHCoG: Perhaps this refers to various types of idols.]

On the other hand, it should be observed that the church of anti-christ is of the evil one, as the Lord said unto the Pharisees, "You are of your father, the devil and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and did not abide in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar and the father of it," John 8:44. "He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning," 1 John 3:8.

Reader, observe. By these words the spirit of truth has already judged all liars, blood-shedders, avaricious, perjurers, adulterers, drunkards, pompous and idolators together with all the unrighteous, that they are of the devil; that is, they are the devil's community. Nevertheless they boast that they are the church of Christ, as also the Pharisees boasted that they were Abraham's seed and children, John 8:39-44.

In the fourth place it should be observed that the church of Christ begets sincere, pious preachers and christians who are actuated by the Spirit of Christ; and who are, as Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter, Paul, John, &c., unblamable in doctrine and life; who, in pure and faithful love, seek the salvation of their neighbors and who can, in sincerity, say with Paul, "Imitate me, even as I also *imitate* Christ," 1 Cor. 11:1; who preach the word in the power of the Spirit; who are shining lights before all men; and who, with all their strength, strive with their received talent and may make a great gain to the treasure of the Lord, Phil. 2:15; Mat. 5:16. For it was God's way and will from the beginning, to proclaim the doctrine of repentance through pious and unblamable servants, as has been sufficiently shown above under the head of the "Calling of the Preachers."

On the other hand it should be observed that the church of anti-christ is brought forth by faithless preachers, who are actuated by the spirit of anti-christ; who with Korah, Dathan and Abiram seek the applause of the people, Num. 16:2, who with Balaam seek inordinate gain, Num. 22:24; and who with the prophets of Jezebel

seek choice victuals. Who, with Hananiah flatter the people, Jer. 28:11; who, with the false prophets preach Peace, Ezek. 13:16; who are earthly and carnally minded and seek nothing but the world, ease, honor, belly and gain, Phil. 3:19; Rom. 16:17.

O, reader, how the greatest and highest esteemed preachers of our day, whose names have become wide-spread, seek the poor, naked and crucified Christ Jesus and the souls of men with their gospel, may, alas, be concluded from the accursed, ungodly pomp and splendor about their houses and from the vain and curious ornaments, chains, rings, silk and satin, of their women and children. Notwithstanding their doctrine is called the evangelical theology and they, the servants of the holy word.

In the fifth place, it should be observed that the church of Christ is begotten by the Spirit and word of Christ. For as an honorable woman can bring forth no legitimate children but from the seed of her lawful husband, so, also, the bride of Christ, namely, the church, can bring forth no true Christians but from the legitimate seed of Christ, that is, from the unadulterated word, rightly preached through the Holy Spirit and conceived in the heart of the hearers. Paul says, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel," 1 Cor. 4:15. James says, "Of his own will he begat us with the word of truth," Jas. 1:18; also read Rom. 10; 1 Pet. 1.

On the other hand, the church of anti-christ is begotten by deceiving doctrine, through the spirit of error. Paul says, "Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy," 1 Tim. 4:1. Yes, reader, what else has the church of Christ abolished and the church of anti-Christ re-established, but the false doctrines of the learned, the many inconsistent councils, decrees, statutes, doctrines and commands of men? What else blinds the German nation to-day and what else retains them in their ungodliness, but the light-minded doctrine of these preachers, their ungodly, infant baptism,

their unscriptural, idolatrous supper and their neglect of the Lord's ordinance (separation), as it was practiced by the apostles?

The prophets on every hand complained that Israel inclined their ears to false preachers, Isaiah 30:9; Jer. 8:8 & 14:14.

Christ Jesus and his holy apostles faithfully warn us in many Scriptures against false prophets; for they deceive you, says Christ; they serve their bellies and not the Lord Christ, says Paul; they promise others liberty and are themselves servants of corruption, says Peter. They turn the grace of God unto lasciviousness, Jude 4 and they are of anti-Christ, Mat. 7:15 & 16:9; 2 Pet. 2:19. O reader, reflect diligently on what I write.

In the sixth place it should be observed that the church of Christ is begotten for the purpose of hearing the Lord, to fear, love, serve, praise, honor and thank God sincerely, as Moses says, "And now, Israel, what does Jehovah your God require of you, but to fear Jehovah your God, to walk in all his ways and to love him and to serve Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul; to keep the commandments of Jehovah and his statutes," Deut. 10:12, 13.

Again, "You shall walk after Jehovah your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice and you shall serve him and cleave unto him," Deut. 13:4. Peter says, "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light," 1 Peter 2:9.

Behold, the church of Christ is begotten that his great miracles, his Almighty Majesty, his inextinguishable love and his adorable, high and holy name may be eternally glorified.

But the church of anti-Christ despises, hates and reviles God, as the prophet says, They transgress my covenant, as Adam did, by which they despise me. Yes, all who reject the Lord's will, word, advice, admonition, chastening, grace and love, hate him and will not be ruled by him. They do not his will, but their own; they say in their hearts: Depart from us, we will know nothing of your

ways; who is this Most High, that we should serve him? Behold, thus they boldly despise the Almighty [Jehovah], the eternal God, who is the Creator, [and our] Messiah and Lord of all the world. May the dear Lord grant them eyes that they may see their great faults; and hearts to realize them; this is my sincere wish for them, Amen.

In the seventh place it should be observed that the church of Christ, [even] in her weakness, is disposed and minded as Christ; for Paul says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation," 2 Cor. 5:17; he is led by the Spirit; and acknowledges through this Spirit that he abides in God and God in him; he partakes of the divine nature. Yes, dear reader, the true church hates that which Christ hates and loves that which he loves; for she is his Bride, flesh of his flesh and "made to drink into one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13. Therefore she can not be otherwise minded than Christ is minded, for she is begotten by his word and abides in him and he in, over and through her, 1 John 4:12; John 15:4-7.

Compare this with the church of anti-christ and you will find that it is of a like nature as her father from whom she is begotten, namely, proud, envious, murderous, false, disobedient, self-conceited, earthly and carnally minded, selfish, avaricious, bold, proud, pompous, superfluous, impure and altogether opposed to Christ. For all things that Christ prohibits, they do; and that which he commands, they despise; whatever he hates, they love and whatever he loves, they hate; notwithstanding they boast that they gather an abiding church, as has been heard, 1 Cor. 8:6; 1 John 3:24 & 4:13. He that has ears, let him hear and judge whether or not I speak the truth.

In the eighth place it should be observed that the church of Christ brings forth the fruits of Christ, as he says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He that abides in me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit," John 15:5.

Every tree bears after its own kind; all who are born of God and partake of the divine nature fear, love, serve and praise God

with all their heart; walk unblamably; fraternally teach, advise, reprove, uphold and comfort their neighbor; daily die unto the flesh and its lusts; conform their ways according to the word of the Lord and continually lament over their being such poor, weak and frail sinners, Mat. 7:17.*

They strive to become conformable unto the death of the Lord that they may arise from the death of their sins and that they may attain unto a perfect being in Christ. Not, my reader, that they have already attained or become perfect. By no means; but they strive, with Paul, to follow after [Christ], that they may lay hold of that which Christ Jesus has laid hold of for us, Phil. 3:12.†

On the other hand, look at the fruits of the church of anti-christ. Their preachers falsely teach, boldly deceive and live an easy, superfluous life. The magistracy behave as if they were born for no purpose but to make war and tumults; to torture, murder, destroy cities and countries; to make vain show, drink, carouse and to live in all manner of lasciviousness. Yes, many act so that they, alas, would better be called *Leones rugientes* (roaring lions) and *lupi ves pertini* (howling wolves) than *humani* (human beings) and reasonable persons, to say nothing of christians.

The common people drink, carouse, curse, swear, grasp, tear, lie and cheat. In short, we find such behavior on every hand, as if God was a chimera and his word a fable. Behold, such are the fruits of those who boldly boast that they are the church of Christ. Oh! Would to God that they could see what Christ Jesus, after whom they call themselves and his holy apostles, have taught them in plain words and what example they left them, that they might

* [CHCoG: We doubt that this is the correct Bible verse, nor can we find any that fully support the last phrase above, though 1 Cor. 1:27 comes the closest.]

† [CHCoG: This was “that they may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended by Christ Jesus.” The substitution is a more accurate rendering of Phil. 3:12.]

yet be saved. For as it is they only play with the letter, cry and boast; but, alas, no spirit, work, power and fruits are apparent.

THE SIGNS BY WHICH BOTH CHURCHES MAY BE KNOWN.

ALTHOUGH I think, kind reader, that the difference between both churches may be fully perceived in the foregoing comparison, yet I will, for the sake of greater clearness, briefly present the following signs by which the one church may be known from the other, that truth may be the more fully testified and manifested.

The first sign by which to distinguish the church of Christ is the salutary and unadulterated doctrine of his holy and divine word. God commanded Israel to abide by the doctrine of the law and not to deviate from it, neither to the right hand nor to the left, Deut. 5:32. Isaiah advised them to conform themselves to the law and its testimony, or they would not receive light, Isaiah 8:20. Christ commanded his disciples, saying, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,” and “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Mark 16:15; Mat. 28:20. The prophets testify on every hand that they spoke the word of God, “Thus speaks Jehovah of hosts,” they say; again, the mouth of Jehovah says; again, thus speaks Jehovah God who has led you out of the land of Egypt and other like testimonies. Paul also says, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed,” Gal. 1:8. In short, where the church of Christ is, there his word is preached purely and rightly.

But where the church of anti-christ is, there the word of God is adulterated; there they are pointed to an earthly and unclean Christ and to means of salvation which are foreign to the Scriptures; there they are taught a broad and easy way; there the great are flattered, truth perverted into falsehood; there easy things are taught, such as the poor, ignorant people will gladly hear. In short, there they are consoled in their unhappy state, that they may underrate it and say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace," Jer. 8:11. They promise life to the impenitent, while the Scriptures say that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6:10; Gal. 5:21.

The second sign is the right and Scriptural use of the sacraments of Christ, namely, the baptism of those who, by faith, are born of God, sincerely repent, who bury their sins in Christ's death and arise with him in newness of life; who circumcise the foreskin of their hearts with the circumcision of Christ, which is done without hands; who put on Christ and have a clear conscience, Tit. 3:5; Rom. 5:4; Col. 3:11; 1 Pet. 3:21. Again, the dispensing of the Lord's Holy Supper [is only] to the penitent, who are flesh of Christ's flesh, who seek grace, reconciliation and the remission of their sins in the merits of the death and blood of the Lord, who walk with their brethren in love, peace and unity, who are led by the Spirit of the Lord, into all truth and righteousness and who prove, by their fruits, that they are the church and people of Christ.

Where baptism is practiced without the command and word of Christ, as those do who not only baptize without faith, but also without reason and awareness; where the power and representation of baptism, namely, dying unto sin, the new life, the circumcision of the heart, &c., are not only not upheld, but also quite hated by those of mature age; and where the bread and wine are dispensed to the avaricious, pompous and impenitent; where salvation is sought in mere elements, words and ceremonies and where a life is led [which is] contrary to all love, there is the church of anti-christ; this all intelligent persons must admit. For it is manifest that they

reject Christ, the Son of God, his word and ordinance and place in its stead their own ordinance and works and thus establish an abomination and idolatry.

The third sign is obedience to the holy word, or the pious, christian life which is of God. The Lord says, "You shall be holy, for I, Jehovah your God, am holy," Lev. 19:2. Christ says, "You are the light of the world." Paul says, "Be blameless and harmless, as the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world," Phil. 2:16. John says, "He that says he abides in him, ought himself also to walk even as he [Christ] walked," 1 John 2:8.

But how holy the church of anti-christ is, how her light shines, how unblamably and purely they walk and how their life conforms to Christ's life, may, alas, be concluded from their words and works, on every hand.

The fourth sign is the sincere and unfeigned love of one's neighbor, for Christ says, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another," John 13:35. Yes, reader, wherever sincere, brotherly love is found without hypocrisy and its fruits, there we find the church of Christ. John says; "Let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loves is born of God and knows God. He that does not love, does not know God; for God is love," 1 John 4:7, 8.

But whether the church of anti-christ is not where brotherly love is rejected, where they hate, defame, strike and beat each other, where everyone seeks his own interest, where they treat each other deceitfully and faithlessly, curse, swear and slander, where they defile their neighbors' maidens, daughters and wives, deprive each other of honor, possessions and life, commit all manner of recklessness, abominations and malice against each other, as may, alas, be seen on every hand, all intelligent persons may judge according to the Scriptures.

The fifth sign is that the name, will, word and ordinance of Christ are unreservedly confessed, in spite of all the cruelty,

tyranny, uproar, fire, sword and violence of the world and that they are upheld unto the end. Christ says, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven,” Mat. 10:32. “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels,” Mark 8:38. Paul also says, “For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,” Rom. 10:10.

But what kind of a church is found where they are papistic when with the papists; Lutheran when with the Lutherans, &c., now build up and anon demolish and act the hypocrite to suit the magistracy, everyone may judge who is enlightened by the truth and taught by the Holy Spirit.

The sixth sign is the pressing cross of Christ, which is taken up for the sake of his testimony and word. Christ says unto his disciples, “You shall be hated by all nations for my name’s sake,” Mat. 24:9. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,” 2 Tim. 3:12. Sirach says, “My son, if you come to serve the Lord, prepare your soul for temptation. Set your heart aright and constantly endure and make not haste in time of trouble. Cleave unto him and depart not away, that you may be increased at your last end. Whatsoever is brought upon you, take cheerfully and be patient when you are changed to a low estate. For gold is tried in the fire and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity,” Eccl. 1:5. Also read, Mat. 5:10; 10:23 & 18:24; Mark 13:13; Luke 6:22; John 16:2; Acts 14:18; 2 Tim. 2; Heb. 11:37 & 12:2.

That this very cross is a sure sign of its being the church of Christ has been testified not only in olden times by the Scriptures, but also by the example of Jesus Christ, by the holy apostles and prophets, by the primitive and unadulterated church; and also, by the present pious, faithful children, especially in these, our Netherlands.

On the other hand, the ungodly, heathenish, lying, hating, envying, upbraiding, blaspheming and the unmerciful apprehending, exiling, robbing and murdering, as may be witnessed in different localities, are plain signs of the church of anti-christ. For John saw that the Babylonian “woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,” Rev. 17:6. He also saw that to the beast which arose from the sea, a mouth was given, speaking great things and blasphemy against God and his holy name and his tabernacle or church and them that dwell in heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, Rev. 13:5, 6, 7. Yes, dear reader, this is the proper way and work of the church of anti-Christ: To hate, persecute and put to the sword those whom she cannot enchant with the golden cup of her abominations.

O Lord! O, dear Lord! Grant that the wrathful dragon devour not entirely your poor, small number; grant that we, by your grace, may, in patience, conquer by the sword of your mouth; and may leave an abiding seed, which shall keep your commandments, preserve your testimony and which shall eternally praise your great and glorious name. Amen, dear Lord, Amen.

With this I will abbreviate the doctrine of the churches and conclude this subject with the following questions and answers, which, I trust, by the grace of God, will enlighten the diligent reader considerably.

Quest. What is the church of Christ?

Ans. A community of saints.

Q. With whom did she originate?

A. With Adam and Eve.

Q. Of whom is she?

A. Of God, through Christ.

Q. Of what kind of servants is she begotten?

A. Of those who are unblamable, in doctrine and life.

Q. Whereby do they beget her?

A. By the Spirit and word of God.

- Q.* For what purpose do they beget her?
A. That she shall serve, thank and praise God.
Q. Of what mind is she?
A. Of Christ's mind, in weakness.
Q. What kind of fruits does she bring forth?
A. Fruits which are conformable to the word of God.
Q. What is the church of anti-Christ?
A. A community of the unrighteous.
Q. With whom did she originate?
A. With the first ungodly.
Q. Of whom is she?
A. Of the evil one, through anti-Christ.
Q. Of what kind of servants is she begotten?
A. Of such as are blamable in doctrine and life.
Q. Whereby do they beget her?
A. By the spirit and doctrine of anti-christ.
Q. For what purpose do they beget her?
A. That she may despise, forsake and hate God.
Q. Of what mind is she?
A. Of an earthly, carnal and devilish mind.
Q. What fruits does she bring forth?
A. Fruits contrary to the gospel.

The True Signs By Which The Church Of Christ May Be Known.

- I. By an unadulterated, pure doctrine, Deut. 4; 5; 6; 12; Isaiah 8:5; Mat. 28:20; Mark 16:15; John 8:52; Gal. 1.
- II. By a scriptural use of the sacramental signs, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3; Mat. 26:25; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:22, 23.
- III. By obedience to the word, Mat. 7; Luke 11:28; John 7:18 & 15:10; Jas. 1:22.

- IV. By unfeigned, brotherly love, John 13:34; Rom. 13:8; 1 Cor. 13:1; 1 John 3:18 & 4:7, 8.
- V. An unreserved confession of God and Christ, Mat. 10:32; Mark 8:29; Rom. 10:9; 1 Tim. 6:13 [Psa. 83:18; Isa 12:2].
- VI. By [suffering] oppression and tribulation for the sake of the Lord's word, Mat. 5:10; 10:39; 16:24; 24:9; Luke 6:28; John 15:20; 2 Tim. 2:9; 3:12; 1 Pet. 1:6; 3:14; 4:13; 5:10; 1 John 3:13

The True Signs By Which The Church Of Anti-Christ May Be Known.

- I. By a light-minded, easy and false doctrine, Mat. 7:16; 15:9; 16:4; Rom. 16:26; 1 Tim. 4:2; 2 Tim. 2:16, 17.
- II. By an unscriptural use of the sacramental signs, such as infant baptism and dispensation of the [Lord's] supper to the impenitent, 1 Cor. 11:19, 20.
- III. By disobedience to the word, Prov. 1; Tit. 1:15, 16; Mat. 7:26; 25:26.
- IV. By hatred of the brethren, 1 John 3:15.
- V. By hypocrisy and denial of the name of God and Christ, Mat. 10:33; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26.
- VI. By tyranny and persecution against the godly, John 15:20; 16; Rev. 12:13.

Behold, dear reader, we have here shown you the foundation of both churches; what they are, of whom they are and by whom they are begotten; of what mind they are, what kind of fruits they bring forth; and by what signs they may be known.

Whoever does not wilfully err, to him a plain way is by this pointed out. If you, then, would be a true member of the church of Christ, you must be born of the word of God; be of a christian mind; bring forth christian fruits; walk according to his word, ordinance and command; die unto the flesh and the world; lead an

unblamable life in the fear of God; serve and love your neighbors with all your heart; confess the name and glory of Christ and be prepared for all manner of tribulation; misery and persecution for the sake of the word of God and its testimony, John 3:3, 4; 15:4; 8:31; 1 Pet. 1:23; Phil. 2:15; Rom. 8:14.

But if you refuse this and remain unchanged in your natural state; lead an impenitent, easy life, lay aside the word and ordinance of the Lord, act the hypocrite with the world and refuse the cross, then you cannot be a member of the church of Christ; or else the word of God must be false and fallible; for on every hand the Scriptures teach faith, love, the fear of God, repentance, obedience, dying unto the flesh, self-denial, a new life and the cross. Therefore, sincerely fear God, deny yourself, search the Scriptures, follow the truth and take heed lest you be deceived and eternally lose your soul for the sake of temporal life and its enjoyments, Mark 1:15; 8:36; John 1:3; 13:14; Luke 13:24; 9:25; Rom. 6:8; Col. 3:9; Gal. 6:1; Mat. 16:25.

Having given a scriptural explanation of the difference between the two churches, I will now turn to Gellius' argument by which he would prove their church to be the christian and ours the heretical and conspirator's church. I trust to be enabled to show [which is which] by the word of the Lord, so that the impartial reader must clearly see that he (Gellius) strives, with all his power, to suppress the salutary and plain word of God, together with God's church; and to excuse and uphold as well as he can the deceiving serpent and his church.

In the first place he writes: "The saints at Corinth and of the church of Galatia, whom Paul reproves on account of their abominable sins, still continued to hear the word of God and to receive the sacraments from their bishops and pastors."

Answer. If Gellius and these preachers would conform their doctrine and life to the Scriptures; would rightly serve out their sacraments, would separate their church from the world, according to the Scriptures, then we might talk of listening to the preachers.

But so long as the preachers remain deceivers, use their sacraments contrary to the word of God and their disciples are of the world; so long as they practice neither ban nor excommunication as the Scriptures require, it is, in my opinion, of no use to say much in regard to this, for it is manifest that they are without Christ and his word.

Reader, understand this matter rightly. Paul did not bear with the ungodly state of affairs in the before-mentioned churches, as the preachers of the present day, do; but he rebuked them, in severe terms, especially those of Corinth and pointed the obedient to the separation, if they, at his coming again, had not reformed themselves, 2 Cor. 12:13.*

Gellius should, reasonably, also do this and should not console the poor, reckless people with the idea that other people in the past have also sinned; for this is surely what Sirach calls excusing with the example of other people; neither can it help his cause; for, in the first place, these churches were rightly built, but afterwards some of them were misled by false prophets and heretics and led into byways. Some of them, as it appears, have again given themselves to an easy, carnal life, as is generally the case with those who turn their backs upon the truth, delight in new doctrines, discord and disputation, as experience, alas, has sufficiently taught me for these last several years, Jude 19; 2 Pet. 3:3.

Paul calls the disturbers at Corinth contentious and heretics; and those of Galatia he calls deceivers; he desires and commands that they be separated from the church, lest the whole lump be leavened by this leaven, 1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9.

Since the before-mentioned churches, being rightly established in the first place and being afterwards made contentious by the heretics and carnal who arose among them, were reproved by Paul, because they allowed such contentious persons, with their open abominations, to remain in the church; how, then, can Gellius make good their cause by their example, while he and his

* [CHCoG: Perhaps he means 2 Cor. 13:10?]

preachers were never the true preachers and their churches were never separated from the world and therefore were not the church of Christ, as heard?

In the second place, he writes: Zachariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, Simeon and Anna, together with other saints, heard the word of God in the church of the Jews, among whom were the murderers of Christ; and the disciples of the prophets did not separate the murderers of the prophets from the church."

Answer. These words of Gellius show that the Jewish synagogue, although many pious persons were among them, such as Zachariah, Elizabeth, &c., was not the christian or apostolic church and that they did not have the ordinances of Christ and his holy apostles, nor used them; for it can never be shown that the apostolic church, so long as she remained the apostolic church, were persecutors and murderers of the pious, or that she allowed such, as was at that time the case with the Jewish synagogue. Therefore he answers and judges himself, for he does not admit that their church was the Jewish synagogue in which such abominations were found, but he claims that they were the christian church, which never thought of such things, much less practiced them.*

Again, we should not follow the before-mentioned church in such abominable abuses and sins, but should be by this admonished how we should, according to the doctrine of Paul, treat such, which always arise among the pious; and that we should not, on account of this, mistrust the promises of the Lord, as if we were not the church of Christ. We are taught by this that in the church of Christ, which is always beguiled by her opponents, offenses, blasphemies and heresies will arise. However, we should

* [CHCoG: Perhaps the most obvious answer to Gellius' claim is that the time-frame he uses is thirty years **before** Christ began his public ministry and thus there was NO Christian church in existence yet, nor could anyone in these synagogues have murdered Christ then, as he died thirty-three years later.]

separate such whenever the case requires it, after proper admonition; whereby she openly testifies before God and man, that she is clear of such offenses and deceivings. This the worldly church does not do; they allow and retain them as members, against the word and command of God, against the ordinance of the Holy Spirit and against the example or usage of the holy apostles. Notwithstanding this, they well know that the institution and command of the Lord does not admit it, yet they wilfully do this. Therefore they can not be Christ's church and community so long as they continue to do so; or else the express word of God must be fallible and false. O, reader, reflect upon this matter.

But from his writing that the disciples of the prophets did not separate them from the church, among whom were the murderers of the prophets, I understand him to say that their church still remains the church of Christ, notwithstanding numbers of wicked and ungodly persons are found among them and suffered to remain among them, directly contrary to the evangelical Scriptures and the usage of the apostolic church. O, no, reader, beware, this cannot be. So long as the transgressors and wilful despisers are unknown to the church, she is innocent; but when they are known and not excluded, after proper admonition, but allowed to remain in the communion of the church, then, in my opinion, she ceases to be the church of Christ. For she transgresses wilfully and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ; she despises the word and ordinance of God, because she will not bear the cross of Christ to the praise of God and to the service of their neighbors, and, because she does not want to lose the favor of men; and makes herself guilty of the sins of others, therefore she, according to John, does not have God in power and in truth, 2 John 1:1; 1 Tim. 5:22; Deut. 17:2; Lev. 19:17; Mat. 18:15-17.

[CHCoG: It is also noteworthy to include at this point that though Christ would enter their synagogues to preach the Truth, as

this was a place where the people were assembled, and at least nominally to worship Jehovah God, he did not hesitate to expose their hypocrisy, as shown in Luke 4:15-30 and Mat. chap. 23, etc.]

In the third place he writes, "That they are plainly the church of God and Christ who publicly assemble, keep the word, accept and preach it; who with open confession and in the holy, divine name, dispense and partake of the sacraments and who banish the offensive criminals and obdurate sinners."

Answer. If to meet publicly, although in all manner of vanity, pomp and splendor, to preach as the world likes it, to baptize infants, to break the bread with the impenitent, feignedly to pray and exterminate thieves and murderers with the sword, constitutes the church of Christ, then, also, all the papists, together with the Arians, monks, &c., were Christ's church; for they all have done these things publicly. This is incontrovertible. Oh no, no! But where they meet in the name of Christ, where the unadulterated word of God is preached, be it in secret or public, where the baptism and Holy Supper are served in accordance with the ordinance of the Lord, where not merely the criminals, who are judged by the law of the emperor, but also drunkards, whores and adulterers, avaricious and extortioners, are excluded from the communion of the pious, according to the doctrine and example of the apostles, behold, such is the [true] visible church, which is attested by the Scriptures.

In the fourth place he writes, "That they, invisible to the eyes of man, which cannot search the heart, but only before the eyes and judgment of God, are the true church of Christ and of God, which are found in the visible church. That is, among the number of the elect; since God, through the preaching of his holy gospel and through the use of his holy sacraments, powerfully works in them and thereby many are again born unto life everlasting, who are only known to Him who knows his people and who searches the hearts of men. These are the true bride of Christ."

Answer. In part I admit this to be right, however with this understanding; that the visible church, in which the invisible (as he calls them) should be included, must be salutary in doctrine, sacraments and ordinances and unblamable in life before the world, so far as man, who is able to judge only that which is visible, can see.

Since it is as clear as day that Gellius and his like preachers are blamable in everything, because they adulterate the word of God, abuse the sacraments, flatter the world, upbraid the pious, do not separate their church from the world and none of their disciples reprove such open transgressions and abuses, but everyone is satisfied with his doctrines and sacraments, follows and maintains them; therefore they all act the hypocrite, walk upon the broad way, hate the cross of Christ and lay it upon others. Notwithstanding all this, that the invisible church should still be among them, I cannot admit; and for this reason: I know to a certainty that it never fails, that where the true church of Christ is, there she will be made manifest among this wicked and perverse generation by words and work, for she can as little be hidden as a city upon a hill, or a lamp upon a lamp-stand, Mat. 5:14; Phil. 2:15.

In the fifth place he writes, "That the churches at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, &c.; and also the strangers here and there in Pontos, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, are called, by Paul and Peter, saints and chosen. For the church, he writes, is called after the better part of its members and is called the church of God or of Christ, holy, pure and unblamable."

Answer. Do not think, kind reader, that all those who lived at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Pontos, Galatia, Cappadocia and Bithynia are called the church of Christ by Paul and Peter, just as [not] all those who live in Meissen, Düringen and the German countries are called the church of Christ by the preachers. By no means. But they meant the small number who, begotten by the word of the divine power, separated themselves from the world

and with open confession willingly placed themselves under Christ and his covenant. If I should write, the chosen children and saints of God at Antwerp, Ghent, Leeuwarden and the strangers in the German countries, here and there, I would not mean all those that live at those places mentioned. By no means. For *those* who persecute and trouble the chosen children of God also live there; but I would refer to those who confess Christ Jesus through true faith and are obedient to his holy word.

Behold, reader, if these preachers, in the same manner, would separate their church from the world, would preach the word of God in purity, would use the sacraments in accordance with the Scriptures and would strive with their churches, after a pious and christian life, then he might truthfully boast that the chosen, which he calls the invisible church, are included in their church, as he pretends they are.

In the sixth place he writes, "If they should say, your church is not believing, holy and unblamable, then I would refer them, first, to the Jewish church, from which we may learn that they, at the time of Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel and all the prophets, of John the Baptist, of Christ and the apostles, were not all holy; this the Scriptures of the prophets and of the apostles sufficiently teach us. But that they, notwithstanding both people and magistrates were for the most part wicked, were called the church of God and of Christ and were thus called on account of some pious persons, to whom God sent his prophets."

Answer. If the preachers would rightly discharge the duties of their office, as Elijah, Jeremiah and the prophets did; and if some were found in their church who follow the word of the Lord, as in the time of the prophets, then this might help the case of Gellius. But they are not such as Elijah, Jeremiah and Daniel, nor the teachers who are led by the Spirit of Christ; but are such preachers and teachers as were reprov'd by Jeremiah, as may be seen in many of his Scriptures. [They are] such as were destroyed by Elijah and against whom we are faithfully warned by Christ and

his apostles not to hear them, Jer. 8:14 & 23:27; Mat. 7:15; John 10:3.

I would further say, Israel was the literal people and had the promise of the fathers, on account of their birth after the flesh. The law was given to them, that they should serve God and walk according to his commandments. When they transgressed the law and did not observe that which [Jehovah] God had commanded them, they yet remained his literal people; and God, always mindful of the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, had awakened his faithful servants, the prophets and often sent them to reprove them earnestly, out of the word of the Lord, to point them again to the law and boldly threaten them with punishment for their sins, Gen. 15:17, 18; Deut. 5:32. This is not the case with us at present, for we are not the literal race, brought forth from the loins of Abraham and Isaac, but are begotten by the word of God, through the Spirit. If we again forsake this birth which is from God, do not abide in the word of Christ and again enter into the broad way, then we do not remain his church and community, 2 John 1:9. Behold, reader, it being manifest that Gellius and the preachers of his class, together with their churches, were never the spiritual people, because they, as it appears, are not born of God in truth but are earthly and carnally minded, live according to the lusts of the flesh, did not enter in at the right gate, teach an impure doctrine and use strange sacraments, where by no abiding church can be gathered unto Christ, as has been heard. Besides all this, they act altogether contrary to the Spirit, word and will of Christ, no, they hate and despise them. How then can they be likened unto Israel, who were the people and church on account of the patriarchs, while this people and church were never the church of Christ in the Spirit, as has been heard? Lastly I would say; All the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, on every hand, point us to Christ Jesus, that we shall hear him, Mat. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Deut. 18:15. Whosoever does not hear him, it will be required of him. Therefore take heed. As I have said before,

although all the pious, from the beginning, were the community, church or body, yet at different periods they have had [some] different doctrines, ordinances and worship.

Moses gave the law and Israel had to obey it until Christ appeared, who was the promised [Savior]. We are now directed to his Spirit, Word and ordinances. If it can be proven to us by his word, that his Spirit allowed drunkards, avaricious, pompous, adulterers, blasphemers, tyrants and murderers (understand, such as do not repent), in the communion of the apostolic churches; and also that his Spirit ordained open deceivers and worldly minded persons to be bishops and pastors, then I will admit that they are the church of Christ. But if they cannot do so and it is impossible for them to do so, then they must confess that their church, which is full of such people—aye full, is not the church of Christ, as they boast it to be. It is a disorderly, refractory and disobedient people, no, theirs it is the church of anti-christ and of the world; and that their pretensions in this respect are nothing but open seduction, falsehood and deceit. Reader, observe, I testify this unto you in Christ; believe it if you will; I write the truth unto you.

In the seventh place he writes, "In the second place I refer them to the church of the Corinthians, whom Paul, in the first place, reproveth on account of their dissensions," saying, "I, brethren; could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal," 1 Cor. 3:1.

Answer. Heretofore I have said that this church was first rightly taught by Paul and won unto Christ; but, being deceived by philosophers, who despised the doctrine of the cross and by false apostles, they became divided; for which they were reprov'd and fraternally instructed by Paul and advised to separate the unfaithful and carnally minded; for the Scriptures command and instruct us to do this, namely, that such should first be admonished and if they do not repent, that they should be unanimously separated from the communion of the church. Judge now, what Gellius can substantiate by this, since he and his, having never been separated

from the world, are not the church of Christ. Yes he, good fellow, does nothing more nor less than that he by this manifests his cross-fleeing and open disobedience and that he covers up and defends the abominable transgressions of his disciples, however gross they are, with the [poor] precedents of others.

In the eighth place he writes, "In the third place I refer them to the parable of Christ, of John the baptist and of Paul. Christ likens the church unto a field in which the tares grow with the wheat until the harvest. Again, she is likened unto a net in which both good and bad fish are caught. Again, unto the virgins, of whom five were wise and five were foolish. Moreover, unto a royal wedding, where the good and evil are gathered together, one of whom is found by the king to be without a wedding garment."

Answer. This first parable is explained by Christ himself, saying, "He that sows the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world" (understand this rightly, Christ says it is the world and **not** the church, as Gellius claims); "the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels," Mat. 13:37-39.

Reader, understand it rightly. Christ, the Son of man, sows his seed (God's word), through his Spirit, in the world; all who hear, believe and obey it are called the children of the kingdom. In the same manner the opponent sows his tares (false doctrine) in the world and all that hear and follow him are called the children of evil. Now, both the wheat and tares grow together in the same field, namely, in the world. The husbandman does not want the tares to be plucked out before their time, that is, he will not have them destroyed by rooting them up, but wants them left until the harvest, lest the wheat be destroyed with the tares, Matt:13:29, 30.

O, reader, if these preachers rightly understood this parable and feared God, they would not cry so loudly against us, who, alas, are everywhere called *tares*, *heretics* and *conspirators*. "Down with the heretics;" [they shout]. Even if we were heretics, from which

God save us. Oh! What noble wheat they destroy! But what does it avail? Satan must rebel and murder, for it is his nature and work, as the Scriptures teach, Gen. 3:4; John 8.

Some of the other parables, as of the net in which good and bad fishes are caught; of the wise and foolish virgins and their lamps; of the wedding of the king's son and the guests and of the threshing floor with wheat and chaff, although the Lord spoke them in allusion to the church, yet they were not spoken for the purpose that the church should knowingly and wilfully accept and allow open transgressors, drunkards, carousers, defilers of women, avaricious, robbers, gamblers and usurers, in their communion; because, then, Christ and Paul would differ in doctrine; for Paul says that we should avoid and shun such. But they were spoken because many intermix with the christians, in semblance only and place themselves under the word and sacraments, who, in fact, are not christians, but are hypocrites and enemies before our God. These are likened unto the refuse fish; unto the foolish virgins who had no oil in their lamps; unto the guest without a wedding garment and unto the chaff, which will be cast out by the angels at the day of Christ. For they pretend that they fear God and seek Christ; they receive baptism and the Lord's Supper and outwardly act in semblance, but, in fact, no faith, repentance, true fear and love of God; no Spirit, power, fruit nor work is found in them.

But as to the two kinds of laborers in the vineyard, Mat. 21:28, 29 and as to those called to the great supper, Luke 14:16-24, the reader should know that they have a different meaning and cannot conform to his sentiments. Whosoever loves truth may examine them and judge by the Holy Scriptures what their proper meaning is. Again, as to his citation of the vessels to dishonor, I will let Paul's words explain them. He says, "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and fit for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work," 2 Tim. 2:21.

Behold, dear reader, here you may observe how miserably he perverts the word of the Lord, that they may appear to be the church of Christ, although they knowingly and wilfully admit open transgressors into the communion of their church, against the Scriptures. But the flaming eyes of the Lord, which search everything, cannot be blinded by such sophistry.

In the ninth place he writes, "The church, now being perplexed by such evils as these which she has to suffer unto the day of judgment, as some of these parables imply; no, that it was never her lot to be entirely rid of evil ones and hypocrites, however strictly she used the ban. Therefore they are wrong and grossly sin by condemning us and saying that we are false teachers and not the church of God, as was the church of the patriarchs, prophets and Moses; and by maliciously and wrongfully calling our church, which is founded by our faithful service upon the true foundation, according to the example of all the messengers of God and which is daily increased and built up upon the chosen cornerstone, an unbelieving, unholy and blamable church, against all the Scriptures and by this not only bringing our church into disrepute, but also all the churches of the German countries, no, of all the christian world, which have and must have a different doctrine from their church, which they call holy, pure, unblamable and spotless on account of their dreadful ban."

Answer. If he had said that their church is troubled with such evils and that she must suffer them, in such a manner as to mean that the true church must suffer the enmity, rebellion, violence and tyranny of the wicked and ungodly actions of the perverse, then he would have written the truth. But since his meaning is that since the church always has hypocrites among her number, that therefore the evil ones, that is, the open despisers and transgressors should be tolerated; therefore he writes contrary to the word of God; for Paul says, "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person," that is, separate him who is wicked from the communion of your church, 1 Cor. 5:13.

Again, to his writing, “that we grossly sin by saying that they are not the church of God,” and to his boasting “that they build their church upon the cornerstone,” I would say that his boasting is false; for their light-minded doctrine, false sacraments, reckless life and his indiscreet writing, alas, prove too plainly that they do not build their church upon the true cornerstone; it being manifest that they, on every hand, are at fault, adulterate the word of God, abuse the sacraments, practice no separation and for the greater part, both teachers and hearers walk upon perverse ways. Whether we therefore sin, because in faithful love we advise them for their own good and in humility show them that they, under such a state of affairs, are not, nor can be, the church of God, the reader may judge. We know to a certainty that where there is no pure doctrine, no pure sacraments, no pious christian life, no true brotherly love and no right-minded confession, that there is no christian church; though they boast ever so much.

Again, in regard to his complaint, “That we not only call *them*, but *all* the churches of the German countries, no, of the whole christian world, unbelieving, unholy and condemn them,” the reader should know that we condemn no one; for he, Jesus Christ, to whom the Father has given it, will do that. Yet we say and teach it verbally and by writing, that all those who are not born of God and his word and are not actuated by the Spirit of Christ, [have] not been changed into his nature and disposition, however high and fine an appearance and name they may assume. In this case, [being] neither emperor, king, doctor, licentiate, pope nor Luther will avail. All who would be in the church of Christ must be in Christ, must be of his mind and walk as he walked, or else Christ Jesus, John, Paul and all the Scriptures must be false; this is too clear to be denied, John 5:22; 1 John 2:6; Rom. 8:14; Phil. 2:5.

Since he accuses us that we condemn all the churches of the German countries and of the whole christian world, therefore I would answer with a few plain words: If the German churches and the before-mentioned world were born of God, were of Christ’s

mind and walked as he walked, then the accusation of Gellius would be right, since we do not acknowledge them to be true churches. But as they prove by deeds that they are without Christ and walk and act against his word and will; as they are quite earthly and carnally minded, therefore they are not judged by men, but of the word of the Lord, for Christ says, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," John 12:48.

Further, by his writing that the said churches have and must have a different doctrine, he judges for himself that they are not the church of Christ. For Christ wills that his church should keep and follow his word, ordinances and commands, whether it be to the joy or to the pain of the flesh.

Behold, dear reader, since it is doubly plain that the Scriptures teach, both by words and examples, that open transgressors should be excluded from the communion of the church; and since these preachers, who fear men more than God and serve their bellies more than the praise of the Lord, neglect this on account of the cross which might result [to them] from such action, therefore their public actions testify that they are not the bride and sheep of Christ; for they do not hear his voice, nor do they follow his doctrines and commands, 2 Thes. 3:6; John 10:26.

Again, to his writing that we consider our church holy, pure and unblamable, on account of the cruel ban, this is my simple reply: We do not at all boast, except of the grace of our God through Christ Jesus. Our frailty is great, our stumblings are many and we feel with Paul that nothing good dwells in our flesh. Notwithstanding this, all true members of the church of Christ strive after the unblamable holy being, which is in him; they conform their walk to the word of the Lord; they follow his commands and ordinances and separate those who are [to be] separated by the Scriptures, which he, alas, calls a fearful ban. O, Lord!

O God! Thus your precious word is esteemed as unworthy by this thoughtless man. For, by this abominable, unseasoned

blasphemy, not only we, but also the Son of the Almighty and living God, together with the Spirit of eternal wisdom, by whom this ban was commanded and also all the apostles and the primitive church, who so diligently taught and earnestly practiced it, are adjudged fools. If the ordinance is foolishness, then the Institutor and all who teach and practice it must be fools; this cannot well be denied.

Observe, reader, if this may not be called hating the word and will of God, despising his commands and speaking blasphemies against the Most High, you may reflect upon this and judge by the Scriptures. O, reader, awaken. Beware and learn to know your preachers and of whose spirit they are the children.

In the tenth place he writes, "Thus they are given to a wrong understanding, prejudice without knowledge and leave the church from motives of spiritual pride and fancy of righteousness, more than from motives of sincere righteousness; they have no other reason to leave the church, than that they, according to the manner of the Pharisees, would justify themselves by despising others."

Answer. I fear that it would weary the reader to reply to all his false accusations minutely. Yet I would say, in regard to this, If I could speak with Gellius before the public, I have no doubt but many, through the grace of God, would begin to see that it is not us who have a wrong understanding, but them; that they prejudice us indiscreetly; remain outside of the church of Christ from motives of pride; and not only despise us, according to the manner of the Pharisees, but also often deprive us of possessions and life, as may be witnessed in different localities. But we must allow, bear and console ourselves with this saying, "Blessed are you 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 they persecuted the prophets which were before you," Mat. 5:11, 12.

In the eleventh place he writes, "They will probably say that if we would be the church of Christ, we must verify the saying of Christ: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" and ask where our church has existed, inviolated by the devil, anti-christ and heresies." He further writes, "Since the church, which is not limited to certain boundaries, but is scattered over the whole world, has this article of faith: "I believe in the holy christian church, the communion of saints and that she will endure unto the end of the world," therefore we are forced to acknowledge that God, true to his promise, saves his church and has always saved her, although the old serpent, the devil, deceives her by the lusts of the flesh, the pomp of the world and by many sects; and, although she is combatted, persecuted and disturbed by the potentates of the world, until she, inattentive to her cause, drowsy in her prayer, indifferent to the will of God and ungrateful for the word of God, or, until found apostatical of Christ, so enrages God that he takes from her the light of his word and lets her fall into weighty errors and adhere to idolatry, adultery, whoredom and other sins and disgraces and follows after them, so that the church in such case, almost destroyed and ruined, is scarcely worthy of the name."

Answer. I would beseech the diligent reader to earnestly observe how the words of Gellius sound, which I have here cited at length. He admits that their church, deceived and enchanted by the devil, the lusts of the flesh, the pomp, sects and potentates of the world, has become drowsy, inattentive, ungrateful and an apostate of Christ, has enraged God and fallen into all manner of wickedness and sins; yet he claims that she remains the church of Christ, as if the church was inherited by one generation from another and did not consist in faith, Spirit and power. I would not know what poorer excuse he could find. Therefore observe that which I write and let it be unto you a certain rule, namely, where the Spirit, word, sacraments and life of Christ are found, that there the Nicene article comes in, "I believe in the holy christian church, the communion of saints, &c. On the other hand, where the Spirit, word, sacraments and life of Christ are not to be found, but where

the spirit, doctrine, sacraments and life of anti-christ are followed, there, also, is the church of anti-christ and not the church of Christ, although we might say a thousand times, "I believe in the holy christian church." For without—or against—the Spirit, word, sacraments and life of Christ, there can never be a christian church, however much we may pervert the truth. The word stands immutable. "Whosoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God," 2 John 9.

In the twelfth place he writes, "Because God, in his grace, has made an eternal covenant with his church and has promised her that the gates of hell, although they may rend and weaken her, shall not thoroughly prevail against her, therefore he will, at all times, preserve a shadow of the evangelical doctrine and of his sacraments, upon which the church shall be upheld; and he will also preserve some members upon the true foundation, who will grow up amidst the thistles, thorns, wolves, bears and lions and deliver them as in a violent hurricane from the elements, as Noah was saved from the deluge."

Answer. Where they conform themselves to the Spirit, word, sacraments, ordinances, commands, prohibitions, usage and example of Christ, there the holy christian church is found, as has been heard and there is also the promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against her. For although she grows as a rose among thorns, as he expresses himself, keeps herself among wolves, bears and lions and as a ship cast about by wind and waves, she must suffer much tribulation, yet she cannot be capsized, that is, she cannot be turned from Christ (understand this to be the true christian church); for she is built upon a rock, Mat. 7:24.

That this is the truth, the Scriptures and their examples teach us on every hand; and we also have found it so by facts within the last few years. For, however fiercely the lions, bears and wolves have roared, raved and torn for the last few years, by their frightful mandates, apprehending, torturing and murdering; and, although the waves often roll up to the clouds, yet the manifested truth

remains with the humble and pious children; and however sharply the thistles and thorns may sting, yet this noble and beautiful rose daily grows, and, praise be to God, increases in size and strength. Thereby it is made manifest unto many reasonable persons that God's promise to the church stands firm and it is the miracle and power of the Most High; for neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. 8:38, 39.

Yet this thoughtless man thinks that they are the true christian church and does not observe that the before-mentioned thistles, thorns, wolves, bears and lions, by which the true church has been so much troubled and still continues to be, are members of the very church which he claims were and yet are the true church of Christ. For they, during the last few centuries, have used one sacrament and unseparated, were greeted as the children of grace and were admitted and accepted in the communion of these churches.

He, besides, also consoles the poor people that the Lord has, at all times, preserved a shadow of the evangelical doctrine and of his sacraments upon which to support his church; as if God was well pleased with such a dead shadow of false preaching and of infant baptism; and, as if the church of Christ, the bride of God and of the Lamb, could be supported by adulterated doctrines and unscriptural sacraments. O, dear Lord! How long shall such errors yet endure? Who cannot understand such palpable deceit? He must have an extremely obdurate and perverse heart, or he must be a very ignorant and blunt man, I think.

In the thirteenth place he produces two arguments whereby he means to prove that their church is the general church (as he calls it) wherewith God has so dealt. And in the first place he writes, "in which church anti-christ was seated; for, according to the prophecies of Paul, he had placed himself in this and exalted himself above God; and asserts that it is the true church to which

God has given the promise, although she was dreadfully stained and miserably torn up. In our church the anti-christ has been seated and placed himself as a God and has exalted himself above all that is of God and religion—therefore our church is the true church and temple of God, to which the promise of God is given.” This argument he proves with these words: “The first proposition is true; for Paul calls the church in which the anti-christ would place himself, the temple of God; the other is also too clear to be denied, from the prophecies of Paul and the teachings of experience. For in the churches which baptize infants, he and all the violent tyrants have exercised their power and violence and trampled under foot all religion and worship. If both propositions now are true, then it follows, also, that the conclusion is true; and shows the anabaptists, in what a fearful condition they are, since they have left us and our church.”

Answer. By the side of this I will place my syllogism: Where true religion and worship, as required by the Scriptures, are trampled under foot, there is **not** the church of Christ. Anti-christ has, Gellius testifies, trampled under foot the true religion and worship required by the Scriptures, in the church for which Gellius speaks; therefore, the before-mentioned church is not the church of Christ. All Scriptures teach that my first proposition is true; for Moses says, “Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he” (meaning Christ) “shall speak in my name, I will require it of him,” Deut. 18:19. Christ says, “If you continue” (mark, “continue”), “in my word, then are you my disciples indeed,” John 8:31. Again, Paul says, “If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which you have received, let him be accursed,” Gal. 1:9. John also says, “Whosoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God,” 2 John 1:9.

My second proposition Gellius admits to be true; for he says that anti-christ has trampled religion and worship under his feet, as heard.

Since, then, the first proposition can be substantiated by the Scriptures and the second is acknowledged by Gellius to be right, therefore, my conclusion must also be right, namely, that the

church to which he refers is not the church of Christ. For she does not accept the word of Christ, but a strange gospel; and does not abide in the pure doctrine of his holy apostles. Therefore they do not have God in power and are not the disciples of Christ; or else the cited sayings must be wrong and false.

As regards the first proposition of Gellius, Paul testifies in plain words, that it is false, for he says, "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition," 2 Thes. 2:3. Here Paul teaches in tolerably plain words that the falling away of faith would first come as was also the case here.

Since Paul openly testifies by the Spirit of God, that the falling away would come before the day of the Lord and also shows through whom it would come, namely, through the man of sin (son of perdition); and since it is clearly visible that this son of perdition has placed himself in the temple of God, that is, in the hearts of man, or rather, in the stead of God in the before-mentioned church and has quite demolished and destroyed it and through deceit has changed it, under the semblance of the name of Christ, from the doctrine and ordinances of God to his own doctrine and ordinances, [Dan 7:25] therefore, I would leave the attentive reader to judge if this church, which is quite demolished and destroyed by him, can be called God's temple. If he judges that it cannot be so called, then he judges rightly; otherwise many passages of the Scriptures would be fallible and false; and, as a consequence, God and the devil, Christ and anti-christ must have been seated in one temple and reigned in one church. But if they deny this, then I would again say that Luther and the learned have done wrong in bringing about such a disturbance, tribulation and misery in the world by their doctrine and change, since they, according to Gellius, still remained the church of Christ, although the anti-christ had quite destroyed and demolished the true religion. Reader, reflect upon this and judge whether I write the truth or not.

In his second proposition he judges himself; for he writes that anti-christ was seated in their church, which baptizes children; has placed himself in this as a God; and trampled under foot the true religion and worship. He also acknowledges, above, under the head of the separation, that the papists are not christians, for he says, “that those who leave us would sooner become papists than christians again.” Kind reader, observe closely what I write. Since it is manifest that the Roman anti-christ has, for a number of years, reigned in peace in their church; has given to them to drink from his cup of abominations; has destroyed the true religion and re-instated his abominations; and since he himself admits that the papists are not christians, therefore, it is certain and plain that their church was not, as he claims, the general christian church and temple of God to which the promise of God was given. For it cannot be that they can be the disciples of anti-christ and then yet remain the christian church and temple.

Now consider if the pious, whom he calls anabaptists, are so much out of way, by renouncing all the anti-christian abominations and false, condemned sects and churches. And if they place themselves in such a frightful position as he sighingly complains, by humbly submitting themselves to the only eternal Messiah, Christ Jesus and by placing themselves as an example of all obedience and virtue, in their weakness, before all the world.

His second argument is this: “In and with all churches which teach the doctrine and faith of Christ Jesus; are not altogether fallen away; do not altogether reject and profane Christ and his holy gospel and which do not altogether trample upon the use of the holy sacraments and neglect them, as under the reign of Mahomet, there still remains the name of the holy church. In and with our church, which has the infant baptism as an apostolic ordinance, the doctrine and faith of Jesus Christ, as taught by the apostles, never was altogether fallen away, as it was with the Turks; although abominably adulterated and weakened by anti-

christ; therefore, the name of the church remains with our community and has true members in it."

Answer. If his first proposition was consistent and right, then it would also be consistent and right to say, The doctrine and faith were never entirely fallen away with the Arians, Circumcellians, Munsterians and other sects; the gospel was not altogether rejected and profaned and the sacraments altogether trampled upon by them. Therefore, the name of the church remains with them and true members of the church are found among them. We are, therefore, also wrongfully called "devilish heretics, conspirers and apostate anabaptists," by him, for we so highly prize the gospel and the sacraments of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we daily sacrifice our possessions and blood for their sake, as may be seen.

If he should say that the before-mentioned sects did not act and teach in accordance with the Scriptures and that they therefore were not in the communion of the christian church; then he judges himself still more markedly. For the papistic church to which he refers did not do this; if they did rightly act and teach, then he very unjustly says that they are not christians, as has been heard that he did.

Again, by his writing, "There still remains the name of the holy church," he openly testifies that his assertion is without all foundation in the Scriptures; for he does not refer to the unadulterated doctrine, to the salutary use of the holy sacraments, nor to the pious, unblamable life, which should always be found in the church of Christ. [It is] as if the name could keep the church in God and could bind it to the promise, without the Spirit, word, sacraments, faith and obedience to Christ. No, no, reader, no. "I know," says the First and the Last, "the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan," Rev. 2:9. If the name alone constituted the true church, then all the raving tyrants, enemies of christian truth, all murderers, perjurers, whore-mongers, avaricious, pompous and unrighteous, would be members of the church of Christ, for they call themselves after the name of Christ. This is incontrovertible.

As to his second proposition, I would say in the first place, Since he says that their church has infant baptism as an apostolic ordinance, that he by this heaps open falsehood upon the holy apostles, the upright, pious testifiers of eternal truth; for he can never prove by a single word in the Scriptures that they taught or practiced infant baptism, as has been sufficiently shown above.

In the second place I would say, That the church to which he refers was not only adulterated and weakened, as he calls it, but has become so estranged from God that she has worshipped, honored and served wood, stone, gold and silver gods and besides this, bread and wine; as has, alas, been seen these many years, in all the temples and houses of worship throughout Europe; and, as may yet, daily, be seen in many kingdoms, cities and towns. Yet Gellius asserts that their church was always the church of Christ. I have never heard more inconsistent reasoning. Therefore, dear reader; beware and do not listen to the smooth talk of the learned, for they deceive you. But hearken unto him who says, "I am the light of the world; he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," John 8:12 and then you will never be deceived.

Reader, understand what I mean; we do not dispute about whether or not there are some of the chosen ones of God in the before-mentioned churches; for this we, at all times, humbly leave to the just and gracious judgment of God, hoping there may be many thousands who are unknown to us, as they were to holy Elijah. Our dispute is in regard to what kind of Spirit, doctrine, sacraments, ordinances and life, Christ has commanded us to gather unto him, in an abiding church and how we should maintain it in his ways.

Behold, reader, these are his most important arguments with which to maintain his assertion, "that their church is the true one," namely, because they sprang from the papists and practice infant baptism. Just hear how strangely he writes. In my opinion, he pens all that comes into his mind, if it has but a little semblance,

that it may tickle the ears of the thoughtless people and console them in their impenitent, easy life. If these adduced assertions of his were true, then it could not be otherwise than that until now the church of Christ must have been the church of anti-christ, or that of anti-christ must have been the church of Christ. Also, Christ and anti-christ must have both reigned in one church; infant baptism must have been called apostolic, without the Scriptures and the mere name constitutes the church of Christ. This [criticism], by the grace of God, no one can successfully rebut; let him garble and twist the matter as adroitly as he pleases.

CONCERNING SOME ACCUSATIONS AGAINST US.

In the first place, Gellius accuses us, saying, "They (he means us), falsely adorn and deck themselves with the sanctity of the church. For, since the Holy Spirit, which sanctifies the church both by the remission of sin and dying unto the old man with all his lusts and also by the nullifying of the sins in the flesh, is given through faith, therefore I cannot see how they can receive the Holy Spirit together with true sanctification and be the true, holy church, while they so bitterly contend among themselves about the divinity of the Holy Spirit (which, besides other evidence, sufficiently proves his divinity by the work of sanctification), as well as about many other articles of faith."

Answer. Zwinglius formerly taught that the will of God actuated a thief to steal, a murderer to kill and that their punishment was also brought about by the will of God; which, in my opinion, is an abomination of abominations. Now, if I conclude that because Zwinglius taught so, all preachers teach it, it

would be a wrong conclusion. Athanasius could not prevent Arius from teaching that the Holy Spirit was a creation of Christ.*

Reader, understand my meaning. I never have thought that God's Holy and eternal Spirit was not God, with God and in God; yet, he would accuse us, who are not guilty, of denying the sanctification, grace, fruit and power of the Holy Spirit, because some, who have been separated from us, have erred in this respect and probably still err. Nonetheless, he plainly sees and palpably feels the sanctification and power of the Holy Spirit in us, namely, that it smothers the old man with his lusts and destroys the sins of the flesh; something which he calls the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, as has been heard. Behold, thus he upbraids and accuses the guiltless. Whether this is not the Pharisaic, envious and disgraceful spirit which explained away the good intentions of Christ and his disciples and by this inflamed the thoughtless populace against them, I will leave to his own reflection.

In the second place he accuses us, saying, "They have an obdurate faith; one half of which is founded upon the merits of Christ and the other upon their own merits. For Obbe Philips, who has a great many followers (as he says) does plainly assert that the justification of man is not brought about by faith alone, but by faith, love and good works."

Answer. I would humbly ask Gellius this question: Does it follow that because Obbe Philips formerly taught this doctrine, Menno and the others also teach it? If he answers in the affirmative, then I would say that he does us an injustice, as alas, he often does. For our doctrine and publications abundantly testify that we and the church of God are not thus minded, but that we seek justification in the righteous and crucified Christ Jesus alone.

But if he answers in the negative, then I wish he would have the kindness and virtue in him to make a difference and not mix the innocent with the guilty; and I also wish that he would say no

* [CHCoG: Or should this be "Arius could not prevent Athanasius from claiming that he taught that the Holy Spirit was a creature of Christ."?]

more than the truth; for he writes that the before-mentioned “Obbe Philips has a considerable number of followers,” and I make the assertion that he cannot find more than six to ten who believe as he does.

In the third place he accuses us, saying, “How can they be a holy church who disagree among themselves about the head of the church; [they] do not suffer him to be the true God and by this resuscitate the old Arian heresy.”

Answer. We may well sincerely thank the Most High, that he so manifests unto us his paternal grace and great mercy, that even our most adroit and acute opponents cannot accuse us but by such puerile, and, for the greater part, false reasoning. If he would consult natural honor, not to mention love and truth, as much as he, alas, consults bitter and envious feeling, how loath he would be to think that which he now is not ashamed to publish in writing, indiscriminately saying that we resuscitate the old Arian heresy, while he and his like well know that such have no part in the communion of our churches, so long as they do not renounce such errors, as heard.

O dear Lord, how long will such bitter and envious accusations and false backbitings continue! Would to God that the magistrates would have a little fear of the Lord and consider what they are doing and that they would hear and compare the different parties, so that they would finally learn whom and for what purpose they persecute and what kind of people and teachers they are whom they daily maintain and encourage in their injustice and abominations, by their violence.

In the fourth place he accuses us, saying, “If they are the true, holy church, the spiritual bride of Christ, pure, holy and unblamable, then let them prove the unity of the Spirit, especially concerning the twelve articles of faith, which are the foundation of the church; then the one should not be Mennonite, the other Adam Pastorite, the third Obbeite, the fourth Dirkite, &c. For

although they may ban one another as much as they please, it still is evidently true that they are all anabaptists and enemies to infant baptism and thus still continue to conspire and fanaticize against the churches of Christ."

Answer. I trust that we, by the grace of God, are so wedded to our Lord and Bridegroom, Christ Jesus, that we are prepared to sacrifice our lives for the sake of hearing his holy voice. We do not boast of our holiness and piety, as Gellius accuses us, but of our great weakness. I also trust that we, who are grains of one loaf, agree in not only the twelve articles (as he counts them), but in all the articles of the Scriptures, as regeneration, repentance, baptism, Holy Supper, separation, &c., which we, along with Isaiah, Peter and Paul, Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 2:6; Eph. 2:20, accept as the only foundation of the churches, as preached by Christ's own blessed mouth, [which he] left and taught us in clear and plain words; and not only the twelve articles as Gellius does.

Neither are we so divided as he says; for Dirk (Dietrich Philip) and we are of the same mind and I trust, through the grace of God, we will always remain so. But that Obbe has become a Demas and that Adam Pastor has separated from us, is not our fault. Such things often happened in the apostolic times also. God reclaim them at his will; they have taken their leave and are, alas, no more counted among us, so long as they do not repent.

His writing "that we still conspire and contend against the church of Christ," and other like bitter and resenting words, show that he is so actuated by the spirit of envy, that he cannot write or speak a discreet and reasonable word about us; but he must call us fanatics, conspirators, hedge-preachers and sneaks; and he never observes how different in opinion and how divided in doctrine the baptizers of infants are, who claim to be the true church; and into how many different sects they are divided. One party is papistic; the other Lutheran; the third Zwinglian; the fourth Calvinistic, &c.; and, although they violently quarrel among themselves, disgrace, condemn and ruin each other as much as they please, yet it is still evidently true that they baptize their children, are unfriendly to the

baptism of Christ, continue to conspire against the truth and persecute it and the church of Christ. O, reader, that the world would once learn to know who are the fanatics and conspirators; then we might hope for the better, but as it is, it is hidden from their eyes.

In the fifth place he accuses us, saying. "If they are the holy church, then let them hearken unto the voice of Christ; which says that the word of the holy gospel and its sacraments should not be preached and dispensed in secret nooks and corners, but in public."

Answer. If we are not the true church of Christ, but if Gellius and his like are that church, as he pretends and would yet have us publicly proclaim our doctrine, why has he then twice refused a public discussion with me, under safe conduct, to which I have invited him, while he well knows that I have to endure so much for the sake of my doctrine and faith? It would be reasonable, if we err in some things, from which God preserve us, that he should go with me before the public, vanquish and convince me of our errors, for God knows that I am willing to be vanquished if I can be convinced by stronger Scriptures and more powerful truths; that he might thus receive the applause of his fellows (which he, in my opinion, very much strives after) and besides, save my soul and the souls of many others.

If he is a true preacher and a member of the true church of Christ, why does he, then, desire us to go before the public, while he well knows that I could not do so without the loss of blood and life? I freely offer myself, if he can show one plain passage in the Scriptures, that the apostles and prophets have publicly taught at such places where they knew that the people had resolved upon their death, as alas, they have everywhere resolved upon our death, and, by the grace of God, we will do the same.

I know to a certainty that he can find no such examples nor Scriptures in the Bible. Yes, dear reader, if he would be straightforward in assigning the reason why he always desires us

to go and preach in public, he would confess that he seeks nothing by his hypocritical and artful pretension, other than to make our cause suspicious with the people, that his cause shall make a good appearance and that he is very desirous and thirsty after the blood of the innocent. He, I say, against all reason, love and Scriptures, desires us to publicly proclaim our doctrine, well knowing that in all Germany, not a place can be found where this could be done without imprisonment, violence, or rebellion. If he, now, were in the truth, as he would like to be considered, namely, an upright, unblamable preacher, how loath would he be to think of such gross disgrace, which he now, alas, dares loudly proclaim both by speaking and writing. David says, "Jehovah will abhor the bloody and deceitful man," Psa. 5:6.

In the sixth place he accuses us, saying, "As they want to be the true church of Christ, they would do well to look back to the origin of their church and see how it agrees with the origin and age of the true church. That their church is not of the origin and times of Adam, Abraham, or David, is proven by their wrong opinion and abominable error in regard to the incarnation of Christ, whereby they make him neither God nor man and rob us of our Messiah. Also, above, under the head of the Calling, he writes, "It is an abominable fruit that they have resuscitated and again introduced into the world such a disgraceful error in regard to the incarnation of Christ. For if Christ was not of our flesh (of which he was not, unless he received it from the woman), then the law was not fulfilled in our flesh; then the righteousness of God is not yet acquitted, which without the ransom would not leave us unpunished.

Answer. The learned always slander us and complain because, we, with the angel Gabriel, Luke 1:32; with John the Baptist, John 1:15-36; with Peter, Mat. 16:16; with Martha, John 11:27; with the apostles, Mat. 14:33 and with the eternal Father himself, acknowledge Christ, both according to his divinity and humanity, as the true and only begotten Son of God; and we dare not teach and believe more nor otherwise than the word of the Lord teaches

us of him. I would therefore beseech all readers and hearers to consider well the following brief answers and references. I trust that, by the grace of God, I will be able to explain the matter so clearly in a few words, that the reader will plainly see that they not only rob us of Christ, the doctrine, sacraments, Spirit, life, ordinances and usage of our Savior, but also rob him of his most holy origin, glory, honor and person; and, that they, by their deceiving comments and reasoning, render Christ as a divided, impure and inconsistent Christ, both according to nature and the Scriptures. Whosoever has ears to hear let him hear and whosoever has a mind to understand let him understand.

THE CONFESSION OF THE LEARNED CONCERNING CHRIST.

The Confession of the Learned concerning Christ, is, "That the eternal word, the second person in the Godhead (these are their words), the eternal Son of God, has taken unto himself the nature of our flesh. Yes, that the whole man, Christ, who was sacrificed and who died for us, is the natural seed of the woman, of Abraham and of David. The seed of the woman (they say) according to the ordinance of God, Gen. 3, with which seed, namely, Mary's flesh and blood, the before-mentioned divine person, the eternal Word and eternal Son, has united himself; and thus became one person and Christ. Or that the whole person, Christ Jesus, with body and soul, is the natural fruit of the flesh and blood of Mary, in which the eternal Word dwelt. The man, Christ Jesus, died, but the Word remains whole and intact."

Answer. It seems very strange to me that the learned never cease to upbraid us by their indiscreet words and cause us more and more tribulation by the bloodthirsty. Yet we have plainly and

incontrovertibly on our side, the firm and immutable foundation of the holy apostles and prophets, also the blessed word and testimony of Christ; while they have neither common reason nor the Scriptures on their side, as may be seen. For all these following weighty and intolerable improprieties and abominable errors result from their confession, as is clear as day.

First, A divided Christ; of which one half must have been heavenly and the other earthly; as some even dare boldly assert that the person of Christ consisted of two principal parts, namely, God and man.

Secondly, An impure and sinful Christ, for the defense says: *Christum non alterius ullius carnis participem factum esse, quana quæ and peccato (ut tentaretur) and morti simul obnoxia esset, &c.*, that is, “Christ partook of no other flesh but of sin, that he might be tempted and subject to death.” At another place the defense says, in regard to Christ: *Si sanctus (inquit) quomodo sub peccatum in Patris judicio condemnatur?* that is, “If Christ is holy, why is he then judged in the judgment of the Father because of sins?” This agrees perfectly with the writing of Gellius; that the righteousness of God would not leave us unpunished without the ransom.

Reader, observe, How could they speak more blasphemously of the most holy manhood of Christ, no, of the Son of the Almighty and eternal God, than they do by this? For if Christ was flesh of our sinful and death-guilty flesh and if he was thus tempted by his own flesh, then the sin of which he was tempted must have dwelt in his flesh and then he died for the sake of duty and not for the sake of grace; this is too clear to be refuted. Nor could it be otherwise, if we assert that Christ’s flesh was of Adam’s sinful flesh.

Again, If his holy, precious flesh was such a ransom as Gellius claims, how could the righteousness of God be fulfilled and acquitted by this, according to the holy will of God? If this may not be rightly called preaching an impure and sinful Christ and

robbing [us of] our most holy Savior and Messiah (something of which they accuse us), I will leave all right-minded and reasonable people to reflect upon in a scriptural light.

Thirdly, [They teach] two persons in Christ, namely, one is the second person in the Godhead and the other [one is] the man of Mary's flesh, in which human person the divine person dwelt. Which error is not only controverted by us, but also by Luther, saying, "Beware, beware (I say) of the *Alleosi*;"* it is the devil's mask; for it will ultimately establish such a Christ as I would not be called after; namely, that Christ henceforth is no more and that his suffering avails no more than the suffering of a common saint. For, if I should believe that only human feeling suffered for me, then that Christ would be a poor Savior; he would stand in need of a Savior himself. In short, it is unspeakable what the devil seeks and intends by this *Alleosi*. We say, God is man and man is God; we cry against them that they divide the person of Christ, as if it were two persons."

For, if the *Alleosi* shall stand, as Zwingli teaches it, Christ must be two persons, one divine, the other human. This he says, "Reader, observe, to what kind of Christ they teach and point us.

Fourthly, Two sons in Christ; of which the first is the Son of God without a mother; the second, the son of Mary, without a father; in which son of Mary, the Son of God should have been embodied and thus have been united, as they claim. Just behold what a monstrosity they produce!

Fifthly, The person, Christ Jesus, then was neither the first nor only begotten Son, but the third son of God in order, who was not born, but created by God; and would be, as Pomer says, the accepted son of God, *Quod & Bonosianorum five Monosolitarum hæresis est*. "Which is the heresy of the Bonosians and the five Monosolites." I say He would be the third in order. For the first is the Word; the second, the first Adam, Luke 3:38 and the third, the

* [CHCoG: Appears to be Latin, which translates as Allies.]

man of Mary's flesh, who should have been accepted as a son of God, as heard.

Sixthly, Then we are not redeemed and delivered through God's first and only begotten Son, but through Mary's son, created from Adam's impure and sinful flesh, as also the defense and his followers dare assert, in the face of all the Scriptures, saying that the nature embodied in the loins of Adam, which committed the transgression also, according to the righteousness of God will requite and remit the same.

Seventhly, If we are thus delivered through Adam's flesh, as they claim, then we should not only give thanks to the Father for his Word, but also to Adam's flesh, through which our deliverance is caused; this, all right-minded persons must admit.

Eighthly, If the man Christ was a creation of Adam's flesh and we were delivered through him, as the learned claim; and since God speaks through the prophet, That he will not give his glory to another, Isaiah 48:11; and since it is manifest that we should honor our Redeemer, Christ, no less than we honor the Father, therefore it must follow that God either did not speak truly through his prophets, or else they were all idolaters because they gave divine homage to a creature of Adam's flesh; something which is so strictly forbidden in the Scriptures and which often was severely punished by God. Behold, reader, such an inconsistent, impure and divided Christ he is to which the learned point and teach you by their sophistry and garbled Scriptures. A christ composed of two persons and two sons; of which one person and son should have dwelt in the other; and of which one person and son should have suffered and the other not; and the one that suffered should have been the son of Mary and not of God. I think this may well be called forsaking the Lord who has bought them and preaching a strange christ whom the Scriptures never knew.

O, reader, dear reader, how lamentably the deceitfulness of the old serpent robs us, through the reasoning of the learned, of this noble, exalted and precious Messiah and points us to an impure,

sinful, earthly and created being; never minding that the Holy Spirit openly testifies that the Word of God was made flesh, John 1 and that this same incarnated Word is our Emmanuel and our God with us, Mat. 1:23; Jehovah who saves us through a son of David, Jer. 23:5-6;* the first and only begotten, John 1:1-18; God's own Son, Rom. 8;† descended from heaven, John 3:13; the living bread from heaven which was not his invisible godhead, as the learned say, but his visible flesh, as he himself testifies, John 6:51; come forth from God, John 16:30; the first and last, Rev. 1:11; who humbled himself and did not assume the form of a great emperor or king, but of a humble servant. He came down to the level of man; assumed the form of man; obeyed his Father unto death, unto the death of the cross. [He was] truly God and man, man and God. God at all times, of God and in God; God's {eternal} Word, who, in due time, according to the promise made to the patriarchs, became a miserable, suffering and mortal man in Mary, the pure virgin, who was of the seed of Abraham and married to a man of the house of David, named Joseph (upon which Joseph, the evangelists base their genealogy); not divided, as the learned teach, but an undivided, single Christ and Son of God; pure and spotless; planted in her of the seed and Word of his Father, by the Holy Spirit of God; conceived of her through faith; fed and nourished in her virgin body and in due time became man, as Isaac was brought forth from Sarah and John from Elisabeth; born from her according to the promise; obedient to the law; a light to the world; a preacher of grace; an example of righteousness; and at last, not on account of his own sins, for he did not know sin, but for our sins, he was innocently condemned to death, nailed to the cross, died, buried, arose and ascended to his Father in heaven, where he

* [CHCoG: Menno instead had this, which is not actually what the chapter says: "the Lord who justifies us, Jer. 23."]

† [CHCoG: Menno used Romans 8 as his reference, likely meaning 8:3. This avoids the more detailed Romans 1:1-4, which clearly states that Jesus is **both** the son of God and the son of David.]

dwelt before; and there he is our only and eternal Mediator, Advocate, Intercessor, Expiator and High Priest with God, his Father, Mark 16; Acts 1; John 6:16; and thus the Almighty and eternal God, our merciful, heavenly Father, alone receives the honor and praises, through this his Christ, our eternal Messiah, his first and only begotten Son and {eternal} Word; and not through the impure and sinful flesh of Adam, as the learned teach.

Observe, reader, which of these confessions is the most powerful and has the strongest foundation in the Scriptures; and in which of the two the greater love of God and higher honor to Christ is perceptible. Whether God had taken a man of the seed or flesh of Adam, as the learned teach, or whether he had given his {eternal} Word, power, wisdom, no, the heart of his own body, (to make a common expression), in death, for us, as all the Scriptures teach us that he did.

O what an inestimable word is this, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Again, “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world,” and again, “Here is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,” 1 John 4:9, 10. Mark, he has sent his Son and not a man of the seed of Adam who had no father. Paul says, “He did not spare his own Son,” Rom. 8:32 and other explicit sayings.

* * * *

Here, in the original [Dutch] works of Menno Simon, follows a brief argument in reference to the incarnation of our Lord, which the publishers have deemed proper to omit, for the reason that they felt that the book would be more edifying to the general reader without it. [CHCoG: We would have preferred that they had translated and included it, as it may have clarified Menno’s beliefs on this complex topic. However, Menno discusses this topic

extensively in his Reply to John A'Lasco and his Discussions with Martin Micron later in this volume.]

[CHCoG: There are several things in this section that need to be expanded upon. First, Menno is absolutely correct that we do NOT have a divided Christ, consisting of a God part and a human part. Next, we need to clarify some issues about Jesus' human ancestry, as given in the Bible. This article claims that the Bible genealogies are those of Mary's husband Joseph, but that is only true of the genealogy in Luke 3:23-38. In Matthew, we are given an entirely different genealogy from King David to Christ. Compare Luke 3:23-51 with Matthew 1:6-16 to verify this. And the last section of the Matthew list seems odd, in that it appears to be missing one generation. However, the Aramaic Peshitta New Covenant manuscripts explain both of these things. The final Joseph listed in Matthew is not Mary's husband, but her father, who is also called Joseph. Mary is herself the missing generation and therefore she is the direct physical link back to King David via King Solomon. Her husband Joseph is instead descended from King David's son Nathan and actually has no genetic link to Jesus, as he is not his father. This physical link is critical to fulfilling all of the prophecies regarding Christ. The Bible and genetics both confirm that Jeshua is unique. That Mary is said to have conceived means that one of her eggs was impregnated. Mat. 1:20, Luke 1:31. But the fact that she remained a virgin and conceived via the Holy Spirit indicates that her egg was directly activated by special male DNA that was divinely created for Jeshua, God's Son, who had previously been truly begotten by Jehovah, his Father, before the universe was created (Isa 7:14, Heb 10:5).^{*} Because of this new DNA, Jeshua is a new and independent Adam, because he does not have Adam's Y chromosome (1 Cor 15:45).

^{*} [CHCoG: It is likely that Jesus was originally begotten from his father in a similar way to how Eve was 'begotten' from Adam.]

But the part of his body that came from Mary, including her contribution to Christ's DNA via her egg, made him **also** a descendant of Adam, Abraham and David (Luke 3:38, Gal 3:16, Mat 1:1, 1 Chr 17:11-14) and thus the prophesied seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). Understand this clearly: If Jesus did not inherit this part of his body from Mary, he could NOT truly be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, David, etc. The Bible does not say that Jesus's body did not partake of what Menno calls 'impure and sinful flesh', either from Mary's egg, while growing in her womb, while he was a breastfeeding infant, or from eating normal food afterwards. Remember, it was God who made our flesh in the first place and He said it was all 'very good.' And Mary was specially selected and prepared by God to become Christ's mother. It is Gnostic beliefs which deny that this creation is 'very good' and are inconsistent with the observation that Jesus did, in fact, grow from a tiny egg into a baby in Mary and then he lived on earth in a physical body. Yes, God prepared a body for him, but as explained, this was done by fertilising one of Mary's eggs with special male DNA, divinely created specifically for Jesus. This DNA became part of every cell in Jesus's forming and adult body and it significantly modified every one of those cells. This means that Christ's body was BOTH from above and from Mary, not just one or the other. This body was animated by Christ's original soul and spirit, which the Holy Spirit united with it when Mary's egg was fertilized, making Jesus a triune being composed of a body, soul and spirit, like we are. 1 Thes. 5:23, 1 John 4:2-3. But in Jesus's case, his soul and spirit existed before his physical body and retained his memories and character. Luke 2:41-47. And though Jesus had a physical body composed of flesh while on earth, it was his choices and his constant refusal to sin that made him sinless. Heb. 4:15. And when Jesus rose from the dead, his physical body was transformed into a spiritual body, which will also happen to us when we are resurrected. 1 Cor. 15:48-54. Jesus returned to heaven in this new spiritual body, which differs from

the one he had before He became human, as He is now both fully the Son of God and the Son of Man. John 3:18 & 20:31, Mat. 9:6 & 12:8, Rev 14:14.]

In the seventh place, he accuses us, saying, "That, secondly, their church has not existed since the time of Abraham; and that she is, therefore, not the true church, is clearly visible from the fact that they, in disobedience to the will of God, refuse the seal of the eternal covenant to the children of the church, which has, since the time of Abraham, been practiced and maintained in the churches."

Answer. Abraham was commanded by God that he should leave the land of his fathers and of his kinsmen and that he should leave his father's house and move to a land which the Lord would show him. Abraham believed in the Lord and departed as Jehovah had commanded him, Gen. 12:4-6.

Again, Jehovah commanded him that he should offer Isaac, whom he loved, his only begotten [son] from the free woman, as a burnt offering. Abraham believed in God; he was obedient and prepared to do whatever God commanded, Gen. 22; Rom. 8:32.

In the same manner he was commanded to circumcise himself, his son Ishmael (Isaac was not yet born) and every man child of his household and all the males after him, at the eighth day after their birth. Abraham believed in God and did as the Lord commanded him.

Behold, thus Abraham believed in Jehovah; and he counted it to him for righteousness, Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3. In the same manner God has spoken unto us in the New Testament, not only by angels and prophets, as he did unto Abraham and the patriarchs, but also by his Son, which Son has thus commanded, namely, That the gospel should be preached to all the world; to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; and whosoever believes it should be baptized, Mark 16; even as Abraham was commanded to circumcise all males, Gen. 17:10-13.

This command we have received from the mouth of Christ, therefore we believe in it, even as Abraham believed in his time. We believe it, I say and do accordingly; we teach those of understanding minds and baptize those that believe, not in disobedience, as Gellius says, but in obedience to the clear, plain and express ordinance and command of Christ, God's own Son.

Dear reader, observe. Christ, our Lord, thanked his Father and said, "This is eternal life, that they might know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent," John 17:3. At another place he says, "If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed." Mark, he says, "If you continue," John 8:31. And while the merciful and affectionate Father, through his great kindness, has exposed to us the glorious knowledge and the wonderful, deep mystery of his beloved Son, and, besides has given us such a fruit through his Spirit, that we dare not wilfully and knowingly deviate one hair's breadth from his holy word, ordinance and command, as is testified and shown by our tribulation, misery and deprivation, to the whole world, yet, alas, according to the judgment of Gellius and of the learned, we are not the believing church, nor the disciples of Christ, as may be seen by their writings.

Behold, thus the righteous judgment of the Almighty and great God is passed upon the wise and learned of this world, that the clear and plain signs by which the true disciples and church of Christ may and must be known, are esteemed an abomination and error. And those who have received light from above, through grace, are not accounted as christians by them, as has been related.

In the eighth place he accuses us and says, "They must admit that their church has existed but sixteen or seventeen years, that is, since the time Menno Simon commenced preaching. For they do not want to be counted at all, of the Munsterites, Amsterdamites and Oude Kloosterites, among whom Menno lost a brother, lest they be called seditious or the seed of sedition."

Answer. We point to Christ Jesus our only and eternal Prophet and Messiah, sent by the Father, who is the only true Cornerstone in Zion, the true Teacher, Law-giver, Commander, Intercessor and Head of his church, together with all his angels, apostles and prophets, through whom he, in former times, spoke and also his Spirit, word, ordinances, commands, prohibitions, usage and example. And if Gellius, or any other person under the canopy of heaven, be he learned or not, can convince us by divine truth that we teach or maintain anything contrary to his word and ordinances, then I, for myself, sincerely desire to correct the wrong and to follow that which is right. This he knows who has purchased me; for I want to be saved. But if they can not do this by the truth, but only in appearance of truth and thus blaspheme it, as all the perverse do and have to leave our testimony unbroken, then it is sufficiently proven that our hated, despised and small church is the true, prophetic, apostolic and christian church, which began with the first righteous who walked according to the will of God; and not with me, as Gellius, alas, maliciously says.

Secondly, I would say, since he has accused us at different times, of the errors and sedition of the Munsterites, of which we are clear and have always been, before God and man, therefore, I would beseech him to take a view of his own infant baptist church, of which he is a teacher and head and see how abominably they have, for years, rebelled among each other; how they have afflicted countries and nations with their accursed, ungodly wars and have given the blood of innumerable human beings, together with their poor souls, to the prince of hell and have placed them as an offering upon his altar; of which, alas, the learned, by their seditious writings, together with the priests, monks and preachers, were the principal cause, which is as clear as day to many reasonable persons.

Thirdly, I would say that, in my opinion, he here so indiscreetly alludes to the error of my poor brother, for one of these two reasons: Either, that he by this would make me suspicioned with

the reader, that I, formerly, also was of the same feeling with my brother, or that he would by this injure my reputation. For my brother is no longer subject to the punishment of man, which he once suffered in the flesh, but only to the judgment of God. It seems that Gellius cannot master the envy and bitterness of his heart; for nobody can be corrected or taught righteousness by such a course.

If he did so for the first reason, namely, to make me suspicioned, then all those who formerly heard me, when yet of the papal church and all who have ever heard me until this hour and also my published writings, will be my testimony, that he wrongfully suspicions me; for I never thought of such a thing, much less taught it.

But, if he did so for the second reason, namely, to blemish my reputation, then he should know that I and mine, I trust, never harmed him nor his in the least; and also, that my poor brother, to whom he so cruelly alludes, did no greater wrong than that he erroneously, alas, defended his faith by force of arms and retaliated the violence committed against him, as all the learned, preachers, priests, monks and all the world do. I presume that I have merited this cruel allusion by nothing less than by my faithful love, because I have, in sincerity of heart, pointed him and all the preachers to the divine truth of the word and because I have advised them to their own well-being. And how this allusion, which cannot have been made but in envy, agrees with honorableness and with the fear of God, all reasonable readers may judge by the Scriptures and the common rules of decency. May the kind Lord grant that he may rightly learn the heart from which this unmerited allusion comes, that he may purge it and sincerely repent; this is my revenge and punishment which I invoke on him.

In the ninth place he accuses us and says, "That we cannot prove that infant baptism is an anti-christian abomination; nor show from the anti-christian ordinance who was the institutor of it. It can also be proven, he says, that infant baptism was practiced

ever since the apostolic times; long before the violence of anti-christ, which was yet unknown, or, at least, very weak, at the time of Augustine."

Answer. We teach and practice such a baptism as was commanded by Jesus Christ, God's own Son; as was taught by his faithful witnesses, the apostles, in clear and explicit terms and as was transmitted to us by their practice; which is the baptism of the believing, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 2:38; 8:36; 10:48; 16:33; 19:5; Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Tit. 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:21. Whosoever, now, will teach and practice any other baptism, must show by the Scriptures where it is commanded. But if they can not do this, as it is impossible to do, then it is already proven that it is not Christ's baptism, but that of anti-christ, however finely it may be ornamented with learned words; this is too clear to be denied.

But as to his assertion that the violence of anti-christ was yet unknown at the time of Augustine, or that it was at least feeble, is too absurd to admit of an answer. Whoever will, may read history and he will find in great clearness that anti-christ was, at the time of Augustine, in full honor and that he reigned with his doctrine in the hearts of men.

In the tenth place he accuses us, said says," If they were the true messengers of God, who are to purge and deliver the church of Christ from such abominable anti-christian errors, they should not be a separated sect; for the prophets and all the faithful servants of God, by whom God has often purged his church, did not separate themselves from the church and establish a church of their own, but they remained with the church and bestowed their faithful labor upon the church, at the peril of their lives."

Answer. Whatever Gellius does, it seems that he must slander. I say again, take Christ Jesus and all his prophets and apostles; Spirit, word, ordinance and life and if he can by this convince us that in any article we are at fault and contrary to their teaching (for his slandering amounts to nothing), or that we do not conform to it, or, that, in our weakness, we do not agree with it—I will confess

that we are a separated sect. But if he can not do so, as it is impossible for him and yet he calls us a separated sect, he shows by this that he is no better judge of the church of Christ than Tertullus was when before Felix and the Jews at Rome, before Paul.

I would further say that if he can prove to us that the faithful prophets intermingled with the worshippers of the calf of Jeroboam; with the servants of Baal and the abominations of Israel, which they so zealously reprov'd; and remained united with those who disobeyed the law; and, also, that the holy apostles admitted [unrepentant] Pharisees and Scribes, together with other refractory persons, in the communion of their churches—then we admit that he has a good cause to reprove us and to write as he does. If they did not do so, (and they have not), but, on the contrary, reprov'd, by the power of the Spirit, the abominations that crept in from time to time, according to the pure word and ordinance of God, at the peril of their lives, then he must admit that he accuses us without cause, since we do not do otherwise than according to the example of the holy apostles and prophets, reprov'g all false doctrine, unrighteousness and abominations with the pure, apostolic teaching, Spirit, ordinance and word of our Lord Jesus Christ (without which no true church of Christ can exist); avoiding that which is wrong, and, faithfully, in love and purity, teaching and promulgating the salutary, christian truth, verbally and by writing, to all the hungry hearts, at the peril of our lives and possessions.

Lastly, I would say, Since he calls us an excluded sect, because we do not unite with them, why have he and his followers seceded from the Papistic and Lutheran churches? If he answers: Because of their abominations, then I would again say that we do it for the same reason. For they forsake the Son of the true and living God and point us to an earthly creature of the unclean and sinful flesh of Adam as being our Savior. Besides, they do not follow the command and ordinance of God in regard to baptism, Holy Supper

and separation. We will never, at any risk, desire to be of one church with those who seek their reconciliation and salvation in the sinful flesh of Adam and who reject God's testimony of his Son and his ordinance. But we desire to be of one church and body with those who give the praise to God through his word; with those who confess the whole Christ as the only and first begotten Son of God and who abide unchangeably in his holy ordinances, example, Spirit and word. Let those of understanding minds understand that which the word of the Lord teaches, John 10.

In the eleventh place he accuses us, saying, "From this it follows that the calling of their doctrine is wrong and that their whole church, service and walk, cannot aid to salvation, but can only lead to the corruption and destruction of the true Churches; and therefore they do not suffer as innocent and harmless christians, but as busy-bodies in other men's matters (he refers to 1 Pet. 4), except that they want to suffer for such a cause of which they must be doubtful themselves and for which no martyr ever suffered."

Answer. As the Spirit of Christ and of unfeigned love, accepts all good and godly actions as right and godly, so, also, the spirit of anti-christ and of bitter envy explains everything that is right and godly as wrong and ungodly. For it is testified to with possessions and life that we dare not wilfully and knowingly deviate one hair's breadth from the word and example of the Lord, but judge everything according to the doctrines and usages of the apostles, so far as the Lord gives us grace. We, in our weakness, gladly conform our lives to the requirements of the Scriptures and gladly seek the praise of God and the salvation of our neighbors, at the peril of our possessions and lives. Notwithstanding this, he dares write that the calling of our doctrine is wrong, that our walk and actions are not conducive to salvation; that we cause all manner of corruption and disorder and that we do not suffer as christians, but as evil-doers, who are busybodies in other men's matters. Behold,

thus all good offices of the godly are always explained to the reverse.

O, reader, beloved reader, that the poor, ignorant world would sincerely accept this, our despised doctrine, which is not from us but from Christ and that they would faithfully obey it; for then they might change their deadly swords into plow-shares and their spears into pruning hooks; they would level their gates and walls, dismiss their executioners and hangmen, for all those who accept our doctrine, in its power, by the grace of God, will not desire to injure anyone upon earth, not even their most bitter enemies, much less wrong or harm them by works and actions; for they are the children of the Most High, who sincerely loves all that is good, and, in their weakness, avoid that which is evil, no, hate it and are inimical to it. Yet we must hear that we suffer for the sake of wrongdoing, as has been heard.

But in regard to his assertion “that we suffer for a cause of which we must be doubtful ourselves and for which no martyr ever suffered,” he should know that if we at all doubted our faith, we would not so deeply impress the seal with our possessions and blood, as we do; for a house built upon the sand cannot withstand such torrents of water and wind-storms as visit us daily, Mat. 7:25.

Nor do we suffer on account of an uncertain cause as he says, but for the sake of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for the sake of his holy, precious word and ordinances; for the sake of the sincere confession of God and Christ; for the sake of obedience to the Scriptures, for the sake of which all have suffered, from the beginning, who have rightly suffered according to the will of God, as may be plainly and clearly concluded from profane and sacred history.

In the twelfth place he accuses us, saying, “That they are the church and Israel is false, since they stain the true church of Christ by many errors which they daily produce and bring forward as from the abyss of hell; destroy the true sheep of Christ; unreasonably adorn themselves with the sanctity of the church;

cause strife and dissension concerning the articles of faith; are carnal, sneak about and preach in secret and do not agree with the elders of the churches, as said before."

Answer. If the spirit of truth had been the writer in this case, the game would have, doubtlessly, been reversed and this accusation laid on our opponents; for they still maintain and uphold some gross errors which were formerly brought forward by anti-christ from the abyss of hell (to use his own expression), both by doctrine and force; and by this cause the godly much affliction and tribulation, cause many a pious child to be deprived of possessions and life, adulterate truth, preach falsehood, are carnally minded and in fact deny that the man, Christ Jesus, is God's only and first begotten Son, while we, with our small, despised number shun and forsake all the anti-christian abominations and errors, build up the church of Christ and again place it upon the true foundation, again publish and proclaim the clear and plain truth to many, both verbally and by writing, at the peril of life and the displeasure of the world. We confess the whole Christ, as the true, only and first begotten Son of God, as did the angel to Mary, John the Baptist, Peter, Martha and the Father from high heavens himself and rightly use his ordinances of baptism, Supper and separation, as all those did from the beginning who rightly knew God and acted according to his will.

Behold, reader, these are the most important accusations charged against us by him; and that they, for the most part, are artful fabrications, false explanations, false suspicions, false accusations and partial charges, whereby he obstructs the course of divine truth, maintains falsehood, insults the godly and consoles the impenitent in their easy life, is fully proven in this our replication.

In the last place he writes of us, saying, "Experience fully teaches that their teachers and prophets are not the teachers and prophets of God. And that they are not the people of God, I have, perhaps, already proven too powerfully. From which, then, it is

clear that our magistracy are right not to let them proceed in their wicked course, but to stop them; and they might, in pastoral and paternal faithfulness or solicitude for the church of Christ, speak and act a little harder towards them, lest the church be quite destroyed. But then we would be their persecutors and blood-hounds."

Answer. [Therefore] Jeremiah, Micah, Elijah, Christ Jesus and Paul could not be called the true prophets and servants of God; nor can we. But the great Lord shall, in due time, make it manifest who are the faithful prophets and servants of God and who are not.

Again, to his saying that we are not the people of God, we answer with holy Paul that it is a very small thing that we should be judged by the judgment of men; and especially by such men who are so diametrically opposed to the ordinance, will and word of God, as may be seen in the case of Gellius, by his writing. Yes, kind reader, if he and his like preachers acknowledged us to be the people of God, they would by this testify that they are not; something which an ambitious, carnal person, who seeks reputation and fame, will never do.

Again, in regard to his approval of the magistracy hindering our course, which he calls wicked, I would say that the longer and the more he writes, the more indiscreet and offensive he becomes and the more he manifests his blindness. If he is a preacher called by the Spirit of God, then let him show a single word in all the New Testament, whereby he can prove that Christ or the apostles have ever called on the magistracy to defend and protect the true church against the attack of the wicked, as alas, he calls us. No, no. Christ Jesus and his powerful word and Holy Spirit is the protector and defender of his church; and not the emperor, king, or any worldly potentate. The kingdom of the Spirit must be protected and defended by the sword of the Spirit and not by the sword of the world. This is too clear to be controverted, according to the doctrine and example of Christ and his apostles.

I would further say, If the magistracy rightly understood Christ and his kingdom, they would, in my opinion, rather choose death

than to meddle with their worldly power and sword in spiritual matters, which are not subject to the judgment of man, but to the judgment of the great and Almighty God alone. But they are taught by their pastors that they should proscribe, imprison, torture and slay those who are not obedient to their doctrine, as may, alas, be seen in many different cities and countries.

In short, kind reader, if the merciful Lord did not, in his great love, temper the hearts of some of the magistrates, but would let them proceed according to the fiendish instigation and blood-preaching of the learned, no pious person could endure. But some are yet found, who, notwithstanding the crying and writing of the learned, suffer and bear with the miserable, and, for a time, show them mercy, for which we will forever give praise to God, the Most High and for which we feel very grateful and thankful to such kind and discreet regents.

But, to his writing that in paternal and pastoral solicitude and faithfulness they might use harsher means against us, I would say this: If he had entered in at the right door with Christ, who is the Prince and Head of all true pastors and if he could taste in his heart of the friendly and amiable Spirit, nature and disposition of Christ, he would not at all think of such a resolution against the blood of others, much less advocate and invoke it. This I know to a certainty, for the Spirit of Christ is not thus natured, John 10:2; 1 Pet. 2:3.

Reader, observe that he, in this instance, does not write plainly that the magistracy should put us to the sword; this he does because he does not want to be called a blood-hound or persecutor. Nevertheless, he makes it understood that if they should do so, he would call it a praiseworthy thing. Whoever is not quite destitute of understanding well understands what he hints at in this instance. O, a doctrine of blood!

O, that he could comprehend the force of the word which the Lord says, "You are of your father, the devil and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning," John

8:44. For, since he encourages the blood-thirsty by such writing and I have myself heard from his own mouth that it is right to persecute and kill one on account of his faith (understand, such faith as they think to be heretical), he, therefore, has by this burdened the innocent blood on his soul. I say innocent blood, for neither he nor anybody else upon the face of the earth, can, by the grace of God, convince us by the force of truth, that we act or do anything against Christ or his word; or that we deserve the punishment and sword of the magistracy.

He should further know that this blood doctrine of his is not only contrary to Jesus Christ, God's own Son and that of his servant, Paul, but also contrary to the doctrine of Luther, see his book, "*De Sublimiori mundi potestate*."* Besides [being] contrary to the doctrine of Hieronimus, Augustine, Theophilactus, Anselmus, Remigius and others, who unanimously agree that the heretics should not be killed, but admonished and convinced and if they do not repent after admonition, that they should, according to the word of God, be separated from the communion of the church and shunned.

Besides, this stone thrown by him might light upon his own head. For what greater and more terrible heresy, deception and blasphemy can be imagined than to assert that the pure and holy flesh of Christ is a ransom for sin, to adulterate so sadly his ordinance and the apostle's clear and plain doctrine of baptism; to neglect Exclusion as required by the word of God; to slander the pious and to console and encourage the impenitent and carnal minded by garbling the Scriptures, as he has constantly done in his writings from beginning to end.

If we were thus to resolve against those who are wrong in doctrine or faith, as he says we should, then we would have to commence with him, because he is a defender of such great errors, as may be plainly seen by comparing both our writings.

* [Google Translate: "Of the Most High Power of the World."]

May the merciful, dear Lord permit him and all our opponents to see the right foundation of truth; [give them] understanding hearts to understand it rightly and a willing, free and new mind to believe and follow it with sincerity, Amen.

CONCLUSION.

HERE, dear reader, you have my forced answer to the unseasoned, blasphemous writing of Gellius, which he has published and printed, A.D. 1552, against the unadulterated truth of God and his scattered church; thereby he so lamentably adulterates the salutary doctrine of Christ and so miserably accuses the innocent, pious hearts before the whole world, that I could not neglect to do so, by virtue of my office, to which I was unworthily ordained by God, through the pious. As he in the first place has done against us, I had to refute him with the word of the Lord and publish it through the press, to the praise of God and his truth, to the justification of the innocent and to the instruction of the humble.

Whoever seeks and strives after truth may find it; for it has been shown with great clearness; but whoever despises it does not despise us, but Christ Jesus, who has taught it unto his church through his holy apostles and who has bequeathed it to us by the testimony of the Scriptures through his Holy Spirit.

I hereby offer myself to you and to the whole world, if these writings are not sufficient for you, to let me have safe conduct to an open and free discussion with Gellius and the learned; and if I cannot maintain my doctrine and faith by virtue of the Scriptures and if I cannot prove their doctrine and faith as deceiving, then I will not refuse to acknowledge my fault before the whole world, to retract my doctrine and to consign myself and my writings to the

fire. But if I can substantiate my doctrine, then I desire and ask nothing more than that they acknowledge their fault, discontinue deceiving the people, repent, teach the truth to the people and flee from falsehood. With this I commend you to God; he will guide your feet upon the way of peace and lead you all in the unadulterated, pure knowledge of his eternal, saving truth, Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all who sincerely seek and fear him, Amen.

MENNO SIMON.



A VERY HUMBLE SUPPLICATION OF THE POOR, DESPISED CHRISTIANS

TO ALL THE PIOUS, KIND AND
REASONABLE MAGISTRATES;
CONCERNING THE ABOMINABLE
CHARGES, UPBRAIDINGS, BACK-BITINGS
AND CLAMOR OF THE LEARNED,
WHEREBY THEY ARE, ON EVERY HAND,
SLANDERED AND TROUBLED, AS MAY BE
HEARD AND SEEN.

BY
MENNO SIMON.

“And if an immigrant sojourns with you in your land, you will not mistreat him. But the immigrant who sojourns among you will be to you as one raised up among you and you will love him as yourself; for you were immigrants in the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God.” Leviticus 19:33, 34.

To all the pious, kind and reasonable magistrates, lords, princes, regents and commanders; we, poor, despised and scattered children wish you eternal happiness, a happy reign and every blessing of God our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, Amen.



“Amend your ways and your doings;” “For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbor; if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless and the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor walk after other gods to your hurt, then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever,” Jer. 7:3, 5-7.

“Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and that you bring the poor that are cast out to your house? When you see the naked; that you cover him; and that you do not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth as the morning,” Isaiah 58:7, 8.

A VERY HUMBLE SUPPLICATION OF THE POOR, DESPISED CHRISTIANS.

IT is well known to many persons, noble, honorable and kind lords, that many are more diligent and zealous to execute the law of Theodosius (although this law was formerly forced from the good emperor by the blood-thirsty bishops), the mandate of Charles the fifth and the decree of the Roman empire, passed against those whom they call anabaptists (issued in our times);

than they are to have the word of God obeyed; never minding that these laws and decrees were made, not on account of baptism itself, but on account of the ungodly errors and abominations which were committed by the doctrine and doings of the baptized; for, if the before-mentioned law, mandate and decree were issued on account of baptism and not on account of the crimes committed at different times by those that were baptized, then would also Christ Jesus, the apostles, Cyprian the Martyr, all the African bishops, the Nicene council and beside, the great apostle, Paul, by this be adjudged as public criminals. This is incontrovertible.

Since we are opposed to the Donatists, Circumcelliones, Munsterites and to the errors, abuses and abominations of all uproarious sects committed in our times (on account of which, formerly, the law of Theodosius was passed and in our times the imperial mandate and the condemnation of the empire were issued); also were opposed to them from the beginning of our doctrine and faith; and, since we, before God and his angels, seek nothing upon earth but that we may humbly and obediently follow the express and clear word, Spirit, example, command, prohibition, usage and ordinance of the Lord, according to which we should judge everything pertaining to the kingdom and church of Christ, if we would please God, as is testified and shown on every hand, by our tribulation, oppression, misery, anxiety and blood. Therefore it is, before God and man, unchristian, no, manifestly wrong and detestable, to impose the same penalty and punishment on us that is imposed on the Circumcelliones, only on account of the baptism, which we have maintained in conformity with the word of God, with the apostolic doctrine and usage and against all human philosophy and inventions. To treat us, I say, the same as they did the Circumcelliones, who, according to history, committed such detestable, cruel tyrannies and also the same as they treated the Munsterites, who, contrary to the word of God, to all the evangelical Scriptures, and, also, contrary to sound policy, established a new kingdom, rebellion, polygamy and such like

things; all of which we unflinchingly oppose and reprove, as may be seen by our open actions and doings.

We would, therefore, in the first place, for the sake of Christ humbly beseech your Excellencies and honorable Wisdom, to consider, in pity and paternal solicitude, how lamentably your miserable subjects, who are created, with you, by one God and were purchased with the same treasure and who will at last appear with you before the same judgment, are, without their faults, belied, derided and slandered by the whole world and especially by the preachers. In many places, they are pitilessly and unmercifully destroyed as the worst criminals upon earth and are given as food to the fowls of the air. They are (as our predecessor, Christ), put to the stake and on the wheel with the criminals. Many of us, with our wives and little children, are driven from our country and possessions, must roam in foreign countries, naked and destitute; and all this for no other reason, God knows, than that we do not agree with the inordinate way of living of this world and do not commune with the preachers who oppose the word of the Lord by their doctrine, sacraments and life; for we rightly use baptism and the Lord's Supper, shun all idolatry, self-righteousness and abuses, according to the Scriptures; and we would gladly, in our weakness, fear the Lord and follow in righteousness.

We beseech your Excellencies and Honors to consider, in the fear of God, what he requires of you, namely, That you shall rightly judge between man and man, without all respect of persons and that you shall deliver the oppressed from the hands of the oppressor. Jehovah God says, "Execute judgment between a man and his neighbor;" "Do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless and the widow and do not shed innocent blood." Consider this; that your despised servants and miserable subjects, who fled from the roaring lions, may, in peace and quiet, serve the Lord and earn their bread according to the Scriptures, under your paternal care and merciful protection, [Lev. 19:15,] Jer. 7:6, 7; 22:17; Isaiah 59.

Secondly, we desire that your Excellencies and Honors would weigh, with the infallible word of God, with the living example of Christ and with the pious, unblamable life of the saints, how a true christian should be disposed according to the Scriptures. If reading, singing, water, bread, wine, name and boasting, would constitute true christianity, then there would be a great number of christians. But no, beloved lords, no. The word of God knows no christians but those who are born anew in Christ by the living seed of God, through the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ, which, being preached in the power of the Spirit, is accepted in true faith, by the grace of God and through the operation of the Holy Spirit. [They are those] who, by virtue of this birth, bury the old sinful life and arise with Christ in newness of life; who, in their weakness, gladly obey the holy will, word, example, ordinances and commands of the Lord and who sincerely die unto everything contrary to it; who diligently combat all licentious, vain thoughts and besetting sins which flow from the inherited Adamic nature; and who daily sigh and mourn before the Lord, on account of their human weakness, errors and short-comings, with a humble, broken heart; who are prepared to take upon themselves the cross of Christ and to forsake father, mother, husband, wife, children, possessions and self, for the sake of the testimony of his holy word, when the honor and praise of God require it. In short, they are minded as Christ Jesus; are in Christ and Christ in them; they are led by his Spirit; and they abide immutably in the word of the Lord, through true faith, firm confidence and a living hope, in all temptations and perils, Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; Gal. 3:27; 2 Tim. 3; Mat. 10:38; Luke 14:27; Phil. 2:3.

Inasmuch as it is found in fact that our faithful brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, the beloved companions in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, Rev.1:9, so sincerely fear and love the Lord, their God, that they would rather give their reputation and money, goods, flesh and blood and everything of which human nature is desirous, as a prey to the blood-thirsty, than

wilfully and knowingly to speak a false word or to act hypocritically, contrary to the word of God. Therefore we would beseech your Excellencies and Honors to consider whether they are such pernicious and dangerous people as, alas, they are called by many and adjudged by all. Yes, dear lords, all their pleasure is in the word of the Lord. Their mouths flow with wisdom, their love smells like the precious ointment on the head of Aaron, their prayers are as the noble incense before the ark of God; their life enlightens as the golden menorah* in the temple of Jehovah and they seek nothing on this earth, but that they may serve the whole world unto righteousness, both with body and spirit and that they may deliver many from the destruction of their souls and win them unto Christ, through the grace, Spirit, power and word of the Lord; and, that they may thus, with the gracious help of God, improve the short time of their earthly existence, in Christ Jesus, to the praise of God and to the service of their neighbors and be eternally saved, Jer. 17:8; John 1:8; Psalms 133:2.

If this is heresy and devilish deceit, as the preachers cry, then the Son of God, Christ Jesus, together with all the prophets, apostles and testimonies of God, were open heretics; and then all the Scriptures which teach nothing but reformation and point us to Christ, are nothing but deceit. This can not be denied; for they, in

* [CHCoG: Menno's original, at least in the English translation, had candlesticks, but the original languages of the Bible reveal it was a seven-branched menorah, which used olive oil burning lamps, with the olive oil often symbolising the righteous acts of the saints. ex. Exo. 25:31-40 & 27:20, Rev 4:5, Mat. 25:2-4. Jehovah never permitted the use of candles in his worship, which in those times was made from the rendered fat of dead animals. The King James Version consistently mistranslated this as candles and candlesticks, which has here been corrected to lamps, lampstands and in this case Menorah. In contrast, the Roman Catholic Church uses candles extensively. The seven lamps remind us of the seven days of Creation Week and thus of the weekly Sabbath and also of the seven thousand year 'days' of God's Plan of Redemption, with its final thousand year 'day' of rest from Satan.]

their weakness, conform in all their doings to the word, Spirit, life, command, prohibitions, ordinances and usages of the Lord, as their open actions testify before all the world, Isa. 1:17; Luke 9:35; Deut. 18:16.

Since, then, they and we walk in unity of spirit, and, before God, seek nothing in Christ Jesus, but that we, in our weakness, would gladly follow Christ, as has been said. We also trust, by the grace of the Lord, that your excellencies will never perceive anything else in your poor servants (we write of those who are united with us in faith and life), therefore, we beseech your Excellencies and Honors, again, for Christ's sake, to discard all prejudice against us miserable orphans, to believe us to be sincere in our profession and never think that we have any other intentions, if we should become as numerous as the spears of grass upon the fields, or as the sands on the sea shore (something which will never be verified, since the way is strict and the gate is narrow); for Christ, whose name we bear, has taught so with his own mouth; his holy apostles have preached it unto all the world and have testified it with the holy gospel and have promulgated it at the peril of life, Mat. 7:13; Mark 16:15; Rom. 10:18.

Thirdly, we desire that your Excellencies and Honors would earnestly consider how the Scriptures are being verified in regard to those who boast themselves christians; how mortally the sword of wrath cuts on every side and how the hand of divine punishment is laid upon us; great and many are our sins; great and severe is the punishment of the Lord. Yes, the fire of wrath is enkindled; unless the Lord in his grace quenches it, it will devour both the green and dry trees, according to the word of the prophet. The prophecies of Christ concerning the latter days; also, of Daniel and of the apostles, are fast fulfilling. The flesh consuming sword of the Lord glitters everywhere and his bloody darts are flying in every country; one kingdom has risen against another; one principality against another; one city against another and one neighbor and friend against another. Some are put to the sword, some are

imprisoned; cities and villages are leveled and destroyed; the poor, despised people who are, in part, innocent, are exhausted, profaned, taxed, burned and ruined without mercy; numbers are rendered adulterers and rogues; one pestilence and epidemic follows another; and one panic another. Storms, hurricanes, misery and tribulation sweep over land and water. In short, the continual severe punishment show that the Lord is angry; notwithstanding this, the wicked world does not reform, but yet daily degenerates more and more, Deut. 32:23-35; Ezek. 21:1-6; Mat. 24:4.

All of them, in general, boast themselves to be christians and that they have God's word, although their seeking and doings are quite contrary to Christ and his word. For, if we turn to the magistrates, whom we should reasonably expect to know the ways and judgments of the Lord, as Jeremiah says, we find that they have broken the yoke and rent asunder the bands. If we turn to the preachers, we find there the envy of Cain to all those who fear the Lord, an insatiable love of money, a Balaamitic avarice, a light minded, easy doctrine, idolatrous sacraments and a lustful, vain, careless life, as may be openly seen. If we turn to the common people, there we find extortion, hoarding, drinking, carousing, lying, cheating, cursing and swearing; some commit adultery and fornication, others are marauders, pillagers, thieves and murderers, no, they lead, alas, such a life that we may well, in anguish, sigh with Hosea, that "There is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; by swearing and lying and killing and stealing and committing adultery, they break out and blood touches blood," Hosea 4:1, 2; with Paul, "They are all gone out of the way; they have together become unprofitable," "and the way of peace they have not known," Rom. 3:12, 17 and that their sins have reached unto heaven, Rev. 18:5. O, dear Lord, how long will this dreadfully great blindness, blasphemy, deceit, abomination, blood-thirstiness and recklessness continue!

Noble lords, reform! Do works fit for repentance, such as can stand before the Lord; humble yourselves with the king of Nineveh; take off the ungodly, tainted coat of sin; repent in sackcloth and ashes; cry out unto the Lord with a broken heart: rend your hearts and not your garments, as the prophet says. Let the pious Josiah be your pattern, who turned himself unto Jehovah, with all his heart and soul and strength, as soon as the law of God was read to him, from the book which was again found, John 3:7; 2 Kings 22:11.

Dear lords, seek, fear and serve God with all your strength; do justice unto the widows, orphans, strangers and all the forsaken; cleanse your hands of blood, rule your countries in wisdom and peace, let all your thoughts, words and actions be conformed to the crucified Christ Jesus and follow his footsteps; for "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" "As I live, says Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live," Isaiah 1:18; Ezek. 33:11; 18:32.

Inasmuch as those who boast themselves [as] the church, are so estranged from Christ that they are no more than nominal Christians; and, inasmuch as the salt, which is these preachers, has so wholly lost its savor that it does more injury than good, for they flatter more than they reprove, if they can make some earthly gain by this. They do not seek the praise of the Lord; by which they all, both preacher and hearer, are led upon the broad road which leads to destruction and since there are, alas, none to stop them in their career, as the prophet complains, and, since we, God knows, would gladly see all men awaken, fear the Lord, sincerely repent and be saved, that thus the fallen city, which is their church, may again be built upon her old foundation, that is, upon the firm foundation of the apostles and upon the pure doctrine of Christ Jesus and that such repentance may be verified unto the world by a pious, penitent, christian life, according to the Scriptures. Behold,

therefore we are so hated by the learned, that by their slanderous crying and clamoring we are often robbed of our possessions and our bodies given to the executioner. Some of us, through necessity, are forced to seek refuge in foreign lands, on account of their persecution, as has been said. Therefore we poor, miserable outcasts pray your Honors and Excellencies the third time, to earnestly reflect upon this matter, for Christ's sake and faithfully compare the doings of the preachers and the tenor of the following writing addressed to them and the matters and things in this set forth, that our apology may be rightly understood and the truth explained according to the word of the Lord; and that the guilty may no longer be protected in their unrighteousness. Yes, beloved lords, if this was impartially done, in the fear of God, you would soon find, by the grace of God, in great clearness, with whom the truth or falsehood is; and that the doctrine, sacraments and lives of these preachers are not in accordance with the Scriptures, but that they are deceitful and contrary to the word of God.

O, beloved, noble lords, we beseech you not to despise our reasonable and christian prayer, but to consider it in love; for it concerns the praise of the Almighty God, his {eternal} Word and truth and the eternal salvation of all our souls, which are so much desired and so dearly purchased with his precious blood. O, consider the difference, to live eternally with Christ Jesus in the kingdom of heaven, or to die eternally with all the devils in the abyss of hell.

Dear lords, we are in great anxiety and tribulation and are terrified in two ways. For, if we follow the truth, which we always intend to do in our weakness, by the grace of God, then we are made a prey to all the world. If we deviate and again enter into the broad way, from which the merciful Father saved us, then we fall into the hands of God and must bear his eternal punishment. The salvation of our souls is worth more than man can comprehend. The sweet-sounding, precious word will finally be heard: "Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;"

and also the fearful word which is threatened to all who are disobedient to Christ, which pierces body and soul, if well realized: “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Happy [are] they who are awake at that time, who have their lamps prepared and [have] saved their wedding garments. Yes, blessed are they who are called to the Lord’s Supper.

Dear, noble lords, it is not flattery nor a vain display of words; but that which we write, we mean, as our sore persecutions testify.

The merciful great Lord, Jesus Christ, who is Lord of lords and King of kings, grant that your Honors may acknowledge the truth, faithfully act in accordance with it and that you may rule the people, cities and countries entrusted to your reign in peace and prosperity, to the praise of your God and to the salvation of many souls. This is our sincere desire. Amen.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.” Be merciful, as your Father is merciful. “Truly, I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me,” Mat. 5:7; 25:45. The humble and obedient subjects of your Excellencies and Honors in all things, we can [all] do according to the will of God by his grace.

A LETTER OF CONSOLATION, ADDRESSED TO AN AFFLICTED WIDOW.

GRACE and peace be unto you and kind greeting, sincerely beloved sister in the Lord, whom my soul loves. The merciful Lord having called you to widowhood, my paternal and faithful admonition to you is, as a father to his children, to bear with your lot as becomes holy women and to serve the Lord with the pious Hannah in the holy temple, that is, in his church, with a new and upright conscience, with fasting and prayer, night and day. Treat, at all times, the needy saints, as the virtuous widow of Sarepta in Zidon treated the faithful Elijah, at the time of the drought and panic, when she received him in her house and fed him with her handful of meal and a little oil; and the meal of the holy, divine word, from the measure of your conscience and the joyous oil of the Holy Spirit shall not be withheld from you. And, if the new son of your spiritual birth does sicken a little and lose his breath for a time, through the weakness to which a widow is naturally subject—yet our true Elijah, Jesus Christ, will again animate him through his grace and again restore you to cheerfulness; for, as the Scriptures teach, you receive, love and serve him in his members.

Beloved sister, understand me aright. I speak of the needy saints and no further. Those who have enough of their own do not need your aid and services. True Christians should not put each other to unnecessary expenses. Faithful sister, walk prudently; fear your God sincerely; crucify your flesh and its lusts; withstand the enemy and all his enchantments; bear everything piously; do not imprudently cause anybody trouble; diligently attend to your occupation, household and children; carefully shun all unchastity,

vain babbling, pomp and splendor; earnestly avoid being led by the temptations of the flesh, that you do not become like the widows who lost their first faith and followed after the devil, as Paul says; from which may the merciful Father always save you.

Receive in love, this, my brief greeting, written to you in true, paternal affection and reflect upon it diligently. The saints here greet you. Greet all pious friends. Pray for me. The eternal, saving power and fruit of the precious blood of Christ be with my chosen, much beloved sister, in eternity, Amen.

Your loving and well wishing brother,

MENNO SIMON.

May 18th.



A BRIEF

Complaint or Apology

OF THE

DESPISED CHRISTIANS

AND

EXILED STRANGERS,

**TO ALL THE THEOLOGIANS AND PREACHERS OF THE
GERMAN NATIONS, CONCERNING THE BITTER
FALSEHOODS, SLANDERS AND ABUSES WITH WHICH
THEY, WITHOUT TRUTH, BURDEN THESE SUFFERING
CHRISTIANS AND EXILES, TOGETHER WITH A
FRIENDLY REQUEST TO HAVE A FREE DISCUSSION
OF THE SCRIPTURES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
RULES OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.**

BY

MENNO SIMON.

*“The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all
men, apt to teach, patient,” 2 Timothy 2:24.*

*“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which
is Jesus Christ,” 1 Corinthians 3:11.*

WE poor and despised christians, who have to endure and suffer so much, on account of the testimony of the word of the Lord, wish to all theologians and preachers of all countries who

boast of the gospel, whoever and wherever they are, a new, penitent heart; a true, active faith in Christ Jesus; an unfeigned, ardent love; a salutary doctrine; a sound doctrine according to truth and a pious, unblamable life, in the fear of the Lord, of God our heavenly Father, in the operation and power of his Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus, his beloved Son, our Lord and eternal Savior, Amen.



A BRIEF COMPLAINT OR APOLOGY.

IT is a fact well known to all, dear men and brethren, how very much the pure, divine truth is disregarded in our Netherlands, caused by the envious crying and clamor of the Papists and Monks; and that the innocent blood is shed like water; on account of which we, miserable children, are forced to flee from the sword of the tyrants and to seek refuge in foreign lands, with our weak women and little ones and to earn our bread in tribulation and misery, according to the prophecy of God's word. Many of you, it appears, cry against us, perhaps with good intentions, through misunderstanding and instigate the magistracy (part of whom should be reasonable and discreet) to persecution, by false accusations and contrary to all reasonableness and christian love; and you warn everybody against us, as being disposed like the Munsterites. [You say] that we would take countries and cities, if we had the power; that we are rebels and use the sword; steal; are polygamists; have our women and possessions in common; will not obey the magistracy; that we murder our children bodily and spiritually; are anabaptists and profaners of the sacraments, deceivers and hypocrites; that we boast of being without sin; self-complacent; heaven-stormers; who trust in being saved by our own good works and merits, that we are ungodly heretics and

conspirators, new monks, rogues, miscreants and possessed by the devil. In short, we are alas, portrayed by you in such colors that all who are not acquainted with our foundation and faith must shut their mouths and noses at the sight of us and must have a horror of us; although, before God and his angels, we seek nothing upon earth but that we, in our weakness, may be cordially united in the Spirit, word and example of the Lord, through his grace, as all the Scriptures teach and imply.

The Almighty, great Lord, who knows all hearts, knows that we are clear, before the Lord and his judgment, of all the before-mentioned abominations and slanders, of which we are always accused by you; also, that we are clear and innocent before all the world. Yes, if anyone under the whole canopy of heaven can prove, by the firm truth, that we and our adherents, are guilty of one of these capital crimes, or that we were ever guilty of it, then we will lay our hands upon our mouths and will be bound by life and possessions to the accuser all our days; with this exception, however; that we do not wish to obey the magistracy when they command things contrary to the word of God. Is it not a deplorable thing that we are slandered and accused of such inhuman disgraces, while we never even thought of doing them and much less commit them?

O, dear men and brethren, if you knew what we seek and how, by the grace of God, we are disposed towards you all, you would not have such hard feelings against us as you have had until now; or else you are abandoned to a state of ungodliness and perversity; something which, we trust, is not true of many of you.

Since you are so lamentably mistaken in our intentions, heap one falsehood upon another and since, alas, we are not allowed at any place to verbally defend ourselves, therefore we are forced to present a defense in writing and would humbly pray and fraternally advise you all to consider these four things:

First, that you would consider in sincerity of heart that lies are of the devil, that the lying mouth kills the soul, that a liar has no

part in God's city, that the backbiters are deserving of death and that they shall not abide in the tabernacle of Jehovah and not dwell in his holy hill, Psalm 15:1.

Secondly, that nearly all of your accusations against us are capital crimes. If we did not fear the Lord, but would strictly ask for our rights, according to the law of the world; and retaliate, what would at last become of us; since you publicly accuse us of such accursed abominations, which no man can ever prove against us by the power of the truth.

Thirdly, that your action is directly opposed to all nature, reason, christian love and the word of God; for where was there ever a person of pious nature who did not pity the outcast and sympathize with the afflicted? All the Scriptures teach that we shall receive, serve, protect and console the afflicted and strangers in love; and you see plainly how lamentably we poor, pitiable people are everywhere hated, despised, banished, oppressed and in some places judged and murdered; yet your hearts are not so much moved as to accost us once with a friendly word, in our sore temptations and tribulations and to examine our foundation, faith and actions in a paternal spirit, according to the word of the Lord. But you cause still more enmity against us, that we may find no rest upon earth. You cry, write, falsify, upbraid, clamor, add tribulation to tribulation, drag us into dungeons and prisons, as if you had never read a syllable of the word of the Lord with understanding minds, nor received a spark of his Holy Spirit. We will leave it to your own judgment, if this can be called acting in accordance with unfeigned, christian love, with the doctrine and usage of the apostles and in accordance with the Spirit, word and example of the Lord.

Say, beloved, where do the Holy Scriptures teach that we shall rule the consciences and faith of others, in the kingdom and church of Christ, by force of the sword, violence and tyranny of the magistracy—something which is left entirely to the judgment of

God? In what instance has Christ and the apostles ever done, recommended or commanded this?

Christ says, "Beware of false prophets;" and Paul commands that we shall shun a heretic after one or two admonitions; John teaches that we shall not greet nor receive the transgressor into our houses, who does not bring the doctrine of Christ, Mat. 7:15; Tit. 3:10; 2 John 1:9. They do not say: Down with the heretics, accuse them before the magistrates, imprison, exile and cast them into the fire or water, as the Roman Catholics have done for many years and as many of you would do, you who pretend to preach the word of God.

Fourthly, we would sincerely pray you, for Christ's sake, to consider and examine whether your spirit accords with the Lord's Spirit and whether your faith accords with his holy word; whether the Spirit of the Lord and the love of your neighbor constrain you to the service, or whether it is the love of gain and the temporary sustenance of your bodies; whether you preach the pure word of God in sincerity of heart, use his sacraments aright and whether you lead a pious and unblamable life, as the Scriptures teach; and whether you shun open transgressors, the pompous, drunkards, misers, extortioners, liars, deceivers, contenders, adulterers, fornicators, swearers and unrighteous and separate them from the communion, without respect to persons, according to the word of the Lord. For we see such living and acting, O, Lord, as if neither prophet, apostle, Christ, nor the word of God was ever upon earth. Nevertheless, you men want to be called the holy christian church and preachers of sound doctrine, as if Christ did not require more of his church than mere reading, singing, crying, infant baptism, breaking of bread and calling themselves after his name; and, as if spirit, knowledge, faith, love, repentance, righteousness, works, power and truth were no longer necessary.

No, no; dear men, no. This is required of the church of Christ, to preach his unadulterated word in the power of the Spirit, to believe it sincerely and to obey it in every particular; to use his

holy sacraments, such as baptism and the Holy Supper, according to his own command and ordinance; to seek, fear, love and serve God sincerely; to be born of God; to love, serve, console, help and protect his neighbor; to shun all false doctrines and works of darkness; to die unto carnal lusts, which are contrary to the word of God; to forsake ourselves and the world; to lead a pious, peaceable, chaste, sober and humble life, in righteousness, according to the truth. In short, [we are] to be of one mind with Christ Jesus. For it is incontrovertible that where these are, there is also the kingdom and church of Christ. But the deceivers, hateful, liars, slanderers, backbiters, rebellious, bloodthirsty, avaricious, unmerciful, cruel, proud and impenitent are of the wicked one. The Scriptures teach that their part shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, eternal death in the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, John 15:12; 3:5; Mark 7:15; Tit. 3:5; 2 John 9; Mat. 16:23; 13:42.

O men and brethren, if you would take to heart this brief reference, in the sincere fear of God and would reflect upon it and judge according to the Spirit of the Lord, you would doubtless find such a great beam in your own eye, that you would not regard the small splinter which may, perhaps, be in your brother's eye (for we are all of Adam's seed). But to know ourselves is understanding and to conform ourselves in all things to the Lord's word, is a salutary understanding and wisdom.

Inasmuch as we are thus indiscreetly and falsely accused by you and as you boast to be servants of God who teach his word and works, therefore we would pray you all, for the sake of the blood of Christ, with which we are sprinkled, to consider how you treat us poor, afflicted ones, that you sin no more by such open falsehoods and tyrannies, as you have until now done; but that you may show such a paternal disposition as conforms to the divine operation and to the christian name; for we testify before him who knows our hearts, before you and before the whole world, verbally and by writing, by our possessions and blood, life and death, that

we, in our weakness, are prepared and willing to obey the word and will of God, from the innermost of our souls; and we shall always be prepared, as we have always been from the commencement of our faith and actions, willingly to hear and obey anyone who can instruct us in a more powerful spirit and truth and who can point out a more godly life. But if he can not instruct us for the better, then we ask again, for Christ's sake, to leave us undisturbed in the truth and not persecute and afflict the pious who walk in it. We, by this, give notice to you all, that we are desirous to meet, at any acceptable time and place, with one or two of our members (no matter whether teachers or not), with you before a full assembly, or before twenty to thirty reasonable and pious witnesses, just as you choose, to discuss the following points (for herein we differ), according to the Spirit, word, life, example, command, prohibition, usage and ordinance of God, in sincerity of heart, namely:

Of the right evangelical preachers and teachers—how they should, according to the word of God, be minded and fitted, before they can rightly preach the word of God and serve his sacraments.

Of the doctrine of Christ and his apostles—that it does not change, but must remain unchanged until his coming again.

That Christ is a perfect teacher and that his offer is a perfect offering.

Of true regeneration; what it is, of whom it is and what are its natural fruits and disposition.

Of true evangelical faith and love; their proper qualities, power and operation.

Of God's commandments and their keeping.

Of true christian baptism—how it was commanded by the Lord and how taught and practiced by the apostles.

Of the Lord's Holy Supper—what it is—by whom it was instituted and ordained and what it implies and represents.

Of the true apostolic Ban or Separation—its proper fruits and usefulness.

Of the pious christian life which is of God.

If you have anything else to discuss, you may present it and have it criticized according to the word of God.

Behold, dear men and brethren, this is what we would gladly have you accept, if it can be obtained in sincerity of heart, under safe conduct, without any trickery and strategy, according to the rules of christian love and the word of God, as Origen, Augustine, Hilarius and others have done in their times, with those who were suspected in their doctrine. You can not think hard of us for asking for safe conduct and freedom, for it is evident that they cry vindictively and madly against us, on every side.

If you are servants of Christ and seek the praise of the Lord and the salvation of your brethren, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Peter and Paul did in their times, then you would rejoice; praise the Lord; again restore our respect with the people and henceforth leave off such slanderous language, as has been mentioned. You would reform your life, accept and advise and aid in the offered discussion, in christian faith; because we do not propose to have the discussion judged according to human philosophy, wisdom and ideas, as some do, but according to Christ's own Spirit, word, command, prohibition, ordinance, usage and example. But, if you reject and refuse it and still continue in your bitterness, falsehoods, slanders; upbraiding, backbiting and disgrace as you have until now done, then we poor, miserable souls must leave it to the Lord, as has been until now done; and possess our souls in patience; allow ourselves to be punished and console ourselves with this saying, "Blessed are you, 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,” Mat. 5:11, 12. But you must fill the measure of your fathers and make yourselves manifest, that you do not seek [to care for] the sheep, but merely their milk, wool and fat, Ezek. 34:3. There are but two ways open, namely, You must either cease your false accusations and slandering and enter into a discussion with us, or you must acknowledge that you are not the true teachers and let go of your gospel fame and *christian* name.

We would with this commend you all to the Lord and desire to say that none should take offense at this; for we have done so for the advancement of the holy word and for the defense of our respectability, and we would reiterate that we are, at all times, prepared and willing for the discussion, on the conditions mentioned.

May the merciful Lord grant you all a sincere, pious heart to love the saving truth of Christ and to walk in accordance with it, to the praise of God and to the salvation of your souls. Amen.



DESCRIPTION OF A TRUE PREACHER.

“A bishop, then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach.” He “must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, not a striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast to the faithful word, as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers,” 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7-9.

By us despised strangers and scattered christians, for the sake of God’s word and its testimony. A.D. 1552.

A
TREATISE ON,
AND
SCRIPTURAL EXPLANATION
of EXCOMMUNICATION,
FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL PIOUS AND GOD
FEARING CHILDREN.

BY
MENNO SIMON.

“Evil men do not understand judgment; but they that seek Jehovah understand all things,” Prov. 28:6.

“Whosoever walks uprightly shall be saved; but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once,” Prov. 28:18.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Corinthians 3:11.

A SCRIPTURAL EXPLANATION OF EXCOMMUNICATION.

Menno Simon wishes to all fellow-believers, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, the grace and peace of God our heavenly Father, through Christ Jesus his beloved Son, our Lord, who loves us and has cleansed us of our sins in his blood. To him be the honor, praise, kingdom, power and glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

Dear brethren, since I find that, for some time, much strife has been occasioned in regard to the ban, and this so violently and indiscreetly, therefore, I fear brotherly love, christian peace and unity, with some, are more diminished than augmented, as was the case in olden times; and it appears that some, through ambition and self-conceit, are desirous of such corrupting disputation that they entertain the opinion, in this matter, that not the banned ones themselves should be shunned, but only their false doctrine and offensive life, not observing that they have already become entangled in false doctrine; for by this they nullify the plain ordinance of Christ, “Let him be unto you as a heathen man and a tax collector,” and also the plain words of the holy apostles, Mat. 18:17; Rom. 16:16; 2 Thes. 3:14; Tit. 3:10.

Others think that the ban should not be practiced, further than that which pertains to the evangelical usages, as the breaking of bread and the kiss of peace; and garble the plain sayings of the Scriptures, to make their opinions good, namely: Do not keep company with such; with such do not eat; “Let him be unto you as

a heathen man and a tax collector,” and other like sayings, 1 Cor. 6:10; Mat. 18:17.

Again, there are some who acknowledge the ordinance of Christ and the doctrine of the holy apostles in regard to excommunication as right and just, yet they do not observe it; some, I presume, from being lukewarm, some from motives of carnal love and favor of the apostates and others on account of being neighbors, or relatives, or perhaps on account of former attachments and favors.

And, since the express ordinance of Christ and his holy apostles in regard to excommunication is lamentably weakened, obscured and garbled by the first mentioned and visibly transgressed and dishonored by the latter, and thus the door is opened wide to all corruption and since they thus act against *all* love: First, against the love of God and Christ, for they by this despise and disobey his holy word, will and ordinance; Secondly, against brotherly love, for by such perverseness and disesteem, they offend and afflict their brethren; Thirdly, against the love of their own souls, for by this, they wilfully expose themselves to the danger of being corrupted; Fourthly, against the love of those deserving the ban, for they despise the advice of the Holy Spirit and do not seek to shame them unto repentance; Fifthly, also against common love, for, by communing with the apostates, they make the worldlings suspicious that we are one and the same people with the apostates and perverse; and, since the precious word of God and his holy church is thus blasphemed and profaned by many, on account of their recklessness and disobedience—therefore, in a christian spirit and brotherly love (of which God is my witness), I have endeavored to explain, for the benefit of my beloved brethren and fellow believers in Christ Jesus, the proper grounds of the ban, according to divine truth; how the ban is instituted by Christ; how it was taught and explained by his holy apostles and what its fruits and benefits are. But this explanation I will leave to the judgment of those who seek

and fear God with all their hearts and who are enlightened and taught by the Spirit of God. Whoever seeks God and the good of his neighbor will acknowledge that this explanation is in accordance with the foundation, meaning, word and will of God.

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, I, your poor, unworthy servant and co-partner in the faith and tribulation of Christ, trust and pray, for the sake of the precious blood of my Lord Jesus Christ, and, for the sake of love to all, that none wilfully and knowingly contend against Christ Jesus and against his holy word; nor against his own conscience, for the sake of maintaining his error, so that he may avoid the disapprobation and shame of the world.

I trust that they, as christians, do not grudge one against another, but that they seek to win again to Christ their erring brethren. In the same manner, that if the God-fearing errs, he is anxious to return again to the right way; if he falls, he is desirous to rise, and if wounded he would be again healed, James 5:19; and if, by the grace of God, he is again delivered from his error and misunderstanding, through the word of the Lord, he is not ashamed, but is exceedingly glad and praises and thanks his God that he is led from the crooked to the right way and from his error to a true and sound understanding. He earnestly seeks to deliver and disentangle those whom he has formerly led astray and deceived by his false doctrine and misunderstanding; for true love does not seek *self*, but God and her neighbor. Whosoever has ears to hear and a mind to understand, let him hear and understand what the word of the Lord teaches us in respect to excommunication, in great clearness.

Christ Jesus says, "Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone; if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother; but if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if

he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a tax collector. Truly I say unto you, Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven,” Mat. 18:15-18.

Here, faithful brethren, stands the firm foundation of God, as an immovable rock or mountain, at which all will be wounded and hurt who try to overturn and nullify it, namely: That we shall shun and avoid the apostates, if they take no heed to all the brotherly services and admonitions which have, in faithfulness of heart, been rendered unto them, according to the doctrine of Christ and the dictates of pure love, if they obstinately continue in their errors, as the Jews shunned and avoided the heathen and tax collectors, at the time of Christ.

In the first place, the Jews did not admit the uncircumcised heathen to their Passover, by command of the Lord, through Moses; nor to their divine service, as it appears from the acts of the apostles, for they were strangers to the citizenship of Israel and Israel was alone the church.

In the second place, they so avoided daily interaction with them, that they considered it as impure for them to enter their houses, or to eat and drink with them. This also applied to the tax collectors. As the Jews, then, did not admit such heathen and tax collectors to their worship, nor to their daily interaction, but shunned and avoided them, so also, would Christ have us shun and avoid an apostate, unrepenting brother, as was said above. And that this is the proper and natural foundation of these words of Christ is well explained by holy Paul, 1 Cor. 2, of which more will be heard hereafter.

Behold, brethren in the Lord, all who would rightly understand the meaning of the words of Christ, above cited, should know that Christ does not point to the Jewish custom, in regard to the heathen and tax collectors in the time of Moses and of the prophets, but to the custom of his own times; and he should first make a distinction between the heathen and tax collectors and not consider them as

one people; and then well consider and judge according to the Scriptures, how those two classes were dealt with at the time of Moses and the prophets, before the scepter was taken from them and they were placed under the yoke of the Romans.

In the first place, it is incontrovertible that the heathen were not of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; that they were uncircumcised, without [Jehovah] God and [His] religion and without [His] law, no, a people that was [not His] people, as Moses says, Deut. 32:27. Thus it is, in the second place, incontrovertible that the tax collectors and sinners were of the Jews. For Luke says, That the tax collectors came to John, that they might be baptized. Again, That the tax collectors justified God and that they were baptized with the baptism of John. Again, All the tax collectors and sinners came to Jesus to hear him, but the heathen did not come to John and to Christ.* Therefore it is manifest that the tax collectors and sinners were not heathens, but Jews. It is also apparent from the case of the sinful woman and from the tax collector, Matthew, who was chosen as an apostle of the Lord; and no apostles were chosen from the heathen. This is manifestly true, Eph. 2:12; Luke 3:2; 7:29; 15:1.

Inasmuch as the Gentiles and Tax collectors were two distinct people, as has been said, and we should turn to the law to ascertain the freedom of the Jews in regard to the Gentiles, then we must also, in the same manner, ascertain the action of the Jews in regard to the Tax collectors, after the law; for the one word is as valid as the other, because they are both produced and attested by the mouth of the eternal Wisdom.

We are aware, beloved brethren, that Moses, in his law, allowed a great deal of liberty to the outward Israel; to have

* [CHCoG: This is only partly true. As examples, we find that the centurion with the sick servant approached Christ, Mat. 8:5-13, as did the Syro-Phoenician woman with the demon-possessed daughter, Mark 7:24-30 and also all the Samaritans from the village of the woman at the well believed in Christ. John 4:6-43.]

interaction with the Gentile nations, as in buying, trading and usury. But, besides, we also know, that he rigorously judges the wilful and open transgressors, by the testimony of two or three witnesses, unto death, without mercy, according to his law, Deut. 17:6; 2 Cor. 13:1. If we were to understand the before-mentioned words of Christ, Mat. 18, as being of the same nature and rigor as those of the law of Moses, then it would follow, first, from the word *heathen* that we were at liberty to deal with the apostates, as far as regards daily interaction, as Israel was at liberty to deal with the heathen. And secondly, from the word *tax collector* it would follow that we should stone and kill the apostates when their apostasy was established by two or three witnesses. But it would not be proper to take too much liberty with them and to put them to death. Taking life is also quite inconsistent with the nature and doctrine of Christ, “For the Son of man has not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them,” Luke 9:56.

Let everyone take heed; for if he takes the word *heathen* alone and judge that according to the law of Moses and excepts the word *tax collector*, then he does not wrong man, but the Son of God, and disgracefully annuls his holy word and truth. For he does not say, Let him be unto you as a heathen, but “as a heathen man and a tax collector.” Christ says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Therefore it is very advisable not to break the word of Christ Jesus; but to set aside human understanding; to acknowledge the truth; give heed to Christ Jesus; and believe and obey him; for then he will be likened unto the wise builder; if not, his house will fall and “great will be the fall of it.”

Further, most beloved brethren, we understand that there are some who comprehend these words of Christ, such that we are not bound to shun an apostate and impenitent brother further than the Gentiles now shun the Gentiles, or fornicators shun adulterers and drunkards, whom they, perhaps, call the tax collectors. Such, I would earnestly beseech and exhort, first, to consider this matter well, before they accept, believe and teach it as a true foundation;

to consider to what class of people Christ was sent from the beginning and among what class he commenced building and establishing his church. This Christ sufficiently explains; saying, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Mat. 15:24. Paul also says, "Now I say that Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." Rom. 15:8. Since he then was, from the beginning, sent unto the Jews and preached unto them and taught them and not to the heathen, therefore these words of Christ should not be understood as meaning that we should deal with an apostate as the believing heathen now deal with an unbelieving heathen, but to deal with them as the literal Jews dealt with them at the time of Christ. For Christ, I say, did not preach unto the heathen, but unto the Jews; and therefore he did not point them by these words, but to the Jewish ban; namely, how they shunned the heathen and open sinners in his times.*

In the second place, I pray that every God-fearing heart considers what the word *Gentile* implies; and see if not all fornicators, adulterers, avaricious, unbelievers, perjurers, idolators, murderers and drunkards are included in the word Gentile. Yes, Paul says that they are without Christ; have no God, are dead in sins and that they are children of wrath, Eph. 2:11. Since, then, all sinners and heathens are expressed in the word "Gentile," for the Gentiles who do not have Christ are also sinners; and without grace and since Christ here speaks as well of open sinners, as of Gentiles, and, moreover, as every word of Christ has its full weight and measure—therefore, the word of Christ can not be explained as meaning that we should deal with an apostate brother as we would

* [CHCoG: Though this is again partly true, Christ clearly regarded the Jewish traditions of his time on earth as often wrong, and condemned their religious and civil leaders as hypocrites. Mat. 6 & 23, etc. Though it is true that we need to shun the unrepentant sinners within our congregations, this use of the ancient Jewish customs as a model seems flawed.]

with other Gentiles, who never received nor acknowledged the word of the Lord.

In the third place, I hope that no true brother, who is called after the name of the Lord, will knowingly and wilfully adulterate the word of the Lord, but that he will give it its due praise and honor and acknowledge that these tax collectors and sinners, of whom the evangelists speak, were not of the Gentiles, but of the Jews, as is apparent from Mat. 9:10; Mark 2:17. Since it is incontrovertible that the before-mentioned tax collectors and sinners were of the Jews and were adjudged to death, according to the law; and since Christ points us to the tax collectors as well as to the Gentiles, therefore it must follow that it should not be explained as having reference to the times when Israel yet exercised their liberties with the heathen, which liberties were allowed to them by Moses, in his [God's] law; for at that time the transgressors, on proof, were adjudged unto death, according to the law. It would then follow that the lives of the apostates, on proof, should be taken at our hands. O, no, for we know that such a bloody ban is [now] an abomination before God, neither is it known to christians, much less practiced.

If anyone should assert that it applies to the present time, that is, of treating an apostate as we now treat a Gentile and not to the time of Christ, as the Jews then treated a Gentile, he must also re-establish the Jewish people with their law and religion and their open transgressors, which is impossible. This everyone must confess.

Since the word *Gentile* can not be understood as applicable to the time when the Gentiles were not yet so strictly shunned by the Israelites, for then we should have to adjudge the apostates unto death, according to the word “manifest transgressors;” nor as applicable to the present time, for now we do not have the Jewish transgressors—therefore no one can successfully contradict, according to God's truth, otherwise than that it applies to the time of Christ, at which time they did not put transgressors to death, but

separated and avoided both the tax collectors and heathen alike, by means of the same ban.

Having sufficiently proven to the pious and God-fearing, by the above mentioned reasons, that Christ spoke those words as applying to his own times and to no other, we will now show in plain language, first, the proper cause why they so scrupulously avoided the heathen, and, secondly, why they shunned the open transgressors and did not inflict capital punishment upon them.

It is well known to all readers of the Bible, that Jehovah God faithfully warned Israel that they should not make an alliance, nor terms of friendship, with the Canaanites, Hittites and others; nor to intermarry with them, lest they should be led astray by them and follow strange gods, Deut. 7. Joshua says, "Take good heed therefore, unto yourselves, that you love Jehovah your God. Else, if you do in any way go back and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you and shall make marriages with them and go in unto them and they to you; know for a certainty that Jehovah your God will no longer drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you and scourges in your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which Jehovah your God has given you," Josh. 23:11-13.

Israel, not taking to heart this paternal warning of God, but, contrary to it, befriended and intermingled with these strange nations, the menace that Jehovah God warned them of through his faithful servants, Moses and Joshua, was verified. They became quite degenerated by the strange women and idols with which they intermingled and were severely scourged and punished by the Lord. Yes, even the talented Solomon, whose wisdom was far-famed, was so enchanted by the heathen women that he became unfaithful to Jehovah, his God, (who twice appeared unto him) and inclined his heart to strange gods. I think, beloved brethren, this is the just recompense of those who despise the counsel of the Lord.

And they, deceived by the artfulness of the heathen, often sinned against their God and being, therefore, so often chastised by God, with his just punishment, they, at last, took to heart the warning of God, given through Moses and Joshua, more than they had formerly done. They quit their interaction with the heathen altogether, so that they, as it appears, also abandoned some liberties which Moses had allowed them. Yes, such that they considered it improper to enter into their houses, or to eat with them, as may be plainly observed. And this for the purpose that they should not, as formerly, be led astray and turned away from their God. For this reason the Jews so entirely avoided interaction with the heathen. If this reason was of weight, every theologian may judge and weigh with the words of God, Num. 33:35; Judges 3:13; 1 Kings 11:1; 3:12; 9:2.

Again, the reason why they shunned the public sinners and did not punish them with death is this: Because the prophecy of the patriarch Jacob was now verified that the royal scepter, taken from Judah by Pompey the great, was now in the hands of the Romans and that they had officers of their own in Judea, who obeyed their superior. Therefore, the Jews did not punish with death, according to their law, those who wilfully transgressed; for they were, at that time, subject to the scepter of the Romans. That this is the truth, the Jews declared before Pilate, when they said, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." John 18:31. According to God's law they were permitted; no, it was strictly commanded to them; but the lost scepter, now, made it unlawful; for the Roman servants, Herod, Pilate, &c., who, at that time, swayed the scepter in behalf of the Romans, did not want to judge according to the law of the Jews, but according to the rights and statutes of the Romans, in whose name they ruled and to whom they were bound by oath. When any Jew trespassed the law of Moses and not the Roman morals, the before-mentioned functionaries did not inflict capital punishment, even if the law of Moses required it. And since the Jews were not allowed to punish him according to God's

law, for the above mentioned reasons, they separated him from their communion and excommunicated him from their synagogue and shunned him.

Behold, faithful brethren, for the before-mentioned reasons, the Jews, at the time of Christ, shunned both the heathen and the Jewish tax collectors. They shunned the heathen, lest they should be led astray and deceived; but the tax collectors, because, according to the law, were deserving of death, Gen. 49:10* and yet [they] were not allowed to kill and destroy them on account of the Roman domination of Israel.

Perhaps some will ask, Why then, did they scourge the apostles and stone Stephen? And why were many saints put to death by Saul? Why was their community destroyed, since they were not allowed capital punishment?

To this I answer: That this did not transpire without the consent of the Romans, for they, themselves, confessed before Pilate, saying, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," John 18:31. The stoning of Stephen was not done lawfully; but merely in a riot, as Luke declares, saying, *Exclamantes autem voce magna, continuerunt aures suas and impetum fecerunt unanimiter in cum*;† and this the Zurichans have also thus translated into the German: "They cried with a loud voice and stopped their ears and ran upon him with one accord," as they also intended to do with Christ and also with Paul, Luke 4:29; Acts 7:57; 10:31; 21:30; 23:12; 26:10. Again, that Saul or Paul destroyed the church and put to death many of the saints, as he related before Agrippa, we

* [CHCoG: Gen 49:10 confirms that Israel had been given the scepter, But it does NOT say here, nor anywhere else in the Bible, that they had to kill **all** tax collectors (or publicans as it is in the KJV). Though tax collectors were then notorious for breaking the laws of God, like everyone else, it was only those who were actually breaking God's Laws that were to be punished by death (or banishing).]

† [CHCoG: Acts 7:57 as it was translated into Latin from the Greek from the Aramaic. The Aramaic directly translates as "Then they cried out in a loud voice, covered their ears, and they all rushed upon him;"]

may be sure that he did not do so without the consent of the magistracy; for it is manifest and incontrovertible that the scepter did not allow them to put anyone to death, and, for this reason they said, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death;" the scepter was taken from them and came into the hands of the Romans, as has been explained above. If they had been allowed to practice their own law of blood, they would not have delivered Christ unto Pilate; Lucius would not have taken Paul from the tumultuous Jews; Herod would not have imprisoned Peter, nor killed John the baptist and James; for this would not do; in the worldly adjudication, for one to grasp the jurisdiction of another; such a policy would, doubtlessly, soon fail, Acts 21:27-40; 24:7.

We are well aware, beloved brethren, that there are some who call this Jewish shunning, or ban, to which Christ has directed us a pharisaic leaven and frankly say, We do not want to be pointed to a leaven, without the Scriptures. Whosoever these may be, we pray them for the Lord's sake, first, to consider well what they say; for, in my opinion, they do not understand their own words. Does not Moses say, "Whosoever does not hearken unto my (God's) words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him," Deut. 18:19. Does not Jeremiah say that he "shall execute judgment and justice in the earth?" Does not the Father from high heaven say, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear him?" Does not Paul say, "In whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge?" Jer. 23:5; Mat. 17:5; Col. 2:3. I am sure that the words and teaching of Christ is Scripture enough for all the pious. It is He, I say, and not I, who points his believers to the use of the ban. *Tu quis es, qui ex adverso respondes Deo?* That is, "Who are you that would answer God with perverseness?"

If there is any brother under the whole canopy of heaven who can show, by the divine truth, that these words of Christ apply to any other time than to the time of Christ, without violating the Scriptures, then I will gladly hear him and open my ears to the

truth; for I do not desire to contend against the truth, which is my testimony, but I desire to uphold it. For the sake of truth I have had to hear and suffer much, these many years; and I am yet prepared unto death, by the grace of the Lord, to testify to the truth. But I know and am convinced that it can not apply to any other time, without violating the word and Scriptures of Christ, as we have sufficiently shown and proven, to the reader, above, by abundance of reasons and Scriptures.

Secondly, I desire, for God's sake, that my beloved brethren will weigh with the balance of the Scriptures, what leaven is and what the Scriptures mean by it, before they call this before-mentioned ban, to which Christ directs us a pharisaic leaven. It implies, first, the word and its power, or rather, faith and its power. Secondly, it signifies a corrupting, ungodly being or man. Thirdly, a deceiving, leavened, corrupting doctrine. If the Jewish ban and shunning,* to which Christ points us was a leaven, as some mistakenly assert, then they must show, by virtue of the Scriptures; what leavening and corruption it has caused in the pure word and in the hearts of the Jews; for, although Jehovah God permitted some liberties to Israel through Moses, in their temporal transactions, as said at the beginning, yet he did not expressly command that they should deal with the heathen, but rather warned the Jews against them. They now scrupulously observed the faithful warning of God, being taught through many perils and for that reason, probably, they did not make use of the privileges granted to them, in regard to dealing with the heathen, lest, by

* [CHCoG: We remain puzzled as to why Menno insists on calling this a Jewish ban. Jesus was NOT constrained by what the Jewish leaders did or did not do. If Jesus tells us who to ban and how, it is Jesus' ban, not a Jewish ban, even if some features were similar. And as for the Jewish ban, God told them not to add to or remove anything from His Law, so all the changes they made—in both directions—were unauthorised and thus illegal in God's eyes, as God showed Peter in Acts 10. And as Jesus has not put any limiting time-frame on bans, it still applies to us, for we are called to obey Jesus.]

these means, they should be ensnared and corrupted in their hearts. Let the spiritual judge now, whether it can be called leaven by the Scriptures, since they did not neglect the law and command of God by this, but, in fact, left it unchanged and whole and were thus shielded against the corrupter.

Sincerely beloved brethren, if we are to esteem this often mentioned Jewish ban as a leaven, to which Christ directs us, because they, for their consciences' sake, abandoned some of these liberties (for liberties are of a nature that we can enjoy them, or not, at our option; else they would not be liberties), not contrary to the law, but rather in conformity with the faithful warning, advice and admonition of God, contained in the law—then the holy prophet Jeremiah might, for good reasons, have reproved the Rechabites as leaven, because they, on account of the command of their father Jonadab, would not drink wine, plant vineyards, sow the soil, nor build houses, although all this was free to them, according to the law of God; for to them, with Israel, was the possession of the land and the other blessings promised, Jer. 35:14. O, no, the Lord did not reckon it as leaven unto them, but it was accounted to their honor to have honored the command of their father and by this they obtained the promise of the Lord.

I would further say that if it is to be called leaven, if we do not partake of our freedom for conscience' sake, or for the sake of the brethren—then freedom cannot be called freedom and Paul must have been an impure leaven to have taught that we should, if necessary, deny ourselves the liberty, for the sake of the brethren, Rom. 14:14; 1 Cor. 8:13; 9:14; 10:23.

From all this it is evident, according to my understanding of the word of the Lord, that it is a frightful blasphemy, unknown to a God-fearing christian, thus to undertake to master and instruct Christ, the {eternal} Wisdom of God, [about] how he should teach us and what he should command us; and to call that which he commands us leaven, although it is a strong and consolatory shield against corruption and deceit. Therefore, it is not contrary to the

law, but in conformity with it; of this we are convinced, for if it were leaven, contrary to the law, as some say it is, then Christ Jesus would by no means have approved of it, commanded it and said, "Let him be unto you as a heathen man and a tax collector," since he, in other places, has diligently warned his followers against the leaven.

Some, perhaps, will contradict me by saying that the shunning of the heathen by the Jews, that is, not to eat with them, when the victuals were clean, was openly contrary to the express command of the law. For Moses had commanded Israel that they should keep the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles, unto Jehovah their God, with a tribute of free-will offering of their hands, which they should give unto the Lord, their God, &c. and that they should rejoice before Jehovah, their God, they and their sons and their daughters and their man-servants and their maidservants and the Levite that was within their gates and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, that were among them. To such, I would reply, that these strangers also had to keep the Sabbath; to enjoy the tenths of the third year, the first fruits of the land, the gleanings of the field, olive trees and vineyards with the Levites, the widows and orphans. Deut. 16:1-17; Isa. 56:1-8; Lev. 23:22.

The stranger also had, with Israel, an offering for their sins of ignorance; also, the same punishment with Israel; they had to hear the reading of the law every seventh year, in the solemnity of the year of release. Deut. 31:10-13. Therefore, it follows from these and other like Scriptures, that these before-mentioned strangers were citizens among the Israelites and not uncircumcised heathen. For they were already among the Israelites at the time they yet journeyed in the wilderness. Exo. 12:37-50.

Moses says, "You stand this day, all of you, before Jehovah your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers, with all the men of Israel; your little ones, your wives and your stranger that is in your camp, from the hewer of your wood

unto the drawer of your water, that you should enter into covenant with Jehovah your God and into his oath, which Jehovah your God makes with you this day,” Deut. 29:10-12, Also Deut. 5:14; 16:13, 14; Exo. 20:8-11; 23:12; Deut. 14:27-29; 24:19; Num. 15:27-29; Lev. 4:13-20; Num. 9:14.

I think, brethren, that the cited passages sufficiently show and prove that they were called strangers, because they were not of the seed of Israel and had no part in the distribution of the land; therefore, Moses commanded the Israelites to allow them the right to the tenths of the third year, to the gleanings of the field, of the olive trees and vineyards and the first fruits of the land, as we have shown and explained from the writings of Moses.

In the second place, it might be asked, why we should shun the apostates, since Christ said, “Let him be unto you as a heathen man and a tax collector,” and since it is manifest that Christ did himself eat with the tax collectors. To this I reply: What kind of sinners they were, with whom Christ ate, is well explained by the evangelists. For, when the Pharisees murmured, Christ said, “They that are whole do not need a physician, but they that are sick; but you go and learn what this means, I will have mercy and not sacrifice; for I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” What kind of sinners Matthew, the sinful woman and Zaccheus were after they had heard Christ is not a mystery, Mat. 9:12, 13.

Again, Luke says that all the tax collectors and sinners came to Christ to hear him and with such he did eat and therefore he did say to the murmuring Pharisees, “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety and nine,” &c., Luke 15:4.

Again, that he ate with the Samaritans is no wonder at all, for they received his word and believed on him; but that he should have sought hospitality in a Samaritan city, is not rightly translated, according to the Latin text. Thus it reads in Latin: *Misit nunciosante conspectum suum and euntes intraverunt in civitatum,*

Samaritanorum, ut pararent illi and non receperunt eum, quia facies ejus erat euntis Hierosolymam. Which being translated reads, He “sent messengers before his face and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him and they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem,” Luke 9:52.*

What kind of preparation is meant by this, may, in my opinion, be clearly learned from the case of the seventy, related in Luke 10:1; whom he sent before his face by two and two, to make preparation for him in all the cities and countries whither he himself would come, not to prepare a place for sojourning, but for the teaching of the kingdom of God. But here they did not receive him. He does not say that the master of the house did not receive him, but *they*, that is, the inhabitants of the city to whom he had sent them to preach, did not receive him; because, as Luke says, he was going to Jerusalem; for the Samaritans and the Jews always have had a severe strife between them in regard to worship and religious matters. Yes, so much so, that the Samaritans were considered by the Jews as being deserving of the ban, John 4:9; and if it were true, that he desired to find a lodging-place, yet it is apparent that the Samaritans were not Gentiles, but a remnant of the ten tribes [conquered by] Shalmaneser; for the Samaritan woman said unto Christ, “Are you greater than our father, Jacob?”† That Jacob was not the father of the Gentiles is manifest. She also looked for the Messiah, whom the Gentiles did not know, for she said, “I know that the Messiah comes, which is called Christ,”

* [CHCoG: The Latin is only a later translation of the Greek, which we believe is itself only a translation of the Aramaic, which was the original language of Christ and the Apostles. This reduces its validity, though in this case the Latin is a faithful rendition of the Aramaic.]

† [CHCoG: The Samaritans claim they are descended from the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim and Levi. However, 2 Kings 17:23-24 says Shalmaneser removed the Israelites and filled Samaria with heathens, likely meaning that by Christ’s time, the Samaritans were a blend of the two.]

John 4:25. Again, after Stephen was stoned, Philip came into a Samaritan city and preached Christ unto them; and at that time they could not yet conscientiously preach the gospel unto the Gentiles and go among them. From this it may be safely concluded that the Samaritans, who claimed the patriarch Jacob to be their father, who looked for the Messiah and to whom they had already preached the gospel, before they were conscientiously at liberty to go among the Gentiles, were not heathen, but a remnant of the Israelites, as said before; therefore it is no wonder that he requested to sojourn with them. Neither did he say, Let him be unto you as a Samaritan, but as a “heathen man and a tax collector.”

Behold, dearly beloved brethren, however we turn these words of Christ, they cannot be made to apply to any other time than that of Christ; namely, that as the Jews at that time dealt with a heathen and tax collector—so we may also now treat an apostate who, either through false doctrine, or through an unclean, shameful life, dishonors, rejects and disgraces Christ Jesus and his holy word. I wish, most beloved brethren, that every christian would diligently consider, since we have given our understanding of these words of Christ, whether Paul also understood these words as meaning the same as we have explained. Yes, he who closely considers this matter will find that Paul, in his doctrine of separation, has in every way conformed to this rule of Christ.

Thus Paul says, “It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father’s wife. And you are puffed up and have not rather mourned, that he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you,” 1 Cor. 5:1, 2.

In another place, Paul teaches how Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself as a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such

thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish, Eph. 5:25. If we admit such open profaners as this fornicator, and, moreover, adulterers, drunkards, contentious, avaricious, upbraiders and idolaters and do not shun them, then we must always hear this reproof of Paul, that we are “puffed up” and do not rather mourn to separate such open transgressors from us. O, brethren, brethren! I fear that this admonition of Paul is not sufficiently weighed by some. Paul says further, “For I truly, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus,” 1 Cor. 5:3, 4, 5.

These words of the apostle teach us three things: First, The great love of the faithful servant Paul, toward his disciples and children; for although he was not present there, yet as present in spirit, he was paternally solicitous for them and always taught, admonished and advised them to their own good.

Secondly, In whose name, how and by whom this separation shall be practiced, namely, in the name, that is, by virtue of the command and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ. For Paul did not undertake to do anything that he had not first received from Christ, as he says. Yes, if Christ had not first instructed Paul to do so, he would not have dared to command the Thessalonians, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they should separate themselves from every brother who walked disorderly and not according to his ordinances. For this may well be called doing things in the name of Christ, when it is done in conformity to his holy word and will.

Again, It shall be practiced by the church; that is, everyone shall not separate at his own pleasure; but it should be done by the congregation of God, after proper admonition in love, diligence and faithfulness, with the power of Christ, that is, with the binding

or closing key of the Holy Spirit. For if it is practiced without the word and Spirit, without love and brotherly affability, whether it is through bitterness, anger, or a false report, not conformable to the word, for reasons not deserving of the ban,—then it is not a work of God, not medicine to the soul, nor fruit of pure love; but a contention of satan, a corruption and pestilence to the soul and a manifest fruit of the flesh. In short, a curse, abomination and stench before God. Let every person well weigh these words of Paul and he will, by the grace of God, find how rigidly this separation is commanded in the Scriptures, and how orderly it should be practiced in the church, with the power of the word and Spirit of Christ.

Thirdly, That we should deliver an unrepenting transgressor unto satan. Not, brethren, that he was not of satan before separation, for as soon as he turned his heart away from the Lord and became ungodly, he became the subject of satan, even as a penitent sinner is a subject of Christ. But now the voice of man, through the church, tells him that he is deprived of the communion of Christ and his church and that he is now delivered unto satan until he again brings forth true fruits of repentance, before God and his church, that his adulterous, avaricious, refractory and idolatrous flesh may be brought to reflection and become ashamed and repentant by such judgment and shunning of the pious, that he may thus suppress and die unto his flesh, that is, the lusts of his flesh and that he may by these means be brought to repentance and his soul be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Here the god-fearing reader may observe in these words of Paul, the first reason why the Holy Spirit ordained this ban to be practiced in the house of God, namely; for repentance and not for corruption; that, if the transgressor rejects as null and void, all fraternal services and admonitions of faithful love that are shown to him and remains unrepentant—that, then, according to the advice of the Holy Spirit, the judgment passed upon him, should, with sorrowfulness, be made known unto him in the church and that he

is separated from the church, that he may thus become ashamed unto repentance.

Again, about this shame, the apostle speaks in another place, "If any man does not obey our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed," 2 Thes. 3:14.

Take notice, brethren, that true, evangelical separation is an express fruit of unfeigned love and not a law of hatred, as some, very wrongly, complain and pretend.

Ah, faithful brethren, if we rightly understood God, if we were enlightened with the Holy Spirit and loved our neighbors with divine love, how diligently we would be engaged in this matter, to follow the faithful advice of the Holy Spirit, in all reasonableness and love, without respect of persons; no matter whether it concerns father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, child, or any relative or friend; for how can we show more spiritual love towards them? But as it is, a great many do not seek that which is of the Spirit, but that which is of the flesh; not their neighbors, but themselves. If they do so through ignorance, then may the merciful Father enlighten them with his Holy Spirit and guide them into all truth; but if they do so through wilful perverseness, then we know that it is written, "To be carnally minded is death," Rom. 8:6.

In the third place, Paul says, "Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," 1 Cor. 5:6-7.

Again, with these words Paul reproves first, the Corinthians, and also all other churches with them, who glory in being the church of Jesus Christ and the spiritual house of Israel and yet tolerate such shameful, corrupting leaven, as this Corinthian and similar defilers in their communion. For how can we glory in the

piety of the church and reprove other churches on account of their ungodly doctrine and life, so long as we tolerate similar leaven of doctrine and life among us, without expelling it? If we are unleavened, why are we not fearful of the leaven, since the apostle tells us that “a little leaven leavens the whole lump.”

Secondly, He here gives us the outward Israel as an example. For when they kept the Passover, they did not keep leavened bread in their houses for seven days. Yes, if it was found in any house the souls of it had to be rooted out from among Israel. Neither was an uncircumcised or unclean one to eat of it. Oh, brethren, if the figure and shadow were to be so pure, how much more should the reality be pure? For our Passover is not a quadruped, but it is the spotless Lamb of God, Christ Jesus. Nor does our Passover last seven days, as did the Passover of Israel, but it lasts forever, namely, from the offering of Christ until the last day; neither is it kept [only] by unleavened bread, baked from flour, but by the unleavened bread of righteousness and by the word of eternal truth.

Therefore, beloved brethren, let us keep this Passover holy and unspotted, to the best of our ability and let us, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, separate from us the corrupting leaven, that is, all those that walk in the foreskin of their hearts and are impure in life (understand, open, known transgressors), that we may be the holy Israel of God, sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, free from the scourging angel of God and that we may thus rejoice before the Lord, in sincerity and truth and celebrate and serve it all the days of our lives.

Further, all the pious may learn from these words of Paul, “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” The second reason why this separation is so necessary and useful to the house of God is that it can not stand without it. This has been shown in Israel. Moses, the faithful servant of God, strictly commanded the people of God, that they should, without mercy, destroy from among them the wilful transgressors, when proven by

two or three witnesses; also, that if any prophets should arise among them, with signs and miracles to lead them to other gods, they should not hear them, but destroy them. Again, the father should not excuse his child, the husband his wife, &c., but their hand should be the first upon them. Also, they should level and destroy any city which went after other gods, that Israel might hear these things, fear God and practice such evil no more. I think this was a rigid separation which was commanded to Israel. If they had stood firm and immutable in this and they had followed the command, counsel, teachings and admonition of God, according to the Scriptures, and destroyed the false prophets and idolators, they would never have become so estranged from God and come to such deadly whoring and degeneration (understand this as in the law). For the rejection of the counsel and will of God will never go unpunished, Deut. 13:5, 7; 17:11; 19:15; Heb. 10:18.

But at present, the Holy Spirit does not teach us to destroy the wicked, as Israel did, but that we should reluctantly separate them from the church and that in the name of the Lord, by the power of Christ and the Holy Spirit; for a little leaven leavens the whole lump. It is a common saying, One scabby sheep mars the whole flock. The lepers were not allowed among the healthy in Israel; but had to be separated until cured. O, brethren in the Lord! The leprosy of the soul is a leprosy above all diseases, whether it is in doctrine or in life. It eats like a cancer, and, as Paul says, "leavens the whole lump." Therefore the Holy Spirit has abundantly taught us to separate such from among us; not to hear the words of the false prophets, for they deceive us; to separate from such who, contrary to apostolic doctrine, cause offense and contention; to shun those who are not pleased with the salutary words and doctrine of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, but are contentious and desirous of quarreling, &c.; to guard against dogs and artful laborers and the selfish; to flee the voice of strangers; to shun a heretic or a master of sects, after having been once or twice admonished; not to greet nor receive in our houses him who does

not teach the doctrine of Christ; and to withdraw from every brother who acts disorderly and does not walk according to the apostolic doctrine. O, says Paul, that they be cut off who disturb you, Lev. 13:2; Jer. 23:16; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10; 2 Thes. 3:6.

I think, beloved brethren, the Holy Spirit of God has done well and fully performed the duties of his office and his faithful service of divine love toward his chosen people by admonishing, warning, teaching and commanding, in Moses and the prophets, in Christ and the apostles, in regard to the Shunning of heretics and apostates; but if we, through obstinacy or perverseness, still associate with the leprous, against the faithful counsel, teaching and admonition of God and intermingle with them, then we will also be infected with the same disease. It is the recompense of those who know the nature of the disease and yet neither fear nor avoid it.

Say, most beloved, is it not the greatest foolishness and recklessness to wilfully and knowingly run into the hands of the murderer, by opening unto him your house and office; for what else can you expect but stealing, robbing and murdering?

O, that the pious reader would receive the command, teaching, counsel and admonition, so faithfully given by the Holy Spirit. Shun all heretics (I refer to those who have been of us) and apostates, according to the word of the Lord; whether it is father, mother, wife, child, relative or friend, or whoever will try to turn you from God and his word and to corrupt you by doctrine or by life. Whosoever loves anything more than his God cannot be the disciple of the Lord, Mat. 10:37; Luke 14:26. Therefore, believe Christ Jesus and sincerely fear him in his word and you will follow his counsel and teaching; but if you are offended that way, then await your punishment, for, by the grace of God, I know what it is to despise the word and will of God and what I have felt and seen in this respect.

In the fourth place, Paul says, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to keep company with fornicators. Yet not altogether with the

fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one do not eat," 1 Cor. 5:9-11.

From these words of the apostle we observe that he had on a former occasion advised the Corinthians in an epistle that they should shun the fornicators, covetous, &c., but they had also understood it as meaning the fornicators of this world. In this epistle, Paul admonishes them that this was not his meaning; for if they should shun such and not have any dealings with them, they must need to go out of the world. But he meant those who are called brethren, as he shows in plain language, saying, "If any man that is called a brother is a fornicator, or covetous," &c., with such a one do not eat; just as the Jews did not eat with the Gentiles and tax collectors at the time of Christ; nor did they keep their company; for Christ and Paul are one and not divided, John 4:9.

I think, brethren, that this text is so plain and clear that it admits of no controversy; notwithstanding some violate and garble it.

First, they say, "Paul had no authority to burden us with any laws when it was not first taught and commanded of him of Christ." To this we answer: Let everyone rightly reflect upon, divide and consider the words of Christ, "Let him be unto you as a heathen man and a tax collector" and he will find, by the grace of God, whether or not Paul first received this doctrine from Christ.

Secondly, they say, "Since Paul makes mention here of the Jewish Passover and adds that we should keep the Passover, not with the old leaven," &c., so this passage and also his sayings, "With such do not company, with such do not eat," must be understood as meaning a spiritual intermingling or communion. To such, we answer: Israel had a Passover of seven days, but we have an eternal Passover. And, as the Lamb of our Passover is

eternal and his offering eternal, so we must now perpetually sanctify and celebrate it, always partake of its flesh; always be sprinkled with its blood and always be diligently guarding against the ungodly, corrupting leaven of both doctrine and life. If our feast and Passover then, is spiritual and not literal, eternal and not temporal, how can this then be applicable to the Lord's Supper, the eating of which does not last but for an hour or so?

In the second place, we answer: If these words were spoken of a spiritual communion then it should read in the Greek text, *choinonia* and in the Latin, *communicatio*, for these words signify spiritual communion, as Christ communes with us and the members of Christ commune with Christ; and also community of property. But in the Greek text it is a different word and in Latin it reads: *commisceri sivi commercium habere*, which does not imply a spiritual communion at all, but an outward, temporal communion; and it appears clearer from these words of Paul that he here speaks of the temporal communion and company and not of the spiritual. For he has prohibited this communion with the apostates and allows the communion with the world, which has no spiritual communion with us, nor can they have. This is incontrovertible. Yes, if the communion or intermingling with the world were prohibited, then we could not make use of the necessities of life, but we would have to eke out our life in poverty, destitution, tribulation and misery, 1 Cor. 10:3; Acts 2:44; 1 Tim. 6:18; Heb. 13:16.

Thirdly, we reply: That Paul had reference to common eating and not to the Lord's Supper; for he calls it in Latin, *cibum capere* (to take food) and not, *panum frangere* (to break bread); and it is manifest that the Lord's Supper is, nowhere in the Scriptures, called *cibum capere*. And if it were spoken in reference to the Supper, as some very mistakenly assert, then it would incontrovertibly follow that we are at liberty to invite the world to the Lord's Supper, to greet them with the kiss of peace and to be one body with them; for this interaction, unclean and prohibited

with an apostate brother, is, according to Paul, clean and allowable with the world. O, no, but as the Jews at that time would not eat a common meal with the heathen and tax collectors and Christ having pointed his followers to that usage, so Paul follows that doctrine and command of his Lord and master, Jesus; and says that we shall not eat with such.

I think that it has been sufficiently shown to the pious, that these words of Paul should not be understood as referring to spiritual communion, nor to the Lord's Supper, but only to daily interaction and common eating. If, now, it is not allowed in outward or carnal communion, it will be less so in inward or spiritual communion.

Dear brethren in the Lord, I would here pray and admonish you all, in humility, to consider well what the proper meaning is of this word *commercium* (interaction), of which Paul speaks and how we should understand it, that you may not give too much liberty to the reckless souls, to their own destruction and that you do not too closely bind the narrow minded, since you have no binding word. For I hear and see and have, alas, seen too much of it, these many years, that some, on every hand, use no weight nor measure in this matter; and the result is that there is much dispute and trouble about this separation. May the Lord grant his divine grace to the peace, unity and edification of his holy church. Amen.

Inasmuch as I am an unworthy and humble servant, called into the house of God and sincerely seek the good of my beloved brethren and co-workers; therefore I will briefly present my views concerning this communion or intermingling, according to my talent, with which I desire to appear before the throne of my Lord Jesus Christ, at the day of judgment and will leave it to the criticism of God's word and all theologians. Therefore, my understanding of *commisceri* or *commercium habere*, (that is, to mix with or to commune), of which Paul here speaks, is that it implies daily communion, company, walk, interaction, presence, usage, behaviour and dealing and that it does not mean accidental

conversation, or necessary dealings, such as dividing a legacy, liquidating debts and such like incidental dealings, or to be serviceable in times of need; for the word *commercium* does not imply anything so strong. Therefore, in my opinion, some err not a little by attaching the same strength to the phrase “have no company with them,” that they attach to “you shall not steal and you shall not commit adultery,” of which Paul testifies that those who are guilty of it shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Their argument is that no is no. Yes, brethren, if this were the case, who could stand before his God?

Again, if the word *commercium*, which in our language means an intermingling or communion, is to be explained as that we are not to speak a word with an apostate, not to have any necessary dealings with him; then the word *commercium* would be violated; many a pious child would be retarded, many an unscriptural action done and the faithful Paul would be rejected. For he says, “Yet do not count him as an enemy, but advise him as a brother,” 2 Thes. 3:15. Besides, it would make an evil report of the gospel of Christ.

It is also incontrovertible that the tax collectors and some heathen lived in Judea, such as Herod, Pilate, Philip, Sisanius, Testes, &c., before whom they had to appear at times. Again, they also had to pay tribute to the Romans; and therefore were obliged to speak to them sometimes and had necessary dealings with them; although they diligently shunned their daily company, conversation, intermingling, eating, &c.

Dear brethren, take heed and do not become masters and despisers of the Holy Spirit, that you do not, through the good opinions of men, make the way narrower nor broader, than the word, Spirit and example of the Lord makes and limits it.

In the fifth place, Paul says, “What have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not you judge them that are within? But them that are without God judges. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person,” 1 Cor. 5:12, 13. Here Paul explains his former words, that he did not apply them in his first

epistle to those that are without; for God judges them and not we. We ought to put away from among us the wicked persons, and commend the world to God.

Behold, faithful brethren, how unanimously Christ and Paul agree in the shunning of the apostates. And also, how earnestly Paul has taught and maintained this separation. Yes, that he has six times enjoined the practice of this ban in such a short chapter.

“You are puffed up and have not rather mourned, that he that has done this deed might be taken away from among you.”

“To deliver such a one unto Satan.”

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that you may be a new lump.”

“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to keep company with fornicators.”

“With such a one, do not eat.”

“Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person,” 1 Cor. 5:2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13.

All these are found in one short chapter; besides what he has taught, commanded and advised in this respect to the Romans, Galatians, Philippians, Thessalonians, Timothy and Titus. John also has explained himself briefly. I do not see how a god-fearing heart can have doubts in regard to this matter and how he can contradict it, since there are such good fruits and utility derived from this shunning. But it seems that this vine must have its worms.

Again, the refractory make another objection and say, “When one is separated from the church it is not necessary to shun him any more, for he is no longer called a brother.” To such we reply: That they should; in the first place, consider that if such a one, who has acknowledged the Lord’s word and truth, and, for a time, led a pious, evangelical life and has thus received baptism, becomes apostatized and afterwards sincerely repents, he is not rebaptized; for the Scriptures teach but one baptism. But if those who are of the world repent they are baptized after repentance; for before,

they neither confessed word, penitence, faith, righteousness nor baptism; and therefore it is a different matter. At the day of judgment, it will also be more strictly required of them than of the world, Luke 9:5; 2 Pet. 2:20; Mat. 24:48.

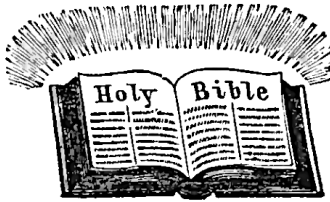
In the second place we say that the world, notwithstanding, esteem them as brethren and many of them would gladly be greeted as brethren; therefore it is very necessary to shun them, that both the world and they may know and understand that we can not accept such as brethren who are so unclean and blamable in doctrine or in life, lest the word of the Lord and his church be despised by the world, on their account.

In the third place we say, That Israel did not shun their open transgressors, nor the Corinthians their fornicators until they were separated from the church. It is neither a custom nor usage in the Scriptures, to shun anybody so long as he is allowed in the church; and therefore we should not shun anyone before separation; or else we practice a ban neither known nor mentioned in the Scriptures.

In the fourth place we say, That if we commune and associate with an apostate after separation, then we show in fact that we despise the word, command, counsel, teaching and admonition of God; that we do not seek the reasonable shame of the apostate, which is to lead him to repent; and also, that we do not guard against the corruption of our own souls.

I trust that this is sufficient to appease every god-fearing heart, in regard to the words of Christ, Mat. 18:18 and in regard to the fifth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians and that no more useless garbling, objections and artful excuses be made to turn it to the lusts of the flesh, for they can stand no better than stubble before the fire and ice before heat. Yes, from these same words of Christ and of Paul it appears clearly how, when, where, with what spirit, of whom, on whom and for what purpose this ban should be practiced. I think this foundation to be so powerful that it cannot be broken by christian reasonableness nor by divine truth. Let everyone fear and love his God with all his heart and he will,

doubtlessly, receive the true knowledge of this matter and will rightly follow the scriptural and God pleasing usage.



A CLEAR,
INCONTROVERTIBLE CONFESSION
AND

**DEMONSTRATION to
JOHN A'LASCO,**

FOUNDED ON THE POWER OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES,
THAT THE ENTIRE CHRIST JESUS, GOD AND
MAN, MAN AND GOD, IS GOD'S OWN, ONLY
AND FIRST BEGOTTEN SON; NOT DIVIDED
NOR SEPARATED, BUT AN ONLY, UNDIVIDED
PERSON, SON AND CHRIST; GOD'S WORD
DULY MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH,
TOGETHER WITH A THOROUGH
CONFUTATION, REPLY TO, AND SOLUTION OF
THE PRINCIPAL POINTS OF THE DEFENSE OF
JOHN A'LASCO AGAINST US.

BY
MENNO SIMON.

*"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; If any
man eats of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I
will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world,"*
John 6:51.

*“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid,
which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.*

First Published 1544.

PREFACE.

TO THE IMPARTIAL READER:—I see and observe, honest reader, that many books, printed in Latin and also written German books, are circulated and read, concerning the incarnation of the Lord, which, in my opinion, so slander our reputation, that those who read or hear them read, shut their noses and mouths at our approach. Therefore I feel myself compelled, First, to reply to some accusations of John A’Lasco wrongfully preferred against me. Secondly, to advance my confession and faith of Christ Jesus, the Son of God; and, Thirdly, to solve and criticise according to divine truth, as far as the grace of God is given to me, his principal points with which he refutes our foundation and faith. This I do not for my own sake, for I am well aware that my truths, with him are lies, and that I will remain, as did all the holy apostles and prophets to the learned, [as] heretics and imposters, even if Christ spoke in and through me, a poor, ignorant creature, with the same power as that with which he spoke formerly through the apostles and prophets. But I do this from the pure love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and his holy word; from love for my beloved brethren and also from a heart inclined towards my opponents, that Christ Jesus, the Son of the Almighty and great God, may be made manifest as a true Son of his heavenly Father; that the Scriptures may remain unbroken; and that the afflicted, hungering consciences, which would gladly follow the right, may see and know it and thus thank the Almighty and eternal Father with cheerful hearts, through his first and only begotten Son, Christ

Jesus; and also that the God-fearing reader may know through whom he is reconciled with his God; and that we establish our foundation not otherwise than by the clear and positive Scriptures and incontrovertible truth.

Behold, for this reason have I yet undertaken this labor before my death. I, who in my weakness, every day look for the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle with resignation; that I may leave behind me a sure testimony and memento, how honestly or dishonestly, how highly or how triflingly, how greatly or how insignificantly I have esteemed the Lord Jesus Christ, my only and eternal Surety, Consolation, Refuge, Deliverer and Savior, during the period of my service; for I am aware how we are upbraided and slandered.

Therefore have I divided this book in three parts. The first part is a reply to some articles and accusations without regard to the foundation of our actions of which John A'Lasco accuses and blames us, without any truth whatever.

The second part is my confession of the origin and descent of the flesh of Christ, demonstrated according to the power of the Scriptures.

The third part contains the principal objections, particularly of John A'Lasco to our foundation, which are overwhelmingly answered according to the word of God. I have so divided it that the reader may not become confused, but may obtain a better and more intelligent understanding and sense of our writings.

I desire and pray all my readers, for the sake of Jesus, whether they are learned or unlearned, favorable or unfavorable, to read my writings with an unprejudiced mind and attentively and intelligently; to read them frequently; to compare them with the Scriptures and weigh them in the balance of the Scriptures; I pray them to believe the Scriptures and not the long and many writings, teachings and the colorings of the learned; that they will examine the foundation without bitterness and believe the surest truth and follow it in the fear of God and give him due praise, as becomes all

reasonable people, according to the christian name. I do not doubt but that all those who read them with due attention will soon find that the foundation, doctrine and faith of our opponents concerning Christ, the Son of God, is deceiving and erroneous and that our foundation is the foundation and testimony of the Holy Scriptures; yes, that it is the power and the truth.

I would further pray that the reader does not think hard of it if I call falsehood, lies; and rebuke evil-doing. I trust, by the grace of God, to do so without any bitter feeling and with as temperate words as possible; and further, do not become impatient if I sometimes repeat the same words and matter, when necessary; and also that at the end, he will not judge me without consideration and intelligence; and thus become angry with me. For I do nothing more than reasonable purging, according to the truth; nothing more than prove my faith and hope to be in accordance with the Scriptures and uphold the honor and praise of my Lord and Savior—something which I am not only called to do verbally and with my pen, but also with my life-blood, if his glory demands it.

May the beloved Lord, the faithful Son of the true and living God, to whom be all honor and praise, grant all kind and discreet readers a mind desirous to examine diligently and enlighten the intelligent hearts to understand rightly. Amen.



A CLEAR, INCONTROVERTIBLE CONFESSION, &c.

FIRST PART. Reply to John A'Lasco

In the first place, John A'Lasco* writes that I have magnified his name so that I might, on account of the correspondence I had with him, obtain greater honor, more consideration and authority among ours (as he calls them).

Answer. It is true that I called him the noble and highly-learned, &c., in my confession to him and these preachers; but I did this for no other reason than simply to be polite. I did not picture him in such hateful colors as he did me; he calling me a doctor or teacher of anabaptists. Nor have I called him by such high names as he calls himself—Poloniæ Baro.† I have not sought through his name what alas, he ascribes to me. I know, thanks be to the Lord, with holy Paul, that I can not be the servant of Christ if I seek to please men, Gal. 1:10. If I should become more honored in the name of man, be it a king or emperor, than in Christ, it would not be well with me in the end. For if I seek my own honor and not the honor of God, it will not be to my honor. But I hope to obtain honor which will remain with me forever; men may judge me as they will, they must confess before our God, in the day of Christ. He who has eyes like a flame of fire knows

* [CHCoG: John A'Lasco, also called Jan Łaski, was for some time a Catholic priest. When his family fell from favour in Poland, he converted to the reformed church and became friendly with Erasmus and Zwingli, becoming pastor of the Emden church in 1542. He originated the term Mennonites during his clash with Menno in 1544. He then migrated to England, and fled from there in 1553 when Queen Mary came to power and settled for a time in Brandenburg. Łaski returned to Poland in 1556 and became a leading Calvinist.]

† [Baron of Poland.]

what I seek and do, my coming in and my going out, my rising up and my sitting down. If he knew nothing better of me than that which I am judged by man, then I might justly exclaim: Woe unto me, that I was born.

In the second place, he writes, "That I have unjustly attacked his reputation and profaned their church service."

Answer. I trust that nobody can truthfully show that I have said anything but truth about John A'Lasco or his abettors and followers. But if they feel hurt at the truth, of which he thinks so hard, for this they may blame the truth and not me. I am willing to leave it to the judgment of all reasonable people, whether I wrote justly or unjustly, too much or too little in regard to his doctrine, sacraments, church service, church or community, or that of the preachers of his kind. If their doctrine and church service is of God and his word, why are their unreasonable and reckless disciples not converted from their ungodly ways and doings? For, according to the contents of the Scriptures, it is infallible that the doctrine and service which is of God, has her power and influence, Isaiah 55. But it is too evident from their fruits that there is nothing threshed from them but chaff. My conscience tells me nothing but that I have done them and their church justice; for I have reproved them with zeal, of the things which all the prophets, apostles and faithful witnesses of God have diligently done before me. Namely, I have reproved their carnal, impenitent lives, as is manifest before all the world. If I have done wrong in this regard, then they may justly accuse Moses and the prophets together with Christ and the apostles of it, for they have earnestly commanded me, an unworthy creature, and all God-fearing preachers to do so, for which we, miserable creatures, have to suffer so much in this wild, excited world. He who has created me, knows that I have done so in sincere love to the conversion of their poor souls.

In the third place, he writes, "I have been obliged to deliver our doctrine from your slander, by authority of the divine word, which

doctrine you may garble among your followers by your crying, but which you cannot refute by authority of the Scriptures, notwithstanding your boasting that you do so."

Answer. Can it be called slander to rebuke wrong, according to the Spirit and word of God? Then not only have I slandered, but also Isaiah, Jeremiah, all the prophets and also Christ Jesus, together with all his apostles. I have rebuked their cause according to the word of God; and by the grace of God, shown them that they are not the true messengers of God, nor is their church the true one. But it will be hard for John A'Lasco to show that our doctrine, which is not ours, but Christ's doctrine, is wrong, and also that our rebuke according to the Scriptures is slander; and to prove before his God, who judges all things aright, that his doctrine is right in regard to the incarnation, the baptism of infants, the calling of their preachers, their separation and the unrestrained, reckless life of his church. I fear that we will find plenty of philosophy, invention and coloring, but little scriptural power, foundation and truth. Yes, kind reader, I am sure that if the violence of the world was ever withstood, as it doubtlessly should be, we would soon find where the victory of the Scriptures would stand.

In the fourth place he says, "If we prove our doctrine by virtue of the divine word, then it will be manifest that we were innocently slandered; and our innocence will be made manifest."

Answer. If he has proven his doctrine and sacraments to be right, by virtue of the divine word, as he boastingly asserts, I will acknowledge that I have unreasonably and wrongfully reprovved them in this regard. But [his claims are] nothing but consoling the poor people with falsehood and keeping them on the broad way by fictitious promises. Even if he could prove his doctrine and sacraments to be in accordance with the Scriptures, which, however, he can not do, then his cause would still not be half way right; for the doctrine and sacraments are useless if the fruitful active faith and the pious unblamable life are not there; for which

purpose the doctrine was promulgated and the sacraments ordained. And what kind of life is generally led by their followers and also by the greater part of their preachers themselves, I will leave to the judgment of those who can observe their daily actions and walk and who have an understanding of the Holy Scriptures.

In the fifth place he says, "If you would have sent your writings to us all, as you promised to do, we might have answered you alone; but you have circulated them first among your own, before sending them to us."

Answer. I do not recollect that I have promised them this; nor can I see why I should have made such a promise, as I had nothing to write but what was my proper faith and foundation; which I do not desire only to testify by writing in secret, but also with my life-blood, before the whole world, if only the Lord strengthen and uphold me by his grace.

But as to his writing that I have circulated it first among ourselves, I would say that he has said too much; for as soon as I had withdrawn myself from them, I went to a secret place, as I have had to do these many years, for the sake of the testimony of Christ and my conscience and simply compiled my faith and foundation in writing, and without any delay after our conversation, sent it to them. However, out of respect, I handed it to M. H. G., he being, at the time, Baliff or Burgomaster (Mayor). The Great Lord is my witness that this is the truth and since it is a fact as related, how could I have circulated it among ours before it was sent to them, as he accuses me of doing? And even if I had done as he accuses me, were he and his followers wronged by this? Since it is not only my foundation, but the foundation and faith of us all, as is known to many.

But his own reason convinced him that it would seem unreasonable to the reader to write such an infamous, bitter book without cause, and therefore he must pretend something, so that his writing against the mute Menno, who, on account of the great tyranny cannot answer before the world, might seem reasonable.

But whether it will stand before the impartial Judgment seat of Christ will be made manifest in his declaration. May the beloved Lord not reckon it as sin; for I know that I am not guilty.

In the sixth place he writes, "Your followers were the cause that I must publicly treat with you, for they have steadily circulated the report in west Friesland, and also in a great part of Holland, that you are at liberty to teach your doctrine in our churches; and that we are certainly conquered and have nothing with which to gainsay it."

Answer. I never heard a word of this until I read so in his writing; if some of us have thus boasted, as he writes (which I cannot believe), then it is evident that they have not spoken the truth in that regard, but falsehood; which falsehood is a shameful thing; yes, it is of the devil and destroys the soul, John 8:45, 55.

If he has it from hearsay, it was not right for him to listen to such partizans and liars and to publish it in a book, to the everlasting remembrance of all the world and the great injury of his neighbors. But if he did it of his own accord and not from the persuasion of others, which I do not presume he did, then he dishonors his famous name and ruins his soul. For lying, I say, is a shameful thing and will not find a place in God's city.

Again I say, I do not presume that he wrote this of his own accord, but I imagine that he was too desirous to listen to the liar, too quick to hear and too hasty to write. Be this as it may, I know that, according to christian reasonableness and love, it does not apply to me; let him adorn it as much as he can. The great Lord will make manifest in due time what each one of us seeks and pretends, yes, maintains, teaches, does and defends.

In the seventh place he accuses me and says that I made light of two Latin syllogisms which he communicated to me; that I despised learning and the skill of languages; that I upbraided them as philosophers and passed myself for simply a theologian, whereby I catch the unlearned and simple and cause myself great

consideration. That, however, my want of excellence is no meanness but rather ignorance. Yes, he has set me forth in such colors that my remembrance, although, alas, not much to my honor, will perhaps be with man as long as the world endures.

Answer. The reason why he applies these epithets to me is because I wrote to him and his abettors thus: Let us not refute these things with subtle syllogisms, nor with sharp, human cavilings, for we do not profess them, but we contradict them alone by the clear, convincing word which cannot be garbled by eloquence, nor broken by human invention. These are my words, A.D. 1543, in my confession written to him and his preachers. Let those of a pious disposition judge now whether I deserve such bitter treatment. But I am aware that I did not earn this crown on account of these words just mentioned, but for the sake of the poor, despised truth. Reader, do not misunderstand me. Never in my life have I despised learning and skill in languages, but from my youth, honored and loved them. Although, alas, I never acquired them yet (thanks be to God), I am not so bereft of my senses that I should therefore despise or ridicule the knowledge of languages through which the precious word of divine grace came to our knowledge. I wish that all pious minded persons possessed this knowledge, if we would but humbly use it to the praise of our God and the service of our neighbors, in the pure fear of God.

Is it not a shameful thing that they regard truth so little and continually try, unreservedly, to reflect such falsehood upon me? Yes, dear reader, if I would repay evil with evil, as the law of nature teaches me, I would collect some falsehoods, some of which were spoken and some of which were written against me, of which neither he, nor any other man, can ever convict me. Whether this can be called just and right, I will leave to the judgment of all impartial, reasonable minds.

Would to God that he and all our opponents would not act differently with me than I do with them, for I trust they do not desire my blood, or at least the greater part of them. I rebuke and admonish them of all the short-comings which I see, as love for

them requires, although they think hard of that. But that I should write falsehoods against them, from this may the Lord save me. For I am well aware from which impure fountain falsehood flows and what will be the end of it. I am also aware that it is not the seed from which we shall beget God's children and gather unto Christ a church. I would have them do the same (and not differently), if I should, human-like, fail in some things; that they would admonish and reprove me according to the truth; that they would uphold their truth (if they had any, which, alas, they have not), by force of the Scriptures; and that they would let the seed of the serpent use his falsehood and the seed of Cain his violence, Gen. 3:4.

But as to my ignorance, of which he so bitterly accuses me, I am not ashamed to acknowledge before all the world, that I am not only ignorant, but altogether unlearned and very little versed in the languages. Yes, dear reader, I freely admit, as did Socrates, that I only know one thing, as regards human skill and wisdom and that is that I know nothing. But as regards heavenly wisdom, I am so far taught by God, through the grace of the Lord, that I sincerely confess that my Redeemer and Savior, Christ Jesus, is the only and first begotten Son of God; that whosoever believes in him has everlasting life; that he that does not believe is condemned; that a liar is of the devil; that "whosoever hates his brother is a murderer;" that unless you repent, you shall all perish; that "the wages of sin is death," John 3:8; 1 John 3:15; Luke 13:5; Rom. 6:23. And from this disregarded wisdom (eternal praise be to the Lord), I have obtained so much fear in my poor soul, that my earthly, carnal mind is converted into a better; and that I am so sorry that I cannot walk in Christ Jesus, with all my strength, according to the will of God and be a sincere, unblamable christian; that I cannot bring the whole world from its obdurate, ungodly state into a new, repentant, christian life, with the Spirit, power and word of the Lord. For this is my only joy and ardent desire, that we may rightly preach Christ Jesus, according to his

holy word; that we may seek, fear, love and serve his holy name. Yes, that we may become the city of the living God, the glorious kingdom, to his honor and the temple of his Holy Spirit, 2 Cor. 6:16.

And this same wisdom which produces such power and fruit, I esteem as being the most worthy of all wisdom imaginable; even if taught and restored by an unlearned cart-driver or coal-carrier—yes, it is the only joy and desire of my afflicted heart; the only amelioration of my misery; and will be to the end, by the grace of God, the glorious ornament and crown of my honor. Of this noble, highly learned wisdom and philosophy read in Solomon's proverbs, also Sirach and the Book of Wisdom and you will find which is its proper virtue, work and power.

Behold, reader, for the sake of this philosophic sweetness, honor, virtue, fruit, love and beauty, which I have not learned from famous doctors nor in high schools and for the sake of filling my soul with its living power, I have rather chosen to be the ignorant and unlearned fool of the world, that I may be found wise before my God, than to be one of the most famous of the world and at last be found a fool before the wise God. And this is my short answer and excuse to his charges and bitter upbraidings.

I say again, that in the simplicity of my heart I wrote the words "subtle syllogism," and "sharp cavilings," without, at all, despising science, and that I did not mean by this to despise or curtail anyone. I praise science when justly used to the glory of God. But above all I praise the humble, virtuous science and wisdom which is from above, for it will never perish, but in glorious honor remains with all the pious, into eternal life.

This, now, is the first part of this book and I would have preferred to remain silent upon these things, if they had not been published to embitter some, to hinder the word and to the affliction of the God-fearing. But as it is, circumstances have rendered it necessary for me to do so. May the beloved Lord grant us his grace. Amen.

SECOND PART. OUR CONFESSION.

THE reason why we do not admit the foundation, doctrine and faith of the learned, in regard to the incarnation of the Lord, but refute it with the Scriptures and truth is this: Because we clearly see and palpably feel that they deprive us entirely of Christ, the Son of God and point us to an earthly, sinful creature and a man of the impure and sinful flesh of Adam; because their doctrine and pretensions are quite inconsistent with the ordinance of God and also with nature, the Scriptures and the properties of the names, father, mother and son and because so many inconsistencies must necessarily be included in Christ, as hereditary sin, condemnation, curse and death; because he would be half man, if the woman, according to their confession, contributed as much to the fruit as does the man; because there would be two persons—one divine and one human, which they call two natures or two parts; because there would be two sons—one the Son of God without mother and not subject to pain; the other Mary's son without a father and subject to suffering.

Again, because that if God shall be called a Father of the man, Christ, he must be a creating and not a begetting Father of his Son and Christ must not be a born, but a created Son of his Father; because he would be the offspring of Adam and his seed, not through the word by which all must stand, but through his own flesh, which was subject to condemnation and death, with which the word clothes him and in whom (while on earth), it has lived and because of other gross inconsistencies. Therefore I have deemed it necessary, before I proceed with the confutation and dissection of the controversy, to propose to the reader our faith and confession of Christ the Son of God, according to the wholesome,

genuine Scriptures, that he may find and understand that the Lord Jesus Christ is not an unclean, divided Christ of two persons and sons—but an undivided, pure Christ, an only person, yes, God’s first begotten and only Son. Let him who is of an understanding mind and who fears God, read and judge.

In the first place I advance the ordinance of God, Gen. 1:28; 9:1, to which John A’Lasco himself refers me, namely, “Be fruitful and multiply,” and prove from this same ordinance that the production of man is brought about from the seed of man, through the woman, 1 Cor. 11:11, as will be enlarged upon hereafter.

To establish this assertion I would first refer to the conception of Sarah, when the Lord spoke unto Abraham, saying, I will bless your wife Sarah and she shall bear you a son; and you shall call his name Isaac, Gen. 17:19. To understand these words rightly and also Gen. 1, the reader should observe that Sarah, as she herself said, was old and it ceased to be with her after the manner of women, Gen. 18:11. Nevertheless, through faith, she conceived and brought forth unto Abraham a son in her old age.

This blessing of Sarah, according to my humble understanding, was that she was made fruitful by the power of God, according to the promise through the faith of Abraham. Behold, thus Isaac was conceived by Sarah from the seed of his father and a son was born unto Abraham, according to the ordinance of God, Gen. 1:28; 21:2.

To this add the proverbs of Philon, or rather of the wise Solomon, which reads thus: “I myself also am a mortal man, like unto all and the offspring of him that was first made of the earth,” &c., Wisdom 7:1.

Again, the Lord said unto Jacob, “Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of you; and kings shall come out of your loins,” Gen. 35:11.

Again, Levi was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met Abraham, Heb. 7:10. Other clear proofs might also be added.

I now leave the philosophers to philosophize and the students of nature to argue as much as they please over this matter. God's ordinance, the example of Abraham and Sarah; and the abundant testimony of the Scriptures are sufficient proof for me on this point.

[CHCoG: The above argument cannot be left unchallenged, as it appears to be both biased and wrong.

Let us start by quoting Gen. 1:28 more clearly: "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply." Note this carefully: Twice God makes it clear that he was addressing BOTH Adam and Eve. This was not just a command to Adam. They were both required to be active in producing children. Producing a child involves the genetics of BOTH the father and the mother.

We readily admit that in Menno's time, little was known of the details of genetics. But any observant person would have known this: Each offspring of a mother and father typically shows a combination of characteristics from both parents. Surely Menno could see this in his own children. And yet it seems that he has attempted above to 'prove' that the offspring only receive their genetic inheritance from their fathers by selecting quotes that emphasize the father's role in procreation. Menno has probably done this to support his strange theory that Jesus inherited his human body entirely from his Father. He deliberately ignores this scripture:

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Genesis 2:24

This directly refers to marriage and sexual union, but it is also exhibited literally in their children, who are truly one flesh which is derived from both their parents.

Today we have much greater knowledge of genetics and reproduction, which we will briefly summarise here, as it can help us understand the composition of Jesus, and in particular his physical body. A woman becomes fertile when one of her eggs ripen. A normal cell in her body has diploid DNA, meaning she has two copies of all of her 23 chromosomes, resulting in 46 chromosomes, two of which are her sex chromosomes, which are always both female, and are designated XX. Her eggs are unique, in that they only have a single copy of her DNA, thus containing 23 chromosomes plus her mitochondrial DNA. One of these 23 is her X sex chromosome. A man also has 46 chromosomes, but he differs in that his two sex chromosomes are different, one is 'female' and again designated X, while the other is male, and designated Y, so a man is XY. The man's seed, as it is called in the Bible, is sperm. Like an egg, each sperm only has a single set of 23 chromosomes, and only one of them is the sex chromosome. But it will contain only the X **or** the Y chromosome, and thus the sperm DNA determines the sex of the child.

After intercourse, the sperm swim towards the egg, which is in one of the Fallopian tubes. When a sperm contacts the egg, the DNA it carries is transferred into the egg, activating it and giving the egg a full normal complement of 46 chromosomes, though now half of the DNA has come from the mother, and half from the father. Everything else that is required for life is contained in the rest of the woman's egg. At this point, we believe that God blesses the fertilized egg with its soul and spirit, and it can then begin to develop into a new person.

From this, you can see that even if Mary somehow had a diploid egg of her own—which has never been known to happen—she could only have had a daughter. She had to have external male DNA containing a Y chromosome to conceive a son.

All of which brings us to the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. The essential part of fertilising an egg is the fusing of the DNA from the male. In Jesus's case, a brand-new set of male DNA, consisting of 23 chromosomes including a special Y male chromosome, was created by his father, Jehovah God, and was directly fused with Mary's egg. Sexual intercourse (and the rest of the sperm) was not required, so Mary remained a virgin. The now fertilized egg was blessed by having Jesus's own soul and spirit combined with it, and began to grow into a new, and utterly unique, human being who did not inherit his male Y chromosome from Adam as every other human male has done, but had his own male DNA. This made Jesus truly a second Adam, who was truly begotten by Jehovah God.

However, through Mary's contribution to his DNA, he was also truly human, and an actual physical descendant of Eve, Noah, Abraham, David, etc.

Although Jehovah is fully able to have created an entire fertilised egg, complete with its 46 chromosomes, and placed that into Mary, using a process slightly mimicked by our modern In Vitro Fertilisation methods, Mary could then not properly be said to have conceived, as that requires one of her own eggs to become fertilised. Mat. 1:20, Luke 1:31. And if the human inheritance was not important, Jehovah could have bypassed this entire scenario totally and simply let Christ manifest a physical body like those used when he ate with Abraham in Gen. 18:1-8. These options would make Jesus entirely unrelated physically to humanity, and thus he would not be a physical descendant of Abraham or David, as the Bible says he is. Mat. 1:1, Luke 1:32, Rom. 1:3.

Though there are times that God does mainly address the male, and the genealogies of the Bible often only give the male line, that does not negate the woman's essential role in reproduction, and there are many times when the mothers are listed too.]

Again, I advance the words of the holy angel Gabriel, when he told Mary that she should conceive and bring forth a son. "Then Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I have not known a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born from you shall be called the Son of God," Luke 1:34, 35. Behold, here is the testimony of a true messenger, that God the Father is [the] true Father of our Lord, Christ. I think that God's own angel has here reproved the falsehood of those who say that the crucified Christ Jesus has had no father.

Since we find from God's own ordinance and from so many sayings of the Scriptures, that a true child takes its origin from the seed of the father according to God's ordinance, as has been related; and since we are so clearly instructed all through the Scriptures that God the Father is the true Father of his Son, Jesus Christ; therefore we say that we believe and confess that the {eternal} Word of God, which is also called the seed in the Scriptures, came down from heaven, through the overshadowing of the divine power, descended into Mary and miraculously became, above all human understanding, through the working of the Holy Spirit, a true, palpable, passive and mortal but imperishable man,* according to the immutable will and gracious promise of the Almighty and heavenly Father; as John, both in his gospel and epistles clearly testifies. A man, I say, like unto us in all things except sin. Not, my reader, that he came from the

* [CHCoG: One cannot be both mortal and imperishable (unable to die) at the same time. Clearly, Christ was mortal while he was on earth, which was proven by his death and then remaining dead in the tomb for three nights and three days. Mat. 12:39-40. But he did indeed become imperishable when he was resurrected and now lives forever. Heb. 1:8, 6:20, 7:24, 1 Pet. 4:11, Rev. 11:15. And was Christ passive? Yes, he was often gentle, but he always stood up for what he believed, sometimes very vigorously as in John 2:15. Perhaps by passive Menno means that Christ was always obedient to his Father.]

unclean seed and flesh of Adam and was, through the power of God, preserved from sin, as the learned assert, without the word of God, for that which never knew sin is the seed and origin of his flesh, as John says, “The word was made flesh,” John 1:14. Besides, examine the passages of the Scriptures which testify that Jesus Christ is God’s first born and only begotten Son and you will find how grossly they err who dare say the man Christ has no father, as they do.

Again of Mary, the Lord’s mother, we believe and confess that the Almighty, eternal God and Father graciously prepared her virgin body, as he also did that of the aged Sarah, by the power of his Holy Spirit, to receive his precious, {eternal} Word, through faith, according to the promise of the angel, and that this same word became man; and thus as human as Isaac,* was nourished and fed on natural food, as a natural fruit, to the certain testimony that he was a true man and no phantasm. In due time, he was born into the world as an undivided and true Son of God and of Mary, as a natural child of its father and mother, the *carnalis intercursum* [sexual intercourse] alone excepted, as the Scriptures testify, Luke 8:10; 1:27; John 1:14; 1 John 1:2; Heb. 2:14; Phil. 2:7.

And behold, with such understanding we believe and confess that he is the seed of the woman, of the seed of Abraham and David, who was given of God the Father unto the whole world, through particular favor and grace, for salvation and deliverance, as the highest surety and certain testimony of his divine love, *through faith*, according to the sure word of his promise; and that the above mentioned virgin, ordained by God, conceived, as above stated, the Savior of the whole world, in Nazareth, according to the word of the angel and was delivered of him at Bethlehem, according to the word of the prophets, Luke 1:31; Micah 5:2.

Faithful reader, observe that Matthew and Luke show that Mary was made fruitful through the Holy Spirit of God, yet they

* [CHCoG: This was the obscure expression “human-like, as Isaac” in the original English.

do not particularly point out his genealogy, Mic. 5; Luke 1:31.* In the meantime, some sectarians arose in the church, as Cerinthus and Ebion, who, according to history, have instituted gross deceptions.

Finally, John, at the prayer of the bishops of Asia, has written a clear account of the origin of Christ. The Son of God and that not only of his eternal divinity, as the learned say, but also of his holy

* [CHCoG: We are astounded that Menno could and did make such a blatantly untrue statement, though presumably out of ignorance. Yes, Micah 5:2 and Luke 1:31 do not specifically say that Jehovah God is the father of Jesus, but they make it clear that they are speaking of Jesus, and that his existence goes back a very, very long time. However, Luke 1:32, the very next verse, says that Jesus is the “Son of the Highest,” and who can that be except Jehovah God? And as for the human side of Jesus’ ancestry, that too is made absolutely clear. The genealogy in Luke 3:23 to 38, in its first verse, acknowledges that this is only as many supposed, as Mary’s husband-to-be Joseph was NOT Jesus’ father. But we find a remarkably different account in Mat. 1:1-17. Compare that list with Luke 3:23 to 31, and you will see that the two genealogies are the same at only the start and the apparent end: King David and Joseph. The Joseph in the Matthew account is descended from Solomon and has Jacob for his father, while the Joseph—Mary’s husband—in the Luke account is descended from Nathan (Solomon’s brother) and has Heli for his father. These are clearly two DIFFERENT Josephs. The Aramaic Peshitta provides understanding on this. The Matthew Joseph is called Mary’s guardian, which in their culture was Mary’s father until she was married, at which time her husband became her guardian. This means that the Matthew genealogy is in fact Mary’s, not her husband Joseph’s. Nor does the Matthew account state that this is only an “as is supposed” genealogy. This also makes Mary the ‘missing’ fourteenth generation mentioned in Mat. 1:17. The Matthew genealogy totally shatters Menno’s claim, and proves that Jesus, through Mary’s egg, is indeed descended from Abraham and David, as stated in the Bible in Mat. 1:1, 21:9, Luke 1:32, Rom. 1:3, 2 Tim 2:8, Rev. 22:16, Gal. 3:16 & 29. But remember that this is only the human side of Christ’s ancestry; his father is, and directly so, Jehovah God.]

humanity, as may be clearly noticed on all sides, in his writings. And he has, in clear and pointed words, written and incontrovertibly shown, who and what he has been from eternity, saying, "The word was made flesh." He does not say; The word was made a man of our, or Mary's, flesh and has installed itself in this, as our opponents say. Besides he shows us from where he came, what he has taught and what example he left us; what we have received through him and where he again went to, &c. Whosoever rightly believes the testimony of John about Christ, the Son of God, has everlasting life through his name, John 1:14.

But he who does not believe it and rejects it is not of God and has neither the Father nor the Son, but is an anti-christ and deceiver; and this is our humble and plain confession of Christ, God's Son, as has been heard, 2 John 7, 8, 9.

As I now enlarge upon our doctrine, faith and confession, the reader should know that the Scriptures show on every hand that Jehovah God, the Almighty Father, has created all things through his Word, John 1:1; Psa. 33:6; that he rules all things and upholds and maintains all things by this, Col. 1:16 and as it is manifest that Adam was created by this same Word and that he, through his disobedience was condemned, by the justice of God, to damnation and death, together with all his descendants; and that he of himself and through himself, could not be restored again, he being, together with all his seed, corrupted in nature and condemned by the justice of God. Therefore, if Adam and his seed were not to remain eternally cursed, the eternal love of God had to restore Adam and his descendants from his deadly fall, condemnation and curse, by the same Word through which he created him, that to him alone be the honor and that through his Word and Son, Christ Jesus, his inexpressibly great love and grace be eternally praised. For if the restoration had been brought about by any other means than the word, we might reasonably give thanks and praise to it.*

* [CHCoG: We can't understand why Menno wrote and kept this sentence.]

Behold, the whole Scriptures accord with our confession, foundation and faith, as by the grace of God, you will clearly see from the quoted Scriptures.

Thus speaks John, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth," John 1:1, 14. This testimony we believe to be true; we therefore leave it unbroken, that the whole Christ remains the Son of God; for we see with open eyes that it accords and agrees, as far as regards this subject, with all the Scriptures.

We truly believe and do not doubt in the least, that the Holy Spirit, which seeks to lead us into all truth, did not mean otherwise than he spoke here through this faithful, plain fisherman, John. For if the beloved messenger of the holy peace had not meant i as he here writes, his writing would not have pacified the churches, which, at that time, were very much troubled about this matter; but it would have still more estranged them than before and would have pointed us, poor descendants to an obscure and uncertain foundation. Oh no! His testimony is true and plain; and will remain so in eternity. The word has become flesh.

This is our confession, and is also authorized by the Lord himself, saying, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world," John 6:51.

Faithful reader, mark the word of your Lord. Christ says that his flesh came from heaven and the learned say that it descended from Adam's flesh. Here they are directly opposite. What now will the God-fearing mind do? If he holds to the testimony and word of Christ, then he must be [seen as] the deceiver and heretic of the learned. But if he holds to the testimony and word [of the learned], then he makes Christ a liar. Since we surely know that Christ and the learned are so antagonistic and since we know to a

certainty that Christ is the undeceiving truth and that all men are liars, therefore we must not turn from truth to falsehood, but from falsehood to truth. Whatsoever the judgment of man may be, God's word will remain forever, Psa. 116:11; Rom. 3:4; Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:25.

Perhaps our opponents will here seek an excuse and say Christ speaks of his more honorable part, for his divinity is from heaven and has taken Adam's flesh. I answer: Let them read and believe the word and testimony of Christ and they will find that they explain it according to their own inclination and not according to the sense and truth of Christ; for thus he speaks, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." Mark, he says, "*Came down from heaven,*" "and the bread that I will give, is my flesh." Mark again, He does not say, It is my *divinity*, but "*my flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world."

[CHCoG: As shown above, half of the DNA used to form Christ's body did indeed come from His Father, and thus from above, just as Menno is saying. But as we quoted above, there are other scriptures that reveal that half of the DNA which formed Christ's body has, in fact, come from Mary, and she inherited it from Abraham, David, etc as listed in Matthew 1. Also see Acts 2:29-30 and Romans 1:3. For all of these scriptures to be true, and they must all be true, Jesus's body has to have resulted from two sources: One directly from heaven, from His Father, and the other indirectly from heaven via his mother, Mary, who ultimately derived her DNA from Adam and Eve, both of whom God also created. Further to this, and much greater, Christ's soul and spirit also came down from heaven.]

I think that Christ himself has here sufficiently explained his words and therefore we do not need the explanation and garbling

of the learned. For Christ and John could not have expressed themselves more plainly, in regard to the descending of his holy flesh, than they did in the two mentioned Scriptures. Therefore let everyone beware how he garbles. For whosoever falsifies these clear, fundamental evidences does not falsify the word of a human being but the word of God. Neither does he reject us, but the Son of God, together with his Holy Spirit and the exalted apostle John, who have left them behind and taught them in such clear and plain words.

Christ still further declares this our confession, saying, "And now, O Father, glorify you me with your own self, with the glory which I had with you before the world was," John 17:5.

I think this also is clear evidence that Christ humbled himself, and, that he, for our sake, abdicated for a time his divine dominion, right and glory. For, although he was Justice and eternal Blessedness, he did not refuse to become a sacrifice for sin and a curse for us, Phil. 2:7; 1 Cor. 1:29; Gal. 3:13; 2 Cor. 5:19.

Yes, kind reader, if he had remained in his first estate, impassive and unchanged, as John A'Lasco and his followers assert; and if he had just surrounded himself with a strange tabernacle of Mary's flesh, then he would not have lost that which he again desired from his Father, while he would have remained, not humbled, but unchanged in his first estate.

But now it is manifest that the eternal, indescribable and inexpressibly glorious word, which from eternity has been with and in the Father in eternal glory and clearness, but in an illegible manner, has in due time left his glory for a season, for our service and become a poor, despised, mortal man and has died a bitter death for us. And thus he again desired his first glory, which he had with his Father before the world began and which he had, for a time left, for our sakes. This Scripture is too clear to be obscured by acuteness. Therefore believe the word of your Lord, trust in truth and you will not be deceived.

Our confession also accords with holy Paul, for he says, “Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things,” Eph. 4:9, 10.

By the side of this plain saying of Paul, place also the word and testimony of Christ, which he himself testifies in regard to his descension. For he says, “No one has ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven,” John 3:13.

Ponder diligently upon these words of Paul. For if he spoke these words alone in regard to his divinity and not of his humanity, how would it then accord with the testimony of Christ, just mentioned, who says, “No one has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.”

My reader, remember, Christ here calls himself the son of man and says, “That he came down from heaven.” The son of Mary, whom the learned say is of her flesh, did not come down from heaven, but must be of the flesh of Adam, if the foundation of the learned were right. Oh no. But *the word came down from heaven*, has become flesh or man, in the lower parts of the earth and afterward ascended up far above all heavens where he first was.

Inasmuch then, as Christ not only speaks in this Scripture passage of his divinity, but also of, his humanity (since he says the son of man), therefore it is manifest that the man Christ is not originally from earth, but from heaven, for according to his eternal divinity, if that should have been left thus unchanged, as the learned say, he cannot be called the son of man. Again, according to his humanity, he could not be in heaven at the time he spoke these words, if he was of Mary’s flesh and not of heaven. Therefore we must accept these Scriptures as regarding the whole Christ, that is, both of his divinity and humanity. From which it forcibly follows that the whole Christ Jesus, God and man, man

and God, is from heaven and not of earth, as also John testifies at another place and says, “He that comes from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth; he that comes from heaven is above all,” John 3:31. Again, Christ says, “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father,” John 18:28.

From these it follows (if we will accept the testimony of Christ, John the baptist and Paul as true) that the Word came down from heaven, became flesh in Mary, dwelt among man, fulfilled the Scriptures, again ascended and sat down at the right hand of his Father and is adored by all the angels of God. Mark, reader, how the one Scripture exactly fits the other and how exactly Christ, John and Paul agree. Sure and immutable stands the testimony, that the Word has become flesh.

[CHCoG: Menno’s inconsistency, and the complexity of this issue, is displayed above. First he says that Christ’s flesh has come down from heaven, then he admits that it was the Word of God who came down from heaven, and acquired his flesh here on earth. As we have shown above, both things are true.]

Paul still further explains our confession and says, “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly,” 1 Cor. 15:47. Reader observe. Although Paul properly speaks of the resurrection of the dead and of its future clearness, yet he testifies by this same Scripture, the coming again and the difference between the first and the second Adam, when he says, “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.” For, as the first man, Adam, is called earthy on account

of his being of the earth; so, also, the second man, Christ, is called heavenly because he is from heaven.

If anyone should contradict this and say, That Christ here is called heavenly on account of his divinity, you should know that Paul rebukes them with these significant words: “The *second man* is the Lord from heaven.” I cannot see how the great witness could express himself more plainly. And since he is, then, such a heavenly Being, and, besides, since he is again glorified by God his heavenly Father, with his eternal glory which he had with God before the beginning of the world, therefore the holy apostle also calls all his true members, after their resurrection, heavenly. Not that they are from heaven, as Christ is from heaven, but because, by grace, through the power of God, in the resurrection they will partake of the heavenly glory and of the nature of the angels, as Christ says, “The glory which you gave me, I have given to them” (his disciples), John 17:22.

Again, Paul says; “Our citizenship is in heaven; from where also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself,” Phil. 3:20, 21.* Read also what Christ says of such, Luke 20; 1 John 3.

For this reason Paul calls them heavenly and says, “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly,” “For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality;” “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” and as the stars of heaven in brightness forever; yes, when we shall be like unto the Lord and shall see him face to face, as he is, 1 Cor. 15:49; Mat. 13:43; 1 Cor. 13:12.

* [CHCoG: The KJV says that we have a “vile” body. However, the Greek is ταπεινῶσις *tapeinosis*, which means lowly or of a low estate, not vile, which is ἀτιμία *atimia*, as in Rom. 1:26.]

Again, at another place the Scriptures say of Christ, I am the First and the Last and the living One and I was dead and behold, I live from eternity to eternity Rev. 1:8; Isa. 41:4; 44:6.[†] In this instance the Holy Spirit brings forward another indissoluble testimony, at which all sharp disputers and famous masters of this world are made ashamed. If they want to pervert this clear and plain Scripture according to their own notion, by their deceitful reasoning, as they do the Scriptures of John 1:14 and all the Scriptures, then they should know that we do not follow and believe the sophistry of man, but the word of the Lord. If they leave it undisturbed, then their cause is already lost, for the Holy Spirit testifies that the First and the Last and the living One, died.

That Mary's flesh was not the first and the last all intelligent persons must admit. If then the man Christ had been of Mary's flesh, as the learned say it is, which neither is nor can be the first and last and if it had thus died, then the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of truth, would not have spoken rightly. Yes, neither Christ himself, who says, "I am the First and Last: I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore." Rev. 1:17-18.

I would further say, That if the man Christ Jesus was a natural offspring of Mary and if the {eternal} Word only lived in this [body], as our opponents say it did and if this same man died and the Word remained unchanged, then Mary's flesh must be the First and Last; this is too plain to be denied.

Since it is evident that Mary's flesh neither is nor can be the First and Last, as has been heard and since it is true, according to the testimony of the Holy Spirit, that the First and Last has died,

[†] [CHCoG: In Rev. 1:17-18 & 2:8, Jesus is indeed the First and the Last, in these cases meaning that he is the first one truly born from God, and is also the last to be born from God. But the three references Menno uses above all refer to Jehovah God, Jesus Christ's Father, who is the First and Last True God, from whom we all receive life. John 17:3. Please understand this: Jehovah God cannot die, for if he does, everything will cease to exist. This is why Jesus, his son, died for our sins instead of him.]

therefore I conclude from this that the explanation of our opponents, by which they point us to Mary's flesh, is deceitful and false and that the learned are badly mistaken when they say that the Son of God remained unchanged, and that the son of Mary died. I say again, the word stands immutable, "The Word has become flesh."

Again, with this our confession, foundation and belief, all the prophets who have spoken of Christ, the Son of God, through the Holy Spirit, agree. Micah says, "But you Bethlehem Ephratah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet from you shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," Micah 5:2. Observe, Isaiah says, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel," which signifies God with us, Isa. 7:14; Mat. 1:23.

He further says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," Isa. 9:6.

At another place he says, "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God." Again, Jeremiah says, "Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch and a King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, JEHOVAH IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," Jer. 23:5, 6.

My reader, observe, Since the descension of this Prince has thus been from eternity, as has been related and his name is called, by the Spirit of Jehovah; Immanuel, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Our Righteousness, &c.; and since the prophets describe him with such significant words, as the apostles also do, from where, who and what he is; therefore I conclude from this that the man, Christ Jesus, is not of unclean, sinful flesh, but of the unspotted, pure seed and word of God, his Father, as John says,

“The word has become flesh.”* This, then, is our proper faith and confession of Christ, the Son of God, namely: That we are all created in Adam our father through the ineffable word and that we, in the same Adam, have become of a sinful nature and subject to death; that we also, by means of this eternal, ineffable word and not by means of the sinful flesh of Adam, are graciously accepted by God and mercifully called unto everlasting life, as Christ says that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” Psa. 33:6; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:3; John 3:16.

All Scriptures force us [to conclude] that we dare not divide Christ, the Son of God, after the pretensions of the learned; but to confess him as being entirely the true Son of the true and living God. The angel testified of Christ, the Son of Mary, saying, “That holy thing which shall be born from you shall be called the Son of God,” Luke 1:35.

Again, the Father testified, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” Mat. 17:5; Luke 9:35.

Again, John the Baptist says, “He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizes with the Holy Spirit; and I saw it and bear record that this is the Son of God,” John 1:33.

* [CHCoG: Hebrews 4:15 says: “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all things tempted as we are, yet is without sin.” Jesus could only be tempted in all things if he also had a body subject to sin, which is something he received from Mary. Jesus’ glory was that he resisted all of these sins for his entire life, and remained sinless. In doing this, he both made himself an acceptable sacrifice to remove our sins, but also vindicated his Father, in that he demonstrated that it was possible to live as a human and still obey God’s Law. Restated, Jesus proved that his Father’s Instructions were not impossible things to keep, and therefore it was fair for God to tell us to keep them, and to punish us for not doing so.]

Again, “Nathaniel said unto him, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel,’” John 1:49.

Again, when Jesus asked his disciples, “Whom do you say that I am? Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Mat. 16:15, 16.

Again, Martha said, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world,” John 11:27.

Again, the disciples, together with these others said, “Truly, you are the Son of God.” Mat. 14:33.

Again, Christ said to the blind man, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” He answered and said, “Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him;” and Jesus said unto him, “You have both seen him and it is he that talks with you,” John 9:37.

Again, when the centurion saw that he so cried out and gave up the Spirit, he said, “Truly, this man was the Son of God,” Mark 15:39.

Again, Saul was with the disciples at Damascus and preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God, Acts 9:20.

Again, John says, “We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God,” 1 John 4:9. Besides [these are] many other clear passages.

Inasmuch as the Scriptures so abundantly testify that also the man Christ is the Son of God, therefore it is manifest that Martin Micron and those of his mind do fearfully err when they say, “The man Christ was not the Son of God; he had no Father; but there are two sons in Christ—the one the Son of God without mother and impassive—and the other the son of mankind, or the son of Mary without father and he passive,” &c. I think this may be called rejecting the Son of God, in the face of all these plain Scriptures and pointing us to a divided Christ, yes, to an unclean, sinful flesh and creature, guilty of death, whom the Scriptures never knew and still less taught. *O detestibilem blasphemiam* (O detestable blasphemy).

All who can be convinced rightly to believe that the word did not take unto itself a man of Mary's flesh, but that, according to the testimony of John, he has become flesh, have a true understanding of Christ. They will not argue *per Syneedochen, de parte ad totum, neque de toto ad partem*. [by Syneedochen, from part to whole, nor from whole to part.] They will not point to the worthiest part in Christ, nor to the communication or communion of the names; neither will they unite two persons and sons in one person and son, as our opponents do, but they will leave the Scriptures ungarbled in their place and acknowledge with John the Baptist, John 1:15; with Matthew 16:16; with Martha, John 11:27; and with the whole Scriptures, that Christ Jesus is God's first-begotten and only Son; an only and undivided Christ, God and man, man and God, an only person and Son, who, in his flesh, has fulfilled the handwriting of the law for us, as we could not, in our flesh, on account of our weakness; and was at last, judged and condemned as an innocent, spotless Lamb, to die on the cross for our sins and guilt.

Behold, this is our foundation, faith and confession of the most holy incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Mary; on account of which, alas, we are so much upbraided by our opponents and have to pass for deceivers and heretics; and that for the reason, I say because we teach and testify with the Scriptures that the Lord, Christ Jesus, is God's own and true Son, as has been heard.

Well, since it is so with them, they must run their course; we cannot prevent it until they are met by the angel of Jehovah and rebuked by the ass, Num. 22; 2 Peter 2. They had, however, better beware, lest they stumble too hard on the Rock of offense, Isaiah 8:14; Rom. 9:33. The time to give an account will soon arrive. As for me, I do not care how these men judge me.

I trust to find my consolation in the Lord who has taken me by the right hand and who knows all my desires, intentions and doings. He will execute our cause to his honor; for he knows that

we do not desire to seek our praise, but his own. Therefore he will protect his own honor. It might doubtlessly happen that through their writing and slandering against us and through their manifestly erring doctrine, in regard to Christ the Son of God, it might be made manifest to some that they are doubly what they would like to make us. May the great God grant them grace, Amen.

THIRD PART. THE CONFUTATION.

BEFORE I proceed to the confutation of the arguments of our opponents, I would first faithfully advise the kind reader that he does not mistake the shining clearness of the eternal God-head, through his high soaring genius and not have the audacity to undertake to fathom this ineffable profundity—lest he, when he thinks that he has fathomed it, at once dazzles his eyes and suddenly falls down the precipice. For it is manifest that many smart and acute genii have been mistaken and made fools of themselves by their high-soaring intellects.

The Tritheists held and taught that there were three Gods.

Arius divided the second as being the least of the first substances.

Macedonius said that the third being, namely: The Holy Spirit, was not God; but a servant of God and the Son.

Ætius and Eunomius taught that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were different things or beings.

The Origenists held that the Son could not see the Father and the Holy Spirit could not see the Son.

Maximinus feared that the Father was a part of God and each person was one-third of the trinity.

The Metangismonites said that the second person was in the first, as a small vessel in a larger.

The Allogians said that John uttered a falsehood when he said that God was the Word; because they could not comprehend the mystery of the Word.

The Monarchians as also the Praxeans and Victorians said that the Almighty Father was Jesus Christ and that he had placed himself at his right hand.

The Sabellians made the person and the names of Christ and of the Father one; and are called *Patripassians*; for they believed that the Father had suffered. Behold, thus save those who undertake to search incomprehensible things and who want to soar higher than the Scriptures teach.

Again Erasmus Roterod says, The Word was God. It was Almighty, out of the Almighty, with the Father, not brought forth for that time, but for all time. Thus proceeding from the paternal heart and never leaving it. He further says, That the Father has begotten unto himself, the Son like unto himself in every respect; from eternity, to eternity. Again he says in *suo ecclesiaste*, [your church] Christ is the word of God, Almighty, which, without beginning and without end, always comes forth from the heart of the Father.

Martin Luther says, The word is that which God speaks in himself and which remains in him and is never separated from him. We do not refute the testimony of Erasmus and of Luther; but we cited them for the reason that it might be observed what diversity of opinion exists.

Philip Mel. says, The word is begotten in thought and is called the image of God, for that which is thought is the image of the thing thought of. Say, beloved reader, who dares to build his conscience upon such foundation and reasoning?

Again, some councils resolved that there were three persons in the Trinity, that is, three real substances and these same were *Homusii*, that is, of the same nature (co-essential); both of these, namely, the persons and their natures have been suspected.

Behold, thus they follow their own opinions and inclinations, build upon vapor and wind, look at each other and not at the word of the Lord, confuse the simple minds who are not versed in the Scriptures, proclaim their opinions and not the word; and whoever cannot agree with and follow them is called a deceiver and heretic by them. Therefore I pray you, for Jesus' sake, not to climb higher in this ineffable Majesty than you have steps and not to search farther than the word of the Lord has taught, while many a piercing eye has been and is yet daily dazzled by this adulation. For you can understand as little of the unspeakable beauty and conception, how and in what manner it was brought about from eternity, as you can form an idea of the indescribable Father himself.

Therefore do not let the opinion and flattery of the learned be the foundation upon which you build your faith; but let the undeceiving, plain word of God and the testimony of holy John be a sure foundation whereon to build your faith.

He says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made," John 1:1, 3.

This same Word, which was from the beginning and which, in the course of time became flesh, is called by Paul the Son, Christ Jesus and the first begotten of all creation, Col. 1:15.

Yes, dear reader, if the learned had left unbroken the testimony of John which he spoke of Christ's {eternal} divinity; and if they had inclined their intellects to the word of God, there would never have been such dark confusion in the world, in regard to Christ, the Son of God.

Therefore I advise you in faithful love to take heed and beware; for the testimony of John is too clear to be obscured by flattery and too strong to be broken by philosophy. Whosoever would rather drink the precious, clear wine of divine truth, than the impure waters of human adulation, let him hold to the word of the Lord

and let him abandon the unscriptural, destructive explanations, garblings, opinions and ideas of the learned:

This is sufficient of the eternal and ineffable divinity of Christ. Now, by the grace of God, we will proceed and maintain by the power of the Scriptures, that those abominably err, who say, The word has not become flesh, but it has taken unto itself our flesh or a man of our flesh, as will be briefly and clearly shown in the following.

In the first place John A'Lasco writes and says, "Divine justice requires that that which we broke through our flesh, included in Adam's loins, should be punished in the same flesh. Or, as some say, that the nature which inflicted sin, should be punished for such sin and that that which incurred death should also destroy it."

Answer. Since he and his followers would uphold their cause with the justice of God and pretend to say that the inflictor and institutor should suffer punishment, then they should, by right, not use the words "our flesh and nature," but "Adam and Eve," in their writings (for they were the first inflictors and institutors) and not the flesh and nature of their descendants, as may be openly seen, Gen. 3:6.

The nature of man was first created pure and good; but was corrupted through Adam's disobedience. And as he was thus corrupted in his nature, so all his children were born corrupted; nevertheless, the children were not the inflictors and institutors, but Adam and Eve were. If the justice of God, then, requires the punishment of the inflicter and institutor, it would be but right, according to justice, that not any of the children should be punished; for they were not the first that disobeyed; but Adam and Eve should receive the punishment, for they were the first that transgressed.

O, no, Adam and all his seed could not be justified through the weakness of his flesh. They were guilty above measure and had not a penny with which to pay, but it was liquidated for Christ's sake, who; through his eternal love and mercy (as Adam and his

[family] could not justify themselves), appearing in the shape and form of sinful man, fulfilled the justice of the Father and tore to pieces the hand writing of [our sins against] the law and has effaced and paid for all that which Adam had inflicted and broken by his transgression, by the sacrifice of his precious [life and] blood, Rom. 8:3; Eph. 2:15.

Since they point to the justice of God, I deem it necessary to treat on this a little further, that the intelligent reader may learn that this assertion of theirs is quite powerless, no, in every respect without foundation in the Scripture.

It is manifest, kind reader, that Adam and Eve, together with their descendants, were tempted by the serpent and fell into condemnation and death, by the justice of God, Gen. 3:6 and that nothing can be born of them but that which is condemned and guilty of death, Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15.

Since Adam and all his seed, on account of his disobedience, became condemned and guilty of death by the eternal justice of God: and if the Lord Christ, according to his holy humanity, were a natural fruit of the flesh of Adam, as they pretend, then the man Christ must be again condemned and guilty of death, on account of his human birth.* This is too clear to admit of denial, or else our

* [CHCoG: Through Adam (and Eve), we have inherited his (their) sinful nature, and through our weakness, further undermined by Satan, we have all also become sinners. But Jehovah God does NOT eternally punish all of Adam's descendants because of Adam's sins. Consider this scripture: "Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins shall die. But if a man is just and does what is lawful and right;—He is just; He shall surely live!" says the Lord Jehovah. "Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live." Eze 18:4, 5, 9, 19. Jesus lived without sin, and could therefore redeem us. Though we are all currently living in a fallen world and are subject to disease, ageing and death because of Adam's sin, this sad state of things is NOT eternal, and for that we are truly grateful to God, and his

opponents must take back their own argument and acknowledge that God's justice is not eternal.

O, no, the flesh of Christ is holy, pure, spotless, knows no sin, makes pious and saves, is a true bread of souls, as is the word, which, in the latter days, according to the intention and purpose of the Father, became a true, passive man, for the salvation and eternal deliverance of all; and who died an innocent death for us.

It avails in no manner that they say that Mary was blessed and that her fruit was saved from sin by the power of God. We confess that Mary was blessed and that the fruit was without sin; but we deny that Mary was without sin in consequence of the blessing; for Paul says, "The Scripture has concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe," Gal. 3:22.

Again, if the man Christ were a flesh of Mary's flesh, then Mary would have been blessed through her own flesh; and Adam would have been reconciled through his own flesh; the justice of God would have been broken and our condemnation, curse and death be dissolved and requited through flesh, condemned, cursed and guilty of death.

O, no, the Scripture teaches plainly that we have all become sinners in Adam and that we have all, through sin, fallen under the judgment, wrath and condemnation of God and become subject unto death, Rom. 5:6; 1 Cor. 15:22. And of Christ it testifies that he is the Lamb without spot; that he has not known sin and in his mouth no guile is found. Inasmuch then as it is manifest that the Scripture entirely concludes Adam and his descendants in sin and entirely absolves Christ, therefore the discreet and right minded reader may conclude from this, that the holy man, Christ Jesus, is not of the unclean flesh of Adam, but that he is the holy and pure word of God, John 1; and that this saying of the learned, that the justice of God requires, &c., is not the sure testimony and word of God, but merely human flattery and fiction.

Oh, I wish that our opponents would once ponder what the justice of God, in this respect, requires according to the Scripture. I trust they would henceforth not hold so strongly to their foundation as they have until now done; neither would they say that if anyone does not accept their doctrine he sins against the Holy Spirit; or at least think that they might be mistaken.

In the second place he intimates that we should understand the conception of Mary, of which Matthew and Luke speak, as far as regards the mother, as is naturally due to her, according to the ordinance of God, Gen. 1.

Answer. It is surprising to me that a man as learned as he is reasons so indiscreetly and dares ascribe the conception of Mary to nature, while it is clearly shown all through the Scriptures that the conception of Mary was brought about by supernatural causes, a particular miracle of the Most High and a glorious sign of Jehovah our God; as Isaiah says, “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel,” Isaiah 7:14; Mat. 1:23; Luke 1:31.

Again, Matthew writes this concerning the conception of Mary: “When his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child by the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately; but while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, you son of David, fear not to take unto you Mary your wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son and you shall call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins,” Mat. 1:18-21.

Again the angel said to Mary, “You shall conceive in your womb and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jesus; he shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and Jehovah God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom

there shall be no end.” Then Mary said unto the angel, “How shall this be, seeing I have not known a man?” And the angel answered and said unto her, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born from you shall be called the Son of God,” Luke 1:31-35.

From all these it is very evident that the conception of Mary was supernatural and a sign and miracle of the Lord; therefore it is all to no purpose that the learned philosophize it as being caused by nature, for it is irrelevant to the matter. [CHCoG: and also physically impossible.]

And if the conception of Mary were ascribed, in part, to nature, in the face of these clear Scriptures, then, still it is apparent from the ordinance of God and of nature, that the material, or origin of the child is of the Father and not of the mother, as has been sufficiently explained above in the confession and also in my writing against Gellius Faber. Therefore these innovations are nothing but philosophy and human genius, without Scripture and not worthy of an answer; but I have briefly criticised them and pray you to not despise my references; but let a trial be given before the accusation, lest you mistake yourselves, as Sirach says.

They further advance that the Scripture speaks of the Savior being promised of the seed of woman, of Abraham and the fruits of the loins of David.

Answer. In the first place I say that he who deduces from these Scriptures that the man Christ was [CHCoG: solely from the] flesh of a woman, no, the natural seed of Abraham and David, who all descended from the unclean flesh of Adam, must also add the unrighteousness, curse and sin of Adam.

If they should assert that he was free from the unrighteousness, curse and sin of Adam, I again answer: That he was not of the natural seed of Adam; for the seed of Adam was unclean, sinful and accursed, therefore nothing but unclean, sinful and accursed flesh could be begotten from this; or else the unclean must beget

the clean, the sinful the holy and the accursed the blessed; and therefore the hereditary uncleanness, curse and condemnation be changed. This is too plain to be controverted.

Yes, reader, if the incarnation of the Lord was, as our opponents say it was, then it would be manifest that Christ Jesus was not so pure in his incarnation as was Adam in the first creation. For if it is asserted, as is true, that Christ was conceived in the virgin Mary, then Adam had no other father on earth but God—wherefore he is also called a Son of God, by Luke. Yet, Adam would nevertheless have been created of purer nature and by God; but Christ, if he was of the unclean seed of Adam, must be of less clean nature, that is, of an unclean, human and earthly seed. This is too clear to be controverted.

In the second place I say, If the man Christ were a natural fruit and seed of the impure, sinful flesh of Adam, then he would also be guilty, through the eternal justice of God, of the judgment and death. And if he was guilty, how could he redeem and liquidate our [guilt]? Or else we must admit that God's justice was ended; and that the sinful had taken away and atoned for the sinful; the condemned for condemnation and he that was guilty of death had taken away death.

O, no: No unclean animal was permitted to be offered as an offering of reconciliation in Israel; but it must be without blemish. And if the symbolic had to be entirely clean and without blemish, how much more so should be the true one, whereby the eternal reconciliation is brought about—and whereby all symbolic offerings are fulfilled and finished, Heb. 9:10; Exodus 12:5; Deut. 16:21; Mal. 1:8.

In the third place I would say, He who asserts that the man Christ is a natural fruit and seed of Adam, Abraham, David and of woman, also asserts by this that there are two persons in Christ, two sons; the father is no true father, the mother no true mother and the son no true son, as has been said before.

In the fourth place I say, If the man Christ was of the flesh and blood of Mary, then it is manifest that he was not God's Son, but a *created* creature, since he would not be begotten by the Father, but of the flesh and blood of Mary, according to nature, as has been sufficiently shown.

In the fifth place I say, If the man Christ, was [only] of the flesh and blood of Mary, as they pretend, then it is very evident that the birth of man, according to the ordinance of God, can not be without father and mother; and also that a child does not proceed from the mother, but from the father; and if the man Christ came without a father, from the body of the mother, against the ordinance of God, then a new creation must have taken place in Mary, which creation could not have occurred without the Word. If such a creation did occur, then it is manifest that the one half or part of Christ must be created by the other; Mary's son by God's Son; and that the two, namely, the Creator and the creation, thus became one person and Son. Dear reader, observe what abominations they advance.

In the sixth place I say, As all men have both father and mother and as each has his generation—the father and the mother—so, also, had Christ Jesus both father and mother. His Father was an unsearchable* Spirit from eternity and will remain so to eternity; therefore he could have no [intervening] genealogy on the side of the Father; but the mother, who was the true daughter of Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob [and David], conceived him in her virgin womb through the Holy Spirit, by his Father's word; and she begat

* [CHCoG: As in Vol. 1, the original translation has *incomprehensible* here, and in several other places, instead of unsearchable. The only time we can find this word in a Bible translation is in the Tyndale-Coverdale version at Romans 11:33, where it should have been properly translated as *unsearchable*. Incomprehensible means “*not able to be understood; not intelligible*.” Unsearchable means “*beyond our capacity to search out*.” Our God does NOT claim to be incomprehensible. This is a false teaching of the ‘Orthodox’ Trinitarians, who have ‘created’ their own incomprehensible god.]

a true man in due time. Her genealogy was counted in the Scripture; for when he became incarnate in a human being, he must have a genealogy, of which he was born. [CHCoG: Mary's father's, and thus her and Jesus' genealogy is listed from Abraham to Jesus in Matthew 1:1-16, and from Abraham back to Adam, and thus back to God in Luke 3:34-38, as noted earlier.] And this is the word which Paul speaks, Born of the seed of David according to the flesh, Gen. 22:18; Psa. 132:11; [Mat. 1:6;] Rom. 1:3; 9:5; Acts 13:23. Not that there were two sons in Christ, the one without a father and the other without a mother; one the Son of God and the other the son of man, as our opponents pretend. But he who was God's Son also was the son of man; and he who was the son of man was also the Son of God. Not two, but an only and undivided Son, as the ordinance of God and the whole Scriptures teach and imply.

If you cannot understand this, then mark this parable: Charles the Fifth is a son of Austria; he is also a son of Spain; not that he is, therefore, one of two sons—but he is an only and undivided son. On the side of the father he is a son of Austria and on the side of the mother he is a son of Spain. Thus also, is Christ Jesus a Son of God and a son of man; the Son of God on the side of his Father and the son of man on the side of his mother. Not one of two sons—but an only and undivided Son. The Son of God and of Mary, as has been shown.

Again, if you are yet in doubt about the fruit of the loins of David, I would first refer you to my "Confession," which I wrote to John A'Lasco and his preachers, A.D. 1543, by which admonishing you to observe how the throne and the Kingdom of David were promised to Christ by Isaiah and the angel Gabriel; which was, however, not *literally* fulfilled in Christ, but in Solomon, who was a figure and symbol of Christ, as were also Isaac, Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Joseph. [CHCoG: Though true so far, the Bible makes it clear that when Christ returns, he will

indeed sit on David's throne, and retain it throughout eternity. Luke 1:31-33, Mat. 19:28, Rev. 12:5 & 19:11-16.]

Since the whole Scriptures teach us that his kingdom and throne are not literal but spiritual, therefore we must, in the same manner, judge the fruit and the king who shall sit upon the throne and reign; or else the one word must be understood literally and the other spiritually. This is too plain to be controverted. [CHCoG: As briefly indicated above, Christ's kingdom will be **both** literal and spiritual. Read [*God's Holy Days for Christians*](#) to learn more about this.]

Secondly, observe what Christ asked of the Pharisees in regard to Christ the Son of David and how he answered them, Mat. 22:42-5. [CHCoG: And yet in other places, the Bible clearly states that Christ IS the son of David. But he is ALSO the Son of God, which is the perspective Jesus uses here to confound the Pharisees, and being the son of God is also how he can live a sinless life.]

Thirdly, observe that if the man Christ were a natural fruit of the loins of David, all the insolvable, gross inconsistencies would be included in him, which we have partly pointed out above and upon which we will enlarge if God permits.

Fourthly, observe that all the properties of God are alike perfect in him. And therefore his perfect, eternal love and justice require it, as Christ says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yes, says John, in this God's love appeared that he sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we, through him might live; for as he adjudged Adam and all his seed unto death, by his eternal justice, on account of his disobedience, so, also, has he, on account of the obedience of Christ, by his eternal love, promised life to all who believe in him; for as his righteous punishment of the sins of Adam's descendants who reject Christ lasts forever, thus also his paternal love to forgive sin through Christ, lasts forever to all those who believe in Christ and accept and obey the word of his grace, John 3:16.

In the third place, I find that it is said that my foundation is that Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit.

Answer. It is very unreasonable that I am always blamed of things of which I am not guilty. In my first “Confession” I have plainly and clearly shown in Latin letters that I do not believe that Christ was conceived in Mary *by* the Holy Spirit, but *through* the Holy Spirit. Yet I must hear that I teach that Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit.

O, dear Lord, how lamentably I am slandered! What else do they do against me than the Scribes did unto Jeremiah, when they counselled about him and said: Come and let us devise devices against him and not regard his reasoning, Jer. 18:18. Yes, I think that I am born to turn my ear to the slanderer and my back to the scourger. Nevertheless, I hope, by the grace of the Lord, that the time will come when some of them will yet awaken and acknowledge, in all humility, with penitent hearts that they have not despised me, but the word of God and that they have scorned his Spirit.

In the fourth place he intimates that I teach that the Word changes itself into human flesh and blood in the womb of the virgin.

Answer. I presume that it will never be proven by virtue of the truth that I have ever, at any place, said or written so; nevertheless they dare say and write so of us. I have spoken of it as the high apostle has taught me, that the “Word became flesh.” That testimony I leave unbroken; and leave it to the Unsearchable, to him, who, through his omnipotent power so arranged it for the salvation of us all, how much and what was changed. Yet, I would, in my simplicity, add (if they explain the testimony of John to which I alluded in unchanged letters and conclude from this: Menno teaches, with John, that the “Word became flesh,” therefore his foundation must be that it was changed into flesh, &c.), that they should know that *change* does not always take

away the first nature of the substances of which something is fashioned.

Adam was a man created of the earth; he was a man of the earth and [his body] remained of earth, as Jehovah said, “Dust you are and unto dust you shall return,” Gen. 3:19.

Again, in the resurrection of the dead, all those who have again returned to earth, shall, through the power of God, be resurrected from the earth. It is manifest that at first we were earth, afterward we became flesh of the earth, again we became earth from the flesh and lastly we became flesh of the earth, out of the first flesh, but in glory and brightness, as the Scriptures testify; and thus the first substance, although changed, of which the thing changed was fashioned, remains, as has been heard.

[CHCoG: Menno’s final “flesh of the earth” contradicts these scriptures referring to our resurrection:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living soul.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. Now

this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 1 Cor. 15:42-50.

To be resurrected into the ‘flesh of the earth’ is to be once again in a natural, physical body, even though Menno allows it to have ‘glory and brightness’. That is NOT the hope that Christ has given us. NO! We are to be completely transformed and given a heavenly, spiritual body. This is our hope:

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 1 Cor. 15:51-54.

Understand this: We **must** be changed! If we remain the same, we must die. We find it bizarre that Menno, usually scripturally spot-on, does not understand this fundamental teaching. It is also bizarre that Menno continually insists that Jesus can only inherit an “impure, sinful and accursed” body from Mary, yet he also thinks that such a physical body can also be given ‘glory and brightness.’]

Reader, understand me rightly. I do not present this parable for the purpose of asserting that the Word was changed into flesh and blood, the same as the earth of which Adam was made was changed into human flesh, but I have presented it for the purpose

of showing to the reader that, although if the Word was changed in being incarnated, it yet remained the word, John 1:14; 8:23; 1 John 1:2; Rev. 19:13.

In the fifth place he writes, "The Lord Christ was a Spirit from the beginning, unchangeable, holy and eternal. If he, then, was spirit and unchangeable, how, then, has he changed his substance or his being and become flesh?"

Answer. If I understand him aright, in Letter E, page five, he says, That he has not yet rightly comprehended my meaning of the phrase "*factum est*," i.e. become. If, now, he has not rightly comprehended me, then I cannot see why he should blame me for such doctrine, unless he cannot understand the testimony of John in any other way, notwithstanding his flattery and corruption; as I have merely testified to the same thing literally and unchanged.

Inasmuch as they verbally and in writing blame me for believing in such change, from the testimony of John (although they never heard such doctrine from my lips, nor read it in my writings), therefore I would pray the reader, for Christ's sake, not to blame me of anything in regard to the change of the {eternal} Word than of what I by this confess and explain in plain words: I believe and confess that there is an Almighty, eternal and unsearchable God, Father, Word and Holy Spirit, who has lived in eternal glory and shall live so forever. And that this same Almighty, eternal Father, before all creatures, yes, from the beginning and from eternity, begets of himself this his Almighty, {eternal} Word,* in a divine and therefore unsearchable manner; and that this, his Mighty, eternal Spirit proceeds or flows from him through the Word or Son; but I do not comprehend it.

* [CHCoG: Almighty is used 48 times in the Old Covenant and 9 times in the New. In every case, it is used to describe Jehovah God, Jesus' Father. It is never used to describe Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Jesus is instead called the Mighty God, as in Isa. 9:6 & 10:21. To be consistent with the scriptures, Almighty has, from here on, been changed to Mighty when used to describe Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit.]

I also believe and confess in the same manner, that this Almighty, eternal Father, through his Mighty, {eternal} Word, which is the Son, has, in the power of his Mighty, eternal Spirit, created heaven and earth with their fullness and that he, by this, forever preserves and maintains all things created in this and by this, but I do not comprehend it.

I further believe and confess that all human nature (at the sound of the last trump), through the power of the Almighty and everlasting God, shall again arise from the earth with a glorified body;* and that the children of God, who, here on earth, have walked before him in a firm faith and in meekness, shall receive the glorious, promised kingdom of honor, at the hands of the Lord—that, on the other hand, those who have rejected the Lord and his word shall be eternally tormented with unquenchable, everlasting fire, with the devil and his angels, under the fearful, unbearable judgment of the Almighty and great God; but I do not comprehend it.†

Faithful reader, observe, that although I do not comprehend the Almighty, only and eternal God in his eternal, divine being, in the dominion of his glory, in the creation and preservation of his creatures, in the reward of both the good and the evil and in many of his works, yet I do truly believe it and for this reason: Because the Scripture teaches so; in like manner I can not comprehend how, or in what manner the unsearchable, {eternal} Word became flesh or man in Mary; nevertheless I do truly believe that he

* [CHCoG: God only promises glorified, spiritual bodies to those who have truly chosen to become his children. Phil. 3:20-21. The rest are raised in their own physical bodies to await their judgement.]

† [CHCoG: As stated previously, Jehovah is a god of justice, and he and his angels are not going to spend the rest of eternity endlessly torturing stupid humans with fire for at most a few decades of sin. Only Satan would want to do something as cruel as this. The Bible teaches that unrepentant humans will be destroyed body and soul in the Lake of Fire. It will truly be eternal punishment, because they can NEVER be restored from this second death. Rev. 20:4-21:8.]

became man, because the Scripture teaches so. I know that it is a work that was done by the Lord and is a miracle before our eyes. No, it is such a work that intellect cannot fathom, nor acuteness comprehend. Truly it is said, Who shall tell of his birth?

Inasmuch as I clearly find that it is an exalted and unsearchable miracle of the Almighty and great God which the Almighty, eternal Father, through the omnipotence of the power of the Holy Spirit, has fashioned in Mary; and inasmuch as I know how very perilous and solicitous it is for one to search into the unsearchable profundity and divine mystery with one's foolish earthly understanding; and to garble the plain testimonies of the Holy Spirit by deceitfulness and human smartness, therefore it is that I dare not believe, nor teach more nor less about the holy incarnation than the holy prophets of the Lord, Christ Jesus and also John, Peter and Paul, teach me on every hand in the Scriptures, with such incontrovertibly clear testimonies. All of these are surer and wiser witnesses to me than all the learned who have been, are, or shall ever be on earth; although, I repeat it, I cannot comprehend the ineffable mystery with my dull, earthly understanding. Sirach says, Do not inquire into the things which you cannot bear; and that which is too great or too exalted for you do not search.

Again, as to the saying of Malachi, "For I am Jehovah, I do not change," Mal. 3:6 and to the question of John A'Lasco, "If He is eternal, how could He die?"

Answer. Malachi does not speak here of God's substance or being, but of his intention, counsel, resolution and will. From which I confess that God's intention, counsel, will, purpose, promise and love are eternal and unchangeable and must come to pass as he wills and has resolved upon in his wisdom.

Inasmuch as it is manifest that the Almighty, eternal and unchangeable Father rules and does all things according to his eternal, unchangeable intention, counsel, will and purpose and as he had, through his eternal, unchangeable love, provided his

eternal holy Word, or Son, that he, according to his firm and unchangeable intention, should become the Paschal lamb, as Peter says, Therefore this must happen that the Word, in due time, became flesh, although we cannot comprehend it; for it was the gracious intention, counsel, resolution, providence and will of his Mighty and everlasting Word which will forever stand firm and which, according to the prophetic word, can never be changed, as has been heard.

Behold, honorable reader, this is my reply to the three questions: If he is a Spirit how could he become flesh? If he is God, how could he change? and if he is Eternal how could he die? as I, before my God, believe and confess. I trust, by the grace of God, to remain firm in this unto death.

I have not counseled with nature and my intellect in this respect, but with the word of the Lord, which is the true light to my feet, which shows me in plain words that the conqueror, the promised seed of woman from the loins of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and of David, born according to the flesh, who is the Blessing, Messiah, Christ, King and Savior of all the world, is not of unclean, sinful flesh, but of the pure seed of his heavenly Father; the word of God conceived by the Holy Spirit, in the virgin Mary and in her became flesh, as John says. Christ himself also says that he is from above, that he is the bread from heaven and that he went forth from the Father, John 16. And Paul says that he is the Lord of heaven; descended from above; that he is the Alpha and Omega; our Immanuel, 1 Cor. 16; Eph. 4:10; Rev. 1:8; Isa. 7:14. And, besides, as I plainly see that our opponents dare not advance these and such plain Scriptures, but garble them by their intellect with many exceptions and flatterings; therefore I repeat it, that I turn away from intellect and nature, bind my faith and conscience to the word of the Lord and truly and firmly believe and trust that this great miracle of God was thus produced in Mary; although I cannot comprehend it.

Behold, kind reader, whosoever testifies or writes anything else of me, in regard to the change of the {eternal} Word, but that which I by this confess, is a liar and does not testify to the truth. The testimony to which I refer is firm and binding: “The word has become flesh.” But how far it was changed he knows who in his eternal love has so arranged it for the salvation and everlasting deliverance of us all, through his Omnipotence. Praise be to God forever, Amen.

Here I will perhaps be asked, if then, the Father is not of divine nature? and where has Christ derived his humanity from? To this I answer: From where came the abundance of water which flowed from the hard rock? The rock was not water nor watery substance. Was it not produced by the omnipotence of God, to whom nothing is impossible, above all human understanding and comprehension?

Again, how did a virgin conceive otherwise than through the power of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit, above the comprehension of all philosophers? No, above the comprehension of Mary herself, for she said, “How shall this be, seeing I do not know a man? and the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born from you shall be called the Son of God.” He does not say that holy thing which shall come from your flesh and blood, as our opponents say.

If they should further say that if the Word became flesh and did not take unto itself our flesh, then it did not remain God’s Word; as when Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt, she did no longer remain man or woman; and when the water became wine it did no longer remain water. I would reply: The Scripture says that Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt and that the water became wine. This the Scripture says [the Word became flesh] and therefore it is also true. But the Scripture does not say that Lot’s housewife took unto herself a pillar of salt and that water took unto itself wine. In the same manner the Scriptures also testify that the Word became

flesh; but does not testify that the Word took unto himself our flesh.

I would further say that if some Scriptures could be produced to prove that “becoming” is taking unto one’s self; or that two persons and sons of different natures and minds can be one person and son; or that there was a true Son from the beginning who had not both father and mother; or that a son can be his father’s son, who is not of the father’s seed, then we might ponder upon their foundation a little further. But since they never produce such Scriptures, neither are they able to produce them; and since the Scriptures testify that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, therefore the testimony of John remains firm and immutable: “The Word has become flesh,” however much philosophers may dispute this.

Lastly I would say, That if the Word did not become flesh, but only took unto himself a man of Mary’s flesh, as our opponents assert and if the same was used as an instrument to suffer for us, then it is manifest that Jesus Christ, a Son of his Father in truth (as John calls him), did not come in the flesh (*corporatus* as Castalion says), for were he to suffer himself and not another in his stead, then he must come in the flesh, otherwise he could not have suffered. This is too clear to be contradicted. All those who deny this are deceivers and anti-christs, 2 John 1:7.

[CHCoG: Menno has failed to answer two of his questions: The first one comes off Menno’s belief that God is unchangeable and that Christ is that God, and so, “If he is God, how could he change?” The answer to this is that in Malachi 3:6 it is Jesus Christ’s Father, the one true God who is speaking of himself. God’s Son, however, is able to change, and indeed, his Father begot him with the intention that he would change. One change was surrendering his spiritual body and taking on a physical body. However, the KJV of Heb. 13:8 says “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.” This is a mistranslation from

the Peshitta original, which translates as “Jeshua is the Messiah: yesterday, today, and forever.” And this is true: Jeshua has always been our Anointed savior, and always will be. But it also allows Christ to be able to change when that is necessary for his role as the Anointed. Our [*Holy Bible*](#) translation is available for all who want to read an accurate English Bible.

The second question was “If God is eternal, how could he die?” The answer is largely given above: Jehovah God is eternal, his son was not, and was therefore able to die, which was another huge change. And part of Jesus’s reward for becoming human and dying on the stake was that he was resurrected into a new spiritual body and was given life in himself, so that he can never die again. John 5:17 to 34. Read [*Jesus Christ, Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity?*](#) for the scriptural details.]

He further writes, “If he is holy why was he condemned for the sake of sin in the judgment of the Father?” At another place he also writes: “Christ partook of no other flesh than that which was subject to sin and death, that he might be tempted.”

Answer. If we are to understand his words as they read, then Christ, together with his holy flesh was subject to sin and death; this is incontrovertible. For he says, If he is holy why was he then condemned for sin under the judgment of the Father. Just as if he was unholy and guilty of death under the judgment and deserving of the wrath and punishment of God. But this must be so too if we are to assert that the flesh of Christ was of Mary’s flesh. Therefore it is manifest from his words that the sin by which he was tempted dwelt in his flesh; and that thus he did not die out of grace for us, but as one guilty for himself. For the wages of sin is death.

O, dear Lord, If the poor Menno was to speak of the Son of God thus blasphemously and were to include him in sin, O, what an unpleasant, bitter song would be sung about him! But whatever the learned dream and philosophize must be accepted as right and good.

This, then, is my short reply to his words just cited, namely: Isaiah and Peter testify of him that he did not know sin and that guile was not found in his mouth. Yes, dear reader, he was holy before his incarnation, holy in his incarnation and will remain holy forever. For it was needful that we should have such a high priest, who is holy, innocent and spotless and who became higher than the heavens; for if he were not innocent and holy, he could not have requited for our sins and guilt, but must have suffered for his own imperfections and guilt. But now the Scriptures testify that he was bruised for our iniquities and was stricken for our transgressions, Isa. 53:5, 8.

In the sixth place he writes and says, "The comparison of the words of Paul, *The form of God* and *the form of a servant*, teaches us that by which God is known to be God and nothing else, than the immeasurable power and the brightness of his light and glory to which none can aspire; that we must also understand it as that by which a servant is known to be a servant and that it is nothing else but our human flesh and that through the disobedience of our first parents it was forfeited under the servitude of sin; nevertheless he writes that we must so understand it that he took upon himself our flesh, but not the servitude of it," *Hac ille*. [Here he is.]

Answer. Here I will leave the reader to choose whether to explain this *form of a servant* as having reference to a servile* form, or, as John A'Lasco thinks, to a sinful form. If it has reference to a servile and not to a sinful form, then it does not support the assertion that the Word has taken unto himself our flesh. But if it is explained, as John A'Lasco explains it, as having reference to a sinful and not to a servile condition, then it must necessarily follow that that is also in Christ, on account of which we are called servants, namely, on account of sin, or else the

* The words *servile* and *servility* here mean a condition of servitude as spoken of by Paul in Phil. 2:7, 8.—*The Publishers*.

adduced antithetical form is not in place and can not stand, as you will hereafter, by the grace of God, clearly hear and see.

I deny that I misinterpreted the Latin phrase *Exinanivit semetipsum*, [literally *He emptied himself*] as John A'Lasco accuses me of doing; although at one place I wrote, *He has humbled himself*, I trust I have not written it wrongly. At another place I wrote, *The Son, the Word, was humbled*, went beneath himself; was made lower than the angels. But nowhere have I written that he went out from himself, as John A'Lasco wrongfully accuses me. I will leave it to the judgment of all grammarians whether or not I have written correctly.

I think Christ has greatly humbled himself, since he is the Mighty, {eternal} Word, Wisdom and Power of God and became such a poor, weak, despised man. He also went much beneath himself, since he was in divine form and became such a despised servant. Yes, reader, that Paul here speaks (Phil. 2:7, 8), of the servile and not of the sinful condition, we may well deduce from the following Scriptures: "Behold," says Jehovah God, "my servant, whom I uphold; my Elect, in whom my soul delights," Isa. 42:1. Matthew is my witness that the prophet speaks this of Christ; and therefore is he called the servant of his Father, because he has performed the work and service of his Father here on earth, for us poor sinners, as he says, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom for many," Mat. 20:28.

Therefore, I repeat it. Paul here speaks of the servile and not of the sinful condition which Christ took upon himself for our salvation. For if he here spoke of the sinful and not of the servile condition, then Christ must also have assumed the form of a servant, that is sin; else the phrase *the form of a servant and the form of God* could not exist together. For as the phrase form of God testifies to his true divinity, so also, the *form of a servant* must testify to his true servile form; or it must follow from the argument of John A'Lasco, that, although Christ was in divine

form, yet he lacked the divinity, the same as he had the form of a servant but the servility, i.e. sin, he had not.

O, no, it is not so. He was in *God-form* and was in this truly God; thus he also took upon himself the form of a true servant and was in this a true servant; as may be deduced from Isaiah, Matthew and the words of Christ. And in this sense the antithesis, the form of God and the form of a servant, exists and does not require the exception which John A'Lasco here made. And this is the proper cause and reason why Paul wrote to the Philippians about this, that they should not be contentious one with another, nor seek their own vain, carnal honor, or anything selfish, but that they should, after the example of Christ, humble themselves one towards another and walk in love; for although Christ was in the form of God, yes "equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant," and not the exalted form of a mighty emperor or king. He came to minister unto us and not to be ministered unto, Mat. 20:28. Yes, "He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin," Heb. 4:15. He sought not his own but that which was ours; and for our sakes "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," Phil. 2:8. Thus the assertion of John A'Lasco, that the Word took unto himself our flesh or a man of our flesh, remains unproven.

But his point that while Christ was here upon earth he still was also in heaven,* that his face shone as the sun, that his raiment was white as the light, that he healed the sick, raised the dead and by his word remitted sin, which power alone belongs to God, does not prove that he received his holy flesh from our sinful flesh; but it rather proves that he still remained God and his word,

* [CHCoG: I am not aware of any scriptures which support this claim. They indicate instead that when Christ was glorified **after** his resurrection, he shone like this in heaven. The only time he shone while he was a human was when he was glorified on the mountain—on earth—with Peter, James and John, and this was done to give them a glimpse of Christ's future glory. Mat. 17. It seems very probable that Jesus gave up the ability to be in various places simultaneously while he was human.]

notwithstanding that he, for a time, so humbled himself and went beneath his divine splendor, attributes, right and glory, for our sakes. Whosoever sincerely fears God, let him consider and judge, Mat. 17:2; Luke 7:21.

In the seventh place he asserts it as his foundation that the Word did not become flesh, but that he took unto himself our flesh of Mary and confirms this with the Scripture Heb. 2:14; which reads thus, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," and says, "The word was made flesh;" not that he has in any manner changed his first estate, or form, but he has taken unto himself our flesh and has with it covered his divinity while here upon earth.

Answer. All those who desire a scriptural and correct understanding of the Scriptures quoted and also of Christ, the Son of God, should well observe that God, the Almighty, eternal Father, the true Creator, who wills and works, is the only source of all good; and that he ineffably before all creatures, begat from himself his Mighty, eternal and ineffable Word and has, through the same created all things.* And by this [he] governs, maintains and preserves them; and that he in his eternal justice, love and in all his attributes, together with his ineffable Word and Holy Spirit, is an eternal and perfect God and beside him there is none other; and that he is eternal and unchangeable in his counsel, purpose, will and conclusion, as was said before, Mal. 3:6.

And, that this Almighty, eternal Father, through his Mighty, {eternal} Word, in the power of his Mighty, eternal Spirit, has, according to his divine purpose, counsel, will and conclusion, created Adam and Eve, the parents of us all, as righteous, good and

* [CHCoG: It is likely that Jehovah God begat his Son from himself in a similar manner to how he begat Eve from Adam, and indeed used this unique method of creating Eve to indicate to us where Jesus came from. Jesus, was, of course, begotten before anything except his Father existed. And just as Eve was created from Adam and was thus human, Jesus was created from God and is thus God.]

pure creatures, unto eternal life, no, after his own image and likeness, as the Scriptures testify; that he gave unto them the command of life and death, that they might fear, love, praise, thank and serve him and live according to his will, Gen. 1.

Behold, this is Jehovah, the Creator that created Adam and Eve; it also shows through what he created them, how and for what purpose he created them; what he permitted and what he forbid them to do; what he promised them if they obeyed him and what he threatened if they should disobey him; and thus the glory of God shone,* Psa. 33:5, 6; John 1:10.

In this piety, holiness and righteousness, Adam and Eve remained so long as they did not deviate from the counsel, word, will and command of God, in which all things have and must have their being. But man was left in the hands of his counsel, Sirach 15:14. But through the old serpent, the cunning reptile and envier of the honor of God and all good, caused these glorious, noble creatures of life to be led from the favor and grace of their Creator into condemnation and death and obscured the glory of God. He began with Eve, the weaker vessel, to tempt her with the desires of her appetite; for the woman saw, says Moses, that the tree was good for food and pleasant to the eyes. He falsified the word of Jehovah and said, "You shall not surely die," and made glorious promises, saying, "In the day you eat of it then your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be like God, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:4, 5.

Adam and Eve disobeyed the command of their God and Creator, by which alone they must live; believed the promise of the serpent; ate and through the justice of God, fell into the threatened curse, condemnation and death and thus the deceiving serpent established the kingdom of hell and of death. There, now lay the miserable, accursed Adam and his wife, Eve, in the power of the devil, poisoned "from the sole of the foot even unto the

* [CHCoG: *Shone* was corrected from "*began to shine*." Surely God's glory has **always** shone, and it always will!!]

head,” both within and without, with his impure, deadly venom and became subject unto sin and death. According to the justice of God, there was now no way of escape for Adam and all his descendants; for the word of life was rejected; the holy command of God was transgressed, the venom of the serpent was taken. Alas, all was lost to them! Their eyes were opened, the shame was acknowledged, the gnawing worm was in their disobedient, self-accusing conscience; there was nothing but shaking and trembling, sighing and remorse. They fled before the face of Jehovah God and did not know where to hide from his wrath; for the justice of God pointed to the word, “For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

Here the counsel, purpose, will and conclusion of the Almighty, eternal God were unchanged. He would make manifest his glory and have a man after his own image and likeness.

Inasmuch as this was resolved upon and provided for with God, as has been said; and as with poor Adam, all was lost, as also with all his descendants, for at heart he was full of venom and abashed before his God, therefore should the unchangeable will, counsel and resolution of the unchangeable God be executed, there must be another who was like the corrupted Adam before his fall; for upon such a man, God’s will had resolved; and with Adam all was lost.*

Therefore the ineffable, {eternal} Word, by which Adam and Eve were created, by which all things are and must forever remain;

* [CHCoG: I have two problems with this. First, yes, Adam sinned and fell. But was he “full of venom?” Where is even one scripture that shows this? Secondly, remember that Jehovah God knows the end from the beginning. Isa. 46:10. Which means that Jehovah **knew** that Adam and Eve would fall before he even began creating our universe. Though Jesus became a second Adam, he is far, far more than that. Adam was merely made from dust. Jesus was directly begotten from God himself. And Christ knew, before he and his Father created Adam, that one day he would have to become human and die to save mankind from their sins.]

the mighty power and wisdom of God, must become man, that he might bruise the head of the deceiving serpent, for the salvation of the condemned Adam and all his descendants. That temptation must be overcome, that the holy and unchangeable will of the Father would be fulfilled; that the dominion and power of the devil must be destroyed; and that he would, by his willing obedience and spotless offering, discharge and put away the guilt and deserved death of Adam, by his innocent death.

Behold, this joyous gospel and these glad tidings of the divine grace God declared to the poor, afflicted and fugitive Adam. He accepted them through faith; consoled himself with it and sincerely rejoiced in his grace, Gen. 3:15; 22:18; Jer. 23:6; Luke 1:28.

And this is the Messiah who, I say, was promised to Adam, of a woman, for the salvation of all the world; promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the glorious Branch, Rod, Plant and Fruit of David, symbolized in Solomon, the natural fruit of his loins; who shall sit on his throne and reign in Israel forever. All who believe on him shall receive the mercy, grace and peace of God; but whosoever does not believe on him, on him remains the wrath of God, John 3:36.

From all this it follows that as Adam was created in the beginning, and we in him, through the Word, he and also we are again made alive by God through this same Word and accepted in grace. John says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God; and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him nothing was made that was made," &c. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Behold, in such plain words testifies the Spirit of God, that both the creation and the restoration of Adam and his seed, was brought about by no other means than through the Word, as has been heard, Mat. 3:11; John 1:1-5, 14; Col. 1:19.

And to the better explanation of this and also to learn to understand rightly how entirely sinful, impure, poisoned, powerless and as nothing we all have become in Adam, I would point you, with Paul, to the Law and the Scriptures; they will depict to you the impure, powerless nature and sinfulness of our flesh so plainly that you are forced to acknowledge that the holy, glorious and spotless Messiah, through whom we all are pacified and reconciled with God, could not be of such impure, sinful and accursed seed and flesh as the learned teach us and pretend with their philosophic reasoning, without the Scriptures.

Thus speaks Moses, You shall not covet, or you shall not desire. Reader, observe: In these few words is properly represented the first righteousness in which Adam was created in the beginning; and which is yet claimed by God according to his righteousness, by his descendants. Ponder diligently on these words of Moses and examine yourself closely, before Jehovah your God, who tries the hearts and minds, whether or not you sometimes do, against the law, find such forbidden lusts in your flesh. Jer. 17:10.

If you imagine yourself free from these, you convert God into a liar, 1 John 1:10; and by this you also shame all the righteous of God who were from the beginning; for they have all unanimously complained of their evil-disposed, wicked flesh and have, alas, too unanimously shown it in their fruits. The Scriptures testify that I speak the truth,

Yes, reader, if any man, born of the sinful flesh of Adam, had completely fulfilled the law, then for such the commanded yearly sin-offering, which was offered by the high priest in the Holy of Holies, was useless and fruitless. Neither would it have been necessary for the Son of the Most high, the {eternal} Word of God to become man; for such a person could have done all this and fulfilled the required righteousness.* But as it was, there was

* [CHCoG: Even if there had been one man who achieved this, he could only have saved himself. But Jesus, as our Creator, is thus responsible

neither prophet nor any man of God, born of Adam, so holy, or so pious, but who had to console himself with the promise of God in regard to Christ, also symbolized in the offering and with the divine grace, through faith.

But if you find that you do not do as the law requires, you are not alone in always fighting the lusts which dwelt in your flesh. If you are also often involuntarily conquered by this, then you must acknowledge that you are already condemned to death by the law of righteousness. For the law says, "Cursed be he that does not confirm all the words of this law to do them; and all the people shall say, Amen," Deut. 27:26.

Behold, kind reader, if you would rightly know and acknowledge how miserable, naked, powerless, impotent, unclean, sinful and poisoned all of Adam's seed became in him, through his transgression; and how his seed has fallen, through the just righteousness of God, into his wrath, judgment, curse, condemnation and death, then I say, search the law diligently; for it points out to you, First, the obedience to God and righteousness required of you; and also the weakness of your sinful flesh, your impure and evil-disposed nature; and that you are already condemned to death, according to the rigour of the above mentioned righteousness, since you, through your inherent, weak nature and evil-disposed flesh, do not walk in the required righteousness as God has commanded and required of you in his law, as you will clearly notice by your own unction if you but rightly observe.

Inasmuch as Adam and his seed are so entirely corrupted; as by nature he was created pure and clean and became wholly impure and evil-disposed and thus fell in the righteous judgment of God; and since everything is involved in sin; therefore, if this venom was to be weakened in its power: if the corrupted nature of Adam was to be delivered from the curse and judgment of sin; if the

for the lives of every one of us, and as he is also the Son of God, his righteousness, and his death, sufficed to redeem ALL of us.]

righteousness of God was to be appeased; if the power of the devil was to be disturbed; if curse, wrath, condemnation and death were to be taken away; if the hand-writing of our transgressions against the law was to be broken to pieces;* if the eternal providence, counsel, will and determination of God were to be fulfilled; if his kingdom and glory were to be acknowledged; and if there was to be such a man as the counsel, will and determination of God required, as has been heard; then the everlasting love of God would require that there should be another man, who, conquering the devil, should disturb his power, fulfill the righteousness of God, promulgate his glory, make a clean sacrifice and who should thus, out of love and compassion, be innocently accursed and condemned to death; ~~not of Adam, but~~ for the everlasting salvation of Adam and his seed. Thus the corrupted and condemned Adam, together with his corrupt and condemned seed, should be again accepted in grace, through Christ's name and be again delivered from their great fall, Gal. 3; Gen. 3:17; Luke 11:21; John 14:30; Col. 1:14.

It could not, I repeat it, be a man of Adam's flesh; for the corrupted flesh of Adam could not beget fruit which could fulfill this, while it was so thoroughly corrupted and condemned before God; but it must be a man who was free from the deserved curse, condemnation and death of Adam and also from all his venom, sin and unrighteousness, as has been sufficiently heard.

Observe, my faithful reader and here learn to know your God in his grace and love. For although the whole Scriptures place Adam and Eve, together with all their descendants, entirely under the sin, curse, condemnation and death, according to justice, yet it

* [CHCoG: Similar to an earlier note, the following words were used here and are based on a horrible mistranslation of Col. 2:14; "if the hand-writing of the law, which required such righteousness of Adam's children, was to be broken to pieces;" Christ did NOT come to destroy his Father's Law, he came to fulfill it. It was our sins he removed on the cross. If God's Law had been broken to pieces, then there could no longer be sin. Rom. 5:13.]

does not leave in hell the solicitous, afflicted conscience, which has been so far taught and directed by the law, that it feels its wounds and stripes and acknowledges that it is deserving of eternal death and condemnation; but the Scriptures show in consoling words and symbols, where and of whom to get the healing medicine, namely: from Christ Jesus. For it is he, who with all his righteousness, merit, cross, blood and death, was graciously given by God our heavenly Father to the fallen and condemned Adam and his posterity, for their eternal salvation and reconciliation.

I think this may well be called a joyous gospel and glad tidings to all afflicted and lamenting souls, who having become subject to sin and death under the law, so fearfully tremble at the righteous judgment and wrath of God, that the Almighty, eternal God and Father has so loved us miserable, trifling and condemned sinners who are so far estranged from him and, according to his righteous judgment, are deserving of eternal death, that he sent into this miserable world, his Mighty, eternal and ineffable Word, his only, eternal and beloved Son, the brightness of his glory; and who was like unto Adam before the fall, as a proof and means of his divine grace; and that this One has, through his perfect righteousness, willing obedience and innocent death, led us from the kingdom and dominion of the devil into the kingdom of his divine grace and eternal peace.

Inasmuch as the Scriptures pronounce the first Adam and all his seed to be such an impure, sinful, accursed and condemned race and pronounce Christ, the second Adam, free from all impurity, sin, curse and condemnation, therefore the impartial reader may well deduce from this that such a precious, glorious fruit could not be plucked from an elder or thorn bush; but should be begotten from some other source, namely: from him who is the only cause and eternal source of all good things, as has been said.

That the holy and saving flesh of Christ was not of the sinful and condemned flesh of Adam may be plainly observed from the following passages and figures of the Holy Scripture.

Isaiah says, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He has done violence to no one; neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him," Isa. 53:6, 9, 10.

I must pay, says the Psalmist, in the person of Christ that which I had not taken. He "bore our sins in his own body on the tree," and by his stripes we were healed, 1 Pet. 2:24.

"For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5:21. Again, we are all sinners and come short of the glory of God; but we are made righteous, without merit, by his grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ.

Again, "The Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to those that believe," Gal. 3:22.

You know, says John, that the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins;" and in him is no sin, 1 John 3:5. Read also all these Scriptures, Isa. 7:9 & 40; Jer. 23; Mic. 5; John 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17; 1 Cor. 15; Acts 20; Eph. 4; 1 Tim. 3; 1 John 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Heb. 1, 2, 3, 7; Rev. 1:19.

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES UPON THE FOREGOING SUBJECT.

He is the spiritual tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, which is not planted by the hands of man, but by God himself

Rev. 2:7. All those that shall eat the fruits of this tree, with pure hearts, shall live for ever; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations, Rev. 22:3.

He is the spiritual brazen serpent, symbolized in the Mosaic serpent, Num. 21:9; which was erected for us miserable sinners by the Father, in the wilderness of this world, as a healing sign, which had the venomous form of the venomous serpent, yet did not have its venomous nature. All those who believe on him are delivered from the curse, condemnation and death caused by the serpent; but whosoever does not believe on him, on him the wrath of God remains and he must ~~eternally~~ bear and suffer, according to God's eternal justice, the threatened curse, condemnation and death, John 3:38.

He is the spiritual mercy seat, which is not like the ark made of Shittim wood, but of fine, pure gold, from which God graciously hears us and speaks unto us through his Spirit and word, Exo. 25:10; Rom. 3:24; Heb. 4:13. He is the spiritual Paschal Lamb, which is without spot and in the sprinkling and sanctification of whose blood the chosen Israel of God was always graciously saved from the destroying angel and from the wrath of God, in the midst of the cruel, dark Egypt of this world, Exo. 12:23; Num. 9:16.

Jesus is the true bread from heaven, which is not made of natural corn or wheat, I mean, of our sinful flesh, but is begotten of the dew of the {eternal} Word, which is the only and true food for our souls, by which we shall live forever, if we only eat of him through true faith, Exo. 16:5; Num. 11:18.

He is the Rock which was torn from the mountain without hands, that is, without human assistance, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream; and to which Daniel was referred as being the one who should waste and destroy the iron, clay, silver and gold [image]; yes, all the kingdoms of this world; for he has all power in heaven and upon earth. He is a powerful King over all; and to his kingdom there shall be no end, nor [shall it] pass to other people, Dan. 2:44.

Behold, kind reader, judge from the above mentioned Scriptures and figures, if you fear God, if such doctrine is based upon the Scriptures, which claim that this righteous, holy, spotless, obedient and saving Messiah was born of the unrighteous, sinful, impure, disobedient and accursed flesh or seed of Adam and that he took his humanity from this. O, no. This pure, clear water, with which all our blemishes were to be washed away, could never be drawn from such an impure, stagnated pool. Let everybody reflect on what the word of the Lord teaches him.

Now we will, by the grace of the Lord, enlarge upon the Scriptures of Heb. 2, that we may rightly comprehend the foundation and truth of it; and that, too, that our opponents may not boast that we do not satisfy them. I would first refer you to the first chapter of Hebrews and have you observe what is said there of Christ.

In the first place it reads that “God has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”

In the second place it reads that this same Son is “the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person.”

Thirdly, that he has purged our sins by himself.

Fourthly, that he is the first begotten Son of God and that all the angels shall worship him.

Fifthly, that he is God and that his kingdom and throne shall endure forever.

Sixthly, that he laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of his hands.

I think that if you earnestly ponder on these Scriptures and rightly observe them, you will soon perceive from where Christ came, who and what he is. For these plain evidences clearly teach that the world was made by him; that he is the brightness of the glory of God; that he has purged our sins by himself; that he is the first begotten Son of God, that he is God and that he has laid the foundations of the earth. This could not be [merely] of Mary’s

flesh, Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6; Eph. 3:9; 1:9; Col. 1:16; Heb.1:2; Psa. 102:26; 1 John 1:7; Col. 1:15.

If they should say that these Scriptures are not spoken in regard to the Son of Mary, but in regard to the Son of God, then they confess by this a divided Son, two persons, two sons; besides, we are convinced by these very Scriptures that they are spoken of the whole Christ; for he has spoken with us as a man and we are also cleansed of our sins through his human suffering and death, as the Scripture teaches, 1 John 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:19.

But if they should call to their support the *sinecdoche*, or commonness of the names, then I would answer in brief, plain, words, that the plain, faithful souls, Peter and John the fishermen, Martha the servant and the plain Nathaniel, knew nothing at all of such satanic testimony and human cunning; but they have given praise to the visible and tangible Christ and confessed that he was the Son of God, Mat. 16:15; John 6:69 & 11:27.

This is still further declared in the second chapter in these words: “What is man, that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man, that you visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor,” Heb. 2:6, 7.

Here I would faithfully advise the faithful reader to observe that both Erasmus and Hieronymus, in their Latin translations, have translated this thus: “You made him a little lower than the angels;” and the Hebrew Psalm also has it: “You made him inferior to God; with praise and honor you crowned him,” Heb. 2:7; Psa. 8:5.

This agrees with the word of Paul, where he says, “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant;” Phil. 2:6, 7. [CHCoG: This quote uses the appalling mis-translation of the KJV. This is the passage accurately translated: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Jeshua, who, while He was in God’s form, did not consider the extortion that He was the equal of God, but He stripped Himself and He took the

form of a servant, and was in the form of a child of man and was in nature as a man. And He humbled Himself and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the stake.” Phil. 2:5-8, CHCoG trans. This translation *does* agree with Heb. 2:7, John 14:28 & 1 Cor. 15:27-28. Remember: Even now, Jesus sits at the right hand of God, as the second in command. He does not sit on the throne with his Father. It is Satan who thought himself equal to Jehovah God, not Jesus.] At another place he says, “Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor,” 2 Cor. 8:9. This also agrees with the words of Christ, “Now, O Father, glorify you me with your own self, with the glory which I had with you, before the world was,” John 17:6. I think these plain Scriptures and clear testimonies prove fully that the teachings of our opponents are unscriptural and erroneous, when they say that the Son of God remained in his first form and estate and was not bruised for our iniquities.

This same man, who, for our sake, was thus humbled and made less than God and the angels, we see is Christ, who for suffering death was crowned with praise and honor; for as he, for the purpose of obedience, humbled himself to the lowest, for our service, therefore he was again exalted to the highest, by the Father. And thus, though innocent, he was put to death for the sake of Adam and all his posterity, by the grace of God; for Adam and his posterity could not be otherwise delivered from the power of death. For it became *him*, for whom and by whom are all things, who has brought many children unto glory, to make the Prince and Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering, as both the Sanctifier, Christ and those who are sanctified through him, the regenerated, are all of one, that is, of God, Phil. 2:9; Heb. 2:10.

Thus the sanctified together have one Father with their Sanctifier, as John says, “As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the

flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;” and therefore our Savior “is not ashamed to call them (the sanctified), brethren, saying, I will declare your name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto you,” John 1:12; Heb. 2:11, 12. Yes, dear reader, if the flesh of Christ was of Adam’s flesh and if we were called his brethren on that account, as is the doctrine of the learned, then one brother must beget the other, besides, then all the ungodly, yes, whores and knaves, must also be Christ’s brothers and sisters. This is too plain to be controverted. [CHCoG: This claim would reduce Christ to nothing more than a natural child of Mary. As we have discussed earlier, though half of Christ’s DNA came from Mary, the male half came directly from Jehovah God, and the Son of God’s already existing soul and spirit were united with that fertilised egg to become Jesus Christ.]

O, no. Who his brethren are, he has himself plainly declared, Mat. 12:59; Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21. And he not only calls them his brethren, but also his children and says, “Behold, here am I and the children whom God has given to me.” Heb. 2:13. They are called his children for the reason that he has begotten them unto God his Father, by the word of his grace, through the power of his Holy Spirit, by the sprinkling of his precious blood. At another place he also calls them his mother, bride, flesh and bones; which, according to the flesh, they could not be.

Yes, dear reader, if he had received his flesh from the flesh of his children, as John A’Lasco and his followers claim that he has, then the children must have begotten the father. Christ, the new Adam, would say to his new Eve: I am flesh of your flesh—and not: “You are flesh of my flesh.” If you fear God, then reflect and judge, Heb. 2:13; Gen. 2: 23. [CHCoG: If Jesus Christ did not share any part of his flesh with us, as Menno is claiming, then Christ could not truthfully say to us that we are “flesh of my flesh”. And oddly, Menno confirms this in his following paragraph.]

As the children partake of flesh and blood, so he, in the same manner partook of the same, that he might, through death, take the power from him who had the power of death, that is, the devil and deliver those who, of necessity, were in servitude all their lives; for he does not accept the seed of angels, but of Abraham; therefore he must become like unto his brethren in all things.

Behold, this is the strongest and most important saying with which John A'Lasco (in regard to this subject), disputes the whole Scriptures, divides Christ and makes him into two persons and sons, and, as he thinks, joins together his whole work, arguments, sayings and flatterings. And this is his proper foundation and meaning: "As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, so, also, has the Word, or Son of God received or partaken of this flesh and blood from the flesh and blood of the children; and has thus vanquished hell, sin, death and devil in our flesh, Heb. 2; Phil. 2:7; Hosea 13:14; 1 Cor.15:54; Col. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:10."

Inasmuch as he so strenuously insists on the above saying, therefore I have, by adducing so many Scriptures, so enlarged upon the inherent, unclean, sinful flesh and nature of the children and their deserved death and condemnation on the one hand, and the pure, holy flesh and nature of Christ, his undeserved death and judgment on the other, that the reader might by this rightly understand and comprehend that the Lord Jesus Christ could not be of such unclean flesh and seed of the children, nor partake of such a man; for the flesh of the children is unclean and sinful, but the flesh of Christ is pure and holy.

Since his pure flesh could not be of the unclean flesh of the children, as has been said, and since our opponents so strenuously insist upon it, on account of this Scripture, therefore I will diligently examine it word for word, and, by the grace of God, I will attach to each word its wholesome and right meaning.

First, observe that the word *children* has reference to none other than those who, above, are called Christ's brethren, namely,

those who believe in him and who are born of God by the living power of his Spirit and Word, as said.

Secondly, observe what the Scriptural meaning of *having communion* with *flesh* and *blood* is; that it is not simply having flesh and blood, as some have interpreted it; but that it [can] also mean to intermix with flesh and blood and to do the things which are forbidden by God, through the lusts of our flesh, Rom. 7:7 & 3:20. [CHCoG: Neither of these verses actually say what Menno is claiming. If they did, even Jesus Christ would be excluded from justification. And A'Lasco is also wrong, though in the opposite direction.]

Thirdly, observe that since the children of God are partakers of sinful flesh and blood and are subject to such human weakness by which they involuntarily always struggle and fail—therefore they must have such a High Priest who could have compassion with their human failures; as he was tempted in the same manner, although without sin, as said.

Fourthly, observe that the adverb *similiter* (that is, in the same manner), here expresses a true human nature in Christ. It is a true, but not a natural conception as John A'Lasco claims and argues; for it is manifest all through the Scriptures that the conception of Mary was supernatural; that it was brought about by the Holy Spirit, through faith, as has been shown above.

Fifthly, observe that the expression “partaking of flesh and blood” means nothing else than *having* flesh and blood; since his children and brethren also have flesh and blood, as Sebastian Castalion, also, has rendered it, but with such difference that his flesh was holy and knew no sin and therefore experienced no decay; but the flesh of his brethren and children is sinful and therefore also subject to decay, 1 Cor. 15:53 & 5:4. [CHCoG: Substituting “having” for “partaking” acknowledges that we are each a triune being composed of a body, soul and spirit, as is Christ. But the next statement is mistaken. Christ's flesh was holy BECAUSE he never sinned. Our flesh is not holy BECAUSE we

have sinned. Our innocent little children do not need to be baptised to be saved because they have not sinned yet. It is the sin that corrupts our flesh, just as it corrupts our soul and spirit: our flesh is not created corrupt. Secondly, Christ's body did not decay because his Father resurrected him and transformed his physical body into a new spiritual body. There was nothing in Christ's body that would have inherently stopped it from decaying if he had not been resurrected.]

Sixthly, observe that Paul does not at all times use the words *partaking of flesh and blood* in the same sense. In one place, 1 Cor. 9:12, he writes, "If others are partakers of this power over you," that is, If others have this power over you; again, "He that threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope," that is [he] should receive that which he hopes to get. Again in the 10th, 17th and 21st of the same epistle, it is used for enjoying.

Inasmuch as the word *partaking* does not have one meaning everywhere in Scripture, therefore, wherever it is found, it should not be explained otherwise than according to the true nature and meaning of the Scriptures, or else the whole of Scripture must be broken and garbled for the sake of such a word.

Seventhly, observe that the word *corundem* (that is, of the same), has reference to the words *flesh* and *blood*, but not to the flesh and blood of the children, for that is unclean, sinful, guilty and condemned; if it had reference to the flesh and blood of the children, as John A'Lasco and Martin Micron claim and that the Son of God took unto himself a perfect man, body and soul, of the flesh of the children, then it is incontrovertible that all the following and indissoluble inconsistencies must exist:

In the first place an impure, sinful, accursed and death-guilty Christ, as is the flesh of the children of whom he should have partaken his flesh; for wherever the flesh of the children is, there, also, is the sin and curse of the children; this cannot be controverted, or else justice must have been changed and the curse taken away and ended by our own flesh. To which Micron, in the

first conversation I had with him, thus replied: "Christ was pure and without sin and that because Mary did not conceive him from the seed of man." I answered: I must understand, then, that sin is because of the mixture, which is the ordinance of God and not because of the transgression of Adam. He answered: No, it was because of the justice of God that he became of a corrupted nature. I asked, how? He answered: "Because God had said, That in the day you eat of it you shall surely die." I then replied: then God was the cause of the sin of Adam; and the threatened death must not only be punishment of sin, but sin itself. I said, Martin, do observe what reasoning you bring forward.

In the second place it follows that there must be a divided Christ, of whom one half must be of heaven and the other half of earth.

In the third place that there must be two persons in Christ; one divine and one human. To which Martin in our second conversation thus replied: "There were not two persons in Christ, but one person; for, although the word was one person from eternity, yet it was no person which was conceived in Mary." He further said, "Although each human being is one person and although the man, Christ, was one man as any other man, yet the man, Christ alone was no person." I am ashamed to touch upon such inconsistent things. Paul justly said, *Ubi disputator seculi hujus?* "Where is the disputer of this age?"

In the fourth place that there are two Sons in Christ—the Son of God without mother and he impassive; and the son of man without father and he passive; something which Martin Micron, both in our first and also in our second conversation, several times openly admitted before us all, in plain language. O God, what strange things we hear!

In the fifth place, that not the first begotten and only Son of God, but the fatherless son of Mary, of the accursed, sinful flesh of Adam, died for us—something which is directly contrary to Christ, John, Paul and the whole Scriptures.

In the sixth place, that the eternal offering of reconciliation, once offered for the sins of the whole world, was not the spotless Lamb, but an unclean, blemished offering which was subject to sin and death, as may also be unmistakably deduced from the writings of A'Lasco, John 3:16; Rom. 8:31.

In the seventh place, the angel Gabriel, Peter and the Lord himself, acknowledge that the man, Christ Jesus, is the Son of God. Thomas acknowledges him as his Lord and God; besides the whole Scriptures teach that he is our Advocate, Reconciler, Mediator, High Priest, Deliverer and Messiah—and if he is yet to be of the unclean sinful flesh and seed of Adam, then it is manifest that a created creature and man of the sinful flesh of Adam is our Messiah, Deliverer, Reconciliator, Advocate, High Priest, Yes, Lord and God; something which is not only an abomination and idolatry, but also open blasphemy against God.

* * * *

In the tenth place, if the {eternal} Word, by which everything was created, had partaken of such a carnal son of the flesh of the children, or of Mary and had thus united himself into one person and son, then the Creator and the creation, the Son of God without mother and the son of Mary without father, must have become one undivided person and son. This is incontrovertible.

In the eleventh place, if the Word has partaken of such flesh as that of Mary and if it did not become man, then God is not the true Father of Christ, Mary is not a true mother and Christ is not a true son of both his father and mother; besides, all the Scriptures are denied which testify that Christ is the Son of God.

I think that all these indissoluble inconsistencies sufficiently show you that John A'Lasco has not given the Scriptural meaning to the word *corundem*.

Eighthly, observe why Christ, the Prince of our salvation, became man, namely, that he might destroy the prince of death, the devil, by his innocent death and that he might thus deliver and free

his poor, enslaved, timorous brethren and children from the accusing law, from the judgment of sin and the terror of death.

Ninthly, observe that the passage, “He takes not on him the nature of angels, but he takes* on him the seed of Abraham,” should not be understood as having any reference to the taking on of human flesh, as the learned explain it, but to the partaking of grace, by which we are accepted; for he uses the word *take* in the present tense and angels in the plural number and says, “He *takes* not on him the nature of *angels*, but he *takes* on him the seed of Abraham,” the children of the promise, Rom. 9:8; the believers, Gal. 3:29; his brethren and children. He accepts them, in grace, to the praise of his Father, Rom. 15:7; prays for their failings and weaknesses, Rom. 8:7; Heb. 5:10. For they can never be freed from the inherent, impure, wicked nature of their sinful flesh in this life.

Tenthly, observe that a thing which is like unto another is not necessarily the same thing which it resembles; and, therefore it cannot be maintained by this passage, “Therefore in all things he had to be made like his brethren,” [Heb. 2:17] that the holy, pure flesh of Christ is of the unclean, sinful flesh of Adam.

Behold, dear reader, if you consider well the explanation of the Scripture in Heb. 2 and weigh it in the balance of the Scriptures, you will very plainly find that this has the meaning of the above mentioned Scripture; that although Christ, the Prince of our salvation, has led us to his glory and has thus accepted us as brethren and children in faith, yet we are, in our first Adamic birth, so poisoned by the serpent and so corrupted by nature, that we can nevermore become free of our unclean sinful flesh, so long as we dwell in this tabernacle; but oftentimes (although involuntarily) mix and soil ourselves with it; and become, therefore, convinced by the hand writing [of sins against us], that we are guilty of death, according to the eternal justice, Rom. 7:7 & 3:20; Col. 2:13.

* In both instances of “takes,” it is from the German and Holland translations.

Since we are ensnared by such wicked, sinful, disobedient and death guilty flesh, as all the pious children of God have, from the beginning, dolefully complained of and could not be entirely freed from the inserted sting of the serpent; therefore it is that our Prince, Savior, Brother and Father, Christ, in his extremely great love, has given himself according to the counsel, purpose, will and determination of his everlasting Father and in accordance partook of flesh and blood; not of the flesh of the children, for they are sinful and unclean, but as John says, "The Word was made flesh," John 1:14; Deut. 32:15; Isa. 64:4; Job 15:14; Psalms 143:2; Gal. 2:17 & 3:11; 1 John 1:3; Heb. 2:14; Phil. 2:7. Yes, a despised, afflicted, tempted and mortal man has thus voluntarily come forward to battle for his associates, sanctified brethren and children; has placed himself heroically in their defense and has abashed the tempter in his temptation; vanquished him in his power; taken his stronghold; bruised his head; fulfilled and blotted out the hand writing; blotted it out with his precious blood; requited our guilty and deserved death by his innocent and unmerited death, to the fulfilling of the prophetic word, "O death, I will be your plagues; O grave, I will be your destruction!" and he has thus delivered and freed his chosen, his saints, his brethren and children from servitude and the penalty of the law; from the judgment of sin and from the fearful terrors of the threatened death in such a manner that their human weaknesses and involuntary mistakes, for his sake, will no longer be counted against them as sin, if they will but walk before him with penitent believing hearts and will steadily cling to his word with positive, assured consciences, Gen. 49:10; Isa. 2:5; Luke 11:21; Col. 2:14; Hosea 13:14; Rom. 8:2, 3.

Behold, thus Christ, the Son of God, has accepted the seed of Abraham and liberated it, to the praise of his Father; and has therefore appeared in person and become, in all things, like unto his poor, weak, afflicted brethren in all manner of poverty, misery, affliction, need, fear of death and mortality; that he might thus be a compassionate, merciful and faithful High Priest to reconcile the

sins, defects and errors of his saints before God his Father. As he has walked with them in the same temptation, battle, misery, anxiety and fear of death, therefore he can also come to the rescue of all those who are tempted by the world, sin, devil, hell and death. This is my reply to the construction which John A'Lasco and his class put upon the Scripture of Heb. 2. If you fear God then read and judge.

In the eighth place he explains the testimony of John and says, "The Word, the Son of God, commenced being of the seed of David, Rom. 1, of the virgin Mary, Mat. 1, flesh, man, Christ, Immanuel," &c. Again, "The Word has accepted our flesh." Again, "The Word, which from the beginning alone was God, has become (that is, it commenced being together) flesh (that is, man) and has dwelt (that is, it has taken its abode) in us (that is, in our flesh) through its participation," as Paul says. These are his words in regard to the Scripture in John 1.

O dear reader, what is so clear that it cannot be obscured by human intellect and what is so straight that it can not be bent? If he does it through a misconception he may yet be corrected; but if he does it for other reasons, then it will not be well with his poor soul.

I am surprised that he dares publish such inconsistent explanations in print, when he well knows that there are to be found so many learned theological men. O, dear Lord! How frightful it is to mix God's clear wine and the high testimony of the Holy Spirit with such impure water and thus to corrupt it by earthly wisdom. He has so treated this plain Scripture that it would have removed all doubt and given me new courage, if I had had any doubt of my faith and foundation, which, thank God, I have none.

Inasmuch as he so fearfully belittles the wonderful, glorious work of divine grace and love, which the Almighty, eternal Father has so graciously shown us poor, miserable sinners, through his {eternal} Word and Son; and as he would rather break the holy

word and testimony of the Lord than doubt his own intelligence, therefore I pray everybody, for God's sake, not to think hard of me, that I, an unlearned man, oppose this and confute his unscriptural explanations with the clear, plain Scriptures and reasoning and thus lay the foundation of truth.

I trust that no reasonable and impartial person can, in any way, think hard of me for publicly replying to him and defending the praise of the Lord, since he has publicly written against me and fearfully violated the word of God, as I understand it.

I would undoubtedly have excused him and not have mentioned his name, if only he and his followers would leave the Scriptures unbroken and would not so indiscreetly war against the clear, pure truth, both verbally and in writing. But my conscience and the word of God constrain me to protect the praise of my Lord and my faith.

I say First, that he, by his explanation, has broken the testimony of the Holy Spirit and adulterated the Scriptures; for he writes, "The Word, the Son of God has, by the seed of David, Rom. 1:3, by a woman, Gal. 4:4, by the virgin Mary, commenced being flesh, man. In Rom. 1:3, it reads, "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh;" Gal. 4, born of a woman; and "That which is conceived in her, is by the Holy Spirit," Mat. 1:20. Inasmuch as he has not left the Scriptures in their natural sense, but has garbled and turned them to his own advantage; and, instead of *born of* and *conceived of* he writes *commenced being*, therefore he shows by this clearly that he cannot prove his explanation by the Scriptures, but merely decorates it, in semblance, by adducing mutilated Scriptures and palms them off as true.

Secondly, I say that there is not a letter to be found in all the Scriptures that the Word *accepted* our flesh, which he so oftentimes writes; or that the divine nature miraculously united itself with our human nature; or that the Son of God should have remained unchanged and took on him the son of Mary; or that the Son of God should have bestowed all his Attributes on the son of

man and that one person was made of two, as John Brent says; or that the son of man should be the chosen Son of God, as Pomeranus says; or that the Word, the Son, should have taken on him a perfect man of the flesh of Mary; or that the blood of Mary was concreted in her womb, as the servants of the barbarous churches of London say; or that he put on our flesh; or that he should have dwelt in this; or that he was flesh of our flesh; or that our flesh should sit at the right hand of the Father. Therefore I say that they are wrong in all particulars, yes more, that they are anathematized. For they are [teaching] a strange gospel and new doctrine which is not derived from the Spirit and word of God, but is invented by flesh and blood, Gal. 1:8. [CHCoG: Galatians 1:8 does NOT limit the invention of heresy to ‘flesh and blood’ as Menno claims, but expressly says ‘we’ or ‘angels.’ Angels do not have ‘cursed’ bodies of flesh and blood, and yet a third of them fell in sin with Satan. Our sinfulness and sins are NOT limited to our bodies. Our souls and spirits are also involved, and often our sins actually begin in them. Three obvious examples are covetousness, envy and hate.]

Thirdly, I say that his explanation is inconsistent in every particular. For he says, The word *commenced being man* and also, that it dwelt in our flesh. If it *became* man, as it truly did, as the testimony of John, when not adulterated, clearly shows—how could it then yet dwell in the flesh of man? For to commence being a house and to dwell in a house are widely different. This all reasonable people must admit.

Fourthly, I say that this explanation of his is inconsistent in itself. For if the Word *commenced being man*, then it did not remain unchanged in its first state. But if it remained unchanged, then it did not commence being man, but it commenced taking on a man of our flesh and thus it commenced to dwell in one of our flesh, let him turn the matter as he pleases. Therefore I will not let John A’Lasco be the expounder, but will let the faithful and plain John himself explain his own words. He writes, “That which was

from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you,” 1 John 1:1, 2.

Inasmuch as A’Lasco’s explanation is inconsistent in itself and is both contrary to nature and the Scriptures; and inasmuch as John shows me such a plain foundation, therefore I will not establish my foundation and faith on such uncertain, dark and colored flatterings, but I will establish them on the certain, clear and undeceivable testimony of John; for I know that his testimony is true, yes, that it is the unbroken truth and pure word of God.

Fifthly, I say that his explanation of the verb *habitavit*, that is, *has dwelt*, is false, for he says and claims that the Word and our flesh, or the son of Mary, taken on by the Word, are one person and one Christ; and here he claims that the Word, which is the Son of God, has taken its abode in our flesh and refers to Xenophon. From which one or the other must follow, either that Xenophon and his domicil are one being and thing, the same as the Son of God and the son of Mary (understand, according to his explanation) are one person and Christ—or, if Xenophon and his domicil are two separate things, as they really are, that then, also, the Son of God and the son of Mary, in whom God’s Son should have dwelt, according to his explanation, are two separate persons and Christs; for, the one who dwells in a house and the house are two different things, is too self-evident to be denied.

Further I say that his explanation of the verb *habitavit* is not at all founded in fact. For the evangelist uses the verb *to dwell* in the perfect tense and says, *Has dwelt*; from which it is evident that John does not here speak of dwelling in our flesh, but of his dwelling *among* men, as all intelligent translators have rendered it. For if he should have spoken it with such a meaning as John A’Lasco explains it, then he would have said *dwelt*, in the present tense, or we must acknowledge that the Word did not dwell in the

man Christ longer than while he walked here on earth, which to my understanding would be a gross abomination and a great error.

Sixthly, I say that the explanation can not be maintained in any manner; for all the Scriptures in regard to Christ would contradict themselves. There would be two persons and sons in Christ—a sinful and death-guilty Messiah—the father no true father, the mother no true mother and the son no true son. The prophets, Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, Christ Jesus, John and Paul would all be false witnesses, as has been previously heard.

Lastly, I say as before, that John wrote his gospel and testimony of Christ, the Son of God, in a very contentious time. If he had not meant it just as he wrote, but if he had written it in such a confused and strange sense as John A'Lasco explains it—then he would not have abated the dispute thereby, but would rather have given new energy to it.

O no. John has simply, clearly and plainly given his testimony, foundation and faith concerning Christ Jesus, the Son of God and our only and eternal Messiah and has testified, without duplicity, that the Word of God, which was from the beginning, became flesh and that this same incarnated Word has dwelt among us. But he did not write a syllable [saying] that he *accepted* our flesh, or that he *dwelt in* a man of the flesh of Mary, as alas, John A'Lasco, by his human wisdom obscures his simple, plain word and clear testimony, mutilates and controverts it.

Inasmuch as he, in his defense and explanation, has so frightfully broken the Scriptures and has so indiscreetly varied from the truth, as you may plainly see from the cited extracts—therefore I felt constrained by pure love to God and your souls, to discover unto you his great misunderstanding and gross errors; that the glory of the Lord may be maintained and that you may be led to the right, true confession of your God and of his beloved Son Jesus Christ.

But I am grieved to mention his name in such a connection and that I must publish his errors, although he has given me an ill

reputation and hateful name with many by his writing. I commend him to the Lord. Perhaps he thinks that he has by this done rightly. Whatever I do, I do for conscience' sake, to the glory of my Lord and Savior, Christ; for I love his glory far more than the honor of all creatures—and him I must seek with all my strength, even at the cost of my life.

I am sure that if John A'Lasco seeks the praise of God more than his own; if he loves his neighbor as the Scriptures require and sincerely seeks after truth, he will not be angry with me, but will love and thank me for not excusing him in this regard, but faithfully showing him his errors, for maintaining my faith and doctrine according to the truth, for warning my fellow-men against corruption and most of all for protecting and defending by the word of my Lord, my Lord's glory and great name, as much as is in my power, according to the testimony of the Scripture and my conscience. But if it be considered offensive in me, as I fear it will be, then I must commend it to the Lord who, in his great love, has, to this hour, stood by me in all my needs, with his paternal faithfulness and who has so graciously succored me in all my temptations. Behold, dear reader, here you may see how far we differ with our opponents in the confession, doctrine and faith of Christ, the Son of God. Now judge, if you fear God, which of the two parties has the strongest Scriptures and foundation.

If you would have the Scriptures, which they call contradicting in this respect, rightly explained, then you must let go of the foundation of our opponents and cling to ours. For it can never, never be explained by divine truth in the meaning which they attach to them. For every intelligent person who will not wilfully combat the plain truth and reject the Holy Spirit, must acknowledge that from their doctrine it follows that the Lord, Christ, must be an unclean, sinful, accursed, condemned and death guilty Christ: that there are two persons in Christ, the one divine, the other human; two sons—the one the Son of God without mother, the other the son of Mary, or the son of man without

father; not God's first begotten and only, own Son, but the son of the unclean flesh of Adam died for us. Besides, all the prophets, Christ and the apostles must be false witnesses; this is too plain to injure by any writing, or dissipate by flattery.

But whosoever rightly understands our foundation and confines his reasoning within the limits of the word of God—who believes the testimony of John, to which he testifies in his first chapter, concerning the incarnation, as just and true and does not injure it; who attributes nothing more to Mary, the mother of our Lord, than what is attributed to a true mother in Gen. 1 and who leaves God, the Father, as a true father of his Son, Christ; Mary as a true mother and Christ as a true Son, both of his Father and mother; to him all the Scriptures in this respect are plain. He does not require the flattery of anyone; for there is not a sentence in all the Scriptures which contradict him. He has an undivided, clean and innocent Christ; the Son of God and the son of Mary; an only person, of all of which I trust, you have been fully convinced in the foregoing synopsis founded on the power of the Scriptures; and which, by the grace of God, you will see by the following brief collection of references.

The {eternal} Word of God, by which all things were created, John 1; which is the First and the Last, Rev. 1:11; which, in due time, in the city of Nazareth, according to the providence of God, 1 Pet. 1:20, according to the will of God, Eph. 1:4, according to the promise of God, Gen. 3:15, through the Holy Spirit, was conceived in the virgin Mary, who knew no man, Luke 1:27, 28; Mat. 1; John 1:14. According to which flesh conceived in Mary, through the Holy Spirit, of the {eternal} Word of the eternal Father, he, in due time, was born of the seed or generation of David, Acts 2:13; Rom. 1:4, of a woman, Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4, of the virgin Mary, Mat. 1:21; Luke 2:21, in Bethlehem, the only begotten Son of God, John 3:16; 4:9; 5:13; Rom. 8:32; according to the promise and the generation of the mother, also, of Abraham, of David and of the seed of the woman, fruit and son, Gen. 3:15; Mat. 1:21; Luke 1:31;

the Savior of the world, Luke 2:11; the Lord himself from heaven, 1 Cor. 15:47; the bread which came down from heaven, John 6:58; Immanuel, Isa. 7:14; Mat. 1:23; the mighty Prince, Isa. 9:6; our God, Isa. 40:9. Jehovah is Our Righteousness, Jer. 23:6 & 33:15.

Behold, faithful reader, here you have our proper foundation, doctrine and confession of Christ, the Son of God; how he has become flesh in Mary and how he came into the world, as we, before our God, believe and teach our brethren. And we would by this pray and faithfully advise everyone, gratefully to accept this noble and precious Son of God, with a sincere desire to hear, love and serve him in gladness of heart and faithfully follow in his footsteps; walk unblamably in his word and ways; freely promulgate his honor and praise, glorify his holy name and humbly and obediently bend their hearts before his majesty, since the merciful Father has shown us such great love as to give us poor, miserable sinners his only, eternal and beloved Son; for it is he who has victoriously led us poor children, through the merits of his precious blood and bitter death, according to the gracious resolution, counsel, will and purpose of God, his heavenly Father, from the kingdom of hell and from eternal death into the glorious kingdom of his divine honor and eternal peace. Eternal praise be to his illustrious, wonderful, high and glorious name, Amen.

CONCLUSION.

CHRIST Says, “This is eternal life, that they might know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent,” John 17:3. At another place he says, “If you do not believe that I am he, you shall die in your sins,” John 8:24. John also says, “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God,” 1 John 4:15. Again, “Who is a liar but he that denies

that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-christ, that denies the Father and the Son. Whosoever denies the Son, the same does not have the Father," 1 John 2:22, 23.

O, that our opponents would rightly take to heart these and similar Scriptures and would learn to know who and what the Son of God is and from where he came, then they might yet be delivered from the chains of the deceiver and be led into the light of the true doctrine. But so long as they do not confess Christ it will always be wrangling and disputation, changing falsehood into truth and truth into falsehood. Yes, they will be so estranged and blinded that all those who, with the angel Gabriel, with the eternal Father, with John the baptist, with Peter, Paul, Martha, Christ and with the whole Scriptures, confess Christ Jesus as the true Son of the true and living God, must, alas, be called deceivers and heretics by them. O, dear Lord, how long will this great abomination continue!

O, that they might yet awaken in time while it is yet to-day, and that they could give just praise unto Christ! Could they see their accursed hypocrisy, idolatry; the lamentable deceit of these poor and miserable people and the ignorant, reckless life of the wicked world, that they could renounce and quit it, what a blessing it would be to their poor souls! But I fear that so long as the spiritual Antioch complacently stretches the idle life and Jezebel sets the delicious tables, the accursed Moaz will retain his sway; and that the world will not be in want of false teachers and deceivers.

Kind reader, ponder well what I write. I warn you in faithful love, watch, look and observe well what you believe and what you uphold; for your preachers deceive you. Watch and pray; the day is at hand, yes, at hand, that we must all stand before the impartial judgment seat of our God, who judges without respect of person and will reward everyone according to his works, be he emperor or king, doctor or licentiate, rich or poor, man or woman.

In short, this is my reply to the defence of John A'Lasco. With this I will not only appear on earth before man, but also in the day of my Lord Christ. According to the word of his promise, I will, by his grace, appear before the eyes of his majesty.

If you are of reasonable disposition and not blinded by the spirit of the envious partisans, or led away by bitter zeal, then judge between us and our opponents; which of us most glorifies Christ Jesus, the Son of the true and living God; who has most wholesomely adduced the Scriptures; and who has broken and turned them to suit his own professions. But beware of judging according to the flesh; judge in purity of heart, even as if before your God, according to truth.

From my innermost soul I wish you a true and unfeigned faith, a true confession of God and Christ, the unction and love of God, a pious, penitent, cheerful heart, an unblamable christian life and a true understanding and a good judgment, Amen.

OBSERVE: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believes on him is not condemned; but he that does not believe is condemned already; because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," John 3:16, 17.

MENNO SIMON.



**A CONFESSION OF THE
Triune, Eternal and True
GOD,
FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.**

BY
MENNO SIMON

*Originally published in the Dutch Language, A.D. 1597.
Republished in 1600 and 1681.*



*“For no other foundation can any man lay
than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,”
1 Cor. 3:11.*



PREFACE.

Menno Simon wishes all his beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, grace and peace, an unbroken, pure and firm faith, unfeigned brotherly love, a sure and living hope, and a God pleasing, unblamable walk, confession and life, from God our heavenly Father, through his beloved Son, Christ Jesus, in the power of his Holy Spirit, Amen.

WE know, dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, that we are condemned by the whole world to water, fire and sword, for the testimony of Christ and our consciences; and that we are the spectacle of and regarded as the off-scouring of all mankind. Besides, we also know that the true Prince of Peace, the blessed Christ Jesus, has summoned and taken us into the mansion of peace through the word of peace; and that he has given and left his followers such a glorious sign by which we shall know them to be his disciples, namely, Love. Therefore it is reasonable and christian-like that we, the poor outcast bearers of the cross, should be united in the perfect bonds of true love, and that we should cling together as the members of one body, "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body and made to drink into one Spirit," 1 Cor. 12:13.

But now we see plainly how the prince of darkness, who from the beginning was a murderer, seeks, with all diligence, to disturb this same peace in the house of God, to rend this bond in twain and thus to make odious to many the dear gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, our cross and confession and all the christian societies; and thus to thoroughly destroy it, John 8:44. Since his acute attacks are so well known to us, therefore it is necessary to be always aware, to repent, to seek each other in true christian love, to resuscitate that which has been corrupted, to cure and make healthy that which is diseased, with the oil of the divine word; for during the last four years, alas, christian love and peace have

materially decreased with some, on account of much pernicious upbraiding and disputing about the ineffable depths of the divinity of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. Also about angels and devils and about the ban; and this has always been the case where such disputes were in sway. May the Lord not count it as sin against those who have used the ban. I see this plainly and as I have been troubled not a little by some about this matter—and since I naturally hate such upbraiding and disputing, for I have these fifteen years never found any use in it, because I love peace and unity, which are in conformity with the word of God, more than my own life. I trust that I speak no lie, for, because of that, my heart is very much troubled, mournful and afflicted, yes, more so than I can write.

Would to God that I could, at the cost of my life-blood, help all afflicted consciences and could lead them to God; for I love nothing more on earth, nor do I seek anything before God, than the glory of my Lord Jesus Christ and the everlasting salvation of my beloved brethren. And therefore I have, at the risk of my poor, diseased body, placed at your disposal and service my firm faith and confession of the eternal, Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as taken from the sure word of God; with which I will, unwaveringly, live and die before my God and will appear with it in his grace, at the day of judgment, trusting by this to make pleasant and worthy to many, the noble and desirable peace and unity in Christ and to restore love.

Brethren, there has been enough of disputing, upbraiding and complaint of one another. I think it is time to discountenance the disturbers of the peace and to cordially seek scriptural peace and unity. But I desire no peace outside of Christ. I ardently desire and pray all my beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord to read, hear and understand this, my admonishing confession, without any partisan bitterness or spitefulness towards God-fearing, pure hearts, as I have written it in purity of heart, as before God, in Christ Jesus, without hatred or malice. I do not doubt but that, if

you do this, brethren, I mean the unpeaceable and troubled ones, disquiet, dispute and disunion will far recede from the peace-mountain of the Lord; and peace, love and unity will again install themselves.

I sincerely desire that it may be so read and taken to heart, that the Almighty, eternal Father, with his blessed Son, Christ Jesus and with the Holy Spirit may remain unchanged in their true, divine being; and that the afflicted, mournful, wavering consciences may find succor, consolation and strength. The beloved Father grant his grace, Amen.



A CONFESSION OF THE TRIUNE, ETERNAL, AND TRUE GOD, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

[CHCoG: At the end of this article is a claim that it was written by Menno Simon in 1550. However, there is no record of the article being published before 1597, fully 47 years later, and 36 years after Menno died. This presents two possibilities: **One:** Other Anabaptists were horrified by Menno's various unbiblical claims in it, and convinced him to not publish it. However, he did not destroy it, and it was later found among his papers and posthumously published. **Two:** Menno never wrote it, and after his death, someone usurped his name to get their own very dubious work published. I would prefer the second option to be true, as this article falls far short of Menno's usual Biblical accuracy in his other works.

Initially I thought that this article's central conclusion; that Christ's Father is an imperfect god lacking his own wisdom, words and power, was not given in any of Menno's other writings, though he does claim in several other places that Jesus is the *eternal* word, truth, wisdom, power, etc. This article also tells the reader to **not** explore the scriptures further, but to simply accept what is presented in it to avoid being deceived. Again, I thought that this unbiblical advice was not given in any of Menno's other writings, for he often encourages the reader to verify what he says in the Word of God. These thoughts were crushed when I began working on Menno's *Second Discussion with Micron*, in which he repeats both of these heresies, although he avoids directly calling Christ's Father imperfect the second time.]

WE believe and confess with the Holy Scriptures, that there is an only, eternal and true God, who is a Spirit. One God, who created heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them. Such a God whom heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot comprehend. Whose throne is heaven and earth is his footstool; who measures “the waters in the hollow of his hand;” who spans the heavens; who comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure and weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance; who is as high as heaven, deeper than hell, lower than earth and broader than the sea; “Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see;” who is Almighty, powerful and a ruler over Kings in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; whose strength, hand and power none can withstand. A “God of Gods and a Lord of Lords;” there is none like unto him, but he is a mighty, holy, terrible, praiseworthy, wonderful and consuming fire; whose kingdom, power, dominion, majesty and glory is eternal and shall endure forever and besides this the only, eternal, living, Almighty over-ruling God and Lord. We know no other; and since he is a Spirit so great, terrible and invisible, he is also inexpressible, unsearchable and indescribable, as may be deduced and understood from the following Scriptures, Deut. 4:35; 6:4; 7:6; 10:17; 32:39; John 4:24; 1:18; Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6; Col. 1:18; Isa. 43:11; 44:6; 48:13; 40:12; Job 11:8; 1 Tim. 6:16; Eccl. 1:7; Mat. 11:27; Rev. 17:14; 19:16; Heb. 12:29; 1:8, 10.

This only, eternal, omnipotent, ineffable, invisible, inexpressible and indescribable God, we believe and confess with the Scriptures, to be the eternal, unsearchable Father, with his eternal, unsearchable Son and with his eternal, unsearchable Holy Spirit. The Father, we believe and confess to be a true Father, the Son, a true Son and the Holy Spirit, a true Holy Spirit; not carnal and comprehensible [to us], but spiritual and unsearchable, for Christ says, “God is a Spirit.” Inasmuch as God is such a Spirit, as it is written, therefore we also believe and confess of the divine

generation of the heavenly Father and of his begotten Son, Christ Jesus (brethren, understand my writing well), that they are spiritual and unsearchable, as is also the Father who begat them; for like begets like: This is incontrovertible, Mat. 3:17; 28:18, 19; Mark 1:7, 11; Luke 3:16; John 14:9; 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:11.

[CHCoG: I hope this has been mis-translated into English, because here Menno is claiming that there is a God **above** Christ's Father who was responsible for "*the divine generation of the heavenly Father and of his begotten Son, Christ Jesus.*" **None** of the scriptures he quotes following his statement even suggest this, and I have NEVER seen any scriptures that support his claim that Christ's Father has **also** been begotten. Jehovah, the heavenly Father of Jesus is the One True God himself. There is NO higher God that has generated Him. Jehovah himself says that there is NO other. Jer 10:10, John 17:3, 1 John 5:20, Deut 4:39, Isa 45:5 & 45:18, 1 Cor 8:4. This heretical concept does explain the odd title the author uses for this article, in which he places God above and on a separate line to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

But in his next sentence, the author shifts closer to the actual Biblical account, in which God the Father begets Jesus.]

And this same unsearchable, inexpressible, spiritual, eternal, divine Being, which is begotten by the Father, before every creature, divine and unsearchable, we believe and confess to be Christ Jesus, the first and only begotten Son of God, "the first-born of every creature," the {eternal} Wisdom, the power of God, the everlasting Light, the {eternal} Truth, the everlasting Life, John 14:6, the {eternal} Word, John 1:1. Do not understand this as a literal word; for it is divine and spiritual and not carnal and literal; for a literal word is but a passing breeze, comprehended in the letter, beginning and ceasing; and then Christ Jesus, before his

incarnation, must have been a literal word. O, no! For he is the {eternal}, wise, Mighty, holy, true, living and unsearchable Word, which in the beginning was with God and was God (mark), by whom all things were made and without whom not anything was made that was made and which will endure forever. And therefore he says, "Before Abraham was I am" Again John the baptist says, "After me comes one who was before me," John 1:1 & 15; 3:36; 8:12; Luke 7:29 & 35; 1 Cor. 1:9; Heb. 1:2. Yes, he had this glory of the divine being with the Father, before the foundation of the world was laid. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, his Father; therefore, we confess with John the Baptist, Nathaniel, Martha and Peter that he is the Son of the living God, John 1:17; Phil. 2; Mat. 16:16, John 11:27; 9:37; 6:69.

[CHCoG: As noted earlier, the robbery quote above is an appalling mistranslation of the Greek into the English KJV, and evidently the Latin and Dutch translations were no better. This is the passage accurately translated: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Jeshua, who, while He was in God's form, did not consider the extortion that He was the equal of God, but He stripped Himself and He took the form of a servant, and was in the form of a child of man and was in nature as a man. And He humbled Himself and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the stake." Phil. 2:5-8, CHCoG trans. This translation agrees with Heb. 2:7, John 14:28 & 1 Cor. 15:27-28. Remember: Even now, Jesus sits at the right hand of God, as his second in command. He does not sit on the throne in heaven with his Father as his equal. It is Satan who thought himself equal to Jehovah God, not Jesus. Isa. 14:13.]

Dearly beloved brethren, understand me rightly. He is the eternal Wisdom and the eternal Power. For, as we believe and

confess that the Father was from eternity and will eternally remain; yes, that he is the First and the Last, so we may also freely believe and confess that his wisdom, his power, his light, his truth, his life, his Word, Christ Jesus, has been eternally with him, in him and by him; yes, that he is the Alpha and Omega; or else, we must admit that this begotten, unsearchable, true, divine being, Christ Jesus (whom the fathers have called a person), through whom the eternal Father has made all things, has had a beginning like a creature; which all true christians admit and look upon as a terrible blasphemy, curse and abomination. The gracious, beloved Father will always protect and uphold all his beloved children in the right and true confession of his beloved Son Jesus Christ.

[CHCoG: Indeed, Jesus did not have “a beginning like a creature.” The Bible clearly tells us that Jesus was begotten from God, and in fact is the only, the first and the last to come into being in that way. The Bible also tells us that Jesus, as the Word, was begotten before anything else, and played an essential part in the creation of everything else. But this simple fact remains: Jesus was begotten. Exactly how we are not told, but it may well be that the way that God created/begot Eve from a rib of Adam’s body indicates that the Word was derived directly from Jehovah God’s—his Father’s—spiritual body. The Bible also teaches that Jehovah God is truly eternal, for He alone is self-existent, has always existed, exists now, and will always exist. In this way the Father is truly the First and the Last God. There is not another exactly like Him, nor can there ever be.

Clearly, at some point during eternity past, Jehovah decided He would like to share life in an everlasting Paradise, and devoted considerable thought into finding the best way to go about creating it. His first act was to beget His Son, the Word. This means that the Word was indeed “the beginning of the creation of God.” Rev. 3:14. When the Word understood His Father’s Plan, and knew that

one day he would need to become human, be tortured and die to redeem humanity, he was given a choice: Was he willing to go through all that pain, and even die, to honour his Father and save us? Once the Word, filled with love, agreed, they began creating the heavens and the earth, and everything in them.

But let us read Christ's own account of His 'birth' and helping create everything:

"Jehovah created* me as the firstfruit of His journey, before His works of old. I was to be poured out from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth.

There were no depths when I was brought forth, there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were set down, before the hills, I was brought forth; while He had not made the earth or the fields, or begun making the dust of the world.

When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He placed a curve on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds from above, when He strengthened the eyes of the depths,[†] when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not pass over His word,[‡] when He cut out the foundations of the earth,[§] then I was beside Him as a master's apprentice; and I was His delight every Day, always rejoicing before Him, rejoicing

* From the Hebrew *qanah* קָנָה, which can also mean acquire or possess. The Peshitta uses *branee* בְּרָנִי and the Septuagint has *ektisen* ἐκτίσεν, which both mean 'create'.

† From *ayin* עַיִן, which in this case may refer to springs of water.

‡ Literally 'mouth', as in the source of the word.

§ Note that God did not say the waters could never cover the mountains later, as they did in the Great Flood, obeying His new word to them at that time.

in His inhabited world, and My delight was with the sons of men.

“Now therefore, listen to Me, My children, for blessed *are those* who keep My ways. Hear Instruction and be wise, and do not let go of it. Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching day by day at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors.

For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains pleasure from Jehovah; but he who sins against Me does violence to his own soul; all those who hate Me love death.”

Proverbs 8:22 to 36

The Hebrew word *chuwל* חָוַל, translated as *brought forth* in Proverbs 8:24 and used in Isaiah 66:8 show that this word often refers to birth. This passage of Proverbs does indeed reveal that Jeshua was born from God the Father before the beginning of our earth and stood beside Him helping in the Creation.

This leads to three conclusions: The Word, who would one day become Christ, is utterly unique, as he has come from God, and therefore is God, just as the offspring of a human is human. John 1:1-3, Rev, 3:14. In all of this the Word, now Jesus Christ, is utterly unique, and is in these ways also the First and the Last. John 3:18 Therefore we, created from dust, can never be equal to Christ. Secondly, the Word's existence is entirely dependent on his Father's decision to beget him, while his Father is utterly self-existent. Thirdly, only Jehovah God has always existed, and lived alone until he decided to beget the Word. Therefore the Word is not, and can never be, equal to his Father, nor has he ever—as he is a loving and faithful son—claimed to be. John 14:28, Mark 13:32, John 17:1-6, 1 Cor. 11:3 & 15:20-28, Acts 5:29-32 & 7:55-56, Rev. 1:1 & 5:1-10.

And one other thing: Menno claims that the Word *is* the Wisdom and Power of his Father, and therefore the Word has always existed. This is wrong. Jehovah God **himself** is the true

source of all wisdom and power. Isa. 44:6 & 46:3-11, Dan. 7:9-14, Psa. 2:1-12. His Son has inherited infinite wisdom and power from His Father, but in doing so he did not deplete his Father's endless supply in the slightest, just as we do not deplete our parents' intelligence or strength if we are born intelligent or strong too. So any claim that Jesus must have existed forever so he could provide the wisdom and power that his Father lacked is false, backwards, and greatly underestimates the wisdom and power of Jehovah God.

Beloved brethren in the Lord, we believe and confess that this same eternal, wise, Mighty, holy, true, living and unsearchable Word, Christ Jesus, which was in the beginning with God and which was God, unsearchable—born of the unsearchable Father, before every creature, has in the fullness of time become, according to the unchangeable purpose and true promise of the Father, a true, visible, passive, hungry, thirsty and mortal man in Mary, the pure virgin, through the operation and overshadowing of the Holy Spirit and was thus born of her. Yes, that he was like unto us in all things except sin; that he grew up as other men; and at the appointed time was baptized and entered upon his ministerial office, the office of grace and love, which was enjoined upon him from the Father and which he obediently fulfilled; that he effaced the hand writing, ~~that is, the law, against us~~ [CHCoG: No, use this accurate translation of Col. 2:13-14: “*of our sins against the Law*”]; and has at last, through the eternal Spirit of his heavenly Father, offered himself in ~~this~~ his human flesh, nature and weakness, in which, also, he has sighed, wept and prayed unto the Father, has sweated water and blood and thus purified our hearts of the deadly works, that we should serve the true and living God. And all who believe on him have received through him grace, mercy, remission of sins and eternal life; and that, by means of his precious blood which he has, in his great love, offered and

shed for us poor sinners on the cross, according to the good pleasure of the Father. He has thus become our only and eternal High Priest, Reconciler, Mercy-seat, Mediator and Advocate, with God his Father. For, as God, the Almighty Father, through his Mighty Word, Christ Jesus, had created Adam and Eve, so he, also, would again by this restore them and make them pious, when seduced by the serpent, together with all their descendants. We should give no one the praise of our salvation, neither in heaven nor on earth, but to the only eternal Father, through Christ Jesus and that through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. This is sufficient [praise] of the incarnation, Mat. 1:16, 25; 5:4; Mark 15:37; Luke 2:7, 40; 22:67; 23:46; John 15:9, 10; 12:13; 11:26; Phil. 2: 5, 7; Col. 2:14, 12; 1:13, 16; Heb. 3:2; Eph. 2:12; 1:7; Rom. 8:32; 3:24, 25; 5:11, 12; Isa. 53:12; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:14.

Further, beloved brethren, we believe and confess Christ Jesus to be the true God with the Father; and this because of the divine glory, operation and attributes, which are found in such abundance with him, as may be clearly deduced and understood from the following Scriptures. Say, beloved! Is it not the only and true God who has made heaven and earth and whose kingdom shall endure forever? Doubtlessly, yes. Paul says, "Unto the Son he says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows. And, you, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands," Heb. 1:8, 9, 10.

Is it not the only God, who alone is "King of kings and Lord of lords?"

[CHCoG: 1 Tim. 6:14-16 indicates that this “King of kings” is Christ’s Father. I also point out here that Menno uses the phrase “*the only God*” repeatedly through the next few pages to reinforce his concept of God. However, this phrase NEVER appears in the Bible. The closest to it is “the only true god” which appears once only in John 17:3, and says “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” Beyond any doubt, this “only true God” is Jehovah, Christ’s Father. As Menno’s phrase is NOT Biblical, it is hereafter being struck through to read simply God, which IS Biblical, and can include both Christ’s Father and Christ. And though Menno also attempts to apply the “True God” phrase to both Christ and his Father, there is no Biblical support for that either. Yes, Christ is God’s Son, and thus is also God, and also deserves our worship, but only His Father is the One True God.]

And [is it] He who reigns in heaven and on earth? Most assuredly. And the Spirit speaks in Rev. [17:14 & 19:16], that Christ is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Christ himself says, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” [CHCoG: Yes, Christ is to be given the position of King of kings. And WHO gives it to him? His Father, Jehovah. John 10:18 & 17:3.] Paul says, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,” Phil. 2:10.

Is it not ~~the only~~ God who says, “I, Jehovah, am the first; and at the last I am He.” Isa. 41:4. And Rev. 1:8 says, “I am Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, which is and which was and which is to come; the Almighty.”* And [Christ

* [CHCoG: Rev. 1:4 shows us that Rev. 1:8 refers to Jehovah God, Christ’s Father.]

says,] “Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that lives and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore,” Rev. 1:17, 18.

Is not this ~~the only~~ God who “tries the hearts and minds?” [Psa. 7:9] Without doubt it is. Christ says, “All the churches shall know that I am he which searches the minds and hearts; and I will give unto everyone of you according to your works,” Rev. 2:23.

Is it not ~~the only~~ God, whom alone we should serve and worship? Yes. Christ says, “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. [He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.]” [John 5:23. CHCoG: The second half of this verse, not quoted by Menno, makes it clear that we are to worship BOTH Christ’s Father and Christ, and **also** that Christ operates under instructions from his Father.] Of divine service Paul says, “He that serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God,” and “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” Rom. 14:18; 1 Cor.4:1.

Paul was a servant of Christ, as may be generally seen at the commencement of all his epistles. Of his worship Luke says that when Christ had ascended to heaven they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem. [Luke 24:51, 52.] Also Stephen, in his last prayer, says, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Acts 7:59. Paul also says, “Let all the angels of God worship him,” also the murderer on the cross said, “Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom,” Heb. 1:6; Luke 23:42. Is it not ~~the only~~ God which is true; and every man a liar? Rom. 3:4, Ps.116:11. Oh, yes. The prophet says “There was not any deceit in his mouth.” Isa. 53:9. Christ himself says, “I am the truth,” “To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth,” John 14:6; 18:37.

Can anyone forgive sins and bestow everlasting life except [Jehovah,] the ~~only and~~ eternal God? Psa. 103:3. O, no! Christ says, “Know that the son of man has power on earth to forgive sins;” and, to the sinful woman, “Your sins are forgiven.” “And I

give them eternal life;" [CHCoG: "and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." Mat. 9:6; Luke 7:48; John 10:28-30. The correct answer to the author's question is "O, Yes!! Jehovah God so loves His Son that He has even given him authority to forgive sins and bestow everlasting life. And why? Because Christ and His Father work together as one, for their goals are the same.—Christ's Father has complete trust in His Son.]

Should we believe in anyone but on ~~the only~~ God alone? Not at all. For Christ says, "He that believes on me has everlasting life." "You believe in God, believe also in me," John 6:47; 14:1. [CHCoG: Here Menno's own quotes show that his "Not at all." should instead be what Christ says: we are to believe in BOTH God the Father and Jesus Christ. John 5:19-26, 1 John 2:23.]

Is it not ~~the only~~ God who is the judge of all the world? Who will raise the dead and at the last day sit in judgment? Assuredly, yes. And Christ says, "For as the Father raises up the dead and quickens them, even so the Son quickens whom he will." "He was ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead;" and at his coming he will judge and sentence, John 5:21; Acts 10:42; Mat. 26:31-46. [CHCoG: Again Menno rejects the plain words of Christ: Jehovah God has also given his Son Jesus Christ the authority and power raise the dead and to judge them, just as He does himself. Christ is indeed worthy of our worship!!]

Behold, beloved brethren, as the throne of Christ is an eternal throne and as the Scriptures are not ashamed to confess him to be God and also testify that he founded heaven and earth, that he has all power in heaven and on earth; that he is the first and last; that he searches the hearts and minds; whom we should serve and worship; who is truth; who forgives sin and bestows eternal life; in whom we must believe and who at the last day will raise us from the dead and judge us, as has been said; so it is incontrovertible

that Christ Jesus also with his Father, must be the true God; for God gives his glory to none other; and these are all glories, powers and attributes which belong to no one in heaven nor upon, earth, except alone, the only, eternal and true God; this all taught by God, must fully admit and confess.

[CHCoG: This paragraph is both true and false. It is true that Christ has incredible authority and power and glory. Menno says that “God gives his glory to none other.” Christ makes it utterly clear that that is NOT true. For example, Menno says that Christ “has all power in heaven and on earth.” He ‘proves’ this by leaving out four critical words: “And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, ‘All power *is given unto me* in heaven and in earth.’” Mat. 28:18. By saying this, Christ acknowledges that this immense power is NOT inherently his, but has been **given** to him by a superior to whom this power truly belongs, and that superior can ONLY be the One True God, Jehovah, Christ’s Father. As another example, Christ asks his Father to give him Glory: “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” John 17:5. And in Revelation 5:12, we clearly see that Christ’s Father has indeed delighted to once again honour His worthy and incomparable Son with “power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” Please understand this. Jesus is not some second-rate, tin-pot god: he is the faithful, fully blessed, one and only truly begotten Son of the one True God. Yes, Jesus Christ is fully God. But he is, and always will be, the True God’s Son, not the True God himself. John 1:14-18, 3:16-18, 1 John 4:9, John 17:3.]

Besides, beloved brethren, we believe and confess Christ Jesus, with his heavenly Father, to be truly God; and that because of the

plain testimony of the holy prophets; evangelists and apostles, as we may learn from the following Scriptures and also from some other texts. Isaiah says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace," Isa. 9:6. Again, "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come with strength and his arm will rule for him! Behold, his reward is with him and his work before him; he will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and will gently lead those that are with young," Isa. 40:9-11. Read also Ezek. 34:11. [CHCoG: And who is it that sits at the right hand of God? It is Jesus Christ. And so, who is it that will rule for Jehovah as His arm? Yes, it is God's Son, Jesus Christ!!]

Jeremiah says, "Behold, the days come, says Jehovah, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch and a king shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name by which he shall be called, JEHOVAH [IS] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15-18.

Micah says, "But you Bethlehem Ephratah, though you be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," Micah 5:2. Read also Heb. 7:3, 4; Isa. 44:6; Rev. 1:8; 22:13. John says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," John 1:1. Jesus said unto Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed," John 20:27-29.

Paul says, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood;” “of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came; who is over all, God be blessed for ever.” Again, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,” Acts 20:28; Rom. 9:5; 2 Cor. 5:19. Read also John 14; Col. 22; 1 Tim. 3. Again, “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant,” Phil. 2:6.

[CHCoG: As shown before, this passage accurately translates as: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Jeshua, who, while He was in God’s form, did not consider the extortion that He was the equal of God, but He stripped Himself and He took the form of a servant, and was in the form of a child of man and was in nature as a man. And He humbled Himself and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the stake.” Phil. 2:5-8, CHCoG trans. Like Jesus, we are to NOT consider ourselves equal to His Father. Nor are we to think we are equal to Jesus: He alone is God’s true son, and he alone died for our sins. Jesus Christ owes his life to his Father, and we owe our lives to Christ.

And do not think me overly critical of Menno. Menno was indoctrinated by the Catholic church, even becoming one of their priests, and then came out of it, and mainly had biased Catholic Latin translations of the Bible to work from. Though he is wrong on some topics, I do not question his sincerity. He had many, many lies to overcome, and that he achieved the purity of doctrine he did in so many areas is astounding. And that, of course, made him their implacable enemy. But on this topic he errs seriously.]

John says, “We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, through his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life,” 1 John 5:20. Besides [this], read the whole gospel of John and 1 Cor. 10:15; Eph. 4; Heb. 1:3; 7; 11; 12; 13; and you will, by the grace of God, find a sure and firm foundation.

Behold, faithful brethren, here you have the unsearchable birth of Christ, his divine glory, operation and power; and a number of precious and plain testimonies of the holy prophets, evangelists and apostles, all of whom with an invincible power, testify and point out, with such clearness, the true, ineffable divinity of our Lord, Jesus Christ. I am convinced and do not doubt the least, that a pious, humble, God-fearing conscience will with this be satisfied and not search into this unsearchable depth any further; and if anyone desires to search and dispute further, to him I prophesy that he will surely search and dispute all his lifetime and yet never have a settled mind nor a firm foundation. Therefore, beloved brethren, be warned. Watch and beware.

[CHCoG: Menno needed to dig a little deeper, and to believe the scriptures he quoted exactly as they are written. As it is, his mind remained confused by aspects of the Roman Catholic Trinity, including its anti-scriptural co-eternal and co-equal tenets. Search the Bible, which God has given to us to teach us who He and his Son are, and you will NEVER find ‘Trinity’, ‘co-equal’ or ‘co-eternal’ written in it, not even once. Learn more about this in [*Jeshua Messiah \(Jesus Christ\) Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity?*](#)]

The Holy Spirit

As we have now pointed out and made known our faith and confession of the true divinity of Jesus Christ; so we will also,

now, by the grace of God, set forth in few words, our faith and confession of the Holy Spirit. Let the God-fearing judge.

We believe and confess the Holy Spirit to be a true, real, ~~or~~ [and] personal Holy Spirit; and that in a divine way—even as the Father is a true Father and the Son a true Son; the Holy Spirit is a mystery to all mankind, unsearchable, inexpressible and indescribable (as we have shown above of the Father and the Son); divine with his divine attributes, going forth from the Father through the Son, although he always remains with God and in God and is never separated from the being[s] of the Father and the Son. And the reason that we confess him to be such a true and real Holy Spirit is because we are impelled to this by the Scriptures, for he descended upon Christ at his baptism in the bodily shape of a dove and appeared unto the apostles as cloven tongues like fire; because we are baptized in his name as well as in the name of the Father and of the Son; because through him the prophets prophesied, performed miracles and works, had dreams and saw visions; for he is a distributor of the gifts of God, and that according to ~~his~~ God's will. Acts 2:26 [Heb. 2:4.] Mark well. He moved Zechariah, the Son of Berechiah, Zech. 7:12 [and Zechariah, father of John the Baptist, Luke 1:59-79], he moved John the Baptist while yet in his mother's womb and he said to Simeon, "That he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." [Luke 1:41, 2:25-32] "The Holy Spirit said, Separate to me Barnabas and Saul." Acts 13:2. And to Peter, "Behold, three men seek you." Acts 10:19. He guides us into all truth; he justifies us; he cleanses, sanctifies, pacifies, consoles, reproves, cheers and assures us; he testifies to our spirit that we are the children of God. This Spirit all receive who [truly] believe on Christ: Paul admonishes us not to grieve him. Whosoever sins against this Spirit (says Christ), unto him it shall not be forgiven. David desired that God might not take this Spirit from him, for all that do not have this spirit are not of Christ. Luke 3:22; John 1:33; Jude 14, 15; Joel 2:29; 2 Cor. 12:4; John 14:26; 15:26; Eph. 4:30; Rom. 8:16; Psalms 51:11; Rom. 8:9.

Yes, my brethren, from these plain Scriptures, testimonies and references and a great many other texts which are too lengthy to mention and which may be found in abundance in the Scriptures and read, we believe the Holy Spirit to be the true, essential Holy Spirit of God, who adorns us with his heavenly and divine gifts and through his inspirations, according to the good pleasure of the Father, frees us from sin, makes us cheerful, peaceful, pious, satisfies our hearts and minds and makes them holy in Christ Jesus. And thus we believe and confess before God, before his angels, before all our brethren and before all the world, that these three names, operations and powers, namely, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (which the fathers called three persons, by which they meant the three, true, divine beings) are one unsearchable, indescribable, Almighty, holy, only, eternal and sovereign God, as John says, “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” 1 John 5:7.

[CHCoG: This last sentence is intriguing. The statement in parentheses is likely from the original English translator, and states his belief that the early Church believed in three separate persons, and thus contradicts Menno’s following attempt to merge them into a single being as the Trinity concept requires. The ‘real’ basis for Menno’s acrobatics is revealed in his quote from 1 John 5:7. This verse, as he gives it, is a notorious Roman Catholic forgery. Even in Menno’s time many knew that it was false, though the Catholics and Protestants still kept it in their Bible translations. This is the ONLY time in all of Menno’s writings that this corrupted verse is fully quoted. The forgery was first inserted in the Papacy’s Old Latin Bibles in the fifth century, then into their Vulgate in the seventh century, and finally made its way into some copies of the Greek manuscripts written in the fifteenth century. The original and genuine text translates as: “1 Jo 5:7 *And the Spirit bears witness because the Spirit is Truth.* 1 Jo 5:8 *And the three of*

them bear witness: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and the three of them are as one.” As seen above, this was altered to read: “*For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.*” This alteration was clearly a desperate attempt to force Athanasius’s renamed Babylonian trinity into the Bible, and those responsible for mutilating God’s Word will be destroyed in the Lake of Fire. Rev. 22:18-19. Nowhere does the Bible tell us that our God is a bizarre three-persons-who-are-one-person trinity. Instead, we are taught about a much more comprehensible God. We are made in God’s image, and like Him, we are triune: we are each one being composed of three parts: our body, soul and spirit (Compare 1 Thes 5:23 & Heb 4:12 with Gen 6:3, Lev 26:11 & Dan 7:9). The Bible teaching of the triune One True God, and His only begotten son, the triune Jeshua (Jesus), was turned inside-out and replaced with their confusing and non-biblical trinity of three separate beings supposedly merged into one being. Contrary to the papacy’s co-equal, co-eternal trinity, the Bible teaches that Jesus’s Father is greater than His Son, because only the Father has always existed, and Jeshua (Jesus) only exists because his Father begot him (John 14:28, 1 Cor 11:3 & 1 Cor 15:20-28, Hab 1:12, Col 1:13 to 19, Rev 3:14, &c.). These topics are explored in *Jesus Christ: Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity?*, *Spirit, Soul and Body* and *The Two Babylons*, at chcpublications.net.]

Read also Mat. 28:18; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:8; John 14:16; 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:11. And although they are three, yet in Godliness, will, power and operation they are [like] one and can no more be separated from each other than the sun, brightness and warmth; for the one cannot exist without the other;* yet unsearchable from the unsearchable Father, even as the brightness and heat of the sun.

* [CHCoG: As shown above, this is not true of the Father, who existed alone for time beyond knowing until He begot His Son.]

The one must exist with the other, or else the whole divinity is denied; for all the Father does and has fashioned from the beginning, he works through his Son, in the power of his holy and eternal Spirit. This Son does not work without the Father and the Holy Spirit. Neither does the Holy Spirit anything without the Father and the Son. Therefore the one must remain with the other, or else there must be an imperfect God; for if we deny the divinity of Christ, or the true existence of the Holy Spirit, then we counterfeit and depict unto ourselves a God who is without wisdom, power, light, life, truth, word and without the Holy Spirit.

[CHCoG: This is blasphemy! Jehovah God, the One True God and Christ's Father, is imperfect??? He is "a God who is without wisdom, power, light, life, truth, word and without the Holy Spirit."?? This is utter rubbish, and shows that Menno has no understanding of who and what the True God (John 17:3) really is. As we have shown above, Jehovah God is the SOURCE of all wisdom (Pro. 2:6, 1 Sam. 2:3, Jer. 51:15, Rev. 16:16), power (1 Sam. 15:29, Gen. 28:3, Psa. 94:1), light (1 John 1:5-7, Rev. 22:5, Psa. 104:1-2, 2 Cor. 4:6, 1 Tim. 6:16), life (Isa. 40:28 & 43:3, John 5:21, Rom. 8:11, 1 Tim. 6:13), truth (Exo. 34:6, Deu. 32:3-4, Psa. 31:5, Isa. 65:16, John 17:17-18), word (Gen. 15:1, 1 Sam. 3:21, 1 Kin. 8:20, 2 Chr. 18:18) and the Holy Spirit (Gen. 1:2, 2 Chr. 24:20, Dan. 5:11, Mat. 3:16, 1 Cor. 2:11, 1 Thes. 4:8). He is Complete and Perfect entirely on His own. Jehovah God did not beget His Son, create our universe and populate the earth because he is incomplete. He did it because He loves being alive, and He wanted to share his joy with others. As Revelation 5:12 shows us, Jesus Christ was judged worthy **to receive** power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing: ALL of these were **given** to him by his Father. Jesus refers to his role as God's Son in the Creation in Proverbs 8:22-31. Without Jehovah God, there would be absolutely NOTHING. And this is also why

Jehovah God could not die himself to save us, for He sustains all things, and if He died, everything would cease to exist. Acts 17:24-28, Isa. 46:3-11.]

Brethren, understand all this in a divine and spiritual sense and not in a human or carnal manner! Then you will be satisfied with the plain, clear and simple testimony of the prophets, evangelists and apostles, concerning this deep mystery. Let everyone see to it with fear and trembling, lest he put his hand in the consuming fire.

Cordially beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus! Mark well the following: Since the eternal God is such a great and terrible God, as you have read; since Christ was thus born of the Father as said and as the attributes of God so richly abound in Christ; and, also, as the prophets, evangelists and apostles so strongly declare, preach and teach him as God; and as the Scriptures so abundantly teach and testify of the Holy Spirit and confess that the eternal Father, with his [almost] eternal Son and Holy Spirit, in their divine state, power, glory and sovereignty are ineffable, inexpressible and unsearchable, as may be plainly understood from the cited Scriptures (for it is all Spirit and God and therefore beyond human understanding); therefore it is that I pray, admonish and desire all my beloved brethren and fellows in Christ Jesus, with all that men can pray, not to allow and consent to flatterings, innovations nor human explanations, be it by whom it may, concerning this unsearchable majesty; ever fearing, you who seek God, with all your powers, that you do not, by such high soaring thoughts and human conjecture, mistake the ineffable God who makes all human wisdom which is contrary to him, foolishness; lest you, through your vain searching and musing of such unfathomable matters, fall into his hands and be consumed by the fire of his wrath.

Brethren, I, for myself confess that I would rather die than to believe and teach unto my brethren, a single word or letter

concerning the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (behold, before God I do not lie), differing from the express, testifying word of God which so clearly points out and teaches through the prophets, evangelists and apostles.

[CHCoG: I have no reason to doubt his sincerity, but sadly, he had so much wrong in this article. Even the Protestants have more respect for Christ's Father.]

O, my pious, God-fearing, faithful brethren! Let us all, one with another, be thus minded; then the desolated cities may be again rebuilt; the strong may remain firm; the wavering be again strengthened; and thus peace, love and unity be again restored. I know certainly and truly that if anyone wants to go further than we here testify and admonish from the word of God, he will fall into error; or mount too high, or deviate from side to side; he will miss the right course and will act no more intelligently than he who would try to pour or confine the river Rhine or Meuse in a quart bottle. But those who abide simply and humbly by the word of God, the testified, prophetic, evangelical and apostolic word and firmly believe it, although they, neither do nor can fully comprehend it and take heed to all human investigation, disputations, flatterings, explanations, turning and conjecture in these incomprehensible abysses, will, in all temptations, stand firmly, by the grace of God and walk all their lives before their God with penitent and cheerful minds. I sincerely wish that all the brethren were of like mind with me in this respect; for I have been at enmity with human sophistry and flattery for fifteen years and I am still. I expect to remain so, and, by the help of God, to take heed not to offer the blood of the Lord with leaven; but I desire, solely, to enter into the sanctuary of God, that is, into his holy church, with the unleavened bread of the unalloyed word of God, overspread with the oil of the Holy Spirit.

O, brethren! Were they all, who are called brethren, thus minded with me, how soon then would the sad, afflicted hearts find consolation and cheerfulness and the divided, restless minds

unity and peace. O, Lord Jesus! Have mercy upon your poor, afflicted sheep and let every hungry and thirsty soul find your verdant pastures and ~~limpid~~ [still] waters, Amen.

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus! Receive this with the same mind with which I have written it to you; read it plainly to all the brethren and understand it in a christian manner; and beware, *beware*, yes, BEWARE of all disputation, discord and division. This I desire from my inmost soul, for the Lord's sake. The sincere, evangelical peace be with all my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, Amen.

MENNO SIMON.

Sept. 9th, A.D. 1550.

AN
EXPLANATION
OF

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

IN THE WATER,
FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

IN WHAT MANNER IT WAS COMMANDED BY
CHRIST JESUS, AND HOW IT WAS TAUGHT
AND PRACTICED BY HIS HOLY APOSTLES.

BY
MENNO SIMON.

*“For no other foundation can any man lay than
what is laid, which is Jesus Christ” 1 Cor. 3:11.*



MENNO SIMON'S SALUTATION.

READ and consider carefully the words which I speak, you learned, who appear to be distinguished in mind and doctrine above others. I have added this [to] my little German work for the celebration of the rite of Baptism. I am not well able to promote this cause in Latin and if able, am unwilling that my labor should perish in the hands of the few, but desire that it may become known to every christian and yield the greater advantage. That there are, in this work, no interpolations of Scripture, nor satires, nor falsehoods, judge for yourselves. Moreover I know it is not the spirit of a christian to lead in any way deceitfully, especially in an affair so serious. Indeed the [true] christian does not know deceit.

It becomes the evangelical teacher to set before himself nothing except these most illustrious precepts of the evangelist—such as faith, charity, patience, life, gentleness, peace, mildness, truth, moderation and finally to so live that no one is able with justice to thrust against him any taint of baseness, that he may teach not only by word, but also by example, following the teachings of Paul who says, “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified,” 1 Cor. 9:27. And elsewhere, “Having your behaviour honest among the Gentiles; that when they speak against you as evil doers,” “they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good behaviour in Christ,” 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16. For in the midst of these things it behooves one to repress such ignorance and stupidities, lest that saying of the Savior be turned against us which says, “First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother’s eye,” Luke 6:42. For how can I induce others to become christians ~~when~~ [if] I myself am not a christian?

Therefore read, and if anything is found in this work that has not the flavor of evangelical purity and spirit, I am confounded, not you. For I have written from a sense of pious affection, not that I may injure anyone, but for the benefit of all men. Nevertheless, such are my thanks from you for my kindness toward you, that I know it is not enough except I, with my sanctified Leader, having indeed received Christ as my reward, endure all evil, ignominy and tortures. No wonder. They indeed do not spare me while I seek the truth and declare openly the offered sacrifice, when almost all teachers of righteousness, who were from the beginning, have yielded to death in the same way. This is indeed gratitude, when the world displays its subjection to God. Would that in very truth they were christians who persuade themselves that they are christians. May grace abound with all the diligent through our Lord Jesus Christ, with sincerity.

PREFACE.

BELOVED readers, in our first publication of the writings concerning Baptism, we have satisfied the desire of every pious christian with christian truth. Yet, there are some light minded, rebellious, contentious and carnal persons who, without cause and Scripture and in every respect without the fear of God, teach, write, admonish and cry out against us with partial hearts, saying, “It is heresy and deceit; for it is written and taught adverse to the learned and against the doctrine of the holy christian church.” I did not intend to reply to such perverse, rebellious, disobedient and contentious persons, according to the word of the Lord, Mat. 7, but solely to write to the humble, meek, God-fearing and penitent. For the wise will hear wisdom; will love it and become wiser; but the fool will hear folly, praise it, persist and die in it—yet to such contenders and gainsayers, who speak so hard against the word of God, I would ask two questions; and request them to examine and ponder them well and return a discreet and becoming reply to me. In the first place: Who are really heretics and deceivers? Secondly, Who are they that advise and teach against the doctrine of the holy church? If they answer these questions fairly, they must themselves pronounce the sentence, that with us *the upright truth* of Jesus Christ is found and not with them. And on the contrary, that all manner of heresy, deceit and false doctrine are abundantly taught and practiced by them and not by us. Which of the two parties, then, are heretics and imposters, I will leave to the judgment of the reader. For *hereticus* means one who sorts out, one who chooses, one who gleans. *Quia heresis Grece ab electione vocatur, inquit Beda super acta Apostolorum*, [CHCoG: Literally: *Because he is called a heretic in Greece by election, says Bede in the Acts of the Apostles.*] one who selects such as will suit

his own opinion.* If these, then, are truly heretics, who, according to their own opinions, without Scripture, form themselves a faith, then I truly do not know where to find more miserable and more deplorable heretics than those who always combat, upbraid, betray and persecute us poor, scattered and rejected christians as damnable heretics. For there is no worse or more abominable heresy under heaven than is found among our gainsayers and contenders; for they so shamefully change and garble the word and the perfect ordinance and institution of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ as to baptize such things which God has neither commanded nor ordained to be baptized, namely: The little unaware children and bells; and do not baptize those whom God has commanded to be baptized, namely: Those who believe. [All the] while they worship and honor a mouthful of bread and a drink of wine as the Son of God; and they ascribe to themselves, without the word of God, the power over the living and the dead; and they place in Christ's stead a sinful man, a child of perdition, whose natural pride, pomp, greed, cruelty, uncleanness and idolatry are beyond description, 2 Thes. 2:4.

Truly, I do not know how a worse heresy could be invented. Notwithstanding, these miserable men cruelly cry against us, *Heretics, heretics, drown them, slay and burn them.* And this for no other reason than that we teach, according to the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, the new life, Baptism on the confession of faith, the Supper as representing both a holy and unblamable church; because we rebuke all false doctrine, idolatry and the accursed carnal life; and point only to the blessed Christ Jesus and to no other means of salvation, neither in heaven nor on earth.

If this is heresy, beloved reader, then, in deed, the true Being is not in Christ; then he is not the true way, the truth and the life, John 14:6. Do not be frightened by their upbraiding and

* [CHCoG: In Latin, this should be "*qui talem eligit ut suae opinioni conveniat.*" I do not know why the obscure Bede quote has been used instead.]

slandering; for from the beginning it has been the case that the unbelieving hate, slander and persecute the believing; the wicked, the good; the unrighteous, the righteous; the carnal, the spiritual; the heretics, the christians. It was the case with Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob and with the false prophets and the true prophets; as Christ Jesus has told us before, namely: "You will be hated by all nations for my name's sake," Mat. 24:9. If they were the true disciples of Christ Jesus as they boast themselves to be, they would not persecute, betray or murder anybody for the sake of their faith. Instead, with Christ Jesus, they would diligently seek to reclaim that which was lost, Mat. 18:11, if we were lost, as they claim. If they were the bride of Christ, they would not be spiteful, cruel and blood-thirsty, but meek, mild and merciful, yes be thus minded as is the good and faithful bridegroom, Christ Jesus. But they plainly manifest themselves by their works, not to be the bride of Jesus Christ, but rather to be the bride of him, who, from the beginning was a murderer, that is, the devil, John 8:44.

If they were the body of Christ, they would not crucify and persecute anyone for the sake of the truth of the Lord, but would themselves, with Christ Jesus and his church, be crucified and persecuted for the sake of it, Mat. 5:11; John 16:1, 2; 2 Tim. 3:12. For the innocent lamb does not kill, but from the beginning it was killed. Behold, kind readers, what miserable, bloody, tyrannical and murderous heretics our gainsayers, opponents and persecutors are found to be before God, in all their teachings, admonitions, instructions, life and tyranny. But this they do not acknowledge, for it would not do to acknowledge this. If they did, how could they then crucify and persecute the chosen children of God, the children of the kingdom and promise, the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, the angels of peace and the children of the eternal, imperishable life?

But now their minds are so obscured, their eyes are so bedimmed, their ears are so closed up that they cannot understand;

for their evil-doing and wickedness have obscured and blinded them. The table of the divine word is to them “a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a recompense,” Rom. 11:9. The righteous judgment and awful wrath has come upon them, because they so industriously seek falsehood and so obstinately combat and reject the lovely truth of Jesus Christ.

Christ Jesus says, “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled,” Mat. 5:6. But these hunger and thirst after unrighteousness, with which they, according to Paul, are abundantly filled, 2 Thes. 2:12.

Christ Jesus says, “Everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks, finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened,” Luke 11:9. But these seek diligently, night and day, not after the right way, but after the wrong; hoping yet to find something, either in the word or in our lives, which may be so twisted, bent or applied as to trample upon and nullify the right, evangelical truth, even as if the eternal Truth, the blessed Jesus, had spoken and taught with two tongues. And if they can find any errors in our walk, as there often are (for we are all of the sinful, failing flesh of Adam); then the evangelical truth is all deceit, as if we had no help from God but only human aid. Inasmuch as they so assiduously seek after unrighteousness and delight in falsehood, therefore God smites them with such great blindness that they can neither comprehend nor judge the teachings of God. Yet they desire to clothe their cause, however shameful it is, in the garment of the Scriptures, that they may, under this scriptural, holy appearance, the better deceive the foolish, ignorant populace that desire to be deceived and seduced. And thus they remain, both teacher and disciple, in the service of their perishable flesh which they have chosen as their God, Phil. 3:18; Rom. 16:17.

Again, kind reader, they cry and foam with rage against us, saying that we write against all the doctors and also against the teachings of the holy christian church. I affectionately and freely admit and acknowledge that we write against the greater part of the

doctors or the learned men, for whenever or wherever they write, advise and teach contrary to the word, ordinances, statutes and institutions of Jesus Christ, we do not consider their famous names and have nothing to do with their human philosophy. But if they teach rightly we do not contradict nor write against them.

I trust, by the most merciful grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the oldest, most pious, most upright, truest and most able doctors of the church of Jesus Christ, who were long before all other doctors, are received and believed by me and my beloved brethren, in every word and doctrine. These are Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David, Christ Jesus, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James and Jude. If anybody can show me a word in all my writing that I have taught or written contrary to the doctrine of these doctors, then I am willing to be abashed, instructed and taught better; but I trust that it can never be truthfully done. If I should write and teach against these pious, unblamable doctors, then my writing and teaching would be against the teachings and admonitions of the christian body, community or holy church.

I acknowledge and know well that I advise, teach, instruct and write contrary to the instructions and teachings of some communities and churches, in regard to some articles, such as the Papists, Lutherans and the corrupted sects; but not contrary to the teachings of the holy christian church. May the merciful Father, whose divine will I industriously seek to obey, save me from teaching, instructing and writing contrary to the doctrine of the holy church; for else woe would be unto my soul forever.

Lest you be ensnared by the words *holy church*, you shall learn and know from the word of God that the holy christian church is not a collection of unbelievers, carnal or wilful sinners; notwithstanding they falsely claim to be of Christ Jesus and think themselves to be the true christian church. No, kind readers, no. They are not all Abraham's seed who are born of Abraham, "But the children of the promise are counted as the seed," Rom. 9:8. Thus, also, the holy christian church must be a spiritual seed, an

assembly of the righteous and a community of the saints; which church is begotten by God, of the living seed of the divine word and not of the teachings, institutions and fictions of man. Yes, they are those who are regenerated, renewed and converted; who hear, believe and fulfill all the commandments and will of God; who “have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts;” who “are all one in Christ Jesus.” “Joint heirs with Christ,” and heavenly and spiritually minded with him, Gal. 5:24; 3:28; Rom. 8:17.

These are the holy christian church, the community of God, the body and the bride of Christ, whom he has trusted, cleansed and sanctified; but “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” This holy christian church has a spiritual Prince over her who rules her with the unbroken rod of his divine word; a Master, or Teacher who teaches the commandments of eternal life; and a Bridegroom whose voice she is always ready to hear, that is, Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 8:8; Psalms. 2:9; John 6:68; 3:29.

If, now, I contend against his scepter, trample upon his commandments and teach or write anything against his heavenly doctrine, then I teach and write against the doctrine of the holy christian church. For this holy christian church has but one doctrine which is fruitful and godly, which is the still, pure and unmixed word of God, the lovely gospel of the grace of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15; 1 Pet. 1:25. All teachings and decrees which do not accord with the doctrine of Christ are only teachings and commandments of men, be they teachings and opinions of doctors, decrees of popes, councils or anything else; they are doctrines of the devil and are accursed, Mat. 15:9; 1 Tim. 4:1; Gal. 1:8, 9. Since we write and teach nothing but the pure, heavenly word and the perfect ordinances of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ and of his apostles; therefore we do not teach and write against the teachings of the holy church, but we sustain them.

Beloved readers, let the light minded run their course to the end, which is certain death. They will nevermore concede the truth, however powerfully they are vanquished, but they will always delight in hatred, upbraiding, discord and disputation and never be satisfied, because they will not go into the strict way of the Spirit; be taught by Jesus Christ and his holy apostles. Notwithstanding they want to be considered the children and the church of God, [though they are] without obedience. Not so, kind readers. Always remember that there is no holy church of Christ other than the assembly of the righteous and the church of the saints, which always acts in harmony with the word and ordinances of the Lord and to no other doctrine. She neither will nor can accept any other doctrine or ordinances in divine matters, forever.

Because, beloved brethren, the divine ordinance of baptism in the water has thus been [almost] destroyed for many centuries and a strange baptism has been practiced, contrary to the true doctrine of the holy christian church, namely, contrary to the word of God, and from this evil custom so much false doctrine, disbelief and fruitless, carnal life have resulted. Therefore I have again clearly pointed out from the holy gospel, how we should practice the true, scriptural, christian baptism; that the hearts and faith of the wise may be affirmed and assured and the mouths of the fools may be stopped and that God may have the glory in his holy word. Read and see if we have not rightly taught and written according to the meaning of Jesus Christ. And because the whole wide world so shamefully blasphemes and opposes the word of God and despises his commandments and ceremonies as useless, saying, What good can water do us? never considering that the kingdom of God and the will of God do not consist in external ceremonies, but in the willing obedience to the word of God. Therefore we have, in the following writings, extensively shown from the holy Scriptures who should be baptized, according to the word of God, namely, the believing, or the regenerated, Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Tit. 3:5.

Besides, we have also shown how very weak, useless and groundless all the arguments of the world are, by which they defend infant baptism, that the before-mentioned despisers of God may know and understand that they are not baptized according to the evangelical commandment of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. From which it follows that they are not in obedience to the divine word, and if they are not in the obedience which has the promise (I speak to those of understanding minds), then they cannot inherit nor obtain the promise, so long as they do not believe the word of God and obediently fulfill it in all respects. Let everyone beware and save his own soul; for our God is a consuming fire.

May the merciful Father, through his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, grant you all a true knowledge and his affectionate grace for your edification, Amen.



CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

Hear, O illustrious, noble, wise lords and princes! Hear all you judges of the land, where the sword of God is given to the destruction of the evil doers, to the protection of the good and to the punishment of the wicked! Hear, you wise and intelligent, you who think that you bear the vessels of the Lord! Hear, all you people of whatever state, condition, trade or class, who call yourselves christians and who boast of his bitter death and precious blood! Rom. 13:1; Tit. 3:4; 1 Peter 2:13, 14.

Since we, for the sake of baptism, are so miserably profaned, slandered and persecuted by all mankind and as we are always suspicioned by the ungodly sects (who are to you very shameful, perilous and abominable, as may be plainly seen); therefore we say and testify in Christ Jesus, before God, before his holy angels, before you and before the whole world, that we are solely urged by a God-fearing faith which we have in the word of God, to baptize and to be baptized, as the only means; nor will it be found otherwise neither in this life, nor in death, nor in the last judgment of God.

Beloved, we truly seek nothing in this baptism other than to obey our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, who has taught and commanded us this with his own blessed mouth, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:16. Consider once, we pray you, that we cannot possibly seek carnal profit in our actions; neither gold, nor silver, nor honor, nor ease, nor long life on earth. For you may plainly see that we are made a prey to the world on account of it. But we are urged solely by the love of God, by an upright, fruitful faith, a faith which industriously examines all the words of Christ, giving ourselves in willing obedience to God; knowing to a certainty that if we oppose and do not obey that which our Lord has commanded, we can never receive nor inherit the heavenly blessing and divine promise. For through obedience everything is received, as has been

mentioned in the preface, Mat. 3:6; Acts 19:18; 2:38; 9:6; 10:48; 16:30.

How could Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, together with all the beloved fathers and patriarchs, have obtained the consoling promise of God, if they had not done, be it ever so little, that which God had commanded them through his holy word? But they heard the word of God, firmly believed and obeyed it; and therefore they became joint heirs of righteousness, Heb. 11:8.

On the contrary, however, all those who did not obey God, undoubtedly, must have borne the punishment of Jehovah, as did Adam and Eve; Nadab and Abihu; Korah, Dathan and Abiram; as Saul; as the man of God who reproved Jeroboam the king for his idolatry and was deceived by the old prophet in Bethel and other instances, which may be read in Moses and other scriptural writings, Gen. 3:17; Lev. 10:2; Num. 16:32; 1 Sam. 15:23.

Since we are so pitiably opposed by all mankind in our doctrine and practice of the christian baptism and since they do not realize that their opposition tends to [their] eternal death, for they oppose Christ and his word; therefore I will again briefly show them and all persons, from the word of God, who shall read, see or hear my writings, how wonderfully, powerfully, no, how incontrovertibly our doctrine and practice are contained and founded on the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, although we have fully shown and proven this before, in our writings on baptism.

Most beloved, there are necessarily three reasons why our faith accepts this baptism under such a heavy cross and anxiety.

First, because of the divine commandment of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, which can never be broken. Secondly, because of the teaching of the holy apostles. Thirdly, because of the practice of these same apostles. And first of the commandment: After Christ Jesus had risen from the power of death and was going to ascend to his heavenly Father, he thus commanded his disciples, saying, "Therefore go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," Mat. 28:19.

Again, at another place, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believes and is baptized shall be saved," Mark 16:15, 16. While, now that Jesus Christ, the eternal wisdom who cannot err, the eternal truth who cannot lie, has commanded this, namely, that we shall first preach the gospel, from the hearing of which comes faith, Rom. 10 and that we shall baptize those who believe, who will or who can explain this divine commandment otherwise, or make it of more value than the eternal, wise, perfect, blessed Christ Jesus, has made and commanded it?

Brethren, it was not allowed to apply one single word of the Mosaic ceremonies differently from how they were contained in the law. For the Almighty God wills that we should not follow our own inclinations with regard to the ceremonies which he has commanded us, but he only desires us to observe his good will and pleasure; for that purpose he has commanded them. In the outward ceremonies alone God finds no pleasure; but he has commanded them because he requires faithful obedience from us. His wrath has often come on those who practiced his ceremonies differently from the commandment, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu and many others. For he wills, yes, he wills that we should not follow our own opinion, but that we should hear, believe and obey his holy voice, Jer. 7:5-7.

If God would have his ceremonies under the law (which were numerous and in one respect attended with trouble and expense and which he commanded not through Christ, his Son, but through his servant Moses), kept thus strictly and unchanged until the time of Christ; how much more so will he have the few ceremonies of the New Testament kept strictly and unchanged, which are but two in number, being baptism and the Supper, which he has commanded, not through his servant but through his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and which are neither attended with trouble nor expense.

Consider how troublesome and expensive it was to the Israelites to travel a long distance over hill and dale, to appear two or three times a year before Jehovah at Jerusalem, with their offerings of bullocks, rams, goats and tenths, which they were bound to offer of all their goods to the Lord.

[CHCoG: In fact, Christ and his apostles also kept Jehovah's weekly and annual Sabbaths, as listed in Leviticus 23, and we are commanded to walk as they walked. Satan has worked hard, for many centuries, to convince us to ignore God's Sabbaths, and thus trample upon them. Exo. 31:16-17, Lev. 23:1-44, Dan. 7:25. Yes, the animal sacrifices and Levitical priesthood have been taken away, but the Holy Days themselves, which remind us that God is our Creator and teach us God's Plan of Salvation remain. Exo. 20:8-11; Mat. 12:8-12; Mark 1:21, 2:27-28, 16:1; Luke 4:16, 4:31, 23:56; Acts 13:42-44, 16:13, 17:2, Mat. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-15, John 2:23, 13:1, 1 Cor. 5:7-8, 16:8; Acts 20:6, 2:1, 20:16, John 7:2-14, Zec. 14:16-19, Rev. 15:5, 21:3.]

But the christian ceremonies of the New Testament, baptism and Supper, which are commanded of us by God, are not at all attended with trouble or expense; although the meaning or representation of these ceremonies to true believers is attended with great vexation to the flesh. This however is not caused by the ceremonies themselves, but only through the faith which leads us to these ceremonies, out of love and obedience to the divine word. Most beloved, since the ordinances of Jesus Christ are unchangeable and the only ones that are acceptable to the Father; and since he has commanded that we shall first preach the gospel and then baptize those who believe; it follows that all those who baptize and are baptized without the teaching of the gospel and without faith, baptize and are baptized on their own opinion,

without the doctrine and the ordinance of Jesus Christ and therefore it is useless and vain idolatry. For had Israel circumcised their females because it was not expressly forbidden, they would yet have circumcised without the ordinance of God, for he had commanded that the males were to be circumcised, Gen. 17:10. It is the same in this instance. If we baptize the unaware children, although Scripture has not expressly forbidden it, just as it was not forbidden to circumcise the females, we yet baptize without the ordinance of Jesus Christ; for he commanded to baptize those who should hear and believe his holy gospel, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 9:18; 10:48; 16:33.

It avails nothing that some say that these words of Matthew and Mark extend the holy church to the Gentiles and that by this the baptism of infants is not excluded. Beloved reader, it is true by this commandment the holy church is also extended to the Gentiles, to the fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures which long before had seen this through the Spirit, as Paul proves, Rom. 15. Yet the word stands firmly with regard to both Jews and Gentiles, namely, whosoever believes and is baptized shall be saved. Faith is before baptism. For faith is the beginning of all righteousness which avails before God, from which faith, baptism is the result as a sign and token of obedience. If the children, then, have faith, their baptism is not forbidden by the alleged words of Matthew and Mark.

Again, neither does it avail anything that some allege and say that the resurrection of the dead was not expressly written in the books of Moses, yet it was implied as Christ Jesus proved to the Sadducees from Exo. 3:6, namely: I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. As in these words of Moses the resurrection is not expressed, yet it is implied, as God is not a God of the dead but of the living, as Christ teaches, Mat. 22:32. Thus they say infant baptism is not expressed in the gospel, yet it is implied. To this we reply: That the resurrection of the dead is no outward ceremony which God has commanded us to do; but it is something which

God himself will accomplish in us by his Almighty power, therefore it is an invisible consolation in the hearts of all believers, which is comprehended by faith alone. But the baptism of unaware children is an outward ceremony. If, then, it is an ordinance and word of God which has the promise, it must be plainly expressed in the Scriptures. If not, it cannot be called a ceremony of Christ.

Thirdly, neither does it avail that some allege and say, “Although the believing women have no express word of invitation to the Lord’s Supper, neither were they at the celebration of the last Supper of the Lord, yet they are, for good reasons, admitted to the Supper and it is the same with unaware children. Although there is no express command for their baptism, neither were they baptized of the Lord nor of his disciples so far as we can learn from the Scriptures; yet they are, for good reasons, admitted to baptism, the same as the believing women are admitted to the Supper.”

Kind reader, this is a very crafty argument to deceive the simple and ignorant, for it savors highly of subtlety, and is not at all according to the example of Jesus Christ. The Holy Supper represents the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of our neighbors; both of which are known and practiced by the believing women as well as the believing men. If, then, the unaware children have that which is represented by baptism, namely, death unto sin, the new life, Rom. 6:4; the new birth, John 3, the putting on of Christ, Gal. 3:27, the moving, quickening Spirit by which we are baptized into the body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12:13 and a good conscience, 1 Pet. 3:16, as have the believing women of what is represented in the Holy Supper, then they should be baptized for the same reason that believing women are admitted to the Supper; but it neither will nor can ever be found in unaware children.

Fourthly, it avails nothing that some allege from Ecclesiasticus 1:14, that “To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and it was created with the faithful in the womb,” and will be with the chosen

women. If then, they say, “The fear of the Lord is created with the believing in the mother’s womb, which fear is a fruit of faith and as the fruit can not be before the tree, therefore the children from their mother’s womb have a fruitful faith; if they have faith, then their baptism cannot be hindered according to the Scriptures.” Not so, beloved reader, but judge everything according to the word of God and his Spirit. For I do not doubt but that you will confess that the faith which avails with God is a gift of God, from where all righteousness proceeds, [and it] comes by the hearing of the divine word. If, now, it comes by hearing the divine word, as Paul teaches, how will it be found in unaware children; for it is plain that they can not be taught, advised or instructed, no, they are more senseless and helpless at their birth than the irrational creatures; so unaware that they cannot be taught anything about carnal things, until their hearing, comprehension and understanding have commenced to develop themselves. If they cannot be made to understand anything visible, how can they, then, prematurely, that is, before they can comprehend things, be taught and instructed in invisible, celestial matters of the Spirit?

Secondly, you know and acknowledge that where there is a true faith there is the true knowledge of the difference between good and evil; the fear of God, the love of God and also of our neighbor and the obedience to God and the desire for righteousness. It can not be otherwise than that a good tree brings forth good fruit. Faith works all manner of righteousness, as it is written, “The just shall live by faith,” and “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” Mat. 7:18; Rom. 1:17; Heb. 11:1.

Say, dear reader, If faith always begets good fruits, all manner of righteousness is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. What fruits and righteousness do our little children beget, which are evidence of [their] faith? And what do they hope for and seek after but eating, drinking, laughter, crying, warmth, play, &c., as has been the nature of children from

the beginning? Besides, they often show the growth of the evil, Adamic seed; and as they advance in youth they manifest it still more; but the fruits of faith, or of the new birth they do not show, as may be plainly observed. And if you do not observe it by daily experience, then believe the word of God, which will never deceive you. Thus Moses says, “Your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil,” &c., Deut.1:39. They had no knowledge between good and evil: then where is their faith which *has* the knowledge between good and evil?

Thirdly, you will acknowledge that all righteousness comes by faith as our controverters themselves allege and adduce in their opposition, Rom. 4:5. Without faith there is no godly righteousness; therefore Paul says to the Hebrews (speaking of those of understanding years): “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” Heb. 11:6. Inasmuch as the children, then, have no faith by which they can realize who God is and that he is a rewarder of both good and evil, as they plainly show by their fruits—therefore they do not have the fear of God and consequently they have nothing upon which they should be baptized, yet they have the promise of everlasting life, out of pure grace. This is all that the Scriptures accord to them and all that the word of God says of them, as will be shown below.

Inasmuch, then, as faith must be first and afterwards the righteous fruits which come by faith—such as the fear of God, the love of God, &c., which fruits do not appear in unaware children, as has been often said; therefore we must presume that Ecclesiasticus does not teach that the fear of God is ~~not~~ in little children immediately after conception; but we are taught here that the fear of God is to the believing in the womb, that it will be given to them in due time; because his eyes of fire, those eyes which from the beginning foresaw to the end all things; foresaw when they were yet in their mother’s womb that they in time would hear his holy voice, truly believe and through faith fear God

and become righteous before him; for true faith cannot be without its fruits, as has been often proven.

If then, faith were in the little unaware children from conception, as our opponents say, it would be a fruitless faith, for they do not bring forth fruits; and therefore their preaching in this regard is in vain. For if that were the case, faith would come by the creation, or conception, of the believing and not by the preaching of the divine word. Not so, beloved reader. This is a sure, eternal, imperishable and an enduring rule of the divine truth, to fulfill all righteousness, namely: First, the true preaching of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ. Secondly, a desire to hear and understand. Thirdly, to cordially believe this gospel and to fulfill it in fruit. This being the case, it follows that the little unaware children have no faith, for they can not understand and learn. If they have no faith, they cannot have the fear of God. Therefore our opponents cannot prove the justice of baptizing little unaware children, from this passage of Ecclesiasticus; but according to God's word they must wait until they can understand the holy gospel of grace and sincerely confess it. Then it is time, no matter how young or old they are, to receive christian baptism, as the infallible word of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ has taught and commanded all true believers, in his holy gospel, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:16. If they die before maturity, that is in childhood, before they have come to years of understanding and before they have faith, then they die under the promise of God and that by no other means than the precious promise of grace, given through Christ Jesus in Luke 18:16; and if they become of understanding minds and have faith, they should then be baptized. But if they do not accept or believe the Word when they shall have arrived at the years of understanding, no matter whether they are baptized or not, they will be damned, as Christ himself teaches, Mark 16:16.

I know that there are a great many who will ask why I, an unlearned man, am not satisfied in regard to this matter with the doctrine of Martin Luther and other renowned doctors, who are

versed in the Scriptures and many tongues and sciences—who teach, and particularly Luther, that faith lies dormant in little children the same as in a sleeping believer?

To this I answer: In the first place, if there were such a dormant faith in little children (which, however, is nothing but invention), then it would not be proper to baptize such children so long as they would not verbally confess it and show it by their fruits. For the holy apostles did not baptize any believers while they were asleep, as we have shown in our former writings.

Secondly, I acknowledge and confess from my inmost heart, before you and the whole world, that they and many others are well gifted with learning, eloquence, subtlety, languages and science and that I, a poor, ignorant man, am in comparison to them as a fly is to an elephant; therefore I am heartily ashamed to write and speak against them, with my dull pen and awkward speech. Yet every reader should know that however learned the before-mentioned philosophers are and however ignorant I am, yet our opinions avail the same with God and before him, for, without the command of the holy Scripture, nothing righteous can be done and nothing pleasing to God can be practiced, let him be whosoever he may. The holy Scriptures do not refer us to them nor to any other learned person, but to Christ Jesus alone. Whenever such highly renowned men, by their subtle acuteness and artful philosophy try to take from us and garble the plain ordinances of Jesus Christ and of his apostles, we must, surely, consider their doctrine, in that respect, as the doctrine of men and false; for Christ Jesus is not under them, but above them. Neither has he received his holy doctrine from them, but from his wise Father, John 7:24; 8:26; 12:46; 16:13.

Since they, by their philosophy, assert that there is a dormant, unfruitful faith in unaware children, evidently against all Scripture and truth and that the children should be baptized upon such human fantasy; now, judge for yourselves, you who oppose me, which of the two I would better do—hear the holy word and

ordinance of Christ Jesus, to whom the Father, together with all the prophets, have pointed me, or hear the learned, who, against his holy word and ordinance, would have me follow *their opinion*, which they have formed by garbling the Scriptures. Eradicate from your carnal hearts all partisanship and contention so that you can fairly judge spiritual matters. God grant that all the learned and those that are taught by them, may acknowledge and teach truth and fulfill it in their works, Amen.

Inasmuch as Christ Jesus has commanded his holy apostles that they should first teach the holy gospel of grace and then baptize those who believe; we are, for the same reasons, urged by the love of God to teach this christian baptism according to the word of God and afterwards obediently receive it, and, by the grace of the Lord, to save it, to the honor of God, both in life and death; notwithstanding all the world opposes us.

TEACHINGS OF THE HOLY APOSTLES CONCERNING BAPTISM IN THE WATER.

Again, we are urged by the pure, chaste teaching of the holy apostles thus diligently to teach and receive this christian baptism: First, because it is written, “Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter,” “Men and brethren what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,” Acts 2:37, 38.

Most beloved, bear in mind, now and all the days of your lives, not only concerning baptism, but concerning all doctrine you may

hear, lest you be deceived by false teaching, namely, as all the true prophets of God who were between Moses and Christ conformed their teaching to the doctrine of Moses, so the holy apostles, also, conformed their teaching to the doctrine of Christ Jesus, as he had commanded them, saying, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Mat. 28:20.

Therefore consider and ponder well that which shall be taught to you, by the grace of the Lord, from the word of God and you will clearly perceive from these words of Peter, how the words of Jesus to Nicodemus concerning the new birth should be understood thus, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God," John 3:5. Beloved brethren, the new birth came to pass through the word of God. When this word was taught on the day of Pentecost by Peter at Jerusalem, the multitudes heard it from his mouth and from the mouth of the other apostles; their hearts were pierced, for, by faith, they accepted these words and therefore they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:1-38. The same as Christ said to Nicodemus when he first taught of the birth from above, saying, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Behold, my chosen brethren! How harmonious are both master and disciples in their teachings, namely: First, the birth from above by which we become children of God. Secondly, the water by which the obedience of the children of God is shown. Thirdly, the communion of the Holy Spirit by which we are assured in our hearts of the grace of God, of the remission of sins and of everlasting life through Christ Jesus our Lord, John 1:14; 3:2.

Inasmuch as the holy Peter, who is the apostle of God, a true witness, sent by Jesus Christ with the word of everlasting life, enlightened and taught by the Holy Spirit, has thus taught and

commanded us, namely, that we shall allow ourselves to be baptized upon the confession of faith according to the command of the Lord, Mark 16:16; in the name of Christ for the remission of sin, therefore we must receive this baptism the same as it is commanded to us in the Holy Scriptures, or else we cannot obtain remission of sins nor the Holy Spirit. For who has ever received remission of sins contrary to the word of God? Surely, it is impossible that we can rob God of the remission of sins and of his Holy Spirit. If we, then, desire the remission of our sins and the Holy Spirit, we must do and fulfill all that which [Jehovah] God, the Almighty Father has taught and commanded us through Christ Jesus his beloved Son and through his holy apostles, in all spiritual matters.

It avails nothing that some teach and say, contrary to the holy Scripture, "That the little children are born of Adam, with a sinful or wicked nature and that therefore they should be washed of their inherent guilt and sin by baptism." To teach and believe thus, my brethren, is first a fearful idolatry and abominable blasphemy against the blood of Christ. There is no remedy, in heaven nor on earth, for our sins, whether they are inherent or worldly, but the blood of Christ alone, as we have often shown in our first writings, 1 Pet. 1:19; 1 John 1:7; Eph. 1:7. If we ascribe the remission of sins to baptism and not to the blood of Christ, then we mould a golden calf and place it in the stead of Christ. For if we could be washed or cleansed by baptism, then Christ Jesus and his merits would be of no effect; otherwise we must admit that there are two means for the remission of sin which is not [true], nor ever can be; first, baptism; second, the blood of Christ. For the most holy and most precious blood of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ must and shall have the praise, as has been so clearly prophesied and testified by all the true prophets and apostles throughout the Scriptures.

The believing receive remission of sins not *through* baptism, but *in* baptism, in this manner: as they now sincerely believe the

lovely gospel of Jesus Christ which has been preached and taught to them, which is the glad tidings of grace, namely, of the remission of sin, of grace, of peace, of favor, of mercy and of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, so they become of a new mind, deny themselves, bitterly lament their old, corrupted life and look diligently to the word of the Lord, who has shown them such great love; to fulfill all that which he has taught and commanded them in his holy gospel, trusting firmly in the word of grace, in the remission of their sins through the precious blood and through the merits of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ.

They therefore receive the holy baptism as a token of obedience which proceeds from faith, as proof before God and his church, that they firmly believe in the remission of their sins through Christ Jesus, as was preached and taught to them from the word of God. Therefore they receive remission of their sins in baptism as the lovely promise of grace proclaims and represents; the same as the literal Israelites received remission of their sins by their offerings. For in the case that we only sought outward baptism and trusted in the literal practice and would yet continue in our old, corrupted walk, then indeed, all would be in vain, the same as it was in such a case, a vain offering, among the ungodly and carnal Israelites. For the Lord of lords so often complained through his holy prophets that their offering was not pleasing to him, that it was nothing but a corrupt abomination and stench before his holy eyes; inasmuch that they despised the law, love and the commandments of God and lived according to the lusts of their flesh, Isa. 66:4, 5 and other passages.

Secondly, we are not cleansed in baptism of our inherited sinful nature which is in our flesh [or selves], so that it is entirely destroyed in us, for it remains with us after baptism. But since the merciful Father, from whom are all good and perfect gifts, has graciously given us the most holy faith, so we manifest in the baptism we receive, that we desire to die unto the inherent, sinful nature and destroy it, so that it will not any longer be master of our

mortal bodies, Rom. 6:12. Although such true believers are often overcome by sin, as John observes, “Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God,” 1 John 3:9.

Brethren, I repeat it: As the Israelites received remission of their sins through the promise which was associated with their offerings, when they offered with contrite hearts; not through the offering itself, for then it would be merit, but alone through the word of promise; for it is grace and not merit—so we receive remission of our sins when we are true believers and are washed and cleansed in baptism, [but] through the promise. I do not say through the washing of water, for it is not merit, but through the promise, for it is grace, with which promise the Holy Spirit of God has associated the baptism of the believers in the gospel, as Paul teaches, saying, “Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself as a glorious church,” Eph. 5:25-27.

Behold, most beloved, from this it is plain that we are not cleansed by the washing of water, but by the word of the Lord, as the holy Paul clearly teaches us in the before-mentioned words. Inasmuch as the little unaware children, by reason of their incapability of comprehending and understanding the preaching of the holy gospel, by which alone comes faith, Rom. 10:17; by which faith alone God purifies our hearts, Acts 15:9 and not by the outward baptism, as has been said before. Inasmuch as the express command and word of God, which associates the promise with baptism, solely refers to those who are begotten of this same word and are thus cleansed in their hearts by faith, it therefore follows incontrovertibly from this that these little children, even if they are baptized under a false pretension and false explanation of the divine word, are not cleansed by this, if they were ever unclean, which however is not the case. Why? Because the promise is not associated with their baptism, for their baptism is not done

according to the word; but in every respect is contrary to the word. For the word requires faith and they have no faith. Therefore their baptism is without doubt a baptism ~~of their own choice~~, without God, without promise, yes, idolatrous, useless and in vain.

Whosoever now wants to oppose this and does not want to believe the ordinance and word of God, let him take heed to what he does. For by infant baptism he nullifies the command of the Lord; tramples upon his precious blood (for he seeks righteousness in this baptism) and he establishes, contrary to the immutable ordinance of God and by his own carnal choice, a false baptism which God never commanded. Therefore it is not his holy will, as has been said above and as will be shown more extensively below.

Again the apostle Peter writes, as Noah, in his day, was saved in the ark from the waters of the deluge, so “even baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” 1 Pet. 3:21.

By this passage of Peter, the baptism of the *believing* is again clearly affirmed and the baptism of infants nullified. For it is impossible that anyone can have a good conscience but only those who believe and whose hearts are regenerated and converted; who acknowledge the divine word which teaches that [Jehovah] God the Almighty Father, whose enemies we were before, Rom. 5:10, is now again reconciled through Christ Jesus, his beloved Son; that henceforth, through the merits of our beloved Lord, neither hell, devil, past sins, eternal death, nor the wrath of God will hurt or hinder us. All those who truly believe this shall receive and obtain a joyous mind and good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as Peter says, because he has so gloriously triumphed over all his enemies, visible and invisible, to our profit; and has again seated himself in heaven, at the right hand of his Father. Such are first inwardly baptized with the Spirit and fire, according to the word of God and are thus taught in their hearts by this Spirit and are led in all divine truth, righteousness, obedience and evangelical

fruits and works. They are inwardly so enkindled with this fire of love, having become conscious by the word of God that such great grace, I repeat it, grace, has been bestowed on them through Christ Jesus, that they regard neither lords, princes, philosophers, learned men, councils, long usages, women, children, flesh, blood, decrees, neither life nor death, nor any other threats; but remain glad in Spirit, maintain at the risk of home, not only the outward baptism, but also all the works of love and the fruits of righteousness, which the true mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ has taught and commanded us in his holy gospel, either himself or through his holy apostles.

Behold, beloved brethren, in this manner baptism saves us, as Peter teaches; not the outward literal baptism, but the inward, spiritual baptism, which as obedient children of God has led us through the power of faith to the outward literal baptism; for the outward, literal baptism is nothing more than obedience to the divine word and thus it is a seal or proof of the righteousness from where the true, fruitful faith comes; the same as was the literal circumcision to the believing and obedient Abraham, Rom. 4:10, 11.

Since Christ Jesus has commanded that we should baptize the believing in Mark 16:18, therefore holy Peter followed the commandment in his teachings; and has taught baptism to be a work of faith, namely, the answer of a good conscience toward God, which answer none can experience but those alone who have faith. Inasmuch as there is but one literal [water] baptism taught in Scripture, which baptism shows and is proof of the answer of a good conscience toward God, as Peter teaches and thus by this Scripture of Peter, infant baptism is prohibited; for they cannot have this awareness like the believing. Therefore take heed, kind reader, whosoever you are, lest you offend God. For all those who thus lamentably oppose this evangelical baptism of the believing, either by doctrine, word or sword, which baptism is so pointedly commanded by Jesus Christ and is thus taught and practiced by his

holy apostles, must confess and acknowledge that they were until now neither rightly believing, regenerated, obedient, nor inwardly baptized with the Spirit and fire. Again, let everyone of you beware and take heed, for it does not concern anything temporal, but it concerns your poor, naked souls which have been so dearly bought and delivered by such a precious treasure.

Beloved children in the Lord, however incontrovertibly our cause is confirmed and founded in the word of God, yet some are not ashamed to persistently and continually write, talk and slander against us; advising and exciting persecution, slaughter and bloodshed against us; in part I presume from ignorance, partly out of partiality and because they are enemies of the cross of Christ and because they do not desire the lovely, spiritual life which is from God. They say, "Although infants do not have the answer of a good conscience as the believing have, yet this should be no cause for not administering baptism to them; but they ought to be baptized, that they may the better receive instruction in the word and commandments of God."

Most beloved brethren, when an idolatrous, refractory and disobedient person does not have the word of God with which to defend his cause, he yet acutely invents something with which he can so beautify and adorn his invention and carnal righteousness with a semblance of divinity and holiness that it seems quite right, just, spiritual, holy, divine and unblamable in the sight of those who are not versed in spiritual matters of faith. And this the more so because their unchristian hearts and carnal minds are prone to trust in outward works, yes, through their own choice and opinion, as I understand it. If I write wrongly, then rebuke me according to the word of God; for the greater part of them have always sought righteousness in man-made ceremonies and not in Christ, as is evident from the fact that, as now, the unintelligent teachers and bishops in the days of the apostles, or soon after, commenced the practice of infant baptism, contrary to the command of God and the doctrine of the holy apostles, as may be readily perceived in

the book of Tertullian, called "*Corona Milites.*" He writes that among the ancients almost invariably the adults were baptized with the washing of regeneration. Understand me rightly brethren. Tertullian lived one hundred and eight years after Christ, some say one hundred and forty years. As early as in the days of these ancient writers, the true evangelical baptism, which was commanded by Christ and taught and practiced by his holy apostles had become degenerated with many, which baptism he clearly testifies that the ancients almost invariably practiced upon adults. If now, brethren, it were so that the ancients, who were before him, already baptized infants, as it appears and to which we consent, because he says *almost* invariably; and in another place in the same book, as the Strasburgian philosophers write of him, he says, "That in the same fount or water-bath, both children and adults were baptized." Nevertheless, infant baptism was not an apostolic institution nor practice, nor a divine command; for if Christ had commanded it and the holy apostles had taught and practiced it, then the ancestors of Tertullian would not have baptized some infants, but all the infants of upright, believing parents indiscriminately.

That there is no divine command nor apostolic institution was well known and shown by the beloved aged father, Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, who was a particular opponent of Arius; for he, so long after the days of the apostles, did not baptize the infants of his church, as may be plainly seen and understood from the *Church History* of Eusebius, Vol. 10, Chap. 14, translated by Ruffinis, on "*The Play of Children,*" by Anthanasius. Therefore the intelligent and learned Erasmus, of Rotterdam, as Sebastian Franck writes of him, who had perused and understood all the noteworthy writers of the world say, That the ancient fathers disputed about infant baptism, but never settled it.

Behold, kind reader, inasmuch as the ancients, from the beginning, were not unanimous in this matter; and inasmuch as they did not all practice infant baptism, as it appears from

Tertullian and Alexander; and as those who practiced infant baptism have always sought righteousness in this, as may be seen by their writings—therefore we will not place our foundation upon that which is uncertain, but upon that which is certain, which is Christ’s word. Neither will we seek our righteousness in the outward baptism nor in any other works, as does the world, but in Christ Jesus, as all the Scriptures teach us. With this we desire to present our cause to the consideration and judgment of all the world and let them tell whether they have ever read in the word of God, I say in the *word of God* or in his gospel, that Christ Jesus and his holy apostles taught two different baptisms in the water, namely, that one baptism should be administered to the believing, which baptism represents death unto sin, a new life, the answer of a good conscience toward God and the washing of regeneration, Rom. 6:12; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:21; Tit. 3:5; and that the other baptism should be administered to infants, which signifies nothing: only that they should be outwardly washed with water.

Brethren, judge rightly and do not deceive your souls. We know that they first say “That infants are cleansed of their inherent sins and that therefore their baptism is not in vain.” To this we reply with the word of God: That such belief is abominable idolatry, for in this case the blood of Christ avails and not the outward baptism, as has been shown above.

In the second place they say, “That by this they are accepted into the covenant of God.” To this we reply again: That this is not because of baptism, but only through the gentle election of grace, Eph. 1:6; for it is grace and not merit, Rom. 11:6.

In the third place they say, “That children should be baptized that they may the better be trained in the word of God and his commandments.” To this we reply again: That we desire to know where this is expressed and written in the holy Scriptures. Give a discreet answer, we pray you, who assert infant baptism to be right, just and necessary and who so lamentably slander and profane us on account of baptism, that we may no longer be

deceived in our hearts; but that we may assuredly know by the word of God where to find this infant baptism. For however industriously we may search, day and night, we yet find but one baptism in the water pleasing to God, which is expressed and contained in his word, namely: Baptism on the confession of faith, commanded by Christ Jesus, taught and administered by his holy apostles, which is administered and received for the forgiveness and remission of sins in such a manner, as we have fully proven above by the words of Peter, Acts 2:38. But of this other baptism, that is, infant baptism, we find nothing.

Because this infant baptism is nowhere commanded nor implied in the divine word, therefore we take issue with you and all the world. We regard it not only as vain, but we believe and proclaim it as idolatrous, useless and unavailable, not only by words merely, but at the cost of our lives, as has been proven by events in many countries of Germany. The reason is this: because it is administered without the word and commandment of God; because righteousness is sought in this; and because the true baptism of the believing must be so lamentably rejected and trampled upon by the whole world as a heretical baptism, as far as the name of Christ is mentioned. Therefore, brethren, it is nothing but opinion and human righteousness to teach without the word of God, that infants should be baptized, that they may be the better trained in the word of God and his commandments; as we find to the contrary that, although these parents have their infants baptized, they yet, from youth on, are trained by these same parents in this Adamic nature, in all manner of pride, pomp, avarice, vanity, lying, cursing, swearing, dancing, singing, foolishness, artfulness, hatred, enmity, revengefulness and to the accursed life of this world, the same as from the beginning the heathen have done who never confessed God.

What profit is such baptism as they have received? Is it not merely folly, deceit, mockery and shame in the sight of God? Certainly. Beware. There can be no greater hypocrisy, mockery

or blasphemy in his sight. Inasmuch as, perhaps, the secret awfulness which is hidden in infant baptism is not yet rightly understood by you—therefore I will briefly present the matter, that you may the better distinguish between truth and falsehood. I will present to you that which for many centuries, as all men may have seen, has been of daily occurrence and which, alas, yet occurs daily.

In the first place, we will imagine an extremely corrupted, ungodly, carnal knave who is yet called a priest, pastor, vicar or prebendary by the world. This same unchaste man, full of all manner of roguery and deceit, covers his condemnable knavery with such a pleasant semblance that none suspect him, as the ravening wolf in sheep's clothing does, Mat. 7:5. His head is frequently shaven, perhaps as proof that he wants thus to violently shave off and destroy all the lusts and desires of his wicked, sinful flesh; he desires to walk in long robes, as Christ says, Luke 20:40, as if he were pious, holy and venerable; he daily reads his prayers with folded hands and uncovered head, as if he were very ardently inspired; he kneels and burns incense before stone and wooden blocks, which he calls Peter, Paul, Mary and the worthy crucifix of the Lord. I tell this truly without facetiousness, of which God is my witness. Judge now whether this is not the case.

Besides he buys a hundred wafers for a stiver, takes one at a time, consecrates it as he says, and that mentally, without saying a word, nods to it, worships, implores and eats it; and this same thing he believes and teaches to be the true flesh and blood of our beloved Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Almighty and living God. Besides he must be so pure and chaste in his walk that he is not allowed to have a legitimate wedded spouse, although the Holy Scriptures allow it, for the Pope has forbidden it. All these and other abominations he calls and teaches to be the holy worship and the most holy christian faith. Such fruits are begotten and produced by this evil tree, by the faith that is within him; and after he has orderly, sumptuously and well performed his carnal

holiness, he proves his inward holiness by seeking the best female company, wine and beer; drinks, sings, dances, laughs, shouts, scolds, fights, curses, swears, boasts, plays, courts and defiles himself with his female servant, his neighbor's daughter, or wife whose husband perhaps is at sea, or some other place, trying to earn a livelihood by the labor of his hands. Thus he lives in shameful adultery until, by the fruits of it, it can no longer be concealed, when the blame is cast upon some one else and the fruit (understand what I write), is disposed of and by falsehood and deception their shame and adultery are concealed.

Behold, brethren, they of whom such illegitimate children are born, have been baptized in their infancy, claiming by this to be christians; they boast of Jesus Christ and of his precious blood. But we may see by their fruits what kind of christians they are and what kind of faith they have.

Therefore I tell you these things, O kind reader, that you may know in the first place what kind of christian parents these are, what kind of faith they have, of whom some children are born who are, notwithstanding all this, carried to the baptism and are baptized on the faith of their hypocritical parents and are therefore called christians. O, abominable mockery!

In the second place, I find at many places throughout the world, numbers of vain and abandoned characters, some of them sanctified, others not, some claiming nobility in a worldly sense, some of large means, some of mediocrity, some poor, in short, of all classes, who, in the same manner, live in all manner of debauchery, vanity, insobriety and uncleanness, according to their shameful, inordinate lusts and devilish desires and in all manner of fornication and adultery. They seduce all they can, notwithstanding they are baptized. And when they, by their recklessness, have succeeded in accomplishing the ruin of such simple and uncircumspect souls who are also born of Adam and who are, perhaps, deceived by false promises and gifts and led to it by their accursed actions, then yet, it must be considered by those

of their class as a great honor and respectability, as the prophet says. Yet, notwithstanding all this, these same persons alike carry the children who are thus illegitimately born from such profaners, rogues and abandoned women, to the baptism, that they may be called christians and be trained up in the same works and fruits as their adulterous parents, in whom and by whom they are conceived and begotten in accursed and damnable adultery. O, unbelief!

In the third place, I find almost universally, both among men and women of whatever class or condition they are; noble, rich, poor, citizen or yeoman, who were baptized in infancy and on that account are called christians, yet they lead such sinful lives that we can form no idea of it. Their pride, unchastity, avarice, fraud in buying and selling, quarreling, hatred, unrighteousness, unmercifulness towards the tenant and the poor, their cursing, swearing, lying, cheating, pomp, debauchery, drinking, vanity, foolery, blood-thirstiness, cruelty, hypocrisy, tyranny, transgressions, idolatry and all manner of wickedness know no bounds.

If there are some who are not guilty of all the before-mentioned vices, on account of their natural indisposition to it, it must be admitted that there is not one in a thousand who industriously seeks and desires to walk according to the commandments of God, or to live according to his blessed will. Nor do they ask for the right way to eternal life that they may be saved; yet they must be called the right christian church. Thus has God, the righteous judge, obscured the understanding and natural intellect of those who reject his holy word and who make and honor things of their own choice as an idol.

Notwithstanding the heathenish life of both father and mother, yet their infants which are born from them must, without the word of God and merely out of their own choice, be conjured, blessed, rubbed with spittle, anointed, crucified and baptized and after this has been done at the insistence of their parents, although contrary to the commandment of God, they are called believing christian

people, no matter how ungodly, inhuman and devilish a life they lead; and are admitted and received into the church as full and proper members.

O, Lord, Father, how very broad, easy and pleasing to the flesh is the entrance into this miserable, carnal church; for it is all as said, no matter who, or what, or how he is, it is all right, if he has but been sworn before a fountain and washed and baptized in it by an idolater. But how wonderfully narrow, Lord, is your way and how very narrow is the gate which leads into your poor and holy church. Yes, so narrow that on its posts are stripped off gold and possessions, flesh and blood and all the lusts and inclinations of those who desire and sincerely seek to enter in at this narrow gate; and thus, by your grace, to rest and remain forever in your holy church, Mat. 7:13.

Behold, kind readers, I have referred to this in this manner: First, that you may better conceive and understand what kind of christians they are, what kind of faith they have and what kind of life they lead, to whom infant baptism has been administered and who now have it administered to their children, that the true, divine knowledge may multiply in you, that you may rightly comprehend, by the word of God, what abominable mockery and hypocrisy infant baptism is before the Almighty God. There is no other fruitful, pleasing and available baptism before God, than only the baptism which is administered and received according to the command of Christ, Mark 16:16; namely, baptism upon the confession of faith, as has been frequently remarked. Secondly, I must refer you, in the same manner, to how wonderfully far the custom of the godfathers, who lift the child upon the basin and answer their confession of faith, is different from the Spirit, commandment and word of Christ, that by all these facts, falsehood, unbelief, abuse and satanic imposture may appear to you and be demolished; and that, on the other hand, truth, faith, the right practice and the divine will may be made known and acted upon.

Inasmuch as Christ commanded that the baptized should first believe, Mark 16:16, before baptism should be administered, Acts 8:38 and as the world well knows that infants have no faith; and as they, notwithstanding this, would have unaware infants baptized, as human righteousness always has looked upon, profaned, persecuted, despised and rejected the righteousness of God as useless, imperfect and foolish; therefore the ninth or tenth pope, named Higinus [CHCoG: commonly Hyginus, and spelled this way hereafter], without any commandment of God, hit upon a happy idea, with which the world has until now been well satisfied and by means of which they baptized their infants and those who feared God more and therefore understood the word of God better, were for the greater part by this excommunicated as heretics. This means was this: That some should be chosen from the church, whom they called godfathers, who should lift the children up to the fountain to be baptized and who should care for and answer to the faith of the child. Most beloved reader, it is true this matter has a fine appearance and show, but is not in accordance with Christ's Spirit and meaning because the practice of godfathers is a human institution, as history plainly shows. Therefore I am at a loss to know why it is that all the learned of the upper and eastern countries yet have this practice of godfathers, since they have so bravely and incessantly written, taught and battled with the word of God against all human institutions and teachings; for nowhere in the divine word are we taught the practice of such godfathers, in any manner whatever; but everywhere in the Scriptures where baptism is spoken of, it is shown in very plain characters that the baptized must believe for themselves, must confess it verbally and by their works and thus desire and receive baptism as a commandment of God, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38; 8:36; 10:48; 16:33; and other passages.

Again, if it were even so that the practice of godfathers was in accordance to the word of God or the commandment of Christ, which however is not so, O, how extensively and closely and with

what great care we would have to search, in city and country, for a suitable person to discharge the duties of such an office. For how can one blind man lead another? How can one fool make another wise? How can one poor person be surety for another? Understand what I write. In the same manner one unbelieving person can be no surety for the faith of another; "For every man shall bear his own burden," Gal. 6:5. Nor can he teach or advocate the faith of another so long as he himself has no true, christian faith; for whatever I am to teach another I must understand myself; and prayer must be the prayer of faith, Jas. 5:16, in Spirit and in truth, John 4:24.

As the unbelieving cannot be surety before God for the faith of another, nor teach him faith, nor advocate it, even if the practice of godfathers were founded on the ordinance of God, which however it is not, so it must be acknowledged and admitted that the practice of godfathers in infant baptism is entirely vain, useless and unavailable. I will leave every intelligent christian to judge what faith there is in the godfathers.

I know that I will be asked if there are no right believing godfathers, who with good consciences, hold the infants to the basin. To this I briefly answer: No. For in the first place, it is human righteousness, contrary to the word of God and without the ordinance of Christ; and therefore it can not be practiced with a good conscience. In the second place I admit that there are godfathers who are honorable and virtuous; but I do not know that they are truly believing; for if they were true believers it would be impossible that they could ever be led to practice such abominable shame with infants without the word of Christ. For there is no word to be found in all the apostolic Scriptures which in any manner teaches and commands us [to do] such a thing; not to say anything about the impurity, avarice, pomp, ignorance concerning divine matters, idolatry, foolishness, vanity, refractoriness against God and his blessed word and of the accursed, carnal life of most of those who are called to this office by these churches, that the

faith of the parents and of the godfathers alike, upon which they baptize these infants and through which they are thought to acquire faith themselves, may go over on them. As we have too often seen, one adulterous knave calls upon the other; one drunkard on the other; or one proud person upon the other. By their works they show plainly that it is not from God; but that it is deceit, devilish hypocrisy, human righteousness, blasphemy, mockery, destruction of the ordinances of Christ, and, in every respect contrary to the blessed word of God.

Behold, worthy brethren, in the course of time they have thus subtly converted and changed the heavenly doctrine and lovely ordinance of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ into this unclean mocking, abuse and shameful practice. O, Lord, Father of grace, that this fearful and abominable snare and imposture to our miserable souls, might ~~onee~~ be destroyed. Amen.

In the third place, as we have first shown you the faith and life of the parents; second, the command, faith and life of the godfathers, we will now show you those whose office it is to baptize these infants and thus to make christian people out of them and will point you, faithful reader, to your own pastor, vicar, prebendary or chaplain, as you call them. Yes, [even] to all the priests round about you; that you may closely scrutinize them according to the word of God and see if there is one among all of them, I say [even] *one*, however many there may be, who is called by an unblamable, christian church, who is moved by the Spirit and who is unblamable in both doctrine and life. O, brother, [there is] not one, no, not one, however far you may travel and however industriously you may search. Their calling is from the dragon and from the beast. They have nothing which forces them to this office but solely their lazy, greedy, avaricious, proud and gluttonous flesh. Their teaching, for the greater part, is merely deceit; their worship is all idolatry, spiritual enchantment from the bottomless pit and a cause for shedding innocent blood. Besides, their daily walk is so shameful, unclean, sodomic, adulterous,

lustful, greedy, avaricious, backbiting, envious, unmerciful, treacherous, ambitious, blind, ungodly, fearful and so abominable that all reasonable men, the angels of God and [all in] the heavens must be astounded and ashamed of their ways.

Say, kind reader, is it not so? Have you ever found greater pride, avarice, gluttony, adultery, fornication, spitefulness, hypocrisy, mockery and shame than is found among them? I am aware that they are not all equally unchaste and shameful in their daily walk; yet there is not one among them, however finely he appears before the world, but his worship and life is of the flesh—of the devil—and contrary to God and his blessed word.

Worthy, beloved brethren, he who knows all things knows that I do not write this with hatred or with bad intentions. Therefore, judge for yourselves all things according to the word of God and according to your rational, ~~natural~~ understanding; as you may daily perceive these things among them. You will without doubt acknowledge that I have discovered and presented to you nothing but the truth, out of love for your salvation. Say, have I done wrong to discover and present unto you the wiles of a thief or murderer? Pluck from your eyes this accursed and abominable blindness and look to the truth of your Lord; root [out] all unbelief from your obscured hearts and believe the word of God. Behold, the holy apostle Paul says, “Not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one do not even eat.” [This is] proof that, although they call themselves brethren or christians, they are not in the church of Christ on account of their disreputable life. For the church of Christ is holy, pure and unblamable. In another place he teaches that such shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Rom. 1:32; 1 Cor 5:11; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:6.

Now if they are not in the church of Christ and if they cannot inherit the kingdom of God, tell me what things divine or christian can then be served or practiced by them in the house of the Lord, that is, in the church of Christ? Notwithstanding that we should

not keep company with such, nor eat with them and notwithstanding they do not have the promise of salvation according to Paul, on account of their unbelief and their terrible, wicked, beastly life, yet the world is so blinded by them and so estranged from God that they look upon, honor and accept them as true shepherds, teachers and pastors who have power from God to do anything they please while they ~~only~~ make their pretensions under the false cover of christianity and of the holy christian church, as they call it. O, blindness!

These are they, O you men, who yet this day are allowed to mislead the whole world by their false doctrine and to uselessly bless, conjure and baptize infants, without the word or command of God, notwithstanding that the most holy gospel of Jesus Christ opposes and rebukes such things.

As these spiritual fathers or teachers are, so also are their children who are begotten by them, that is, those whom they teach and baptize as they plainly prove and verify by their fruits.

Behold, brethren, by ~~no other~~ means ~~than by~~ [of] these before-mentioned teachers and infant baptists, the church of Christ is converted into such a work of hypocrisy, shame, mockery, deceit, degeneration, knavery and prostitution. O, misery of misery!

Now you have presented to you: first, the parents by whom the children are born, with their unbelief and carnal life; secondly, the papal godfathers, together with their abuse, unbelief and evil fruits, who lift the children to the basin for baptism and answer [for] their confession. Thirdly, the teachers, or baptizers together with their sending, calling, doctrine, idolatry, unbelief and ungodly works, who baptize the infants, and, as they call it, cleanse and wash them of their inherent sins. All of these parties, namely, parents, godfathers and baptizers, feel in their hearts neither knowledge, faith, truth, love, fear of God, gospel, christian fruits, obedience, remission of sins, peace of mind, prayer, promise, God, Christ, Spirit, nor eternal life; but are only nominal christians. These deliberately claim to make a christian out of a child just taken from

the mother's womb, which can neither stand, walk, hear, speak, nor comprehend; which for lack of understanding, is as the irrational animals; which cannot distinguish between good and evil; without the word and without faith by no other means than by crucifixes, breathings, salt, oil, crisma, candles, clothing, useless questions and answers; blessings, conjuring, baptizing, offering and such like abominations and when this noisy, idolatrous hypocrisy has been practiced upon the infants, then they are christian people, as the nurses tell the mother after these things have been performed, saying, we have received from you a heathen but we return and deliver to you a christian now.

The next thing in order is setting the table. Victuals and drink are prepared, the neighbors and friends partake of it and the parents are well satisfied with their baptized infant. And from that hour it is trained in all manner of foolishness, unbelief, vanity, sin, shame, wickedness, idolatry and all manner of carnal and devilish works; in [such] a manner that no knowledge, faith, fear and love of God, evangelical truth and [everlasting] life can ever take root in it. And should anything occur that something christian-like would spring up in it, then it will have to suffer much and bear the cross of Christ. I repeat it, because of this baptism it is henceforth considered a christian person, no matter how it acts. Behold, beloved brethren, they call this the holy church of to-day and in this manner one of these christians begets the other, until the world is full of them.

Honored reader, understand rightly what I have written unto you, for I have treated so extensively of this matter that you may be convinced of what a secret, hidden snare and what a terrible, fearful idol infant baptism is against God; and how very useless and idolatrous it is to teach that infants should be baptized that they may be the better trained in the word and commandments of God. Thus human doctrine always puts on a fine and holy air, but in fact it is truly nothing but hypocrisy, falsehood and a deadly venom.

Those who do not depend on this antichristian infant baptism, but practice the true, christian baptism which was commanded by Christ Jesus and taught and practiced by his holy apostles, take care of the salvation of their children. Therefore they train them in the fear of God by teaching, admonishing and chastising them and with an example of an unblamable life, that when they become of mature years, they may hear, believe and accept the most holy gospel of Jesus Christ and receive the holy christian baptism, as Jesus and his holy apostles have taught all those believing in God, in diverse places of the New Testament.

In the third place, Paul also teaches us so, saying, “Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that just as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life,” Rom. 6:3, 4.

Here the baptism of the believing is again undeniably confirmed and infant baptism is made void. For as Christ Jesus commanded that we should baptize the believing, Mark 16:16, so it is also evident from these words of Paul that baptism represents and signifies something which none can realize but only those who are believing; namely, it represents death unto sin or a burying of the old life and a resurrection into newness of life.

Since Paul says this christian baptism is such a death unto sin and a raising up into a new life, therefore they must confess and admit that none can die unto and bury his shameful lusts and desires, his inordinate, carnal, ungodly life; and that none can raise up into a pious, unblamable, godly life but those alone who, as obedient children of God, are taught and regenerated by the word of the Lord; whose spiritual death, burial and resurrection are represented in holy baptism. At another place Paul calls it the spiritual circumcision, saying, “You are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands; in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in

baptism, wherein also you have risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead,” Col. 2:11, 12.

Inasmuch as it clearly appears that only the believing die unto their sins and bury them, and, with Christ, enter into and are raised up into the new godly life; and as little children cannot do this because they do not have the faith by which God operates in his children, therefore it must be acknowledged and admitted, whether they are willing or not, that infant baptism is not commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ, nor taught or implied in the apostolic doctrine.

Kind reader, it is sometimes alleged that other apostles also left Scripture behind them; which scriptures Pope Gelasius has selected and that perhaps infant baptism was expressed and implied in them.

Beloved reader, if our opponents build their cause upon these selected ‘scriptures of the apostles’ and have no certainty from this, but [are] only presuming that infant baptism *may* have been expressed in this, we would discreetly answer and ask, first, since they refer to the apostolic Scriptures which we do *not* have, we would like to know from them what these apostles **have** taught and commanded concerning infant baptism.

Secondly, as they seek to establish their doctrine by uncertain Scriptures which they do not have and this only on presumption, they show by this that they are unable to verify their doctrine at all by the apostolic Scriptures which we actually have.

Thirdly, we say that we should not teach and practice the ceremonies of the Lord, in this case the holy baptism, upon presumption and adventure, but on certainties.

Fourthly, we say that the apostles have all written, taught and preached in one spirit. Inasmuch as Christ Jesus has commanded baptism on the confession of faith in Mark 16:16 and as Peter, Paul and Philip taught and practiced, according to the commandment of Christ, the baptism of the believing and not of infants, therefore

you may surely deduce from this that it was not taught and practiced differently by the other apostles whose Scriptures we do not have; even if they had written and published six hundred volumes. For if infant baptism was an apostolic institution it would appear so in their Scriptures. Nor would Tertullian, who lived not long after the days of the apostles, have written that among his ancestors, almost invariably adults were baptized, as has been said above. Also would Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, have baptized the infants of his church; and the ancients would not have disputed about it; as all those who feared God would act according to the Scriptures and not deviate from this; for what God-fearing person would dare to despise, oppose, or in any manner contradict an apostolic institution or practice?

Those who did not rightly confess Christ, but sought their righteousness and placed their trust in outward ceremonies, got the upper hand of the world; and therefore it was not necessary that this infant baptism should be confirmed by any papal decree or council, as it gradually and of its own accord stole its way into all classes, nations and tongues and took its full sway; for [almost] the whole church, after the demise of the apostles, through the ignorant teachings of the bishops, gradually degenerated from the trust in Jesus Christ to the trust in outward ceremonies, as may be plainly seen.

Again, brethren, however plain this passage of Paul in Romans 6:1-13 applies to the believing, yet the learned of this barren world have inverted and explained it as confirming and asserting infant baptism, saying *that infants should be baptized that they may become partakers of the death and holy blood of Christ Jesus; and that when they become of mature age, they may die unto sin and walk righteously before God.*

My beloved children in Christ Jesus, if it would do to bend, twist and garble, by our own choice and carnal fancy, the plain truth and will of God and the most holy and glorious gospel of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, then truly, I do not see why we could

not so adorn and beautify almost any abomination or idolatry as to give it a good appearance in the sight of the ignorant. No, most beloved, no. The eternal, omnipotent and saving word of God must be taught, explained and understood according to the true meaning of the Holy Spirit. For they baptize before that which is represented by it (namely, faith,) is found in us. This is no more sensible than to place the cart before the horse, to sow before we have plowed, to build before we have the lumber at hand, or to seal the letter before it is written. Would this not be ridiculed by all the world as foolishness? Yes, certainly. Therefore the Holy Spirit of God did *not imply* infant baptism in this before-mentioned Scripture of Paul. Yet they are partakers of the death and blood of Christ by the precious promise which was graciously given by God through Christ Jesus our Lord and not through baptism, Luke 18:16. But this passage of Paul speaks and teaches of those who, in their baptism, through their new birth from above and through their fruitful operating faith, have died unto and buried their old sinful life, as Christ Jesus once died in his flesh and was buried. For whosoever thus died with Christ is already justified of his sins and is thus victoriously raised up with Christ, from the power of sin, to the praise of the Lord, in a new, just, godly and unblamable life, which is by no other means than through God's word alone, which is accepted and believed by them through faith, as has been alleged above and is written "You are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein you are also risen with him through faith in the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead," Col. 2:11, 12.

O, beloved brethren, open the eyes of your hearts and understanding and take heed; for he who will not wilfully battle against his God, or his holy word, certainly, can not mistake these plain words of Paul. Yet Henry Bullinger and many others, on the strength of this epistle to the Colossians, have taught baptism to

have taken the literal place of the Israelitic circumcision, although without a good reason and without the Scriptures, yet not without a good deal of blasphemy and vituperation. For what reason they have done so, I do not know; perhaps because Paul has so closely placed together and so intimately connected both the spiritual circumcision and the baptism of the believing or upright christians.

O Lord, your divine blessed word is always garbled into a shelter for all manner of false doctrine, heresy and wrong doing, so that the Bible is called by some the book of heresy! Notwithstanding their opposition and subtle lying and philosophising, the eternal truth of God shall obtain and triumph in the chosen children of God who sincerely desire and seek the same.

I repeat that I am heartily ashamed to write or speak one single word against such highly renowned and learned men. But what will we do? It will never do to be robbed by these learned men, of God's eternal truth which leads to eternal life and which was so plainly taught to us by Jesus Christ our Lord and by his holy apostles. For, truly, I find nowhere that we should follow and obey such learned men rather than Christ and His holy apostles. If it should be said that they are wise and pious, I say that Christ is the most wise and pious; and if it is said that they are versed in many tongues and sciences, I rejoin, briefly, that the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ is not bound by tongues and science. Therefore the most holy and invincible truth of God must be defended and maintained by us, not only against them, but against all the gates of hell, by the most holy word of God, in so far as God has bestowed on us grace, mercy and knowledge.

For this reason I will refer all my readers to Col. 2:12, and would humbly beseech them to judge impartially whether we find in this or any other divine Scriptures that the circumcision of the Israelites was the prototype of infant baptism. It is incontrovertible that Paul, in this passage and also in Rom. 2:29, taught that the literal circumcision was a figure of the spiritual

circumcision and not of infant baptism, which circumcision cannot be applied to any but the believing as may be plainly inferred from the figurative, literal practice; for the literal circumcision was to be performed with flint knives* on the foreskin, Josh. 5:2, 3; Gen. 17:23. This spiritual Rock is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 10:4, the [flint] knife with which the believing are circumcised is his holy word. Brethren, understand it well. If we wish to remain with believing, circumcised Abraham in the covenant with God—into which covenant we are all graciously accepted, young and old, male and female, through Christ Jesus and not through any sign—then our earthly, carnal birth which is of the earthly, carnal Adam, must be circumcised with this same stone knife, which is Christ Jesus and his holy word. Therefore examine the before-mentioned words of Paul to the Colossians and judge whether they are spoken in regard to the believing or to unaware infants: Ask, who is it that is circumcised by the circumcision of Christ? Is it not the believing? Who is it that has put off the body of sin by the circumcision of Christ? Is it not the believing? Who is it that is buried in baptism with Christ? Is it not the believing? Who is it that is raised up into a new life by faith in the operation of God? Is it not the believing? Yes, they are those who hear the word of God and believe it; and not the little infants. Never.

Kind reader, since the infant baptizers seek to prove their cause by the circumcision of Abraham and by his promise, therefore observe and ponder how unreasonably they make this assertion; and observe and ponder also on that which will be briefly taught and presented by us, from Scriptural truth.

In the first place, as we said before, we are all accepted into the covenant with God, not by any signs but by grace and have obtained the promise by it, if we accept them by faith and walk according to the will of the giver; as Abraham was accepted by

* Stone knives in the German translation, [flint knives in the NKJV and CHCoG translations. Flint is a stone which can be given extremely sharp edges.]

God by grace, from among the nations and was made glad with the promise of grace; for he accepted it by faith and walked according to the will of him who had accepted him as the Scriptures say he believed in Jehovah and it was counted to him for righteousness, Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; Jas. 2:23.

To all those who are thus, by faith, graciously accepted by God into the covenant of peace with Abraham, God has given his ceremonies and figurative signs. Not that they should by this be justified (for if it were by the signs it would not be grace, Rom. 11:6), but that they should be justified by faith; be children of God, children of the promise, &c., that they should show their obedience to the commandments of God who has graciously called, accepted and consoled them by his promise. For those that are obedient unto God are his friends, John 15.

Behold, brethren, this is one reason why God commanded his ceremonies, as is plainly shown in the case of Abraham; for Abraham was already in the covenant with God before he was circumcised; as Paul shows, that his faith was already counted for righteousness when he was yet uncircumcised; and because he was in the covenant with God and justified by faith, therefore God commanded him [to perform] the circumcision, in itself a useless and dishonorable ceremony. First, it was in itself quite useless, because it did not benefit any neighbor. Secondly, dishonorable, for it is performed upon the most dishonorable member of the body. And it was commanded to him that the believing father, Abraham, should deny himself and not live according to his own desires, but according to the will of him, alone, who, by grace, had accepted him and chosen him from among the nations; and thus he sealed, by this performance, which was dishonorable in itself, that his faith was true and fruitful before God. Why these ceremonies were again commanded will be shown hereafter, if God pleases.

Behold, kind reader, in this manner Abraham was circumcised and we are baptized; because it is thus commanded by God. Whosoever disobeys and opposes the voice of the Lord

commanding these ceremonies and despises the performance of them because of their uselessness and triflingness, not observing that it was commanded by God, excludes himself from the precious covenant of grace by his disobedience; nor does he prove his faith to be fruitful and living, but on the contrary he proves that it is unfruitful and dead before God. For he does not hear the voice of his Lord nor does he live in accordance with it, but despises it as powerless, vain and useless. Therefore observe and know that we are not accepted into the covenant by an outward sign, but only by grace through Christ Jesus. And because we are in the covenant by grace, therefore he has given and commanded us his signs, that we shall perform them upon those on whom he has commanded them to be performed, namely, upon the faithful; for if it was possible that we could come into the covenant with God by any signs or ceremonies, then the merits of Christ are vain and grace has ended. No, brethren, no. Abraham was already chosen, accepted and justified by God, through faith, before he was circumcised; and because he was faithful and justified through faith, therefore the circumcision was commanded to him by God that he should by this seal his faith. Again, as Abraham and all his seed born of Isaac, together with others, were already included in the covenant with God, women as well as men, as the promise was given to both sexes, yet it was not commanded that the females should be circumcised, but only the males.

Observe well, beloved reader. Had they obtained the covenant with God by the sign and not by grace, then the females would have been excluded and without the promise. Not so: it was by grace, it is by grace and it will always be by grace. If they had been disobedient to the word of God and not circumcised their males on the appointed day; or if they had done differently from the commandment of God and circumcised their females, then they would have had to bear the punishment of their disobedience ~~in~~

~~their children.~~* Gen. 17:14 excluded the [uncircumcised] from the covenant with Jehovah and [he would] not have obtained the gift of his grace. For God, the Almighty Father, whose voice, will and commandment all creatures, both in heaven and on earth, should obey, will have the commanded ceremonies performed as it pleases him and as he has commanded them to be performed, for that is why he has commanded them. If we do not perform them or we perform them differently, we have, by our disobedience, neither covenant nor promise. This is the right, scriptural meaning of Abraham's covenant, circumcision and promise. Whosoever teaches you differently deceives your soul; for he points you to merits and works and not to Christ Jesus through whom alone are received the eternal covenant of peace and promise of grace given by God.

O brethren, brethren, how long will you oppose the Holy Spirit! Give the word of God its due praise and observe that little infants are not buried with Christ in baptism; nor are they raised into newness of life: for if they did die and were buried in baptism, then sin would be so destroyed in them that it would never after vanquish their spirit. Inasmuch as sin, after their baptism, so powerfully and so abundantly flourishes in them as they begin to come to understanding, as may be plainly seen, therefore the infant baptizers must acknowledge and confess that they bury the children alive, which should not be; or else that they baptize them all without faith and contrary to the ordinance of Christ, therefore [it is] useless and vain.

For this reason, learn once, beloved reader, that infant baptism is not of God nor through him. But whosoever rightly acknowledges the love of God for himself through Christ Jesus and is baptized upon his own faith through true love of God,

* [CHCoG: The KJV mistranslates this as 'man-child', making it appear that the punishment is placed on the children. But it was actually the adult individual who refused to be circumcised, or the adult who refused to allow their child to be circumcised, that would be punished.]

according to the doctrine of Christ, Peter, Paul and Philip, is rightly circumcised in his heart with the circumcision of Christ, as Paul teaches; he is buried with Christ Jesus; he has died unto sin and is again raised up by a fruitful faith with Jesus Christ in a new life, Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.

In opposition to this, the infant baptizers have still another point, saying, *Because Paul, in this passage, has not forbidden infant baptism, therefore it is right.* To this we reply by asking whether infant baptism is commanded in this or any other Scripture? They must own the truth and answer, *no*. If it is not commanded by God, then it is not his ordinance and therefore it has no promise. Again, if it is not commanded by God, then it is not his ordinance; if it is not his ordinance, then it has no promise; and if it has no promise, it is doubtlessly useless and vain.

Again, we ask them, Where in the word of God it is expressly forbidden to baptize bells? They must own the truth and answer, *nowhere*. If it is, then, not expressly forbidden to baptize bells, is bell baptism therefore just and right? Not at all.

Thirdly, Israel was not forbidden to circumcise the females. Now, would it have been right if they had circumcised their females? Far from it. For the Scriptures commanded that the males should be circumcised; therefore they considered that it was forbidden to circumcise their females.

In the same manner Christ Jesus commands us to baptize the believing and that which is represented by baptism is only found in the believing, as may be plainly seen from Peter and Paul. Therefore we infer that infant baptism is sufficiently forbidden, for they have no faith and do not understand the representation of baptism which comes by faith.

I repeat it: If the infant baptists assert that by this scripture of Paul, infant baptism is not forbidden and that therefore it is right, as it is not expressly forbidden in the holy Scriptures to bless (as they call it), holy water, candles, palms, goblets and robes; to hold mass and other ceremonies; yet we pointedly say that it is wrong.

First, because trust is put in it. Secondly, because it is done without the ordinance of God, for he has not commanded us [to do] a word of it; and there is no ordinance in which his holy blessed word is not expressed and implied either in spirit or letter.

Since Christ Jesus has commanded baptism upon the confession of faith in Mark 16:16; since the apostles have thus taught and practiced it and as the meaning of baptism in Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12; Tit. 3:5; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Pet. 3:21, cannot be applicable but to the believing, therefore it is sufficiently forbidden to baptize infants by this divine ordinance; for there is no faith in them nor do they understand the meaning of it; notwithstanding that infant baptism commenced soon after the time of the apostles, or perhaps yet in their time and thus it has been practiced for many centuries; for length of time can not prevail against the word of God, as we have sufficiently shown the pious, god-fearing reader above.

Fourthly, thus says the holy apostle Paul, “The kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,” Tit. 3:4, 5.

Most beloved brethren, if we rightly and thoroughly examine this passage of Paul with spiritual eyes and weigh it with the Scriptures, then the infant baptizers, by force of the Scriptures, must acknowledge that the christian baptism which is commanded by God pertains only to the believing, according to the commandment of Christ in Mark 16:16 and not to those who are naturally unable to hear, speak and understand, namely, infants; for it is a washing of regeneration as holy Paul has taught and testified to by the above words.

My worthy, kind brethren, because the holy, christian baptism is a washing of regeneration, according to the doctrine of Paul, therefore none can be washed with it, to the pleasure and will of God, but those alone who are regenerated through the word of

God; for we are not regenerated because of baptism, as may be perceived in the infants who have been baptized; but we are baptized because we are regenerated by faith in God's word, as regeneration is not the result of baptism, but baptism the result of regeneration. This cannot well be controverted by any man by the force of the Scriptures. Therefore all should be shamed by [abusing] this passage of Paul, let them be ever so learned; [especially] the learned, who so shamefully teach and make the unsuspecting populace believe that infants are regenerated by baptism. Beloved reader, such teaching and belief is, truly, nothing but fraud and deceit. For if the infants were regenerated, as the learned say, then their whole course would be humility, long-suffering, mercy, pure and chaste love, true faith; certain knowledge, sure hope, obedience to God, spiritual joy, inward peace and an unblamable life; for these are the true and natural fruits of the new, heavenly birth; but what fruits are found in children every intelligent reader may judge from every day experience.

Do you think, most beloved, that the new birth consists in nothing but in that which the miserable world until now has thought that it consists in, namely, baptism? Or in the expression, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit? No, worthy brother, no. The new birth consists, truly, not in water nor in words; but it is the heavenly, living and quickening power of God in our hearts, which comes from God and which, by the preaching of the divine word, if we accept it by faith, quickens, renews, pierces and converts our hearts, so that we are changed and converted from unbelief into faith, from unrighteousness into righteousness, from evil into good, from carnality into spirituality, from the earthly into the heavenly, from the wicked nature of Adam into the good nature of Jesus Christ; and of such Paul spoke in these Scriptures.

Behold, those who are of such a nature are the truly regenerated children of God; those are the beloved brothers and

sisters of Jesus Christ, who are born with him from above of the one Father, namely, of God, John 1:13; Heb. 2:13. And these regenerated [ones] are those to whom, alone, he has taught and commanded the holy christian baptism, as a seal of faith, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15, by which they receive remission of sins; Acts 2:38 and not the unaware infants, as has been frequently shown above from the word of God. Therefore the holy apostle Paul teaches us by this Scripture that God sanctifies the regenerated by the baptism of regeneration; because they are regenerated by the word of God, they deny themselves by the power of their regeneration and have obediently taken upon themselves all that which God, the Almighty Father, in his holy word, has taught and commanded his chosen children through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and through all his true servants and messengers. Therefore I repeat that the baptism by which God sanctifies us belongs to the believing or regenerated, as Paul teaches. And in this manner: First, there must be the preaching of the gospel of Christ, Mat. 28:19; Secondly, The hearing of the divine word, Rom. 10:17; thirdly, faith, by hearing the word, Rom. 10:17; fourthly, there must be the new birth by faith; fifthly, baptism by the new birth, Tit. 3:5, in obedience to God's word, and lastly, the promise follows.

If we do not desire to wilfully oppose the Holy Spirit and reject the grace of God, it is impossible to believe that a true faith can be without regeneration and obedience and that this obedience can be without the promise. For the eternal truth, the blessed Jesus Christ, will never fail nor deceive us in his holy word; and it is he who taught this: First, to preach the holy gospel, saying, *Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature*; from this follows faith, saying, *And whoever shall believe*; from faith follows baptism, saying, *And be baptized*; and from these follows the promise, saying, *Shall be saved*, Mark 16:15-16.

Inasmuch as the ordinance of Jesus Christ thus reads and as the one follows from the other, therefore Paul here teaches us that God

sanctifies us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing by the Holy Spirit; for if true faith and obedience be separated from each other, as is sometimes the case, such as grieving the Holy Spirit and sinning against him, then such faith does not profit us; for it has no promise on account of disobedience and is, besides, useless and dead before God, Jas. 2.

To all those who, of their own choice and contrary to the Scriptures, assert the regeneration of infants because they were baptized, notwithstanding there are no fruits in them, as may be plainly seen, I reply: First, that he does not know what the new birth is. Secondly, with the same propriety and reasonability, bells are baptized. God in his word has no more commanded the one than the other, for according to their nature, there is as little faith and fruits in the one as there are in the other. O, Lord! When will this awful abomination finally cease to be practiced? When will those who now call themselves christians become christians? Yes, when will the blessed Lord Jesus Christ be acknowledged as wise, true and perfect in his holy word? I fear, never. [CHCoG: Not until Christ returns and establishes the Kingdom of God, Jer 31:31-34, Zec. 12:9 to 14:19.] The false teaching, unbelief and opinion is esteemed and loved by these miserable, carnal men far above the true doctrine of Jesus Christ and his holy apostles. Notwithstanding we say in Christ Jesus, let them baptize their infants as much as they will, let them teach it as long and as strong as they will and let them assert it on the strength of the garbled Scriptures of learned men and of long usage—yet it is all vain and useless before God; for the regeneration of infants cannot be maintained by virtue of the word of God.

Chosen brethren, let them freely cry out against us, let them adduce all the doctors, learned and famous men who have lived centuries ago, let them console themselves with long usage, [perhaps] even from the apostles' time; yet where there is no new birth there can be no baptism administered in accordance with the commandment of Jesus, for baptism is the washing of

regeneration, Tit. 3; which regeneration none have but the believing alone, as we have shown our readers before.

Therefore I would advise all my beloved readers in the Lord to not heed the philosophy of the learned, nor to look at the long usage, but to the plain and unmixed word of God, and you will surely find by this Scripture of Paul and others, that, according to the commandment of Christ, the christian baptism should be administered to none but those who, by grace, have become believing and regenerated through the word of God. As long as baptism is administered to infants, it is not a washing of regeneration. For the new birth is through the word of God, as has been often said, which word infants cannot hear and understand; therefore they cannot be born again as long as they have a child's mind. All that the Father has not planted should be plucked from the heart by the word of God, Mat. 15. God's word shall stand forever and according to His divine word, every pious christian shall and must build the structure of his faith, if his work shall be pleasing before God; and he should not build it according to his own opinions. For Jehovah God, the Almighty Father, who rules all things by his word, will not be honored by human doctrine and commandments, Mat. 15:9; Mark 7:7; Col. 2:22; Jer. 29:8.

In the fifth place holy Paul teaches us, saying, For you are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3.

My beloved children in Christ Jesus, you are aware that all the world, by their blind and foolish unbelief, have until now whored with outward works and ceremonies. Yet you should not do likewise. But you should know that the righteousness which avails before God, consists not in any ceremonies and outward works, but solely in a true, pious and fruitful faith and in nothing else, in this manner. For the faith which comes by the word of God cannot be without fruit. It is only so in those who sin against the Holy Spirit, as said above. Faith leads into all manner of righteousness,

it willingly submits itself in all obedience and it cheerfully complies not only with baptism, but with all the words and ceremonies which God, the gracious Father, through his blessed Son, has so clearly taught and commanded in his holy gospel.

Therefore true faith is the fullness of righteousness, as shown in Romans 3 and 6. Yes, it is the true begetter of all christian virtues; and by reason of this, the word of God ascribes to it righteousness, Rom. 3:23, the blessing, salvation and life everlasting, John 3:36 & 17:4 and does not ascribe these to ceremonies. When ceremonies are commanded by him, [the blessings are] not because of these ceremonies, but are because of the faith which compels us to observe these ceremonies, for they are commanded by God. Therefore you should know, kind reader, that when the ceremonies in God's word are coupled with the promise, as the Israelitic offerings in the law and baptism under the gospel, then it is not because of ceremonies, but it is by virtue of faith, which obediently and in love fulfills not only the commanded ceremonies, but also all that which God has commanded, as has been said above.

For this reason holy Paul taught the Galatians that they had become the children of God through faith and not by baptism, saying, "You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." And again, because they were the children of God by faith, they showed obedience to his word and therefore Paul said unto them, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Therefore the principal thing is in faith and not in ceremonies. But this godly, fruitful faith, in which all consists, together with its christian fruits, is not known to many and for the reason that they always seek their righteousness in outward ceremonies, yes, also in the most useless ceremonies of human invention which are neither taught nor commanded by God, as they have shown, these many centuries, in baptizing infants.*

* [CHCoG: And add to this all of their masses and so-called Holy Days such as their Sunday Sabbath, Christmas, Easter, All Saints Day, etc.—

Read what we told you above about the parents, godfathers and baptizers and you will see that all the world is led into a false trust by infant baptism. They have become estranged from God and are blinded in regard to all christian matters. And to give their false pretensions a beautiful, holy and divine appearance, they mutilate and twist the precious word of God to suit them[selves], as they fully show in this case; for by [twisting] this Scripture of Paul and garbling other Scriptures, they have fooled and deceived the poor, ignorant people these many years; teaching them that infants put on Christ in baptism, plainly showing by such doctrine that they do not know what regeneration is, nor what it is to put on Christ Jesus.

Most beloved brethren, truly it is the nature of all heretics to tear a fragment from the holy Scriptures and by this to prove their chosen worship; never observing what is written before or after by which we may ascertain the right meaning, as in this instance they have so plainly shown. For this sentence: “as many of you as are baptized have put on Christ,” they pick out to give their infant baptism an appearance; but the foregoing sentence: “You are all the children of God because you believed on Christ Jesus,” from which, as we have shown above, all the rest must follow, that they seem not to have noticed; and thus they seek merit in ceremonies and not through faith in Jesus Christ.

Besides, inasmuch as they are not clothed with Christ nor have put him on, either actively or passively and have not tested his heavenly, spiritual nature and Spirit, because they are carnally minded—therefore they do not understand, however much they write and teach, what it means to put on Christ Jesus, I repeat, either actively or passively.

That we may convince all gainsayers of the word of the Lord and that we may neither stumble nor err in these words, therefore I

all mere counterfeits for God’s seventh-day Sabbath, Passover, Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks, Trumpets, Atonement, Feast of Booths and Last Great Day. Lev. 23.]

would refer all my readers to holy Paul. He shows who they are that put on Christ and what fruits they manifest, by which we may know that they have put on Christ, thus saying; "If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness," Rom. 8:10; 6:5.

Kind reader, however dexterously the scribes and infant baptizers may refute under a false semblance of the divine word, yet none can deny that Christ dwells in those who have put on Christ. Since the truly baptized put on Christ Jesus, he is in them; and if he is in them then the body is dead unto sin and the spirit is life because of righteousness. This being the case, I again call on all reasonable persons to judge impartially for themselves, whether it is found in truly believing persons, or in infants? If they say, in the believing, their judgment is right; for Christ Jesus dwells in the hearts of the believing, Eph. 3:17. But if they say in infants, then I would again ask by what means we may find this out, inasmuch as in these infants the death unto sin and the spiritual life are not shown nor found? For all of them, from infancy, so long as they do not believe the word of God, notwithstanding their baptism, are not only prone to evil, but also to disobedience, as daily experience openly shows in all those baptized [as infants] by this world.

Therefore I conclude this from the Scripture of Paul and say, If the infant baptists remain constant in their opinion and belief that by their baptism infants put on Christ, then they must come to the conclusion by virtue of the word of God, that Christ Jesus is unbelieving, proud, ambitious, envious, vain, drunk, adulterous, refractory and disobedient to the word of God [as they are]; for whosoever has put on Christ Jesus does not live [for] himself, but Christ lives in him. If they, then, have put on Christ by their baptism, as they claim and as, according to Paul, Christ lives in them and rules their actions, so it must follow that Christ is vain and useless in them, or that their accursed works are begotten by Christ, for they yet live in all manner of carnality and ungodliness.

No, truly, no. It is therefore follows [obvious] that they have not put on Christ. For Christ Jesus cannot be without fruits; but whosoever has put on the humble, long-suffering, merciful, amiable, peaceable, sober, chaste and obedient Christ, in such a one the before-mentioned accursed works are not found; for whosoever has put on Christ is dead unto sin and lives in righteousness, Rom. 8; is led by the Holy Spirit, born with Jesus, from above, of the Father; and therefore he lives according to the will of the Father and cannot sin because he is born of God, 1 John 3:9; 5:18.

Inasmuch as all those who are baptized without faith prove the contrary by their life and do not manifest the nature and virtues of Christ whom they falsely claim to have put on; but they manifest in their whole walk the nature and vices of the flesh and of Satan. Therefore it proves clearly that they have not put on Christ who is from heaven; but that they have put on the devil who is from hell; for it is he who actuates and leads them at will, as may be plainly seen as all their thoughts and works of the flesh and of Satan are natural, inherent fruits which are found all over the world, in all men; no matter of what state, trade, condition, class or sect they are.

Beloved reader, you will acknowledge that every tree brings forth fruits after its own kind and that by the fruit we may know the tree, Mat. 7:20; 12:33. Therefore it can not fail but that where Christ Jesus is, there are the good fruits of life everlasting; but where the devil is, there are the wicked fruits of eternal death. Yes, whosoever has put on Christ, in him the works of the devil are not found. On the contrary, where the devil is, there Christ is not; the one must give place to the other; for they are two princes so very different that it is impossible for them to dwell in one heart, or for the two to be conceived and included in one human heart, Mat. 6:24; Eph. 2:2.

For this reason I would advise all God-fearing christians in the Lord to ponder well upon these words of Paul and to understand

them according to the divine truth and you will plainly see that Paul taught by this Scripture just what Christ had commanded in Mark 16:16. Only the believing put on Christ Jesus in their baptism and they alone bring forth true fruits and not the infants, as we have here and also in our first writings sufficiently proven to all the pious and true believers.

Most beloved brethren, let the infant baptizers, to their own condemnation, thus scornfully ridicule such plain Scriptures and let them subtly garble and twist them as much as they please, yet this Scripture will always remain unbroken by them. It will remain so firm and binding that they will stumble upon it, be shamed by this and will have to stand back, notwithstanding all their flattering. If they would but rightly look into the matter and then judge according to the word of God, what it means to Paul, what it implies, to put on Christ, whether spoken in the active or in the passive (for all those who are not content with the active may apply the passive to Rom. 13, although it is in the active by Paul, according to the translation of Erasmus), they would soon perceive that it makes no difference in this matter whether it is used in the active or in the passive. But what will it benefit? If the learned have nothing with which to obscure the truth, they garble things before the ignorant, simple populace, by strange tongues, false explanations, lies and high-sounding philosophical reasons. O, how justly Christ Jesus said unto the Pharisees, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor allow you those that are entering to go in," Mat. 23:13.

In the sixth place, Paul teaches, saying, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit," 1 Cor. 12:13.

By these words of Paul the baptism of the believing is again plainly taught and confirmed, and, on the other hand, the anti-christian, infant baptism is rejected and made of no effect, because

God, the merciful Father, in his holy gospel, points us to faith through Jesus Christ and to the new birth alone. Because the believing or regenerated act rightly before God and diligently seek and fulfill his holy will according to the grace they have received—therefore we must forcibly acknowledge that we cannot be led to this godly gift of faith and of regeneration other than by the word of God, through his Holy Spirit. All writing, reading and teaching is in vain, when the Holy Spirit of God, the true Teacher of all righteousness, does not quicken, pierce and turn the hearts of the disciples or hearers, by the only means for this purpose given by God, which is his word.

Since we are baptized by one Spirit into one body, according to the teaching of Paul and since this same Spirit must quicken and turn the hearts by the word of God—therefore it incontrovertibly follows that none should be baptized but those alone whose hearts are quickened and turned by this Spirit through the word of God.

All those who hear the holy gospel of Jesus Christ and sincerely believe it and are thus inwardly quickened and pierced by the Holy Spirit (let them be of whatever nation or sex), are baptized by this quickening Spirit into one holy spiritual body, of which Christ is the head, that is into the [true] church. And thus Paul has taught by this Scripture in conformity to the command of Christ, Mark 16:16.

Beloved reader, as those should be baptized who are urged by faith and ~~forced~~ [encouraged] by the Spirit, as Paul teaches, so I will again leave it to your judgment who they are that are led and impelled by this Spirit. Whether they are the believing or whether they are the infants? If you say *the believing*, your answer is right. For the believing die unto their flesh, lusts and desires, Gal. 5:24; they put off the old man and all his works, Eph. 4:23; seek Christ Jesus in purity of heart; bring forth the precious fruits of the Spirit which is in them and show outwardly and inwardly in all their actions that they are taught, led and impelled by this Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:18; Rom. 8:14. But if you answer *the infants*, then I would

ask you, Where are their spiritual fruits? For nothing appears in a child but their childish actions, as we said above. Yet they are baptized and called christians, without doctrine, faith and commandment, from which follows that in all the baptized of the world nothing is found but abominable blindness, idolatry, hypocrisy, evil thoughts, vain words, madness against the truth, disobedience, blasphemy, trickery and a very wicked life contrary to God and his blessed word.

I am aware, brethren, that children have *spiritum vitalem*, that is, *the spirit by which they live*, which God breathed into Adam and [breathes] into all flesh that they might live, Gen. 2:7; Acts 17:25. But they do not have the *Spiritum Justificantum, aut innovantem*, that is, *the spirit which sanctifies or regenerates*.^{*} For if the latter spirit was in them it would surely be manifested in the fruits, as it is impossible that the Holy Spirit of God, which of itself is awake, living and fruitful and by which all true christians are justified, taught, led and urged. It [can not] be idle, dormant and fruitless in those in whom it dwells. Let the infant baptists refute this as much as they please, no matter whether they are old, learned, or of high renown, yet it will never be proven by the word of God, that the Holy Spirit of God is [can be] always idle, useless and without fruits. I am aware that one may stumble, notwithstanding he has the Spirit of God, as is shown in the case of the pride, adultery and manslaughter of David; the hypocrisy of Peter and the quarrel of Paul and Barnabus; they will not long continue in this, but will be immediately advised to repentance, either by the kind admonition of the brethren or by the Spirit. For it is impossible that those in whom is the spirit of love and the fear of God can long continue in a shameful sin and transgression. If the baptized infants have the Holy Spirit, as the infant baptists

^{*} [CHCoG: Though this is a correct translation of the Latin, God's Holy Spirit, which is sent to dwell in us when we sincerely turn to Christ, BOTH sanctifies AND regenerates, and it must do so if we are to be transformed.]

affirm, then they must admit that it is a dead, unfruitful and powerless spirit which can beget neither faith, love, fear of God, obedience; nor any evangelical, divine righteousness, in these children.

Because they have, of their own choice, contrary to all scriptural truth and by their own [self-]righteousness, taught infant baptism—therefore they subtly seek to clothe and adorn it with a garbled form of the divine word, that the adulterous, enchanting wine which is in the goblet of the Babylonian whore may be swallowed as a good and pure wine, saying that “infants should be baptized so they may be the better trained in the word and commandments of God; cleansed of their inherent sins; buried in the death of Christ; regenerated and put on Christ Jesus. Yes, [they are] baptized into the body of Jesus Christ and thus become partakers of the Holy Spirit.” Which teaching is, truly, nothing but open deceit, lies, garbling of the Scriptures and a deception of satan. For in all the [infant-] baptized of the world we find the very contrary in their fruits, all through their lives, as every intelligent christian may plainly observe.

Most beloved brethren in the Lord, never let such shameful and abominable lies find place in your hearts, but examine all things rightly and according to the word of God, that you may rightly understand all evangelical truth. For to thus ornament infant baptism with the virtues which only belong to the baptism of the believing is just as reasonable as it is to clothe an ape in purple and silk, as the common saying of the learned implies, which reads, *Simia semper manet simia, etiamsi induatur purpura*; which means: *an ape remains an ape, even if he is clothed in purple*. In the same manner infant baptism will remain a stench and abomination before God, however finely it is ornamented with garbled Scriptures by the learned; for an infant, so long as it is in its infancy, will remain ignorant, simple and of childish mind, notwithstanding it is baptized a hundred times and its baptism is still more subtly asserted by six hundred garbled Scriptures. It is

plain to all intelligent persons that with infants are found neither doctrine, faith, spirit, fruits nor idea of God's commandments; and that therefore they should not be baptized; that is, if we believe that the word of God is true and will always remain true, as we have abundantly proven in our first writings concerning baptism, and also in this.

O, kind reader! Truly, if it were not that this bitter, cancerous, lime spittle of false doctrine and long usage had so deeply eaten into the eyes of your hearts, you would acknowledge at once that this large church, in its young days, was not embodied into the pure, chaste, god-serving and unblamable body of Jesus Christ, by the office of a clean and christian spirit, but rather into the adulterous, idolatrous and blamable body of anti-christ, by an unclean and anti-christian spirit.

For if it were the case that they were incorporated into the most holy body of Jesus Christ, as they persistently boast, they should prove by their works that they are serviceable and fruitful members of that body into which they are incorporated. For we plainly see that there is no member of the human body created but for some use and purpose, be it ever so small and trifling; but it is in its way profitable and useful to the body to which it belongs. But how useful the before-mentioned infants are to the body of Christ Jesus will be perceived by all those taught by the spirit.

From this it incontrovertibly follows that if they are of the body of Christ as they claim and that Christ is the head of his church, that Christ is the head of the unbelieving, the avaricious, perjurious, gamblers, drunkards, adulterers, fornicators, sodomites, thieves, murderers, liars, idolaters, disobedient, blood-thirsty, traitors, tyrants, proud and of all rogues and knaves. For where is there one in the whole church of those who were baptized in infancy that walks unblamably in all the commandments of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ and who, either inwardly or openly, is not guilty before God, in some or many of the before-mentioned crimes? O no, kind reader, no. The most holy and glorious body

of Jesus Christ is wonderfully far different from such a cruel, ungodly, refractory, disobedient, carnal, bloody and idolatrous body.

Most beloved brethren, since they plainly are such transgressors, blasphemers and wilful sinners, judge for yourselves from these and other scriptural reasons, what kind of a body they are; by whose doctrine, commandment and practice; by what Spirit they were and are yet daily incorporated into this very horrible body. Yes, it is such a body that has neither gospel, faith, christian baptism, supper, nor christian life; and therefore neither God, prayer, promise nor eternal life; but only false doctrine, false faith, false sacraments, false promise, ungodly life and eternal death. O, Lord, save all your beloved children from such an abominable, bloody body.

But in the most holy body of Jesus Christ is a true and orderly state of things according to the word of God, as the true doctrine, faith, baptism, supper, love, life, worship and true excommunication; and therefore also grace, favor, mercy, remission of sins, prayer, God's promise and eternal life. Behold, brethren, where these are, there also is the true body of Jesus Christ, of which Christ Jesus is the head. They are the true brethren of Jesus Christ who with him are born by God the Father; the spiritual Mount Zion which will never be moved; the spiritual house of Israel which is wisely ruled by Christ Jesus, our ~~only~~ King according to the Spirit, with the unbroken scepter of his divine word; the spiritual Jerusalem in which the great King, the blessed Christ Jesus has placed the glorious, kingly throne of his honor; the spiritual temple of the Lord [Jehovah] in which his holy name is sincerely glorified; the spiritual ark of the covenant with his heavenly bread; the blooming [almond rod] and the stone tablets upon which the throne of mercy, the blessed Christ Jesus is found between the two cherubims of his testaments according to

his promise.* Yes, the lovely bride of Jesus Christ; flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Eph. 5:30; which he placed in his chamber, Cant. 1:4 and kissed with the mouth of his eternal peace, Col. 1; Eph. 1. Therefore no one can be a profitable member in this most holy, glorious and pure body of Christ who is not believing, regenerated, converted, changed and renewed; who is not amiable, mild, meek, obedient, merciful, chaste, sober, humble, forbearing, peaceable, just, constant and who are heavenly and spiritually minded with Christ. It is impossible, according to Scripture, that Christ Jesus will or can be a Prince or head of those who do not conform themselves to him, that is, of those who do not sincerely seek, hear, believe and serve him; but rather trample upon, blaspheme and resist him.

But those who hear and believe the word of God, are, by the Holy Spirit which has taught, begotten and enlightened them, baptized into the body of Christ, on their own faith, according to the commandment of Christ; for these are regenerated by the word of God; their sins are buried and [they] are raised up with Christ into new life; have a good conscience; receive remission of sins; put on Christ Jesus; become true members of the most holy body of Jesus Christ, which are fruitful, useful and serviceable according to their strength, 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:5; 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27. On all such are the affectionate eyes of the Lord, the heavenly blessing and the merciful mind, protection and solicitude of the eternal Father; because they have sincerely and fully denied themselves and have obediently followed the will of God to live according to the will of him who has graciously called them to Christ Jesus. Beloved reader, since infants do not have this mind and as the Holy Spirit does not operate nor show itself to be in them and since they cannot serve in the body of Christ as is

* [It is Christ's Father, Jehovah God, who sits on the throne of Mercy between the Cherubim. Exo. 25:1, 22, 1 Sam. 4:4, 2 Sam. 6:2, 2 Kings 19:15, Isa. 37:16. Christ is our High Priest who is at the right hand of his Father. Eph. 1:20, Heb. 1:3, 8:1, 1 Pet. 3:22, 1 Tim. 2:5-6.]

required by the word of God, since it is plain to all intelligent persons [that] they should not be baptized; for without the quickening Spirit of God, none should be baptized, as we have abundantly proven to all the pious children of God, from his word.

Therefore I conclude this matter of baptism with these plain words: Inasmuch as Christ Jesus, the true Teacher, sent by the Father, has commanded us to baptize the believing in Mark 16:16 and as the holy apostles have, in the above adduced Scriptures, so explained that which is represented by baptism as pertaining to none but the believing, and as infant baptism is no such baptism—because it is evident that they have no faith nor its fruits, which faith and fruits are the true representation of baptism—therefore we are again necessarily forced by the word of the Lord, by faith and by the love of God, to diligently teach and receive the baptism of the believing and to assert it to the praise of the Lord before lords, princes and the whole world, at the risk of life and goods as true witnesses of Jesus Christ.

HOW THE HOLY APOSTLES PRACTICED BAPTISM IN THE WATER.

IN the third and last place we are forced to assert the christian baptism of the believing, even at the risk of life and blood, for the reason that the holy apostles of God baptized none but those alone who desired to be baptized, as Christ expressly and plainly commanded them, saying, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” Mark 16:15. This commandment the apostles received from the mouth of the Lord and have proclaimed this holy gospel,

the glad tidings of grace, throughout the world, Rom. 10 and preached it to every creature which was under the heavens, Col. 1. They baptized all who accepted this gospel by faith and no others, as is shown and perceived in many Scriptures treating of the acts of the apostles; some of these Scriptures I shall place before the reader, by which all the rest of the Scriptures will be easily explained.

When Philip was led by the angel of the Lord to the chariot of the eunuch, who had come from the land of Ethiopia and was reading the gospel about Jesus Christ from Isaiah the prophet, “Philip preached Jesus unto him and as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water; what hinders me from being baptized?’ And Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart you may.’ And he answered and said, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,’” Acts 8:35-37.

My chosen, beloved brethren, if all the earth were full of learned orators or highly renowned doctors and these were, by sharp subtlety and human philosophy, exalted as high as the stars; yet, by the grace of God, the word will never be wrung from us, namely this: That where there is no faith, no baptism should be administered, according to the word of God; or else we must admit, first, that the command of Christ Jesus is wrong. Secondly, that the holy apostles have taught wrongfully. Thirdly, that the holy Philip here asked wrongfully. Fourthly, that the eunuch was concerned about this matter more than all the rest of humanity.

No, kind reader, no. But as Peter and Paul, together with all the pious witnesses of Christ always had their eyes fixed upon the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ and did not act in opposition to them, so also, the holy Philip, the true servant of God who preached and taught with the same spirit, would not baptize until this illustrious and famous man had sincerely confessed his faith; for it was thus commanded of him by Christ Jesus, his true Master, our Redeemer and Savior, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15.

As the holy apostles required those that were to be baptized to first make a confession of their faith before baptism, so I ask you, beloved reader, How can we require a confession of faith from infants before they are baptized, and who shall confess for them? If you should say the godfathers, then I would reply that the [idea of] godfathers was first invented by pope Hyginus, as we have shown above. Inasmuch as Hyginus is the inventor of them and as infant baptism has been practiced ever since the time of the apostles as Origen and Augustine write and as I believe, because those who do not rightly confess Christ always seek their righteousness in man-made ceremonies, notwithstanding there is no divine command nor apostolic usage, as may be particularly proven by the holy Scriptures and also by Tertullian and Ruffinus and others—therefore I truly do not see who, by the faith of infants, has answered for them in their baptism which were baptized during the period between the apostles and pope Hyginus, inasmuch as the godfather was first invented by Hyginus who was either the ninth or tenth pope and as the infants which were before him had as little doctrine, hearing, voice or understanding as the children of the present day, as they plainly prove by their fruits.

Observe, kind reader, that all their doing with children, such as catechism, godfathers, baptism, crisma and such like things, is nothing but open hypocrisy, human righteousness, idolatry, useless fantasy and opinion.

Inasmuch as Christ Jesus has commanded only one baptism on the confession of faith and as the apostles have taught and practiced it—therefore the infant baptists must consent and admit, by virtue of the word of God, that infant baptism is not by the commandment of Christ, is not by the teaching and practice of the holy apostles, but [is] by the doctrine of anti-christ and by the practice of his preachers.

I repeat that the holy apostles baptized none but those that desired it, or those who confessed the most holy faith either verbally or proved it by their walk, as did holy Peter; for although

he was previously informed by a heavenly vision that he might go among the Gentiles to teach them the gospel, yet he refused to baptize the pious, noble and godly centurion and his household, so long as he did not see that the Holy Spirit was descended upon them, that they spoke with tongues and glorified God. But when Peter plainly saw that they were truly believing and that the Spirit was descended on them, he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord," Acts 10:47, 48.

Behold, kind reader, here you are plainly taught that Peter commanded that only those should be baptized who had received the Holy Spirit; who spoke with tongues and glorified God, which only pertains to the believing and not the unaware infants. Thus the practice of Peter was in accordance with the commandment of Christ in Mark 16:16.

[CHCoG: In Mark 16:16, Christ did not require that people speak in tongues before they were baptised, nor is there any evidence that the apostles themselves spoke in tongues before they were baptised. There is no evidence that Peter REQUIRED baptismal candidates to speak in tongues as a standard procedure. Instead, the Holy Spirit made this happen in this case to overcome Peter's Jewish bias against non-Jews, and thus ensured that Peter would in fact baptise these people, who had indeed declared their faith in God through Christ. In 1 Cor. 12:28-30 Paul makes it clear that even though he had the gift of tongues, not ALL christians are given the gift of tongues, and in Acts 19, quoted below, those being baptised by Paul only spoke in tongues AFTER being baptised.]

Therefore Peter did not command infant baptism; for the Holy Spirit does not operate in them, as may be plainly seen. This may also be understood from a passage of Paul; for he says, "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women," Acts 8:12. Observe, nothing is said of infants [or children].

Paul, a preacher and apostle, also baptized upon the confession of faith and truth. He required faith before baptism to such perfection that he regarded the baptism of the holy John the baptist as useless and vain among the disciples at Ephesus, because they did not know the Holy Spirit, saying, "Unto what then were you baptized? And they said Into John's baptism. Then Paul said, John truly baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied; and all the men were about twelve," Acts 19:3-7.

Hear, most beloved readers; for I would here present to you and to all the world three points which you should impartially consider and judge according to the word of God. First, was the baptism of John ~~not~~ from God? I know you will give an affirmative reply. If the baptism of John is from God, as it is indeed and if Paul yet considered this baptism which was from above as insufficient and imperfect in these disciples because they did not acknowledge the Holy Spirit and as he, after preaching Christ to them, again baptized them with the baptism of Jesus Christ, as is mentioned in Luke, we must consider what is the purpose of the baptism of children that are naturally unable to understand the divine word and therefore they acknowledge neither Father, Son, nor Holy Spirit; nor can they distinguish between truth and lies, righteousness and sinfulness, good and evil,

right and wrong? Does this not prove infant baptism to be useless, vain and unfruitful, and as administered and received without the ordinance of God? And if we acknowledge this by the word of God through faith, is it therefore not necessary to be baptized with the baptism of Jesus Christ as Christ has commanded and as Paul has administered to these disciples? I say, truly, if we do not, there is, according to the word of God, neither faith, regeneration, obedience, nor Spirit in us and therefore no eternal life, as we have frequently shown above.

Let all the learned garble this invincible Scripture and practice of Paul as subtly as they please, yet it can never be denied by virtue of the word of God that these disciples, notwithstanding that they were baptized with the baptism of John, were again baptized after they were taught by Paul with the baptism of Jesus Christ because they did not know that there was a Holy Spirit. That was [necessary], if baptism is to be baptism according to the word of God. Brethren, the preaching of the cross is always opposed because it is foolishness to them that perish, 1 Cor. 1:18.

Again, judge for yourselves kind readers, since Christ Jesus himself and also the holy apostles, Peter, Paul and Philip, have commanded and taught no other baptism in all the Scriptures of the New Testament, but upon the confession or proof of faith. The whole world is in opposition to it, teaches and practices a different baptism, which is founded neither in the command of Jesus nor in the teaching and practice of the holy apostles, namely, infant baptism. They assert it not by the word of God, but solely by the opinion and long usage of the learned; and force it upon the world by the cruel, bloody sword. Therefore judge, I say, which of the two we should follow—the divine truth of Christ Jesus, or the lies of the ungodly world? If you answer, *Christ*, your judgment is right; but the consequence according to the flesh is anxiety, being robbed, apprehension, banishment, poverty, water, fire, sword, the wheel, shame, cross, suffering and temporal death; yet in the end eternal life. But if you answer, the *world*, then you truly judge

wrongfully; notwithstanding, on the contrary according to the flesh, the consequence is honor, peace, ease, liberty, temporal life and such perishable advantages; yet the end is eternal death.

Thirdly and lastly, judge rightly whether the ordinance of Jesus Christ which he commanded onto his church and which the holy apostles learned and administered from his blessed mouth, can ever be changed and broken by human wisdom or excellency. If you answer in the affirmative, you must prove it by the divine and evangelical Scriptures or else you should not believe it. But if you answer in the negative, as it should be, you must acknowledge that those, no matter who they are, whether they lived at the time of the apostles and were [perhaps] even their disciples, who say that the apostles baptized infants, shamefully misrepresent the apostles and load falsehood upon them. Yes, that they speak their own opinion and not the word of God, for the most holy apostles, the true witnesses of christian truth, never taught two different baptisms in the water; neither did they act contrary to the command and ordinance of Christ, nor administer it contrary to their own doctrine.

O, had the educated and learned men, Origen, Augustine, Jeronimus, Lactantius and others, not soared so high in their smartness and philosophy; and had they been satisfied with the clear, chaste and plain doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles and had they conformed their intelligence and subtle reasoning to the word of God, then the heavenly doctrine and unchangeable ordinance of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ would not have been subjected to such shame and change! And in particular has the great Origen, by his philosophy and self-conceit, so shamefully treated with the Holy Scriptures that Martin Luther in his book called *Seruum Arbitrium* [*Serious Decision*], calls him *Spercissimus scripturarum interpres*, that is: *The falsest explainer of the Scriptures*.^{*} And besides, it is annotated in the Lutheran

^{*} [CHCoG: Google translates this as “The most experienced translator of the scriptures.” Perhaps this should have been “*Falsissimus*

New Testament that this Origen is the great star which fell from heaven, burning like a lamp and that his name is Wormwood, Rev. 8:11. Therefore we will leave it to God [as to] who and what he is. Notwithstanding he has treated the word of God so shamefully and has erred so terribly, yet, because he pleases the world in regard to infant baptism that the holy doctrine of Christ Jesus and the apostles must stand back; and Origen is heeded, accepted and followed as a sure testimony to this idolatrous ceremony. O, abominable blindness! O, shameful foolishness! That we do not believe the sure word of our Lord Jesus Christ, the word of truth and the true witnesses who were sent by him! But they would rather follow, to the loss of their souls, those who teach to please them, notwithstanding it is plain from their writings that they have so often stumbled and erred and been mistaken in regard to the truth of Almighty God!

Therefore I beseech you all, beloved brethren in the Lord, by the grace of God, to open your understanding, that you may be no longer deceived and that you may perceive, you who are made uneasy by the writings of the learned, that all the writers, both ancient and modern, have always sought righteousness in man-made ceremonies, which we should only seek in Christ Jesus. And again, [they do] that because they do not have the word of God on their side: they do not follow the same path in regard to this matter, do not speak of one accord nor write unanimously. For as their writings show, some seek the *washing away of inherent sin*. Others teach that they should be baptized on account of their *faith*. Others again, to train them in the *word* and *commandments* of God. Still others, to have them included into the *covenant* with God; and yet again, to baptize them into the *church of Christ*. Behold, kind readers, thus each of the before-mentioned writers follows his own course and do not follow the same way. If they were supported by the word of God in regard to this matter, they

Scripturarum explicator.” And though Luther opposed many of Origen’s heresies, he accepted his infant baptism.]

would all be unanimous. But because they do not have the word of God, each one follows his own inclination, thinking that he can, under a scriptural appearance, palm off pernicious falsehood as being the truth. Yes, he tickles his vision so long with garbled Scriptures that his mind becomes so obscured that he can no longer perceive that he teaches, follows and administers accursed falsehood instead of the blessed truth of God.

Thus, most beloved children, because the learned have always sought and yet seek righteousness in infant baptism, you can easily surmise that these infant baptists have, by that means, made this innovation. For with the ancients it was not the common practice, I say common, as may be deduced from Tertullian, Ruffinus and others; but as it appears, just after the demise of the apostles or perhaps yet in their times, they commenced to abuse the true, christian baptism, which solely belongs to the believing. As some of the Corinthians already in the time of Paul allowed themselves to be baptized for the dead, 1 Cor. 15:29, so, also, through the false doctrine and opinions of foolish bishops, the abominable serpent of infant baptism crept in and was [slowly] confirmed by long usage so that it was at last thought [to be] and accepted by all the world as an apostolic institution for the sake of righteousness, which they all seek in [doing] this. Therefore you must acknowledge, beloved brethren, notwithstanding infant baptism is of an old date, that it is still not by the command of Jesus Christ nor by the teaching and practice of the holy apostles; and is therefore idolatrous, useless and vain.

And because the true, christian baptism has such great promises, namely, the remission of sins and other promises, Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; 1 Cor. 12:13; 1 Pet. 3:21; Eph. 4:5, the pedo-baptists apply the same baptism to infants; never once observing that the before-mentioned promises are solely to those who show obedience to the word of God; for Christ Jesus has so commanded it. Inasmuch as pedo-baptism is not commanded, therefore it is not required of children as obedience. For where there are no

commandments there are no transgressions. Again, baptism is not commanded to infants by God; and therefore they have no promise in their baptism, from which it follows that infant baptism is idolatrous, vain, useless and void before God, as was said above; for God, the Lord [Jehovah], has no pleasure in the ceremonies unless they are administered according to his divine and blessed word.

But the little children, and particularly those of christian seed, have a peculiar promise which was given to them by God without any ceremony, but out of pure grace, through Christ Jesus our Lord, who says, "Allow the little children to come unto me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," Mat. 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16. This promise makes glad and assures all the chosen saints of God in regard to their children or infants as they are certain that the true word of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ can never fail. Inasmuch as he has shown such great mercy towards the children that were brought to him, that he took them up in his arms, blessed them, laid his hands upon them, promised them the kingdom of heaven and has neither done nor commanded them anything more; therefore they have in their hearts a sure and firm faith in the grace of God concerning their beloved children, that they are children of the kingdom, of grace, of the promise and of eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom alone be the glory; and not by any ceremony. Yes, by this same promise they are assured that their beloved children, so long as they are not of understanding years, are clean, holy, saved and pleasing unto God, be they alive or dead. Therefore they give thanks to the eternal Father through Jesus Christ our Lord, for his inexpressibly great love to their children and [they] train them in the love of God and in wisdom, by correcting, chastising, teaching and admonishing them and by walking before them with an unblamable life until they may hear the word of God, believe it and fulfill it in their works. Then is the time, of whatever age they may be, that they should receive the christian baptism which Christ

Jesus has commanded to all christians, in obedience to his word, and which his apostles have thus practiced and taught.

Behold, brethren, if it should be said that we thus rob the children of the promise and of the grace of God, you will observe that they contradict us out of hatred and envy and do not tell the truth. Say, who has the strongest ground and hope of the salvation of their children? Is it he who places his hopes upon an outward sign? Or is it he who bases his hopes upon the promise of grace, given and promised by Christ Jesus? Still the evangelical truth must, in all respects, be blasphemed and belied by the ignorant and light-minded. But notwithstanding this, the just and impartial Judge, Christ Jesus, will at some time pass the true sentence between them and us, although they do not fear it now. I am forced to think that then it will be acknowledged too late by many, that they did not believe and follow the truth of Christ Jesus but the falsehood of anti-christ. Take heed and watch.

Again, it is sometimes, and very foolishly too, asserted by the pedo-baptists that, "The apostles baptized whole households, [such] as the household of Cornelius, Acts 10:48; the household of Stephanus, 1 Cor. 1:13; the household of Lydia and of the jailer, Acts 16:15, 33; from which, they say, it may be presumed that there were also small children among them." From this allegation, beloved brethren, they show, although not intentionally, that they can not produce [any] Scriptures to prove infant baptism. For whenever we must follow (build on) presumption, there is evidently no proof of the assertion.

To such opponents I would reply, in plain language, thus: These three households, namely, of Cornelius, Stephanus and of the jailer, were all believing. Of the first household it is written, "There was a certain man in Cesarea, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band; a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people and prayed to God always," Acts 10:1, 2. If they all served and feared God, as Luke writes, then they were not baptized without

faith, as is plainly shown in the same chapter; for Peter commanded that those should be baptized who had received the Holy Spirit, as they had spoke with tongues and glorified God; which are all fruits of faith, as every intelligent person will admit.

Again, of the household of Stephanus it is written, "I beseech you, brethren (you know the house of Stephanus, that it is the first fruits of Achaia and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints); that you submit yourselves unto such and to everyone that helps with us and labors," 1 Cor. 16:15, 16. I repeat it: to serve the saints is a work of faith. Since the house of Stephanus served the saints, as Paul writes, therefore they showed by their fruits that they had faith.

Again, of the house of the jailer it is written that Paul and Silas spoke unto him and said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved and your house; and they spoke unto him and to all that were in his house the word of the Lord. And he (the jailer) took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house," Acts 16:31-34; or as Erasmus says, "He has rejoiced because he believed in God with all his house." Beloved reader, observe first, that they spoke the word of the Lord unto him *and* to all that were in his house. Secondly, he rejoiced with *all* his house. To hear the word is something which pertains to those of understanding minds and spiritual rejoicing is a fruit of the believing of the spiritual, Gal. 5:18. Inasmuch as they all heard the word and rejoiced in God, therefore it incontrovertibly follows that the holy apostles did not baptize them without faith.

In the fourth place, in regard to the house of Lydia, I reply: Because the world tries to establish their cause on presumption, therefore we would say first, that presumption ought not to establish faith; and if it were so that it could avail before God, then still the presumption in the case of the house of Lydia would not

be in favor of the world but against it; because it is the custom in the Holy Scriptures and also with the world, that a house is named after the man and not after the woman, so long as the husband lives, because the husband is the lord of his wife and household. As in this case the house is named after the woman and as there is no mention made of the man, therefore it follows that she, at the time, was not married. If she was a young woman or widow, as it appears, then the presumption of the world is contradictory; and it is probable that she had no children and still more probable, that she had no infants, since she at that time had no husband.*

Again, we would further say in reference to this Scripture, that if it were that Lydia had infants, they would not be counted among the baptized of the house. For Christ commanded that the believing should be baptized and the holy apostles taught and practiced [only] such baptism; from which it may be safely deduced that when the holy Scriptures speak of houses being baptized, or houses being subverted that it has reference to those of understanding years, who may be taught or subverted, as Paul shows in another Scripture, that some “subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake,” Tit. 1:11.

If you take the term *whole houses* as applying also to infants; and as whole houses were subverted, as Paul says, then it would follow that infants were subverted by false doctrine. No, beloved reader, no. An infant without understanding can be neither taught nor subverted; therefore they are not counted in the number of baptized, or those who were subverted, of which the Scriptures speak. But the Holy Scripture teaches and admonishes, both by words and sacraments, as they are called, those alone who have

* [CHCoG: in Acts 16:15 we are told that Lydia “and her household” were baptised. This expression usually includes descendants, and it is expressly ‘descendants’ in the Aramaic Peshitta. The Bible gives us no information on her age, nor the ages of her descendants, nor her marital status, though it seems likely that she was a widow.]

ears to hear and minds to understand, as we have frequently shown above.

If anyone would like to have more information about the ceremony of baptism and about the objections made to it, let them read our first treatise on baptism which we published; and by the grace of the Lord, they will be enlightened upon the subject from the word of God.

Brethren, I conclude this treatise on baptism in the water in these words: Inasmuch as God, the merciful Father, has graciously sent into this miserable, blind and erring world his chosen, beloved Son, Christ Jesus, who has taught us the holy will of his Father in great clearness; and as he has, in his great love, offered up his precious and most holy flesh and blood for us. The eternal Father has not only pointed us to him through his holy prophets, but also from high heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear him," Mat. 17:5. Therefore we say and testify that we should hear this Christ Jesus; that we should believe in him and follow him in all things which he has taught and commanded us; and that we should also hear and follow his holy apostles who by his own divine command were sent out with the most precious word of grace, namely, with the holy gospel. Otherwise we have neither God, nor promise, nor eternal life, as is plain and intelligible to all mankind, from the New Testament.

This Christ Jesus has given us this express and incontrovertible command: First to teach the gospel and then to baptize those who believe and those that are thus baptized shall be saved, Mark 16:16; Mat. 28:19; Acts 19:5; 2:38; 10:48; 16:33. And as the holy apostles have taught and used no other baptism than baptism on faith, according to the command of Christ, as shown and proven by many reasons from Acts 2; 8; 10; 16; 19; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2; 1 Cor. 12:13; Tit. 3:5 & 1 Pet. 3:21. Therefore we again declare before you, before all the world and before God, that we are prompted by nothing but by the fear of God, being so taught by his word to teach this christian baptism and thus to receive it upon the

confession of faith for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38, as said before, and are thus baptized with the washing of water, by the word, Eph. 5:26; and by the Holy Spirit which quickens our hearts, into one body, 1 Cor. 12:13; of which body Christ Jesus is the head, Col. 1:18; Eph 1:22. Nor do we know of any other baptism of which God is a witness, than this alone; of which, by the grace of God, we have so much taught and written.

I beseech you, kind reader, not to do like the angry, blind and bloody world, who condemn everything from an envious, rebellious, refractory and raving heart before they have thoroughly perused and understood it; who reject all good, christian doctrine and usage; sometimes because of fashion, again, because of the cross and sometimes because of the plainness of the person. Do not do thus; but judge this and all our writings according to the Spirit and holy word of the Lord and you will plainly see whether we have written and taught you truth or falsehood; whether we teach two baptisms or one; whether we seek to save your souls or destroy them; whether we seek the praise and honor of our Lord, or his dishonor. For I trust, by the grace of God, if you are desirous of your own salvation and if you peruse what we have written and judge it with a spiritual judgment, that you will find nothing in it but the teaching which is from God; the eternal, heavenly, true and saving will of God and the very strict way of truth which the ever blessed Jesus Christ and his apostles have, in the most holy gospel, taught and shown to all mankind.

Take heed, you illustrious, noble and pious lords! Take heed you judges and keepers of the law, against whom your cruel, bloody sword is sometimes sharpened and drawn. I tell you in Christ Jesus that we seek nothing but what we have told you here, as you may clearly see by many [examples], namely, that there is not a false syllable nor deceitful word heard from their mouths or found in them. And [yet] these are forced and led by you to the sword, fire and water, as poor, innocent sheep to the slaughter. And if you should point me to the abominable actions of the

corrupted sects and say that you must therefore oppose baptism by the sword, that such ungodly doings may be averted and hindered; then I would again reply: First, Christian baptism belongs not to corrupted sects, but it is the word of God. Secondly, the holy christian baptism does not cause mutiny nor shameful actions; but [these are] caused by the false teachers and false prophets who boast themselves to be baptized christians and yet, before God, are not such. Thirdly, there is nothing under heaven at which I am more alarmed than I am at the ungodly actions of the false, corrupted sects. They frighten me more than death, for I know that all men must die once, Heb. 9:27. More than the tyrannical sword, for if they take my body, it is all they can do, Mat. 10:28. More than Satan, for I have vanquished him through Christ. But if the terrible doctrine of the corrupted sects adhered to me, then I would truly be lost; eternal woe would be to my poor soul. Therefore I would rather die the temporal death (that he knows who knows all things) than to eat, drink, commune, greet or converse with such, if I knew that they would not be helped by my conversation or admonition; for it is forbidden in the word of Christ to keep the company of such, Mat. 7:15; 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:14; Phil. 3. And, by the grace of God, I know to a certainty that they are not in the house of the Lord, not in the church of the living God and not in the body of Jesus Christ. Therefore I say, if you find in me or in my teachings, which is the word of God, or among those who are taught by me or by my brethren, any thieving, murdering, perjury, mutiny, rebellion or any other criminal acts, as were formerly and are yet found among the corrupted sects—then punish all of us, as we would be culpable if this were the case. I repeat, if we are disobedient to God in religious matters, we are willing to be instructed and corrected by the word of God; for we mean to diligently do and fulfill his most holy will. Or if we are not obedient unto the emperor in matters belonging to him as he is called and ordained by God, I say in matters belonging to him, then we will willingly submit to such punishment as you may

inflict upon us. But if we sincerely fear and seek our Lord and God, as I trust we do and if we are obedient unto the emperor in temporal matters, as we should be according to the word of God, Mat. 22:21; Rom. 13:7; 1 Pet. 2:13; Tit. 3:1, and are yet to suffer and be persecuted and crucified for the sake of the truth of the Lord—then we should consider that “the disciple is not above his master nor the servant above his lord. * * * If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?” Mat. 10:24, 25.

Yet you should know and acknowledge, O you beloved, noble, illustrious, pious lords, you judges and keepers of the law, that as often as you take, condemn and put to the sword such people, that you put your tyrannical sword into the blessed flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ and that you break the bones of his holy body; for they are flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Eph. 5:30. They are his chosen, beloved brothers and sisters, who are with him, born from above, of one Father, John 1:13; they are his sincerely beloved children who are born of the seed of his holy word; they are his holy, spotless and pure bride whom he, in his great love has wedded as his spouse. Why? Because they have, by the operation of their faith and led by the Holy Spirit, cordially committed themselves to the service of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ and do not live any more according to their lusts, but agreeably to the will of God alone, according to the direction of his holy, blessed word. Yes, they would rather surrender everything which they possess and suffer envy, slander, scourging, persecution, anxiety, famine, thirst, nakedness, cold, heat, poverty, imprisonment, banishment, water, fire, sword or any other punishment than to forsake the gospel of grace and the confession of God and be separated from the love of Christ Jesus, Rom. 8:35. But they will never accept the vain doctrine and commandments of men.

Therefore we pray you, as our beloved and gracious rulers according to the flesh, by the grace of God, to consider and realize, if there is any reasonableness about you, in what great anxiety and

suspense we poor, miserable people are placed. For if we abandon Christ Jesus and his holy word, we fall into the wrath of God; and if we remain firm in his holy word, we are put to your cruel sword. O, Lord! If it were true that this large church were your holy church, bride and body, as they boast it to be, then we might truthfully assert that you are the prince, bridegroom and head of an abominable, detestable band of murderers, who thirst after the innocent blood of those who sincerely seek, fear, love and serve God. For the ignorant, blind people go about like a backsliding heifer, as the prophet says, seeking nothing but the persecution, imprisonment and destruction of God's saints and children.

All the priests and monks who seek and fear nothing but their gluttonous, greedy belly and their avaricious, pompous flesh, do nothing but upbraid, slander, lie and persecute. The judges and magistrates who seek to live off the bloody labor of the miserable take them and deliver them into the hands of the tyrants, that they may become favorites of the rulers, as the prophet says, Mic. 7; "The prince asks and the judge asks for a reward." The lords and keepers of the law, as a body, are after nothing but the favor and friendship of their prince to whom they are sworn, [they are] after authority, good wages and aggrandizement. They are those who torture, banish, confiscate and murder, as the prophet says, "Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw at the bones till the morrow," Zeph. 3:3. At another place, "Her princes in the midst of it are like wolves, ravening the prey to shed blood and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain," Ezek. 22:27. O, how just was the revelation of holy John, when he saw that the Babylonian woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, Rev. 17:6.

O, beloved lords and judges of the land, observe how all the righteous; the prophets, Christ Jesus himself, together with his holy apostles and servants, have been treated from the beginning; and to-day *you* still treat those thus, who in purity of heart seek the

truth and eternal life. Therefore we must run the risk; for if you do not fear God and do not sheathe your murderous sword against Christ Jesus and against his holy church, then we esteem it of less consequence to fall in the hands of worldly princes and judges than to fall into the hands of God. I repeat it: take heed, awake and be converted, that the innocent blood of the pious children of God, which calls for vengeance in heaven, may never again be found on your hands.

Take heed, also, you wise and learned and you common people! For such a people are they and such is their doctrine and faith whom you daily ridicule and mock as fools; whom you slander as heretics and deceivers; and whom you take and deliver and murder in your hearts as thieves, murderers and criminals. Yet, God's word shall never be broken, 1 Pet. 1:24; Jas. 1:10; Psa. 90:6. O you miserable people, what will become of you? You are not ashamed to daily mock and ridicule the blessed Christ Jesus; to trample upon him and ravenously tear to pieces his most holy and glorious body, notwithstanding you boast of his divinity, word, death, grace, mercy and blood.

Say, beloved, if you are the church of Christ, why are you not obedient unto him? If you are the body of Christ why destroy its holy members? If you are the children of God why trample upon your brethren? If you are the servants of Christ, why [do you] not do the things he has commanded? If you are the bride of Christ why [do you] not hear his holy voice? If you are the truly regenerated where, then, [are your] fruits? If you are the true disciples of Christ, where is your love? If you are the true christians where are your christian ordinances of baptism, Supper, deacons, ban and life as commanded in his word? If you are the truly baptized ones of Christ where is your faith, your new birth, your death unto sin, your unblamable life, your good conscience, your christian body into which you were baptized and your Christ whom you have put on?

O beloved brethren, error has been rampant long enough! Christ Jesus will be no longer be mocked as a fool. I tell you as truly as the Lord lives, that so long as you are thus earthly, carnally and devilishly minded; so long as you oppose God and his holy word; so long as you live without the fear of God, but according to the lusts of your flesh, so long you are not the true church of Christ, even if it were that you were using the true sacraments, which, however is far from being so. Beloved brethren, first our hearts must be cleansed and afterwards our outward actions will show that; or else it is hypocrisy before the eyes of God. I repeat it: So long as you live ungodly, as you have done until now, Christ Jesus was, truly, born in vain, died in vain, arose and ascended in vain. He is not the Lord, Deliverer or Savior of the wilful, obdurate, unrepenting and disobedient sinners, but he is the Lord, Deliverer and Savior of those who willingly hear his divine word; who sincerely renounce evil and walk diligently according to his holy commandments all the [rest of the] days of their lives.

May God, the gracious Father, who lives in mercy forever, grant you all true knowledge to comprehend all divine truth; and a heart, mind and will to fulfil that which you now confess, by faith from the word of God, through Christ Jesus our beloved Lord. To him be the honor, praise, kingdom, power and glory forever and ever, Amen.

Let the bride of Christ rejoice.

HEREIN, reader, you have most devoutly [seen] what the mode of God's baptism, which [almost] perished through the long degeneracy of the ages, in the church ought to be, being restored whole by the unspeakable gift of God. Therefore let the writers oppose as they please; let the learned oppose by their shrewdness as they know how; let all the world under the heavens oppose in every way in which they are able, this is the only mode of baptism which Christ Jesus himself instituted and the apostles taught and practiced.

The invincible truth will always abide, although powerfully opposed by many. He who reads the teachings of christianity and considers it well, will welcome this divine truth of Christ, though for many ages [nearly] lost and now made to appear, because it is not without merit by its favor toward us.

May the reader give thanks to the infinitely great and good God.

May you be well, be humble, read, obtain, believe and live and may our Lord be with you.

[CHCoG: Surprisingly, this section, titled “How the Holy Apostles Practiced Baptism in the Water” says nothing about their use of water in Baptism or their actual practices, apart from their baptising only those who have confessed their belief in Christ and their desire to obey Christ and therefore they rejected infant baptism. But does the Bible give us more detail about HOW they actually performed their baptisms in addition to baptising them in the names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Mat. 28:19. Specifically, did they baptise by sprinkling or pouring or did they use full immersion under the water? What were their practices, and why would this matter?

As a starting point, Jesus Christ himself was baptised by full immersion in the Jordan river: “Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, *Jesus came up immediately from the water*; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.” Mat 3:13-16. So we see that John was baptising in the Jordan River, Jesus was baptised **in** the river

by John and then came **up** out of the water. Later, John was baptising at Aenon because ‘there was much water’ there. John 3:23. Philip took the eunuch down **into** the water to baptise him. Acts 8:36-38.

The Greek word βάπτισμα *baptisma* literally means immersion or submersion. Our water baptism is, in part, symbolic of us being buried and then rising up into new life with Christ, as shown in Col 2:11-12: “In Him you were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of sins through the circumcision of the Messiah, and you were buried with Him in immersion, in which you also arose with Him because you believed in the power of God, who raised Him from the house of the dead.” A hand-full of water can’t bury us, nor can we rise up out of it. Surely we should follow Christ’s own example and use full immersion whenever it is possible.

Though some scholars insist that *baptisma* can also mean sprinkling or pouring, it seems that they are merely trying to justify their own sprinkling modes of baptism, for the Greek does indeed have a word that does mean sprinkling, and it is ραντίζω *rhantizo*, which is used in Heb 9:13, 9:19, 9:21 & 10:22. In this last verse, we are told that our hearts are sprinkled, but our bodies are washed, and washing is again consistent with immersion. *Rhantizo* is never used to describe baptism in the Bible.

A LETTER OF CAUTION ON DISCORD.

*To the brethren in Groeningen and the country thereabout,
copied and sent by the faithful brother John Aertsen. Receive it in
love.*

Grace and Peace: Since, beloved brethren, it is known to all churches that in the southern countries, great trouble exists in regard to the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit, whereby much unbelief, discord and division have been caused in some bodies, to the great affliction of all the saints; and, since it sometimes happens that this one or that one, who comes from those countries, is affected by this and causes trouble with some—therefore love has constrained me to write the following to the churches and for these reasons:

First, that the unaffected and sound hearts may beware of such frightful disputations and incomprehensible murmurings, lest their hearts, to their eternal loss, drown in such bottomless profoundness and become forever ashamed before their God.

Secondly, that all those who ignorantly and unwittingly err and are bound in their consciences and yet fear God and walk under the cross, may be saved and freed, through this our service and christian warning, to the eternal praise and glory of God and to the joy of all the saints. I have written it to all my beloved brethren and fellows out of sincere love and compassion. If but one afflicted, wavering, doubting soul could be helped by this, I would esteem it the dearest thing under heaven. My children, beware of all discord and division, that you may thrive and multiply in Christ Jesus. Avoid all those who disturb you and excite you to disunion; all those who would institute something novel and peculiar whereby they might weaken and destroy the christian, evangelical love, peace and unity. O, my sincerely beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord! Consider diligently that which I write to you, that God the heavenly Father with his blessed Son Christ Jesus and with his Holy Spirit, may retain their divine honor. Peace be with you.

Note. To write with my own hand such long writings and send them to each particular church, I can not do.

MENNO SIMON.

ANOTHER LETTER.

My very faithful brother in Christ, grace and peace with you.

Chosen brethren in the Lord, I have nothing particular to write to you, but that I wish you would write to me how far the choosing of the brethren in Waterhorne and of Lebe Pieters has progressed. Not that I desire to impede the choosing of Lebe; but I would have been glad to have had a conversation with him before his entering upon the office of bishop; for my soul is troubled about that which passed between us last year.

O, brother Rein, that I could speak with you half a day and make known to you a little of my affliction, sorrow and sadness and also of my great solicitude which I yet bear for the future of the church; what an ameliorating, pleasing application that would be to my sorrowful soul! As it is I must bear it all myself. If the omnipotent God had not preserved me last year, as well as now, I would already have been deprived of my mind; for there is nothing upon earth which my heart loves more than it does the church; and yet I must live to see this sad affliction upon her. I think much, yet I write and say but little. Help me pray, that I may find refreshment and may yet see a gracious result with all afflicted souls.

Brethren, beware of discord; foster love and unity with sincerity; accompany the peaceful; make use of few words and in every respect show yourselves to be children of God. O, chosen brethren! Come and unite your ardent prayers for me in my great affliction. I pray you for Jesus' sake, let my affliction be buried with you; but if you should speak about it to anyone, then know with whom you speak. If all hearts were pure, all tongues seasoned with salt and all the mistakes of the last year were

honestly and truly acknowledged, how soon would I be found a cheerful man. Now, the Lord will be my Comforter. May the poor church be saved! O, brethren, let us pray! I trust that you will not be offended at the writing in my last [letter] to a private brother, concerning the sixty dollars annually. I took the liberty of so writing, for I do need it annually. The merciful Lord will send them to me. He knows where.

Greet the pious with the peace of the Lord. My daughters greet you. The God of all grace be with you, most beloved brother, and with all the pious forever. Amen.

If something should be sent to my assistance, send it at the first opportunity; for slaughtering time will soon be at hand and I have little with which to buy. O, brethren, do not think hard of it; it is necessity which compels me to do so.

Your unworthy and affectionate brother,

MENNO SIMON.

September 1st.

THE REASON

MENNO SIMON

DOES NOT CEASE

TEACHING AND WRITING.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine,” 2 Tim. 4:2.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.



THE REASON WHY MENNO SIMON DOES NOT CEASE TEACHING AND WRITING.

“FOR Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until righteousness goes forth as brightness and salvation as a lamp that burns; and the Gentiles shall see your righteousness and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of Jehovah will name.” Isaiah 62:1, 2.

I am well aware, most beloved readers, that we are, on account of our teaching and writing, cursed, envied, hated, slandered, persecuted and condemned to death, by innumerable persons of both high and low stations in life. As roaring lions they gnash their teeth at us. Lords, princes, learned and ignorant people, no matter of what station in life, exercise their tyranny over us, as may at all times be seen; not solely upon us, but also upon all those who accept and fulfill, by their works, our doctrine, with believing, faithful, obedient and resigned hearts. Not that we claim it to be our doctrine, understand, but it is the eternal, heavenly and unchangeable doctrine of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, which he himself has carried from high heaven, from the bosom of his Father, to earth with his own blessed mouth which cannot lie. He has taught and proclaimed it to the world by his faithful witnesses, the holy apostles, which he has chosen for that purpose. Whosoever does not believe that our doctrine is the pure, undefiled and saving doctrine of Jesus Christ may piously examine the rest of the plain Scriptures of the New Testament and he will come to the conclusion and acknowledge that it is the pure doctrine, testimony and Spirit of Christ Jesus, however much his reluctant,

lazy, rebellious, refractory, selfish and disobedient flesh may oppose, frighten, tremble and be awe-stricken [about] that way. Yet, however incontrovertible our cause appears, so much so that it can not be controverted or refuted by the Scriptures, still it must be persecuted by this ignorant, blind world as an abominable crime and treated as heresy. The prophet says, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing." Hosea 8:12.

O, worthy, beloved reader, if you would consider and realize how earnestly the righteous God always enforces his holy word and how terribly his wrath has always been enkindled against those who did not abide firmly in his divine word, you would, without doubt, if you are not within the word of God, tremble and be frightened in your inmost soul before God, on account of your disobedience! Did you never read that the parents of all mankind, Adam and Eve, who were, by the power of the divine Word, created by God himself and punished by him on account of their disobedience; banished from paradise; subjected to manual labor; that the earth was accursed in them and that all their daughters must suffer and give birth to their children in perilous travail and excruciating pain; not to mention that they would be subject to eternal death, if the new Man of grace, the blessed Christ Jesus, had not, by grace, prevented this? Why was it? For no other reason than that they did not abide in the true word of the living God, but lived according to their lusts, contrary to the word of God, trusting in the deceit of the lying serpent rather than in the warning of the true God, who, by grace, had created them wise, righteous and incorrupt and placed them as lords of all creatures, Gen. 2:26.

Again, do you not know that all the creatures under the heavens, both rational and irrational, were destroyed by water, through the righteous judgment of God, except those that were in the ark with Noah, because they became corrupt and lived according to their lusts and in my opinion, because they did not

acknowledge the Spirit of the Lord as their judge? Gen. 6; 7; 8. O, do consider these things, and doubtlessly you will hereafter sincerely fear your God and always abide in his holy word!

Besides, you must have often heard and perchance read for yourselves about Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 18:16 to 19:30; Er and Onan, Gen. 38:7-10; the idolaters, Exo. 32:5; the man who gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day, Num. 15:32-36; Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Num. 16; about the murmurers, Num. 21:5; Zimri and the other adulterers, Num. 25:14, 15; Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10:2; those who hid the forbidden things, Joshua 7; King Saul, 1 Sam. 15:17-22; Jeroboam, Manasseh and the other kings, priests and prophets who did not abide in the true worship and in obedience to the divine word, which was given through Moses, but taught and practiced either more or less or something quite different from the law of the Lord; how terribly and in how many different ways they and their followers were punished and smitten by God, who desires to have his will obeyed. Some suddenly died; some were pierced with the sword, Exo. 32:27; Num. 25:5; some were stoned to death, Num. 15:36; Josh. 7:25; some were swallowed up by the earth, Num. 16:32; some were bitten by serpents; Num. 21:6; some were hanged, Num. 25:4; some were consumed by the fire, Lev. 10:2; Saul's kingdom was taken from him, 1 Kings 15:28; and [he was] killed with the sword; the house of Jeroboam and Achab were taken from the earth; the eyes of Zedekiah were put out; Manasseh was captured; and all Israel was in exile in foreign countries, as in Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt as recorded in Chronicles, Kings and the prophets. I repeat, why was it? Solely because they did not abide in the law of their God, but either by their own choice or else out of disrespect for the law, transgressed it, establishing images, temples and altars in many countries and cities against the command of God. Jer. 2; Hosea 10; and on many mountains and under large trees, Hosea 4:13; notwithstanding, as may be seen by the writings of many prophets, that Moses so strenuously commanded them, as also was

commanded by their fathers, thus, “Whatever thing I command you, observe and do it: you shall not add to it nor diminish from it,” Deut. 12:32. At another place, that on all those who do not abide by the works of the covenant, which are written in the Book, all the plagues will come and on the contrary, all the blessings will be to all those who abide by this, Deut. 28:58, 59. The children of Israel did not always abide by the express, commanding word of Jehovah who had, by his powerful hand, brought them out of the land of Egypt; but allowed themselves to be misled by ungodly princes and false prophets and chose for themselves, against the divine commandments, places for ‘divine’ worship; carved for themselves images and built themselves temples. All this by their own choice and not by God’s divine command; besides, they committed all manner of idolatry. This the Holy Spirit, in diverse Scriptures, has called shameful whoredom, perjury, accursed idolatry and despising Jehovah. The prophet says, “Woe unto them, for they have fled from me; destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against me. Though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me,” Hosea 7:13.

As Israel deviated from the laws of God and committed themselves to the service of Baal. Not being content with the law, doctrine and service which the living God [Jehovah] had commanded them through Moses, they erected altars to Baal, as it appears. So God, in his grace and paternal love which he bore to Israel for the sake of their fathers, again sent his faithful servants, the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Ezekiel and others, who sharply reprov'd, on behalf of God, the degenerated princes, the false prophets and the miserable, confused people; and again returned them to the true worship and ceremonies of the law which Jehovah God had commanded and which they had forsaken.

Besides, they prophesied famine, pestilence, failures, drought, war, conflagration, robbery, imprisonment and destruction as plagues on account of their sins and disobedience. And they also [prophesied] concerning the divine grace, salvation, deliverance,

peace, mercy and the eternal glory which in the latter days will so gloriously appear unto all the world through Christ Jesus our Lord, who is the ultimate promised prophet, Deut. 18:15. The truly anointed son of the Lord; the spiritual King David, Ezek. 37:24; who establishes his kingdom by right and righteousness, Isa. 9:7; the true Shepherd who leads us into the pastures of eternal life, Ezek. 34:14; whose name is Emmanuel, that is, God with us, Isa. 7:14; Mat. 1:23; and our Lord who makes us righteous, who shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, Luke 1:33; and this was the peculiar work of the holy prophets who were graciously sent by Lord Jehovah to the carnal Israel. But what did it avail, dear reader? They preached both mildly and harshly, punishment and grace, judgment and mercy; yet it was all in vain, as God plainly proclaimed by these same prophets, saying, "I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walks in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts," Isa. 65:2.

Again, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, "Obey my voice." Yet they did not obey, nor inclined their ear, but everyone walked in the imagination of their evil hearts; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant which I commanded them to do; but they did not do them," Jer. 11:6, 7, 8. Again, "O Ephraim, you commit whoredom and Israel is defiled; they will not direct their doings to turn unto their God; for the spirit of whoredom is in the midst of them and they have not known Jehovah," Hosea 5:3, 4. Again, at another place, "Jehovah has testified against Israel and against Judah, by all the prophets and by all the seers, saying, Turn from your evil ways and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers and which I sent to you by my servants, the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, that did not believe in Jehovah their God," 2 Kings 17:13, 14. Again, "Thus speaks Jehovah of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment and show mercy and compassion, every man to his

brother; and do not oppress the widow, nor the fatherless, nor the stranger, nor the poor and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart; but they refused to hearken and pulled away the shoulder and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yes, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law and the words which Jehovah of hosts has sent in his Spirit by the former prophets; therefore a great wrath came from Jehovah of hosts,” Zech. 7:9-12.

Yes, most beloved reader, they had so stopped their ears and so hardened their hearts that they would not only not hear, but all of them, as a general rule and particularly most of the kings, princes, prophets and priests, wittingly thirsted after the innocent blood of the true witnesses of God, who, by an inextinguishable fire of love fraternally reproved them of their sins, called them to repent and turn to God and they proclaimed and taught the way of Jehovah in righteousness.

Thus the mad, blind world has thanked and rewarded the faithful servants of God, the true prophets and true teachers of the divine truth, who sincerely seek their salvation; by upbraiding, imprisoning, beating, banishing and slaying them. For these obdurate, ignorant, whoring, refractory people will not be reproved, as may be read in the fourth chapter of Hosea and like the men of Anathoth to Jeremiah, saying, “Do not prophesy in the name of Jehovah, that you do not die by our hand,” Jer. 11:21; and “As for the word which you have spoken unto us in the name of Jehovah, we will not listen to you,” Jer. 44:16.

The selfish and lustful teachers will not allow themselves to be reproved or admonished; they boast of their wisdom and say, “We are supported by the Holy Scriptures: although all that the scribes say and teach is falsehood.”

Above all, the proud, carnal, worldly, idolatrous and tyrannical princes, who do not acknowledge God; I speak of the evil princes, who do not want to be right in all their mandates, projects and undertakings, however much they may be at variance with God

and his blessed word; as if the Almighty Father, the Creator of all things, who holds heaven and earth in his hands, who rules all things by the word of his power, had given to them the privilege not only to command, rule and administer according to their will in temporal government, but also in the celestial kingdom of Jesus Christ. O no, beloved, no. This is not the intention of God, for it is an abomination in his blessed sight when mortal man substitutes himself in his stead. And when God raised up and sent his beloved servants, the prophets, who fraternally reprov'd and admonish'd all the princes, prophets, priests and common people from the mouth of God; the princes destroy'd them as seditious persons and the learned and common people as deceivers and heretics; as was the case with Zechariah, the son of Berechiah; with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Uriah, Kiriathaim and others, as may be read in history.

However ravenously the princes and the learned tyranized and opposed the law and its followers, yet the law and word of God remained immutable until Christ Jesus; so that everyone who desired to be saved had to regulate and conform himself according to the law and his conscience, if he would see the dawn of day. For God is an eternal God and his will can never be changed and diverted by man. In this case neither prince nor learned man can avail. God alone has dominion over man; he will keep them in eternity.

Therefore all things which they instituted and practiced as holy worship without the command of God, or against it (notwithstanding it was [sometimes supposed to be] in honor of the living God who had so gloriously led their fathers and them from the land of Egypt), was nothing less than open idolatry, spiritual whoredom, perfidy, degeneracy, blasphemy and an awful abomination, as we have above briefly shown the reader from the prophetic Scriptures. God is a God who does not need our aid and offerings, because he has made all things. Mine, he says, are the cattle upon a thousand hills. What then can I offer? He will take no other sacrifices than those alone which are commanded in his

holy word, as Samuel spoke unto Saul, “Behold! To obey is better than sacrifice.” Jehovah God of Israel spoke through Jeremiah, saying, “Obey my voice and do according to all which I commanded you, so shall you be my people and I will be your God,” Jer. 11:4; 2 Cor. 6:17.

All those, beloved reader, who sought a different way of salvation than the one which God had commanded, either did not esteem God as wise enough to teach the right way; or else [thought] that he would deceive them by his word. They despised the commanding voice of their God; they honored and exalted their own opinions and deceiving wisdom far above the wisdom of God; and they transgressed the precious covenant which God, by his grace and mercy, had entered into with them and their fathers; for the most shameful obduracy and the worst disesteem of God is not to abide by his divine word, as the Scriptures say. They transgress the covenant, as did Adam and by this they despise and abhor God.

O, had Israel acknowledged the most glorious promise of grace which was given to them and their fathers in regard to the promise of the seed, land, kingdom and glory? And had they considered the beneficences of God, so abundantly shown to them and their fathers, in miraculously leading them from the land of Egypt and letting them pass through the Red Sea, Exo. 14:22; that “He went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud to lead them in the way; and by night in a pillar of fire,” Exo. 13:21; that he gave them bread from heaven, Exo. 16:4; that he gave them to drink from the rock, Exo. 17:6; that their clothes nor their shoes did not grow old, Deut. 29:5; that he scattered the giants from before them; that he led them into the promised land overflowing with milk and honey; that he gave to them the strongly fortified cities and well built houses full of gold and silver, which they had not built; that he gave them the vineyards they had not planted, Deut. 6:11; that he gave them these not for their righteousness’ sake, but by grace and because he would fulfill his promise which he had sworn to

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Yes, he gave it as a permanent possession, if they should abide by his holy word and should walk in his divine commands, statutes and righteousness, as Moses the faithful servant had, in diverse instances, taught and commanded. Besides that, he gave them corn, oil, wine, peace, freedom, religion and fame above all the people round about; for there was no people under all the heavens which was like unto them, Deut. 4. He led them by the hand, as a young child; carried them in his blessed arms; and girded himself round about them as a lancer, as Jeremiah says; raising up among them his righteous men and prophets who spoke unto them the words of Jehovah, fraternally reproving all disobedient transgressors and mildly consoling the pious hearts with the gracious promise of both temporal and eternal life.

O, had the children of Israel sincerely realized all these favors and many others, they would never have deviated so shamefully from the word, law, will and commandments of God, their Savior and Deliverer, who in every respect treated them with such a paternal spirit. But because they did not acknowledge the gracious beneficences which the Lord showed unto them and because they did not fear the righteous judgments against them, therefore the wicked, blind flesh and the adulterous spirit of idolatry had so misled them, so estranged them from God and made them so drunk and mad that they acted worse than the Gentiles which were before them, whom God had, on account of their sinfulness, rejected and scattered, as the holy prophets in diverse Scriptures show and proclaim.

O, fearful wrath of God! We can never escape it. If we do not desire grace, light, truth, righteousness, salvation, true religion, life, the kingdom, blessing and God himself, we must, by his righteous judgment, doubtlessly inherit disgrace, darkness,

falsehood, unrighteousness and idolatry and hereafter eternal damnation, death, hell, malediction and the devil himself.*

Sincerely beloved readers, God knows that I love you with pure love in Christ Jesus. Inasmuch as I find proof in many Scriptures of how severely God has, from the beginning of the creation, always punished all transgression of his divine word and disobedience to it, as every intelligent reader may clearly understand from the history of Israel; and as I clearly see that the whole world, from east to west, from south to north, in the course of time, has been misled by ignorant teachers and preachers, who seek nothing but carnality, aided by unfaithful lords and princes. They have lost their faith in and knowledge of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, the ever blessed Savior, his holy gospel and sacraments, true religion and the pious, unblamable life which is from God; and as they are falsely led, under the name of Christ, to put faith in a man of proud, unclean, idolatrous and ungodly flesh, in useless fables, doctrines and human commandments; in an idolatrous baptism and supper; in images of wood, stone, gold and silver, in water, bread and wine; in a shameful idolatry; in mere vain, false and useless promises. It has gone so far among those who boast of the name of Christ that there is nothing left to them, neither in regard to faith, love, sacraments, nor [anything] in their life of which it can be truthfully said that it comports to the life and doctrine of Christ. Judge for yourselves whether or not I speak the truth; and although some of them, to-day, boast of the holy gospel of Christ, yet there is nothing preached except what is useless and vain and even this no stronger than the temporal lords and princes allow them to do. And as the princes are, so are the

* [CHCoG: As noted earlier, God's judgement of those humans who refuse his salvation is the second death in the Lake of Fire. This is an eternal punishment, as it is an eternal death from which there can never be a resurrection. Rom. 6:23 & 8:6, Rev. 20:4 & 21:18. And though Satan will also be cast into the Lake of Fire, he will be there solely to be tormented himself, not to be tormenting others—something Satan would enjoy—as the Catholic myths would have it.]

preachers; and as the preachers are, so are the people. And by this we are asked to abandon Christ and his holy apostles and humble them in their doctrine and believe and adhere to the princes and the learned, if we do not want to be tortured or burned at their hands, or be murdered by some other tyrannical means; [it is] as if the preachers were sent by the princes and not by Christ. Therefore, for the sake of the chosen of Zion and of Jerusalem, I can no longer hold my tongue, but must tell the truth; that ~~their~~ [the Word's] righteousness may go forth as a light and his salvation burn as a torch; and that thus all mankind may acknowledge the righteousness of the Lord and all tongues, generations and people confess his glory. Although I have sometimes, with Jeremiah, thought not to teach any more in the name of the Lord, because so many thirst after my blood, yet I can no longer hold my tongue; for I am, with the prophet, very much troubled at heart. My heart trembles in my bosom; all my joints shake and quake with the idea that the whole world: lords, princes, learned and ignorant people, males and females, bond and free, are so widely estranged from Christ Jesus, from his evangelical truth and from life eternal.

When I think I will find a magistrate who fears God, rightly performs his office and [rightly] uses his sword, I truly find, as a general thing, nothing but a wine-bibbing Lucifer, Antioch, or Nero; for they place themselves in Christ's stead so that their decrees must be respected above the word of God. Whosoever does not regulate himself according to their decrees, does not serve Baal, maintains the ceremonies of Christ and fulfills the word of God in fruits; must be taken and suffer as a rogue, his property be confiscated and the poor, innocent orphans who have now lost their faithful parents because of the testimony of the Lord, must be cast out and find their way begging through the land. But the idolaters, deceivers of souls, whore-mongers, knaves, adulterers, fornicators, blasphemers, perjurers, drunkards and like transgressors are not persecuted, but can live at liberty and peace under their protection. I do not speak here of the good magistrates,

who are few; but of the evil ones, which are numerous. Besides, we have their unseasonable pomp, pride, greed, uncleanness, lying, robbing, stealing, burning, hatred, envy, avarice and idolatry. Yet they want to be called christian princes and gracious lords. O, Lord! Of what little benefit will these hypocritical, lying titles and false boasting be to them before Christ, when he shall appear!

Again, when I think of finding true teachers, such as are sent by God, quickened by the Holy Spirit; who sincerely seek the salvation of their brethren; who are not earthly minded, but preach the saving, wholesome word of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ in purity of heart and who are quite unblamable in their doctrine and life, I find myself altogether mistaken. But instead, I find all over the world and among most of the sects, nothing but robbers of the glory of God and murderers of souls; deceivers, blind watchmen, mute dogs, masters of sects who are carnally, earthly and devilishly minded; enemies of the cross; serving their bellies instead of serving God; false prophets, idolaters, vain talkers, liars and wizards. If any person does not believe my words, let him prove their walk by the word of the Lord; let him compare their doctrine, sacraments, spirit, object, walk and life with the doctrine, sacraments, spirit, object, walk and life of Christ. Common sense will teach you, ~~without even the word of God~~, by whom they are sent; how, what and why they teach and what fruits their teachings bear.*

In the third place, when I think of finding an unblamable church without spot and blemish, which serves the Lord with all its power and which conforms itself to his word—I truly find such an ungodly, abominable, corrupted and confused people; so carnal, idolatrous, whoring, cruel, ungodly, unbelieving, ignorant, blood-thirsty, unmerciful, drunk, pompous, luxurious, proud, avaricious, greedy, envious, adulterous, false, deceiving, sodomitic, refractory,

* [CHCoG: Common sense is fickle and cannot be trusted, and most especially not to judge spiritual matters. We require God's word and his Holy Spirit to discern such matters.]

disobedient, rebellious, vain and so devilish that a god-fearing soul must stand dumbfounded and be ashamed of it. Yet they claim to be the true bride, the believing church of Christ. O no, dear reader, no. Christ Jesus does not own such a bride or church. But his bride is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Eph. 5:30; she conforms to him, Rom. 8:29; is created after his image, Col. 3:10; partakes of his nature, 2 Pet. 1:4; is minded as he is, Phil. 2:5; seeks nothing but the heavenly things where Christ Jesus is, sitting at the right hand of his Father, Col. 3:1. Yes, in God's church nothing is heard, seen or found but the true doctrine of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ and his holy apostles, according to the Holy Scripture. But in the before-mentioned churches it is mostly [not true] doctrines, [but] flatterings, comments, councils and commandments of men. Here is faith, truth, obedience, baptism of the believing according to the word of God, true fraternal love, and the service of our neighbors; yonder is unbelief, falsehood, disobedience, infant baptism without God's word, hatred, envy, tyranny, cruelty, shedding blood, quarreling, lawsuits, backbiting, cheating, stealing, robbing and murdering. Here is teaching, admonition, consolation, reproof in righteousness—there, merely corruption, heresy, upbraiding and slandering; here, blessing, praise and thanksgiving—there, cursing and swearing by the suffering of the Lord, by his wounds, sacraments, flesh, blood and judgment; here, long-suffering—there, inflammable temper; here, humility—there, pride; here, mercy—there, mercilessness; here, true religion—there, idolatry; here, spirit and spiritual wisdom—there, flesh and foolishness; here is prayer in spirit and in truth—there, mockery with many powerless words; here is prayer for the Lord's truth—there the righteousness of the Lord is persecuted; here is faith in Christ—there, idolatrous ceremonies. In short, here is Christ and God—there, anti-Christ and the devil. Yes, most beloved brethren, the pure, chaste and spotless bride of our Lord Jesus Christ (judge for yourselves) is quite different from this carnal, unclean, adulterous and shameful 'church'.

Truly, they are not the true church of Christ who merely boast of his name. But those are the true church of Christ who were converted, who are born from above by God, who are of a regenerated mind and by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the hearing of the divine word have become the children of God; who obey him and live unblamably in his holy commandments and according to his holy will, all their days after their calling.

Inasmuch as the worldly church is not such an amiable, obedient bride, but has left her lawful husband, Christ, and follows after strange adulteries, as may be plainly seen, and all this through blindness, ignorance and the deceit of their teachings—therefore I seek to accomplish nothing by my writing and teaching, according to the talent God was pleased to give me, but to reclaim this adulterous bride, the erring church, from her adulterous actions and again to return her to her first husband, Christ Jesus, to whom she was so unfaithful, notwithstanding he did her such great service. By this, showing and declaring to all sects, nations and individuals who desire to read or hear our doctrine, writings and admonitions, not by flatterings nor my own opinion, but by the express word of God, which alone avails, that there is no salvation on earth or in heaven other than in Christ Jesus, that is, in his doctrine, faith, sacraments, obedience and walk. All doctrine which is contrary to his word or is without his command, is vain, such as, in the papal church; purgatory, false promises, differences in places, in victuals and in days, pilgrimages, false sacrifices, &c. Again, in the German [protestant] churches, the availability of infant baptism. Again, with the corrupted sects, the third David; the carnal kingdom; that ‘everything is clean to the clean,’ such as to show idols outward honor and reverence, to baptize infants, polygamy, shameful confession, to make indecent show of a person, not to believe in angels or the devil; that a more perfect doctrine can be proclaimed than was taught by Christ Jesus, Paul and the other apostles and other similar abominations.

Again, all the sacraments not contained in the word of God, such as the idolatrous baptism of infants, the false supper in a church which neither seeks, knows, fears nor loves its God; which believes that the bread is actual flesh and the wine actual blood; also, the confirmation, the holy oil, as they call it; again, all the services which are neither taught nor commanded by Christ nor his apostles, such as holy water, altars, images, masses, vigils, absolution, the invocation of the departed [such as Mary and the apostles], monkhood, pilgrimages, [Sunday 'Sabbath', Christmas, Easter, All Saints Day] and similar abominations. Again, the private and public life which does not comport with the Spirit and life of Jesus Christ; such as unclean, vulgar thoughts, evil desires, unbecoming, shameful words; uncleanness, adultery, fornication, drinking to excess, hatred, envy, the shedding of blood contrary to the ordinance of God, avarice, pride, lying, cheating, backbiting, jesting, theft, usury, murder, swearing and fighting. All these matters and articles, such as doctrines, sacraments, worship and life, which are here noted and others which are not, every reader can easily understand by the inward unction of God that they, not being contained, expressed, nor commanded in his word and in the wholesome doctrine of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, but most of them being diametrically contrary to the Word, therefore we deem them, according to the sentence of the Holy Scriptures, as nothing else than false doctrine, deceit and fantasy; as false and garbled, idolatrous sacraments, as abominable idolatry, spiritual whoredom, degeneracy and as carnal, earthly and deadly [to] life, of which the Holy Spirit of God has so abundantly testified through Paul and John that those who commit these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God, Rom. 1:22; 1 Cor. 6:8; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 3:5; Rev. 22:5.

For if the literal Israel was so severely punished and crushed by Jehovah because they did not abide by the law, commandments, statutes and righteousnesses of their God and because they did not hear and receive the reproofing, admonition and teachings of their

faithful prophets who spoke to them through the inspiration of God, but stoned them, put them to the sword, killed, upbraided and blasphemed them; [instead] following a worship to suit their own taste, as has been shown above—O, what must we, then, expect from God, if we do not abide by the wholesome doctrine of grace by the right holy sacraments, by the works of love which are pleasing to God and by the pious, unblamable life which not Moses, not a prophet, not an angel, nor a creature has taught us, but which the eternal Son of God himself, the eternal wisdom and truth, the eternal love and mercy, the blessed Christ Jesus has taught us by his own blessed mouth. [He did this] by the command of his Almighty Father, which command is eternal and immutable, whose love for us is ineffable, who has confirmed it by virtue of miracles and at last sealed it with Jesus's precious blood; and has proclaimed the same to all the world by his faithful testimony and by his holy apostles, in the unsearchable power of the Spirit. This doctrine is nothing else, nor will it ever be anything else, than the precious gospel of peace, the glad tidings of grace, the remission of sin, the victory over death, the grave and the devil; besides [this, it is] grace, peace, freedom and admission to the Father; and all this is out of love and grace—not by works or merit of our own; but by means of Christ Jesus alone.

Again, these are the sacraments which Christ Jesus has instituted and taught: First, the holy baptism of the believing, in which we bury our sinful flesh and take unto ourselves a new life, seal and confess our faith, testify to the new birth and good conscience; and thus we enter into the obedience of Jesus Christ, who has taught and commanded us to do this himself and also in his Holy Spirit through his disciples. Secondly, the Holy Supper, in which is represented the death of the Lord, who died for us in his great love; and in which is represented true, brotherly love; and also the righteous, unblamable, christian life which must be lived inwardly and outwardly in full measure of death unto sin and unfeigned love, conformable to the word of God.

[CHCoG: The two sacraments above were provided as additions to the older Biblical ones, not as replacements for them. And note that the two new ones are both not so much about the death of Christ as they are about the life we are each being given through Christ. The first of these older sacraments is the Passover, which follows on immediately after the Last Supper and it directly commemorates the capture, torture and death of Christ as the Lamb of God. (John 1:29, Exo. 12:1-14, Mark 15:1-39, 1 Cor. 5:6 to 8).^{*} Second, the Wave Offering, (also called the First Fruit) during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which commemorates Christ rising from the dead and taking his blood to be presented before his Father in Heaven, making him the first fruit to be harvested from the earth (Lev. 23:9-14, John 19:40 to 20:18, Heb. 9:11-16). Third, the Feast of Unleavened Bread itself, which is a week-long celebration of what Christ has done for us, and reminds us that our Christian walk is an ongoing walk in which must remove sin from our lives. (Lev. 23:4-8, Rev. 1:4-7, Rom. 6:1-23, 1 Cor. 9:19 to 10:17, Gal. 5:13 to 6:10). Next is the Feast of Weeks, also called Pentecost, which commemorates the Holy Spirit coming down onto and into the disciples, and reminds us that we too must have God's Holy Spirit dwelling within us to

^{*} [CHCoG: The Holy Days based on the first month of God's year also have historical meanings, which indicated what would be coming in Christ. The Passover is linked to the death of the first-born son of the king (pharaoh). The week of the Unleavened Bread is linked to the Israelites fleeing from Egypt, while the last day of it was when they crossed the Red Sea (at the Gulf of Aqaba), by which they were finally freed from Egypt (sin), and foreshadows our baptism. Pentecost was when God came down onto Mount Sinai, when they received the Ten Commandments and committed themselves to obeying God. Exo. 19:1 to 34:32. The non-Christian Jews have no clear understanding of what the future-linked seventh month Holy Days mean, as they do not accept the New Covenant nor the Holy Spirit, both required to reveal it to them.]

enable us to truly walk with Christ, and become one of God's First Fruits. (Num 28:26, (Lev. 23:14-22, Acts 2:1 to 2:43 & 5:31-32, 1 Cor. 15:19-23, Rom. 8:1 to 39). The rest of God's Annual Holy Days tell us of future events, and thus remind us of God's Promises to us. The first of these is Trumpets, held on the first day of the Seventh month on God's calendar. This day signifies the day when Christ returns near the end of the Great Tribulation and is declared the King of all the earth. (Lev. 23:23-25, Rev. 11:1-19, Mat. 24:3-39, John 14:1-18, 1 Thes. 4:13-18, Rev. 17:1 to 19:21).^{*} Then comes Atonement, a fast day which has two main events. One part is the repentance across the world as the people who have survived the years of the Great Tribulation finally recognize Christ as their Saviour and King, and repent and place themselves under his rule. (Lev. 23:26-32 & 16:2-34, Zec. 12:1-13:2, Heb. 9:7-15, Dan. 9:1-19). The other part of this day is the capture and sentencing of Satan, and his imprisonment in the Abyss for One Thousand Years. (Rev. 20:1-3). This is followed by the week-long Feast of Booths. That it is a week long reflects the passage of time. That it is also during the seventh month reminds us that with God a day is as a thousand years, and that this Feast is a celebration of the coming Thousand Years of Peace, when the entire earth is under the rule of Christ and his Saints. (Psa. 37:11, Mat. 5:5.) It will be the seventh period of one thousand years since Creation, and is thus in many ways a thousand year long Sabbath celebration. (Lev. 23:37-44, 2 Pet. 3:8, Rev. 20:1-6 & 5:8-10, Zec. 14:16-19, Zeph. 3:9, Jer. 31:1-14, Isa. 25:1-9, Rev. 7:13-17 & 21:7-8). A booth is a temporary structure, though more substantial than a tent. The booth reminds us that those of us who

^{*} [CHCoG: It is also possible that Christ will return on the Day of Pentecost to be declared King of earth, resurrect and transform his disciples. Then the Day of Trumpets is the day that the war against Christ begins (and ends?). This scenario gives Satan about 110 days to call up and bring all of earth's armies to Armageddon, which is sufficient time using modern ships and aircraft.]

have been transformed in the First Resurrection at Christ's Return will live in temporary dwellings until the New Jerusalem, our permanent home, will come down after the Thousand Year have ended. For those who were not yet Christ's when he returned, they will continue to live in their 'booths'—their temporary physical bodies—until they are transformed at the Second Resurrection if they choose to walk in the Way. And then comes the Last Great Day, which follows on immediately after the Feast of Booths. Satan is released, and gathers together all those who refuse to live under Christ and his Father. They are destroyed and Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire. (Lev. 23:39, Rev. 20:4-10). This is followed by the White Throne Judgement, and all those who have been resurrected in their physical bodies who are not written in the book of life are destroyed in the Lake of Fire, which is the second death. Those in the Book of Life are transformed and given everlasting spirit bodies. Then God transforms the entire universe, and brings the New Jerusalem to earth, where we will live with him and Jesus for the rest of eternity. (Rev. 20:11-15, 1 Cor. 15:20-28, Isa. 65:17-19, Psa. 102:24-28, 2 Pet. 3:5-15, Rev. 21:1-22:21, 1 John 3:1-3, Rev. 1:5-18). These events are dealt with more fully in [*God's Holy Days for Christians*](#) and the [*CHCoG Holy Days Service Transcripts*](#) series.

And apart from these annual Holy Days, every week we have the seventh-day Sabbath, which reminds us that Jehovah God and his son Jesus Christ are our Creators, and they command us to set aside this day to fellowship with them and our fellow believers. (Gen. 2:1-3, Exo. 16:23-29, 20:8-11 & 31:13-16, Lev. 19:3, Isa. 56:1-7, 58:13-14 & 66:22-24, Mark 2:27-3:5, Luke 4:16 & 23:56, Acts 13:42-44, 16:13 & 17:2). There is more detail in [*The Sabbath in Scripture*](#).]

Behold, worthy reader, since the whole world, yes, all tongues, tribes and people have become degenerated, according to the

righteous sentence of God, in the doctrines, sacraments and life which is pleasing to God, for they prefer falsehood to truth, unrighteousness to righteousness. They have committed themselves to all manner of false teachings, false ceremonies and carnal life, so that we may consider them [almost] as brutes rather than human beings, rather like devils than [as] christians, as every reasonable being can easily, ~~even without the word of God,~~ comprehend and understand. Their learned and preachers, who we should reasonably expect to reprove such things, are themselves committed to such false doctrine, unbelief and abominable idolatry and lead an even more beastly and infernal life. Yes, as these learned people diligently lead and force all mankind to such idolatry, unbelief, transgression and accursed life, both by their teaching and example, as most of the learned have done from the beginning. They are always earthly, carnally and devilishly minded and they always reject the spiritual and heavenly wisdom and will of Jesus Christ, which tempers the carnal lusts, as a displeasure and inconvenience, Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:11; Rom. 13:14. Therefore, since I clearly see this awful disesteem of the holy word of God and the condemnation of innumerable thousands of souls whom Christ Jesus has so dearly bought and ransomed by his precious blood, for outside of obedience to the divine word there is no salvation, therefore I cannot be silent, for the honor and praise of my Lord and God are at stake and it avails the salvation of a poor, erring brother—although, perchance, it may be at the risk of my life.

Who knows but that God, through me and through my beloved brethren who are and who shall be, has chosen and provided in his grace that some of those who now unwittingly err may yet acknowledge and confess the right way, doctrine, truth and life and walk unblamably in Christ, before God and before all the world all the [rest of the] days of their lives. O, Lord, that it might be so, Amen.

Behold, most beloved reader, inasmuch as the Babylonian king, namely, the [pope or] anti-christ, has, through his servants, that is, through the false prophets and teachers, demolished the disobedient Jerusalem, the temple of the Lord and has thus imprisoned Israel these many years—therefore I and my brethren in the Lord desire nothing but that we may, to the honor of God, so labor at his fallen city, temple and imprisoned people, according to the talent received from him, that we may rebuild that which is demolished, repair that which is damaged and free those who are imprisoned, with the word of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit; the same as it was before the fall, that is, in freedom of the Spirit, on the doctrines, sacraments, ceremonies, love and life of Jesus Christ and of his holy apostles.

For this reason I am not ashamed to write down, publish and loudly proclaim my faith, doctrine, seeking and desire, before all mankind who will hear, no matter who they are. Yes, I do not doubt but if those could see my inmost heart who now assiduously seek my life, they would change their hatred against me and my brethren into love for us.

In the first place we desire, according to the word of God, that no bishop, pastor or teacher shall be admitted into the church of the Lord, to teach and administer the sacraments of the Lord, other than those who are competent in the doctrine, ordinance and life of our Lord Jesus Christ and unblamable in all things, 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6; Lev. 21:7; Ezek. 44:21; for the word of the Lord is truth, John 17:17; it is Spirit and life, John 6:63. Therefore the sacraments can not be administered by the carnal minded; by none of the children of death, nor by liars; but by the truthful, by the spiritual minded and by those who rightly confess Christ Jesus; who surely feel the eternal life in their hearts and who live unblamably before God and walk in Christ Jesus, so that they may truthfully say with Paul, “Be followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,” 1 Cor. 11:1.

In the second place we desire with ardent hearts, even at the cost of life and blood, that the holy gospel of Jesus Christ and his apostles, which alone is the true doctrine and will remain so until Jesus Christ will reappear in the clouds, may be taught and preached through all the world, as the Lord Jesus Christ commanded his disciples at the last moments while he was on earth, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15.

In the third place we seek, teach and desire a true faith and christian life conformable to the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his apostles; for the doctrine of the preachers is all vain and useless if the word which is preached is not accepted by faith, Heb. 4:2; and faith is vain and dead before God when it does not work by love, Jas. 2:20.

In the fourth place, we teach, seek and desire a right christian baptism; first with Spirit and fire, Luke 3:16; afterward in the water, in obedience to faith; for thus has Christ Jesus commanded all the believing; and thus the holy apostles have taught and administered it, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 2:38; 9:5; 16:31; 10:47.

In the fifth place, we teach, seek and desire such a Supper as Christ Jesus himself has instituted and administered, Mat. 26:19; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; first, to a church which is outwardly without spot and blemish, that is, without any considerable transgression and wickedness; for the church can only judge as to the visible; but what is inwardly wicked and not outwardly apparent to the church, as the betraying of Judas, of that God is to judge, for he alone tries the hearts and minds and not the church. Secondly, in both forms, namely, bread and wine; thirdly, to the remembrance of the Lord's death. Fourthly, as a renewal and proof of brotherly love, as this supper was also called a brotherly supper among the ancients, as Tertullian writes.

In the sixth place we seek and desire that all strange ceremonies and manners of worship which are without the word of God, or instituted contrary to it and tend to abominable idolatry,

such as holy water, oral confession, infant baptism, masses, matins, vespers, images, altars, false promises and similar ceremonies, may be abolished, not by force of arms, but peaceably by the word of God, that the poor, ignorant populace may no longer be deceived by such vain works which are nothing short of idolatry; but that they may put their faith in the living God and in the merits of our always blessed Lord Jesus Christ and that they may cordially walk in his divine commandments, not varying to the right or the left; for in him is life everlasting, John 12:50 and in none other.

In the seventh place we seek, desire, teach and preach that all magistrates, emperors, kings, dukes, counts, barons, mayors, knights and other officers may be so taught and trained by the Spirit and word of God that they may sincerely seek, honor, fear and serve Christ Jesus, the true head of all lords and potentates; that they may rightly administer their office and use the sword given to them by God, in fear of him and in brotherly love, to the praise of God, to the protection of the good and to the punishment of the evil, according to the intent of the word of God, Rom. 13:3; 1 Pet. 2:13; as did the men of God, such as Moses, Joshua, David, Ezekiel, Josiah and others. Read also Deut. 17:2 & 3 and you will clearly understand what God has commanded all magistrates to do.

Besides, we teach the true love and fear of God, the true love of our neighbor, to aid and assist all mankind and to injure none; to crucify the flesh and its lusts; to circumcise the heart, mouth and the whole body with the knife of the divine word, of all unclean thoughts, unbecoming words and actions. Now consider whether these things are not the will of God, the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, the true ministering of the sacraments and the true life which is of God; even though all the gates of hell may wilfully oppose them.

Behold, dear brethren, against these doctrines, sacraments and life no imperial decrees, no papal bulls, no councils of the learned, no long usage, no human philosophy, no Origen, Augustine,

Luther, Bucer, prison, banishment or murder can prevail; for it is the eternal, imperishable word of God. It is, I repeat, the *eternal word of God* and will remain immutable forever. *Etiamsi rumpantur illa codro.* [Even if those cords are broken.] Whosoever yet opposes and wars against these things, either at heart, verbally or by the sword, does not war against flesh and blood, that is, against man, but he wars against the Lamb, and against him who has all power and who by his word created heaven and earth and the fullness of it. Yes, against Jehovah who lifts up his hand and says, "I live forever," Deut. 32:36-40.

As this is the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, which alone leads to life eternal and as there is no other true doctrine besides it; therefore I might be asked by the reader why it is that so very few men sincerely believe and fulfill it in works? In my opinion there are four reasons for this. First, because all lords, preachers and common people are carnal and earthly minded; therefore they cannot admit the lovely doctrine of the Holy Spirit, [which is] the doctrine of eternal peace. Secondly, because they are drunk and full of the enchanting wine of the Babylonian whore, [who is] exceedingly rich and not in want of anything, Rev. 17:2; 3:17. Thirdly, because they do not fear the awful judgment and fearful wrath of God against all disobedience and transgression. Yes, they so utterly disregard the word of God, [it is] as if the Holy Spirit was merely jesting when threatening temporal or eternal punishment. Fourthly, because they do not acknowledge the great beneficence of God toward them in Christ Jesus; for if they did acknowledge the works of divine love toward them, namely, that God has created heaven and earth and the fullness of it for their benefit; that he formed them after his own image from the dust of earth; placed them at the head of all creation; gave them gold, silver, land, house and home and all the necessities of life and gave them his divine word. First [there was] the law of nature, then Moses and the prophets and afterwards his only begotten Son, Christ Jesus, [with] his wisdom and his power, who has taught

them the will of his Father in great clearness; opened heaven and closed hell; vanquished death, sin and the devil for them; fulfilled the cumbersome, threatening law ~~on the cross~~ [throughout his life] and acquired for them grace, favor, mercy, peace, freedom, deliverance, remission of sins and eternal life with the Father [on the cross], if they in truth believe, seek and desire it. Besides [this, the Father is] calling them daily to repentance, regeneration and the glory of the chosen children of God; desiring to draw them forth from the darkness of the world and deliver them into the kingdom of his beloved Son; not letting his righteous judgment come on them as it did on Sodom and Gomorrah; giving them day and night, sun and moon, rain and drought; again, blessing them with wisdom and understanding, wife, children, cattle and fruits. If they did cordially acknowledge these rich gifts of his abundant grace, then all the tyrants under heaven would not separate them from the doctrine, love, sacraments, life and confession of Jesus Christ even if it were possible that they could testify to and assert it by a thousand deaths. Yes, they would say with the apostle Paul, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” Rom. 8:35.

But because they do not acknowledge the God of all grace in his divine word, judgments and beneficences; and do not acknowledge the Spirit, power, will and life which is in Christ Jesus whom we should follow, according to the word of God; therefore they so wrongfully oppose and persecute the heavenly doctrine of Jesus Christ and diligently follow, teach and protect all manner of falsehood, deceit, fraud and idolatry. Again I repeat, If they rightly acknowledged and believed the paternal heart, mind and love, protection, favor, will, solicitude and affection of the Almighty God in Christ Jesus, they would doubtlessly accept and cordially fulfill his blessed word and admonition; but as they do not rightly acknowledge Christ Jesus nor his Father—the Savior said, “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,

that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believes on him is not condemned; but he that does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil,” John 3:16-19.

Take heed, O you miserable, erring men! For here the eternal wisdom of the blessed Christ Jesus has expressed why you do not believe his precious word and do not fulfill his divine will: because you prefer the damnable darkness to the saving light. Yes, I repeat, that if you sincerely accepted and believed the divine goodness, mercy and the ineffable love of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ toward you, namely, that through his ardent love he became a humble mortal man for you; came down from high heaven into these lower parts of the earth, taught and preached unto you the eternal kingdom of God, performed miracles, prayed, suffered tribulation, anxiety, apprehension and prison; that he was beaten, mocked, derided, spit upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, drenched with gall and vinegar, blasphemed and crucified. He died and was buried for you; was again raised up, ascended to heaven [and is] seated at the right hand of the Father. By his precious blood he became your faithful Servant, Reconciler, Deliverer, Mediator and Advocate; by love he sent to you and the whole world, his faithful servants, the holy apostles, with the word of grace. If you believe all this, you would doubtlessly love *him* who has shown you such great love and grace without any merit on your part; and if you would return the love with which he has loved you and yet loves you, you would, truly, not tire of seeking him and following him, so that you might live unblamably according to his blessed will and walk all your life in his divine

commandments, for as he himself says, “He that has my commandments and keeps them is he that loves me,” John 14:21.

Behold, most beloved reader, thus true faith or true knowledge begets love and love begets obedience to the commandments of God. Therefore Christ Jesus says, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Mark 16:16. Again at another place, “Truly, truly, I say unto you, he that hears my word and believes on him that sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation; but has passed from death into life,” John 5:24. For true evangelical faith is of such a nature that it cannot lay dormant, but manifests itself in all righteousness and works of love; it dies unto flesh and blood; destroys all forbidden lusts and desires; cordially seeks, serves and fears God; clothes the naked; feeds the hungry; consoles the afflicted; shelters the miserable; aids and consoles all the oppressed; returns good for evil; serves those that injure it; prays for those that persecute it; teaches, admonishes and reproves with the Word of the Lord; seeks that which is lost; binds up that which is wounded; heals that which is diseased and saves that which is sound. The persecution, suffering and anxiety which befalls it for the sake of the truth of the Lord is to it a glorious joy and consolation.

All those who have a faith as is here mentioned, namely, a faith that makes [one] desirous to walk in the commandments of the Lord, to do the will of the Lord and which shows itself in all righteousness, love and obedience, also acknowledges that the word and will of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ is true wisdom, truth and life, yes, unchangeable and immutable until Christ Jesus shall reappear in the clouds of heaven at the judgment day. They do not scoff at God’s word as if it were a vapor, as do the ignorant world, saying, “What can water avail me?” but they will diligently try to obey the word of Jesus Christ in every particular, even at the risk of death according to the flesh.

Behold, beloved brethren, I speak frankly with a certain and sure conviction, not by any revelation or heavenly inspiration, but by the express, definite word of the Lord. From my inmost heart I am convinced that this doctrine is not our doctrine, but the doctrine of him who sent us, that is Christ Jesus. All those who are desirous of doing his will, will acknowledge that this doctrine is from God, and that we do not preach our own opinion, dreamings and visions. But those who do not fear God; do not believe on Christ Jesus; who trample upon his word and do not do his will; who love darkness rather than light; by them all evangelical truth must be called damnable heresy and considered and treated as deadly treason. Notwithstanding all this, the word of God shall remain unbroken until the judgment day.

Woe unto such! For in them are lost the abundant gifts of grace, the heavenly word of peace, the mild admonitions, the hard and bitter labor, and the precious treasure, which is the precious blood and bitter death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, woe, woe unto them! For it can never be that we can be saved without faith, love and obedience to our Lord Jesus Christ. I speak of those of understanding age. Paul says, "Without faith it is impossible to please him (God)," Heb. 11:6, [and Christ says] "He that does not believe is condemned," John 3:18.

As the literal law of Moses can not, at any time, be changed by the tyranny of princes, the acuteness of the learned, or by the madness of the common people; and as there could be nothing added to nor taken from it, it had to remain unchanged until the coming of Christ. Yes, as all who did not abide by this law were the children of the wrath and of death; so, also, it is today. If all the deceased apostles should be raised up and should teach us differently from what they did at the time of their ministration; and besides these, Moses and the prophets, all the angels of heaven and as many eloquent and miraculous prophets as we have hairs on our heads; and if besides these, all the princes should roar like devouring lions and ravening wolves and if every learned tongue

should cut as a razor, it would yet be impossible that those could be saved who do not abide by the wholesome doctrine, sacraments, obedience and life of Jesus Christ. Yes, they are the children of wrath, the curse and eternal death, as Christ himself says, "Not everyone that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven," Mat. 7:21. At another place he says, "If you continue in my word then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," John 8:31, 32. From this follows the opposite, beloved brethren; namely, that if we do not abide in Christ's word we cannot be his disciples and we do not acknowledge the truth; and if we do not acknowledge the truth how can we then be made free by this? And if we are not freed by truth, woe unto us that we were ever born; for then we are yet in sin, under the curse of wrath, children of hell, of the devil and of eternal death. O, misery, misery! Fear with all your heart, faithful reader! For this will never be found otherwise.

If the bloodthirsty, tyrannical lords and princes had, from the beginning, acknowledged this and would now acknowledge it, namely, that the word is eternal and will remain unchangeable and that it cannot be changed by the most exalted of men, never would they thus have opposed and murdered the professors of the divine word.

If the Roman bishop and his learned fellows had taken this matter to heart, he would never have taken from Italy her emperor and from Christ Jesus the spiritual reign. But he would, doubtlessly, have bidden adieu to his worldly glory, pomp, luxury, idolatry, false doctrine, easy life, garbled sacraments, sodomitic uncleanness, councils, statutes and decrees and would have contented himself with the immutable, heavenly doctrine of the only true Shepherd, Teacher and Bishop of our souls, Christ Jesus.

As the whole burden of our salvation is included and comprised in Christ Jesus and his holy word and in no one else, nor in any other doctrine—therefore I warn every god-fearing soul,

by the word of God; through nothing but brotherly love, not to be shaken and misled, either by the exalted position of a man, or by old age, learning, eloquence, finely gotten up ceremonies, dreams, prophecies, visions, signs and jugglery. For there can never be a wiser, truer, more diligent, more righteous, god-pleasing, unblamable, powerful, perfect, higher or holier Prophet than the always blessed Christ Jesus. Every thing, too, has testified this of him, both in heaven and upon earth. In the first place God testified this to Adam; afterward to Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Zechariah and to most of the prophets; to the angel Gabriel; to the angels at his birth; by the star of heaven; by the wise [men] from the east; the learned at Jerusalem and John the Baptist. Again at his baptism by the Father and the Holy Spirit; afterward by the multitudes, the devils; by the healing, the raising up of the dead; by changing water into wine; commanding the storm to cease; by the loaves, fishes, fig-tree and the children on palms-day. Again, at his death; by the murderer; the firmament of heaven; the whole earth; the curtains of the temple; the stones; the deceased dead and the centurion under the cross, Psa. 22:7; Isa. 53:5; Dan. 9:25. Say, what is there that has not testified to Christ Jesus? Yes, he is the one, as he himself says, who after his resurrection again ascended to heaven, to whom all power is given by the Father both in heaven and in earth, Mat. 28. Therefore it is just and right, yes it is absolutely required, if they do not want to be lost, that all magistrates bow themselves under his scepter; all reason and sagaciousness place themselves under his heavenly wisdom; all flesh lay at his blessed feet; and that every tongue confess that he is the Lord, to the honor and praise of his Father. Therefore I pray all god-fearing readers in the Lord, by the merits of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be the kingdom, the praise and honor; not to consider me any higher than a mere humble servant of Jesus Christ and as a dispenser of his mysteries, according to the faith given to me by him. I, miserable sinner that I am, on account of my unclean, greedy, proud, vain, idolatrous

and carnal life which I formerly led and on account of my yet often sinning and transgressing before my God, of who I am not worthy to be the least servant in the house of my Lord! Yet, by his grace I am what I am.

Brethren, I tell you the truth and do not lie. I am no Enoch, no Elijah, I have no visions, am no prophet, who can teach and prophesy differently from what it is written in the word of God. Whosoever tries to teach something else will soon miss the right way and be deceived in his learning. I trust that the merciful Father will keep me in his word so that I shall write or speak nothing but that which I can prove by Moses, the prophets, the evangelists or by other apostolic Scriptures and doctrines, explained in their true sense, Spirit and intent of Christ. You that are spiritually minded judge. Again, I have no visions nor angelic inspirations, neither do I desire such, lest I be by this deceived. The word of Christ alone is sufficient for me. If I do not follow his testimony, then, truly, all that I do is useless. And even if I had such visions and inspirations, which is not the case, even then it would have to be conformable to the word and Spirit of Christ, or else it would be mere fantasy, deceit and satanic temptation. For Paul says, "Let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith," Rom. 12:6. Nor am I a third David, as some have falsely passed themselves and yet pass themselves for. There are but two Davids described in the word of God. The first, a literal and figurative, namely, the son of Jesse; and the second, the spiritual, the only begotten Son of God, Christ Jesus. Whosoever passes himself for the third is a falsifier and blasphemer. Let every soul take heed, lest he err in his faith.

According to my first birth I am nothing but unclean slime and dust of earth, conceived and born in sin from my mother's womb and educated all my life in all manner of ignorance, sin and blindness, until the clear light of grace and knowledge appeared unto me from high heaven and which has given me such a heart, will and desire that I willingly seek after that which is good and

strive, with holy Paul, to “press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me,” Phil. 3:12.

O, most beloved reader, I repeat that I have formerly acted shamefully against God and my neighbors; and I yet sometimes think, speak and act recklessly, of which however I sincerely repent. What am I that I should boast of, seek and teach anything other than the always blessed Christ Jesus alone, his word, sacraments, obedience and his god-pleasing, virtuous and unblamable life. He is the only one of whom it is written: That he was begotten of the Holy Spirit; that he knew no sin; that guile was not found in his mouth, that his doctrine, word, will and commandments are life eternal, Mat. 1:25; Luke 1:31; 1 Pet. 2:22; Isa. 53:12.

Therefore take heed and save your soul. For thus every christian must be minded in regard to Christ Jesus, his Savior, and in regard to his holy word; nor must he think himself more exalted, no matter what gifts he has received, if he would not rob Christ Jesus of his glory; and remain in a humble walk before God, in the right measure of his faith as becomes him in Christ. I advise all not to deceive themselves. Let spiritual pride and vain boasting be far from you, “For God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble,” 1 Pet. 5:5.

Inasmuch as I daily see the perils which have surrounded us from the beginning; and as so many souls are deceived by the false prophesies, smooth words, seeming holiness, lying, jugglery, boasting and false promises of the anti-christians and the false prophets who are always intent upon their own honor, fame and gain, under a semblance of God’s word, as is the case with the popes of Rome, with John of Leyden, the Munsterites and others. Therefore I deem it essential to sincerely warn and advise all beloved readers in the Lord to not accept my doctrine as the gospel of Jesus Christ until they have weighed it in the balance with the Spirit and word of God, that they may not place their faith in me, nor in any teacher or writer, but solely in Christ Jesus. For if they

should accept it for my sake and should not first compare it with the word of the Lord and should thus depend upon me or any other man and not upon Christ Jesus, they would be like unto the culpable Corinthians, whom Paul severely reprov'd because there were dissensions among them; some were of Paul, some of Apollos and not all of Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. 1. They would be like those of whom it is written, "Cursed be the man that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm and whose heart departs from Jehovah," Jer. 17:5.

If I should, by my teaching, gain disciples for myself and not for Christ Jesus, seeking my own gain, praise and honor, then indeed, woe unto my soul! No brethren, no. The Lord be blessed! I do not seek that which Judas, Gallio and Theudas sought. By the grace of God I am not minded like those who, in their imagination soar above the clouds and want to be like unto the Most High, Acts 5:37. I repeat it. I am a poor, miserable sinner, who must daily fight with my flesh, the world and the devil and daily seek the mercy of the Lord; and who, with holy Paul boasts of nothing but Christ Jesus alone; and that he was crucified for us.

My writing and preaching is for nothing but for the sake of Christ Jesus; for I seek and desire nothing (this the Lord knows) but that the most glorious name, the divine will and the glory of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ may be acknowledged throughout the world. I desire and seek sincere teachers, true doctrines, true faith, true sacraments, true worship and an unblamable life; for which I must pay with much tribulation, trouble, uneasiness, labor, watching, fear, anxiety, sorrow, envy, shame, heat and cold and perhaps, at last by torture, yes by my blood and death. For my reward, according to the flesh, must be that of him who, from the beginning, in his great love, has sought the salvation of the world. I say with holy John the Baptist; Christ Jesus must increase, but I must decrease, John 3:30; he lives forever and ever, but I shall again return to the dust from where I came, as all the children of men do.

Therefore I beseech you again, by the grace of God and for the salvation of your souls, that you weigh my doctrine and the doctrine of all mankind, who have been from the times of the apostles, are now and shall yet be, in the balance with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of his holy apostles, lest you be deceived by me or by any other man, no matter whether he is a prince, learned or unlearned, holy in appearance, or miraculous. If it is the word of God which I teach, accept it in the name of the Lord, if you would not be lost. But if it is human doctrine, then let it be accursed by God. "For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid (by the apostles) which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. 3:11.

No doctrine is profitable or serviceable to our salvation but the doctrine of Christ Jesus and his holy apostles, as he himself says, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Mat. 28:19.

All Scripture, both of the Old and New Testaments, rightly explained according to the intent of Christ Jesus and his holy apostles, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 2 Tim. 3:16; but whatever is taught contrary to the Spirit and doctrine of Jesus is accursed by God, Gal. 1.

Inasmuch as there is but one corner-stone laid by the Lord Jehovah, the Almighty Father, in the foundation of Zion, which is Christ Jesus, Isa. 28:16; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:6; upon whom alone we should build conformable to his word and upon none other. As the whole world, to the contrary, have built upon strange corner-stones, such as popes, councils, doctors, doctrines and commandments of men; upon wrong practices of long standing and still continue to build upon pretending prophets; and as they thus so shamefully reject the only, noble and finished corner-stone, the always blessed Christ Jesus—therefore I can not be restrained, but must warn all god-fearing souls in the Lord, by my writings, wherever they shall be taken, read and heard, that from this

moment they may awaken, if they desire to be saved (whether I live or die by so doing) and that they must without delay, enter upon the wholesome doctrine, sacraments, obedience and life of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ; for in him alone is eternal life, as has been frequently said above.

Beloved reader, truly, I can not but wonder at the obduracy, deafness and blindness of the world, inasmuch as they are not ashamed to bear the name of Christ and to boast of his merits, blood and death, while nothing is found among them at all by which they prove the good will and nature of Christ Jesus. O, you vain boasters, if you are the true christians in whom God is pleased, as you pretend, where then, is your christian baptism in which you have buried your sins and put on the new life? Where is your true Supper in which you proclaim the death of the Lord and show your brotherly love? Where is your love and fear of God? Or your love of your neighbors? Or your humility of heart? Your mercifulness towards the needful? Your obedience to the commandments of God? Your new birth from above, which results a new life that should be unblamable before God and before all the world? Jas. 1:27. Where is the living, holy and pleasing sacrifice of your own body, which you should always be ready to present for the sake of the Lord's truth? We find nothing among you but unbelief and its evil fruits; an anti-Christian baptism, an idolatrous supper; an unclean love of flesh, unmercifulness, pride, avarice, disobedience in all divine matters, carnal birth, earthly mindedness and the old blamable life, led according to the will of him who, from the beginning, was a proud, false, deceitful, cruel and bloody murderer.

We find among you no [true] worship, but only a self-begotten set of rites which are pleasing to the flesh, such as, bells, organs, singing, celebration, ornamented churches, beautiful images, differences in victuals and in days, false purification and promises, reading many psalms and pater nosters with the mouth and not spiritually, adulteration of the sacraments and a destruction and

garbling of all that Christ Jesus has taught and commanded in his holy gospel. All of these are, truly, not works of regenerated christians, but rather the works of Satan and of the foolish, blind and ignorant flesh. For by these works neither the word nor righteousness of God is taught: no flesh is crucified; no neighbors are served; and above all they are not pleasing to God. Therefore they can not be considered, according to Scripture, services of God, but rather an abominable, fearful and terrible service of idols. For by such means the ignorant, trusting populace is led away from the true faith and trust in Christ Jesus and is led into a false trust in ceremonies, yes, in such ceremonies as the eternal wisdom of the blessed Christ Jesus has never commanded. By their ceremonies they plainly show that they believe at heart that Christ Jesus is imperfect, foolish and unclean. For if they believed him to be wise and perfect, how could they thus shamefully adulterate, break, despise and garble his perfect, evangelical word and ordinances? And if they acknowledged him to be spotless why do they seek their salvation in such impure and strange means and not in the only pure sacrifice, which is Christ Jesus?

Because true religion opposes your carnal mindedness, pride, avarice, uncleanness, vanity, ease and the lusts of your flesh, therefore you have chosen for yourselves a vain and strange religion by which you think to be saved, although you do not live according to the word and will of God. O, no, dear reader, no. I repeat it: If all creatures under the heavens were devouring swords, fire and water; if all men were cruel, horrible and bloody tyrants; and if the acuteness of the learned ruled all the people, yet all would be vanity. If you would enter into life, you must be born again, John 3:5, you must be regenerated and in malice you should be children, 1 Cor. 14:20. Yes, you must keep the commandments which were taught and commanded by Jesus Christ, Mat. 18. Nothing can be devised as a substitute, for there will never be a way to salvation other than Christ Jesus.

It is just plain and indiscreet blindness to think that we could be saved and at the same time be avaricious, spiteful, envious, proud, adulterous and idolatrous, as all the Scriptures plainly show and teach that such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Did you ever find falsehood with God? I think not. Holy Paul says that God is one “that can not lie,” Tit. 1:2. Christ Jesus says, “Your word is truth,” John 17:17. If he is, then, a God that can not lie; and if his holy word is truth; O, you miserable ones, then all is lost with you. For his doctrine and truth is that the unbelieving, refractory, disobedient, avaricious, vain, lying, whoring, greedy, obdurate, idolatrous, adulterous, ambitious, bloodthirsty and carnal person shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven; but his portion shall be “everlasting destruction,” 1 Thes. 1:9, [resulting in] eternal darkness and eternal death.

As you are such ungodly, obdurate and wilful sinners, therefore you are, according to the word of Christ—which can not lie—and according to the doctrine of the apostles who spoke in like Spirit, deprived of the glorious revelation of the children of God and of the future life; and must ~~remain forever~~, [die the second death], by the wrath of God, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21:8.

And if you, notwithstanding this, trust to be saved while you do not sincerely repent of your old life, then, truly, your trust is vain. For by such trust you make God a liar, because you hope to acquire life contrary to his holy word.

What! Do you think, O you perverse [people], that we shall surprise, blind and bribe the Almighty, wise and just God? Do you think that the eternal truth shall become falsehood for your sake? No, beloved reader, no. Beware. The irrepressible sentence of [Jehovah] God was passed, irrepealably more than fifteen hundred years ago, namely: “If you live after the flesh, you shall die,” Rom. 8:13. This word is sure and firm.

O world, world, you thus despise as vain and useless, the calling and inviting voice of your God, who is as faithful to you as

a faithful Father is to his beloved children! And that you speak in your hearts, with beautiful Tyre, “I am of perfect beauty,” Ezek. 27:3; and with the proud [daughter of] Babel, “I am and there is none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children,” Isa. 47:8. Yes, although you now say, as do the ignorant, ‘It is peace and freedom;’ yet I tell you, as Ezekiel said unto Tyre, You are nothing; you will be nothing forever; and as Isaiah said unto Babel, You shall fall and not rise again; and with Paul, “That the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night,” and, “as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape,” 1 Thes. 5:2, 3; and although you may now, with Capernaum, be exalted unto heaven yet you will be brought down to hell, and unlooked for, Mat. 11:23. You eat, drink, dress, grab, hoard and you act in all your transactions as if you would always remain in this tabernacle of clay; and you never reflect that soon the word will be heard by all of us, “Give an account of your stewardship; for you may be no longer steward.”

The precious word of grace and of eternal peace, which is the most holy gospel of Jesus Christ, you account for nothing more than a fable; no, as accursed heresy, for you drown, burn, persecute and murder those who teach, admonish and reprove you by this word and who by the strong power of the Spirit are sent to you by God, by his grace; just as the mad synagogue of the Jews did. They did not only persecute and destroy the chosen children of God, the holy prophets, but also the only begotten Son of God himself; who by the ineffable love of the merciful Father was sent to them for their own eternal salvation. What did they say? “This is the heir; come, let us kill him and let us seize on his inheritance,” Mat. 21:38.

How long will you continue in your damnable blindness, your refractory obduracy and your pernicious madness? Reflect upon the abundant, ineffable works of grace which Christ Jesus has shown you and if his great love cannot move you to withdraw from your idolatry, disobedience and accursed life, then remember

his rigid judgments which, from the beginning of the creation, came upon all those who did not abide in his blessed word and obey, that you may by such fear, since you are not moved by his love, be drawn away from all evil.

Behold the weeping eyes, O, miserable world, and hear the tender voice of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, how he wept for obdurate Jerusalem and said unto them, "If you had known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes," Luke 19:42. At another place he says, "Behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes; and some of them you shall kill and crucify; and some of them you shall scourge in your synagogues and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth; from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. Truly, I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone them who are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings and you would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate," Mat. 23:34-38.

O, sincerely beloved readers, if you would rightly take to heart these words of Christ, your bones would become dry by fear; they would shake and tremble; for it is with you even as it was with Jerusalem and Judah. You wilfully deny that Christ Jesus is your Lord. You do not desire the true knowledge of his ways. But you desire to do as all gentiles have done from the beginning, namely, worship wood, stone, gold, silver, bread, wine and the works of your own hands. Besides this, your earthly, carnal and corrupt life does not conform in the least to the word and will of him who, by grace, created you, to his honor.

Indeed, you have so entirely rejected Christ Jesus and cast him from you in mockery that there is no doctrine, sacraments or anything left with you which conforms to his word; but you have

instituted self-begotten doctrines, sacraments, ceremonies and commandments, as if Christ Jesus, the only begotten Son, and the Wisdom of the Almighty Father, were not the true Messenger. And all those who, about these damnable, deadly errors, fraternally advise and mildly reprove you and seek to return you to Christ Jesus and to his blessed word, must be taken and suffer as rebellious heretics, in all cities and countries.

Behold, kind reader, as you have always been and yet are so unthankful for his paternal grace, God has shut you out from his mercy and has brought his just judgment upon you so that there is neither right, god-fearing truth, nor true teachers, nor deacons, nor gospel, nor faith, nor christian baptism, nor christian Supper, nor christian life, nor knowledge, nor truth, nor spiritual wisdom, nor judgment, nor ban, nor love, nor piety left ~~upon earth~~ in your church. Thus the house of which Christ Jesus has spoken is entirely destroyed and the well prepared vineyard of the Lord is without fruit and is become useless, as the prophet says,

“Now let me sing to my Well-beloved a song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up and cleared out its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, and also made a winepress in it; so He expected it to bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes.

“And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; and break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned or dug,

but there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain on it.

“For the vineyard of Jehovah of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; for righteousness, but behold, a cry for help,” Isa. 5:1-7.

Behold, dear brethren, as this judgment came first upon Israel, so it also has come upon us. For all flesh has corrupted his way, from the lowest to the highest. The heavens are iron and earth is metal. There are found in the vineyard of the Lord no dew, no moisture nor ripe fruits; there is no digger, no pruner nor tender. Every where it is accursed; the walls and hedges are trampled down; it is laid waste to be trampled upon by all men; strangers have dominion over it. The Gentiles have entered into the sanctuary and have soiled the temple of the Lord. Our princes are to us devouring lions; our fathers are our betrayers; our pastors are our deceivers; our shepherds are our wolves; our watchmen are the thieves and murderers of our souls. We find nothing but thistles and thorns; it is all plundered and robbed; it is all torn up and broken down wherever we turn.

And all this on account of our sinfulness; this we must confess before our God.

Yes, dearest reader, compare our transgressions with those of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities which God has destroyed on account of their sinfulness and see how far they stand above us yet. For if we will rightly look into the matter we can conceive of no sinfulness greater than that of our time; no matter how great a sin it is, as pride, avarice, fornication, adultery, idolatry, backbiting, hatred, envy, greediness, treason, murder, disobedience to God, refractoriness, lying, stealing, hypocrisy or any other ungodliness, as may be plainly seen.

Besides this, flesh is accounted Spirit; falsehood, truth; sinfulness, righteousness; and Satan is accounted as Christ by this miserable, blind, erring world. Anti-christ is seated in the temple

of God. Pharaoh arms himself against Israel. The powerful miracles and the beseeching voice of the Lord are neither seen nor heeded. Thus has this abominable darkness covered the whole land of Egypt. I repeat, thus the fearful judgment of God has come upon us because of our sinfulness, as the prophet says:

“Behold, Jehovah’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated you from your God and your sins have hidden his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness. None calls for justice, nor any plead for truth; they trust in vanity and speak lies; they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice’s eggs and weave the spider’s web: he that eats of their eggs dies and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity and acts of violence are in their hands. Their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they do not know; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made crooked paths for themselves: whosoever goes in this way shall not know peace. Therefore judgment is far from us, neither does justice overtake us. We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon-day as in the night; we are in desolate places like dead men. We all roar like bears and mourn sorely like doves; we look for judgment but there is none; for Salvation, but it is far away from us. For our transgressions are multiplied

before you and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them: In transgressing and lying against Jehovah and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward and justice stands far off: for truth has fallen in the street and equity can not enter. Yes, truth fails; and he that departs from evil makes himself a prey: and Jehovah saw it and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man and wondered that there was no intercessor,” Isa. 59:1-16.

Most beloved, thus has God, the just judge, sent his fearful judgment into this wicked world, although you do not feel it. For inasmuch as you trample upon the Son of God, deem the blood of the New Testament as unclean and grieve the Holy Spirit of grace—therefore you are under the terrible judgment and have fallen into the hands of the living God, so that you prefer falsehood to truth, obscurity to light, death to life; and therefore God has sent you error and deprived you of his holy word, faith, knowledge and truth, so that you have, in this world, neither light nor way, nor spiritual wisdom, nor prayer, nor God, nor Christ, nor promise, nor righteousness, nor peace, nor conscientious freedom, nor inward joy nor hope; notwithstanding you so highly boast of the name, mercy, merits, death and blood of the Lord. For since you say that you acknowledge God and yet do not honor and thank him as God, therefore he has allowed you to be deceived by your sensual thoughts and your foolish heart has become obscured, 1 John 1:6; John 1;10; Rev. 22:15; John 9:31; Eph. 4:18; Rom. 1:18, 22. Besides, you deem it but mockery to acknowledge God; therefore God has delivered you to a perverse mind, to do the things you should not do; “Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers; backbiters, haters of God,

despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful," Rom. 1:29 -31.

Behold, beloved reader, thus God mysteriously punishes by his righteous judgment. For [Jehovah] God, the Almighty Lord visits this world in many different ways, on account of the sinfulness of it, such as with bondage, war, blood-shed, drought, famine, pestilence and many other diseases; at which plagues and chastisements the world is horror-stricken. But above all, the most terrible wrath of God is his depriving us of his divine word. For the first mentioned plagues, such as pestilence, famine, sword, &c., only punish us according to the flesh and are chastisements for our correction, as the prophet says, which he inflicts that his children may learn wisdom; but when he deprives us of his word, then all is lost. For if we do not have the word, we truly have nothing but unbelief, blindness, error, disobedience, conceit, acrimony, an unclean, foolish and adulterous spirit and eternal death. But how few, yes, how *very few*, are horror-stricken at these plagues, however abundantly they have come upon them.

If we should desire to put out a man's eyes, cut off his ears, take his life or take from him the inheritance of his natural father, would not such a one use all his reason, wit and wisdom to prevent such pain, shame, danger and damage? And to-day the whole world have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, life and yet are dead; and, above all, are bereft of the eternal inheritance of the merciful Father, but do not mind it. O, if they acknowledged their own misfortune, how diligently they would seek him who gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and true wisdom to the unlearned, which is Christ Jesus, Psa. 94:9.

But the finely attired woman has so enchanted you and her whoring spirit of spiritual whoredom has so kept you under its wings that I fear, indeed, that your abominable unbelief, obscurity, blindness, falsehood and madness will never be taken from your hearts, but the wrath of God will remain upon you to the end; so

that in this earthly life you will err, without any piety, [lurching] from one unclean thing to another until the time that we shall be placed before the just judge, where everyone shall receive his reward according to his works. Then, when its too late, your blind eyes will be opened amidst sighs and unavailing remorse, acknowledging that you have not walked in the ways of righteousness to eternal life, but in the dark ways to eternal death. O misery, where will you then hide yourselves from the wrath of God? Then you will cry in terror: You mountains fall upon us and you hills cover us, Rev. 6:16. For then there can not be found a place of prayer, of mercy, nor of repentance for the sinner. But the awful sentence of the just God against all the wicked, unbelieving, wilful and disobedient sinners will then be pronounced, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," Mat. 25:41. O, how well it would be for such if they had never been born.

Therefore I will not cease, while I live, to teach and admonish both verbally and by writing, so far as God, the merciful Father, by his ineffable kindness, is giving me knowledge, spirit, grace and wisdom, to all those that seek the truth; that they may awaken while it is yet time and seek the Lord while he may yet be found and call upon him while he is near, that their righteousness may go forth as a light and their salvation burn like a torch; which consists in nothing but casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armor of light, which is to renounce all false doctrine, sacraments, false religion and the unbecoming, dishonest, carnal life and entering into the divine doctrine, the evangelical sacraments, the services and works of love and the sincere, christian life, as it was taught, instituted and practiced by Christ Jesus himself, our only Deliverer and Shepherd, according to the will of his Father, Isa. 55:6; 62:2; Rom. 13:12.

Thus I labor and strive, according to the small talent given to me by God, of which God is my witness, after nothing else than that the Day-star, the blessed Christ Jesus, the ever shining Light

may arise in your heart and enlighten you in all divine truth; knowledge, spiritual understanding and wisdom, unto eternal life. Amen, 2 Pet, 1:19.

Most beloved reader, with this I beseech you, whether you be lord, prince, learned or unlearned, [rich or poor,] to peruse these and all my writings with the fear of God in your hearts. I have no doubt but you will clearly find that our doctrine is the doctrine of Jesus Christ and his holy apostles, does not tend to mutiny, discord, treason and rebellion; but rather, yes surely, to true christian love, unity and peace. For Christ Jesus, whom we preach, is the true Prince of eternal peace and not of discord, Isa. 9. Say, whom have we curtailed? Whom have we injured? We sincerely seek nothing but that we may save all mankind. Not only at the cost of our chattels, shelter, gold, silver and labor, but also (understand it in a spiritual sense) at the cost of our life-blood.

Truly, truly, I say, If all lords and princes and their subjects who boast of the name of Christ would acknowledge the before-mentioned doctrines of Jesus Christ as right and true and were minded as the doctrine, life and Spirit of Christ require, then it would not be necessary to fortify cities and towns; to keep cavalry and infantry, nor to manufacture deadly weapons such as guns, swords and spears. I do not here speak of the sword of justice which is given as a punishment to the wicked and for protection of the good. But it would be as the prophet says, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "But every man shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree," Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3, 4. For it is impossible that those who have committed themselves to the doctrine, life, body and church of Jesus Christ and remain in this should seek or desire anything but divine love, peace and unity; to suppress all evil and protect all good, as becomes us in Christ Jesus. But we do not support the false prophets of the corrupted sects which in many actions transgress the doctrine, rule and measure of Christ.

With this we commend you to the Lord. O, faithful readers, now judge for yourselves according to the word of the Lord, whether or not I have, by his grace, pointed out to you the truth of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. Grace, peace, mercy, true knowledge and eternal life be to all who, in truth, love Christ Jesus, Amen.

Do not hide the praise of God. But let it be read and heard by all who diligently seek and desire it. Beloved brethren, do not deviate from the doctrine and life of Christ.



**A FUNDAMENTAL
AND
CLEAR CONFESSION OF
THE POOR AND
DISTRESSED CHRISTIANS**

**CONCERNING
JUSTIFICATION, THE PREACHERS, BAPTISM,
THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND THE SWEARING OF
OATHS; ON ACCOUNT OF WHICH WE ARE SO
MUCH HATED, SLANDERED, AND BELIED,
FOUNDED UPON THE WORD OF GOD.**

BY

MENNO SIMON.

A.D. 1552.

**“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, I will also
confess him before my Father who is in heaven; but whosoever
shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my
Father who is in heaven,” Mat. 10:32, 33.**

**“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid,
which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.**

A TRUE knowledge of the divine word, a fruitful faith in Christ Jesus, unfeigned love and a pious, penitent, unblamable life I sincerely wish to all those who shall see, read or hear this, our confession of God our heavenly Father, through Christ Jesus our Lord, who has loved us and cleansed us of our sins with his blood. To him be the honor, praise, kingdom, power and glory, forever and ever, Amen.

Christ says, "Whosoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that hears these sayings of mine and does not do them shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was its fall," Mat. 7:24-27.

PREFACE.

Honored reader, the reason why we write this is because we and our ancestors, for many centuries, have sought the light in obscurity, the truth in falsehood, life in death and the way among the deceivers; and have wandered about like a flock of sheep without a shepherd; and, alas, there was none who pointed us to the way of life and led us into the pasture of the Lord. The accursed doctrine of anti-christ had so drawn the shameful smoke of deceit from the bottomless pit; had so obscured the glorious dazzling of the divine word that the just judgment of God was coming upon this reckless world, on account of its sinfulness. Alas, there was neither true doctrine nor true knowledge of God

and Christ, nor faith, baptism, Supper, ban in accordance with God's word, nor love, nor righteousness found among men and very little of which is found as yet; for all over the world we find false teachers, hypocritical deceivers and enemies of the cross, who diligently serve their own bellies, who by their tickling, erring doctrine proclaim peace to those who know of no peace and thus strengthen the hands of the wicked so that none converts himself from his wickedness, as the prophet says.

Yes, they have carried on their wrangling, writing and preaching so far that they adjudge the Lord's express ordinances of baptism, Supper and ban, as commanded by him and as taught, practiced and testified to by his holy apostles, not only as heretical, but also fiend-like. They upbraid and persecute those who keep them, as may be plainly seen; and have instituted a new baptism, one which the Scripture does not know, which is more pleasing to the flesh than the baptism of Christ; a new Supper which is a false consolation to the ungodly; also a ban which serves for nothing but the destruction of the pious and which is not founded on anything reasonable; for if they are not banished from city and country, they are sentenced to the stake or water; nor is it practiced sparingly upon the pious in many places.

In short, they have so led the common world from God and so estranged them by their carnal doctrine and false sacraments and led them into such unbelief and heathenish life that all heaven must be afflicted and ashamed of their way. Say, reasonable reader, who can enumerate the accursed, ungodly pride, pomp, adultery, fornication, idolatry, Roman and Spanish abominations, unfaithfulness, fraud, avarice, usury, unrighteousness, debauchery, luxury, hatred, envy, murder, thefts, robbery, incendiarism, treason, blood-shed, unmannerly, obscene words, the terrible lying, shameful diseases, lameness, suffering and wounds which are found with this wicked, reckless world? Yet they claim to be the church of Christ. Yes, everything is in such a condition that we may well say with the prophet Hosea, "There is no truth, nor

mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land; but swearing and lying and killing and stealing and committing adultery; they break out and blood touches blood,” Hosea 4:1, 2; with Jeremiah, that “An appalling and horrible thing is committed in the land,” Jer. 5:30; with John, that “The whole world lies in wickedness,” John 5:19; and with John the divine that their “sins have reached unto heaven,” Rev. 18:5. O, faithful reader, it is worse than I can express. Whosoever is reasonably disposed may realize the truth.

Inasmuch as the brightness of the sun has not shone for so many years; as heaven and earth have been as copper and iron; as the brooks and springs have not run, nor the dew dropped from heaven; as the beautiful trees and verdant fields have been dry and barren (I mean spiritually); but, inasmuch as, in these latter days, the gracious, great Lord, by the rich treasures of his love, has again opened the windows of heaven and let drop the dew of his divine word. The earth once more produces its green branches and plants of righteousness, as before, which bear fruit unto the Lord and glorify his adorable name; and inasmuch as the holy word and sacraments of the Lord again lift up their heads from the ashes, by means of which the blasphemous deceit and abominations of the learned are made manifest—therefore all the infernal gates are opened in opposition; they foam and rave and that with such subtle deceit, blasphemous falsehood and tyranny that if the strong God did not interpose with his gracious power, no man could be saved. But they will never wrest from him his chosen ones.

Inasmuch as they so fearfully teach and strive against the truth, weigh out dross for silver, and, besides, accuse us of all manner of shame, blasphemy, roguery and profanity, as they did from the beginning to all those who fear the Lord—therefore we are forced and constrained by the true love of the divine word and the salvation of your souls, to explain briefly to you according to the word of the Lord, the sure, divine foundation and the pure, immutable truth of Justification, of the Preachers, of Baptism, of the Supper and of the swearing of oaths. On account of these we

are so much hated and slanderously belied by every person and especially by the learned. You may by our explanation acknowledge what the Holy Scriptures clearly teach in regard to these articles; and show whether we are such useless, ungodly people as the learned incessantly cry against us and tell the people. If you have ears to hear, then hear the word of the Lord; and if you have understanding hearts, take heed and follow the truth.



A FUNDAMENTAL AND CLEAR CONFESSION OF THE POOR, AFFLICTED CHRISTIANS.

HONOURED reader, it is plain and manifest that Adam and Eve, the father and mother of us all, were, in the beginning, created after the image of God by Christ. They were pure, good, without sin, righteous and incorrupt, as the Scripture teaches, Gen. 1:27; 5:1; 2:7; Acts 17:24; Eccl. 17:9. And they remained pure and righteous until they sinned against their Creator's word and commandment. For God had said unto them, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat; for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die;" as also it happened. For as soon as Adam and Eve, deceived by the serpent, ate of the forbidden fruit they became impure, unrighteous, corrupt, of sinful nature, children of death and of the devil; and thus, by their disobedience they ceased to be children of God and lost the purity in which they

were created. They would have always remained, with all their descendants, in sin, under the curse and servitude of death and the devil, if [Jehovah] God, the merciful Father whose love endures forever, had not again comforted and raised them up by the promise of Christ whom he said he would send in the future to bruise the Serpent's head; for whose sake he would be gracious unto them, would forgive their transgression, and would show them mercy and favor, so far as they would believe.

When Adam and Eve heard these glad tidings of grace, the gospel of peace, from the mouth of Jehovah, they joyfully accepted and believed it as the immutable truth of God, anxiously cleaved to it and consoled themselves with it as a sure foundation of salvation. And thus Adam and Eve were again accepted by God through Christ Jesus, justified and delivered from the eternal death and curse; for they, according to the promise of God, believed and trusted in him and looked for him in [their] latter days as the Conqueror, Savior and means of grace to eternal reconciliation.*

But had they despised this means and not accepted it by faith, they would have suffered eternal death; this is incontrovertible, as Christ himself says, "He that does not believe is condemned already." Again, John the Baptist says, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that does not believe the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him," John 3:18, 36.

As Adam and Eve were bitten and poisoned by the infernal serpent and became of sinful nature and would have been subject to eternal death if God had not again accepted them in grace through Christ Jesus, so we, their descendants, are also born of a sinful nature through them, poisoned by the serpent, inclined to

* [CHCoG: Though God did offer them eternal life, they still had serious consequences for their disobedience: From the moment they disobeyed, they began to age, and eventually both suffered the first death, just as God had warned them. They, and their offspring, also remained under two parts of the curse: They now had to work hard to produce their food in a world where weeds flourished and some animals became savage, and Eve suffered pain in childbirth.]

evil and by our inherent sin, as children of hell by the devil and [subject to] everlasting death. We cannot be delivered from this [condemnation](we speak of those who have come to years of understanding and hence to sinful works) unless we accept Christ Jesus as the only and eternal means of grace, by true and unfeigned faith and thus conscientiously look upon the brazen serpent which is erected by God, our heavenly Father, as a sign of salvation. Without him there is no help for our souls, no reconciliation nor peace; but only disgrace, wrath and eternal death can be expected, as was said before. But those who accept this Christ by a true faith which, according to the doctrine of Paul, was given to us from the Father for the purpose of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and deliverance, are in grace for Christ's sake and God is their Father; for by faith they are born from him; he forgives them all their sins; has compassion on all their human failings and weaknesses; turns them from the curse, wrath and eternal death; accepts them as his beloved children and gives them Christ Jesus, together with all his merits, fastings, prayers, tears, sufferings, tribulation, cross, blood and death; besides this, also his Spirit, inheritance, kingdom, glory, joy and life; not, we say, by our own merits and works, but by grace through Christ Jesus, as Paul says, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loves us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ (by grace you are saved); and has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them," Eph. 2:4-10.

Behold, kind reader, thus we do not seek our salvation in works, words or sacraments, as do the learned, although they blame us for this, but we seek them alone in Christ Jesus and in no

other means in heaven or earth. In Christ, our only means, we rejoice and in no other. We trust, by the grace of God, to abide in this unto death.

But we abhor the carnal works and desire to suit ourselves to his word and commandment, according to our weakness, and we do so because he has so taught and commanded us. For whosoever does not walk according to his doctrine, proves in fact that he does not believe on him nor knows him and that he is not in the communion of the saints, 1 John 3:10; 5:10; 2 John 1:6.

All those who accept this means of divine grace, Jesus Christ, with believing hearts and enclose him in their consciences, believe and confess that their sins are forgiven through his sacrifice, death and blood; that his wrath and damnation will not be upon them forever; that he accepts them as his beloved sons and daughters and gives them eternal life. All such become of peaceable and joyous spirit and give thanks to God with renewed hearts; for the power of faith quickens and changes them into newness of life and they walk thus, by the gift and grace of the Holy Spirit in the power of their new birth, according to the measure of their faith, in obedience to their God who has shown them such great love; and they diligently watch lest they fall from the grace and favor of God by licentiousness and ungodliness. They acknowledge by the Scriptures that Adam and Eve, the antediluvian world, Sodom and Gomorrah and the patriarchs in the wilderness were severely punished by God on account of their sins; that the wages of sin is death; and also that Christ Jesus, the innocent Lamb of God who knew no sin, was so deeply humiliated and tortured on account of our sinfulness, Gen. 3:7; 19:9, 10; Lev. 10:1-4; Rom. 6:23; 1 Pet. 1:19.

Inasmuch as they believe the word of the Lord which says that to be carnally minded is death—if you live according to the flesh you shall die. Therefore adulterers, fornicators, drunkards, the avaricious, proud, liars, &c., shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Besides this, believe that God is truth; that none can be saved

contrary to his word; that he will judge in accordance with his word, because he is true and cannot lie, as the Scriptures testify, Rom. 8:6, 13; 1 Cor. 5:10; 6:10; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 22:15. Therefore they sincerely fear the Lord and by fear die unto their flesh, crucify their lusts and desires and shun and abhor the unclean, ungodly works which are contrary to the word of the Lord.

Besides this, they acknowledge the abundant grace, favor and love of God towards us, as shown in Christ Jesus and therefore, in return they love their God, for he first loved us. They stand prepared by this love to obey, in their weakness, his holy word, will, commandments, advice, doctrine and ordinances, according to the talent [they] received; and thus they show, in fact, that they believe, they are born of God and are spiritually minded. They lead a pious, unblamable life before all men; allow themselves to be baptized according to the commandment of the Lord, as proof that they bury their sins in the death of Christ and are prepared to walk with him in newness of life; they break the bread of peace with their beloved brethren as proof and testimony that they are one in Christ and his holy church. They have and know no other means of grace and remission of their sins, neither in heaven nor in earth, than the innocent flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, which he once, by his eternal Spirit in obedience to the Father, sacrificed and shed upon the cross for us poor sinners. Therefore they walk in all love and mercy and serve their neighbors. In short, they suit themselves, in their weakness, to all the words, commandments, ordinances, Spirit, rule, example and measure of Christ, as the Scripture teaches; for they are in Christ and Christ is in them; and therefore they live no longer in the old life of sin after the first earthly Adam (weakness excepted), but in the new life of righteousness which comes by faith, after the second and heavenly Adam, Christ. Paul says, I do not now live, "But Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave

himself for me,” Gal. 2:20. Christ says, “If you love me, keep my commandments,” John 14: 15.

Do not think, beloved reader, that we boast of being perfect and without sins. Not at all. I confess for myself that often my prayer is mixed with sin and my righteousness with unrighteousness; for by the grace of God I feel, by the unction which is in me, when I compare my weak nature to Christ and his commandments; what kind of a flesh I inherited from Adam. Yes, if Jehovah God should judge us according to our own worthiness, righteousness, works and merits and not according to his great goodness and mercy, then I confess with holy David that no man could stand before his judgment, Psa. 143:2; 130:3. Therefore it should be far from us that we should console ourselves with anything but the grace of God through Christ Jesus; for it is he alone, and no other, who has perfectly fulfilled the righteousness required by God. We are also aware, by the grace of God, that all saints, from the beginning, have lamented the corruption of their flesh, as may be seen by the writings of Moses, David, Job, Isaiah, Paul, James and John.

But for Christ’s sake we are in grace; for his sake we are heard; and for his sake our failings and transgressions, which are committed involuntarily, are remitted: For it is he who stands between his Father and his imperfect children, with his perfect righteousness and with his innocent blood and death; and he intercedes for all those who believe on him and who strive by faith in the divine word, to turn from evil, follow that which is good and who sincerely desire, with Paul, that they may attain the perfection which is in Christ, Phil. 3:12.

Mark, beloved reader, that we do not believe nor teach that we are to be saved by our merits and works, as the envious accuse us of without truth. We are to be saved solely by grace, through Christ Jesus, as has been said before. By grace man was created, through Christ Jesus, Gen. 1:27.

By grace he was again accepted through Christ when he was lost. By grace Christ was sent to us by the Father, John 3:34. By grace he has sought the lost sheep, Luke 15:4, taught them repentance and remission of sins. Christ died for us when we were yet ungodly and enemies, Rom. 5:6; by grace we receive faith. By grace the Holy Spirit was given to us, in the name of Jesus, John 14:16. In short, by grace we receive eternal life through Christ Jesus, Rom. 6:8.

Behold, kind reader, this is the article of our faith and confession, namely: That we can not obtain salvation, grace, reconciliation nor peace with the Father, other than through Christ Jesus, as he himself says, "No man comes unto the Father but by me," John 14:6. Peter also says, "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved" than the name of Jesus; and all those who accept this grace in Christ, preached by the gospel and accepted by a firm faith and cordially adhered to by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith become new men, born of God. They are changed in their hearts, renewed and of a different mind; yes, transferred from Adam unto Christ; and thus walk in newness of life, as obedient children, in the grace which is manifested unto them; for they are renewed. They have become humble-minded, meek, merciful, compassionate, peaceable, patient, hungry and thirsty after righteousness; they strive firmly by good works after eternal life, for they are believing, born of God, are in Christ and Christ is in them; they are partakers of his Spirit and nature and thus live according to the word of the Lord by the power of Christ which is in them. And this is, according to Scripture, [what it is] to be believing; to be a christian; and to be in Christ and Christ in us.

Again, all those who disregard this preached grace and do not accept Christ Jesus by faith; who reject his holy word, will, commandments and ordinances and hate and persecute them; who live according to their lusts and licentiously are lost. It will avail them nothing before the Lord to boast of their faith, new creature,

Christ's grace, death and blood; for they do not believe; they remain in their first birth, namely, unchanged in their earthly, corrupted nature, impenitent, carnally minded, no, utterly without the Spirit, Word and Christ. Therefore they are children of death, as Scripture teaches; for they do not know Christ in whom is life, as John says, "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life," 1 John 5:11, 12.

Behold, worthy reader, this is our foundation and confession of justification, as you have read. Judge for yourself whether the preachers act rightly in slanderously belying us, saying that we expect to be saved by our merits and works; and that we boast to be without sin.

May the Lord forgive them for so fiendishly belying us with such shameful lies. O, that these miserable men would at last take to heart that the backbiters, slanderers and liars are of the devil and worthy of death; that God abhors all liars; that they shall have no part in his kingdom; and that a lying mouth kills the soul, John 8:44; Rom. 1:32; Psalms 5:7; Revelation 21:27; 22:15.

This, I say, is our foundation, and, by the grace of God, it will always remain our foundation, for we truly know and confess that it is the invincible word and truth of the Lord. Therefore we testify before you and before all the world that we do not agree with those who teach and institute a dead faith which they gather from profane history: First, that without change, there can be Spirit, power and fruits. Secondly, that we can be saved by our own merits and works, for the reasons stated above.

May the merciful, gracious Father, through his beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, grant us all the gift of his Holy Spirit, that we may sincerely believe and confess this before-mentioned grace in and through Christ; and that we may walk and abide in this [Spirit] firmly and faithfully unto the end, to the eternal praise and glory of God, Amen.

HEARING THE PREACHERS.

IT is a well known fact, kind reader, that principally on account of this article, we are so hated and persecuted by the learned and that all the world cries against us and complains that we will not hear God's word. Therefore we are necessarily impelled, inasmuch as it concerns the praise of God and the salvation of our souls, to assign the reason according to the word of God, which we would gladly omit if we were not required [to do so] by Scripture. This is the reason why we do not hear them and conscientiously dare not listen to them, and on account of which we have to suffer so much pain and tribulation: Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." Paul also says, "If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his," and John says, "Whosoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God," John 3:3; Rom. 8:9; 1 John 1:9.

Honored reader, consider these words of the Lord. That the preachers of the world are not born again and do not have the Spirit of Christ and do not abide in his word, their fruits abundantly prove; for it is manifest that they pitifully adulterate the word of the Lord and walk according to the flesh, as will be clearly shown in the following:

First, I am convinced that you never saw one of these preachers, who are one with their church, ever convert an avaricious person from his avarice; a drunkard from his inebriety or a proud person from his pride and luxury, which are plainly works of the flesh, and, according to Scripture punishable with eternal death if not repented of. Inasmuch as it appears that they convert none, therefore it is plain that their doctrine is nothing but

vain prattle without power and fruit; which, alas, is clearly shown and proven to all the world by their unbecoming life.

Secondly, the reckless people are chained to and consoled in their unbelief and licentious, carnal life by their light-minded doctrine, sacraments and easy life; for they preach and teach you, “There are none that can truly believe; we are all sinners, therefore none can rightly keep the commandments of God. In your baptism (they say) you became a regenerated christian and received the Holy Spirit.” [And this] although you could not understand the words; although you have no faith in Christ Jesus nor knowledge of good or evil, nor any change or renewing of heart, because you were an unaware child and like false consolations. You hear their absolutions and receive their bread, as if that were sufficient; and never mind that you are yet an impenitent, avaricious, proud, drunk, unclean, envious and idolatrous man. We will leave you to judge whether these can be called preachers of peace who make arm cushions and pillows for the people and preach such things as are pleasing to them, Deut. 1:39; Ezra 13:18.

Inasmuch as none are made better by their doctrine and sacraments but are more and more comforted in unrighteousness, therefore it must be acknowledged that they strengthen you in your evil doing, shut the kingdom of heaven to you, lead you into the ditch and rob and murder your souls, Jer. 23:14; Mat. 15:14.

O, kind reader, they have so enchanted the ignorant people who so gladly walk upon the broad road, with their light-minded doctrine that we may well exclaim with Jeremiah that “No man repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?” Jer. 8:6; or who enquires after a pious, penitent or godly life? What is worse, they have carried it so far that alas, those must be called *work-saints* and *heaven-stormers* who with faithful hearts hear, believe, fear, love, and, according to the measure of their faith, obey the word of the Lord. Behold, thus entirely has the smoke of the pit darkened the sun and sky, Rev. 9:2.

As to their sacraments, it is manifest that they do not have the sacraments of Christ; but mere self-begotten abominations and idols—only a semblance of the Lord's sacraments. For they baptize infants, which Christ has not taught nor commanded by a single word in the whole New Testament and [they] are therefore called christians, notwithstanding that such baptized persons generally walk in perverse ways all their lives and not only do not confess Christ Jesus together with his holy word, but even hate him and oppose his words.

Again, their supper must be called the Lord's [actual] flesh and blood; while the Scripture at many places testifies that he ascended up to heaven, Mark 16:19; Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; Eph. 4:8; and is seated at the right hand of his Father, while common sense, besides the Scripture, teaches us that therefore he cannot be chewed with teeth nor consumed by the stomach. Besides, it is administered by some as [being] for the remission of sins. Behold, they have so entirely forsaken the Lord who has purchased them with his blood, that they have changed his praise and honor into such a weak creature [idol]. If this cannot be called serving Baal and moulding calves you may judge according to Scripture.

Lastly, How they conform their lives according to the doctrine of Paul you may best deduce from their fruits and life. That they do not walk in humility of heart before the Lord, their looks and names prove. They allow themselves to be greeted as lords and masters; notwithstanding it is forbidden by the mouth of the Lord. [Mat. 23:1-15, Mark 10:35-45, John 13:12-17.] Say kind reader, did you ever hear or read that the holy apostles and prophets were covetous of such high, vain names as are the learned and the preachers of the world?* It is true the word Rabbi or Master was applied to the ambitious Scribes and Pharisees, but not to the apostles and prophets. For we do not read of Doctor Isaiah, of

* [CHCoG: Indeed they were, and Christ had to correct them, as in the scriptures just given. But once they were filled with the Holy Spirit, such vain squabblings fell away.]

Master Ezekiel and of Lords Paul and Peter in the Bible. No, no. All those who have rightly taught the word of the Lord were not honored with such high-sounding names in their time. This I write that you may know that such ambitious, proud spirits can never rightly teach you the humble word of the cross.

Besides, also consider their avarice and concern for their appetites; for they do not preach nor render services without pay, as if the office of a preacher and shepherd were a profession or trade. Jude says, They honor the persons for the sake of profits. Where there are no liens and rents there we find none of their preachers; but where liens and rents are abundant there is no want of preachers.

Again, they are in part usurers, in part fornicators or adulterers, greedy, liars, irascible, proud, hateful, lustful, vain and lazy, envious, cruel, treacherous and rebellious toward all those who sincerely seek and fear God. In short, if you rightly confess the Lord and his word, then you must acknowledge that the best and most pious of them are yet far outside of Christ and his word in regard to doctrine, sacraments and also in their walk.

Inasmuch as all of them, in doctrine, sacraments and walk are so diametrically opposed to the Spirit, word and walk of the Lord, as it appears and inasmuch as Christ says, "Every tree is known by his own fruit," Luke 6:44; therefore it is plainly proven that they do not see the kingdom and glory of God; are not of the Lord and do not have God, as was said before.

If they do not see the kingdom of God as Christ speaks of it, how, then, can they rightly preach it and teach it to others?

If they do not have the Spirit of the Lord and are not from him (as it appears), how then, can they be true ministers and servants of the spiritual office?

And if they do not have God, how can they rightly teach and point out his precious word unto righteousness? Inasmuch as it is well known to all [these] theologians that they do not understand the kingdom of God and his glory; [they] are not of the Lord and

do not have [the true] God, as was said. Therefore we conclude that their sending, calling, office and service is not truly of God and his word; but they are of the bottomless pit and of the dragon and beast, Rev. 9:2. By this we do not mean just this one, or that one; but all preachers in general who do not act according to the word of God; no matter of which denomination or sect [they are]. We do not judge according to their boasting and appearance, but truthfully, according to doctrine, sacraments, fruits and life; for we are sure that the high and holy office, which should be filled by the power of the Spirit, can never be filled by the avaricious; nor by the proud and unrighteous, the carnal and earthly minded, nor by drunkards and the lustful who serve their appetites before their God. As Paul says; not by slanderers nor by vain prattlers, nor liars, nor soothsayers, nor hirelings, nor by those who adulterate, hate and oppose the Spirit, will, word, ordinances and commandments of the Lord and who are ignorant and blind in all spiritual and evangelical matters; for the Spirit and word of God do not know such shepherds and teachers. Instead, the Scripture portrays them with many terrible names and calls them profane, blind watchmen and greedy dogs, blind leaders, consumers of souls, false daubers, fools who do not seek Jehovah, preachers of [false] peace, of whom it is written, "The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I did not send them, neither have I commanded them, nor spoke unto them; they prophesy unto you false vision and divination and a thing of nought and the deceit of their heart," Jer. 23:11; Mat. 15:14; Ezek. 13:10; Jer. 10:8; 14:14. In short, they are the teachers against whom the word of the Lord has faithfully warned us. Read it here and there in the prophets, particularly Jer. 23:13; Mat. 7:15; 15:14; 16:12; 24:11; Mark 12:38; Luke 12:1; 20:45.

Say, kind reader, did you ever read in the Scriptures of any proud, avaricious, unclean, lying, inebriated and idolatrous prophets, apostles and shepherds who were pleasing unto the Lord? Or of such who, to please the world, have adulterated,

changed and abused the word, ordinances and commandments of the Lord? Or of such who said to cities, districts or towns, If you will care for our necessities of life; or, if you will give us so much money or income, we will teach you the word of the Lord? O no, reader, no. It never was and never will be the way of the holy prophets, apostles or servants of Christ. Of this we are sure.

The teachers and preachers who are sent by God are born from God, are of a godly nature and are prompted by the Spirit of the Lord. They acknowledge the kingdom of heaven and are ~~forced~~ [led] into the vineyard of the Lord by pure, unfeigned love of God and of their neighbors. [They] do not seek the gifts of Balak, nor the tables of Jezebel; but they seek the praise of God and the salvation of your souls and commend their worldly cares to him, who, according to the word of his promise, furnishes the necessities of life to all creatures upon earth, Mat. 13:25; Num. 22:28; 2 Pet. 2:16.

They teach the words of the law in the power of the Spirit, [even] to the remission of sins and the denial of the flesh by the gospel of grace for the consolation, peace and joy of all the god-fearing, pious hearts, who before disobeyed the law and so greatly feared the wrath and judgment of the Lord.

They reprove and shun all false doctrine, deceit, abuse, idolatry and licentious, reckless life, which is of the flesh and contrary to the word of the Lord. They use baptism, Supper, ban and all the ordinances of God as is commanded to them by the word of the Lord, be it unto life or death; they advise lords and princes, learned, unlearned, male and female, so far as they possibly can, if they are favored with a hearing; for the word of God excuses neither emperor nor king, doctor nor master, rich nor poor; all must follow the word of the Lord who wish to be saved, Mat. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 9:6.

They lead their lives in the fear of the Lord; they die daily, with holy Paul, for the sake of their brethren; they are pointed at by all the world; are slandered, persecuted and deemed the sap and

substance of all knaves and rogues. Notwithstanding they are always ready to show their love and faithfulness to all, as was formerly the case with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah the son of Berechiah, John the Baptist, the apostles and Christ himself; and how the pious are thanked and rewarded at the present time for their love and services, the burning, the sword, the stake and the wheel show, 1 Cor. 15:32. Carefully observe and understand me, kind reader.

The sending, calling, doctrine, sacraments and life of the [worldly] preachers do not conform to the before-mentioned rules and [they] are therefore not from God, as was said. They generally do not enter but to destroy, steal and murder, as the Lord says; to adulterate and garble the precious word and the holy sacraments, to gratify their appetites; to exclude the word of God and institute their own; to kill the souls which would have eternal life; and promise life to those who will die the eternal death. And [all this] for the sake of a handful of barley and a mouthful of bread, as the prophet says; [they] rule but do not serve; deceive but do not lead; corrupt but do not teach; weaken but do not cure and scatter but do not gather. They shut the kingdom of heaven against man and freely lead all poor souls to hell. Behold, therefore we do not hear them, nor can we conscientiously hear them; for the word of the Lord everywhere admonishes and commands us that we should beware of them, flee and shun them and not hear them, as was said before, Ezek. 13:14; 34:1; Jer. 5:26; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:8; 2 John 1:8.

Judge now, kind reader, whether these reasons are not sufficient to shun the preachers. We have not presented to you philosophical words, garbled flatterings, nor falsehood; but we have pointed you to such facts as you may daily observe and hear of among your preachers. This is what our much beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus and fellow-partakers of the tribulation, kingdom and obedience of Christ, the faithful children of God, have for many long years so frankly confessed and so heroically

asserted before this idolatrous, bloody world, in excessive measure of poverty, by preaching and writing, at the peril of their life, property, blood, prison, banishment, water, fire, chains, gallows, wheels and the stake; but [their] preachers remain preachers and the world remains the world. They, as it appears, will [almost] never be converted, for they so firmly adhere to their idolatry that they do not allow themselves to be converted, Jer. 8.

Honored reader, we pray for you for Christ's sake that you will rightly understand our confession; do not think that we have written this out of bitter feelings or hatred, inasmuch as it so openly reproves, discovers and points out the shame of these preachers. O, no. We testify before you and before the Lord who has created us that there is no hatred or bitterness in our hearts; for we know and confess that they are works of the flesh and will be rewarded by death. But we have written in purity of heart, as before him who tries the hearts and minds, to the service of you and all mankind, no matter whether they be our opponents or not, learned or unlearned; to the service of all those who seek the truth; that we may so uncover the judgment of the Babylonian whore and the covert wiles of the learned, by such expositions, that you and all god-fearing hearts may tire of the inhuman abominations and so understand the word and truth of the Lord and with all your hearts seek and obey the same, that you may be saved, Rom. 1:32; Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 17:1.

OF BAPTISM.

CONCERNING baptism, we believe and confess that it is the institution, word, ordinance and command of the Lord; and therefore a holy, divine sacrament or sign by which faith and its powers, fruits and mysteries are gloriously represented and

portrayed when rightly administered according to the ordinance of God and not after our own choice, namely: To the believing and not to infants.

We teach and administer baptism upon the confession of faith, for these reasons: First, because Christ himself has commanded so, for he says, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” Mark 16:15; Mat. 28:19.

Secondly, because the holy apostles have taught and administered it upon the confession of faith, according to the commandment of God and not to infants, Acts 2:38; 8:37; 10:47; 16:15; 18:8; 19:5. Thirdly, because the effect, or the signification which is represented by baptism is found with the believing and not with infants, Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4; 1 Pet. 3:21; Gal. 3:27.

Inasmuch as Christ, the Wisdom and Truth himself, has commanded that we should baptize the believing; and as his faithful witnesses, the holy apostles, have not taught and administered it other than according to the commandment of their Lord; and as the signification is only applicable to the believing and not to infants as remarked; and as, by the grace of the Lord, we acknowledge from the Scriptures that Moses and the prophets, yes, even the Father himself, point us to Christ, then we shall hear him. According to the doctrine of Paul, there can be laid no other foundation, nor any other gospel preached but that preached to us by [Christ and] the apostles. Behold—therefore we teach, receive, assert and maintain baptism upon the confession of faith, at the cost of so much misery, even at the peril of property and life; for we truly confess this in accordance with the Scripture, which is the true light for our feet, which is the institution, word, ordinance and command of the Lord, Jer. 23:33; Mat. 17:5; Mark 9:6; Luke 9:30; 1 Cor. 3:11; Psal. 119:105.

INFANT BAPTISM.

IN regard to infant baptism we hold and confess: First, that it is a self-begotten rite and human righteousness; for in all the New Testament there is not a word said nor commanded about baptizing infants, not by Christ nor by the apostles.

Secondly, infant baptism is a breaking and tearing to pieces of the ordinance of Christ; for he has commanded that the gospel should be preached and that those should be baptized who believe, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15. But they baptize infants without a divine command, without the preaching of the word, without [their] knowledge, faith, repentance, new life and without all awareness and knowledge, yet it is called by the learned a holy, glorious work and a christian baptism and sacrament.

Thirdly, that it is a vain consolation and boasting of all the unrighteous; for although they do not understand the word of God, do not know the truth and lead a licentious, carnal life, yet they boast themselves to be baptized christians.

Since infant baptism is such a pernicious superstition, it entirely destroys the Lord's baptism and the poor, blind world allow themselves to be misled and consoled with it. Besides this, there is connected with it such fearful blasphemy, hypocrisy, adjuration, witchcraft and abuse of the glorious name of God that a god-fearing heart may well be astounded by it. Therefore it is that we so strenuously oppose infant baptism, and openly confess that it is not of God nor of his word but [is] of anti-christ and of the bottomless pit.

Luther writes in a book on "*Human Doctrine*" that "what is not commanded by God in religious matters of faith is forbidden." Again, concerning the 12th chapter of Genesis he says that "we should not accept any doctrines without certain reasons from the divine word."

Daniel writes, "Worship without the word of God is idolatry."

Philip Melancthon, in a book on the *Jurisdiction and Authority of the Church*, says, “That all worship which is not instituted by God by his express word is false and wrong, let it be glossed over ever so much.”

Here Luther and Melancthon have rightly expressed themselves according to the Scripture, although alas, they did not practice it. For if we read and well consider the Scriptures then we clearly find how pointedly God has commanded us that we shall not institute a religion of our own choice, but that we should do as he has commanded. On account of self-righteousness and self-chosen religion, Israel was visited and severely punished by the Lord [Jehovah].

Do not say, beloved reader, as the ignorant do, that we by this condemn our children because we do not allow them to be baptized. O, no. For the Scripture does not connect the kingdom to words and water, but to the election and grace of the Father, in the merits of the death and blood of Christ.

Christ has promised the kingdom to small children without baptism, Mat. 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16. On account of this promise we are exceedingly rejoiced and give thanks unto the Lord for the grace shown to our children. Therefore, take heed and do not make this mistake; for to connect the election, grace, favor and kingdom of God to words, works, signs and the elements is quite contrary to the merits, death, blood and word of the Lord; yes, it is open deceit, abomination and idolatry.



THE LORD'S HOLY SUPPER.

IN the same manner we believe and confess concerning the Lord's Holy Supper, that it is a holy sacramental sign, instituted by our Lord himself, in the shape of bread and wine; and left to his

own in remembrance of him, Mat. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; 1 Cor. 11; which was also thus taught and administered by the apostles among the brethren, according to the commandment of the Lord, by which, first, the Lord's death is proclaimed, 1 Cor. 11; and also to remember how he offered his holy flesh and shed his precious blood for the remission of our sins, Mat. 26:27; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:19.

Secondly, it is an emblem of christian love, of unity and of peace in the church of Christ. Paul says, "For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread," 1 Cor. 10:17. For as a loaf is composed of many grains, but is one bread, so we, also, as a church composed of many members, are but one body in Christ; and as the members of a natural body are not disunited but are in every respect united and peaceable among themselves, so it is with all those who in Spirit and faith are true members of the body of Christ; and for this reason this same supper was called by Tertullian a brotherly meal, or supper of love.

Thirdly it is a communion of the flesh and blood of Christ, as Paul says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10:16. Our communion is that Christ has accepted us in his great love and we have become partakers of him, as Paul says, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," Heb. 3:14.

Inasmuch as it is a sign which is left to us by Christ, in such power that it is to represent and advise us of his death as well as the love, peace and unity of the brethren and also the communion of his flesh and blood, as was said, therefore none can rightly partake of this Supper, according to Scripture, but he that is a disciple of Christ, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, who seeks the reconciliation and remission of sins in no other means than in the merits, sacrifice, death and blood of Christ alone, who

walks in unity, love and peace with his brethren and who leads a pious unblamable life in Christ Jesus, according to the Scriptures.

Here you have the true Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ together with what it represents, briefly stated, which the mouth of the Lord has left and taught you by his holy word. If you would be a becoming guest at the Lord's table and would rightly enjoy his bread and wine, then you must also be his true disciple, that is, you must be an upright, pious and godly christian. Therefore, prove yourself according to the doctrine of Paul, 1 Cor. 11:27, before you eat of this bread and drink of this cup; for before God no feigning avails. He did not institute this ceremony with the intention that God would be pleased in the mere eating of the bread or drinking of the wine. O, no. But he instituted it that by this you should observe and faithfully conform yourself to that which is represented and advised by this sacrament. For not the ceremony itself, but the meaning represented by it, rightly understood and fulfilled in actions, constitutes a sincere christian.



THE SUPPER OF THE FALSE PREACHERS.

IN regard to the supper of the [false] preachers we hold and confess, first, that it is a false and idolatrous consolation and sign of peace to all those who delight in walking upon the broad way, such as the greedy, covetous, avaricious, usurious, adulterous, lying, deceiving, proud and unrighteous persons. For as it is represented to them by their preachers, as being a means for the remission of their sins, they console themselves and think that if they partake of it they are the people of the Lord. O no. The ceremony makes no [one a] christian; for, so long as they do not [allow] themselves [to be] converted [by Christ] and become new men, born of God, of spiritual mind, it is a vain baptism and a vain

supper, even if it were administered even by Peter or Paul. Paul says, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision avails anything nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love," Gal. 5:6, the new creature; and keeping the commandments of God, 1 Cor. 7:19; Mat. 18:4; John 3:3-5; 2 Pet. 1:3.

Secondly, we assert that it is openly a feigned work, although this is acknowledged by few. For Christ instituted it in remembrance of his death, as a sign of christian peace and as a communion of his flesh and blood; while the common world partake of the supper in semblance, as if they believed thus and were thus minded; and yet they seek the remission of their sins and their salvation in infant baptism, absolutions and in the bread and wine, as is manifest.

Besides, their fruits openly show that they are not of the body of peace; for they make use of tricks and perfidy among each other in buying and selling; some also commit adultery, lie and cheat; one slanders, defames and robs another. It may be truly said of them that they do not practice real christian peace which is from God and that they are not in the communion of Christ, but that they are in the communion of him of whom John says, "Little children, let no man deceive you," "He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning," 1 John 3:7, 8.

Thirdly, we say that their supper is a horrible blasphemy, abomination and adultery, yes, a new calf and Moloch; for the blind, reckless world sees plainly that it is a perishable fruit of earth which they have planted, cut, pressed and baked with their own hands and which again returns to earth; that it must be taken care of by man lest the worms and age consume it. And yet it is called by many the imperishable precious flesh and blood of Christ and worshipped and honored as the true Son of the living God. Many of our ancestors have done this for over five hundred years and it is yet done in many large kingdoms, principalities, cities and districts, as was in bygone times the case with Israel in the worship

of the brazen serpent, which was afterwards broken in pieces by Hezekiah, king of Judah, 2 Kin. 18:4.

Behold, the apocalyptic Apollyon has rendered the scribes of this world into such rude idolaters and deceivers that they have, by their own wisdom, doctrine and council erected a powerless, earthly cereal and fruit as being, or filling the place of, the true Son of the Almighty and eternal God. Behold, thus has the noble Son of righteousness entirely lost his brightness and the Egyptian darkness has covered the entire land, Rev. 9:2; Exo. 10:22.

Faithful reader, by our exposition and confession of the [false] preachers and their baptism, supper and envious hearts toward all the pious, learn of the judgment of the finely attired woman, seated upon the scarlet colored beast in Rev. 17:3, 4. Mark: The beast upon which the woman is seated is full of names of blasphemy; understand the spiritual sense. The woman is arrayed in purple and scarlet colors—in celebrations, churches, bells, choirs, organs, baptism and supper. The cup in her hand is of gold. The papists boast of the word of God—but are filled with abominations and the filthiness of their fornication and have made all the world drunk with it; and the name is written upon her forehead and may be read by all who have spiritual eyes and is called, “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Rev. 17:5-6.

And although she is so finely arrayed that all kings commit fornication with her, yet she is called a whore by the angel and [she is] of such an inhuman and wolfish nature that she is “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

John, the holy man of God, saw this in the Spirit and was astounded at it. Yes, kind reader, whosoever rightly understands the abominable power, idolatrous array, spiritual enchantment and fornication, inhuman abominableness and fearful bloodthirstiness and tyranny of this woman may well be astounded by her. Therefore, fear God and learn wisdom. We have, by the grace of

God, thoroughly shown her, exposed her shame and diligently and in faithful love warned you against her.

THE SWEARING OF OATHS.

David says, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that has clean hands and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from Jehovah and righteousness from the God of his salvation," Psa. 24:3-5.

These words of David are full of spirit and wisdom, yet are not regarded by the world. For everywhere we find guilty hands, unclean hearts, false doctrine, faithlessness and only little truth. Yes, it has come to this, among the children of men that the precious *yes* and *no* which was commanded by the Lord himself can no longer be trusted. Nearly everything which is transacted before the magistracy must be affirmed by an oath, although the Lord has so plainly forbidden the swearing of oaths to all christians, Mat. 5:34.

The Scripture teaches that we should hear Christ, for he will be the king of Israel, Isa. 9:6-8. He is the king of righteousness, the Teacher and Prophet promised by God, who has taught us the words of the Father and his word is truth and his commandment is eternal life, Deut. 18:15; Mat. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Jer. 23:6; 33:16; Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:26; John 3:17; 5:46; 17:17; 12:50.

Inasmuch as we thus confess and cordially believe and besides, confess that no emperor or king may rule or command contrary to his word, since he is the Head of all princes, Eph. 1:21; Col. 2:10; and is the King of all kings, Rev. 1:5; 19:16; and that unto him every knee shall bow who is in heaven, in earth or under the earth, Phil. 2; and as he has plainly forbidden us to swear and pointed us

to *yes* and *no* alone, therefore we do not swear, by the fear of God, nor do we dare swear, though we must hear and suffer so much on that account from the world.

Since throughout the world they act so fearlessly contrary to the word of God in regard to this article; and as sometimes some of the god-fearing are put into difficulty by this, therefore I will, by the grace of God, show the kind-hearted reader, from the word of God what the Holy Scriptures at different times teach and imply concerning the swearing of oaths.

First, the reader should observe that swearing was not always practiced uniformly among the people of the Lord. Before the law [through Moses] the holy fathers had a custom to lay their hands under the thighs and thus swore to others, as may be read in the case of Abraham and his servant, Gen. 24:3; and in the case of Jacob and his son Joseph, Gen. 47:29-31. Joseph also swore by the life of Pharaoh, Gen. 42; and it seems that such swearing was customary among the Egyptians.

Secondly, the reader should observe that Israel was bound by the law to swear by the name of Jehovah and to keep their oath, as Moses says, “And you shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shall you profane the name of your God. I am Jehovah,” Lev. 19:12; and this oath settled all dispute among Israel, Exo. 22:11; Heb. 6:16. Thirdly, It should be observed that in the New Testament Christ Jesus does not point his disciples, in regard to swearing, to the law, [designed for] imperfect [people], which allowed swearing—but he points us now from the law to [simply] *yes* and *no*, as to the perfect and speaks thus, “You have heard that it has been said by them of old time (that is, to the fathers under the law by Moses), You shall not forswear yourself, but shall perform unto Jehovah your oaths (that is, you shall swear truly and fulfill your oath): but I (Christ) say unto you (my disciples), Swear not at all (that is, neither truly nor falsely); neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth; for it is his footstool; nor by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shall you

swear by your head, because you can not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, yes, yes; no, no: for whatsoever is more than these comes from evil.” Here you have Christ’s own doctrine and ordinance concerning swearing, Mat. 5:35-37; Jas. 5:12; Exo. 20:7.

Behold, beloved reader, before these words of Christ all human laws and regulations concerning swearing must stand back and be abolished; such as *Juramentum Calumniæ. Jerumentum de veritate dicenda, or Fede*; [Literally: *Slander oath. An oath of truth to be spoken, or Faith*]. It does not matter how they are performed; be it by words, or by raising your hand, or holding your hands upon your breast, or upon a cross, or upon the New Testament, &c. And the truthful yes and no, ordained by the Lord himself must be restituted, if the magistrates and subjects do not want to licentiously transgress the word of the Lord and reject it as vain; for, whatsoever is more than yes and no (says Christ) comes from evil. The holy James also teaches the same, “Above all things, my brethren, do not swear, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: (understand, such as *By God’s word—By the Lord’s cross—By the salvation of your soul*); but let your yes be yes and your no, no (and do not say *So help me God*, or *So help me God and all the saints*, as is, alas, the custom in many places); lest you fall into condemnation,” Jas. 5:12.

We are aware that the magistracy claim and say, *We are allowed to swear when Justice is on our side*. This we simply answer with the word of the Lord. To swear truly was allowed to the Jews under the law; but the gospel forbids this to christians. As Christ does not allow us to swear and as the magistracy, notwithstanding, proceed according to their rule, although contrary to the Scriptures, and as the Scriptures may not be set aside by man, what shall the conscientious christian do? If he swears, he falls into the hands of the Lord; but if he does not swear he will have to bear the disfavor and punishment of the magistracy.

O, you beloved lords! If one had christian eyes and could see and sincerely acknowledge what it is, according to the justice of God, to licentiously despise and transgress the word of God, they would rather die than weaken or break the precious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ or defy the ordinance of the eternal God by temporal statutes and policies.

Nor would we even think of asking more than yes and no, particularly of the pious, god-fearing hearts, who, by the fear of their God, dare not speak anything but the truth; who esteem every word which comes from their mouths as an oath and keep their yes and no unto death. But alas, the magistrates dare force them to swear to a trifle, as concerning some temporal goods or something of the kind, even with their fingers raised to heaven or with their hands upon the New Testament, by the God of heaven and by his living word.

O, you beloved lords! How pitiably your teachers and leaders lead you upon the way which tends to damnation, who always console you by saying that we should obey the magistracy (as is becoming, so far as is not contrary to God's word); as if the magistracy may act and rule against the Lord at their pleasure.

O, no, beloved lords, no! We warn you in faithful love. Wake up, take heed and repent. Your preachers deceive you. With God there is no respect of person. If you do not repent, are not born from God, become like unto children in malice, do not in love execute your office and service agreeably to the will of God, do not act justly to the poor and miserable and do not walk obediently to the word of the Lord with godly, humble hearts, you will find your judge [stern] at the judgment day. Beloved lords, take this saying to heart, "Mighty men shall be mightily tormented," Wis. 6:6.

Again, you learned, you who by your flatterings and errors assert and maintain oaths, how dare you so flatly contradict the eternal wisdom and truth of God and say, You say you shall not swear; but we say; *You may swear when the love, profit and the*

need of your neighbor require it. We will leave it to your judgment whether that is not teaching contrary to Christ. It is so plain that it was allowed to the Jews under the law to swear sincerely; but to us christians, it is forbidden and as it is very plain that, according to the New Testament, no love of neighbors nor kinsmen nor peril of life is any excuse to strain or break the word of the Lord, Mat. 10:37; Mark 8:38.

Therefore, worthy reader, if you fear the Lord and if it should happen that you are asked to swear, then pray to the Most High for wisdom, courage and strength; do not listen to the flatterings of the learned, for they deceive you; do not look to numbers lest you follow in their evil ways. As Moses says, Respect no flesh in this matter, no matter who, what or where they are, but admonish them in a becoming manner and in love when they ask of you more than the Scriptures command. Abide in the Lord's word which so plainly has forbidden you to swear; and let your yes and no be your oath, as was commanded, whether life or death be your lot, that you, by your courage and firm truthfulness, may admonish and reprove unto righteousness the useless, fruitless, vain world (who in their faithlessness respect nothing less than the word of the Lord) by your truthful yes and no; that some might yet be converted from their unrighteousness and by this more deeply study the truth and be saved, Mat. 5:37; Phil. 2:12.

It is better to incur the disfavor, scorn and slander of man and remain in the truth, than to be the favorite of man and sin against God. The good John Huss* confessed when he was asked to swear and said, *"I am pressed on all sides. If I swear I have eternal death; and if I do not swear I will fall into your hands. But I would rather fall into your hands without swearing than to sin in the face of God."* Thus this worthy man considerably weighed the oath.

* John Huss was condemned to be burned—and burnt—by the Papists at their council at Constance in 1415.

Also read Hieronymus, Theophilact, Chrysostom, Erasmus of Rotterdam in their annotations; Philip Melancthon's *Treatise on the fifth Chapter of Matthew*, Heymon's *Treatise on the Tenth Chapter of Revelations* and also Origen and you will find that in this article they agree with our foundation, faith, doctrine and confession. This is our foundation and understanding in regard to oaths. Inasmuch as the Lord has forbidden us to swear at all (understand in temporal matters) neither sincerely nor falsely, as was said; and has commanded that our yes shall be yes and our no, no, Mat. 5:37; as Paul and James also testify to this in 2 Cor. 1:18 and Jas. 5:12; and as we know that no man, nor commandment of man, may supersede God and his commandment, therefore it is that we, in temporal matters, dare not affirm to truth with more than yes or no, as the case may be; for thus the word of the Lord teaches us.

Reader, mark. We say, *In temporal matters* and for this reason: Because Christ sometimes in his teachings makes use of the word, *truly*, Mat. 18:18; John 3:3, 5; 8:34; 10:1; and because Paul called upon the Lord as a witness of his soul. For this reason some think that swearing is allowable; not observing that Christ and Paul did not do this in speaking of temporal matters, as in a matter of flesh or blood, or money or property; but as an affirmation of the eternal truth, to the praise of God and to the salvation and edification of their brethren.

We pray that all lords and magistrates, for Jesus' sake, will fear the Lord sincerely and conform their policy in this matter of swearing to the word of the Lord, and to consider why they require the oath, namely: That which one swears shall be fulfilled. Inasmuch as we deem our yes and no to be no less than an oath, why [do you] require any further affirmation at our hands than the word of the Lord teaches and allows; for, by the grace of God, we trust, inasmuch as we are partakers of the Lord and adhere to the word in which yes is amen—that it will be found with us that it is yes where it should be yes and no where it should be no; much

more so than with the world under strong oaths. But if a man's yes and no is not kept, then let him be punished as a perjurer. That it is yes and amen with all true Christians is sufficiently proven by those who, in our Netherlands, are so tyrannically visited with imprisonment, confiscation and torture; besides, with fire, the stake and the sword; while with one word they could escape all these if they would but break their yes and no; but as they are born of the truth, therefore they walk in the truth and testify to the truth unto death, as may be abundantly seen in Flanders, Brabant, Holland, West Vriesland and other places.

CONCLUSION.

IT is manifest, honored reader, that the world is so degenerated that it esteems everything wrong which God teaches, commands and desires; hates it with envious hearts and persecutes and destroys it. On the contrary, all that which God hates, curses and despises as an abomination, it looks upon as good and diligently asserts and maintains it. Yet they want to be the holy christian church and the people of God, by baptizing children &c.; without faith, the new birth and the Spirit and obedience to God, as if we could be christians by the mere name. O, no, reader, no. Take heed. Your consolers deceive you and corrupt the way you should go, Isa. 3:11.

Inasmuch as the world is so entirely degenerated and as our opponents so shamefully lie and war against us that we cannot answer for ourselves, therefore we have written this confession, that everyone who may read, hear or see it may know why and how we seek to be saved, and why we do not hear their preachers and why we so strictly administer baptism to the believing and oppose infant baptism. We know what is represented by the

Lord's Holy Supper and what abominations are implied in the baptism of the learned; and that a true Christian is not allowed to swear in temporal matters, but only affirm by yes and no. And by doing so we have compared truth with falsehood, light with darkness and white with black, as you will perceive. If you do not want to be wilfully blind, you have a good eye-salve here. Yes, we have presented it so plainly and clearly that you must acknowledge it to be the truth; or else reject it in perverseness and say, No, I do not want to believe this. What kind of a Christian you are you may consider for yourself.

Kind reader, do not associate with those who say unto [Jehovah] God, "Depart from us; for we do not desire the knowledge of your ways," Job 21:14. Nor with those who are intent upon blood, for their reward will be death, Rom. 1:32; Rev. 21:27. Behold, this is our foundation, as you have read here. If you are of a pious mind and do not want to be led by the blind spirit of the spiritual whoredom, then judge our cause according to the word and truth of the Lord. If you do not understand it then fear God and pray [for wisdom]. All those who are born of God and inclined to the word of the Lord must acknowledge that our doctrine is from God and that truth is on our side. Whosoever accepts the truth and abides in it unto the end has eternal life; but whosoever rejects it does not reject us, but Christ Jesus himself who has taught us from the mouth of his Father and sealed it with his blood, Rev. 1:5; 1 Pet. 1:19; Acts 20:28. [May Jehovah God,] the gracious Father, through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, enlighten you and all hungry hearts by the gift of his Holy Spirit and lead you by his strength into his eternal, saving truth, Amen.

To the praise of God and the service of all mankind.

MENNO SIMON.

A.D. 1552.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION 1. Is separation a command or is it a counsel of God?

Answer. Let everyone weigh the words of Christ and of Paul referred to above and he will discover whether it is a divine commandment or whether it is a counsel. Every thing which Paul says in regard to separation he generally speaks in the imperative mode; that is, in a commanding manner. *Expurgo*, that is, Purge, 1 Cor. 5:7. *Profligo*, that is, drive out. *Sejungere*, that is, withdraw from, 1 Tim. 6:5; *Fuge*, that is, flee, Tit. 3:9. Again, “We command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 2 Thes. 3:6.* I think, brethren, these Scriptures show that it is a command; and if it even were not a command but an advice of God, should we not diligently follow such advice? If my spirit despises the counsel of the Holy Spirit, then I truly acknowledge that my spirit is not from God. And to what end many have come who did not follow God’s Spirit, but their own, may be read in many passages of sacred history and may also be seen in many instances at the present time.

QUESTION 2. If any person should not maintain this ban and yet be pious otherwise, should such a one be banned on that account?

Answer. Whoever is pious will show his piety in obedience and not knowingly or wilfully despise and disregard the word, commandment, will, counsel, admonition and doctrine of God. For if anyone wilfully keeps *commercium* (interaction, company) with such whose company is forbidden to be kept in Scripture,

* [CHCoG: Though Menno is using the Latin translation here, in these cases it is an accurate translation of the original Aramaic and the Greek.]

then we must come to the conclusion that he despises the word of God, yes, is in open rebellion and refractoriness (I speak of those who well know and acknowledge [this] and yet do so). “For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry,” 1 Sam. 15:23.

Since the Scripture admonishes and commands that we shall not associate with such, nor eat with them, nor greet them, nor receive them into our houses, &c. [1 Cor. 5:9-11]; and yet if some body should say, I will associate with them, I will eat with them, I will greet them in the Lord and receive them into my house—he would plainly prove that he does not fear the commandment and admonition of the Lord; but that he despises it, rejects the Holy Spirit and that he trusts, honors and follows his own opinion rather than the word of God. Now judge for yourself what kind of a sin it is to not be willing to hear and obey God’s word. Paul says, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly and not after the tradition which you received from us;” and again, “And if any man does not obey our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed,” 2 Thes. 3:6, 14. Inasmuch as the ban was so strictly commanded by the Lord and practiced by the apostles, Mat. 18:17; therefore we must also use it and obey it, since we are thus taught and enlightened by God, or else we should be shunned by the church of God. This must be acknowledged.

QUESTION 3. Should husband and wife shun each other on account of the ban—as also parents and children?

Answer. First, the rule of the ban is a general rule and excepts no one; neither husband nor wife, nor parent nor child. For God’s judgment judges all flesh with the same judgment and knows no respect of persons. Inasmuch as the rule of the ban is general, excepts none and is no respecter of persons—therefore it is reasonable and necessary to hear and obey the word of the Lord in this respect; no matter whether it be husband or wife, parents or

children, Rom. 2:11; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Jas. 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:17.

Secondly, we say that separation must be made by the church; and therefore the husband must consent and vote with the church, in the separation of his wife; and the wife in the separation of her husband. If the pious spouse must give his consent, then it is also becoming that he also shun her, with the church; for what use is there in the ban when the shunning and avoiding are not connected with it, 1 Cor. 5:3.

Thirdly, we say that the ban was instituted to make [the shunned] ashamed unto reformation. Do not understand this shame as the world is ashamed; but understand it as in the conscience and therefore let it be done in all discretion, reasonableness and love. If the husband or wife, parent or child is judged in the church, in the name of Christ and by virtue of Christ, to be banned, it becomes us (inasmuch as the evangelical ban is unto reformation) according to the counsel of the Holy Spirit, to seek the reformation of our own body, namely, of our spouse and also of our nearest kinsfolk as parent or child; for spiritual love must be preferred to anything else; aside from this I would care for them and provide the temporal necessities of life, so far as it would be in my power.

Fourthly, we say that the ban was given so we should not be leavened by the leaven of false doctrine or by unclean flesh through the degenerated. And as it is plain that none can corrupt and leaven us more than our own spouses, parent, &c., therefore the Holy Spirit counsels us to shun them, lest they leaven our faith and thus make us ashamed before God. If we love our husband or wife, parent or child more than Christ Jesus, we cannot possibly be the disciples of Christ, Mat. 10:37; Luke 14:26.

Some object to this, saying that there is no divorce except by reason of adultery. This is just what we say; and therefore we do not speak of divorce; but of shunning, and that for the before-mentioned reasons. To shunning Paul has decidedly consented, 1

Cor. 7:10; although this is not always coupled with adultery; but not to divorce. For divorce is not allowed by the Scripture except for the reason of adultery, Mat. 5:32; Luke 6:18; therefore we shall never consent to it for other reasons.

Therefore we understand that the husband should shun his wife, the wife her husband, parents their children and the children their parents when they apostatize. For the rule of the ban is general. They must consent, with the church, to their sentence, they must seek their scriptural shame unto reformation and diligently watch, lest they be leavened by them, as said above.

Beloved in the Lord, I would here sincerely pray that you would make a difference between commandment and commandment and not consider all commandments as equally hard. For adultery, idolatry, shedding blood and similar shameful and abominable works of the flesh will be punished more severely than a misunderstanding in regard to the ban and particularly when it is not committed wilfully and perversely. Therefore beware, that in this matter of matrimony, you press none farther than he is taught by God and that he in his conscience can bear and thus [you will not] seethe the kid in his mother's milk, Exo. 23:19; 34:26; Deut. 14:21. On every hand the Scriptures teach that we should bear with the weak brethren; it is a delicate matter. I know too well what has been the result of pressing this matter too far by some in my time, Rom. 15:1; Gal. 6:4. Therefore I advise you to point all to the sure and certain ground. And those consciences that are through the Scripture and the Holy Spirit, free and unencumbered, will freely, without the interference of anyone, by the unction of the Holy Spirit and not by human encouragement, do that which he advises, teaches and commands in the Holy Scripture, if it should be that either spouse should be banned. For truly I know that whoever obeys the Holy Spirit, with a faithful heart, will never be made ashamed.

QUESTION 4. Should we greet one that is banned, with the common, every day greeting, or return our respects at his

greeting, since John says, "If any comes unto you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor speak a greeting to him; for he that speaks a greeting to him is a partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 10, 11.

Answer. Mildness, politeness, respectfulness and friendliness to all mankind becomes all christians. If, then, an apostate should greet me with the common greeting of *Good Morning*, or *Good Day* and I should be silent; or if he should be respectful to me and I should turn my face from him and bear myself austere and unfriendly toward him, I might well be ashamed of myself, as Syrach says. For how can such a one be convinced, led to repentance and be moved to do better, by such austerity? The ban is not given to destroy but to buildup. If it should be said that John has forbidden such greeting, I for myself would say that, before my God, I can not understand that John said this in regard to the every day greeting. But he says that if some deceiver should come to us who has left the doctrine of Christ, we should not receive such a one into our houses lest he deceive us; and that we should not greet him as a brother lest we have communion with him. But it is not so with the worldly greeting, for if the worldly greeting has such power in itself that it causes the communion of the vain works of those whom I greet, then it must follow that I would have communion with the adultery, fornication, drunkenness, avarice, idolatry and blood shed of the world whenever I should greet a worldly man with the common greeting or return his compliment.* O no. But the greeting or kiss of peace signifies the communion.

Yet if one should have conscientious scruples in this matter, with such a one I do not dispute about it. For it is not worth

* [CHCoG: In this Menno is ignoring John's clear statement: we are not to greet an unrepentant apostate, nor invite them into our home. But if they assure us they have come to repent, we can then greet them and help them. But John's command has nothing to do with those in the world that have never been in communion with us, have never known the truth, and are not trying to convince us to follow in their ways. 1 Cor. 5:9-12. We can still greet them in the common manner.]

contending about. But I would much rather see all scruples in regard to this matter removed and have christian discretion, love, politeness and respectfulness practiced, to the building up and not unbecoming stubbornness, unfriendliness, malice and unmercifulness to the destruction of our fellow man. Brethren, beware of discord. The Lord grant every god-fearing person a wholesome understanding of his holy word, Amen.

QUESTION 5. Are we allowed to show the banned any charity, love and mercy?

Answer. Everyone should first consider the exact meaning of the word *commercium* (interaction, communion).

Secondly, for what reason and purpose the ban was ordained by the Holy Spirit, in the Scriptures.

Thirdly, how a true, regenerated christian is minded.

Fourthly, how the merciful Father himself acts with those who are already worthy of his judgment and wrath.

All those who can rightly see into these will doubtlessly not deny charity, love and mercy to the banned. For the word *commercium* does not forbid these, but it forbids daily company, conversation, society and business, as was explained above. The ban is a work of divine love and not of perverse, unmerciful, heathenish cruelty. A true christian will serve, aid and commiserate with everybody; yes, even with his most bitter enemies. Austerity, cruelty and unmercifulness he sincerely hates. He has a nature like his Father of whom he is born, "For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." [Mat. 5:45] If I, then, am of a different nature, I show that I am not his child.

Therefore I say with our faithful brother Dietrick Philip that we should not *practice* the ban to the destruction of mankind (as the Pharisees did their Sabbath) but to their improvement; and thus we desire to serve the fallen in love, reasonableness and humility, with our temporal goods when necessary and [provide] their souls with the spiritual goods of the Holy Word; and should rather show

mercy to the wounded with the Samaritan, than to pass by him as the priest and Levite did. [Luke 10:30-37.] James says, "For he shall have judgment without mercy who has shown no mercy and mercy rejoices against judgment." "Therefore be merciful, for your Father is also merciful." "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy," Jas. 2:13; Luke 16:36; Mat. 5:7. In short, if we understand the true meaning of the word *commercium*; understand for what reason and purpose the ban was instituted; how a true christian is and should be minded; and conform ourselves to the examples of Christ and of God, then the matter is clear. And if we do not have this grace, we will shamefully err in this ban and be cruel, unmerciful christians; from which error and abomination may the gracious Father eternally save all his beloved children.

Brethren, I tell the truth and do not lie when I say that I sincerely hate such unmerciful and cruel mindedness. Nor do I wish to be considered a brother of such unmerciful, cruel brethren, if there should be such, unless they desist from such abominations and discreetly follow, in love and mercy, the example of God and Christ. For my heart cannot consent to such unmerciful action which exceeds the cruelty of the heathen and Turks; and by the grace of God I will fight against it with the sword of the Lord unto death. For mercilessness is against the doctrine of the New Testament and contrary to the Spirit, mind and nature of God and Christ, according to which all the Scriptures of the New Testament should be judged and understood. All those who do not understand it thus are already in great error.

But if my necessary service, charity, love and mercy should become a *commercium*, or that my soul should by this be led into corruption, then we confess (the Lord must be glorified), that our daily interaction [with them] is forbidden in the Scripture and that it is better to leave off our charity, love and mercy, than to ensnare our souls by this and be led into error. The unction of the Holy Spirit will teach us what we should best do in these premises.

Question 6. Are we allowed to sell to and buy with the apostates, inasmuch as Paul says that we should not have interaction with them; and yet the disciples bought victuals in Sychar and the Jews dealt with the Gentiles? John 4:5.

Answer. That the apostles bought victuals in Sychar proves nothing at all, for many of the Samaritans were a remnant of the ten tribes, as we have sufficiently shown elsewhere, from the Holy Scripture. But we do not deny that the Jews dealt with the Gentiles, yet they shunned their *commercium*, that is, their daily association, company and conversation and did not eat nor drink with them, as the writings of the evangelist sufficiently and plainly show in many scriptural passages.

And inasmuch as Christ points us to the Jewish ban or shunning, namely that as they shunned the gentiles and sinners, so we should likewise shun an apostate christian; and as the Jews had dealings with them, although they shunned their daily interaction in company, association and conversation; therefore we say that we can not maintain, either by the Jewish example to which Christ points or by any explicit Scripture, that we should not in any manner deal with the apostate, if no such daily interaction arises from this. For such [extended] interaction with the apostate is strictly prohibited by Scripture; and since it is prohibited, it is manifest that a pious, god-fearing christian should not have an apostate as a regular buyer or seller. For as I have to daily get my cloth, bread, corn, salt, &c. and exchange for it my grain, butter, &c., it can not fail but that interaction will arise from this. But with a trading which is conducted without such interaction this is not the case.

And because such merchandizing, which is carried on without interaction can not be avoided by virtue of the Scripture, as was said, therefore we would pray all god-fearing brothers and sisters in the Lord, for the sake of God and of love, to act in this matter, as in all others, as reasonable, good, discreet, wise and prudent christians and not as vain, reckless, self-conceited, proud, obdurate

and offensive boasters; for a true christian should always strive after that which is the best and the surest and follow the pure, unfeigned love, lest he abuse the freedom which he seems to have, to the injury and hindrance of his own soul, to the affliction and destruction of his beloved brethren, to the scornful boasting of the perverse and to the shameful blemishing of the Holy word and the afflicted church of Christ. Besides, I pray and desire in like manner, that none will thus in the least be offended at his brother and mistakenly judge him by an unscriptural judgment; as he has in this case no reproving example among the Jews nor forbidding word (in the Scriptures.)

O my beloved brethren! Let us sincerely pray for understanding and wisdom, that all misunderstanding, error, jealousy, offense, division and undue reports may at once be exterminated, root and branch; and that a wholesome understanding, doctrine, friendship, love, edification and opinion may be restituted and prevail. Let everyone look with pure eyes and impartial hearts to the example which Christ points to and to the wholesome, natural meaning of the holy apostles and let true christian love always prevail and he will know, by the grace of God, how he should act in this matter.

Question 7. Are we allowed to be seated with an apostate in a ship or wagon, or to eat with them at the table of a tavern?

Answer. The first part of this question, namely, to be seated with an apostate in a ship or vehicle, when the captain or driver is not an apostate, we deem childish and useless, since this so often happens without conversation and must often happen. As to the second part, namely, to eat at the table with an apostate while traveling, we can point the questioner to no surer ground and answer than this, namely, We advise, pray and admonish every pious christian, as he loves Christ and his word, to fear God sincerely and follow the most certain way, that is, not to eat by or with him; for by this none can be deceived; and if perchance some god-fearing brother might do so, then let everyone beware, lest he

sin against his brother by an unscriptural judgment; for none may judge unless he has the judging word on his side.

Whosoever fears God, whosoever desires to follow after his holy word with all his strength; loves his brother; seeks to avoid all offense and desires to walk in the house of God in all peace and unity, will act justly in all things and will not offend or afflict his brethren.

Question 8. Who, according to scripture, should be banned or excommunicated?

Answer. Christ says, in Mat. 18:15-17, If your brother trespasses against you, &c. and will not hear you nor the witnesses, nor the church, let him be unto you as a heathen man and a tax collector. And Paul says, "If any man that is called a brother is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one do not even eat," 1 Cor. 5:11; Jer. 16:8. To this class also belong perjurers, thieves, violent persons, haters, fighters and all those who walk in open, well known, damnable works of the flesh, of which Paul enumerates a great many in Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:19; 1 Cor. 6:9 & Eph. 5:5. Again, also disorderly persons who do not work at all, but are busy bodies; such who do not abide in the doctrine of Christ and his apostles and do not walk in it, but are disobedient, 2 Thes. 3:11, 14. Again, also the masters of sects. Again, also those who give offense, cause dispute and discord concerning the doctrine of Christ and of his apostles.

In short, all those people who openly lead a shameful, carnal life and those who are corrupted by heretical, unclean doctrine, Tit. 3:10 and who will not be overcome by the wine and oil of the Holy Spirit, but remain obdurate in their corrupted walk and opinion, even after they have been admonished and sought to be regained in all love and reasonableness. They should, at last, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that is, by the binding word of God, be reluctantly but unanimously separated from the church of Christ and afterward, according to the

Scriptures, be shunned in all divine obedience, until they repent, Rom. 16:16; Gal. 5:16; 1 Tim. 5:24; 6:3.

CONCLUSION.

MOST beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, as we have hinted at the beginning of this admonition and as you are all aware that for some years there has been much division and discord concerning the ban by which christian love has been and is yet much retarded; therefore I have endeavored (while I see that this is carried on without the foundation of the word, without reason and discretion and without the nature of Christ Jesus and his holy gospel, both as to stringency or leniency, to the ensnarement of many consciences; as everyone asserts and follows his own view as the best, to advise all my beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord who seek the amiable peace and unity, not to seek more nor less than the Scriptures teach, show and require), to write this explanation of the ban or separation. It is compiled with the greatest care from the Holy Scriptures and to the promotion of the peace of all the pious children of God; and I trust, before God, that this will satisfy all humble, peaceable consciences; for, behold, I seek nothing, before God through Christ Jesus, but that the unscriptural proceedings and mournful disputations concerning the ban, both as to stringency and leniency, may be by this ended and that the noble, glorious peace and unity in Christ Jesus may remain unbroken and undamaged.

Although I have written this out of pure love and upheld the peace according to the true nature and direction of the Holy Word, as before my God who shall judge me at the last day; yet I know that I will not be thanked by some; for to some it will be too stringent and to others too lenient; but I must bear with this, as I

have done these fifteen years. Still, I would pray you, for the sake of the merits of the precious blood of my Lord Jesus Christ, that if anyone should find fault with my treatise, be it on account of mildness or stringency, not to do so otherwise than by authority of the Word, Spirit and life of the Lord and not recklessly and without thought, lest he is mistaken. Whatsoever any person can advance and prove by the Word I will gladly hear and be obedient thereunto; but I dare not go higher nor lower, more stringent nor more lenient than the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit teach me; and that is out of great fear and anxiety of my conscience, lest I again burden the god-fearing hearts who now have renounced the commandments of men with these commandments. Self-conceit and human opinions I hate, nor do I desire them; for I know what tribulation and affliction they have caused me for many years.

Sincerely beloved brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus! Understand my writings rightly and faithfully follow my advice, explanation, understanding and admonition and you will doubtlessly find great peace and joy (so far as regards separation) among all the brethren; but whosoever rejects them, let him take heed, for he will one day meet his Judge.

In short, it is my inward and outward faith, foundation and confession of the separation which I never before wrote and published with such clearness and minuteness. But now necessity urges me; and with this; my faith, foundation and confession, which I have had from the beginning, I desire to die in Christ Jesus and to appear before the throne of God; for I am aware that it is the most important showing of the separation which can be explained and taught to the god-fearing consciences from the Holy Scriptures. Therefore I ask of all my brothers and sisters in the Lord to leave me at peace about this matter and not to trouble me further; for by the grace of God, there will be nothing heard from my lips but that which my writings teach and imply.

Let every brother seek the wholesome understanding of the word of Christ and of his apostles with a humble spirit, in

brotherly love and in christian peace and he will, doubtlessly, drive back all unscriptural dispute and discord and sincerely follow the true god-pleasing unity.

May the Almighty, merciful Father, through his blessed Son Christ Jesus, grant all brothers and sisters the heavenly gift of the Holy Spirit, that there may become an end to this sad dispute and discord and thus become a sound body with the perfect bond of unfeigned, christian love, bound together in becoming, steady peace in Christ Jesus, Amen.

Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, I pray you by the bloody wounds of my Lord Jesus Christ to beware of dispute and discord and that you may receive my labor with affectionate hearts, for in true christian love I have written it for your service, as before God in Christ Jesus.

MENNO SIMON.

A.D. 1550.



**A THOROUGH ANSWER
TO THE
SLANDER, DEFAMATION, BACKBITING,
UNSEASONED AND BITTER WORDS OF**

ZYLIS AND LEMMEKES

**CONCERNING
OUR FOUNDATION AND DOCTRINE, FULL
OF INSTRUCTION AND ADMONITION,
WHICH DOCTRINE IS (IN OUR OPINION)
THE UNADULTERATED FOUNDATION AND
DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY APOSTLES,
CONCERNING THE
BAN, SEPARATION OR SHUNNING.**

**BY
MENNO SIMON.**



**“The man that is accustomed to opprobrious words will never
be reformed all the days of his life,” Eccl. 23:15.**

**“The disposition of a liar is dishonorable and his shame is
always with him,” Eccl. 20:26.**

**“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid,
which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.**



“If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, of the gods of the people which are all around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, you will not consent to him or listen to him, nor will your eye pity him, nor will you spare him or conceal him; but you will surely kill him; your hand will be first against him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

“And you will stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. So all Israel will hear and fear, and not do such evil as this among you again.” “It will come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, ‘You will not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of Jehovah.’ And his father and mother who begot him will thrust him through when he prophesies.” Deut. 13:6-11; Zech. 13:3. [CHCoG translation]

THOROUGH ANSWER, REPLETE WITH Instruction and Admonition.

A true, pure and pious mind, unfeigned love of God and neighbor, a true and well seasoned tongue which speaks nothing else but the truth and a resigned, impartial and pious heart wherein the Holy Spirit dwells, together with the sure knowledge of Jesus Christ and of his holy word, I wish to Zylis and Lemmekes, to all righteousness, now and forever, from my inmost heart, Amen.

I HEAR and understand, dear friends, that you, alas, mistake yourselves against God and against myself, both by writing and speaking untrue, slanderous words and abominable, bitter backbiting, which are not becoming of a christian. I had not in the least expected this from you; for I thought that you were so taught by the Lord that you would not thus enviously smite your poor brother who cannot now answer for himself; nor that you would, as is the case, defame your faithful friend, who, according to his small talent, has always sincerely served you and all the pious in Christ and thus you thank him for his faithful service and love. But my good opinion of you, alas, has been a mistake in this case. For my case in regard to you is the same as that of the good Jeremiah, when his enviers counseled [together] about him and said, "Come and let us smite him with the tongue and let us not give heed to any of his words," Jer. 18:18. Yet the innocence of my hands, the true intention of my labors, the unfeigned love of

my unction, together with the incontrovertible, sure foundation of the truth shall be my refuge, yes, my invincible shield and surety against all unreasonable upbraiders and defamers, now and at all times. By the grace of God I am sure of this.

Inasmuch as you prove yourselves quite unreasonable and devoid of love (as I am at such a great distance from you, yes, it is as if you have never had heard a syllable of the word of the Lord), by which you do not only make me an abomination and stench (which I deem very little in you) in the sight of many of those who are not versed in this matter, but also make the holy word such, which, in my weakness, has been preached by me for some time and is not altogether without fruit. Thus [you] deter those of little understanding from the right way and strengthen them in their blindness and rob them of the true light and understanding of the true ban. Therefore I am forced by a sense of duty to send to you and your brethren (whom you deprive of the light by your cunning), my humble, but true reply, as briefly and clearly as possible. It is in writing as I can not attend personally, hoping that you may take the matter to heart and henceforth sin no more, but truly repent of your great mistake and yet find grace in that day before the Lord and his righteous judgment. Therefore I pray that you earnestly consider that to which I shall point you.

First, understand that I am blamed by Zylis of being a trifler. The reason is that (as he says) I have published two small books which contradict each other. To which I thus answer, in my humility: It is well known to a great many that I have been combated on all sides by many sharp spirits for more than twenty-three years; and that I have had to withstand many a hard assault. Yet (glory to him who has saved me) I did not go, unsteadily, from one church to the other as both of you have done (do not think hard of my writing this; for you urge me to it); but I remained firm and peaceable in the faith and doctrine with my beloved brethren until this day. And as I have borne testimony in the name of the Lord in such dark days, I trust, by the grace of God, to remain firm

and peaceable, so long as I remain in this tabernacle. To which of us this name of trifler (if so it must be called) is now applicable, I will leave to the judgment of every intelligent reader. But as to the two publications of which you seem to think hard, this is my plain reply: Eighteen or nineteen years ago, when I wrote the first book, I was not well enough enlightened to understand all things thoroughly; and I freely and frankly admit that until that time I included all sin in three admonitions. This I acknowledge verbally and in writing and do not deny it. But, as all well-minded servants of God, who seek the crucified Christ and not their own honor or flesh, are always ready to investigate the sure foundation of truth still further, thus I, the least of all servants (on account of many abominations which were, from time to time discovered in the church and also on account of the miserable disputation and discord which crept in without my fault) came to a serious reflection concerning this matter and, at last, plainly saw that we men may not retain those whom God himself, by his Spirit and word excludes, or else the church of Christ must be divided. This is as clear as day.

Therefore it would be advisable for you to season your words a little better. For you do not by this slander and despise me, but the Holy Spirit, which, according to the word of promise, has led me, his poor, weak servant and instrument into his truth and exposed to me the true foundation in this matter.

Yes, dear men, if I, on that account, am to be called a trifler by you because I was not perfectly enlightened from the beginning, nor claim to be perfectly enlightened at this hour, O Lord! what a trifler you would call the beloved Peter and others, if they were alive to-day and if you loved him no more than you love me, as he, although taught by the Lord's mouth and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, was yet so uninformed that he dared not preach the gospel to the heathen until he was admonished and told to do so by a heavenly vision and revelation from God and thus first took the liberty to teach them.

Oh! oh! Terrible is the word that slanderers, defamers and liars shall have no part in the kingdom of God. Behold, chosen Zylis and Lemmekes, let it be told to you.

Secondly, I understand besides, that Zylis said I published a book from which nothing but hatred, murder and blasphemy could emanate.

To which I reply with Christ's own words, thus. "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I came not to bring peace, but a sword," Mat. 10:34. At another place, "I have come to cast fire on the earth, and I wish it were already kindled!" Luke 12:49. From these words and also from experience, it is plain that the pure doctrine of Christ and of his holy apostles, truly taught and practiced upon, is of such a nature that it engenders, among the obdurate and unbelieving, hatred, envy, falsehood, slander, upbraiding, persecution, rebellion, murder, misery and tribulation. But should we not on this account teach and practice upon the pure doctrine and truth? If you answer in the affirmative, you judge that we should not suppress the truth on account of danger, if that should be the result, but that notwithstanding it should be taught and practiced upon. And what kind of a spirit it is that teaches you this pretense of hatred, murder, blasphemy, &c., by which you frighten the poor people from the truth, I will leave you to reflect upon in the fear of God. But if you answer in the negative you make yourselves merely men of blood, as you still continue in teaching, baptizing and the like, while you daily hear that many a pious child is, on that account, robbed and even murdered. O, I pray you, learn to know the spirit of upbraiding. Say, beloved, is the word of Christ not called the word of the cross? You must answer in the affirmative. For here, in the kingdom and reign of Christ upon earth, the command to the believing is nothing but to deny yourselves and take up the cross and follow him, Mat. 16:24. If we love father, mother, husband, wife, children, property or ourselves better than Christ, we are not worthy of him. Yes, he says if we do not hate all these we cannot be his disciples, Mat.

10:37. Inasmuch as this is the case with the gospel of Christ, as has been heard; therefore your trifling darts and powerless thunderbolts of hatred, murder and blasphemy, cannot and should not deter me in the least, so long as you do not convince me by the binding truth and power of the divine, Holy Scriptures, that I, in this matter of the ban or separation, have mistaken the word of the Lord, or in any manner not fulfilled the requirements of it. But I am the more assured by your slander, inasmuch as it is done altogether without truth or the Scripture, that the invincible foundation of truth and of the immutable word of the Lord is on our side. But as for the words slander and blasphemy, I would make this my brotherly reply: Learn to know with more fear of God what, according to the Scripture, is blasphemy or sinning against the Holy Spirit. For in my opinion it is this: that when the truth of God is imprinted and conceived into the heart of man, with such a power of the divine, Holy Scripture, by the Spirit and finger of his power, that we, convinced in spirit, must confess that it is the true foundation of truth and cannot be controverted by the Scriptures, yet, by reason of self-conceit or choice we are so audacious and stubborn as to persist in hating, upbraiding and slandering this inspired and truly known truth, or ascribing it to the devil, by our ambitious, partial, proud and obdurate flesh, as the obdurate Pharisees and Scribes ascribed the glorious miracles and power of Christ to Beelzebub. This the mouth of the Lord (if we persevere, as I understand it) calls blasphemy and sinning against the Holy Spirit. Of which they will not be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come. O, dear [men], take heed, Luke 12:10.

Inasmuch as such slander and sin is the true blasphemy and sin in the Holy Spirit, as was heard and as God before whom we stand exposed with all our teachings and doings, knows that I have written the book which you slander with a good, sealed and assured conscience and all theologians must acknowledge that it is the truth and word of the Lord; and as you cannot disprove it by virtue of the Scriptures and as you, notwithstanding all this are so

obdurate and lost as to call this undisproven writing of mine a book of fables and heretical doctrine; therefore I will leave the impartial reader to judge with which of us this slander is to be found. O, that you would see!

Thirdly, I understand that you call our doctrine concerning the ban between husband and wife as heretical. To which I would reply: First, Paul says, "Knowing that he that is such (a heretic) is subverted and sins, being condemned by himself," Tit. 3:11. Inasmuch as such a one is subverted and condemned by himself, as was shown, therefore I know by the grace of God that I am not worthy of such a heretical name; for he that knows and tries all hearts also knows me. He knows that I never knew and much less fostered any obduracy, licentiousness, partiality or perverseness in my heart contrary to his word and will. I am sure that the merciful Father (who alone is the true Father of my soul), will not thus condemn his despised, weak servant to hell; nor look at him as such a heretic, although I must hear the despicable slander, not only from the world, but also from you. O, no, no. His name is Our faithful God, Merciful Father, Deliverer, Emmanuel, &c. Therefore let all under heaven judge, upbraid and slander; his paternal word, conceived in my open and willing heart, together with the Holy Spirit of his love which leads all souls, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, to the bread of life and to the true fountain of his living waters, will doubtlessly refresh me in the ardor of such and of all my tribulations and extend unto me his hand of consolation. For where is he who thus sought him that did not find grace? And where is he who trusted in him that was not aided and protected? O, that you would once see the abomination of your perverse and unseasonable judgment!

Secondly, I answer: That according to the Scripture, heretics are self-conceited, disquiet, licentious and perverse sectarians, who choose, collect and establish for themselves a peculiar foundation, doctrine and church, contrary to the true foundation of truth in which the true church which avails before God should be founded;

by means of which they disturb the unity of the pious, extinguish love, destroy peace and cause much disturbance, trouble, sorrow and tribulation among those who would gladly walk in the truth. O, I pray you, learn to know the heretic.

As such are really heretics, as has been heard, so necessity requires me to show the division between us and to explain it; that the intelligent reader and auditor may by this understand and comprehend with which of us such perverseness and heretical foundation is to be found. Take heed. Judge not by words and semblance, but by God's Word.

So our first foundation and doctrine is that all obedient children of God, without any respect of person, must withdraw from all brothers and sisters who walk disorderly and who are disobedient to the institution, ordinance and doctrine received from the apostles; because it is so commanded by the Holy Spirit in the name of Christ. But your foundation and doctrine is that this does not apply to husband and wife if one or the other deviates from the truth. You have respect of person, which the Holy Spirit of wisdom does not command nor imply in a single word in all the Holy Writ. Mark our first difference, 2 Thes. 3:14; Jas. 2:9; Deut. 3:6; Zech. 13:3.

Our second foundation and doctrine is that the true apostolic ban and shunning does not have reference only to the spiritual communion, such as Supper, the hand, kiss and greeting of peace (as you think), but also to the carnal communion, such as eating, dealing, to receive into one's house, &c. and that this is plainly forbidden. But your foundation and doctrine is (for your deeds show it, which in my opinion proves more than your words and confession would do) that the shunning applies only to the spiritual communion and that it does not apply to natural association. For it is a well known fact that you allow the natural association between husband and wife; and that you eat with the separated and deal with them, if you have not changed. Mark our second difference.

Our third foundation and doctrine is that the second table, namely, the commandment concerning our neighbor, must give way to the first, which is the commandment concerning God. But your foundation and doctrine is (for your action in regard to husband and wife testify to it), that not the second table must give way to the first, but the first to the second. It is as if the Creator must do the will of the creature and the creature not do the will of the Creator. O! O!! Mark our third difference.

Our fourth foundation and doctrine is that the Holy Spirit always cares for his [people] and has therefore commanded us to shun the sectarian and offensive sinners, lest they leaven the pious with the leaven of their unrighteousness, or by their interaction or conversation (as is generally the case), and draw them into their wicked works; and also, that the apostates may by the shunning be made ashamed before the Lord and his church, repent and be recovered. But your foundation and doctrine combats and disputes this so cruelly that you quite bitterly call us divorcers and heretics; because we, in this regard, through the zealous fear of God, follow the command of the holy apostles and point everyone whose lot it becomes, to the surest way according to Scripture. You pretend to the poor people that it is an abomination that, on account of the ban, a husband should shun his wife, or a wife her husband. This is the same as saying it is also an abomination to the world that we should baptize the believing and not hear the false preachers. Thus [you] reprove the Holy Spirit of the love of Christ; accuse and abuse his holy apostles of a false doctrine, as if the leaven of corruption (against which they have faithfully warned us) could not leaven husband or wife; also, as if we were at liberty, according to the rule of the holy word, not to seek the reformation of our spouses, 2 Thes. 3:14; Tit. 3:10; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 5:9; 1 Cor. 5:3; 2 Tim. 2:18, 21.

Our fifth foundation and doctrine is that the ban without the shunning is quite useless and dead, yes, like a mill without a millstone and like a knife without a blade; for it is very clear that

the apostolic ban, properly, has its power and effect in the outward shunning. Otherwise the danger of corrupting others would not be in the least avoided, which, properly, is the first and main reason for the ban, as has been heard. Your actions openly show that you have and teach a ban without the shunning and that the same is therefore without effect, since you first except husband and wife from the shunning and second, eat, deal, &c., with those who are banned, while the Holy Scriptures plainly and pointedly forbid it, saying, With such you shall not eat; with such do not keep company; but shun them. Have no dealings with them; do not greet them, nor take them into your houses. 1 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 16:16; 2 Tim. 3:5; Tit. 3:10. Mark our fifth division.

But if you should say, *That if the pious can abide in his faith, living with the impious, that in such case there is no necessity of shunning*, I would then answer: First, that by such acceptance of the matter you in fact annul all the plain commandments of the Scriptures concerning the outward, bodily shunning; as not to eat, deal or take them into your houses. Yes, if some liberty should be taken, it would be more reasonable to give the whole church liberty to eat and deal with apostates than to allow it between husband and wife. For there would be less danger accompanied with it to the church than to husband and wife who are of necessity in continual interaction; something which the church could more easily avoid. This is too clear to be denied. O, men, take heed.

My second reply is that none under heaven can abide in their faith, living with a degenerate spouse. For first, he would transgress all the explicit commandments of the Holy Spirit concerning the ban and shunning. Secondly, he would not seek the repentance of his spouse in such a manner as the Scripture teaches. And, thirdly, he keeps company with one who should, according to the command of the word, be shunned by all pious persons. I will leave it to the consideration of all of you, if this can be called abiding in the faith. Therefore, I pray you again, take heed.

Behold, beloved, if you compare this division with the doctrine of the Scripture and in the fear of God impartially weigh it in the balance of the holy word, you will clearly see that I and my beloved brethren have the immutable, incontrovertible word to sustain us; and that you only have a vain presumption and a self-conceived opinion. We have a restoring ban, while you have one that is fruitless, vain and dead; we have obedience, you, disobedience; we cordially seek to save all afflicted souls from the inherent disease of corruption, according to the doctrine and command of the holy apostles, while you, contrary to all admonition, doctrine and the explicit commandment of the holy apostles leave them to corruption, without all aid, succor, consolation, assistance and earnest trial. You are not looking at what is pleasing to the spirit, but only at what is pleasing to the flesh. Therefore it shows that you are, alas, those who are covered with the abominable shame of heresy of which you undeservedly blame me. If you are intelligent, mark what this means.

Fourthly, I understand that you call us divorcers, telling your followers that of such shunning of husband and wife there can not be found a single example in all the Scriptures. To which I answer, first, that Moses taught the Israelites that they should not excuse their own wives, sons, daughters and friends who were as precious to them as their own hearts, if they should want to lead them to strange gods; but that they should, without mercy, slay or stone them, Deut. 13:6-10. Say, beloved, who was the cause of this? Moses or God? Not Moses; but God who had thus commanded him. Thus it is with us also. We teach that the apostates and sectarians should be shunned, without respect of person. Yet not we, but God, who has commanded us to do this in his word, as has been sufficiently shown. O, mark this.

Again I reply by asking this question: If one of your number had a dishonest, wicked, thievish,* murderous, incendiary wife or

* [CHCoG: Menno had “sodomitic,” at this place, but the rest of his paragraph indicates that this should not be listed here.]

one that should try to take his life and he was aware of it, would he yet continue to live with her? If you answer in the affirmative, you must acknowledge and own that he is an abominable, fearful, murderous rogue, to remain one flesh with her; something which would not well become a servant of Christ. But if you answer in the negative, you judge yourself that you, in this matter, without previous adultery or fornication, are no less divorcers than we are. I repeat, mark this also.

Again, I ask, If one of your number had such a spouse that he would have to renounce his faith or could not abide in this, would he, or should he, continue to live with such a spouse? Jer. 17:5. If you answer in the affirmative you by this plainly testify that such perverse and ungodly flesh avails you more than Christ Jesus himself, together with his kingdom, truth, word, promise, blood and death, besides your faith, unction, love and the salvation of your souls. If you answer in the negative, I again say that you, in this matter, without previous adultery or fornication, are no less divorcers than we are. Mark this.

Thirdly, I answer, If this our doctrine must be called a divorce by you, then it is evident that holy Paul was no less a divorcer than we are, for he says “and if she departs, let her remain unmarried (observe he openly admits their separation), or be reconciled to her husband,” 1 Cor. 7:11. Paul also allows such separation when it is for their betterment if they remain unmarried, as is also our doctrine and so you yourselves (if the above is your answer), are no less divorcers than we are, as shown in the above two articles. Therefore I would have you to consider in the fear of God what kind of a spirit it is that prompts you to make use of such slanderous, cunning words as divorcers, book of fables, heresy, &c. Venom is deadly and gall is bitter, but much more poisonous and bitter is the tongue which is charged and laden with partiality and hatred. O, mind this, Jas. 3:5-10.

But as to the before-mentioned example this is our answer: That all those who make such pretensions manifest by this that

they do not believe the Scriptures of the apostles concerning the ban and shunning, nor understand the reasons, utility and effects of the ban and alas, have but little regard for the explicit commandments concerning the outward, bodily shunning.

Again we say, concerning the opinion that a doctrine without example cannot stand in the church of Christ, as seems to be your ground; that in such case we are all badly mistaken, both you and we; because we allow our women to approach the Lord's Supper, of which there is not a syllable to be found in the Scriptures. But if you should say that *our women are believing; therefore they should be admitted to the Supper, along with the believing men*, I would answer in like manner: As the pious spouse is believing, he should shun his apostate wife, according to the common rule of Scripture, together with all other believing ones without exception. Whosoever is intelligent will judge and consider the inference.

In the fifth place, I understand that Lemmekes has boasted that he is going to rebut more than half of the books. To which I briefly reply: To promise mountains of gold and not to have sandhills to give, is called boasting by the world; therefore, it would be well not to boast of more than we have Scripture and talent for. But whosoever will rebut it must first establish the following ten articles, by virtue of the Word.

First, that the first table of the commandments in Christ's

Kingdom and reign must give way to the second. Mark.

Secondly, that the Scripture teaches two bans or shunnings. Mark.

Thirdly, that there can be a scriptural ban without the shunning. Mark.

Fourthly, that the deadly disease of corruption cannot leaven or make unclean the husband or wife when they do not shun each other. Mark.

Fifthly, that it is not required at the hands of the pious spouse to earnestly seek the reformation and repentance of the impious spouse, according to the counsel, doctrine and commandments of the Holy Scripture. Mark.

Sixthly, that the pious spouse is not bound to agree to the separation of his impious spouse. Mark.

Seventhly, that the carnal ban and love must be preferred to the spiritual ban and love. Mark.

Eighthly, that the marriage with Christ in the Spirit, must give way to the marriage consummated in the human flesh. Mark.

Ninthly, that the Holy Spirit has taught exceptions or respect of persons concerning the ban or shunning in the Scripture. Mark.

Tenthly, that the spouse is not subject to the explicit commandments concerning the outward or bodily shunning. Mark.

Behold, dear Lemmekes, whenever you or any of your followers dissolve or untie this knot by virtue of the Scriptures, then we will further consider the matter.

But as we know that no man, no matter who he is, can ever do so by virtue of the truth, of which, before the Lord, we are certain; therefore we let men slander and boast as much as they please: Firm and immutable the doctrine remains, namely, that all pious husbands and wives as also the church are bound to shun their impious spouses, according to the common rule, doctrine and command of the Holy Scriptures, as has been frequently shown by virtue of the holy Word. Whosoever seeks and loves the truth may ponder upon that which we say and consider the meaning of the Scriptures.

In the sixth place I understand that Lemmekes has said that if we were of one mind in regard to the article concerning husband and wife, that there would yet be three or four articles about which we could not agree. To which I would say this, that I would like to have him put in writing these articles and the points of difference and send them to me. If you have truth on your side and we have not, then, by the grace of God, I for myself will say yes with you. But still I would warn you not to call that which is right and pure, wrong and impure; nor that which is wrong and impure, right and pure. Do not dissolve that which the Scripture binds, nor bind that

which it makes free, as some, alas, are in the habit of doing; so that not our self-chosen righteousness nor human propositions and holiness but the word of God alone can be our guide and way. In love, take heed.

In the seventh place, I understand that Lemmekes also said that I first came to the Franekers and their followers and agreed with them; but was afterward instructed by the brethren and remained with them. To which I reply to you and all who believe your untrue story with the truth: I fraternally asked the Franekers when I was in conversation with them, If they had any further doings with carnal transgressors after the third admonition? To this they answered, no. Then I said (after passing a few words concerning secret sins), If that is your doctrine we will not remain divided. Then they thanked the Lord, as if we were quite of one mind in regard to the matter. Observing this, I said, Not so, brethren, but I will also talk to the others and see what grace the Lord will give. That this is true I can prove by our beloved brother, Nette Lippes and it is also known to the omniscient Lord whose hand and judgment I cannot escape if I lie and do not speak the truth.

Afterwards I came to them and conversed with them and got my full satisfaction (praise the Lord for his grace) concerning secret sinning, at which my heart was rejoiced more than I am able to write, not now doubting in the least but that the matter would come to a good result, until the time that the Franekers came and showed that they did not abide by their understanding concerning carnal works as they had confessed it to me. This caused in me sorrow as bitter as death. In my affliction I did not know what to do, for there is nothing upon earth I love more than the Lord's church. But as it is, I see that the leavening spirit of the false parties has leavened many. Yes, had not the gracious breath of the Omnipotent saved me I would probably have had my mind wrecked. In short, the Franekers would not unite before they had first consulted Henry Naeldeman. In the course of time, Henry came to us and in love, we informed him that we were not those

who thus judge the offensive transgressors; but that, according to the word, we could not do the will of God by retaining those whom his Spirit and Word exclude. He was so startled that he openly said before us all that he had never so taken the matter to heart in his life, hoping to place the Franekers on a better footing. I then left the country. Not long afterward he again sent for me. He had studied the matter over; and all we had built before, with the Lord's word, was again broken in the poor man. Yes, it is known to me and to the Lord how unstable and childish he proved himself once or twice, in a short time, concerning the matter of husband and wife. His own handwriting shall be my testimony of this assertion.

Behold, dear men, here you have the outline of our action in this matter of which you quite partially dare to upbraid me, which I assert with a good conscience before the eyes of the Lord. If you had acted the part of wisdom in this matter and had not inclined your ears to the backbiting of the unpeaceable of the sectarian parties, you would never have offended against me by such gross falsehood and slander. Justly did Paul say "That a little leaven leavens the whole lump," 1 Cor. 5:6.

In the eighth place I understand that Lemmekes publishes that I said to him, the people build upon and look to me so much that I am afraid that the Lord will yet cause me to stumble, so that they shall no more look to me or any other man. To which I reply first: If I should now or at any time say to Lemmekes or anyone else that the people build upon and look to me; then my own mouth would convince me that I would be like unto a fool who is quick to praise himself. I trust that not only the word of the Lord but also common sense will teach me better. And as I have experienced more than once in my time that the spirit of Diotrephes is not yet dead, 3 John 9, which generally clothes itself in a sheep skin, sighing and complaining—saying: Oh, oh! The people build upon and look too much to Menno, whereby their hearts are turned from love; therefore I have not said once, but perhaps ten times: If the

unversed should thus build upon and look to me, then my desire is that the Lord would cause me to stumble, but not take his grace altogether from me, that they might learn to not to build their foundation, hope and consolation upon me, but solely upon the living corner stone, Christ Jesus. Whosoever has the bride, says John, is the bridegroom and that is Christ Jesus, who, according to the will of his Father (to his honor), has called us in his eternal love and married us by faith in his death and blood; and not Menno or Lemmekes. Oh, that they would not garble my words and not tell anything but the truth which stands before God.

Secondly I answer, If you thus turn to shame the word of my piety, whereby I only seek the praise and honor of my Redeemer, which I had not thus expected, then I desire that in love, you point out my error according to the truth; for although I am a poor sinner who, at times, is mastered by his flesh, I yet thank God for his grace that he has to this day saved his poor, weak servant, without any considerable offense, both in doctrine and in life. But if your sight is so weak and dim that you call it stumbling, namely, that I teach according to the Holy Scriptures that we should shun the offensive transgressors until they repent; or that the ban should be used without respect of person; or that I am always prepared to accept a better instruction from God or admonition and doctrine from his Holy Spirit, as I have done in regard to the doctrine of carnal abominations—then I may well console myself that the holy apostles are, in this matter, no less stumblers than I am. For before God, I do not know but that I teach the essence of their word unadulterated and walk in the footsteps of their spirit, so far as I have received grace and strength from my God. O, how quite carnal, unintelligent, blind and perverse is the judgment of a person who, before his God, is led away by partiality and envy. If you fear God then heed what I tell you, Jas. 3:2, 17; 1 Cor. 2:4.

In the ninth place, I understand that you slander and upbraid our brethren in Friesland not a little. To which I briefly reply: It is not necessary that I should be the brethren's advocate, since the

merciful Lord has not denied them his grace, Spirit and gifts. Yet for myself I would say that the worldly privileges are, or imply that, we should give both sides a hearing. We also read of Alexander the Great, that when one party or one side laid in a complaint to him without the presence of the other side or party, that he would shut up one ear to give the other side a hearing with it. Since there was found such great decency among the gentiles; and as it is the common usage, in all matters and policies, not to judge until after a hearing has been granted; therefore you have acted very unscripturally and unreasonably, not only to give the one party (and that is the party which are separated from the church on account of their contention) a hearing, but besides, accept them as your beloved brethren, while the other party you reject, to the great shame of you and your counselors; and you would not give them a verbal explanation and hearing, although they so frequently and brotherly desired it. At your unreasonableness, unwillingness and childish ignorance we can not sufficiently satisfy our astonishment. We are of the opinion that [such behavior] was never heard of in people who seemingly feared God. Yet you proceed on the strength of the sayings of the partizans with intolerable lying and misgivings, without any certainty about the matter and by this violence and wrong doing you take from us that which, I fear, you can never restore to us. But if you had given both parties a reasonable and christian hearing you might have (if you had the gift) passed a just sentence between them and thus have sought unity and peace between them, according to the intent of the holy word. But now you have manifested yourselves to all mankind, while you see that with your unscriptural ban, now used by you and your followers these many years, you cannot stand before the sharpness of the Holy Spirit of Christ and his strong word. You seek to assert and maintain as much as you can; not the desirable unity and peace, nor the unfaltering, abiding truth which is of God, but your own ignorant opinion and carnal intentions by wrong and violence, dissension,

partiality, slander and defamation. You should, however, know that not such wrong and violence as you commit is to be the judgment and decision in this matter, but that the Holy Spirit and word of Christ Jesus are to decide it. In love, take heed.

In the tenth place, I understand that Lemmekes said that “he would rather be banned by our elders than to agree with them.” To which I answer: That one of two things is made true by his words; that he either does not know what the ban is in fact; or else that the elders are such abominable people that they are not worthy of the church. For all the world I would not pass such a sentence. If these elders were such evil people, even as his words imply, why be so unreasonable (since it is his office) as not to show his brotherly love by pointing out to them, in accordance with the Scriptures, their errors and abominations of which he shows such abhorrence, since it becomes him before God and his church to seek their salvation in love. But I presume that you feared the sharpness of truth and that you, therefore, were afraid to face them. O, that you would hear the voice of the Lord and not harden your hearts while it is yet to-day.

I must also, lastly, remind you that you came to us in A.D. 1556, just before May and that we had a conference of two days, in the fear of our God. Yes, such a conference that Lemmekes, the morning of his departure openly confessed before me that he quite agreed with us, although not quite satisfied in the matter of husband and wife, but as he had not confessed this before the brethren, he had come hither that he and they would come to us and as he had now opened his heart before all, his word would thereafter avail but little. And he wished to further treat with you on the way, Exo. 17:2; Gal. 6:2; John 3:29. Behold, such were his pretenses. Besides he said, If the Upperlanders will not agree and Zylis and Henry will remain with them, I will (he said) go over to the Netherlanders.

Again he said, There are some strangers at Weert who would gladly come under the Word of the Lord; and asked: To whom

shall I take these? To Zylis or to the Netherlanders? Besides this he desired of me that when we would have the consent or dissent of Zylis, to send one or two faithful brethren to his assistance, that the ban and shunning might be thus introduced into his church. Dear friends, that he thus agreed with us he did not only confess before me, but also before our beloved brethren Herman of T. and John S. And what is become of all these words and promises? Were they not all vain wind and falsehood? You must answer in the affirmative. And yet you do not want it said at Cologne and thereabouts that you had thus agreed with us. The most lamentable of all is that which he then confessed to be good and right is now called by him heresy and deceit. Whether such an inconsistent person can not be justly called an apostate I will leave to the judgment of all reasonable and intelligent readers. Zylis and Henry wanted to consider the matter and propose it to the Upperlanders; they sent a written message, but whether or not you showed it to the elders of your church, I do not know. But Lemmekes has written, Yes. And the brethren write, No; and it is said that Zylis said, No. Their answers are contradictory.

In short, at last we, after long delay and waiting, received an answer from you and the Upperlanders: That we should not push the ban to its utmost, for it would have to be broken and that there were as many Scriptures concerning marriage as for the ban and shunning. Behold this was the instruction of scriptural argument, by which he puts aside all apostolic Scriptures concerning this matter and rejects them as useless.

If I do not write the truth, I am willing to bear my punishment. In my opinion it has come so far with you that, before God, I do not know who could ever agree with you. For first you agreed with us; afterward you dissented without our knowledge and joined the Upperlanders. Observe, Lemmekes agreed with us, but the same summer yet turned his back upon us and again agreed with them. Observe again: Those that were separated on account

of their dissension and shamefulness you again accepted as your brethren.

Observe, thirdly: Our elders and church you despised, answered their prayer quite unfriendly and sneeringly and said that you did not come on their account.

Fourthly, observe: The spirit of the disquiet partizans you believed behind our backs.

Fifthly, observe: You belie, upbraid, backbite, slander and accuse me and my beloved brethren without any truth; while I for myself never said an unfriendly word about you, of which God is my witness, but have always shown regard for your well being until this hour of your unbearable action.

Sixthly, mark: The plain word of the holy apostles as regards the ban and shunning, you reject.

Seventhly, mark: You uphold many light-minded, carnal babblers.

Eighthly, mark: You encourage many disquiet, unpeaceable dissenters and quarrelers.

Ninthly, mark: Many, yes, thousands of faithful hearts who sincerely seek God and his sure truth, you afflict.

Tenthly, mark: Many pious children who would gladly obey the word of the Lord in this regard and thus save their souls, you hinder.

Eleventhly, observe: You beget many defamers, liars, profaners and upbraiders. In short, you have brewed such beer that, if the Lord does not save you by his mercy, I fear you will yet stumble over the heaped pot. For beware, if you again renounce the Upperlanders and also those whom you, alas, have now given the hand of brotherhood, they will not depict you in very pleasing colors.

And if you even remain with them, all intelligent persons must confess that you build your faith in this matter with a sectarian spirit, upon vain self-conceit, opinion, flesh and man and not upon the firm rock and foundation of the divine word. If you change

your doctrine which you have so long wrongly practiced and taught in your church, then you will have to hear that you are miserable teachers, that you have deceived many souls and that you do not know the light of truth.

But if you do not, you make it manifest that you do not seek and uphold their souls or the salvation of the church, nor the word of God, but only your own honor and flesh.

If you acknowledge that you have, through partizanism, wrongfully defamed me, a cry from the pious will issue against you, that you have defamed the reputation of your brethren without cause, not as faithful servants of Christ, but rather as envious defamers.

If you do not acknowledge it, nor do such penance as can avail before God, then the just sentence of his immutable word will be upon you, that is, as the defamers, backbiters, slanderers and liars who have no portion in the kingdom of God and Christ. O, how awful is the sentence! Woe unto those on whom it is inflicted! With fear, trembling and shaking, I pray you reflect, 2 Pet. 2:18; Jude 1:10; Rom. 1:30.

Behold, dear chosen men, how perilously you are sailing! [You are] like a ship that is cast about between two rocks. If she avoids the one she will sail upon the other. Therefore, take heed. Take heed, that you may prevent the eternal shipwreck of your poor souls and yet arrive in the haven of eternal peace with the Most High, Amen. Amen.

This is the proper content, conclusion, intent and meaning of my writing to you and yours. First, that you may behold the abomination of your actions in this clear mirror, turn from evil, come before the Lord with a contrite heart and sincerely pray for his grace. Secondly, that also, the simple and those of little understanding who are, in this respect, imprisoned by you, may taste and see from this that you have fed and satiated them not with the pure bread of their heavenly Father, but with mere swill, chaff and human self-conceit.

Thirdly, that you may know that I and the pious who are with me dare not, by the fear of our God, be your brethren, so long as there are not found with you such doctrine, obedience, confession, reconciliation and repentance as to pacify the church of the Lord and to be pleasing unto him.

This is written in sorrow. If you fear God, then take heed and reflect. The God of all grace and the Holy Spirit of peace and of the love of Christ grant you grace that you may read with impartial hearts and that this may be to your service. Amen. Amen. Amen.

By Menno Simon, who loves your souls according to the truth.
January 23rd, 1559.



**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 MERCY, SO LAMENTABLY
HATED, BELIED, SLANDERED, UPBRAIDED
AND PERSECUTED UNTO DEATH, AS MAY,
ALAS, BE WITNESSED DAILY IN MANY CITIES
AND COUNTRIES.**

BY

MENNO SIMON.



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

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

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.

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 and are accounted as the off-scourings and this because we diligently seek our salvation, such that the pious and god-fearing heart must tremble and be astounded at the defamation which they unjustly heap upon the righteous, so that some who strive after the truth hardly dare to 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 god-fearing person may stop the mouth of the slanderer. For it is said, *Jacula previsa minus feriunt*. [Anticipated shots hit less.] 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 you well.

PREFACE.

ALL that we sincerely desire, reasonable reader (behold, before God we do not lie), 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 to us in public. Then 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. Then 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. They are, in an 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 to 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, [and regarded] as a hateful, ungodly abomination. And thus 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; advised 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 by God as a prophet from his mother's womb and spoke from the mouth of Jehovah. He had to hear that on his account they had to bear such sore plagues. Ahab, the blood-thirsty and idolatrous king, blamed the pious and spiritual man, [claiming] 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 [prophet] born of woman, a burning, shining light, the messenger of the Lord, a voice crying in the wilderness, the second and spiritual Elijah, was accused that he was possessed by devils and was at last beheaded because of his reproving a shameful case of fornication, Luke 1:15; Mat. 11:11; John 5:35; Mal. 3:1; Mk. 1:3; Mat. 11:14.

Again, Jesus Christ, the {eternal} Light and Life himself, was called Beelzebub, a Samaritan and possessed by a devil, a mover of insurrection, a transgressor of the law, a blasphemer, a glutton, a wine-bibber and a friend of tax collectors 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 and a crown of thorns, then 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 and 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. All that was because of their separation from the priesthood of Balaam, and their occasional night-meetings to partake of the Lord's Supper.

Again, [they were called the] 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, [they were called the] enemies of God, accursed malefactors and rogues, because they kept aloof from the shameful idolatry and allowed 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, this is the way the blind, ungrateful world has always 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 the truth. God's word is an abomination to the ungodly, for it is a treasure of wisdom hidden from them. Christ says, "That light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," John 3:19. The pious and god-fearing are always an offense and sting in their hearts and are a hurt in their sight. And this is why the world, which in all its doings will always live unrebuked and unhindered in its idolatry, pride, pomp, licentiousness and lust, from the beginning, has so enviously hated, miserably belied and so tyrannically persecuted the pious and god-fearing.

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 reproved nor admonished. They hate 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 [supposedly] wise and learned, who have always 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 some irrational creatures, we

have our goods and women in common; that we say to each other, Sister, my spirit desires you. Again, [they say] that we claim to be without sin and that we mean to be saved by our own merits and works and similar unfounded lies, that they may thus lead from the truth, all mankind and particularly the lords, princes and magistrates which they have inebriated by their golden cup, so 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 well-lettered teacher, but who can only quarrel, upbraid, slander and lie sufficiently to move the magistracy, who would perhaps be reasonable, kind and favorable enough if they were not spurred on and vexed to persecution by this unreasonable generation of vipers, so that the innocent, belied sheep, that have not injured a hair on anyone, are, without a hearing, led captive and mercilessly exiled from country, city and town, sent 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 spoke. 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 cries of murder and by their slanderous lying such that we can not acquire sufficient mercy by all our prayers, beseechings and supplications, nor by all our innocence, tears, patience, misery, cross, goods and blood, so that we might be allowed a public conference and discussion with our enviers. 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 the judgment seat of the Most High God and then shed innocent blood. As we are always 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. Thus the god-fearing conscience which would not knowingly act contrary to the will of God, no matter whether he is a magistrate or citizen, learned or unlearned, may know that we are innocent and slandered and belied by our opponents through the before-mentioned abominations; and that God would grant that thus the word and truth of our Lord might become more known and manifest by this and that the deceit and feigned holiness of the learned and priests must become uncovered 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 these preachers, and 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 god-fearing and take their goods and even their lives. This is quite different from the Spirit of the Lord, and they wish hold to their shameful gain, lustful, vain and fruitless life without reproof; and as they do not allow themselves to be admonished, taught and warned by the word of God, by love, long-suffering, 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 those who are reasonably minded and yet do not know the mystery of unrighteousness, as Paul calls it in 2 Thes. 2:9, as they are yet carnally minded, not born of God and are kept back by these preachers. They may learn to know these preachers and teachers by such clear and plain uncoverings; further reflect upon it and thus become tired of their shameful deceit and seduction; and all

the lords and magistrates who dare boast of the name of Christ may know what kind of people and teachers these 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 reproved and judged by God and man; yet 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 do not lie.

Besides, I can fearlessly challenge anybody that none under the broad canopy of heaven can show and prove that I ever agreed with the Munsterites in regard to the before-mentioned articles; for from their 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 everybody 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 so 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 understanding and opinion of the Munsterites, as is also the opinion of all those who are known and accepted by us as brothers and sisters, that is, those of us who assert and testify unto death their pure doctrine of baptism and Supper, with a humble confession and a pious, unblamable life. [But the Munsterites,] on account of their false doctrine, unclean pedo-baptism and supper of the preachers, are visited with a superabundance of misery, tribulation and anxiety.

All those who reject the cross of Christ, as did the Munsterites; who turn their backs upon the Word of the Lord and 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, even if 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 always 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 the Judge who has no respect of person and who will not judge according to the complaint, nor regard favor and partiality, but will judge according to the truth.

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 into 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 everybody that perjurers, murderers, highway-men, thieves, &c., have received the same baptism which they have. If we are Munsterites because of our baptism, they must be perjurers, murderers, highway-men, 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, such as water, but that we are baptized into one body by one Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:13. Jehovah's prophet says, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father," and "The soul that sins, it shall die," Ezek. 18:20. Paul says, "Everyone shall bear his own burden." And if they now 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 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 hereby 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 is 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 from 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 the past several years abundantly prove that this accusation against us is wrong and untrue. We publicly confess that the office of a magistrate is ordained by God, as we have always confessed since we serve, according to our small talent, the word of the Lord. And in the meantime, we have always 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 to not know what the Lord's word commands in this respect. We render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's as Christ teaches in Mat. 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, so they may disturb the hearts of those that have authority and excite them to all unmercifulness, wrath and bitterness against us so that 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 always excite the magistracy by such gross falsehoods; and besides, will say yes and amen to everything the magistracy do, whether it is agreeable to the Scriptures or not; and as they thus by their tickling doctrine lead these souls into condemnation, because they do not seek their salvation, but their own enjoyment and gain; therefore love compels us to respectfully and humbly show all high in authority who would do right if they knew it and had someone to point it out to them (since it was concealed by these 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) sits upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write himself 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 in this all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear Jehovah 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 is not lifted up above his brethren and that he turns not aside from the commandments, to the right hand, nor 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,” Exo. 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. You shall not respect persons in judgment; but you shall hear the small as well as the great; you 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 you do; for you judge not for man, but for Jehovah, who is with you in judgment.” O, this is an important and heroic word. “Therefore let the fear of Jehovah be upon you; take heed and do it; for there is no iniquity with Jehovah 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 this, you rulers). Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do that which is good and you shall have praise from the same. For he is the servant of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid: for he does not bear the sword in

vain; for he is the servant of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that does evil," Rom. 13:3, 4.

Behold, beloved rulers and judges, if you take these cited Scriptures to heart and diligently reflect upon them, you will observe, first, that your office is not your own but God's office and service, that you must 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 Luther and others also wrote when they began. But once 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 Jehovah 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 from him your country and people to rule, you cannot possibly avoid punishment by him who has called you to be such exalted potentates, commanders, heads and regents.

Beloved, observe and beware. Before him Cræsus and Irus 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 such as Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Sennacherib, 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 to protect the good; to judge rightly between a 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 good policy and administration in accord with God's word, to the peaceable and quiet enjoyment of life for all and that you should anxiously seek and love the holy word (by which the soul lives), the name and glory of God and promote, protect and maintain the same without blood-shed and uproar as much as possible.

Behold, beloved lords and judges, this is the proper office to which you are called. Whether you fulfill these requirements piously and faithfully, I will leave to Your own consideration. I think with holy Jeremiah that you have all broken the yoke and torn it into 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 kept in high esteem by you. And the poor, miserable sheep who, in their weakness, sincerely fear and obey the Lord and who do not speak a harmful word against anyone, because they dare not do anything against God's 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. They 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, even if their fathers were guilty, are sent to wander about naked; and thus they must leave the labor and sweat of their parents in the hands of these avaricious, greedy, unmerciful and bloodthirsty robbers.

O, you beloved lords and judges, we will leave it to your own judgment whether this is done to protect the good and punish the evil, to judge justly between man and man and to do justice to the widow, orphan and stranger, as the Scriptures teach and your

office implies. O no, beloved rulers, no. Take heed, for 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 warned us. 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 Ezekiel says, "Look, the princes of Israel: each one has used his power to shed blood in you. In you they have made light of father and mother; in your midst they have oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the fatherless and the widow. You have despised My holy things and profaned My Sabbaths. In you are men who slander to cause blood-shed; in you are those who eat on the mountains; in your midst they commit lewdness," Ezek. 22:6-9. Read and diligently ponder upon these prophetic Scriptures and you will find what terrible threats the holy and faithful men of [Jehovah] God have always prophesied [will result from] such evils and abuses: And if you do despise these admonitions, they are nevertheless the firm truth; you must acknowledge this. For it is manifest and undeniable that in our Netherlands the lascivious, unchaste and vain men whom they call pastors, ministers, [priests,] 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 god-fearing people of their country, honor, possessions and even life; 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; 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 by 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 always, publicly and privately, make us so obnoxious by their cries that we are not allowed a hearing and facing. They do this to avoid our presence, as they can not prove (we are sure they cannot do this) against us that which they every day from their thrones of pestilences and mockery, so shamefully proclaim to the world, to the shame and injury of great numbers of pious and god-fearing children. Beloved rulers, we beseech you for Christ's sake, to fear and love God sincerely. Believe Jehovah's true word and act accordingly, Isa. 1:23; Psa. 73:6.

In the third place, you will also observe from the Scriptures that, although you are the chosen authority on earth, yet you dare not act according to your own option and opinion. Instead, you are to love your Lord and God sincerely as your Creator, Deliverer and Savior and to fear and obey him as your Head, King, Prince and Judge; to always diligently follow the directions of his word; not to lift yourselves above your subjects and brethren; and to never to deviate from the ways and commandments of Lord Jehovah. Henceforth, beloved rulers, diligently ensure that you are christians in your actions, works and truth, inasmuch as you boast yourselves to be such. Water, bread, wine and name [alone] do not make anyone a christian; but christians are those who are born from God: are of a divine nature, are of the same mind as Christ Jesus; are led by the Spirit of God, who daily crucify their evil and corrupt flesh; who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit; who love nothing above God's word; who love their neighbors as themselves and lead an unblamable, humble, pious life; who meekly walk in the footsteps of Christ and who have become new, changed and converted men and women 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; Mat. 10:37; 7:12; 16:24.

Beloved lords, observe that we do not read in the biblical Scriptures of proud, carnal, perjurious, adulterous, drunk, pompous, unrighteous, idolatrous and bloodthirsty christians. [Instead we read] that the portion of such people shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, the devil, hell, darkness, fire and eternal death. Their portion will end in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Rom. 1; Rev. 21:8.

Dear lords, take heed and be deceived no longer. For with God there is no respect of persons. All the Scriptures teach this. It is life everlasting, with the angels around the heavenly throne, or everlasting death ~~with the devils in the bottomless pit~~; [CHCoG: in the Lake of Fire, as just quoted from Rev. 21:8. Only Satan is imprisoned in the bottomless pit, and even that is only for the first Thousand Years of the Kingdom of God. Rev. 20:1-3.]; for all must be judged according to the Spirit, example and word of God. "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation," 2 Cor. 5:17. "He that says he abides in him (Christ), ought himself also to walk even as he walked," 1 John 2:6. It does not matter whether one is an 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 and 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, you build the wall and they daub it with untempered mortar, Ezek. 13:10.

Beloved rulers, we do not do so. 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 [teach you] according to Scripture, to Christ

Jesus, to hear him, to believe him and to faithfully follow him. For he is the Prophet promised by God; the Teacher sent from 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; John 3:2; 8:12; 3:15. He calls to emperor, king and everyone, "Except you be converted and become as little children, you 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;" and whosoever loves anything more than he loves me cannot be my disciple; and is not worthy of me, and many other passages, Mat. 18:3; 16:24; Luke 14; Mat. 10:38.

Rulers, awake and learn to know him. Jesus Christ is the Son of the Most High God, the Lord of lords and the King of kings; [and shares] 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 nowhere 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 with which to quench his thirst. Why was it? Was it so we should live a lustful, pleasurable life? O, no. According to Peter, it was so we should die unto sin and live in righteousness, Mat. 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 strict gate! How few find it and fewer still who walk in it! Mat. 7:14; Luke 13:24.

I write this admonition so the princes, regents and lords may take heed and observe that they are miserably deceived by their 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

strict way. I 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 sprinkled, not to think hard of me, a 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 their enchanting, deceiving falsehood may at last 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, John 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 always remain so; and by the grace of God, time and experience will prove that those who prophesy this, according to the word of Moses, are not of God. Deut. 18:22. 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, his church is the church of peace; 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; John 14; Col. 3; Zech. 8. In

short, with this King and in this kingdom and reign there is nothing but peace; everything 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, we, who were formerly no people at all and who knew of no peace, are now called to be the glorious people of God, to be a church, kingdom, inheritance, body and property of peace; therefore we do not desire 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 strike you on your right cheek, turn to him the other; and if he takes away your coat, let him have your cloak also. Say, beloved, how can a christian scripturally retaliate, rebel, war, murder, slay, torture, steal, rob, burn cities and conquer countries? Mat. 26:52; John 18:10; Mat. 5:12, 39, 40.

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

O, beloved reader, our weapons are not swords and spears, but patience, silence, 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) esteems 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 exalts 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; Mat. 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 even 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 do not have faith. O, that the way is so narrow and the gate so strict, 2 Thes. 3:3; Mat. 7:13; Luke 13:24.

True christians do not practice 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 does the world; but, with Christ, they supplicate and pray: “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they do,” Luke 23:34; Acts 7:60.

According to the declaration of the prophets, 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; 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 always 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, a 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 scorn and cross for him, 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 my life, as much as is in me. Should I then yet at heart be a disquiet, rebellious; vengeful and bloody murderer? May [Jehovah], the Most High God, save his poor servant from that!

Again, in Brabant, Flanders, Friesland and Gelderland the god-fearing, 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 blood-shed? 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 his proper intention and seeking and you shall find that they are not rebels, murderers and robbers, as the learned accuse them of, but that they are a god-fearing, 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, such as rebellion, blood-shed, uproar and murder, which agrees with his proper nature, arts and doings, John 8:44. His commandments and teachings and his kingdom, body and church are of the same nature, 1 John 3. Here

we do not need much Scripture, as seeing, hearing and daily occurrences and experience prove the truth. [CHCoG: Yet here are some: Dan. 7:8-14; 23-27, Rev. 17:1-19:9.]

Our opponents charge that we are intent upon rebellion; something of which we never thought. But we say truthfully, that they and their ancestors for more than a thousand years have been that of which they accuse us. If you search history you 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, and it is even so today.

For what they have done these last few years by their writings, teachings and cries, the cities and countries prove. How cunningly 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 by it*, 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. They have eaten up and plundered the innocent civilians 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 your holy, worthy word mocked and your glorious works derided! It is as if your divine and powerful doings in your 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 to recognize this [foul] 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 is not sufficient for them 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, so 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. 2 Peter 2:1-22.

O, how exactly the Holy Spirit has depicted them, saying, “I saw the woman drunk 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 will 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 shall never 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 Jehovah grant and give you and them wisdom, that you may learn to know of what spirit and kingdom you are the children of, 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 our brief treatise on the two princes and their kingdoms. By the grace of God, it will give you a deeper 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. All the Scriptures speak of mercifulness and love; and it is the only sign whereby a true christian may be known, as our Lord says, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples (that is that you are Christians), if you have love for one another," John 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 their life and blood. They show mercy and love as much as they can; allow none to be beggars among 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, it is 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 is among you a poor man, one of your brethren, within any of your gates, in your land which Jehovah your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your poor brother." Tobias says, "Give of your bread to the hungry and of your garments to them that are naked." Christ says, "Therefore you are to be 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 has shown no mercy; and mercy rejoices against judgment," Deut. 15:7; Tobit 4:16; Luke 6:36; Mat. 3:7; Col. 3:12; Jas. 2:13; Mat. 18:33; 25:36.

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 dwells in love dwells in God and God in him," 1 John 4:16.

I write this to shame our backbiters, because of their envy. They are so blinded that they are not ashamed to thus shamefully slander us and wickedly convert good into evil. For although we, in accordance with all Scripture, teach mercy and love and serve the god-fearing poor by the sweat of our brow and would not let

them suffer from want, yet we must hear that we teach community of goods; that every person should beware of us, for 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 shown no mercy," Jas. 2; and, "He that does not love his brother abides in death," 1 John 3:14; and 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 tragic 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 everything, 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 allow many of their poor, afflicted members (notwithstanding they are fellow believers, have received the same baptism and partaken of the same bread with them), to ask alms; and poor, hungry, suffering, old, lame, blind and sore people to beg for their bread at their doors.

O, teachers, teachers! Yes, 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, "Whosoever has this world's goods and sees his

brother have need and shuts up his bowels of compassion for him, how does the love of God dwell in him?" Also Moses says there shall be no beggars among you, 1 John 3:17; Deut. 15:8.

Behold, kind reader, thus this charge is false and in fact wrong, as are also their other charges. For although we know that the apostolic churches did practice it at the beginning, as may be seen in the acts of the apostles, [Acts 4:32-37,] yet we may observe from their epistles that it went down in their times and (perhaps not without cause) was not practiced. [Acts 5:1-4, 10:6; 11:28-30; 16:15; 17:5; 1 Cor. 16:1-3; 11:34; 1 Tim. 5:3-8] 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 advise assistance, love and mercy, as the apostolic Scriptures abundantly teach us this. Behold, in Christ we tell you the truth and do not lie.

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 it was 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 serene 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; do not let such liars deceive you. Adam and Eve believed the deceiver and by this 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 half-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 to 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,

* [CHCoG: As time passed, genetic mutations have accumulated. Initially, our DNA was perfect, and thus Adam and Eve’s children could marry each other (and indeed had to at first). By the time of Moses, these genetic problems were becoming more common, and marriage between closely related people was banned. Lev. 18:6-16. But the Law of Moses did not prohibit a man from having more than one wife, though there were some restrictions intended to minimise contention in the household. Lev. 18:17-18. And the Law did require that each wife was to be treated equally. Exo. 21:10-12, Deu. 21:15-17. Thus we have Kings David and Solomon having multiple wives at the same time. But God certainly recommends having only one wife, and the Bible has examples of the troubles caused by having more than one wife, eg. 1 Sam. 1:1-10, 1 Kings 11:3-8. That law was changed in the New Covenant, where we see commands to have only one wife, especially for those in ministry, as in 1 Tim. 3:2 & 3:12 and Titus 1:6.]

practice and consent to no other [law] 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, Mat. 19:1-6.

We say one husband and one wife and not one husband and two, three, or four wives and these all 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, otherwise than for adultery, nor [can they] marry again, as the Lord says, Mat. 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 always 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: "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like unto him." and yet; "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes," 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 by this with shameful roguery and knavery, but also with the worst of doggery. As those with pious, virtuous hearts would, if possible, rather die ten deaths than commit such abominations, one may see how they are spit upon by some indiscreet slanderers. Therefore it is no more than reasonable to respond 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 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 God also hates, Rev. 2. We teach, as from the mouth of the Lord, "That whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart," Mat. 5:28. And with Paul, we teach that adulterers and fornicators cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6.

As we are so plainly taught this 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 for which, according to many Scriptures, they are rewarded by everlasting death in 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 as 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 us, 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 speaks," Mat. 2:34. Every tree bears fruit after its own kind. Seneca says, "As is the man, so is his word." Yes, 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, you indiscreet slanderers (I mean all those who are guilty of this shamefulness), 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 your church not 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 indecorously in allies and streets? Do they not live in the city and country 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 god-fearing with these slanderers. Syrach says, Whosoever accustoms himself to saying evil 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, then how much more this abomination? For it is not only contrary to God's word, but also contrary to reasonableness. O, dear Lord, thus are those slandered who sincerely glorify your name, who walk in your ways and sacrifice property and life for the sake of your 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 a 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 it 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 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, [which is] contrary to God's law and contrary to the first righteousness, and is inherited at birth by all descendants and children of corrupt, sinful Adam; and it is not inaptly called inherent sin. Of this sin, David says, "Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Again, Jehovah 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," *Psa.* 51:5; *Gen.* 8:21; *Eph.* 2:3.

Yes, 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 to us as a reconciliation to Jehovah God, our heavenly Father, *Rom.* 6:8. 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; 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 wrath and death abide there, unless they are repented of, as the Scriptures teach.

If this inherent sin is to lose 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 instigation of the devil—thus, on the other hand the heavenly birth, which is from God, is clean and pure and begets all righteousness and piety unto life, according to the will of God, Rom. 5; 1 John 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 often 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 wilfully and intentionally, but contrary to their will, out of mere thoughtlessness and frailty. Yes, 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 from 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 rejoice in the sure trust of the merits of Christ and praise the Father for his grace, Heb. 4; Mat. 6; Luke 12; Rom. 6; 1 John 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 always 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 luster 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 Spirit and is born of God; if he again, by stubbornness, malice and willfulness, contrary to the heart, mind and spirit [of God] 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 wilfully 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; [and thus] returns to the broad way and says [in his] heart with all the 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; Mat. 12; Mark 3; Luke 12; 1 John 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 Jehovah saves all his), who was so miserably deceived by the lusts of the flesh, but I speak of those who, out of ~~mere~~ petulance, wilfully 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 wilful blasphemy and sin had no offering in Israel, Num. 15 and sinning against the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness, as Christ says, Mat. 12; Mark 3; Luke 12; yet I would advise all the god-fearing, 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, to wisely consider the matter and not make a mistake in such a case by an unseasonable and undue[ly severe] sentence; for the Lord, to whom nothing is concealed, knows what sin he has committed; whether he has sinned [the unpardonable sin] against the Holy Spirit or not; but let them advise such according to the word of the Lord. If he is [again] converted, if he shows true fruits of repentance according to the Scriptures; if he again receives 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 Spirit. But if he remains unrepentant, continues in his perverseness, and [holds to] this unto the end, wilfully despises 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 John 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 everyone take heed that he walks in the fear of the Lord and accept his grace, lest he is given to the wrong spirit, falls into the judgment of the Lord and the penance which avails before God is refused to him. For Christ says, "Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin." Peter says, "By whom a man is overcome, by the same is he brought into bondage." Let therefore none be overcome by sin, for then he will be the servant of sin. This is incontrovertible. John 8:34; 2 Pet. 2:19.

I think that 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 vilified by our opponents in this regard. Yes, 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 we say this; That God's promises 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 by this become new men born of God and become dead unto this fearful world of ungodly pride, pomp, vanity and lustfulness. For the unrepentant boasts of the Scripture and console themselves by these promises, while their life remains contrary to it and is open blasphemy. Christ says, "If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed," John 8:31. "You are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you," John 15:14; for the tree 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, are 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 by 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, Mat. 10:25, 24.

Reply to the charge of Vagabonds. Vagabonds are rogues, evil-disposed, 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. 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; Exo. 22:24; Isa. 58:6; Jer. 7:5; Zech. 7; Mat. 25; Rom. 13; 1 Pet. 4; Heb. 13.

Reply to the charge of 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 [and women] of their neighbors. Such wait for the darkness and say, “No eye shall see me; and disguises his face. In the dark they dig through houses,” Job 24:15, 16. But this is not the case with us. Yet the

lying, upbraiding and cries of the learned have gone so far 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, Exo. 12; that Christ advised Nicodemus at night, John 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 the day-time, to the praise of the Lord; and thus we oftentimes assemble in the fear of God, without injury to anybody (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 of 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 [fake] 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 of, 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 [are] 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 by this sow the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in many hearts, to the praise of Jehovah our God and publish his great and adorable name, Ezek. 34; 2 Cor. 10.

Reply to the charge of 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. They remained in their sins and 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.

It is not so with us. 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 everyone, is the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:11.

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

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

Our cap and cloak are the garments of righteousness, with which we would gladly clothe ourselves, Mat. 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 the daily expectation of prison and fetters, fire and water or 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 monk-hood which we confess and practice and none other. By the grace and power of the Lord, we also hope to abide in this unchangeably, all our lives. O, indiscreet slanderers and blasphemers! John 4:23.

Reply to the charge of 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, Mat. 23 and who are inwardly full of all unrighteousness, avarice, hatred and deceit, as our opponents are. They 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, [saying] that we claim to be without sins, is because we teach penitence according to the Scripture and 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; and that those who are carnally-minded shall die, Rom. 8:13. And with John, [we believe] that those who sin (understand, wilfully) 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 always 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, Isa. 63:6; with David, that there is no living man righteous before God, Psal. 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 there is no truth 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 these 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 of Heaven-stormers. Henceforth, because we teach from the mouth of the Lord: That if we would enter into life we must keep the commandments, Mat. 19:17; Mark 10:19; John 15:10, that in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avail; but the keeping of the commandments of God, 1 Cor. 7:19 and that our love of God is shown when we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous, 1 John 5:2-3. Therefore we are called by these preachers *heaven-stormers* and *work-saints*; and [they say] that we want to be saved by our own merits; even though we have always confessed and by the grace of God, always 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, John 14:3; Acts 4:12; Phil. 2:10.

Behold, thus the best of these perverse people have been changed to the very worst and will not observe that the whole of Scripture condemns all licentious, obstinate despisers and transgressors of the commandments of God to death. They 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, John 3:36. For whosoever does unrighteousness, shows 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 this infamous charge and they would be found guilty.

For Scripture testifies to what kind of conspirators they are: “The conspiracy (mark, conspiracy) of her prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. Her priests have violated My law and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.” Ezek. 22:25, 26.

All may find a place in their sect who will keep their ceremonies and acknowledge them to be the true preachers and messengers, no matter what kind of life they lead, as long as they 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 that he can still be called a christian. If he just says, I am sorry, it is all ascribed to his weakness and he is admitted to their supper; for they say he is saved by grace and not by merits. He remains a member of their church notwithstanding that he remains in all his doings an unrepentant, obdurate and ungodly heathen; to-day as yesterday; also, to-morrow as today notwithstanding that 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, John 8:44; 1 John 2:11.

O, preachers, preachers! Learn 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 you very well; but we have received mercy and spewed out these abominations and willingly entered into the lovely communion of his saints, into the house, kingdom and body of Christ; [and are

with those] 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 your small flock is always slandered! Rom. 12:4; Eph. 1:23; 5:27.

Reply to the slander and false charge of 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 to them by grace, by the election of God our heavenly Father through the merits of Jesus Christ, as he says, "Allow the little children to come unto me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," Mat. 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16; and that we therefore do not allow them to be baptized with the baptism of anti-christ. For it is not the baptism of anti-christ but the promise of Jesus Christ which assures us of the salvation of our little children if they die and depart from here. But if the good Father allows them to grow up and grants them his grace, then we will 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, Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:16. But those who practice such manifest hypocrisy and anti-christian works [claim to] banish the devil from these innocent vessels which are cleansed with the blood of the Lord. They conjure, salt, anoint and consecrate them and 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 [real] information from the word of God and walk all their lives, trusting in their infant baptism, upon a crooked and dark way, without confession, faith and new birth, without Spirit, word and Christ. What such people do to the souls of their 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 are also 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 Spirit, 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 by John), but with the [false] 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 unaware 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 anabaptists. 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 bread and wine, 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, Augustine, Chrisostom, Tertullian, Tyrill, Eusebius, &c. and, in our weakness, diligently strive rightly to commemorate and fulfill the holy, glorious mystery of 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 these 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 profaning the sacraments you may judge according to the Scriptures.

Reply to the pharisaic charge that we are possessed by the devil. We consider those are of the devil who speak his words and who teach falsehood instead of truth, Gen. 3:4, [attempt to] steal God's glory and miserably deceive souls. But we trust, by the grace of the Lord Jehovah (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 grace 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 would not so resignedly offer our property and blood for the cause of the word

of the Lord. But the disciple is not above his master. The Father of the house himself had to hear that he was of the devil, John 10:20; 8:48. The Pharisees and Scribes must manifest their nature and Spirit. For when they can not stand with their foolish wisdom before the power and truth of the Lord (for the spirit of Belial must always 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 [the righteous] 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. Their writings are filled with such slander 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 you, being evil, speak good things?” Mat. 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 all 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 your beloved children from this lying, deceiving generation forever!

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

Answer. We would faithfully advise 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 bloodthirstiness, we are sure, thinking that if we would do so, we would soon be brought to an end. Others, perhaps through simpleness and ignorance, thinking that we cannot defend our beliefs 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 bloodthirstiness, we would say that they, with the Pharisees and Scribes, have burdened themselves with the blood of the innocent, and are counted as murderers, Mat. 23:34; John 10:16; Luke 11:49.

But to those who do so through ignorance (if there are such, which we hope there may be), we would say in all love, to diligently 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 would be the case if we publicly go forth. No, no. If I understand it rightly, they always 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 Jehovah, saying, What shall I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me," Exo. 17:4.

Jeremiah says to Zedekiah, "O my lord the king, let my supplication, I pray you, be accepted before you; that you do not cause me 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. 26:20-23.

Elijah, the spiritual man of God, fled to the wilderness after the threats of Jezebel, 1 Kings 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 these exalted men of God have feared and avoided death and did not, generally, go where they feared violence unless they were advised 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 Kings 17. Thus the apostles freely spoke the word of the Lord in the temple after they were freed from prison by an angel, Acts 5:19; 12:7; 26:19-23.

Thus Paul preached at Corinth one year and a half after the Lord, in a vision, spoke unto him, "Do not be afraid, but speak and hold not your peace: For I am with you and no man shall set on you to hurt you: for I have many 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. Yes, 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 everyone and as no Scriptures direct us to go where we surely know that we shall die or be imprisoned for life, but as we are advised 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 unless 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, Mat. 10:23; Jer. 1:7; Mat. 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 everywhere by the learned, notwithstanding that we are always quiet and act justly with all mankind; and, if we should now 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 blood-shed, 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 unblamably cannot, at the present time, safely dwell in any kingdom, country or city under heaven, so far as our knowledge goes, if he is known. If he is 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, even though they are not teachers. 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; and 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 Flanders, Brabant, Holland, Gelderland, &c., must 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 well preached in these countries that we may well say with holy Paul, "If our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them who do not believe," 2 Cor. 4:3, 4.

Besides, I have, about the year 1545 or 1546, asked from 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 and also by those of Emden.

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

Again, I have also offered to discuss [these things] 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 desires 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 anyone desires to discuss with us, no matter who he is (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 Augustine 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; John 8:44.

Inasmuch as our adversaries and opponents make our life and doctrine suspicious with many, by saying that if truth is 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 everywhere, as may be seen); therefore we give them this discreet answer.

Further, I would say that if the truth is 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 torture, they should, therefore, show enough reason and love toward us, as 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 is not becoming for 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. Then, if they have anything 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 again 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 this 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 from them and as the ignorant and unversed yet cry, *If they are right why don't they 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, [corrupt] kings and [immoral] 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, and 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 and so lamentably adulterate and suppress the precious, worthy word of our Lord Jesus Christ while they maintain and uphold all the earthly in their impenitent, ungodly existence 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 from all pious and god-fearing persons. By this, 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. We place this 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 final judgment.

They may prove the nature of their father and fill the measure of their bloodthirstiness, for ~~they~~ [many] will not do otherwise. We trust, by the grace of the Lord, to possess our souls in patience and not turn our faces from their spies until the coming of him who shall come. Then shall they see him whom they have pierced, Rev. 1, Zec. 12:10. And I would with this sincerely pray for the readers and auditors, whether their station is high or low, learned or unlearned, for Christ's sake to accept 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 wilfully act contrary to the will of God) may be warned against protecting this ungodly state of affairs and against heaping upon themselves innocent blood. [I also pray] 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; and 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, do not be repulsed if it should taste bitter to your flesh. Behold, it is the truth in Christ to which we have testified; nor will there ever be found any other foundation, doctrine, way, light and truth.

Therefore I desire that it is not kept hidden from any reasonable persons; but that it may be read by or to everyone, no matter who or where they be, if it might be of use to them and they are not intent upon the corruption or blood of anyone, that by this the saving truth of Jesus Christ may be extended and the accursed falsehood of anti-christ be destroyed.

May Jehovah, 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 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 an abomination to Jehovah: but they that deal truly are his delight,” “I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me.” Prov. 12:22; 8:17.

“Do not devise a lie against your brother: neither do similar to your friend. Do not make use of any manner of lie: for the custom of it is not good,” Eccl. 7:12, 13.

MENNO SIMON.



A
BRIEF AND CLEAR CONFESSION
AND
SCRIPTURAL
DEMONSTRATION to JOHN
A'LASCO

FIRST,
OF THE INCARNATION OF OUR
BELOVED LORD JESUS CHRIST.

SECONDLY,
HOW BOTH THE TEACHERS AND THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST SHOULD BE
MINDED ACCORDING TO THE
SCRIPTURES.

WRITTEN TO
John A'Lasco and his Fellow-laborers at
Emden.

A. D. 1544.

BY
MENNO SIMON.

“If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free,” John 8:31, 32.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Corinthians 3:11.



PREFACE.

Menno Simon wishes the learned John A'Lasco and his fellows, and to all the people of East Friesland, of whatever class or condition in life they be, true faith, true light and knowledge, the Holy Spirit, the lovely fear and pure love of the Lord, an unblamable life and eternal life from Jehovah God, our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, his beloved Son, our Lord, who has loved us and washed us in his blood. To him be the glory, honor, praise, kingdom, power and majesty for ever and ever, Amen.

BELOVED friends and brethren, In the latter part of the first month of the year 1543, I met you at Emden to discuss with you for three or four days, the disputed articles of our faith and religion, for which purpose I was invited to come by writing. The first article was the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, to which, as you well know, you forced me against my will. The second article was infant baptism. Not agreeing in this, you let me depart in peace at our separation, desiring however, that I should send to you, by U. L., the foundation of my faith, which I had compiled in writing, inside of a stipulated period of three months, so that you might thus show to your god-called rulers, our faith, diligence, desire, seeking and life (which, however, is very weak); and upon what foundation, Scriptures and reasons our intended doctrine, faith and life was founded. I hope and trust, by the grace of the Lord, that you have desired and required this of me without any malice or bad intention.

Therefore I have promised to fulfill your kind bidding and desire and rejoiced in spirit; because also through U. L., our faith, doctrine and life could be best explained to those of high social standing, to whose care the carnal sword was entrusted and thus the suspicion [might] be destroyed which is held against us by the pernicious uproar and shameful doctrine and practice of the false

prophets, who, under a holy semblance, always creep into society to the hindrance of the wise and intelligent. Before God, who knows our hearts, we are certainly clear of all their abominable doctrine, uproar, mutiny, blood-shed, polygamy and similar abominations. Yes, we hate and with sincere affection [commitment] fight against them as acknowledged heresy; as snares to the conscience; as deceit, seduction and fraud and as pestilential doctrines, accursed by all divine Scripture. For how could the true brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, the well-disposed children of God, who, with Christ Jesus, are born of God the Father and the powerful seed of the divine word in Christ Jesus; regenerated by Christ, partake of his Spirit and nature, conform unto him, and are christian and heavenly minded, teach rebellion of any kind? For they are always prepared, according to the measure of their faith, to do the will of the eternal Prince of peace, who has taught his disciples nothing but patience and eternal peace, saying, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," John 14:27. Again, "Peace be with you." John 20:19. For his kingdom is a kingdom of love, of unity, of peace and of reformation; and not of hatred, rebellion, blood, disquiet and destruction. Again, in peace we are called by God; peace should rule in our hearts to him by whom we are called. Again, "Blessed are the peace-makers." Mat. 5:9. Paul says, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Rom. 15:13. I am aware, kind reader, that the cited Scriptures have, for the most part, reference to the inward peace, which comes through Christ; yet whoever has this inward Christian peace in his heart will nevermore be found guilty, before God and the world, of rebellion, treason, mutiny, murder, robbery or such unbecoming acts. For the Spirit of Christ which is in him seeks not evil, but good; not destruction, but healing; not corruption, but assistance; seeks to live everywhere in peace with all mankind, as far as possible. He follows "peace with all men and holiness, without which no man

can see the Lord,” Heb.12:14; John 14:17; 21:15; Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 7:15; Col. 3:15; Mat. 5:9; Rom. 15:13.

Behold, beloved friends and brethren, by these and other Scriptures we are taught and warned not to take up the literal sword, nor ever to give our consent to it, *Excepto ordinario potestatis gladio, indebitum usum verso*; [Literally, With the exception of the ordinary sword of power, by turning it into an improper use] but [instead] to take up the two-edged, powerful, sharp sword of the Spirit, which goes forth from the mouth of the Lord, namely, the word of God. By this we intend to destroy the kingdom of satan, ~~constrain~~ [lead] all the world to salvation and regeneration and bruise, pierce and crush all petrified and obdurate hearts. Desiring, I say, by the grace, Spirit and power of the Lord, to use it to circumcise all flesh, high, low, rich, poor, learned or unlearned, of all pride, vain show, pomp, avarice, usury, smuggling, lies, deceit, robbery, shedding of innocent blood, hatred, envy, adultery, fornication, unchastity, unnatural desires, gluttony, wine-bibbing, drunkenness, debauchery, cursing and swearing, blindness, vanity and of the fearful, unbecoming idolatry. And thus, all of them, no matter who they are, through the pure fear of the Lord, from whom comes the sure knowledge of the judgment of God, become first inwardly humble before him and then, by the sure knowledge of his blessings, so abundantly shown to us, be refreshed and consoled by Christ Jesus and thus willingly renounce, by the power of their faith working by love, their own wisdom, cunning, philosophy, sophistry, unwillingness, sloth, evil lusts, unbelief, disobedience and the very erroneous, carnal, mad life of this world. [Thus they can] enter into all divine wisdom, truth, love, zeal and soberness; the true sacraments and true religion, in full obedience to God and Christ and in all the christian fruits which flow from a pure heart, good conscience and unfeigned faith, Tit. 2:7; 1 Pet. 1:23; Eph. 6:7; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16; 19:15.

Thus we do not fight with carnal, but with spiritual weapons: patience and with the word of the Lord, against all flesh, world and devil, trusting in Christ. Nor shall there ever be found any other weapons with us. Therefore, do not be afraid of us (behold, in Christ Jesus I do not lie); for we do not desire your destruction, but your regeneration; not your condemnation, but your everlasting salvation; not your flesh and blood, but your spirit and soul; on account of which I have these seven years suffered and yet suffer slander and scorn, anxiety, suspension, persecution and great peril of being imprisoned.

The more the word of the Lord is extended, by the grace of God, to the reformation of some persons, who, however, are few, the more hatred and bitterness increases against me; so that up to this hour I could not find, in all the country, where, alas, the mere boasting of the divine word is a great deal more plenty than the fear of God, a cabin or hut (blessed be the Lord) in which my wife and little children can safely sojourn for a year or two. O, cruel, unmerciful christians! O, that all magistrates and princes, as also all the wise and learned knew the seeking, intention and desire of my heart, and also of my beloved brethren who, by the grace, Spirit and word of God, are converted into a new spirit or new birth! If they rightly understood our teaching how soon their hearts and minds would be changed into a different sense! But as all of them, with only a few exceptions, are nothing but earth and flesh and not gifted with the Spirit of Christ; therefore, alas, we hear nothing from them but upbraiding and slander, can expect nothing from them (I mean the evil-disposed) but the stake, water, fire, wheel and sword, as a reward of their gratitude, that we have sought and yet seek our conversion, salvation and eternal life, and that of the whole world, with such diligence, solicitude, pains and labor from our inmost heart. For I strive after nothing, of which God is my witness, but that the God of heaven and of earth, through his blessed Son, Jesus Christ, may have the glory and praise of his blessed word; that all men may be saved; and that

they may awaken in this convenient time of grace, from their profound sleep of sinfulness; that they may set aside all adhering sin and the damnable works of darkness; that they may put on the armor of light. They may thus become one with us by true penance, faith, baptism, Supper, ban or separation, love, obedience and true life, one holy christian church and body in Christ Jesus. This is something which the whole world to-day yet opposes with all its strength, with both shoulders and horns; not being willing that Christ Jesus, forever blessed, shall reign over them. Yes, they persecute, banish, burn, murder and destroy all those who willingly teach and uphold the glory, praise, honor, will and commandments of the Lord. *De bis satis*, [Twice is enough.] Heb. 12:15; Rom. 13:11; Heb. 12:2; Rom. 13:12; Luke 3:3; Mat. 3:1; 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 2; Mat. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:5; 2 Thes. 3; 1 Tim. 1:20; Luke 19:47.

Inasmuch as I do your kind bidding in this matter by briefly compiling in writing my doctrine, faith and seeking, as I did before, verbally, which I am always prepared to do to all mankind, according to the doctrine of Peter, as was said above, therefore I desire of you, as dear as Christ is to you, that you do not look upon my confession, which is the word of God, with carnal, blind eyes, as the mad, unintelligent world do who want to have all things taught according to their own fancy and will, yet under the name of christianity. [I ask] that you will not measure and judge according to the carnal way, as with logical questions and other similar human wisdom; but that you will look at and judge it according to the word and truth of the Lord, as those would who understand spiritual matters, as unblamable, regenerated christians who are full of the knowledge, love and fear of God; are urged by the Holy Spirit and do not seek human favor, praise and honor, self and carnal welfare, but only the honor and glory of God and the eternal salvation of their brethren. For only such people can judge spiritual matters; and not the carnal minded, 1 Cor. 14:29. The Spirit of God teaches, judges and understands all things. Paul

says, "What man knows the things of a man, apart from the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, no man knows the things of God except by the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. 2:11. Therefore test your intention and the inmost of your hearts, as if before God who sees all things. Search yourselves thoroughly and open your hearts before the Lord. If you yet seek any carnal liberty, lusts, honor and profit, then, doubtlessly, your judgment in spiritual matters (especially as regards the mere confession) will be quite carnal, selfish, partial, unjust and false. You will also garble and pervert the plain testimony of the Holy Scriptures by false logic and reasoning, to flatter yourselves and to please the world. Beware, lest you do so and thus the terrible wrath of the Lord comes upon you. I know why I write this. I am in doubt about your sincerity. Remember what I mean. And if your hearts are sincere, clean and pious before God, as I hope; and if you actually are desirous of the truth, then you will confess, by the grace of God, that our humble, plain doctrine, faith, sacraments and the life of nearly all, particularly the outward, unblamable, christian, evangelical life, is conformable to the Spirit and word of God.

And if God, by his loving kindness, should grant that you sincerely acknowledge it in your inmost soul as being the unchangeable word and will of God, even as the Spirit and power of God; then I pray that you, by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, receive it in gladness and gratitude of heart and let it be examined by your ordained rulers and by all men and let them know what your heart, spirit and conscience testifies concerning our doctrine, faith, sacraments and lives. Do not fear the exalted position of any man, nor despise his humbleness. Go upon the kingly highway speaking the truth to all mankind, with a clear conscience, lest you teach, judge or testify contrary to your inward understanding, judgment and conviction, to your everlasting condemnation. For you are certainly taught by the word of the Lord that whosoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, not in this world, nor in the world to come, Mat.

12:32; Luke 10:12; Mark 3:28. Therefore, most beloved, search your spirits. If you are spiritual then your judgment, doubtlessly, will be spiritual, just and right. If you are not and judge spiritual matters according to your own will, woe unto you! I speak to you as to one whose soul I seek and love with all my strength. Although you are more learned than I am, yet I teach and advise you to judge justly in all things, without carnality or partiality. For I am afraid that there were not a few, some of whom were also famous men, excelling in learning, who, in semblance of fearing God, for the sake of shameful gain, worldly honor and carnal lusts have shamefully written, judged and taught the blessed word of the Lord by garbling the Scriptures, against their own consciences, to the despising of the cross of Christ, in order to please those who are in authority.

Be this as it may, let every soul seek the pure christian truth in purity of heart; and strive after the same with all diligence and he will be successful. Jesus says, "If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed; and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Again, those who trust in him shall understand the truth and the believing in love shall be agreeable unto him. Again, "The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant," John 8:31, 32; Psa. 25:14.

May our Almighty Father, through his blessed son Jesus Christ, give you all, in all things, a true understanding and clear vision to judge rightly in all things, to distinguish rightly between that which is holy and that which is unholy; between good and evil; right and wrong and between the clean and unclean, according to the evangelical truth. May all of you who have renounced gain, honor and fame for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ, henceforth be taught by the sure and true confession of Scripture, be impelled by the Holy Spirit and enter into all divine wisdom, truth, righteousness and obedience to him who has taught us by his

powerful word, drawn us by his Spirit and bought and delivered us by his precious blood, that is, Christ Jesus, Amen.

Judge aright and confess the truth.



A TRUE CONFESSION
AND
SCRIPTURAL DEMONSTRATION
OF THE MOST HOLY INCARNATION OF
OUR BELOVED LORD JESUS CHRIST.
WRITTEN TO JOHN A'LASCO AND HIS
FELLOW-LABORERS AT EMDEN.

BELOVED LORDS, friends and brethren, when this matter of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ was first mentioned by the brethren, on hearing it I was terrified at heart, lest I should err in the matter and be found, before God, in pernicious unbelief. On account of this article I was often so troubled at heart, after receiving baptism, that for many days I abstained from food and drink, by the over-anxiety of my soul, beseeching and praying God in extreme necessity that the kind Father by his mercy and grace would disclose unto me the mystery

of the incarnation of his blessed Son, to the extent necessary to the glorification of his holy name and to the consolation of my afflicted conscience, [though I was] a poor sinner, who, although in extreme weakness, desired to do his blessed will and pleasure.

Thus wandering about for days, weeks and months, I have frequently asked the opinion or belief of some of you in regard to this matter which bore so heavily upon my heart. Yet none could instruct me sufficiently to quiet my conscience. For I found with them gross misunderstanding of some Scriptures which they alleged as proof of their assertion, not only according to my opinion, but according to the meaning of the Scriptures. But at last, after much fasting, weeping, praying, tribulation and anxiety, I became, by the grace of God, quiet and refreshed at heart, firmly acknowledging and believing, assured by the infallibly sure testimony of the Scriptures, understood in the Spirit, that Christ Jesus, forever blessed, is the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor.15:47; the promised spiritual seed of the new and spiritual Eve, Gen. 3:15, namely, the eternal Truth, John 14:16; the powerful Conqueror of the serpent and his seed, Gen. 3:15; Luke 11:21; John 16:33; Heb. 2:14. This promised seed is the eternal Truth and word of God, and, in the fullness of time, was sent forth from the Almighty and merciful Father, Gal. 4:4, in a pure virgin, Mary, Isa. 7:14, conceived by the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High. She heard and believed the heavenly message and pleasure of the Father, that was brought to her by Gabriel, Luke 1:28. This {eternal} Word of God has become flesh; it was in the beginning with God and was God, John 1:2. Conceived and begotten by the Holy Spirit, Mat. 1:18; generated and nourished in Mary,* as a

* [CHCoG: This is incorrect. Mat. 1:18 does not say this. In Luke 1:31 Mary is told that SHE will conceive. And nine times the Bible directly tells us that Christ's FATHER begot him. The Holy Spirit did indeed play an essential role in transferring Christ's DNA, soul and spirit into Mary, but the Bible does not say that Christ was "conceived and begotten by the Holy Spirit." Nor is Christ called either the "eternal truth" or the "eternal word" anywhere in the Bible, but simply as the

natural child is by its mother; a true Son of God and a true son of man, born of her, truly flesh and blood, suffering, hungry, thirsty, peace-loving, mortal according to the flesh; immortal according to the Spirit, like unto us in all things, yet without sin, Heb. 2:9; 4:15. Truly God and man, man and God. Not divided nor separated as being half heavenly and half earthly, half of the seed of man and half of God, as some express it; but an unmixed, whole Christ, namely, spirit, soul and body, as Paul says all men are.* “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But he made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,” (mark, *humbled himself*), Phil. 2:6-8.

[CHCoG: As shown previously, this passage accurately translates as: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Messiah Jeshua, who, while He was in God’s form, did not consider the extortion that He was the equal of God, but He stripped Himself and He took the form of a servant, and was in the form of a child of man and was in nature as a man. And He humbled Himself and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the stake.” Phil. 2:5-8, CHCoG trans. Remember, it is Satan who considers himself equal to God, not Christ. Isa. 14:12-14. Like Jesus, we are to NOT consider ourselves equal to His Father. Nor are we to think we are

Truth and the Word. As we have seen and will see again, these incorrect assumptions lead Menno far astray.]

* [CHCoG: Based on 1 Thes. 5:23 & Heb. 4:12. This is the true definition of a Triune being, such as Jehovah God is, and we are created in his image. The Catholic three-beings-in-one-being trinity is not taught in the Bible. Physically, as we have discussed earlier, half of Christ’s DNA came from Mary, while the male half came directly from Jehovah God. This does not make Jesus a divided person, but a true person, as each of us is also a combination of DNA from our mother and our father. It also makes Jesus the true son of God and the true son of man.]

equal to Jesus: He alone is God's true son, and he alone died for our sins. Jesus Christ owes his life to his Father, and we owe our lives to Christ.]

He who was more exalted than the angels, was made a little lower than they are. For as he became flesh and blood, he was subject to death, Heb. 2:9. I believe and confess without a doubt that he was thus, according to the flesh, conceived and come from the Holy Spirit, born of the seed or lineage of David and of Abraham and made of a woman, under the law, Gal. 4:4, circumcised the eighth day, obedient unto his parents, growing and waxing strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him, Luke 2:40.*

This same man, Christ Jesus, preached, was crucified, died, was buried, arose and ascended to heaven and is there seated at the right hand of his Almighty Father, according to the testimony of all the Scriptures and from there he will return to judge the sheep and the goats, the good and the evil, the living and the dead, 2 Cor. 6:10; 2 Tim. 4:1.

Thus I believe and confess that the pure word of God, Christ Jesus, the Creator, Commander and accuser of Adam,† instituted himself in Adam's stead, that is, in his wrath, death and curse and has, by his great compassion, love and mercy, taken upon himself the accursed burden of his erring creatures; that he himself became like Adam in the flesh. And thus he has, by his death, again given life; and by humbling himself, by his righteousness and obedience,

* [CHCoG: Again, Jesus can only truly be of the seed of David by being at least in part a descendent of David. And this he is, via the DNA he received from Mary, who was herself a true descendent of King David, as the Matthew genealogy shows, for the final Joseph in this series is her own father, as the Aramaic Peshitta reveals.]

† [ChcoG: I am unsure what Menno means by calling Christ the "accuser of Adam." Rev. 12:10 tells us that Satan is the accuser of sinners, while Titus 2:14 says Christ is our redeemer.]

he has reunited and fulfilled the eternal righteousness of the righteous God, as he speaks through David, "I restored that which I did not take away," Psalms 69:4.

God has not reconciled the world unto himself by Adam's flesh, for by his [un]righteousness it was subject to the wrath and curse. And what can be reconciled by wrath and curse? But he has done so by himself, by ~~mere~~ grace, by his {eternal} Word, that is, by his blessed Son, who became like unto the first Adam in all things except in unrighteousness, disobedience and sin, that all honor and praise should belong to God and not to us or to Adam. Yes, "But by Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in Jehovah."'" 1 Cor. 1:30, 31.

Behold, beloved lords, friends and brethren, thus I believe that God has sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (which he conquered, ~~or~~ [and] for which he was offered), condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Romans 8:3, 4. Again, "He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5:21. And thus he has become our only offering and sacrifice, fulfillment and requisition, by whom God the Father is reconciled, by whom his righteousness is fulfilled, the malediction removed, the devil, sin and everlasting death conquered and eternal life restored; yes, grace, favor, mercy, peace and eternal life. Paul says, "He that did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Romans 8:32.

Thus I believe and confess that "God was made manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. 3:16; "That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," 2 Cor. 5:19; that he has blotted out our sins and has again seated himself at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and all the angels of God worship him there, Hebrews 1:6. And with this

doctrine of the conception and incarnation of Christ, all scriptural testimony and truth agree.

First, Paul says, “Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things,” Eph. 4:9, 10. Again, Christ himself says, “No man has ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.” John 3:13. Again, “He that comes from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth: he that comes from heaven is above all and what he has seen and heard, that he testifies; and no man receives his testimony,” John 3:31, 32. Again, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Does this offend you? What if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” John 6:51, 61, 62. Again, “I came forth from the Father and have come unto the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father,” John 16:28. Again, “Father, I will that they also, whom you have given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which you have given me, for you loved me before the foundation of the world,” John 17:24. Again, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the word of Life (for the life was manifested),” 1 John 1:1; and also many other Scriptures, particularly by John.

All those who, by the grace of God, clearly and intelligently see into and confess this doctrine of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, will rightly confess and comprehend the unspeakable grace, favor, compassion, mercy and the inexpressibly great love of God the Father expressed and manifested in Christ Jesus, as he himself says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life,” John 3:16. Again, “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,” 1 John 4:9, 10. For how could God show greater paternal love to us than to humble his eternal Wisdom and Truth, his pure, powerful Word, his blessed Son, by whom he created all things; who was like unto him in form, the image of his blessed being, yet he became less than the angels, a poor, despised, peace-loving, mortal man or servant, who had to bear the trouble, labor, transgression, curse and death of the whole world alone. He so humbled him that he became the most miserable of men, 1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:6,* “a worm and no man; a reproach of men and despised by the people,” Psalms 22:6; and thus the innocent, the true, the wise, the righteous, the obedient and the pure Christ Jesus had to wash off, blot out and satisfy the guilt, falsehood, foolishness, unrighteousness, disobedience and uncleanness of all men. Say, beloved, who ever heard of greater love?

Beloved, holy father and brother, this is, before God, my doctrine, faith and confession of the consoling incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ; which is, in my opinion, very strong and incontrovertible by the Holy Scriptures; nor can I, therefore, be convinced by any view of the matter, by any of your reasonings and writings until now advanced by you against our doctrine, faith and confession; as you turn and explain them according to a natural and carnal sense and not to the true explanation and sense of the Holy Spirit; which, doubtlessly, should not be the case in this matter, since this glorious work of the incarnation of Christ is fashioned and accomplished by God through his Holy Spirit,

* [CHCoG: Yes, Christ was horribly mistreated and died an appalling death. But throughout all this, he had his father’s promise that he would redeem millions and be resurrected into glory. Surely those with no hope are the most miserable of men.]

above all natural causes and solely in faith, as the pleasure of God directs.

I repeat, this is my confession to those who desired to hear my belief and feeling in regard to this article. Yet I never teach it so profoundly in my common admonitions to the brethren and friends; nor have I, heretofore, always taught it thus profoundly, as I have told you verbally. But I simply teach that the blessed Christ Jesus is truly God and man, a Son of God and a son of man, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, a poor, despised man, like unto us in all things, except sin; that it is he who was promised in the law by the prophets and is our true Messiah, Christ, King, David, Prophet, Bishop and Priest, the Deliverer, Savior, Sacrifice, Reconciliation, Fulfiller, Shepherd, Teacher, Example, Mediator, Advocate, Ruler, Commander, Bridegroom, Light of the world, the true Door to the fold, the eternal Wisdom, the image of God, the Father's Word, the right Way, Truth and Life, &c. For I know full well that there are few who can understand this particular matter, even after it is explained to them. Therefore, I say, I deem it unnecessary for me and for all teachers to teach this matter of the incarnation of Christ further than simply, to the teaching of the regeneration of the church, to love, to consolation, to the sanctification and to live and act according to his holy doctrine and life. Would to God that we were all of such a mind. But if one wants to search further and inquire into this matter, if [their need] to know and his understanding reaches far enough, it will not be hidden from him; if not it will be said unto him, *A litora te ne quæferis*, [Do not seek yourself from the shores.] Eccl. 3:21.

Well, as this is our doctrine and understanding, not otherwise than according to the testimony of the Scripture, as we can by the grace of God, best understand and comprehend it, we yet fear that our explanation from the word of God will not satisfy and convince you to unite with us in this matter, but that you will persevere in your adopted reasonings and arguments and try to

explain it literally, naturally and human-like; not observing that Isaiah, Matthew, Luke and John clearly testify that it was brought about by faith in Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, as was said above.

O, let us not humble the Almighty Father in his mercy! Let us not rob the blessed Son of God of his glory. Beloved brethren the Scripture remains eternal and unbroken. Take heed, lest you err. Thus speaks Isaiah, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," Isa. 7:14. Again, the angel of the Lord said unto Joseph, "That which is conceived in her is by the Holy Spirit," Mat. 1:20. Again, when Mary asked the angel the manner of the conception, how it shall be, he answered: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you," Luke 1:35. Again, this is the sure testimony of John the servant of God and of Christ, concerning the incarnation of Jesus Christ. "The word was made flesh," John 1:14. He does not say, *The word took unto itself flesh*.

Behold, dear brethren, however incontrovertible these reasons and Scriptures are by which we try to establish our assertion, yet I fear that we, on account of this article, will be judged and considered as being sectarian, heretical and deceitful, notwithstanding there may be many among us who fear the Lord from their inmost hearts, who never in their lives heard a word spoken in regard to the mystery of this matter as previously expressed with great clearness; nor ever inquired into it, besides they neither knew nor understood anything about it. They are satisfied with the Father's favor through Christ; obey his holy word, follow his example, love, doctrine and life and are rejoiced solely at the remission of sins, freedom of the Spirit, grace, favor, promise, mercy and eternal life, which they have received through him. If only all the wise and learned, even all the men of this world would satisfy themselves with the plain, humble teaching of Jesus Christ and his apostles, not climbing higher nor remaining lower; would seek God with purity of heart and firmly believe,

fear, love and obey his blessed word. O, what precious talents and what glorious gain would then, by the grace of God, be gathered into the treasury of the Lord. But, as it is, there are many, alas, whose faith and knowledge is not in their hearts but solely upon their lips and tongues, *non loquor ad erubescentiam proborum*, [I do not speak to the shame of the righteous] who find pleasure in foolish and useless questions and in disputation; who are versed more in the wisdom of man than in the wisdom of God; who are of broken minds, who always learning and never come to the true knowledge of the eternal truth; and whoever contradicts and reproves them by the plain word of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ, out of mere brotherly love, is from that moment considered by them as being a shameful sectarian or a wicked perverse heretic; *Ipsi judicate, an ne verum sit quod dico?* [Judge for yourselves, whether what I say is not true?] notwithstanding that their own unbelieving hearts are quite earthly, carnal and devilish and their whole life is nothing but mere flesh, pride, vanity, laziness, unchristian like avarice, hatred, cruelty, blood-thirstiness, drunkenness and flattery, in short, nothing but sin and shame. O, might it be that I lie and do not tell the truth!

Nevertheless let them slander and upbraid as much as they please; we will willingly bear it. We will all be judged by one Judge who will scrupulously try and reward their doctrine, faith, zeal, seeking and life, as well as ours. Then it will appear who have anxiously sought the everlasting truth of God, the praise and honor of the Lord and the everlasting salvation of all mankind. Brethren, beware, lest you become like these fruitless disputers. Take heed, if you would save your souls, that you sincerely seek, desire, believe, receive and live according to the saving truth of God, Amen.

OBJECTIONS.

As I have shown and confessed to you the firm foundation of the incarnation of the Lord, that he did not become flesh from Mary, but that he became flesh in Mary; and as I have also, in part, adduced the reasons and Scriptures by which we are forced to such belief, therefore I will now briefly reply to your Scriptures and arguments, until now advanced, by which you teach and undertake to prove that he did not simply become flesh in Mary but from Mary.

First, you ask, "If he is not the seed of woman?"

We answer, Yes, Gen. 3:15.

From this you conclude that if he is the seed of woman, he is also a man born of a woman. We answer by asking, did the deceiving serpent not have a body? You must answer, Yes. For God said, "Upon your belly shall you go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life." Again, Was the deceived woman ~~not~~ corporeal? Doubtlessly so. If the natural and corporeal seed of the deceived woman is bodily, then the seed of the serpent must also be a natural, bodily seed, of which God himself has spoken and testified in Genesis. Or else you must admit and confess that the one should be understood spiritually and the other literally. Not at all, beloved brethren. But the bodily serpent represents the spiritual serpent, namely Satan, Rev. 12:14 and has his spiritual seed, which is falsehood, John 8:44. Thus also, the woman, who is the mother of all mankind, a like image of Adam, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; subject to her husband, after she had sinned—the image of the new spiritual bride, namely, of the church of Christ, which is the image of Christ, Rom. 8:29, flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone, subject to Christ, Eph. 5:30. If the bride is spiritual then the seed must be spiritual, namely, the eternal truth, which truth is Christ himself, John 14:6. Behold, most beloved, thus the serpent is spiritual and his seed is spiritual of which he begets all his children of accursed falsehood. On the

contrary, the bride is spiritual and her seed is spiritual, of which she begets all her children of the saving truth. Between these is constant opposition, as may be plainly seen. Yet truth triumphs and falsehood is vanquished, notwithstanding falsehood opposes with all its power. O, brethren, do understand the Scriptures aright, lest we, through misunderstanding or pernicious obduracy, deceive ourselves and with us many souls. If you are not satisfied with the clear explanation of these Scriptures, but still maintain that both the woman and the seed must be corporeal, then we know and confess that this same woman conceived in her womb the before-mentioned seed, which is God's word, John 1:1; not from her body nor of her body, but from God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mat. 1:18, through faith, Luke 1:34.

[CHCoG: This is a convoluted argument attempting to sidestep what the Bible clearly says: Mary conceived, Mary was pregnant with Christ, Mary gave birth to Christ, and Mary was Christ's mother. And the counter-example used is bizarre: Why would anyone compare Christ's incarnation with Satan possessing a snake to deceive Eve? For Menno's spiritual argument to work, the Church must have conceived Christ, and he must have been born as a solely spiritual being, and there is a slight echo of that in Rev. 12:1-4, which Menno does not even mention. Yes, Christ's incarnation is far more than merely physical. Jehovah God sent his Holy Spirit to Mary and fertilised one of her eggs with special male DNA formed solely for Christ, and joined the now fertile egg with Christ's own soul and spirit. So yes, Christ's incarnation is unique and miraculous, but if it was purely spiritual, Christ would not have had a physical, human body.]

Secondly, You ask, If he is not called the seed of Abraham?

We answer: Yes, Gal. 3:16. From this you conclude that he must, according to the flesh, be descended from the flesh and blood of Abraham. In confirmation you cite the saying of Paul,

“For truly he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham; wherefore in all things it behooved him to be named like unto his brethren,” Heb. 2:16, 17.* To this in the first place we reply, That your conclusion is according to the flesh and not with the word of God. John says, “The word was made flesh and dwelt among us;” and it is of the Holy Spirit, Mat. 1:25; therefore it was not Abraham’s natural flesh and blood. But by grace it was promised to the beloved father Abraham, that he, that is, the true blessing of all nations, should not come of the seed of his brethren, nor of the gentiles nor uncircumcised, but of his seed, that is, of his generation, as it is written, “In you shall all families of the earth be blessed,” Gen. 12:3. Thus is Christ Jesus promised to Abraham and born of his seed, according to the promise, as Christ himself says; that “salvation is of the Jews,” John 4:22† and thus he is called the seed and son of Abraham, Gal. 3:16; Mat. 1:1. For he is, doubtlessly, according to his blessed flesh which is

* [CHCoG: This passage is more accurately translated in the NKJV: “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. Heb. 2:14-17. Though this passage does not directly say that Jesus is of the seed of Abraham, it remains consistent with Gal. 3:16.]

† [CHCoG: In this confusing paragraph, Menno appears to somehow be claiming that Christ **is** directly of the seed of Abraham, and thus not just a random human, and **also** that Christ is NOT descended from Abraham, but only directly from the Holy Spirit. This latter view is contradicted by his own use of John 4:22, for although Abraham was NOT a Jew, the Jews are descendants of Judah, who was himself a descendant of Abraham, though three generations later, so Christ is clearly linking himself to Judah in this verse and thus less directly back to Abraham.]

conceived by the Holy Spirit from Abraham's seed, come and born for the salvation of us all.

Again, the saying of Paul which you allege to sustain your cause was not taught and spoken by the Holy Spirit in such a sense as you claim; but Paul says, "Both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one (that is, you say of "of one Adam." But we say they are of one, that is, of one God), for which cause he (the Savior) is not ashamed to call them (the sanctified) brethren, saying, I will declare your name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto you," Heb. 2:11, 12. For as Christ Jesus was born from above of the Father and is therefore called God's child or Son, having God as Father, thus, also, all who receive Christ "to them he gave power to become the sons of God," John 1:12. Such also have God as their Father. As the regenerated are born, together with Christ Jesus, of one God and have one Father, therefore he calls the sanctified who, with him, are born of God, his brethren, not because of the flesh but because of the new birth. If it were otherwise you would have to consent and admit that all wicked, unbelieving and perverse men and women were brothers and sisters of Christ Jesus as well as the believing, sincere and pious ones. Not so, for Christ Jesus says, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother, Mat. 12:60. Read and understand it rightly. Further, Paul says, "Behold I and the children which God has given me," Heb. 2:13. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself partook of the same (that is, mortal, as a consequence); that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, which was the seed and generation of Abraham, and, by the terrible threat, subject to the heavy burden and intolerable yoke of the law of Moses.* For truly

* [CHCoG: Again Menno shows his occasional disrespect for God's Law. God's Law is holy and pure. Psalms 119:33-39; Romans 7:12. It is our

he took not on him the nature of angels: if you understand it as meaning the good, then you should know that they did not sin; but if you take it as meaning the evil ones, then you should know that he rejected them and keeps them in the bondage of eternal darkness unto the great judgment day. Therefore Paul says, “For truly he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Therefore in all things it was necessary for him to be made like unto his brethren (to wit: weak and mortal), that he might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted,” Heb. 2:16-18. Now, judge for yourselves whether this is not the right meaning of this Scripture of Paul.

In the third place you declare and say thus: Paul plainly teaches that Christ Jesus is born of the seed of David according to the flesh and is proven to be the Son of God with power; according to the spirit of sanctification. Therefore he is, you conclude, according to the flesh, of the seed or loins of David and according to the Spirit only, born of God.

To which we reply: It is true that it would follow in the common course of nature that Christ was born of the seed or loins of David; but it is not in accordance with the testimony of Scripture. The reason is this: Because the Scripture teaches that the “Word was made flesh,” and that it came forth from the Holy Spirit, John 1:14; Mat. 1:20; Rom. 1:2. Therefore, beloved brethren this is the true meaning of Paul in regard to this and like Scriptures; the consoling promise of the future Savior was given to Abraham; that he should be born of his seed or generation. Abraham’s offspring were Ishmael, Isaac and the children of Keturah. The promise of the patriarch was again given to Isaac and not to the others. Isaac begat Esau and Jacob. Not Esau, but

propensity to sin that is the “heavy burden and intolerable yoke.”]

Jacob again received the promise given to his father Abraham and Isaac. Jacob multiplied into twelve tribes; and, that the promised Savior might not be looked for from the tribe of Reuben, Dan, Gad, or any of the eleven tribes, therefore the Holy Spirit points to Judah and not to any of the other tribes, Gen. 49:10. Judah, multiplying into many branches, the promise is renewed in David, 2 Kin. 7:12. Thus the merciful Father has always testified and shown beforehand, from one patriarch to another and from one generation to another, that all men might know from which patriarchs and generations the promised Savior and Deliverer of all mankind should be born, according to the flesh, as the Jews well knew by such showing of Scripture, saying, "Has not the Scripture said that Christ comes of the seed of David and out of the town of Bethlehem," John 7:42. "He came unto his own and his own did not receive him." He has come of the seed or generation of David, according to the promise; but they did not receive him. Yes, the appointed hour has come. Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin named Mary who was promised to a man. Mary believed the word of the Lord; the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, &c. The Word became flesh in her, John 1:14. It is conceived and brought forth by the Holy Spirit, Mat. 1:20; and according to this same flesh, or with this same flesh, which was conceived by and brought forth by the Holy Spirit, he is born of Mary, the pure virgin, who was of the seed and generation of David; David was of Judah; Judah of Jacob; Jacob of Isaac; Isaac of Abraham; and thus the divine promise was fulfilled, which God through grace alone had promised and given to the above mentioned patriarchs; and thus was born, according to the flesh, as was said above, of the seed or generation of David; and by his saving Spirit is proven to be the living Son of God, Rom. 1:4. For if he were to prove or declare himself to be the Son of God, it must, without doubt, be according to his sanctifying Spirit, inasmuch as he could not be such according to the flesh as

he had humbled himself and was forsaken by the Father,* was weak, despised, hungry, thirsty, peace-loving, mortal and like unto us in all things, yet without sin. Beloved brethren, take heed. The alleged Scripture of Paul is very clear and has everywhere a scruple, Rom. 1:13.

[CHCoG: Menno is again claiming the Christ was conceived and born (the normal meaning of “brought forth”) by the Holy Spirit, which as we saw above, is NOT what Paul, nor any other scriptures teach. Jesus was conceived in and brought forth by Mary, though she was divinely impregnated by Jehovah God using the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit.]

In the fourth place, you say, Christ is called a fruit of the loins of David. Therefore he must be the natural and pleasing seed of David.

Answer. These words, according to the letter were spoken of Solomon and not of Christ; which Solomon was naturally born of the loins of David. Thus Nathan spoke unto David, “And when your days are fulfilled and you shall sleep with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, which shall proceed out of your bowels and I will establish your kingdom. He shall build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he shall be my son (now note of whom it is spoken). If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men,” 2 Sam. 7:12-14. Now, Christ never committed iniquity; for he did not know sin; neither was guile found in his mouth, 1 Pet. 2:22. Again, in the Psalms, “Jehovah has sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn

* [CHCoG: Though Jesus felt forsaken by his Father as he was dying on the cross, it is far more likely that he was overwhelmed by what was happening to him, and he was not truly forsaken. Deu. 4:31, 31:8, 1 Sam 12:22, Psa 37:28, Heb 13:5]

from it; from the fruit of your body I will set up your throne. If your children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon your throne for ever more,” Psa. 132:11, 12. That this is literally spoken of Solomon, he himself testifies in plain words, 1 Kin. 3:6; 8:20. Solomon, without doubt, represented Christ Jesus in figure, as in his glory, wisdom, building of the temple, &c. Behold, most beloved, thus we should not take the letter for the spirit and the spirit for the letter. But that the promise according to the Spirit had reference to Christ, is incontrovertible; for this the holy prophets of God plainly show; and particularly, Isa. 9:6[-7]; Jer. 23:5[-8]; 33:[14], 15[-21].

[CHCoG: Menno is correct in noting that these are dual prophecies, and they relate to both Solomon and Christ. But he goes too far in claiming that they only relate to Christ in figure. Christ is indeed, through Mary, of the seed of David, and he will build a new house for his Father when he returns, as shown in Ezekiel 40-42, John 2:19,* and he will sit on the throne of Israel forever, as Menno concedes and the additional verses quoted above confirm. This is not something that Solomon could do.]

In the fifth place you ask, If he is not a fruit of the womb of Mary?

Answer. Yes, Luke 1:38. From this you conclude,

If he is a fruit of the womb of Mary then he is also brought forth of her flesh and blood by the power of the Holy Spirit. For if he were not of her flesh and blood then he could not be called a fruit of her womb. But because he is of her flesh he is called the fruit

* [CHCoG: The John quote also refers to Christ himself, whose body they destroyed, but was raised again as a spiritual body three days later by Christ's Father, but it will likely have a physical fulfillment when Christ returns to establish God's Kingdom on earth.]

of her body, as an apple is called the fruit of a tree, because it grows upon the tree and partakes of its nature, through the strength of the earth.

Answer. According to the course of nature your conclusion is in part right, but according to scriptural testimony quite wrong. For the Scriptures say that Mary, the pure virgin, by faith, conceived the {eternal} Word of God which in the beginning was with God and was God, that it became flesh, John 1:14; conceived and brought forth by the Holy Spirit, Mat. 1:20; that it was human and natural-like; nourished in her; and was in due time born as a natural child is born of its mother. Thus Christ Jesus remains the precious, blessed fruit of the womb of Mary, according to the words of Elizabeth, which was conceived not *by* her womb but *in* her womb, fashioned by the Holy Spirit through faith, by God the omnipotent Father, from high heaven, as we have frequently shown.

You allege a natural reason concerning the tree and its fruits in proof of your assertion. Inasmuch as you do so, I will reply to your reasoning according to nature, namely, I have a well prepared field, well pulverized and manured, bearing abundance of wheat, corn, or rye. I say, ah, that is a beautiful crop, which fruit this field could not produce of itself, however well tilled and rich the same was and however much it was induced to do so by the heat of the sun and the moisture of the atmosphere, until the seed was sown in by the sower. Being sown and grown up it is called the fruit of the field, notwithstanding it was first sown upon it. An apple is called the fruit of the tree, although it is produced and grown by the soil on which the tree is grown.

In the same manner the heavenly seed, namely, the word of God, was sown in Mary and by her faith, being conceived in her by the Holy Spirit, became flesh; and thus it is called the fruit of her womb, the same as a natural fruit or offspring is called the fruit of its natural mother, John 1:14. For Christ Jesus, of his origin, is not an earthly man, that is, a fruit of the flesh and blood of Adam; but he is a heavenly fruit or man. For his beginning or origin is

from the Father, John 16:28, like unto the first Adam, yet without sin. Given to Adam and his children, if they hear and receive him in his holy word, to their everlasting salvation and deliverance, from God the merciful Father alone through grace and mercy; without price and without any previous mention on our part.

[CHCoG: Both of the above examples used are faulty. A human child cannot be exactly compared to an apple from a tree nor to a crop of wheat in a field. Using the correct analysis yields the correct understanding. A human child is physically a combination of DNA from the sperm of its father and the other half of the DNA and all the organelles required for life come from the egg of its mother. But to be viable, it also needs a soul and a human spirit, which God provides when the egg is fertilised. So a human, every human, is a combination of DNA from their father, an egg from their mother and a soul and spirit from God. In Christ's case, as we have indicated earlier, his physical material, which formed his body, was unique. Through Mary and her egg, her contribution to Christ's DNA was derived from Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Judah, David, etc, as listed in Luke 3:34-38, and continuing in Mat. 1:1-17.* But the male half of Christ's DNA was directly created by Jehovah God, much as Adam's had been, and was placed into her egg by the Holy Spirit, who also joined Christ's soul and spirit to the egg. Thus Christ is physically **both** a descendent of Adam and a new, second Adam. And in this way he became **both** the Son of God and the son of man. This is not an either/or situation, as both Menno and John A'Lasco are contending from opposite sides. Both are true, and both **must** be true for Christ to fulfill his mission of redeeming mankind, which

* [CHCoG: Matthew lists Mary's ancestors, and the final Joseph listed there is her father, not her future husband, as shown in the original Aramaic manuscripts. This is why the two lists are different from King David onward.]

requires him to be **both** God's son and Adam's son. If genetics had been better understood then, perhaps their differences on this article could have been resolved.]

In the sixth place you say, God could not suffer. If Christ's flesh were not of earth or of Adam, but from heaven, then he could not have been passive [perhaps passive is a poor English translation??] and consequently he could not have died.

Answer. Be impartial and judge rightly. Your meaning is that Christ Jesus according to the Spirit alone, is of the Father, in which Spirit he was impassive and immortal, as you say, but that he was not of the Father according to the flesh. But according to the flesh, in which he suffered and died, you teach that he is of earth, that thus the law (with which earthly man was cursed on account of his disobedience) concerning the earthly man, namely Christ, might be fulfilled, that he by obedience might save us, and we in him by the communion of his human nature and blood, whereby he has fulfilled the righteousness of the Father in our flesh. This foundation is implied in your Latin syllogisms. We will not refute this by subtle syllogisms nor by acute human cavilings, for we do not have them; but we refute it by the plain testimony of the word alone, which cannot be turned by flatterings, nor broken by human reason.

First, we confess and consent before all the world that Jehovah God, the Almighty, eternal Father is quite impassive and immortal; for with him there is no change, Jas. 1:17.* *Ego Deus, inquit*

* [CHCoG: Impassive? Really?? How about this: "Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them." Exo. 32:10. "Jehovah delighted only in your fathers, to love them;" Deu. 10:15. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Luke 3:22. How can you get impassive out of these? Jehovah God is NOT impassive. He is very much a being with emotions.]

Propheta, &c., non motor. [Literally: I, God, says the Prophet, &c., do not move.] But God the Son, the {eternal} Word is humbled, has denied himself, became less than the angels, a man of miserable, mortal flesh, John 1:14.

You say God cannot suffer, but the Scripture says otherwise; that God the Son has suffered, for he himself says, I am the first and the last, I am he that lives and was dead and behold I am alive for evermore, Rev. 1:18; 22:13. Adam's flesh was not the first and the last; but he who was before every creature, by whom all things were created, Eph. 3:9. Whose goings forth were from the beginning and from eternity. This is the first and the last; this same one has become flesh; he has suffered, he died, he again became living and shall live forever. Take heed, lest you wilfully oppose the Scriptures. Christ can not be divided into two parts, as you think.

I repeat, the Father is impassive, immortal and unchangeable; but for our sakes the Son is humbled, became passive and mortal, according to the testimony of the Scriptures, Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:19 and many other Scriptures. Therefore he prayed his beloved Father that he might again acquire the glory that he had with the Father, which he had lost in becoming man, John 17:5. If he remained unchanged in his divine form and if he suffered in that which he took of earth, as you say, then tell me, beloved, what he had lost that he desired again to acquire from his Father? Examine the Scriptures rightly and pray and by the grace of God, your eyes will be opened to behold the truth of Christ.

Again, in the second place we answer that the whole Christ Jesus went forth from his Father, John 1:14; 3:31; 6:27; 8:42; 14:24; 16:28; 17:8; that the word of God became flesh in Mary, the Lord himself from heaven, 1 Cor. 15:47; and that he was afflicted and oppressed in the flesh, soul and Spirit, according to the testimony of the Scriptures. In the flesh, because he was crucified. In his soul, because he himself says, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. In the Spirit, as he said John 13:21,

Turbatus est Jesus Spiritu, “Jesus was troubled in spirit.” Which Christ Jesus (that he might be an offering unto God), suffered the judgment of the unrighteous and died according to the flesh, but was made alive according to the Spirit.

Again, In the third place we reply to your syllogisms thus: The commandment was not given to the heavenly Christ, but to the earthly Adam and his seed, through Christ, that is, through the word. Adam, transgressing, was condemned to death through the Word Christ, Gen. 3:19. As the righteousness of God is unchangeable and eternal, as you yourselves say, therefore disobedient Adam must die according to the immutable righteousness of God. As Adam was earthly and of earth and was cursed by the word on account of his disobedience and had to die, therefore nothing could be expected nor taken from earth but earth, from curse nothing but curse and from death nothing but death, as Paul plainly shows, Rom. 5:12. Adam, being disobedient to the word which created him, in not giving heed to it and eating what it had forbidden, had to die involuntarily the death, with his seed, which the word had promised him. Because it was for righteousness’ sake that Adam and his descendants had to die, he having sinned and not having that with which to requite; therefore it is solely grace, mercy and love that he should live. But how? Through the righteousness of Adam’s flesh? Not at all; but [through] the word which had made Adam a living being, which gave him the commandment and promised him death, if he should commit iniquity, as was said above. This same word (as death had to be the consequence, according to righteousness, as truth had spoken) which God again promised to Adam, was to become flesh; that, as he was deceived by the liar and therefore, according to the justice of God, had to die, he might again be delivered by the promised truth and thus by grace and mercy alone, inherit life eternal. Adam believed it and was consoled and as a sign of the truth of the promised favor and love, God made coats of skins for Adam and for his spouse, and clothed them, Gen. 3:21.

Thus the earthly, guilty, transgressing, accursed and mortal flesh of Adam has not requited the righteousness and appeased his wrath, as you claim, but only the heavenly, innocent, obedient, blessed and quickening flesh of Christ, as the Scriptures testify that he bore our sins, 1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:8, and by his wounds are we healed. For the promised Word, Christ Jesus, has become man and has fulfilled the righteousness required by the law. As Paul says, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemning sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” Rom. 8:3, 4.

Hence it follows that all those who are born of Adam and remain his in not receiving by faith the promised seed (I am speaking of those of understanding age), must, by the immutable righteousness of God, inherit the curse of Adam, that is, death, as a reward of sin. Christ himself says, “He that does not believe shall be damned,” Mark 16:16. Again, Paul says, “The wages of sin is death,” Rom. 6:23.* For they have no communion with the most holy flesh and blood of Christ Jesus; nor can they ever enjoy his deliverance, kindness, merits and blessing unless they are truly converted from the shameful darkness of unbelief and sin, to the eternal, clear, heavenly light [through] Christ Jesus, 1 John 1:7. But those who, with Adam, truly receive the promised seed and thus become renewed and consoled in God, who are born anew by this same seed; who are changed and converted from the disobedient nature of Adam into the obedient nature of the Word, Christ Jesus, these are called flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. Eph. 5:30. He gives these unto himself by mere grace and

* [CHCoG: Menno in the previous paragraph correctly states that Adam and Eve DID accept forgiveness by grace through Christ, and thus through faith. But they, and we, will all still die the first death as a consequence. But to be damned is to suffer also the second death, from which there can be no resurrection.]

makes them partakers of his righteousness, merits, cross, blood and bitter death, yes, his whole life, love and Spirit; for they are one body and one Spirit with him; so that they willingly fulfill, by this spirit of love which they have received from him, for God is love, all that which the merciful Father, by his saving truth, Christ Jesus, has commanded as John testifies, saying, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," 1 John 3:22. Again, Paul says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. 13:10. Again, Christ says, "He that has my commandments and keeps them is he that loves me," John 14:21.

Besides you say, What is born of the spirit is spirit. Just brethren, we do not say Christ is born of the Spirit, but we do say with the Scripture that he is incarnate and was conceived by the Spirit. Now it is different, as you know, to be born of the Spirit and to be incarnate and conceived by the Spirit. Who doubts, moreover, but that to be born of the Spirit is regeneration! I beseech you therefore, through the Lord, as not being led rightly by the Scriptures. If you hold these things, you are ready to defend your cause. With this, beloved lords, friends and brethren, I conclude my confession of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ. I write this to you in accordance with your desire and place it before you in all clearness, as one who is not ashamed of his faith. Although I do not this deeply go into the matter in my admonitions to the brethren; but only in an apostolic manner, advise them to regeneration and love. I desire by the grace of the Lord, that you will rightly see into all things and rightly observe who have sinned and on the contrary, who has requited sin. Then we may put on Adam and his descendants their unrighteousness, darkness, sin and shame; and give to Christ Jesus his righteousness, brightness, praise and honor. Praying you, I say, not to follow human wisdom in this and other matters, but the wisdom of God; not [human] intelligence, but Scripture; not flesh, but Spirit; not the writings and opinions of the learned, but only

the testimony of Christ and his apostles, fearing God in purity of heart from your inmost souls, as I should also myself, that we may not be like them who are ever learning and never come to the knowledge of the truth. Observe well that you do not otherwise ask, hear and answer, except by sincere zeal. Before God, faith and works avail. In all things be prepared to do the will of God and not the will of your idle, vain, unwilling flesh.

I know there are many who are disposed to do nothing but search, inquire and dispute and have never once confessed and received the most necessary things, without which none can be saved, namely, the piercing, regenerating and sanctifying faith, the urging fear of the Lord and the burning love of God and their brethren. Do not be like them. Beloved brethren, seek and strive after true wisdom; open unto her; she stands before your door; behold her beauty; taste of her fruits; search her strength and you will love, embrace and gladly receive her; your flesh will go under and the Spirit arise and go before you in the word and truth of the Lord, until Adam dies in you and Christ prevails. May God give us all his divine grace, Amen.

“Take heed, watch and pray,” Mark 13:33.



AN
**ADMONISHING CONFESSION
AND CLEAR DEMONSTRATION
TO THE LEARNED JOHN A'LASCO, ARCH-
BISHOP AT EMDEN, EAST FRIESLAND, ALSO
TO HIS BRETHREN.
HOW THE PREACHERS OF THE DIVINE WORD
AND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST SHOULD BE
MINDED, ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONY OF
THE SCRIPTURES.**

BELOVED sirs, friends and brethren, as I have disclosed unto you, at your own request, the foundation of my faith and feelings concerning the very consoling incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, although I do not teach the same so deeply before the church, therefore I will now briefly point out my foundation and feelings [concerning] how the teachers and church, who can rightly be called christians, should be affected and minded before God and before all the world, according to the showing of the Scriptures, so far as we can, by the grace of God, comprehend and understand it from his word; yet I will not dwell upon this matter long, lest I become tedious.

First, I would say in regard to the preachers and adduce this Scripture, "As my Father has sent me, even so I send you," John 20:21. Always remain unchangeable in the church of God, thus: As all true teachers and preachers are sent by Christ Jesus, as he is sent by his Father, therefore we should rightly consider how and who this Christ Jesus was, how and what he taught when the Father sent him. He is doubtlessly the Son and image of God, the

Teacher of righteousness who has taught and testified nothing but the truth, namely, the word of his Father. He taught it in the power of the Spirit and was urged by the Holy Spirit through an unquenchable fire of love to the service of all mankind. Besides, he was the burning, shining light of the world, the true pattern of all virtue who could truly say, "Learn from me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." Again, "For I have given you an example," &c. and therefore he gloried by the true testimony of his Holy Spirit, saying, "I am the good Shepherd," John 18:37; 7:16; 1:9; 3:19; 8:12; 12:36; Mat. 11:29; John 13:15; 10:11.

This Christ Jesus is the Bishop of bishops and the Shepherd of shepherds, who was faithful in all things unto which he was sent by his heavenly Father. He never sends any other bishops, teachers, shepherds and laborers in his vineyard, to his members, children and sheep to care for them, to pasture and protect them, than those who are of one body, Spirit and mind with him, as he is one with his Father; who, by the divine Word, which is Christ, are in him and in his heavenly nature, and are so renewed, converted and changed that he may truly say of them, Behold, these are the children which God has given to me. Whosoever shall hear you shall hear me, as the Father testified of Christ, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear him," Mat. 17:5. Again, those who are of one spirit with Christ Jesus are members of his holy body, full of the love of God and of their brethren, who with Christ Jesus, their Bishop, seek nothing but the eternal gain, honor, glory and praise of God and the inward conversion, regeneration and eternal salvation of those whose brotherly care is entrusted and commended to them by God. Yes, he sends such as are unblamable both in doctrine and life and are urged by the Holy Spirit. [Yes, those] who sincerely lament with Christ about those who do not acknowledge the gracious [God at the] time of their temptation. [Indeed, those] who rejoice with all the angels of God at the conversion of a sinner, who so thirst after the salvation of all mankind as a hungry person hungers after bread; who so apply the

word and truth of the Lord that they dare not teach or practice a word otherwise than Christ Jesus himself has taught, practiced and commanded, namely, the pure, unadulterated, biblical word in the true sense and meaning of Christ and of his holy apostles. They practice the sacramental signs conformable to the gospel of Christ, namely, the baptism of the believing (and not of infants) and the Supper under both forms, in such church as is flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone; such as are outwardly unblamable and inwardly of one heart, spirit, soul and body in Christ Jesus. Yes, he sends such whose doctrine is as salt; whose life is as a shining light; long-suffering, meek, lowly, merciful, hospitable, not avaricious or selfish, not desirous of shameful gain, not puffed up, of good report among those of the world, ruling well his own house, having a well-minded spouse, if they have the gift of cleanliness and obedient children. Yes, in all things chaste, sober, unblamable, having the Spirit, fear and love of God. Again, so minded in all things that they can truly say with Paul to their entrusted sheep, "Be followers of me, even as I am of Christ." "Be an example of the believers in word, in behaviour, in charity, in Spirit, in faith, in purity," Heb. 3:2; John 17:11; Heb. 2:13; Mat. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Eph. 5:30; Mat. 5:14; 1 Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:6; 1 Cor. 4:2; 11:1; 1 Tim. 4:12; Phil. 2:17.

Behold, most beloved, thus the teachers should be minded who shall serve the Lord's church, that they may not hear from the obdurate and refractory: "Why do you teach others and not yourselves?" Nor can they otherwise teach to the glory of God; for the service of the New Testament is a service of the Spirit and not of the letter, 2 Cor. 3:6. Therefore Christ never chooses as laborers in his vineyard, as servants and builders, such who are avaricious, drunkards and idlers, that the kingdom of God, which is spiritual, may be taught in purity of heart, pasturing the sheep of Christ not by [being] forced, but willingly, not being intent on shameful gain but on affection, not as those who seek dominion over others, but as examples to the flock of Christ, not serving for

a certain benefice, pension, or stipulated salary as your teachers do, but solely for the gain of the souls which Christ Jesus has so dearly bought with his precious blood. Entrusting the care of their temporal necessities of life and commending them to our God, who, by his grace, created, delivered, regenerated and sent them to his ministration; diligently feeding themselves by the grace of the Lord, from their own or their rented lands, or from the labor of their hands, so far as is possible; that they do not sell the free word of God, given to them without price and thus live on shameful gain, robbery and theft. Let all sincere and pious servants of Christ beware of this and whatever they cannot obtain by due prudence and diligence will doubtlessly be provided for them by the begotten brethren who fear the Lord, for whom they sow spiritual things; and not by ~~inconvertible~~ [unconverted] heathen, drunkards, usurers, whore-mongers and the like. For such teachers are the oxen which tread out the corn, which should not be muzzled, 1 Cor 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18; Deut. 25:4. They are those who are worthy of double honor, with whom all things should be shared and who shall live by the gospel according to the Lord's own ordinance, as the priests under the law lived by the altar; these are the true laborers worthy of their reward as Christ says. Such teachers we shall acknowledge, honor, maintain in love and for their labors' sake keep peace with them, as Paul teaches, "For they watch for your souls as they that must give an account," Heb. 13:17.

Behold most beloved sirs, friends and brethren, thus has God, the merciful Father, sent his blessed Son, who was in his own form and minded like him in all things, namely, Christ Jesus, who has sent such as were of one spirit, soul and body with him, without a staff, purse, shoes, scabbard, money, gold and silver, that is, without all solicitude and avarice. The apostles ordained, at all places where they had begotten churches, such bishops and teachers as were unblamable both in doctrine and in life and have never mentioned annual incomes, benefices or rents. For they

were men of God and servants of Christ, full of the love of God for their beloved brethren, who labored, taught, sought, pastured and watched through mere love, urged by the Spirit, not only for one, two or three hours a week, in the synagogue, but at all hours and places, in synagogues, streets, houses, mountains and fields. And as they had received the knowledge of the kingdom of God, the truth, love and Spirit of God without price, so they were prepared to dispense it diligently and teach it without price to their needy brethren; and, as for the temporal necessities of life, the begotten church was sufficiently urged by love, through the Spirit and word of God, to give unto such faithful servants of Christ and watchers of their souls, all the necessities of life, to assist them and provide for them all such things they could not obtain themselves. O, brethren, flee from avarice!

Again, those teachers did not go about offering their services [for a price] as these do, but they were called by God, as were Aaron, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Zechariah, Paul and others. Others, born of the unblamable church of Christ, were chosen by lot, as was Matthias in Acts 1:26. Being called, they were constrained by the Spirit, to teach, to advise, to console, to reprove and to serve and protect their poor brothers and sisters according to God's holy word, with all their strength. As they were thus called and felt in them an urging spirit and were moved by love, as was said above, so they reasonably filled their office with all solicitude and diligence, watching night and day for the eternal salvation of their sheep. They were working diligently in the vineyard of the Lord, ruling the people of God with the rod of the Lord; they did not doubt, made use of no flattery; but in a good conscience they reproved the great as well as the small, the rich as well as the poor, the learned as well as those that were not learned. The word was proclaimed in their church, wholesome and unadulterated, at all times and in all places, as was said above, according to the measure of their faith and Spirit which God, by his grace, had given to every one of them. Most beloved, do not excuse

yourselves because all who boasted of themselves as being teachers of the church of Christ, even in the times of Paul, were not sincere, pious and urged by love, as it appears from Phil. 1:15; 2:21; 3:2. Truly, I say unto you, they boasted of being such, but in truth before God, they were not. For it is not hidden from you what kind of fruits they produced and how Paul regarded them. As you are aware that it is not the intention and will of God, nor ever shall be, that his holy word should be proclaimed to the erring world unto salvation by drunkards, whore-mongers, avaricious, idolaters, despisers of the Scripture, gluttons, proud, thieves, bloodthirsty, vain talkers, enemies of the cross of Christ, by those whose belly is their God, by those who are already condemned by the word of God, or by the carnal or earthly-minded. But only by the truly regenerated christian, unblamable men who sincerely seek God from their inmost souls, urged by the Holy Spirit and constrained by love, as Christ said three times unto Peter, "Do you love me? Yes, Lord (answered Peter); you know all things and you know that I love you. Jesus said unto him, Feed my lambs," John 21:15.

O, most beloved, take heed to what spirit urges you, what love constrains you, what church calls you and what things you seek. Follow the good and not the evil. I tell you in Christ Jesus that my soul is troubled for your sakes. I pray to you, beloved brethren, receive it with a will. I must frankly speak my mind; for as much as I can deduce and understand from my past actions and from your apparent fruits, you are all, none of your teachers excepted, urged by your flesh and belly and are therefore all hirelings and not shepherds, John 10:12. Or, at best, are such shepherds as seek the wool, milk and flesh and do not care for the Lord's sheep. For wherever the fattest are, there are also the best sheep. O brethren, consider what the Lord's prophets have so often threatened on such [shepherds]. Yes, how many are found among you who, for the sake of an earthen house, or for ten guilders, move from one

place to another, as if they were not all bought equally dear at one price? I fear that you would all do it.

O brethren, if you confess this to be true, then judge for yourselves what is your seeking and if you will not verbally confess it, *superbia five pertinacia impediante*, [literally *pride five obstinacy hindering*] it can yet not be denied by the intelligent. God has been mocked long enough. Brethren, be converted!

As the teachers are serving their bellies [and are] avaricious, desirous of shameful gain, earthly-minded, as Paul says, not to say proud, lazy, vain, drunk, spiteful and envious, so all those who are taught and begotten by them are also minded, as may be plainly seen, inasmuch as both teacher and church live and walk so shamefully that all heaven must be ashamed and astounded by them. For their avarice, unchastity, pride, pomp, greed, drunkenness, hatred, envy, fornication, adultery, bloodthirstiness, usury, fraud, vanity and all manner of shame have no limits or bonds. Moreover, we find open fencing-schools, gambling houses, houses of ill-fame and drinking houses. For as the teachers are, so also are their doctrine, sacraments and church, as is said, *Qualis Papa, tale Evangelium and omnia*. [Literally *Such is the Pope, such is the Gospel and everything*.] Truly, I say, believe it if you choose, Christ does not send such avaricious, selfish and carnal teachers, nor does he acknowledge such a self-conceited, carnal and blamable church. But those who are sent by Christ Jesus have his Spirit and crucify the lusts and desires of their flesh, that they may not be found shameful when preaching to others, seeking only the praise of God and the salvation of their beloved brethren, refusing all shameful gain, presents and gifts, so long as they have that with which to maintain themselves. [They are] honoring none for the sake of gain, living unblamably, teaching the word wholesomely and using the sacraments according to the commandments of the Lord, excluding all degenerated sisters and brothers, again proclaiming grace to those that are converted,

having eternal vigilance and care for those whose care is entrusted to them by the Lord's church.

As you are not such as the Scriptures require you to be, but are as yet in opposition to the true doctrine and also blamable in life, as is apparent, therefore I advise you in all earnestness and fraternal love, to become first sincere christians before you undertake to impress and teach Christ unto others. Let us examine ourselves, that we may learn to know our own failings and knowing them, die unto them, for before God, neither smooth words nor semblance will avail. Brethren, I must tell you the plain truth, which may be galling and bitter to you because there is found neither Spirit nor power, nor trust in Christ, nor fear of God, nor love of the brethren with your teachers, but only a vain calling of words for the sake of a stipulated salary, without any show of christian fruits. Therefore all your calling is nothing but sowing on the shore to reap the wind; for the pure word of God and the teaching of the Holy Spirit cannot be pointed out and taught by servants who are unclean and carnal. To this all intelligent persons must, doubtlessly, consent.

As you then, I say, are blamable both in doctrine and in life and as your doctrine, such as you have, is hired for a salary and without spiritual fruit and as no unblamable church is begotten by you and as the signs of the Word are abused by you; therefore it is apparent that you are not the true messengers of God, but you run your own course, urged by the flesh and not by the Spirit. [You are] not sincerely seeking the salvation of the church, but rather the temporal profits and rents and that with such rapacity that you are not ashamed to receive them as a reward and price for your preaching, which were in ancient times, by feigned words and fraudulent commerce, as Peter says, no, by nothing but theft and sly robbery, taken from the true and legal heirs.

Thus you sell, first, the precious, free word of God which, by grace, was given to us by God, without price. And secondly, it is paid for by that which was stolen. Here lies hidden more than I

will disclose. *Qui de furto vivit and rapina non dubium est, quim fur est and raptor.* [Literally *There is no doubt that he who lives by theft and robbery is a thief and a rapist.*] Do look at the matter in a christian light. Behold, feel and taste your manifest error, unworthiness and plain avarice. I here speak of all your preachers; for they all enjoy such gain. Your teachings, benefices, pensions and rents are such an abomination before my eyes that brethren, truly I would rather be beheaded, burned, drowned or torn into quarters by four horses than to receive, on account of my preaching, such benefices, pensions or rents. Yes, when giving salaries to preachers was established, there surely crept into the church of Christ a very fearful, corrupting pestilence; which has corrupted so that, alas, there are scarcely any left who have retained the breath of Christ in them. To this you must all consent. What other reason is there than this that the preachers have sought the temporal gain of their own bellies more than the eternal gain of the souls of Christ? As you freely accept and enjoy the before-mentioned shameful gain and what is still worse, as you diligently seek and desire the same, how can you defend yourselves and say that you are not desirous of the filthy lucre? 1 Tim. 3:3, and that you do not honor the person for filthy lucre's sake? O, brethren, I wish you would awaken, to consider the matter and that you were all of one mind with us in this matter; for it would doubtlessly be profitable to both the praise and truth of God and to your poor souls, that we would without pay, dispense the precious word of God, the word of eternal salvation and heavenly grace, which can be merited by no works nor requited by money, as we, by grace only, received it from God without price, so that we again would dispense it without pay and solely by brotherly love would teach it to the hungering consciences. God surely would not forsake us, but would in every emergency paternally care for us and protect us, but it can not thus be with you because you are devoid of faith and love.

As you are all buried up to your ears in filthy lucre; earthly and carnally minded in all things; yet not dead unto the flesh by the power of regeneration, yet have not received Christ Jesus in all his words and on that account are not yet wholesome in doctrine, do not conform the ministration of the signs to the word of God; are blamable in doctrine, as is plain and as there is found with you no power, no fruit of the Spirit, no true fear of God and no brotherly love; but rather heresy, upbraiding, blasphemy and profaning of the teachings and lives of the pious saints and children of God, who for the testimony of their consciences, confirmed by the word of God, have fled from their country and kindred and for the sake of the testimony are prepared for water, fire and sword if God so wills. Besides your doctrine being quite powerless and fruitless, the church which you beget is quite earthy, carnal and contrary to the testimony and fruits of the holy word of the Lord; therefore, we repeat it: you are not the true messengers of Jesus Christ. Do not be angry with me, most beloved.

It is for the before-mentioned reasons that we will not hear nor attend your preaching, nor partake of your supper. For we shall never desire to enter into your church and to become one body with you until you sincerely repent and embrace a free christian doctrine, not hired nor sold out, but solely urged by the Holy Spirit through brotherly love, a true use of the sacramental signs, according to the command, doctrine and usage of Christ and his apostles and an unblamable life and walk, led in the love and fear of the Lord. If we do so before these are found with you, we are sure that we sin against God and his holy word, from which may the kind, merciful Father save us. For before God, it does not become us to commit ourselves to such doctrine, admonition and church, who first err in doctrine and secondly do not in the least show by their lives that they are the truly regenerated children of God, or the true church of Jesus Christ. But most beloved, it behooves you, as you do not have the unblamable doctrine and walk of Jesus Christ, to renounce your doctrine and life and

voluntarily bid adieu to all the lusts of the flesh, to seek the kingdom of God in sincerity of heart, to enter with us into all obedience to our beloved Lord Jesus Christ with all your strength, if you do not desire to err wilfully, that we together, may become the holy, christian and unblamable church; godly, holy, clean, obedient unto God, serving all mankind, powerful in truth, shining forth in righteousness, dead unto sin, living by the Spirit, yes, in all things christian, heavenly and unblamable in Christ Jesus.

Do receive my admonishing confession in good faith and do not understand it as too far-reaching, namely, such words as *clean*, *unblamable* and the like. For they are spoken by Christ Jesus himself and by his holy apostles to the church of the Lord, John 13:10; Phil. 2:15. Do not understand it, most beloved, [as meaning] that we deem ourselves so clean and unblamable that we are without sin. Not at all, dear brethren; for I know full well that holy John teaches, saying, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," 1 John 1:8. Again, James says, *In multis enim labimur omnes*. "In many things we all offend," Jas. 3:2. Yes, beloved brethren, with Paul, I find the disposition to commit sin at all times so strong in my flesh, that I often think recklessly, speak inconsiderately and "the evil which I would not do, that I do," Rom. 7:8, 19.

But the abominable, shameful sins and offenses such as adultery, fornication, hatred, envy, inebriety, pomp, splendor, cursing, swearing, gambling, desire of filthy lucre, abuse of the ordinances of Christ and fraud I truly detest from the inmost of my heart and they should never, by the grace of the Lord, be practiced by any sincere, god-fearing christians, inasmuch as they hate and oppose them; for the spirit which is in them is a deadly enemy to all ungodliness, wickedness and sin (in the mean while we often find that we are born of Adam). Besides, their spirit strives and hungers after the truth, righteousness, will and commandments of God, yet in great weakness; for they are very much retarded in the works, fruits and fulfillment by the heavy burden of their sinful

flesh. Nevertheless, because the good Spirit of God abides in them, they do not cease to fight their tardy flesh. For the life of true christians is nothing but a continual combat upon earth. Whosoever shall valiantly battle and overcome, will be clothed in white raiments and be fed with the heavenly bread of the tree of life, Rev. 2:17.

Behold, most beloved, inasmuch as you and your church have never triumphed in this battle (I judge from what I hear and from your actions which I see), but still serve the world, the flesh and the devil carelessly; therefore we deem, according to the testimony of the Scripture, that you vainly and wrongfully boast of the name, grace, deliverance, merits, death, blood and promises of Christ; as you do not have his word and by the word, his faith, Spirit, fear and love and consequently you do not follow them.

Therefore, I pray you by the mercy of the Lord, to now consider what kind of teachers you are, what kind of spirit urges you, what kind of love prompts you, with what intentions and by what motives you teach, what kind of fruits you produce, what kind of ordinances you use and unto what kind of a church you teach and minister. Judge all things according to the divine testimony, without self-love, flesh and partiality. I do not doubt but if you examine the matter rightly, you will not be surprised that we will not hear your doctrine, nor use your sacraments and refuse unto death to become members of your church. For this remains incontrovertible and eternally unchangeable: that as Christ Jesus is of one mind with the Father and is sent by him, so all teachers should be of one mind with Christ Jesus who can be considered as having sent him. Those who are one with Christ in Spirit, love and life; who teach that which was commanded by Christ, such as repentance and the peaceable gospel of grace, which he himself received from God and taught to the world. All those who hear, believe, keep and fulfill the same in true fear are the church of Christ, the truly believing, christian church, the body and bride of Christ, the ark of the Lord, the mountain and paradise, the house,

people, city and temple of God, the spiritual Eve, flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone, children of God, the chosen generation, the spiritual seed of Abraham, children of the promise, branches and trees of righteousness, sheep of the heavenly pasture, kings and priests and a holy begotten people which are God's own. Besides, they are chosen to proclaim the power of him who has called them from darkness into his marvellous light, Col. 1:14; 1 Cor. 12:27; Heb. 12:22; Mat. 5:14; 2 Cor. 6:16; 11:5; Eph. 5:30; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rom. 9:8; Isa. 61:3; Psalms 95:7; 79:13; Rev. 1:6.

All those who do not have the Spirit, love and life of Christ, nor sincerely desire them, have no share in the glorious Jerusalem of God, that is, in Christ's church; no matter whether they are teacher or disciple, prince or subject, man or woman; besides they have neither prayer, nor God, nor Christ, nor promise, nor remission of sins, nor any sure consolation in eternal life, so long as they do not sincerely repent, receive God's word and fulfill it in the true fear [of God], as Christ himself says, "He that does not believe is already condemned," John 3:18.

Dear brethren, you may contradict this as much as you will, yet this foundation shall stand forever and will never be changed. The words of Paul shall never be broken, "If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his," Rom. 8:9; and where the Spirit is there shall also be the fruits of the Spirit [of Christ]; as it is infallible that if a spirit is in a man, the evil one or the good one, it will manifest itself by its fruits, Gal. 5:16; Mat. 7:17.

Lastly, most beloved, if you want to be the true church of Christ and boast of the truth, grace, word, Spirit and blood of the Lord, then separate, first, all your preachers who are urged by the unclean spirit and flesh and who therefore are not of the church of Christ. Namely, all those who are desirous of filthy lucre, as was said above. Again, also, all drunkards, wranglers, flatterers, proud, envious and avaricious; for all these testify by their fruits that they do not have the Spirit of Christ. And if they do not have the Spirit of Christ, how can these poor, miserable men then teach and

impress the Spirit, power and will of God, the word of grace and the word of eternal life, which they do not confess? Yes, brethren, it is impossible for me to teach the things which I do not know myself and how could I serve in the house of the Lord while I myself am a castaway? Judge for yourselves.

Secondly, cleanse your church also. Exclude, according to the word of God, all adulterers and fornicators, drunkards, slanderers, swearers, those who lead a shameful and inordinate life, the proud, avaricious, idolatrous, disobedient unto God, whore-mongers and the like, that you may become the holy christian church which is without spot or blemish, which is as a city built upon a rock. If these are truly observed and found with you, and, besides, a free christian doctrine, the true ministration of the sacraments of Christ, not according to the opinion of men or of the learned, but according to the true doctrine of Christ and his apostles—again, [with] the fear and love of God and an unblamable life according to God's word, then you will always have us as your brethren; for it is such we seek. But if you remain as you are, then I say publicly, it is better to die than to enter into your doctrine, sacraments, life and church, as was said above.

Beloved brethren, it is no use to allege the Scripture of the Pharisees sitting in the seat of Moses, Mat. 23:2; nor that Herod sent the wise from the east; nor that some say, If the devil should preach the word of God, why not hear it? Christ Jesus did not send the Pharisees, the [self-appointed] servants of the letter, to preach the word of the Spirit and of life; Herod did not send the wise men with good intentions; nor has the devil ever sincerely given praise to God; nor does God want the praise of the devil, for Christ says, "Hold your peace and come out of him," Luke 4:35. Therefore it is useless to adduce such reasons, inasmuch as God, by his mercy and grace, has so opened the eyes of our mind that we surely know that the spiritual service of the New Testament can be administered by none but the servants of the Spirit [of Christ] impelled in love by the power of the Holy Spirit; for it is and

remains a service of the Spirit and not of the letter, 2 Cor. 3:6. Enough has been adduced on this.

In short, deny yourselves, be prepared to do the will of God, seek nothing but his honor and praise and the eternal salvation of your brethren and hunger and thirst after the righteousness of God. Believe and receive Christ Jesus rightly in his blessed word and you will undoubtedly understand and comprehend the true way, the truth and life eternal, to the praise of God and to your own salvation. May God, the kind and merciful Father, grant us all this, Amen, Mat. 5:6; Jer. 31:25.

As I, dear brethren, have diligently reproved these preachers, on account of the receiving of filthy lucre, in this my admonishing confession, according to the word of God, therefore I do not doubt but that there are some who will bitterly contradict me in this matter and say, "Beloved Menno, you can not deprive us of the privileges Christ Jesus has given us; as you have alleged from Paul, that those who serve the gospel shall live by the gospel. Why do you seek to take away that of which we have the privilege?" To those who contradict me thus, I would first reply by asking, If the teachers to whom this privilege is given by Christ through the gospel are not sent by Christ Jesus? They must answer in the affirmative. Then I say again, as *they* are sent by Christ, who enjoyed this privilege given by Christ, therefore those do not have this privilege who run their own course and are not sent by Christ.

Again, I ask if these teachers to whom this privilege is given by the Scriptures were not men of the Spirit of love and of truth? Doubtlessly so. Then I reply: If they are men of the Spirit, of love and of truth, to whom this privilege is granted by the gospel, those who do not teach and serve by the Spirit of love and truth, may not appropriate and make use of this privilege; for they are not the teachers to whom it was given and promised by the word of God.

Thirdly, I ask if the teachers which are sent by Christ Jesus, who according to the Scriptures may enjoy this privilege, led a

shameful life after their being called? And if they led a shameful life and were found corrupt before God and his church, if they could remain any longer as teachers in the unblamable church of Christ? They must doubtlessly answer, No. Then, if they answer, no, as it is in truth, that those whose life and walk in the church of Christ are no more pure and useful than the filthy carrion by the roadside, are not teachers in the church of the Lord; such as drunkards, perjurers, those filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, deceit, debate and malignity. For if the salt have lost his savor, says Christ, it is thenceforth good for nothing, but is to be cast out and to be trodden under the feet of men, Mat. 5:13; 1 Cor. 5:10; 2 Cor. 6:10; Rom. 1:29. And if the church is to be unblamable and without spot or blemish, how much more so the teachers, as Christ himself teaches, saying, You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth, Eph. 5:30; Mat. 5:13. Inasmuch as the before-mentioned, carnal teachers are already excluded from and deprived of the christian office of teacher, by God's own ordinance and word, as they do not live up to the doctrine and by their apparent unbelief and inordinacy are not in the church of Christ; therefore they can not enjoy that privilege; for Christ Jesus has promised and given sincere, pious, spiritual, meek, true, unblamable teachers, sent by God and not inordinate, lazy, vain, idle, drunk, shameful, lying, pompous, gluttonous, avaricious and carnal rogues, Rom. 10:16; Isa. 51:7; 62:6.

Fourthly, I ask whether the men of God, the prophets, apostles and teachers sent by God, were also hired or bought at a stipulated annual salary, to teach and proclaim the free word of grace? I know that the answer must be no. For they did not teach except by the urging of the Spirit and love. I say again, Inasmuch as your preachers are hired and bought at a stipulated salary or rents and do not preach unless they are hired, they must acknowledge that they are hirelings and not teachers that are sent; for they do not teach by the urging of the Spirit and love, but are enticed and

drawn on as was Balaam by the promised salary, benefices and rents. *Qui id negat, Solem in die splendere minus concedet.* [Literally *He who denies this will allow the sun to shine less during the day.*]

Fifthly, I ask if the teachers sent by God, men of the Spirit, of love and of truth, enlightening both in doctrine and in life, lived on a stipulated salary, benefice or rents; or whether they did not live by the services or assistance of the brethren, so far as they could not obtain it for themselves? They must confess that it was by the assistance of the brethren and not from certain benefices, pensions or rents. This I teach, seek and sincerely desire. Therefore this is my brief conclusion and christian admonition to all preachers and teachers. Brethren, humble yourselves and become unblamable disciples, that you may hereafter become called teachers. Try your Spirit, love and life before you commence to pasture and to teach. Do not run your own course, but wait until you are called by the Lord's church; I say the *Lord's church*, by the Spirit of God and are constrained by urging love. If this is the case, brethren, then pasture diligently, preach and teach valiantly, cast from you all filthy lucre and booty, rent lands and milk cows. Learn a trade, if possible, do manual labor, as Paul did; and all that which you then fall short of will doubtlessly be given and provided to you by the pious brethren, by the grace of God. Understand it not as 'superfluously,' but as 'necessarily.'

Such privileges the holy gospel grants to the unblamable preachers which are sent by Christ Jesus and nothing further. But the preachers who run their own course are earthly and carnally minded, are blamable in doctrine and in life and "do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies," who, on account of their lazy, gluttonous, easy flesh, teach and serve to please the world as hired servants at certain wages, [which] the Scriptures do not know. Therefore I say for once and for all time, If they will not do differently, but always say in their hearts—*Erret quilibet homo ad libitum, nihil ad nos, modo ventri nostro provisum fuerit* [Literally

Let every man wander as he pleases, (it is) nothing unto us, so long as our stomachs have been provided for]—then I will leave them in the hands of him who shall judge them and us according to his most holy word and to his pleasure.

Brethren, decide more wisely, and living in the great God through all things, do not refuse to bid adieu to your carnal bodies.

CONCLUSION.

HERE you have, beloved sirs, friends and brethren, our plain confession of the incarnation of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, which I thus sincerely confess and believe; for you requested me to do so, and, I trust, with a good intention. Therefore I have not hidden my faith. Now, judge the matter rightly, if you are spiritually minded and if I should, as you think I do, err as is natural to man, which I trust I do not, then do not think that I do so out of obduracy, or partiality, but before God, my Creator, it is because I know no better except that it is the firm, immutable foundation of God's word and truth. Brethren, do not look at me as one who seeks something contrary to the will of God. Not at all. I am prepared to do the eternal truth, word and will of God, at the risk of all that his paternal kindness may inflict upon me. This I say in sincerity of heart and have no doubt. Therefore I say to you that if you have any plainer Scriptures in support of this article of the incarnation of Christ; if you have a clearer foundation, truth, or clearer proof than we have, then assist us. I will, by the grace of the Lord, change my heart in regard to this matter and follow your doctrine. But, above all, brethren, I want you to understand that I will not accept nor listen to human doctrines, nor cleverness, nor garbling of the Scriptures, nor flatterings, nor presumption, in regard to this but solely to the plain Scriptures, truth and

immutable testimony; [just] as we have presented to you, in this matter of our confession, nothing but scriptural truth and immutable testimony. But if you cannot advance such, then give heed, keep your peace and leave us in our faith in peace; for, most beloved brethren, before God, I seek nothing but the pure, unadulterated word of God and its testimony.

Besides; I have here presented to you, how and in what manner I advise and teach the open-hearted brethren; with which doctrine no god-fearing consciences can be afflicted, nor christian souls be deceived. I pray and desire you to do likewise, that you may build and not break. Brethren, if you do not then take heed of how and what you teach, I can beseech and admonish you in love, but it behooves me not to force you, even if I could. Every person shall have to render an account of his teaching and doing, before God and not before men.

In the third place you have my admonishing confession of how both teacher and church should be minded according to the Scriptures. Again, I pray and desire by the mercy of the Lord that you will not accept this scriptural truth in bitterness; for that which I have written is the unchangeable word and will of God and will remain so forever. Therefore take heed that you do not become angry with me on account of my writing, because it is contrary to your flesh. It truly is not mine, but the doctrine of Christ; not my will, but the will of Christ. If you become angry, you are not angry with me, but with Christ, who has thus taught and instructed us in his holy gospel and word. And if you fear God, you will doubtlessly love me the more, because I, by the grace, Spirit and word of God, as far as he bestows it on me, open unto you the kingdom of heaven and show you the right way. Yes, because I, fearlessly and in true brotherly love, of which God is my witness, speak unto you and point you to the eternal, immutable truth; because I cut the cankering flesh from your wounds and do not flatter you; for I do not seek your carnal but your spiritual friendship; not your praise but the praise of God; not your goods

and gifts but your salvation and souls. For these reasons I tell you the pure truth of God and do not spare you. O, brethren, receive it in gladness of heart. It is the only word and will of Christ. If you reject it, you do not reject me, but Christ Jesus who has so dearly bought us all. Therefore take heed to awaken yet to-day and no longer wander and proceed in darkness and deadly blindness. And let the poor, ignorant people, the poor, innocent souls no longer err under your name and cover. The whole wide world depends upon you learned. As you pipe, so they dance; as you teach, so they believe; and as you proceed, so they follow. Therefore, woe unto you if you teach wrongly; if you destroy and do not gather; if you deceive and do not pasture; if you corrupt and do not convert.

Receive eyes of wisdom, that you may rightly teach and lead others according to the will of God; and that this word which Christ spoke is not applicable to you, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Mat. 15:14. Lastly, I shall soon send you, if God so pleases, my treatise on the baptism of the believing, with other doctrines, from which you may clearly learn my foundation, doctrine, seeking and intentions: why I labor, after what I strive and by what Scriptures and for what reasons we assert the baptism of the believing; and for what reasons we deem and consider infant baptism as vain, idolatrous and contrary to the word.

Read it all in sincerity of heart, ponder upon it, follow only the true sense of the divine Spirit and truth. Let opinions go, let flesh and adroitness be destroyed. Many have been deceived in this. This our doctrine concerning the preachers, concerning the unblamableness of the church, concerning the baptism of the believing, concerning the Supper of an unblamable assembly and concerning the separation of the penitent. It is, doubtlessly, the eternal, immutable word, will and ordinance of God; therefore, by the grace of the Lord, we will never be reasoned out of it by human wisdom, cleverness, threats nor tyranny. Yes, at all times I am prepared to testify and assert this doctrine before God and my

brethren, with the sure testimony of my conscience, at the cost of all anxiety, persecution, blood and death. Let our merciful, kind Father treat me and all those who sincerely seek and fear him according to his divine, blessed will. Read it discreetly and judge it in a christian way.

This is briefly my foundation and conviction of the articles of the christian church; that before God neither baptism, nor Supper, nor any other outward ordinances avail if partaken without [Jehovah God's] Spirit and the new creature. But before God, only faith, love, Spirit, the new creature and regeneration avail, as Paul plainly shows, Gal. 5:5, 6. All those who, by the grace of God, receive these from above allow themselves to be baptized according to the commandment of the Lord and rightly partake of his Supper, Acts 2:38; 9:19; 8:38; Mat. 28:19.

Yes, they with ardent desire commit themselves to the ordinance and doctrine of Jesus Christ and shall nevermore wilfully oppose the holy will and plain testimony of God. For this reason I amicably beseech you, most beloved, from my inmost heart, not to dispute with me, nor any other person concerning any outward articles and literal ordinances; but first conquer and subject yourselves; that is, your unbelieving, miserable, refractory, obdurate flesh which yet keeps and hinders you from the truth, faith, knowledge, righteousness and obedience of God. Yes, doubtlessly, if that is rightly vanquished, you will see into all of the ordinances of God, confess and practice them. But as long as it lives in you and has its sway, you will dispute and oppose and nevermore comprehend, understand and follow the immutable foundation of eternal truth. Beware.

No more at present. But rightly compare Christ with yourselves; his love and Spirit with your love and spirit; his seeking, doctrine, sacraments and life with your seeking, doctrine, sacraments and life; and you will, no doubt, find wherein you fall short.

May God, the merciful Father, grant unto you and to us all, true wisdom, understanding, faith, knowledge and true judgment; an ardent heart, true fear, love, doctrine, life, sacraments and ordinances, through Christ Jesus, our Savior and eternal Deliverer of the world, Amen.

“Enter in at the narrow gate,” Mat. 7:13.

Amara est veritas, and qui eam prædicant repletus amaritudine, dicit Hieronymus. [Literally The truth is bitter, and those who preach it are filled with bitterness, says Jerome.]



**A
VERY PLAIN AND POINTED REPLY
TO THE
ANTI-CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE
of MARTIN MICRON**

**AND
HIS FALSE ACCOUNT CONCERNING THE
DISCUSSION BETWEEN HIM AND MYSELF,
BEFORE MANY WITNESSES, HELD A.D., 1553,
CONCERNING THE INCARNATION OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST, ACCORDING TO THE
TRUTH AND POWER OF THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES, TOGETHER WITH A SINCERE
EPISTLE OR ADMONITION TO HIM, TO LEARN
TO KNOW HIMSELF, TO REPENT AND BE
SAVED.**

**BY
MENNO SIMON.**

WRITTEN A.D., 1556.

**“This is life eternal, that they might know you, the
only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have
sent,” John 17:3.**

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.

PREFACE.

To the well-disposed Reader:

It is manifest, honorable reader, that as Satan, the envier of the divine honor and of our salvation, in the beginning of creation, used the serpent as an instrument to lead Adam and Eve off the way of life and thus to lead them into death, as he actually did, Gen. 3:19, he now uses his false authors and preachers to do so, some of whom he clothes with an angelic appearance of innocence, by using many garbled Scriptures, philosophy, sophistry, words of human wisdom and by leading a reasonable, private life, whereby he detains and ensnares the poor, bound souls in their great blindness and abominations and robs them by his many wiles of their only means of salvation, which is Jesus Christ.

For the serpent said unto Eve, “You shall not surely die.” Thus our opponents now say, “*Should Christ be the Son of God? No, he is not. The man Christ has no father.*” and like expressions.* For from the beginning, the devil neither did nor could confess the true faith in Christ Jesus, namely, that we should acknowledge him to be the true Son of God, as may be plainly understood from 1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7. “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God,” 1 John 4:15. In short he has life everlasting. Such [truths] destroy the dominion of the devil and the kingdom of falsehood. Yes, Christ had to suffer

* [CHCoG: And how is this done? By pretending that Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with his father, and is only just a part of his father, and thus not truly his son at all. The truth is explained clearly in [*Jeshua the Messiah \(Jesus Christ\): Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity?*](#) at [chcpublications.net](#).]

death himself because he confessed he was the Son of God, Mat. 26:64; Mark 14:62, John 5:18; 19:7.

If Satan, then, did not confess such faith in the beginning, as was heard, how shall he now suffer, as by the righteous judgment of God, he has risen, through anti-christ and his servants, to full dominion because of sin and has bound all on earth by his deceitful doctrines, explanations, flatterings, statutes, commandments, idolatry, tyranny and violence?

We see clearly, since Christ Jesus, by his grace, has shown himself through the clouds [of darkness] so that we, with Peter and with all the Scriptures confess him in power and truth to be the Son of the true and living God and submissively seal this faith with the sign of the holy baptism, as did the Ethiopian in Acts 8:36, according to his command, because we would, in our weakness, walk according to his commandments and be saved by his grace. How terribly we are upbraided, slandered, belied, accursed, persecuted and murdered by this wicked, perverse, blind and carnal generation on that account. For Satan never, [not even] from the beginning, confessed true faith in Christ Jesus, nor submissively sealed it by true baptism. Nor will he ever do so, unto the end.

The apocalyptical Apollyon has so corrupted things by the locusts of the bottomless pit, that but little truth remains with man; for it is manifest that not only the Turks and the Papists are inimical to the clearness of the most holy birth of Jesus Christ, in which consists true faith, to the nature, power, fruit, impression and sealing of faith, but also those of whom we should expect better things, as may be seen by the writings of our opponents.

Oh! oh! How very little these poor children have and know of the kingdom of God and of the power of his holy word, although they may think, perhaps, that they understand a great deal. For it is very clear that an earthly, carnal minded heart, an ambitious, proud mind, a spiteful, envious person and an untrue and false tongue is not from the good, but from the evil one, 1 John 3:8; and

that the writings of our opponents were prompted by an earthly, carnal, hateful and false heart; that they did not seek the glory, name and honor of God but their own. That they are partial and untruthful can be easily deduced from the fact that from beginning to end they do not speak a kind word about me nor our beloved brethren; that they are quite silent upon the favors faithfully rendered to them in their need; nor even once mention that they were so often silenced and could not present any excuses, something which I do not mention to our honor, but to the praise of the Lord. Also, that they did not at all in their writings touch upon their confession which they made before us all: that woman has no seed, * * * whereby, in fact, his whole cause was already lost. Again, [they said] that there were two persons in Christ; and that the crucified one was not the Son of God; something which does not fit with an impartial writer who does not seek his own honor, but sincerely seeks the honor of God; also, that they call me quite ignorant, yes, as a cuckoo (as he also calls me) which always sings the same song and passes himself for a spiritual master, versed in Scripture. However, before God and his angels and before all present, it was actually found to be quite different, as by the grace of God, will be found and clearly seen from my following writings, if judged according to the divine truth. Very little, alas, have they meditated upon the Scriptures by Paul, saying that we should not be desirous of vain glory, Gal. 5:26. Inasmuch as they give such an untrue account of the discussion and as they have so lamentably profaned the Father and his Son and their precious, dear, powerful and true word and all their confessors, including our beloved brethren who daily, piously suffer and die for the sake of the Lord's word and who are slandered as if their whole life and death were but madness and their forsaking possessions and kindred were but heresy; therefore I am impelled and duty bound for the love of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and his holy church (not urged by wrath; for this I leave to him who in due time shall judge us all without respect of person), to

faithfully and truthfully annotate all that which Micron has wilfully suppressed, to the dishonor of Christ and his holy word. Besides also, how slanderously he has blasphemed the Father and the Son, the Word and its confessors and how wrongfully he opposes our faith and doctrine concerning the incarnation of Christ, which is taught and testified throughout the Scriptures in incontrovertible power and clearness.

I therefore beseech all readers, for the Lord's sake, to peruse my explanation with impartial hearts, to consider well the foundation and to pray to the Lord for grace and understanding. I trust to be able to show and explain it, by the aid of God, with such power and clearness of the holy Scriptures, that it will be plainly seen that anti-christian deceit is on the side of our opponents and that the clear ground of truth is on our side. Therefore I would have the judicial term, *Alteram partem audito*, that is, *hear also the other party*, applied and [ask you] to compare my writings with theirs and not be mistaken through prejudice as the partial do.

I also beseech you not to think hard of my having to use such terms as seed of man, seed of woman, &c. God knows how unwillingly I do so, but necessity forces me to make use of such terms, that the glory of Christ Jesus may not be obscured with many and that the heavenly brightness of his most holy birth may not remain obscured by the anti-christian flattering and sophistry of the breath of Micron.

I can not sufficiently wonder at the man's heart and mind that he dares publish such absurd fables to the world and that he dares show himself so ambitious and proud (something which, before God, I must deduce from his writings), as it will doubtlessly be read by many intelligent persons; for what else does he do all through his writings but exalt himself and trample me in the dust, as is the nature of all the ambitious. [This is] something which I would not have written if it only touched me and not the honor of God, while so many god-fearing, pious men were present who heard the discussion from beginning to end. Yet besides, it is well

known, perhaps to thousands, as I presume, to whom it is known through my printed writings which are daily read here and there, that I have frequently solicited a public discussion, at the risk of being burned if I could not maintain my faith and doctrine by virtue of the Scriptures; but which, alas, has never been accepted.

If I were so entirely ignorant as must be understood from his writing, it would be very curious why such a discussion should have been so long denied me, as he might by this have gained many a soul, might have redeemed many a child, if we were wrong; and as he might have won such a fame and reputation, if he had been successful, among those of high standing and also among the whole world. But Micron has not yet forgotten how they were situated with us, notwithstanding that he wrote so sneeringly. If Micron and Herman had feared God as they pretend by their sheep's clothing, they would not have acted so foolishly as they have done by their writings. But I presume that the one who urged Pharaoh to persecute Israel (notwithstanding he had seen such miracles in Egypt by the hands of Moses and Aaron) and found his punishment in the Red Sea, Exo. 7:25; 8:2; 9:6; 10:14; 11:5; 14:28; who urged Antiochus to turn Jerusalem into a death-pit and on his way met the punisher; that this same one has urged Micron and Herman to write thus, that their covert hypocrisy, their many gross falsehoods, ambitious partiality (I call it as I judge them before the Lord), ingratitude, slander, adulteration and wilful garbling of the holy, divine word, their corrupting flatterings, sophistical philosophy, miserable deceit of the poor, despised souls, abominable, anti-christian doctrine, blasphemy of both the Father and his blessed Son, palpable blindness and their vain, carnal hearts, may once be made manifest through our explanation; and that thus the hearts which are bound by their snares through the falsehoods which they publish against us, by the fine appearance they put on and by the garbled Scriptures which they teach by smooth, flattering words, may be unbound and delivered, to the glory of the Lord.

I do not know what else to say or think of the matter. For, more than two years ago I warned him by a man of considerable name and one of his fellow-believers, that if he would put it in print (for I was told that he intended to do so) and would not tell the tale just as it truthfully happened, for I observed that he did not spare falsehood, I should reply to him, if I lived and the Lord granted it. But he was aware that if he did not tell it differently from what it was, he would have acquired but little fame and honor with the world; for it would have sounded [like this]: *Micron lost it all*; something that conceited, proud flesh does not like to hear.

Yet I would never, in my life, have thought that he was of such an extremely ambitious, partial, untrue, infamous and shameless mind, if I had not been convinced of it in our discussion and by this writing of his: I thought that his intellect would have told him, even without anyone's warning, that if he should do as he did while I am yet living, that it would produce nothing but shame and dishonor for him with all reasonable readers and auditors. But Micron had to speak, as his heart was full.

But perhaps he hoped or thought that I might die in the mean time, and that he might thus acquire unrebuked fame and honor with the world. He was also aware that he could not offend the world by abusing me, who gladly accept and hear false consolations and slanders; for whosoever can best belie, defame, upbraid and depict me and my brethren in evil colors, is, with them, a great prophet and a pleasing preacher. Let them run their course until hindered by the Lord! John says, "They are of the world and therefore they speak of the world and the world hears them," 1 John 4:5. If possible, the beloved Lord grant them grace. Let the reader take due notice of the following reply, that he may learn to know Christ, do right and be saved.



**A VERY PLAIN AND DISCREET
ANSWER TO MARTIN MICRON'S
ANTI-CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, AND
UNTRUE ACCOUNT OF THE DISCUSSION
OF 1553, ACCORDING TO THE TRUTH
AND POWER OF THE HOLY, DIVINE
SCRIPTURES.**

*How and when the so called English came to us and what
faithful love our brethren showed them.*

IN the year 1553, a little before midwinter, it happened that it was told to the brethren that a ship-load of people had arrived from Denmark, who, on account of their faith, were driven from England and that they lay a short distance from the shore, frozen up in the ice.

When the brethren heard of this, they were moved by christian mercy on their account, as was proper. They counseled together and concluded to lend them their assistance to help them out of the ice and properly escort them to the city, without any commotion, as they also did; although they conjectured that it might cause trouble with their governments, as was also the fact.

They met them with wheat bread and wine, so that if there should be any sick among them, they might refresh and stimulate them with it. And after they had escorted them into the city they made a collection of twenty-four thalers out of their poverty and presented that sum to the leading ones of them, to be distributed among the needy if such there should be among them. They refused the money and said they had enough; but would like that

labor might be procured for some of their number; in which our brethren assisted them as much as they could.

One of our number offered to take the children of John A'Lasco into his house and to do the best he could for them. To which Herman Backereel answered: No, this can not be granted; for John A'Lasco is a man who has dealings with lords, princes and other high personages. It might (Oh! reader observe) injure his reputation if his children should sojourn with such people. On hearing this, I observed that we had not met with the true, plain and humble pilgrims of Jesus Christ.

Behold, thus was their arrival and reception by us; and such faithful love have our brethren shown them, which was, not long afterward, taken quite amiss by ungrateful Herman; and as it appears, this is not touched upon in Micron's account, merely out of hatred of the truth and out of disfavor to our brethren, lest piety should be ascribed to them.

HOW THE 'ENGLISH' CAME INTO DISCUSSION WITH US.

AFTER they had been a few days in the city, Herman and his followers called some of us together and desired a discussion with them and after many broad assertions he said unto them, "I am a teacher and would like to have a teacher put against me; for I have heard that Menno was to be in the city. Therefore I would have him or some other teacher to discuss with me. For I have had discussions with hundreds of yours and when they would be vanquished they would invariably appeal to their teachers." Behold, thus he spoke! I might here write a good deal about his false pretensions and ambitious expressions; also about his infamous talk behind my back and seeking if he could not find a

splinter about me to magnify into a beam and to tie this upon my back as a sign of shame. Also, how he inquired of an innocent child about my secret shelter, &c. But, as it can not be serviceable to the reader, therefore I will commend it to the Lord and leave the shame of Herman untouched, that the reader may not think that I wish to retaliate evil with evil, from which may the Lord forever save me. Yet it is my heart's desire that he would be more truthful and more impartial of heart and that he would fear the Lord, his God, more.

The discussion was agreed upon with Herman and his fellows upon this condition: That they were to tell none where the discussion took place (as I was a poor, weak man, hated by all the world). Upon which they, on their part, gave our brethren their hands that they would never tell it. But how they kept their word their deeds have shown. For it was but a short time until it was known in the streets of Emden where Menno lived and that Micron and his fellows had a discussion with him. And besides, they have published it in print to all the world. If honorable, pious persons are not bound to respect their word and pledge (which is considered the same as an oath by all reasonable people) better than this, I will leave to the judgment of all readers, both those for and against me. But there are many who think that they cannot misuse us.

In the same manner they have been ungrateful to the city which showed more mercy to them than all Eastland and Denmark, when in midwinter they did not know where to find shelter; as they, with their unsalted, partial writings, have made the city suspicioned by lords, princes and other cities, that the city maintained us; while the city knew no more of my sojourning [there] than they knew of the hour of their death.

Lastly, they registered the names of some good persons who had not merited such treatment, that they might be known in all countries to which they might move. A reward of thousands has been offered for the apprehension of one and his little children,

who have rendered them such great services; if the Lord, by his grace, does not prevent it. If they had in all this considered the unfeigned, pure love which wishes harm to none, much less does it, and common honesty and their word and honor, for such a course instructs none upon the earth, nor makes them better in God and appears more like the work of a traitor than of a pious man; then, according to my opinion, their evangelical, christian character, spirit, discipline and reasonableness would have been more uniform than it now is. The Lord's word is true: The fruit shows what the tree is, Mat. 12:33. Behold, thus they who pretend to be christians have acted and say that we are heretics; who [say that they] call upon God as their witness and judge that they have faithfully described the discussion, while they are well aware that [even] the first sentence they wrote was a falsehood. And how quite untrue it is, will, by the grace of the Lord, be shown by self-evident truths from my following explanation of the discussion between Herman and myself.

DISCUSSION BETWEEN HERMAN AND MYSELF.

IT happened when we met for the purpose of a discussion, that I briefly admonished them in regard to the suffering, oppression, tribulation, persecution and cross of the true christians. To which he immediately answered: "That I wished to make his doctrine suspected." [This was] something of which I had not thought of in the least. I then quit and said, Well Herman, I presume you would rather discuss the question of the incarnation? He answered in the affirmative. Then, I said, confess your faith. When he had made his confession, I said, Beloved Herman, take heed of your words.

For behold, all these inconsistencies follow from your belief. And I enumerated eight of them.

And behold, when I had finished my discourse there was one among them (J.M., whose name is frequently referred to in Micron's writings), who asked me if I could prove that to be the fact, according to Scripture, thinking that I had thus spoken in regard to my own faith. I told him that he might ask Herman, as it was his faith and doctrine. On hearing this he dropped his head and was silent. I told him thrice, successively, to get Herman to prove it to him, according to the Scriptures. I have yet to receive his answer.

When I observed such partiality, I was very sorry. I said, Great God, are we thus to treat the word of the Lord? O shame! When you thought that it was my doctrine you wanted Scripture; but since you find that it is the doctrine of Herman, now you have Scripture enough! O, friend, I said, repent and be ashamed before God; for you do not treat his word as becomes a true christian. And this is one of the principal impartial witnesses, as Micron wrongfully boasts.

Afterward Herman replied and said, "I will scatter these inconsistencies as the wind scatters the dust." Dear Herman, I said, do not speak so boldly, it does not become a christian. I know you can not do it. And, praise to the Lord for his grace, it is verified to the present time as I can plainly see by Micron's Appendix, notwithstanding they have revolved the matter in their heads for more than two years.

The inconsistencies remained unreplyed to; and it was mostly *granting* that could be heard from him. So at last I said, My dear sir, show me, where do you find it written that he took on him our flesh or our human nature, as you claim? He then answered: Paul teaches us that Christ "took on him the form of a servant," Phil 2:7.

When he had finished his discourse I asked him whether or not he agreed with John A'Lasco in doctrine? He answered in the

affirmative. I replied: Well, A'Lasco has made an antithesis of this Scripture of Paul "In the form of God," and, "the form of a servant." That as he was in a divine form and by this truly *was* God, he has thus, also, taken upon himself our sinful form and was by this, truly made man, "but" (he says), "the sins, on account of which we are called servants in Scripture, he did not have."

From which antithesis one of two things must be true. Either, if he had the sinful form and not the sin, that he then, by virtue of the antithesis, must also have had the divine form; but he did not have the divine form. Or if he had it, and with it the divinity also, that he must also have had the sinful form and with it sin; or else the antithesis is false and in fact can not stand. In this view of the matter one of two things is true: that Christ Jesus was either a sinner, or else he was not God. And how such doctrine could agree with the Scriptures, I will leave to your own judgment.

Then he replied: "The Scriptures testify that he was without sin." It is true, I said. Therefore it is manifest that this antithesis of A'Lasco is false and that you can not maintain your doctrine by this Scripture. But if the Scriptures are to remain unbroken, then this is the true antithesis; Christ was in the godly form and was by this truly God, but he humbled himself and did not take on himself the form of a potentate, emperor, or king, whom we should serve, but the form of a poor servant, because he wanted to serve; for as he has been truly God in and with God his Father, from eternity; thus he became our true servant in due time, Isa. 7:15; 9:5; 40:28; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; John 1:2; Rom. 9:26; 1 John 5:5; Mat. 12:18; 20:28.

He then abandoned that Scripture and said, "There is another one much plainer, which has it that," "He has taken on him the seed of Abraham," Heb. 2:16. Not so Herman, I said. We should not thus adulterate the Scriptures. For it does not read that *he has taken on him* the seed of Abraham, but it reads that *he took it on himself*. Which taking on shall last unto the end.

He then took the words of the same chapter and said, "That Christ had taken upon himself the children's flesh and blood and is thus, on account of the flesh, is called our brother."

On hearing this I replied: That that was again an adulteration of the Scriptures; for it is written that he took upon himself *flesh and blood*; but not the flesh and blood of children. Therefore let us get at the meaning of these words at the start, lest we adulterate the Scriptures. Thus Paul says, "He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one." [Heb. 2:11] Now I ask, to whom has it reference? To God or to Adam? He replied: "To Adam." Then it follows, I said, incontrovertibly, that all ungodly children of the devil, such as thieves, murderers, drunkards, haters, idolaters, whores and rogues, are Christ's brothers and sisters. He frankly admitted this to be the case.

It would further follow, if we were Christ's brothers and sisters on account of the flesh, then also we would be his children on account of the flesh; for Paul says, "Behold, I and my children," &c. [Heb. 2:13] From which it would surely follow that the one brother had generated the other and the children their father, according to the flesh. And I will leave you to study out how such a generation could be, according to the Scriptures and according to the ordinance of God.

After passing some other words concerning *the partaking of*, I asked him if Adam had not partaken of flesh and blood? He answered in the affirmative. Well, said I, of whose flesh and blood did he partake, if we are to understand *participation* as you do? Therefore beloved Herman, take heed. Your learned ones deceive you. Thus Paul says, "He that threshes in hope, should be a partaker of his hope," that is that he may obtain that for which he hopes. Again, in the same chapter: "If others be partakers of this power over you, are we not even more?" 1 Cor. 9:10, 12, that is, if others have this power. Again, "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," Heb. 3:14. Not that we partake partly but wholly.

Therefore, beloved Herman, I warn you, let the Scripture remain Scripture and do not garble it to suit your opinion. For Paul does not say that the unsanctified, such as, liars, haters, proud, adulterers and the children of the devil are one with Christ, our Savior, but that the sanctified are of one with him, that is, those who are born of the one God with him. On account of this birth from God and not from Adam, we are his brethren; for the regenerated have one Father with him; as he is the first begotten Son of God, thus he is also the first-born among many brethren, Heb. 1:6; Rom. 8:29.

As holy Paul, then, teaches us that he is thus the first-begotten among the brethren; therefore it is very plain that he is not our brother from Adam, but from God; for he was not the first-begotten of Adam, therefore Adam's children must, through regeneration by faith, also become the children of God, John 1:12 and thus be Christ's brethren, Mat. 12:50; Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21; Heb. 2:11.

Behold, he is not ashamed to call such regenerated and sanctified ones his brethren, who with him have one Father (no whores, rogues and children of the devil), saying, Your name (he means his Father's name and not Adam's) I will declare to my brethren. Again, I will trust in him (namely, in the Father and not in Adam). Again, behold, "I and the children which God (not Adam) has given me." [Heb. 2:12, 13] Inasmuch as it is very plain that his children are not the carnal, but the spiritual children (for he had no carnal children) then his brethren must be spiritual brethren; or else one Scripture must be understood spiritually and the other carnally. Then, also sister Mary must have generated her brother Christ, in the flesh. This is incontrovertible.

Although now such regenerated [people], the sanctified, are his brothers and sisters, they yet have, contrary to their own will, communion with flesh and blood. Through their inherent sinful nature they frequently sin, stumble and transgress and are thus through the before-mentioned communion, conscious of guilt

according to the law which requires perfect righteousness. And behold, therefore he is their Savior, the first-begotten Brother and Father Christ, who in like manner, has partaken of flesh and blood, not of the children, for it does not read so and in that case he must have been one of two sons, one of whom was of heaven, eternal and immortal, the other of earth and mortal, but the Word itself (I add some words for explanation) has become flesh, that is, a truly passive, mortal man, in Mary, as John says, "The word became flesh," [John 1:14] like unto his sanctified brethren in all things except sin, that he might fulfill the law in his innocent flesh and not by our guilty flesh; that he might take away our deserved death by his innocent death; destroy the devil who had the power of death; bruise the Serpent's head; sanctify us unto God, his Father, by virtue of his precious blood; and assist us in all our temptations and besetting sins which result from our wicked flesh and the inspirations of Satan. Behold, this is the proper explanation of Heb. 2:14. And by such explanation Christ remains the undivided Son of God [and son of man], the Scripture remains unbroken, Christ remains the Sanctifier and we are the sanctified. Brethren and children, there is not a single Scripture which contradicts this, while Herman's confession and faith are very inconsistent, as has been heard.

When I again touched upon the inconsistencies, he asked me to confess my faith as he had done his; and he was going to show, he said, more inconsistencies (although he had not yet heard it) in my faith than I had shown in him. And when I had made my confession, he said, "This is too long for me; *I can not reply* to it." I then made a brief statement. Yet I was shown no inconsistency.

Behold, worthy reader, these are the principal points and Scriptures which Herman and I discussed concerning the incarnation of Christ. I say the principal ones; for to repeat all the words which passed between us is impossible.

After meal time we came to the discussion of pedo-baptism, which he tried to make right by the assertion, that the children, as

he said, are accounted as believing by the Scriptures and that Zaccheus (he insisted upon Zaccheus, notwithstanding I told him that it was not Zaccheus) and his whole house were baptized.

Kind reader, if I were to give an account of the discussion as it happened it would seem to some readers as if I were partial; again, to others who know me, that it was very foolish of him to challenge us while he did not know more of Scripture. I told him twice, dear Herman, you are too young; you will have to learn a great deal before you ought to try to defend your cause. What has become of all your bold assertions which you made at the start? Yet Micron writes that some of their weak brethren were very much strengthened by Herman during the discussion. I will leave the matter here. Thus they hoodwink the reader, that he may not observe that Herman acted so childish, to their shame.

I know to a certainty that Micron was written to immediately after the discussion, as his own writing implies. For their brethren who were with us were in great need, inwardly and outwardly. What he means by ‘inwardly’ I will leave the reader to judge.

FIRST DISCUSSION WITH MICRON

**HOW PARTIALLY MICRON NARRATED OUR FIRST
DISCUSSION; HOW SILENT HE IS ON THE PRINCIPAL
POINTS; HOW HE GARBLES MY WORDS AND HOW HE
ADORNS HIS OWN.**

WHEN we were met for the discussion, I said to Micron, I hear that your name is Martin Micron. You are unknown to me; and I have never heard of you before you came here. But I understand that you have made quite a reputation at London, England, that you have published writings, as I hear. Therefore my fraternal

admonition to you is that if you hear more powerful truths and firmer foundation in our discussion than you have heard or learned before this, that you do not seek your own fame and honor, but the praise and honor of God. To which he replied: "Menno, this is also my admonition to you." I said, "I am here for that very purpose; and I have suffered for many years because I would gladly have the truth and follow it."

This brotherly admonition, given to him in faithfulness of heart, he has lamentably disregarded in the latter part of the discussion, as he was every time conquered in his false, anti-christian doctrines and he said it before my face that I had blamed him with seeking his own praise and honor by his writing in London. Something which I had never thought of then, for I was not acquainted with him.

He called upon his own people as witnesses, which poor, enchanted children all agreed with him. At which I was very sorry and said, Is the fear of God not before you? There are now ten of you, all of whom answer to suit him. If there were ten thousand more besides you, you would not tell the truth in this matter. For how could it be possible that I should at the first start run up to a man with whom I was not acquainted and of whom I had heard nothing but a good report and say that he had sought his own honor with his writings.

Also, all of our brethren contradicted him and said, "Good Micron, you are mistaken; for so and so has Menno admonished you and thus you have answered him." Yet it was of no avail. These unkind, bitter, lying and defaming words have, alas, been published in his book. What kind of a spirit this is; how he follows the unadulterated, christian truth, piety and love; and how faithfully he narrates the matter I will let all impartial, reasonable readers judge by his dishonest adulteration of my words which I spoke to him with such good intentions. We then discussed some articles with which my writings are replete; and to which it is useless to reply. Lastly, we came to the discussion of the

incarnation, for the sake of which we are called such abominable heretics and deceivers by them, namely, because we confess with God the Father, with Christ, with the angel Gabriel, with Peter and with all the Scriptures that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Mat. 3:17; 17:6; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 1:31; 3:22; John 1:46; 5:22; 6:35; 7:21; 8:23; 9:37; 10:36.

His proper confession and foundation was, *That there are two Sons in Christ. The one eternal and impassive; the other temporal and passive; and that the one which was crucified for us was not the Son of God.* Which confession he did not make thoughtlessly and by mistake, but with premeditation and a sober mind before us all; and he has repeated it at least four or five times. Yet he calls on the judgment and name of the Lord, that they frequently confessed, with us, that the Son of God died for us. Syrach truly says, “Many would rather do the worst than to lose their honor; and do it for the sake of the ungodly,” Syr. 20:24.*

I proposed the inconsistencies of his belief and after many long and broad assertions I let him read undisturbedly an hour or an hour and a half from the Bible, about the seed of woman, the seed of Abraham and of David; and about the fruit of the loins of David. When he had finished reading, I asked what he wanted to assert by this? “I assert by this, he said, that the man Christ is of the fathers and that the word did not become flesh, as you say.” This was the amount of his words.

I replied, I cordially acknowledge and confess all these Scriptures to be right and good; for they teach us and testify that such a Savior should come. But now we will find out from the Scriptures of whom the human fruit comes; whether it comes from the father or from the mother. On hearing this, he said, “Are you going to find that out?” I answered in the affirmative; for I trust, by the grace of God, to be able to prove by virtue of the holy, divine Scriptures, that the origin of the child is from the father and not from the mother, but through the mother. This, I think, was

* German Bible.

something new to him; for he said, "Sir, let us hear it." I pointed him to 1 Cor. 11:8, where Paul says, "Man is not from the woman, but the woman from the man." On hearing this he interrupted me and said, "This is spoken of Adam and Eve." Hold, said I; but it further reads: "Even so is the man also by the woman." Was Adam, then, by Eve? He was then silent, as one who is beaten. I showed him many plain Scriptures, such as Gen. 15:4; 17:6; 19:32; Rom. 9:7; Heb. 7:10; 11:12. I also referred him to the genealogy, Mat. 1, that Christ, according to his foundation, must also have been a Syrian, Canaanite, Moabite and an Ammonite. I also made some natural illustrations, as of the sower, his seed and soil; from which he tries to make it appear to the reader that I made use of my intellect and not of the Scripture, against him.

[CHCoG: These arguments have been dealt with in previous discussions on this topic, eg. on pg. 690, and will only be summarised here. First, 1 Cor. 11:8 does refer to how Eve was created from a rib from Adam, but then vs 12 acknowledges how ALL other men have indeed been born from a woman. It is unreasonable to apply the latter statement to Adam, as the Bible clearly teaches that he was a special creation made directly by God. Nor can the conception of a human child be compared to sowing a crop of wheat in a field. The wheat seed being sown has already been fertilised by pollen and grown into a mature seed before it is sown. In a similar manner, Abraham's seed in the Bible refers mainly to his descendants, each one conceiving with their wives. No man can produce a child on their own. A human child is physically a combination of DNA from the sperm of its father and the DNA (and all the organelles required for life) from the egg of its mother. In Christ's case, his father was Jehovah God, who created new DNA for Christ and had the Holy Spirit fuse it with Mary's egg. Through Mary and her egg, her contribution to Christ's DNA was derived from Adam and Eve,

Noah, Abraham, Judah, David, etc, as listed in Luke 3:34-38, and continuing in Mat. 1:1-17. And yes, Jesus does have other nationalities who have contributed to his DNA, exactly as King Solomon—his ancestor—had, but that does not disqualify him from becoming King any more than it did King Solomon. Menno must have been aware that his children were not exact copies of himself, and Micron that his children were not exact copies of his wife, but instead each child was a unique combination of himself and his wife, and in this way too they became one flesh. They both needed to use some common sense and both needed to admit they did not know the full truth.]

But, as the saying is, Micron's little finger knows full well that the seed of the land and the seed of man are called by the same name in the Scriptures; and that also Abraham cast his seed, that is, sowed it, Heb. 11:11, although he garbles it in his writings and would apply the casting to Sarah. What we are to judge of such wilful adulterers of the holy, divine word, I will leave to the impartial reader. It is the same means of which the serpent made use when he led Adam and Eve into death, Gen. 3:1. Kind reader, as the Scriptures, together with daily occurrences, openly testify to us by the ordinance of God, that there are sowers and also that there is seed which is sown, there must also be a fit soil to be sown; for neither in the unplowed land, nor upon houses, trees and rocks do we sow, as may be seen. And whether or not my comparison of the husbandman, of his seed and of his field can stand according to the Scriptures, I will not leave to the calumniating Micron and Herman, but to the reasonable reader.

When I had finished my argument I said, Behold, Martin, this natural comparison which I have proposed, you may take into consideration at your leisure, but let us have a reply to my Scriptures. Then he appeared as one who is in doubt and said, "Away with this philosophy of the seed of woman." On hearing

this, I replied: I have proposed to you the plain Scriptures whereby I have proved that the child is originally of the father and not of the mother;* and you want it to be of the mother without the Scriptures. Say, kind sir, which of us two makes use of philosophy? You or I? He made no reply at all. But he now writes as if he had then said, thus, “The words of Paul, 1 Cor. 11:7, should be understood as having reference to Adam and Eve; for Paul wanted to humble the men that they should not exalt themselves above woman, on account of their glory,” which in one sense is right, yet not according to the sense of Paul in this instance. For Micron desires to apply it to Adam and Eve and Paul spoke it, in reference to all who are born of Adam and Eve. For he says, “For as the woman is from the man, even so is the man also from the woman.” Mark, he says, by [from] the woman. If Onan had done as he did, Gen. 38:9, a thousand times; and besides, all men with him, who were from the beginning, no human fruit would be born from this. For the seed must have a proper soil to produce fruit and to generate according to the word and ordinance of the Lord and therefore Paul says, “Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord,” 1 Cor. 11:11. I trust that such plain Scriptures can be understood.

Again, concerning the Scripture, Wis. 7:2, Micron says, “It does not read of man’s seed alone.” To which I reply: Micron must be a man who esteems the judgment of the Almighty God too little, that he is not afraid to adulterate such plain words, or to obscure them by the breath of the abyss, as it is so plain that the Holy Spirit in plain words here ascribes to the father that which belongs to the father, according to the ordinance of God and to the

* [CHCoG: There are NO scriptures that say the child is “not of the mother.” In fact, there are many scriptures that talk of both a child’s father and mother, though the Bible typically uses the tradition of following the father’s line for its chronologies. However, we have Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel and Leah, Salmon and Rachab, Boaz and Ruth, David and Bathsheba, etc, all in Christ’s genealogy.]

mother what belongs to the mother.* * * * I repeat it, that such plain words of the Scriptures are easily understood.

Again, to my pointing [out to] him how Sarah conceived by Abraham and Rebecca by Isaac, Heb. 11:11; Rom. 9:7, he replies thus, but in the discussion he did not refer to it; the reason why Abraham and Isaac are called the origin of their descendants, he says, is to exclude other men and also because woman has lost her privilege through sin. This is such glossing as if both the Scripture and that [??] were lost. Therefore this is my brief reply: God does not require of anyone that which he has not given, nor does he envy anyone for that which is given to him; for he is a God of the truth and not of a mere name. And if the Lord had done so for the reason given by Micron, then God would have had pleasure in the name and not in truth. He would also have given more to those patriarchs than truthfully belonged to them and taken from woman what belonged to her. Mark what kind of a God the sophistry of Micron teaches.

As for the privilege, of which he writes, I would in all love ask him what kind of a privilege this was, which woman has lost through sin? If she is no more woman and if she has become unfit to fulfill her maternal calling and office to which she was ordained by God? That she is woman still and necessary to fill her place in the world is too clear to need arguing. Therefore I do not know what this privilege might be, as the Scriptures say no more than, "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in sorrow you shall bring forth children: and your desire shall be for your

* [CHCoG: Wisdom is an apocryphal book, and 7:2 is one of the verses that convince me it is NOT scripture. Here it is in the KJV: "And in my mother's womb was fashioned to be flesh in the time of ten months, being compacted in blood, of the seed of man, and the pleasure that came with sleep." It is well known that the time from conception to birth in humans is nine months, that the woman's egg is required as well as the man's sperm and that a baby does not form simply from congealing blood, but is a miraculously complex process which is precisely controlled by DNA.]

husband and he shall rule over you,” Gen. 3:16. But something must be done to deceive the humble reader, when flattery will not give it a scriptural appearance.

Oh! oh!! If we poor children were to treat the Scriptures the twentieth part as they do (something from which may the Lord save us) and would veil the eyes of the ignorant as Micron does by his flatterings, great god! how they would be offended. They would also have full right to do so. Nevertheless, however they teach and do, it is a welcome gospel to the poor, deceived world, as was commonly the case from the beginning with all false prophets and their followers. He is allowed to break the bones of the Passover and to cut off Samson’s hair, Exo. 12:46; Num. 9:12, until the time comes that it is ended with him and he has to give an account of his deceit before the Lord.

After some passing remarks, we came to the inconsistency that they had an impure Christ; and I asked him if he confessed Mary to be of the impure and sinful seed of Adam? He answered, “Yes.” But he said she was pure, because the angel said unto her, “Blessed are you among women,” Luke 1:28. To this I replied: Jehovah said unto Abraham, “I shall bless you;” “and I will bless them that bless you,” Gen. 12. Again, he promised to the obedient parents under the law: “Blessed shall be the fruit of your body,” Deut. 28:4. Were, by this, Abraham, together with all those that bless him and all those who are born of such pious parents, pure and without sin?

He said, “Christ was pure and without sin and that because he was not of human seed.” I replied: From such explanation the greatest inconsistencies would follow.

He then replied: “God was the cause that the nature of Adam was corrupted.” I noticed that he was unable to reply and that he did not know what to say. I asked him, Why? Because, said he, “God said,” “In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” So I hear, I said, that God was the cause of the transgression of Adam? together with some other remarks. “No,” he said, “I do not

say so.” Oh, Micron! I said, Consider what inconsistencies you advance and what a weak, unscriptural foundation it is which you would assert and maintain! He did not reply again, yet he claims in his writing that he asserted and maintained the purity of Christ against us. If that is not seeking one’s own honor and to give an untrue account of the discussion, I will leave the reader to judge. And how the assertions which he now makes in his writings will stand according to the Scriptures, we will show by the Scripture. Thus he writes: “We can conclude nothing under sin, but that which the Scriptures conclude under it.” In this he is right, yet [it is] contrary to himself. For the Scriptures conclude Adam and all his seed under sin. Therefore it must be so with Adam and all his seed; this cannot be denied, 1 Cor.15:21; Rom. 5:18; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:1. He further writes: That which the Scriptures make free, we also should consider free. Again he is right; but contrary to himself, for the Scripture makes Christ free and therefore we also consider him as free, because he is from above, from God who is pure and not from below of impure Adam; which Adam, I repeat, according to the Scriptures, is concluded under sin, with all his seed and the Scriptures do not contradict themselves.

He further writes that the apostles and prophets had no need of saying so much about the holiness of Christ, if he were from above and not of Adam. This is so simple, that it looks surprising. For, if Christ were such a pure man of impure Adam, as our opponents say, then the Scriptures would contradict themselves; or else Adam must have had two seeds of which one was corrupt and the other remained pure, which is not thus taught by holy writ. Observe what blind arguments he advances.

Lastly, he writes: “That which God testifies to be holy; man can not make common or unholy,” and adduces Acts 10:15. Here the most holy holiness of the flesh of Jesus Christ is compared, by him, to the flesh of the animals, which, under the law, were forbidden to Israel to eat, Lev. 11; Deut. 14:7 and which are now, under the gospel, allowed as clean, Mat. 15:11; Mark 7:15; Acts

10:15; Rom. 14:20; Tit. 1:15, as if Adam, thus, by one word (as the animals under the law), was made unclean; and now, again, by one word (as also these animals), was made clean, in this his seed (of which, according to him, Christ should be generated); by which he blasphemes the most holy holiness of Christ's flesh. O, abominable flattery!*

Behold, dear reader, this is the best foundation upon which Micron can build his assertion of the purity of the flesh of Christ, after a study of two years of which he, at the time of the discussion did not advance a single word. You may consider for yourselves whether he does not make his doctrine suspected by such flattery.

And when he was defeated in his assertion about the seed of woman, by virtue of the Scripture and could find nothing to solve the inconsistency and was hedged in on all sides, he proposed the following question, as if he was so confused that he did not know what to say and yet wanted to say something, that it might not be said that he was silenced: "Do you believe that Mary was a human being?" For God's sake, hear what he has proposed!

On hearing this, I became recklessly excited and answered thoughtlessly: She certainly was no brute. What is this for a base question? Behold thus the brute came into play; upon the cause of which he is silent; and which he adduces quite strangely and little to my honor.

I confess before him and before all readers that I did not answer him respectfully; and I am sorry for it; for it would have been proper to have given him a considered answer; and not to return foolishness with foolishness. But to which of us the greatest blame should be attributed, to Micron with his surprisingly indiscreet question, or to myself with my unseasoned answer, I would gladly leave to his own consideration if he were impartial.

* [CHCoG: Even this claim that the New Covenant makes unclean animals clean is based on misunderstandings. Read [*Clean and Unclean Animals from a Christian Viewpoint*](#) for clarification.]

After this had taken place I had but very little desire to discuss with him at that time, as I saw that he so quite partially placed himself against the truth although he had nothing to advance whereby he could defend his foundation, so that I was forced to say, Good Martin, do not take it amiss; it would be well if you would learn to know yourself better, for you are yet too much of a novice in the Scriptures to defend the foundation of your doctrine in regard to this matter.

“Attend,” he said then, “I will tell you something else.” But as it had no foundation at all and was nothing but nonsense; and as he went from one thing to another, I recklessly answered: Away with your talk. All you adduce is nothing but anathema.

He then became very angry and cried out thrice: “The pope has taught you this.” No, I answered with the same words, thrice, Not the pope, but Paul has taught me this, Gal. 1:8. For it is a strange gospel, your philosophy about Christ, which is not taught to us by the apostles nor by the Scriptures; and I did not say a word about 1 Cor. 16:22, although he, without any truth, said and wrote so, the like of which alas, he often does to defame me out of malice.

I again acknowledge that I might have borne with him more patiently than I did. Yet the Son of God has not lost his son-ship and rights by my inconsiderate answer; nor was Micron’s anti-christian doctrine by this rendered the christian doctrine. I became very tired of answering his foolish questions; for I began to observe by what kind of a spirit he was prompted.

Besides, he has quite reversed the narration of the discussion; has enlarged his ten words into very many to flatter his cause; has abbreviated mine in many instances to weaken our cause and has written many things which were never thought of; and such by which he was quite stunned, he has not mentioned at all. Yet this audacious man dares call on God as his witness that he has given a true narration. O Lord!

Well, everyone will have to give an account of himself before his God. Let him adorn his falsehoods and seal them as much as

he pleases. By the grace of God, I shall affirm my humble truth with yes and no, as Scripture teaches. Whosoever will may therewith believe my writings; and if he will not I cannot help it. I will call on nothing higher. I have suffered much pain and trouble for about twenty-one years for the sake of truth, yes and no and have borne it submissively; nor shall I by the merciful assistance of the Lord leave it in my old age, on account of Micron and all anti-christian false doctrine, however Satan may portray me by his authors and servants.

SECOND DISCUSSION WITH MICRON

HOW AND WHAT MICRON CONFESSED DURING OUR SECOND DISCUSSION, AND HOW UNFAITHFULLY HE HAS NARRATED IT.

IN the second place, I asked him if he admitted the confession which he had made, concerning the two Sons in Christ, at the time of our first discussion? He answered, "Yes." Then I desired Andrew, whom he calls Cananeus, to write it down, which he did in Micron's presence and it reads thus: "Two sons in Christ. The first, God's eternal Son, born of him before time was, without mother and impassive. The second, Mary's son, or the son of man, born of her in due time, without father and passive. In which passive son of Mary, the impassive Son of God dwelt. So that the man Christ who died for us, was not the Son of God; for he had no father." Behold, this was his confession which we all heard from his own mouth and which was written down in his presence.

When Andrew had written it down, Micron said, "Read it to me." After it was read I asked him if he had written it down right. He replied "Yes." And now this untruthful man comes and writes that they frequently confessed that the Son of God died for us; while it did not happen otherwise than it is here narrated; and it comes now again in his writing and says that he had no father. For on the thirty-second page he writes: "As to the real origin of the human substance (which he called before us, the second son), he had, according to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, no father; and refers to Mat. 1:2, 3. And thus the pure Holy Scriptures (because they call Mary a virgin), must be the cover for his abominably false doctrine; notwithstanding it clearly testifies in many places that God is his Father; and that he is the Son of God, Luke 1:31; 9:35; Mat. 3:17; 14:33; 16:16; 17:5; Mark 3:11; 9:6; 15:39; John 1:45; 3:16; 6:69; 7:28; 8:23; 9:37; 10:36; 11:27. Behold, this is the man who, according to his own writing, has so cleverly discussed and so powerfully asserted the foundation of his doctrine, as he falsely makes his followers believe; and who has, to his own everlasting shame, placed such a bright crown upon his head, as he claims in his book. The proverb, "That honor shames those that seek it," is true.

In the third place, I asked him, since he says that the man Christ had no father, whether he did not call him the Son of God? He answered, "Yes." I asked him again, for what reason he called him so; whether it was on account of his birth, or of regeneration, or of his creation, or of the acceptance? For if he should be truly called such it must be because of one of these four reasons; or else one would speak a falsehood as often as he would call him such. I received this answer: "On account of none of these four reasons." This is all the answer he gave me; but he sought another retreat, that he might not be caught in the net of truth. This question (then left unanswered) he now, adduces quite garbled and says, page 173, "That he is called the Son of God, on account of the union of the two sons" (which he artfully calls two natures that it may not

sound too strange), of which union we can find not a letter in all the Scriptures, whereby he confesses publicly that the crucified Christ Jesus who has borne the sins of all the world and reconciled it unto God his Father, was merely *called* the Son of God; and that God is therefore but a God in name and not a God in truth. Surely, this is too much of blasphemy, that the Almighty, great God [Jehovah] and his blessed, beloved Son must hear of such a man.

In the fourth place, I asked him if he knew that Gellius Faber had issued a publication against us and if he had read it? He answered, "Yes." Well, said I, how do you like it? "It is a very fine thing," he said, "I have also let our brethren read it."

Ah, Martin! said I, do you endorse that ungodly homily which is so replete with falsehood, by which the word and ordinances of the Lord are so lamentably broken and wherein the most holy flesh of Christ is called a *boose-geld** and ransom? If the Lord will help me he will he replied to, for when this happened mine was almost in print. Behold, I tell the truth. Then Micron said, "I have spoken to Gellius about the *boose-geld*; and he claims that it is a mistake of the printer and that it should be *loose-geld* (a ransom). Then one of ours said, loose means, in this sense, false or frivolous." Should Christ's flesh, then, have been a false or frivolous money? &c.

On hearing this, I said: I have often thought to myself how is it possible that a man could thus write? It must be a mistake. Reflecting upon the matter, I said, I remembered that John A'Lasco and he were unanimous in this doctrine; and that A'Lasco wrote: "If Christ is holy why was he then condemned by the judgment of the Father, on account of sin?" Again, "Christ partook of no other flesh but that of sin, that he might be tempted and subject to death." Inasmuch as they agreed, I thought, and as these sayings of A'Lasco openly testify, that he (Christ) was not holy, but that he was of a sinful flesh, guilty of death, therefore it

* Boose in Dutch means wicked. [CHCoG: Google translates *boose-geld* as angry money.]

might, in the same manner, be called by the learned, a *boose-geld* and ransom. Behold, thus I answered and not otherwise.

When I told it thus, Micron desired to read the sayings of A'Lasco and said at last, after having studied about them: "It is very obscure." Yes, certainly, I said, Not obscure but ungodly. And this discreet reply of mine he has not only suppressed, but lamentably garbled, to my disadvantage. Besides, he has left the writings of A'Lasco out of the narrative and thus he blames me for what others are guilty of. I will leave it to the all-seeing God and to his own mind whether he has written it with the Spirit of truth, which is quite impartial and with true, christian love, as if standing before God.

Inasmuch as I have thus found it printed in his book and as the sayings of A'Lasco imply that Christ's flesh was guilty of death; as has been heard, which may rightfully be called a *boose-geld* and ransom, as he deems it to be sinful, then say, beloved, what have I said about which to make such an ado? And, as he perhaps thinks, on account of which he has so mortally wounded me; besides, according to truth it is their foundation and the unmistakable result of their doctrine. But thus he must render Gellius a favor at my expense, although he once spoke quite differently to some preachers at Emden about Gellius' book.

We then came to the inconsistency of concluding [there are] two persons in Christ. To which Micron answered: "We do not assert that there are two persons in Christ; but we say there is but one. For although the Word, from eternity, was one person, yet when it was conceived in Mary it was no person." Beloved, mark what indiscreetness he uses.

He further said: "Although every man is a person and although the man Christ was a man as any other man, yet the man Christ, for himself alone, was no person." Is it not a shame that one has to repeat such ignorant words before intelligent persons? Paul truly asks: "Where is the disputer of this world?" 1 Cor. 1:20. When we had finished our arguments in regard to this matter, I said, I

understand that some of you say, “Menno said some time ago that the whole Christ was God’s Son; but he did not prove it by the Scripture.” Therefore I desire to do so now; and I will read the Scriptures of the New Testament to you, which testify that the whole Christ Jesus, from head to foot, visible and invisible, is God’s own, only and first-begotten, true Son, if you will patiently attend, as I did when you were reading. “Do so,” he said.

I read about twenty-four or twenty-five strong, plain Scriptures, to some of which I shall here refer. The first was, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God,” Luke 1:35. Here the angel of the Lord testifies that Christ Jesus should be the Son of God and you, Micron, say that he was not.

The Father himself says, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” Mat. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35. And you, Micron, boldly contradict it and say that he is not. Again, Christ said unto the blind man, “Do you believe in the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him? And Jesus said unto him, You have both seen him and it is he that speaks with you,” John 9:35, 36. Here the visible, speaking Christ confesses himself to be the Son of God. And you, Micron, say he is not.

Christ says, “And what if you shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before?” John 6:62. Here Christ testifies that the Son of man was from above and that he would again return thither. And you, Micron, say that the son of man is not of heaven, but of earth.

Peter answered Christ to the question: “Whom do you say that I am?” “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Mat. 16:16; and Christ blessed him for it. And you, Micron, say that the man Christ is not the Son of God.

The centurion confessed him to be such at the cross. He said, "Truly this man was the Son of God," Mark 15:39. And you, Micron, refute it and say that he was not.

All the apostles confessed Christ to be the Son of God, Mat. 14:33; also, John the Baptist; Nathaniel and Martha, John 1:45; 11:27. And you, Micron, are not ashamed to say that he is not.

John says, "These are written, that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name," John 20:31. Beloved Micron, take heed. At another place it reads, "He that does not believe God has made him a liar; because he does not believe the record that God gave of his Son," 1 John 5:10. "He is anti-christ that denies the Father and the Son," 1 John 2:22. Behold, Micron, what kind of spirits you have we will let you judge by this Scripture of John. What is your answer to all these plain Scriptures which I have read?

He was again puzzled as before, during the first discussion when he was overcome on the subject of woman's seed. Both he and Herman became pale (as the brethren told me, for I did not notice it) and Micron said, "Most of these Scriptures I confess to be right and just." Not all? I asked. I have not added a single word; but merely read from the Bible. Tell me which are *not* right.

I received no answer at all. But again he asked a strange question three or four times, which I refused to answer, desiring an answer to the Scriptures which I had read. At last he spoke, but merely deceitfully, that he might lead me off my Scriptures which he could not answer because they were too powerful and plain and also because he yet wanted to make a show: "They shall be answered," he said. Then ask on, said I. "Do you believe," he said, "that Christ was born from the Father and seated with the Father, from eternity?" I let him ask the question again.

Martin, said I, you do not act as becomes a true and pious man. Is that an answer to my Scriptures? Immediately he began to boast that I could not answer his question. I was sorry that I had commenced to discuss with such a perverse man; for I saw clearly

that he was not prompted by the spirit of truth. I further said that I have never read of such a birth in the Scriptures, as the one which he enquired about, which implied a seat with God from eternity. If you read of it, I said, then show me where to find it.

“No,” he said, “We want to find it out by you.” Martin, said I, be ashamed. When I want to see the Scriptures you are not willing to show them. He again said, “He wanted to find it out by me.” Man, man, I said, By this you show what kind of a spirit there is in you. What indiscreet perverseness, to require of me to show that which is not to be found in the Scriptures. Heaven and earth have not yet stood six thousand years and the Scriptures say that heaven is God’s throne and earth his footstool and that God is an eternal God who has neither beginning nor end. If I should ask, now, what were God’s throne and footstool before heaven and earth were created, would you be obliged to answer me, while the Scriptures say nothing about it? I again received the answer: “We want to find out by you.” Mark with what kind of a spirit this man discussed with me.

Observing that the bait which he threw out was to get something peculiar from me, I said to him: Micron, since you can not stand before the truth, I can see what your object is. Therefore understand me, that you may give a true account of me. Whatever the Scripture testifies concerning the eternal, divine form of Christ, I sincerely believe, although I may not thoroughly comprehend it, as that his goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, Micah 5:2; that he is the Alpha and Omega, Rev. 1:8; 2:8; the {eternal} Word of the Father, his Wisdom and his Son, by whom all things were created, Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6; Prov. 8:22; John 1:3; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; the first-born of every creature, Col. 1:15, who is before Abraham was, John 8:58 and other like Scriptures I do not comprehend. But that there was a birth from everlasting, as you say, I can not find in the Scriptures.

Inasmuch as I can not find this in the Scriptures, and, as I am prepared to obey them unto death, therefore I ask you to show me

(as you ask it of me) where it is written, and, by the grace of God, I will not in the least refute it; for I was certain that he could not show it. He answered again: "No, we want to find out by you." Now judge of the spirit of the discussion.

I will now leave this to the judgment of all impartial, reasonable readers whether Micron has met us in discussion as a godly, humble, kind and pious christian, to teach me and all of us, or to be taught by us in the matters pertaining to Christ Jesus, by the Spirit and word of the Lord; or, whether he met us as an ungodly, proud, cruel and infamous pharisee.

A more abominable discussion I never heard of. In the first place, because he wanted to find out by us something which is not in the Scriptures. And in the second place, because I desired him to show it to me and he would not do it for the sake of truth and love. But Micron knew that he could not find it in the Scriptures, yet, by such trickery, after he had lost this foundation, he tried to make a show among his followers who understood so little about the Scriptures. But he was caught in the net he set for us, as you may clearly see from the following account. For, when I observed that he had lost all christian reasonableness; that no Scriptures would avail anything in his case and that he strove for nothing else but to catch me at some expression or other, which he might, by falsely adding to it himself, fasten it upon us, to our disadvantage. I desired of him to explain his question a little better, namely, whether he believed that Christ, from everlasting, was born of the Father, or that he was from eternity seated with the Father and separated from him? Three or four times, he said, "Born."

Born? I said, I do not contradict it; for you have heard my confession, clear enough, but explain your question. It was again, "Born."

Then I said to Herman, Do tell, what is your faith? He spoke in his usual, thoughtless manner and frankly said, "That he was seated, separate from the Father."

Well, Micron, I said, is that your faith also? He again answered, *Born*. For the fox was afraid that he should be caught in his den.

Micron, said I, say yes or no. We have heard enough of your, *Born*. Then he said, "Yes!" Well, I said, give attention!

I presume, I said, that you have read that there was a sect in ancient times which was called *Triticole* or *Tritoites* (Tritheists),* because they worshipped three Gods. If you have the same faith concerning the Holy Spirit that you have concerning the Father and the Son, then it is plain that you are Tritheists; for you so divide them, as being seated separate, one from the other, as was seen. He made no reply to this at all.

In the second place, I said, You are aware that Arius was deemed a heretic because he said that Christ had a beginning? He answered, "Yes." This is right, I said. But reflect. If Christ was from eternity with the Father, separated from him, as you say, having neither beginning nor end, then he is not the Father's Son; for in such case he is not born of the Father; and if he is born in such a manner, that he was divided from the Father and separated from him, as you have it, then he must have had a beginning; for that the begetter must be before the begotten, in a natural sense as you assume, is as clear as day. And if you, then, are not Arians, I will leave to your own judgment. I am yet to be answered.

In the third place I said, Some ancient authors have compared the eternal, divine Being to the Sun, that is, they have compared the body to the Father, the Word or Son to the brightness and the Holy Spirit to the heat. For as these three, the body, the brightness and the heat are one sun, thus the Father, his Word and his Holy Spirit are one God.

And, as the brightness cannot be separated from the sun and yet remain brightness, thus the Word can not be separated from God and still remain the Word. Yet the Word is not the Father, nor is

* Tritheist, One who believes that the three persons in the Trinity are three distinct Gods.

the Father the Word. And therefore you daily sing in your temples, *Lumen de lumine*, that is, a Light of lights. Also says Paul, “He is the brightness of the glory of God,” Heb. 1:3.

Behold, dear Micron, this the before-mentioned writers have confessed concerning the eternal, divine Being and you confess thus. I will leave it to your own judgment whether you did not forsake their faith and whether you did not make them false writers by your confession. He did not reply at all to this.

In the fourth place I said, You surely confess that Christ Jesus from everlasting, was the Mighty word, wisdom and power of God? He replied, “Yes.” Well, I said, if such a birth, then, took place, as you say that he was seated, divided and separated from the Father, then the Father must have been seated without wisdom, word and power from eternity, inasmuch as they were separated, as you claim. This is too plain to be controverted, John1:1; Gen. 1:1; Isa. 40:8; Bar. 3:5. Dear Micron, consider how you blaspheme God. Not a word did he reply to this.

[CHCoG: First, let us state that Micron and Herman were usually much farther from the truth than Menno, though we are mainly dealing with Menno’s errors in these inserts.

Menno here restates his own blasphemy, as it was in his Triune God article, (pg. 390) though this time he is careful to avoid calling Christ’s Father “imperfect.” But he still insists that Jehovah is bereft of any “wisdom, Word and Power” of his own. Let us deal with this first, though somewhat differently to how we treated it in the Triune article. The starting point is not controversial: Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Dan. 3:25, Mat. 14:33, Luke 1:35, John 20:31, Heb. 1:5 & 4:14. And we are also told that Jesus is “the express image” of his Father Heb. 1:3. So the obvious conclusion from this is that everything that Jesus is has been given to him by his Father, otherwise he would not have been an ‘express image’ of the Father. Therefore Christ’s Father has

given him glory, power, the position of being the word, etc, etc. Indeed, in 1 Cor. 8:6, we are told that “ours is one God, the Father, for everything is from Him.” Christ himself says “He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.” John 14:24. Indeed, Jesus says that all he knows he has learned from his Father: “Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, [meaning their joyless version of the Sabbath, not God’s] but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.” John 5:18-20. Please understand Jesus’s response: He was declaring to them that he was LESS THAN EQUAL to his Father. Therefore, any claim that Jesus’ Father was in any way inferior to Christ or incomplete without Christ is outright blasphemy, and does not have a single scripture to support it. And be clear about this: Menno was not merely claiming that the Father was only incomplete before Christ was begotten, but has ALWAYS been so. He is only complete when considered as a portion of the hypothetical three persons-in-one-person Trinity. Menno’s errors in his concepts of God can largely be traced back to his continued belief in the unbiblical Roman Catholic Trinity, though he is careful to use the word triune instead. But even in this he errs beyond Athanasius, as the Catholics claim that Christ and his Father are co-equal, while Menno’s claims make Christ superior to his father. Though it may be that Menno did not intend to blaspheme Jehovah God, he none the less has done so, and it is hard to understand how he could not have realised this was exactly what he was doing. The Bible is crystal clear: Jehovah God, Christ’s Father, is the ultimate, true God; he is above and beyond

everyone else, and he comes short in NOTHING. John 17:3, 1 John 5:20, Isa 46:9-10, Mark 13:32, John 14:28, 1 Cor 11:3, 1 Tim 2:5-6. Christ is second in charge of everything, but like all children, he owes his existence to his Father, and again like all children, learned what he knows from his Father. And what Scriptural evidence do we have that Christ's Father existed before Christ? Contrary to Menno's claim and Micron's silence, there is such evidence, some of which is given below:

Now to the King of eternity, to Him who is indestructible and invisible, *the* One God, be honour and glory for eternities of eternity. Amen. 1 Timothy 1:17 (Aramaic Peshitta, CHCoG translation, here and below.)

Jehovah, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting and to everlasting, You are God. Psalm 90:1&2

"I was watching visions in the night, and behold, One like the Son of Man was coming with the clouds of heaven! And He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.

Then dominion was given to Him, and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and His kingdom is that which will not be destroyed.* Daniel 7:13 & 14

So, who are they? Clearly, the King of Eternity and the Ancient of Days are Jehovah God, Christ's Father, and the Son of

* Rev 1:6 and 11:15.

Man is Jesus Christ. And just as clearly, Jehovah is both much older and more powerful than Jesus Christ. But let us learn more:

“Jehovah created me as the firstfruit of His journey, before His works of old. I was to be poured out from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth.

There were no depths when I was brought forth, there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were set down, before the hills, I was brought forth; while He had not made the earth or the fields, or begun making the dust of the world.

When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He placed a curve on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds from above, when He strengthened the eyes of the depths, when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not pass over His word, when He cut out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him as a master’s apprentice; and I was His delight every Day, always rejoicing before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and My delight was with the sons of men.

“Now therefore, listen to Me, My children, for blessed are those who keep My ways. Hear Instruction and be wise, and do not let go of it. Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching day by day at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors.

For whoever finds me finds life, and obtains pleasure from Jehovah; but he who sins against Me does violence to his own soul; all those who hate Me love death.”

Proverbs 8:22 to 36

Again, this is clearly Jesus speaking of his own creation, then his existence before the heavens and earth were created, and next

of his role as the Master's Apprentice during Creation Week. And what do we learn? That Jesus was 'brought forth' before Creation Week ever began. And what does that mean? That Jesus did not always exist, but was created from his Father. As we have seen, he was created as the "express image" of his Father, and he was the "beginning of the creation of God." Rev 3:14, and is the first and only one begotten from his father. John 1:14, Rev. 2:8. And more than this, it confirms that Jesus knew before Creation Week began, that he would have to die, "to be poured out" for our sins. John 19:30-37.

We do not know precisely how Jehovah begot Christ at the beginning of creation, but it is possible that the unique way God created Eve from Adam was chosen to give us some insight into how He created Christ. Thus it is that both Eve and Christ did not have a mother. But when Jehovah begot Christ again in Mary, then he did not remain 'only' the Son of God, but also became the Son of Man, and this time he did have a mother as well as a father (and Joseph as a step-father).

But let us go back to Christ's initial 'birth.' Did Eve remain embedded in Adam? NO. She immediately became a separate being to Adam, though she was human, just as Adam was human, but even so God says they became one flesh. Gen 2:24, Mark 10:8. So it seems probable that Christ also became a separate being to his Father, Jehovah God, though he was a god, just as his Father was god, but even so they were so close that it was *almost* like they became one in many ways. John 17:20-26. Which brings us back to Menno's question: was Christ *seated* separately to his father before the Creation of the heavens and earth? Though Herman said yes, it was indeed a thoughtless answer. Why? Because we have no evidence that anything existed at that time apart from Jehovah God and his Son Christ. Even the heavens were not yet created. Exo 20:11. As that is so, there were no thrones, not even any chairs, to be seated upon, nor even anything to set the thrones upon. And though we are not told precisely

when the angels were created, it is clear that they came into existence AFTER Christ, but before the earth was created, as Job 38:4-7 shows. It seems likely that they were created at the start of Day One, shortly before the earth was created. But we do know something of the glory that Christ had back then, as it was like the glory Christ received when he returned to heaven: he again has his position at the right hand of God, and is thus the second in command of all that exists. 1 Peter 3:21-22.

As for Menno's comparison of the Father, Christ and the Holy Spirit to the body, brightness and heat of the sun, note that this idea is NOT from the Bible, but is merely idle speculation from some nameless 'ancient authors', and therefore it carries NO weight. Nor does it add anything to a correct understanding of the relationships between Jehovah God, his son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is merely intended to support the pagan Trinity idea.

For a more detailed analysis of this topic, please read [*Jesus Christ, Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity?*](#).

But now he comes and says that Christ, from eternity was born of the Father, although yet remaining in the Father. Mark what a double tongue and unsteady spirit it is. At the time of the discussion, Christ was, from everlasting, seated, divided and separated from the Father; and now he remained in the Father. In such a short space of time he has changed his mind on five points concerning the incarnation of Christ, as is shown in the "Admonition" written to him and now he comes to cast upon me the base stains of his own unsteadiness; while the merciful Lord has, by his grace and power, for about twenty-one years, kept me steady in one sense and foundation of the doctrine, notwithstanding the many artifices devised against me by so very many crafty spirits, as all must testify who have impartially read my books and heard my admonitions.

Here I would faithfully advise all readers in love and would humbly pray them, for God's sake, that none will say or think that I, by these four answers to his proposed and explained question, would change or forsake my doctrine concerning the birth of Christ, the {eternal} Word, before every creature. Not at all. For, with all those who, with holy Paul, in truth, confess Christ Jesus to be the first-born of every creature and that without the intermixture of any human philosophy, with these I by this confess to be unanimous, now and forever.

I declare that if Micron had asked, in accordance with the Scriptures, if I confessed Christ, according to his divine form, to be the first-born of every creature, then I would immediately have answered him in the affirmative. It would, then also have prevented his irrelevant questions. But as his questions were the result of reason and not of the Scriptures and as he would thus make of the word a separate person, from everlasting, of which not a single word is found in the Scriptures before his ascension, therefore, he was immediately defeated by the four inconsistencies concerning the eternal, divine Being, from which he could not extricate himself at all, as was heard.

Mark also that he has reflected upon the foolishness of his wisdom which he, without any Scripture, used against me, so that he is now ashamed of his own confession and words; for he says, "If I received the correct news, that he never talked about" "being seated." If this is true, then, alas, it is too gross a falsehood. He also writes now that he is born of the Father, from everlasting, but, that he yet abided in him, as is also the doctrine of the Nicene council, Athanasius, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Luther, Pomeranius, Melancthon, Bullinger and of the most learned persons, as can be easily deduced from their comparison of the sun, as also from the writings of some of them.

He again makes use of philosophy and not of the Scriptures, as he did in his first [discussion], which he has now eaten up. For the spirit of wisdom has not left us a single word concerning the

ineffable, unsearchable mystery of the eternal birth at all; whether he became separate from the fatherly Being at his birth, before all creatures, or whether he remained ineffably one with it. For God is a Spirit, John 4:24 and that Spirit is ineffable.

As he again makes use of philosophy and not of the Scriptures, the searching, curious philosopher might again ask him in regard to the word, *born*: How can one be born and yet remain in the begetter? I do not know where Micron can find a direct answer, with which he could stand before the disputer. Therefore I would [say] that the ineffable mystery was left with God. For all who want to follow their own intellect in this ineffable mystery and maintain their opinion by this, are immediately caught in the snare of the disputer, no matter how he manages.

Inasmuch as we clearly find and know that the Holy Spirit has hidden this mystery in the Scriptures and that he has not, in any manner, revealed it unto us, neither by prophet, apostle nor by the Son himself; and, inasmuch as it is manifest that it can not be explained by intellect how short or how long; how near or how far he was to the Father; or whether at birth, he became separate from the Father or not; as he is a Spirit; besides, as we learn from history and find in our own time how many piercing eyes are dazzled by this impenetrable brightness; therefore I warn all pious hearts that would walk with a good conscience before their God, not to speculate about this ineffable and indescribable majesty of the immeasurable, eternal Godhead and not to conclude, assert, teach or maintain anything more than the Holy Spirit has revealed and taught, lest they, by their fancies, make themselves a god which is not revealed unto them by the Scriptures. For it is sufficient for all godly souls that they have such faith in God as his word directs and points out, that Christ Jesus is from everlasting; the ineffable, {eternal} Word, wisdom and power of the Father and first-born of every creature, an eternal, true, perfect, divine substance or being in, by and with God and that this same, by the power of the Mighty, eternal Spirit, according to the promise,

became, in due time, a true, passive, mortal man, in Mary, as the Scriptures teach.

For, if we should have needed more knowledge and understanding of this ineffable birth, the Holy Spirit which rightly teaches us unto all godliness, would undoubtedly not have hidden it from us, but would have revealed or explained it to us by some of his holy apostles, or prophets, or by the Son himself. [CHCoG: See our previous insert which shows that the Bible does explain this.]

I hereby pray all pious hearts, for Jesus' sake, to submit their intellect to the word of the Lord, to feel and believe of God as the Scriptures command and teach, not to ascend higher nor descend lower and to walk before God and his church with a patient, humble, contrite heart and he shall find peace in this. Whosoever fears God, let him reflect upon what I write.

When he was again met in his question and unable to reply, he broke forth with a disturbed mind, as it appeared and said, "Do you also believe that Christ was nourished by Mary?" Yes, I said, I sincerely believe so. "Fy!" he said then, "what an impure Christ; for if he was nourished by her, then he must also have become impure." He did not know, as I thought, what to say for surprise.

Dear Micron, I said, control your heart and tongue. We speak of his origin and not of his nourishment. And if nourishment could make him impure, which is contrary to Christ's own word, Mat. 15:11; Mark 7:15, how much more the substance taken from such body of which the fruit should have come, as you say and teach that Mary was born of the impure, sinful seed of Adam, of which you say the flesh or humanity of Christ came; this you admitted yourself; nor could you produce a single Scripture by which you could prove her spotlessness, as I mentioned sufficiently plain in the narration of the first discussion.

Behold, honorable reader, here you have the principal foundation of that which Micron and Herman have suppressed in

their narration. It is easy to guess for what purpose and with what intention they have done so.

Inasmuch as it did not happen otherwise than we have here told you, and as it is well known to the all-seeing God, to Micron and Herman, as also to their own witnesses and all of us who were present, that he was quite outdone in the argumentation in regard to the question under discussion and on which their whole foundation rests, whereby the cause was already lost, had he not again admitted it, as also, that there were two sons in Christ and that the crucified one was not God's Son, whereby he had already forsaken the Son of God; and as he could not prove by the Scriptures the spotlessness of the flesh of Christ, according to his view of the matter; nor that there were two persons in the one Christ, as he professes to believe, nor did he know how he could show the fatherless Christ (as he makes him) to be the Son of God; and as he could not reply a single word to all the plain Scriptures which I produced to prove that the visible, palpable, speaking and crucified Christ Jesus was God's own Son; and, lastly, as he was so inextricably caught in his unscriptural, strange question; and as he is silent on all these, not even touching them and yet calls upon the name and judgment of the Lord and upon my own conscience, that he has faithfully narrated the matter in discussion; therefore I will leave it to the judgment of all reasonable, impartial readers whether he has written as a true writer or as a false one; whether he gained the discussion or lost it; whether he has done justice to truth and to us, or whether he has done wrong; whether he sought the honor and glory of God, or his own honor and fame; and also, whether he should be deemed a pious, praiseworthy, honorable, unblamable, true teacher, or an impious, unfaithful, ungodly, blamable and lying deceiver and calumniator; as he wrote through envious partiality and carnality, without truth and yet, to affirm his falsehood, so highly seals it, alas! as was heard.

When I had answered his last question, they left me and went to the front part of the building. What was said there I can not say

to a certainty; for I was not there myself. But I was told by the brethren that he was still arguing there, notwithstanding the weapons were knocked out of his hands by force of the Scriptures. Also some of their members about the doors next the street were too noisy in their talk. For which reason some of the brethren said they would better go and asked them to help us all out of the gates. Of which he so unworthily has made us *thrust out*, that he might by this make a greater stench and hatred for the pious and true and make them a bad name.

Justly has the Holy Spirit likened this generation unto the fearful apocalyptic locusts whose shapes were like unto horses prepared unto battle, who have crowns on their heads, like gold; which however are not gold; of which Micron and Herman have placed one on each others head by their writings; their teeth are as the teeth of lions and they have tails like unto scorpions and there are stings in their tails, Rev. 9. Consider what the Holy Spirit means, as also that the serpent should bruise the heel of the seed of woman, Gen. 3:15. I think they have not stung a little by this writing of theirs. The Lord forgive them and grant that they may yet sometime find his merciful grace, if possible.

Had they now been people of contrite hearts, as they should reasonably be expected to be, insignificant in their own sight, born of truth and gifted with the power of the word, they would have thought: What is the use to write [of this]. Our cause is lost. And if we now defame them we do so out of partiality and not with truthfulness; for it is manifest that they do not hate us, because they have shown us such faithfulness and love in our time of need. But, alas, there was not so much prudence, honorableness, reasonableness, reflection and love found with them.

As we have truthfully and plainly shown all that which Micron has artfully suppressed in his narration, to the dishonor of God and of his holy church, as was heard, thus we shall now, by the grace of God, briefly show to the reader how far we differ with them in

regard to this matter, that, by this, truth may be the more clearly distinguished from falsehood and light from darkness.

THIRTY-ONE ARTICLES AND DIFFERENCES

PRESENTED TO THE READER, TO SHOW THAT
MICRON SAYS THIS WITHOUT THE SCRIPTURES, AND
WE SAY THAT ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE.

First. Micron and Herman have clearly and publicly confessed before us all, “That Christ Jesus was so born of the Father, from everlasting, that he was separated from the Father and seated separate from him, from eternity,” Mark that this being *seated* separate from the Father is without the Scriptures.

We confess and that according to the Scriptures, that Christ Jesus was from eternity the Father’s wisdom, Prov. 8:12. His {eternal} Word, John 1:1, by which all things are created, Gen. 1:1; Psa. 23:6; John 1:3; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; that his goings forth were from the beginning and from the days of eternity, Micah 5:2; that he was before Abraham was born, John 8:58; that he was before John the Baptist and came after him, John 1:3; the first and last, Rev. 1:8; 2:8; the first-born of every creature, Col. 1:15. But of such a birth which implies a separate seat, from everlasting, as Micron and Herman confessed before us, we do not read in the Scriptures. Consider whether this our confession is not in accordance with the Scriptures.

Secondly. The doctrine and belief of our opponents is, “That this separate Son of God, in due time, became a real son, body and soul, of the flesh and blood of Mary.” Mark, *two* Sons and a *divided* Christ.

Our doctrine and belief is that this same Word, Wisdom, or first-born, as we have confessed, in due time descended from heaven and that he became a true, passive, mortal man, by the power of the Most High and his Holy Spirit; not *of* Mary, but *in* Mary, above all human comprehension, as John says, “The word was made flesh.” Observe if this our confession is not in accordance with the Scriptures.

Thirdly. Micron and Herman frequently confessed before us all, “That there were two Sons in Christ; the one, the eternal Son of God, the other the temporal son of Mary.” Mark, again, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ. We confessed, as said before, that he who was the Word, Wisdom and first-born from everlasting, became the son of man in due time, an only, undivided Son, whose Father was God from everlasting and whose mother was Mary temporally, Luke 1:31; Mat. 1; John 1:49. Observe if this our confession is not according to the Scriptures.

Fourthly. Micron and Herman frequently, have plainly confessed before us all and do so in their narration many times, that the son of man had no father; sometimes they say no near father, which is the same as no father. Mark, how they blaspheme both the Father and his Son, Christ.

We confess with the angel Gabriel, Luke 1:28; with the heavenly Father, Mat. 4:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:20; with Christ himself, John 3:16; 5:22; 6:69; 7:28; 8:23; with all the apostles, Mat. 14:33; with Peter, Mat. 16:16; with John the baptist, with Nathaniel, John 1:49; with Martha, John 11:27; and with all the Scriptures, that God is his Father, John 1:14; 9:38. Observe whether this confession is not right according to the Scriptures.

Fifthly. Micron and Herman have frequently confessed before us all and yet do so in their narration, “That the crucified Jesus, who died for us, was not the Son of God and is one with the other.” Observe if this is not forsaking the Lord who has purchased them, as Peter says. We confess according to the Scriptures that the crucified Christ Jesus is God’s first and only

begotten, own true Son, whom he has not spared, for our sake, Rom. 8:3;2; but sent him to be the propitiation for our sins, by his paternal, divine love, 1 John 4:10, by whose blood we are cleansed and bought, 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; who also, in his last extremity confessed God to be his Father, crying, “Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit,” Luke 23:46. Mark whether our confession is not right according to the Scriptures.

Sixthly. Micron makes use of a parable that as body and soul are an undivided man, thus the Son of God and the son of Mary are an undivided person. Mark, in the third place, *two* Sons and a *divided* Christ.

We call one what the Holy Scriptures and all the world call one, that which is one; and that which they call two, are two. If there are two sons in Christ which generated at different times, the one from eternity, the other in due time, of different persons, namely, of God and of Mary, in different forms, the one invisible and impassive and the other visible and passive, as is the doctrine of our opponents, then there must also be two persons in him; or else the Word was no real Son of God, or the son of Mary no real son of man, or else the one must be taken away by the other and absorbed by this. Of this, we can not, by the grace of God, be convinced by human reasoning, without the Scriptures.

Nor is such a parable of body and soul, in regard to this matter, known to the Scriptures; nor such a Savior and Christ, who was changed from one Son into two sons, from one person into two persons, from earthly into heavenly, from holy into sinful, from good into evil, from pure into impure, from blessed into cursed and who was changed from man into Jesus Christ. [CHCoG: Note that Menno does not support his objection here with even a single scripture, and it is Menno who insists there are two sons here, which is the opposite to what Micron has said.]

Seventhly. The foundation and doctrine of our opponents is, “That as the man Christ was born of Mary, he was, therefore, also

of her flesh and seed;” and refer to Mat. 1:16. Mark, fourthly, *two* Sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say Obed is also born of Ruth and Solomon of Bathsheba; nevertheless Boaz and David were their fathers, who begat Obed with Ruth and Solomon with Bathsheba, thus, also, the man Christ was born of Mary; yet, God the heavenly Father, was his Father, Mat. 1:20; Gen. 17:6; 19:32; 35:11; Wis. 7:2; Rom. 9:6; Heb. 11:11. Observe whether I do not rightly teach you according to the Scriptures. [CHCoG: Indeed, the fathers are a vital part of the begetting, but so are the mothers. Otherwise, it would not have mattered that Ishmael was born from Hagar and Issac from Sarah, for both had the same father. And so we see that it is important, for it is recorded in Scripture, that Jehovah God was Jesus’s father, and Mary was his mother, making Jesus BOTH the son of god and the son of mankind. — And yet there is one son, not two.]

Eighthly. —There is no entry here.

Ninthly. The foundation and doctrine of our opponents is, “That the man Christ is of the natural seed of David,” because the Scriptures say, “Of the fruit of your body will I set upon your throne,” Psa. 132:11; 89:4. Mark, fifthly, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say, according to the foundation and doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, that he is David’s supernatural, promised and given son; for if he were David’s natural son, as our opponents have it, then he must have been of Joseph’s natural seed (for the evangelists count to Joseph) and the Word did not become flesh. Observe whether we do not teach according to the Scriptures. [CHCoG: We have dealt with this several times now. Mary is herself a descendent of David, and through her contribution to Christ’s DNA, he is indeed also a true descendent of David; while at the same time, through Jehovah’s contribution to Jesus’s DNA, he is also a true son of God. This contrasts with Menno’s position, which only considers the Father’s contribution, and Micron’s, which often only considers Mary’s contribution.]

Tenthly. Again, the foundation and doctrine of our opponents is, “That the man Christ was of David’s seed and refer to Rom. 1:3; 9:5.” Mark, sixthly, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say that the foundation and doctrine of the Holy Scriptures are that the same who was God’s Mighty, {eternal} Word, from eternity, in due time, according to the promise, became man by his Almighty power, in the virgin Mary, who was promised to a man of the generation of David, called Joseph, to which Joseph, the evangelists count, Mat. 1:16; Luke 3:23; Mat. 1:18; John 1:14 and was thus, in due time, born according to the flesh of the same generation of which he was incarnated, as the Lord had promised unto David. And thus Christ is born of the seed of David, that is, of the generation of David; but did not become flesh of the seed of David, as our opponents claim, by garbling this Scripture. Observe whether we do not teach rightly according to the Scriptures. [CHCoG: Again, Jesus became of the seed of David through Mary, not through her future husband Joseph, as the Matthew genealogy shows.]

Eleventhly. The foundation and doctrine of our opponents is, “That the man Christ is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone and that our flesh is seated at the right hand of the Father.” This he advocates in his book on “The Doctrine of the Church of God.” Mark, seventhly, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say that the foundation and doctrine of the Holy Scriptures are, That the regenerated church of Christ is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, as Adam testifies of his Eve that she was flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, Gen. 2:23, but Eve was not thus of Adam. Thus Christ also testifies of his church which he has begotten by virtue of his holy word in the sprinkling of his most holy blood, by faith, that she is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; but the church can not thus testify of Christ, Eph. 5:30. See if we do not rightly teach you according to the Scriptures. [CHCoG: Menno says that Eve is “not thus of Adam.” And yet Adam says the opposite, and the account God gives in the Bible is

consistent with Adam, not Menno, as Eve was built from a rib taken from Adam's body. What more could be done to make her "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone"? But Micron has it backwards: We are flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of Christ's bone. And just as Christ was transformed when he was resurrected into a new spiritual body, we will also be transformed into new spiritual bodies like his body now is. 1 Cor. 15:44, Phil. 3:20 to 4:1.]

Twelfthly. The foundation and doctrine of our opponents is, "That the man Christ and we, are of one Adam and are thus brethren by virtue of the flesh." The foundation of this assertion is that Paul says, "He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified, are all of one," that is, of "one Adam," they say. Mark, in the eighth place, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say that the foundation and doctrine of the Holy Scriptures are that Christ and his regenerated church are of one God, John 1:12, that is, those who hear and obey his word, Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21 and therefore he calls them his brethren and says, "I will declare your name unto my brethren;" for as he is God's first-born Son, Heb. 1:6, thus he is also the first-born of the brethren, Rom. 8:9. If he were our brother in Adam, as is the doctrine of our opponents, then he must, also, have been Adam's first-begotten son, as he is the first-begotten of the brethren, as was heard. Then, also, all the ungodly of the whole world, who have the devil as their father, John 8:44, must be Christ's brothers and sisters, as well as the regenerated who have God as their Father. See if we do not teach you rightly according to the Scriptures. [CHCoG: As Christ received his male DNA directly from his Father, and not from Adam, Christ is therefore a new Adam, and it is this second Adam that is our spiritual brother. 1 Cor 15:44-57.]

Thirteenthly. The foundation and doctrine of our opponents is, "That Christ has partaken of the flesh and blood of his children; which can not be explained or understood otherwise than that he

has received his flesh and blood from the children.” Mark, in the ninth place, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say that they by this deny the word of the Lord and the ordinance of creation. For the Scriptures only say that he partook of flesh and blood. If they should say that the children are spiritual children (as is also the case, because Christ had no carnal children) and, if then the brethren should yet be carnal brethren, then they first break the Scripture, in explaining the one word, which is so closely connected to the other, as being understood in a spiritual and the other in a carnal sense. And, secondly, they assert an inconsistency. Consider whether they teach according to the Scriptures.

Fourteenthly. Micron frequently writes that Christ has taken unto himself the seed of Abraham, and refers to Heb. 2:16. In the tenth place, mark, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say, and that truthfully, that Micron lamentably adulterates the text; for Paul does not say, *has taken*, but he says, *takes* unto himself the seed of Abraham, that is, the children and descendants of Abraham. Mark how he deals with the Scriptures.

Fifteen to Seventeen are missing. * * * *

Eighteenthly. Micron confessed before us all, “That although Mary was of the impure, sinful flesh of Adam, she was nevertheless pure and holy, because the angel said unto her, ‘Blessed are you among women,’” Luke 1:28. See whether such doctrine can stand the test of the Scriptures.

We confess that according to the Scriptures, that as Mary was of the sinful seed of Adam, as we are, she, therefore, was concluded under sin, the same as we; for the Scriptures except none of Adam’s seed, Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:3. For if she would have been pure on account of such [a saying], as Micron says, Then God might have cleansed the whole world by such a word; and it would have been vain to have sent his

beloved Son into this wicked world, in such a humble form. Oh no. It required another who must requite the debt, fulfill the law and be the pleasing sin-offering for Mary, no less than for us, if we were to be saved. Observe and see if we do not rightly teach you in accordance with the Scriptures.

Nineteenth is missing. * * * *

Twentieth. Now Micron writes, “That we should free from sin whatever the Scripture frees from this; and that man should not declare common or unholy that which God testifies to be holy,” and refers to Acts 10:15.

We confess and say and that in accordance with the Lord’s word, that the Scripture frees none from sin but him that is free indeed, namely, Christ Jesus, Isa. 53:12; 2 Cor. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5; whereby it is plainly shown that he is not of Mary’s flesh, which was also concluded under sin; but that the Father’s most glorious word, which did not know sin, became flesh, John 1:14. For he is holy and that is truth and he shall always remain holy. Therefore, in my opinion, it is blasphemy against the most holy flesh of Christ, which is the true food for our souls, the living bread, given in such great love, to the reconciliation of the sins of all the world, thus to compare it to the flesh of irrational animals which were forbidden as food under the law and were, therefore, deemed unclean; and which are now again, under the gospel allowed as clean and free, as was once heard. See if we do not teach in accordance with Scripture, John 6:51; Lev. 11:4; Deut. 14:7; Rom. 14:20; Mat. 15:11; Mark 7:15; Acts 10:15; Tit. 1:15.

Twenty-first. The doctrine of our opponents is, “That the Son of God has fulfilled the law in our flesh.” In the fourteenth place, mark, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say that it is the doctrine of the Holy Scripture that none born of the accursed and sinful flesh of Adam could fulfill the law, which was spiritual; for the seed of Adam was too much corrupted

and was also, by the righteous judgment of God, subject to the curse, Deut. 27:26. Inasmuch, then, as it has become so impotent and weak in Adam and as the law accused us before God, therefore he, in his great love, took pity upon Adam and all his seed and did not spare his own Son, but he sent him in the form of sinful flesh, Rom. 8:3, 32, who fulfilled the law for us, Mat. 5:17; Eph. 2:13, who innocently died for us guilty sinners that through him we might live, 1 Pet. 2:24; and thus he became our holy, innocent and spotless High Priest, Mediator, Advocate and Reconciler, with God his Father, Heb. 5:1; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:14; 10:12; 13:12; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 1:2. And thus the glory is only to God our Almighty Father, by his blessed Word or Son, as the Scriptures teach; and not by the accursed, sinful flesh of Adam, as our opponents teach, Rom 7:14. Observe whether we do not teach you in accordance with the Scriptures. [CHCoG: As noted earlier, Christ's body grew from male DNA contributed from Jehovah and 'female' DNA contributed through Mary. Christ demonstrated that it was possible to live a sinless life, even though he was in a body that was partially derived from Adam. In this way, he confirmed the righteousness of God's judgement against us for our sins: we too could have lived sinless lives, but instead every one of us chose to sin, and thus we truly deserve the death penalty. God's mercy is truly immense.]

Twenty-second. The distinct doctrine of our opponents is, "That the man Christ who died for us was not of heaven, but of earth." In the fifteenth place, mark, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

Our foundation and doctrine is, according to the Scriptures, that he was of heaven and not of earth, as he himself says, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven;" "and the bread that I will give is my flesh," John 6:51. Again in verse 62, "What then if you should see the son of man (mark he says, the *son of man*, who Micron says was of earth) ascend up where he was before?" Again, "I am from above; you are of this world," John 8:23. Again, "He that comes from above is above all," John 3:31.

Christ says, “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father,” John 16:28. Paul also says, “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven,” 1 Cor. 15:47 and many other similar Scriptures. By the grace of God, we will, at the proper time plainly show what kind of spirits those are who deny these plain Scriptures and point the poor, ignorant people to a divided, earthly, impure and sinful creature and Christ, and also what abominations they commit by their false doctrine. Observe whether we do not rightly teach in accordance with the Scriptures.

Twenty-third. Micron writes: “They testify sufficiently that the name without truth and works is vain; and that none can be saved by the name unless he has, above all, the reality of the being; for the name comes from the truth.” Mark how he here judges himself.

We say that he is right, that the name without the reality avails nothing; and yet he confesses in different parts of his writings that the man Christ (as he calls him), had no father, still he calls him the Son of God; he calls him of heaven, yet he says that he is of earth; he calls him pure, yet confesses that he is of the impure seed of Adam and says other like things. Whether or not Micron proves by this that he calls vain names and does not speak the truth—for according to his doctrine the Son of God is the son of man and the man Christ is the son of God. I will let himself and all intelligent persons judge according to his own word.

Twenty-fourth. Micron writes: “As, then, the same human nature (he means, the whole man of Mary’s flesh) in which he suffered, was his own flesh and body, and was none other; therefore it can not be concluded from this that God’s Son did not suffer for us.” Mark how, here, the mere name and not the reality, must avail with him, contrary to his own doctrine.

We say that Micron manages it so with his flatterings that they may not be too much alarmed; for at different places he says that Christ, according to his human substance and nature, had no Father

and that he suffered in this same human substance and nature, which had no father; and here he says that this was God's Son and that he suffered for us. What kind of a flatterer and writer Micron is and what one should think of his foundation and doctrine, I will let each one judge for himself, from his own writings. This is not simply truthful declaiming, as he writes. I do not know what greater shame one could think of.

Twenty-fifth. Micron writes that the Scriptures say, "That the Son of God suffered and died for us. This he writes for two particular reasons. First, to prove the inseparable union of both the divine and human natures in one person: Christ. Secondly, to show that Christ's suffering, in his body and flesh, could not conduce to man's salvation otherwise than by such inseparable union of both the divine and human natures in one person, Jesus Christ. In the seventeenth place, mark, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say Micron generally sings the same tune about the union of both natures all through his appendix, of which not a single word can be found in all the Scriptures. We ask nothing more than that he shall show us where the Scripture says, "This is the divine nature is Christ," or, "that is the human nature in Christ," although I confess both natures to be in Christ; but not as the doctrine and teaching of our opponents have it. Or else, that he show us where the Scriptures say this is the union of the two natures in one person, as he generally writes; or that he show us where the perfect Son of God is called only of divine nature, or the perfect man, body and soul, only of human nature, as he would make the reader believe, that we may reflect upon it. If it is no Scripture, it is anathema, Gal. 1:8 and if it is Scripture, let it be shown to us and we will yield. O, God! What abominable deceit they falsely teach the poor, ignorant people under semblance of the Scriptures!

I would further say that if it were such inseparable union and that the same made his suffering have the power unto salvation, as he says, then it is manifest that also the divine nature suffered. For

that which is inseparable cannot be separated and in other places he says that the divine nature did not suffer; whereby he makes the natures separable. Thus he contradicts himself and deceit remains deceit however he garbles the Scriptures by his flatterings. See if we do not rightly teach you according to the Scriptures.

Twenty-sixth. Micron writes, “Those speak very unintelligently of this great and holy mystery of our salvation, who say that Mary’s flesh was crucified for us, when the man Christ was born of her, for they do not consider that Christ was not only man, but also God.” Mark, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say that Micron makes his glozings worse and worse, so that it must be apparent that he advocates the cause of anti-christ. I leave it to the judgment of all the world if the man Christ (mark what he means by saying the man Christ) were of the seed of Mary, born of her, as the wine is of the vine and the blossom and fruit are of the tree, if he was not, then, Mary’s flesh and blood who was crucified for us? Although one could not say when Absalom hung upon the tree, there hangs David, as he writes, yet one could have truthfully said, There hangs David’s flesh and blood; neither do we say that Mary was crucified, but Mary’s flesh and blood (mind, I speak this in the manner of Micron) was crucified; that is, if he were born of the flesh and blood of Mary; or else the whole Scriptures must be wrong, which say that we are the seed, children, flesh and blood of Adam, on account of our carnal birth. Mark whether we do not rightly teach you in accordance with the Scriptures.

Twenty-seventh. Micron says, “That David confessed Christ to be his Lord according to his divinity and to be his son according to his humanity,” Ps.110:1; Mat. 22:42. Mark again, *two* sons and a *divided* Christ.

We say that the prophets call him, without any distinction as to his divinity or humanity, our “Immanuel,” [God is with us] Isa. 7:14; Mat. 1:23, “The mighty God” and “everlasting Father,” Isa.

9:6, “Jehovah is Our Righteousness,” Jer. 23:6.* Paul calls him our Lord, 1 Cor. 8:6; 12:3. Thomas called him, “my Lord and my God,” John 20:28. Christ says, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,” Mat. 28:18. Paul says, “That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,” Phil. 2:10, 11. As also, that all things are put under his feet; and that the Father gave him to be the head over all things to the church; “and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come,” Eph. 1:21; that he is the Lord both of the dead and living; and if he is thus not also David’s Immanuel, the Powerful, God, Father, Jehovah, Lord, Head and Judge, all those may reflect upon in the fear of the Lord, who rightly confess the Lord and his word. Consider whether we do not rightly teach you according to the Scriptures. [CHCoG: Again it seems that Menno confuses Christ and His Father. Though Christ is given the use of these titles and roles by Jehovah, his Father, and even the use of his Father’s Name on special occasions, Christ always remains subservient to his Father. 1 Cor 15:20-28.]

Twenty-eighth. Micron writes, “If the flesh of Christ were of the substance of the heavenly Father, as Menno dreams, then the heavenly Father must also have flesh and blood; or else Christ could have no flesh and blood; but would only be a Spirit, as God is a Spirit.” Behold what blind reason and no faith.

We testify and confess before God and all our readers and that in accordance with the word of the Lord, that the eternal, ineffable word is of the eternal, ineffable substance of the Father and must be, if it be God. For what can be God, with God and in God which is not of his substance or being? And, also, that this same word

* [CHCoG: Menno adds Jer 33:16 as well, but this verse links the phrase to Jerusalem, not to Christ, so I have removed it.]

came down in due time and that it became truly man in Mary, by the Almighty power of God, John 1:14. Behold, thus the Holy Scriptures teach and thus we believe, notwithstanding Micron dares call it “dreaming.”

The holy angel Gabriel and the dear evangelist, together with John the Baptist, Peter and all the apostles, yes, Christ himself certainly knew as well as Micron and the learned do, that God the Father is a Spirit and that he is not of flesh and blood; yet they confessed before all the world that the visible, palpable, eating, drinking, speaking, sleeping, waking, walking, teaching, sighing, weeping, dying and resurrecting Christ Jesus was the invisible, eternal and living Son of God, as may be plainly seen by the general tenor of the whole New Testament. O God, what abominable snares [they set] to catch the poor souls and to drag them to the pit of destruction. [CHCoG: Though it is true that Christ was originally created from the same “eternal, ineffable substance of the Father” this does not mean that Christ himself has always existed. Indeed, the Bible teaches that only Christ’s Father has always existed, and that Christ was begotten by Him twice: the first time as a God being with a spirit body, and the second time with a physical body through Mary, and in the end resurrected with a new spirit body. We are less than Christ: first we are begotten with a physical body, but in the resurrection God will give us spirit bodies.]

Twenty-ninth. The foundation and doctrine of our opponents is, “That the word was God from the beginning and could therefore not suffer.” They refer to John 1:1. “It was flesh and could, therefore, not become flesh.” Mark, it is reason and not faith.

We say and confess by the strength of the Scriptures that this same Word, which was in the beginning with God and was God, in due time became man and dwelt among us, John 1:14. For “God so loved the world,” says Christ himself, “that he gave his only begotten Son.” He did not spare his own Son, says Paul, but

delivered him up for us all, Rom. 8:32; and John says, "He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John 4:10.

All those who refute this, deny first, the eternal love of God who so loved us that he gave his only begotten Son, John 3:16; 1 John 4:10.

Secondly, they deny the promise of truth whereby God promised that the Messiah should be our Immanuel, Isa. 7:4, our God, Isa. 40:10 and [says] Jehovah is Our Righteousness, Jer. 23:6.

Thirdly, they deny the Almighty power of God, by which he can do whatsoever he wills. They make Gabriel a false messenger, as he said that nothing was impossible with God, Luke 1:37.

Fourthly, they are in opposition to all the Scriptures which testify, without any separation, that Christ Jesus is the own, only and first-begotten Son of God, John 1:14; 3:16; 1 John 4:9; Heb. 1:5; Rom. 8:32.

Fifthly, they make the Father a liar; for they do not believe the testimony which he has given of his Son, 1 John 5:10.

Sixthly, they have neither the Father nor the Son; for they deny the Son, 1 John 2:22.

Seventhly, they remain under the wrath of God; for they do not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, John 3:36.

Eighthly, they attach to Christ all the gross inconsistencies which neither Micron nor any other man can explain away, as may be clearly seen by his writings, if one has spiritual eyes. Consider whether we do not rightly teach you in accordance with the Scriptures. * * *

Thirtieth. Micron and Herman say," That if the Word became flesh and did not take on himself the flesh of Mary, there must have been a new creation in Mary. Mark how diametrically they oppose the foundation of truth.

We say (note it) that if all miracles and powers of God, by which many things were changed into different beings or forms from what they were before, were to be called a new creation, then

we would find many such new creations in the Scriptures, as when water was changed into wine, John 2:9, [or when] it was turned into blood, Exo. 7:20. Lot's wife was changed into a pillar of salt, Gen. 19:26. All the dust of Egypt was changed into lice, Exo. 8:17; and many other miracles. The omnipotence of God was by this acknowledged; yet they were not called new creations in the Scriptures.

But we will let the polite, impartial reader judge according to the Scriptures, if there would not have taken place a new creation in the case of Christ being born of Mary, as was in the beginning the case with Eve being made of Adam's rib, if our opponent's foundation were true. Consider whether we do not rightly teach in accordance with the Scriptures.

Thirty-first. Micron writes "That we place in the stead of the true Christ, a new, unknown Christ whom neither the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, nor the many thousands of martyrs, &c., ever confessed."

We say that Micron, as also all the false prophets, by this lamentably slander the pious patriarchs, prophets, apostles and witnesses of Christ; and that he by this denies their sure, true testimony, left in the Holy Scriptures, concerning Christ Jesus, the Son of God. For it is manifest that the prophets confessed him to be their Immanuel; and that he was to be the son of a virgin, who was to [be] conceived [through] the Holy Spirit, Isa. 7:14, for God himself was to be his Father, Luke 1:31-35. They confess him to be their mighty God and everlasting Father, Isa. 9:6, their [representative of] Jehovah who would make them and us righteous, Jer. 23:6, that his goings forth were from everlasting, who was to be Lord and Prince of Israel; that he was the wisdom of God and was to show himself on earth and dwell among men. David confessed him to be his Lord, Psalms 110:2, he was to be the Lord, strong and mighty and to be the Lord Sabaoth, Psalms 24:8,*

* [CHCoG: Here Menno again confuses Christ with his Father. Psalm 24:8 does not say *Lord Sabaoth*, which is the Greek version of Jehovah of

which no man of Adam could be. Also, all the holy apostles, Mat. 14:33, the angel of God, Luke 1:28, the Father, Mat. 3:17; 17:16; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35 and Christ himself, John 9:35, John the Baptist, John 1:34; 3:28, Nathaniel, John 1:49 and Martha, John 11:27, confessed him to be the true Son of the true and living God; yes, to be his only and first-born, inseparable Son, all through the New Testament. I say *inseparable* because this son of man was God's Son and this Son of God was the son of man, as Peter plainly confessed, upon which salvation was promised to him by Christ; and that the church would be built [upon Him (Christ)] and that flesh and blood had not revealed this to him, but our Father who is in heaven, Mat. 16:17.

And now these thoughtless people come and divide Christ without Scripture for it: He must not be the Son of God on account of the flesh; but is only called so for the sake of their garbled union. They rob us of both Father and Son, make false and untrue all the Scriptures, together with all the apostles and prophets, yes, even the Father and his Son, and use the innocent apostles, patriarchs and prophets, with whom we agree in all particulars, as a mere cover for their falsehood. They point us from the firm foundation of truth to the quick-sands of criticism, garbled Scriptures and glossing; build their church upon a man and creature of the impure, sinful seed and flesh of Adam, without a father. And although they, poor children, are quite earthly and carnal, as may be seen by their writings and works, yet they boast that they rightly teach Christ; which none can do but by the revelation of the Father through his Holy Spirit, as Christ himself says, "No man knows the Son but the Father; nor does any man know the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him," Mat. 11:27.

Hosts. Instead it says that the King of Glory is "Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle." Rom 9:29 tell us that Lord Sabaoth left us a seed, and that seed is of course His own son Christ.]

Observe whether we teach a Christ to whom the prophets and apostles have not pointed us, as these unfaithful people falsely accuse us of [doing] before all the world.

Oh! That they meant [to obey] God! That they sought the glory of God and the salvation of their neighbors and not their own vain honor and glory! How gladly would they then confess that we had the pure, saving truth and they the impure, accursed falsehood. But as it is, it is hid from them by their earthly, carnal vision.

Behold, honorable reader, here you have distinctly presented to view the principal differences between us and our opponents concerning this article. And I will now faithfully show you, for further explanation, their unscriptural confessions, garblings and adulterations of the Scriptures, together with their principal glozings of which they make use without the Scriptures, or with a false and garbled understanding of them, whereby they quite obscure the brightness of Jesus Christ the Son of God, break the foundation of truth, ensnare the simple reader, deprive him of the Father and Son, and thus detain him in the curse, sin and death, as has been heard.

FORTY-FIVE UNSCRIPTURAL CONFESSIONS, EXPLANATIONS, FALSE GLOZINGS, ADULTERATED AND GARBLED SCRIPTURES, PRESENTED TO THE READER FOR THE EXPLANATION OF THE MATTER.

First. We do not read in the Scriptures that Mary, who was a natural daughter of the impure and sinful flesh of Adam, was

without sin and pure, as Micron confessed before us all at the discussion, or:

Secondly. That such pure, innocent, spotless and blessed fruit, as was Christ Jesus, was born of such impure, sinful flesh, guilty of death, as was the flesh of Mary, since she was a daughter of the impure seed of Adam as Micron says, or:

Thirdly. That Adam had two seeds, of which the one was holy and pure, as was Christ and the other sinful and impure, as we are; as must be concluded from the doctrine of Micron, or:

Fourthly. That Christ was born of the Father, from eternity, that he was *seated* separate from the Father and outside of the Father, *from eternity*, as Micron and Herman confessed before us all, or:

Fifth to Tenth are missing. * * * *

Eleventhly. That the Word, or the eternal Son of God, without mother (I write it according to their foundation), thus united himself with a son of man, without father; that he accepted, or took on the same, that he dwelt in this and thus became one person and son, as is the foundation and doctrine of our opponents, or:

Twelfthly. That there were two sons in Christ, as was heard, of which one was visible, passive and earthly—the other invisible, impassive and heavenly, as is the foundation and doctrine of our opponents, or:

Thirteenthly. That the divine nature thus united itself with the human nature (whereby he means, two perfect sons) into one person, which he so often repeats, or:

Fourteenthly. That such a union of God's Son and Mary's son, as Micron says, should be compared to the union of the body and soul of man, or:

Fifteenthly. That such a divided, double, earthly and heavenly, righteous and unrighteous, pure and impure Christ was promised

by the prophets and preached by the apostles, as Micron says, without any truth, or:

Sixteenthly. That Christ was God and man in such a sense as Micron teaches, or:

Seventeen is missing. * * * *

Eighteenthly. That the Son of God is called the son of man and the son of man is called the Son of God, by reason of such union, as our opponents assert, without any Scripture, or:

Nineteen is missing. * * * *

Twentieth. That the flesh of Christ was sinful and guilty of death, as John A'Lasco (with whom Micron agrees) blasphemously teaches, or:

Twenty-first. That the word, which from the beginning was God, thus took its tabernacle, tent, or dwelling in our flesh, as John A'Lasco philosophizes, or:

Twenty-second. That the Son of God thus covered his divinity with humanity, so long as he was upon earth, as John A'Lasco writes, or:

Twenty-third. That the one who had transgressed also had to requite it in his nature, as is the foundation of our opponents, or:

Twenty-fourth. That the Son of God fulfilled the law and reconciled the Father in our flesh, as is the foundation of our opponents, or:

Twenty-fifth. That we could not have partaken unto salvation, of his heavenly and spiritual attributes, such as his life, holiness, righteousness, merits, &c., if Christ had not had our human nature, form and substance, as Micron writes, or:

Twenty-sixth. That the son of man, who is confessed to be the Son of God by Peter, by John the Baptist, by the angel and by all the Scriptures, said in any part of Scripture: No, I am not the Son

of God, but he that dwells in me, whom you do not see, is the Son of God and for his sake I am called his Son, as is the doctrine of our opponents, or:

Twenty-seventh. That the angel Gabriel told Mary that such a divided son would be conceived in her, Luke 2:28, as Micron garbles it, or:

Twenty-eighth. That Christ Jesus was not God's Son according to his most holy humanity, as well as according to his eternal divinity, as our opponents teach, or:

Twenty-ninth. That the man Christ was of the earth and was called heavenly only on account of some honorable attributes as Micron writes, or:

Thirtieth. That the flesh and blood of the seed of Adam, as our opponents say that the flesh of Christ is the true bread of life, on account of some divine attributes as they garble the word of Christ, John 6:51, or:

Thirty-first. That Abraham and Isaac were called the *autores* or origin, in the Scriptures, that it should not be attributed to strange men, as Micron says, without the Scriptures, or:

Thirty-second. That Christ took on him our sinful form as John A'Lasco says, Phil. 2:7, or:

Thirty-third. That Christ took on him the seed of Abraham, as Micron garbles the text of Heb. 2:16, or:

Thirty-fourth. That Christ partook of the flesh and blood of the children by generation, as our opponents garble or falsely explain the text, Heb. 2:14, or:

Thirty-fifth. That God was manifested in our flesh, as our opponents explain the Scripture of Paul, 2 Tim. 3:5, or:

Thirty-sixth. That Christ dwelt in our flesh by generation, as our opponents explain, 1 John 2:4, or:

Thirty-seventh. That we are to compare to purity the most holy flesh of Christ with the cleanness of the animals which were declared clean, as Micron compared Acts 10:15, or:

Thirty-eighth. That the most holy flesh of Christ Jesus was flesh of our impure, sinful flesh; as our opponents make the poor people believe, or:

Thirty-ninth. That Christ would be the Immanuel in our flesh as our opponents claim, or:

Fortieth. That Christ and we are brethren on account of the flesh, as Micron teaches the unrepentant, ignorant world, without the truth, or:

Forty-first. That the children of the devil, such as liars, haters, murderers, adulterers of the Scriptures, blasphemers, &c., are Christ's brothers and sisters as well as the children of God, as we must conclude from the teachings of our opponents, or:

Forty-second. That the Son of God united himself with human nature, that is, with a man of the flesh of Mary and that he ascended with such flesh, as Micron unscripturally garbles Eph. 4:10, or:

Forty-third. That our flesh is seated at the right hand of the Father, as is the doctrine of our opponents, or:

Forty-fourth. That Christ is our Head and we are his body, members and brethren, on account of the flesh, as we must understand it from the teachings and foundation of our opponents, or:

Forty-fifth. That a man of the impure, sinful seed of Adam is our Advocate, Mediator, Reconciler and High Priest with God the Father; and, that with him we should worship, honor and serve him as the true and living God, as our opponents teach.

CONCLUSION.

Here observe, kind reader, that the whole foundation and belief of our opponents concerning this article is built upon mere carnal

wisdom, philosophy, interpretation, glozings, adulteration and garbled Scriptures whereby they make it appear as if their anti-christian doctrine was the doctrine of the Son of God and whereby they cause themselves to be called the true teachers and us the deceivers by the world who, alas, are little versed in divine matters. But how they will stand at the coming of Christ, before his impartial judgment seat, I fear most of them will find out too late.

I will now point out to you, by the grace of the Lord, the inconsistencies that must follow from their doctrine and faith, in such clearness that you can see that their doctrine is not from the Fountain of Eternal Wisdom, as Micron dares boast, without any truth, but that it is exhaled from the abyss by the locusts of Apollyon. Take heed.

FOURTEEN INCONSISTENCIES, WHICH MUST RESULT AND FOLLOW FROM THE FOUNDATION AND DOCTRINE OF OUR OPPONENTS.

FIRST, it follows incontrovertibly from their doctrine and faith that there are two sons in Christ, of which one was the impassive, eternal Son of God without mother and the other the son of Mary or the son of man without father. And whether or not such doctrine and faith is not an inconsistency, I will leave you to judge according to the Scriptures.

Secondly, it follows incontrovertibly that there are two persons in Christ; for where there are two actual sons there must be two persons. Or else the one must have taken unto him the other and by the fictitious union quite absorbed the other. If this can not be called an inconsistency you may judge according to the Scriptures.

Thirdly, it follows incontrovertibly that the eating, drinking, sighing, weeping, passive, dying and crucified Christ Jesus was not the Son of God, notwithstanding he is confessed by all the Scriptures to be the first and only begotten, own Son of God; for they say that he had no Father. You may judge by the Scriptures whether this may not be called a blasphemous inconsistency and denial of the Son of God.

Fourthly, it follows incontrovertibly that they utter a falsehood as often as they call the man Christ, the Son of God; for how can he be a Son of God according to their doctrine; for they publicly write and verbally confess that he was not of God but of Mary. You may judge according to the Scriptures whether this is not a blasphemous inconsistency, which is not conformable to the true God who deals according to truth; and does not use idle names.

Fifthly, it follows incontrovertibly that it is a divided Christ who became a Savior and Jesus Christ, of God and man, of the heavenly and earthly, of the pure and impure, of the righteous and unrighteous, of the good and evil and of the blessed and accursed, as was once heard above. You may judge by the Scriptures whether this may not, also, rightly be called an inconsistency.

Sixthly, it follows incontrovertibly that the eternal expiatory offering, offered once for all the world, is not the spotless lamb which the Scriptures confess him to be, but an impure, sinful and accursed man of the impure, sinful and accursed flesh and seed of Adam. You may judge by the Scriptures whether this is not an abominable, blasphemous inconsistency.

Seventhly, it incontrovertibly follows that as the holy apostle Thomas confessed the crucified, [resurrected and] visible, [palpable] Christ to be his Lord and God, and, as all Scripture testifies that he is our Reconciler, Mediator, Advocate, High Priest, Savior and Deliverer and if he were a man of Adam's impure seed, as our opponents assert, then it is manifest that an earthly, impure, sinful and accursed creature, of the earthly, impure, sinful and accursed flesh of Adam is our Reconciler, Mediator, Advocate,

High Priest, Savior, Deliverer, Lord and God. You may judge by the Scriptures whether this may not, also, be called a blasphemous inconsistency and anti-christian abomination. [CHCoG: Menno in this yet again, and inconsistently, denies that Christ is indeed truly a son of David. As we have stated before, though Christ has inherited some of Adam's sinful nature through Mary, he **always refused to sin**, thus overcoming it and remaining pure and sinless. In this, he became the example that we are to follow. Heb 4:14-15, John 16:33, Mark 8:34, Rom 12:21, Rev 3:21.]

Eight and Nine are missing. * * * *

Tenthly, it incontrovertibly follows that if the man Christ were of the unclean, sinful flesh of Adam, as is the foundation of our opponents, that one of two things must be true, either that the Scriptures do not rightly teach us, or that all are idolaters who worship, honor, thank and serve such an earthly, sinful and accursed Christ, as our opponents teach and advocate without the Scriptures; for they say, "You shall worship Jehovah your God and serve only him," Deut. 6:13; Mat. 4:10. Through the prophet Isaiah God says, "I am Jehovah, that is My name; and I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to carved images." 42:8. And it is clear that one should not worship our Savior Christ any less than he does the Father himself. You may judge according to the Scriptures whether this is not also an idolatrous inconsistency and an infamous blasphemy.

Eleven is missing. * * * *

Twelfthly, it incontrovertibly follows, if I understand the writing of Micron, that the {eternal} Word became the Spirit of man and that it only took on itself a tabernacle of Mary's flesh. For, as I think, he alleges Peter for such a purpose and says he was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, 1 Pet. 3:18.

If he understands the Spirit of Christ as being the Spirit which he commended to the Father, as also, being the immortal Son of God with which, according to his doctrine, he was united, then Peter did not write enough by merely saying “quickened by the Spirit,” and not, “as also by the immortal Son of God with which he was united.” Mark what I say.

And if he understands it as solely having reference to the Spirit of Christ and not, also, to the immortal Son, as he confesses him to be, then the Son of God must have become, according to his doctrine, a spirit of man; or else I do not know for what purpose he adduces this Scripture. You may judge by it whether this is not an abominable inconsistency and blindfolding of the poor, ignorant world. [CHCoG: How could Christ have been “the immortal Son” and yet have died, thus demonstrating that he was in fact mortal? The Bible teaches that Christ only became immortal **after** His Father resurrected him from the dead. 1 Tim 6:13-17, John 5:26, Rom 6:8-10.]

Thirteenthly, it incontrovertibly follows, if the doctrine of the learned is right, that the Mighty Word, whereby heaven and earth were replenished, must have united itself with such a small body of the flesh of Mary and thus sighed, wept, ate, drank, suffered and died with it and lay dead in the grave; or else it must have merely sheltered in Christ’s Spirit and thus, at death, departed with it and at the resurrection again united with it the second time, Wis. 18:15. You may judge by the Scriptures, whether this may not rightfully be called a wonderful inconsistency.

Fourteenthly, it incontrovertibly follows that if the word or the {eternal} Son of God thus took on him such a man of Mary’s flesh and blood and united himself with it into one person and son, as our opponents pretend by their philosophy, then God the Father was not the true Father of Christ, Mary was not the true mother and Christ was not a true Son; and all the Scriptures are by this denied, which confess Christ to be the first and only begotten, true Son of God, without any distinction between divine or human,

between spirit and flesh, invisible and visible, immortal and mortal, as we have clearly explained above and shall still further explain below, by virtue of the word of the Lord. You may, in the fear of God, judge by the Scriptures whether this can not be rightfully called a blasphemous inconsistency and a direct denial of both Father and Son.

Behold, chosen readers, it is such an unscriptural, divided, unclean, sinful and earthly Savior and Christ which our opponents teach and point to by their anti-christian, covert, garbled, mysterious and obscure reasonings of human wisdom. I place before you, in plain and clear words the mirror of their deceit. If you will, you may clearly see how lamentably you are deceived by them.

Inasmuch, then, as their doctrine and faith is nothing in fact but anti-christian deceit and the temptation of the old serpent, for it is all *taking unto, uniting two into one, divine and human nature, honorable virtues* and similar [things.] Whatever we read or hear from them we find nothing in Scripture; and they make these assertions and adorn them with many broken Scriptures, glozings and false explanations. Therefore I say, first, in Micron's own language, that all they philosophize and teach avails for nothing, since it is not according to Scripture. And secondly, in the language of holy Paul, it is anathema, since it is a strange gospel of which not a single word is taught in the Scriptures, neither by the prophets, nor by Christ, nor by any of his apostles, in such a sense as our opponents teach it. Take heed.

We will now, by the grace of the Lord, present to view, in the first place, the foundation of the confession and doctrine of our opponents, concerning this article, together with its proper contents, fruits, end and promise, and, in the second place, the foundation of our confession together with its proper contents, fruits, end and promise; that you may, by such comparison in black and white, the more readily guard against the deceit of the old

serpent and find the sure and firm foundation of truth and believe and follow it, with a sure conscience and without any fear.

MICRON'S FOUNDATION AND FAITH

CONCERNING CHRIST JESUS, TOGETHER WITH THEIR PROPER CONTENTS, FRUITS, ENDS, AND PROMISE.

HONORABLE reader, take heed. The following is the whole contents, conclusion, sense, explanation, foundation and meaning of the faith and doctrine of our opponents, concerning the incarnation of our Lord, whereby they, by their human wisdom and the cunning of the old serpent, proclaim that all the glorious promises concerning Christ, the Son of God, contained in Moses and the prophets, such as grace, mercy, remission of our sins, peace of conscience, reconciliation and life eternal, are concluded in the unclean, sinful flesh of Adam, which they call clean although they confess that it is of him without any Scripture.

They confess publicly (witness their own confession), that there are two Sons in Christ; of which the one is the Son of God from everlasting, without mother and impassive; and the other is the son of Mary, or the son of man, without father and passive. Which two sons, they say (but without Scripture), are united into one; so that the man Christ who visibly walked, ate, drank, sighed, wept and hung on the cross and who cried to his Father: "Father into your hands I commend my Spirit," and who lay in the tomb for three days, was not the Son of God.

They make the Holy of holies, the always blessed Christ Jesus, a sinful and accursed man; (one of their number asks publicly: If Christ were holy, why was he adjudged unto death by the judgment of the Father, on account of sin?) and say that he partook of sinful flesh, that he might be tempted and be subject to, or guilty of death. They place their salvation in an earthly, sinful creature of the unclean, sinful seed of Adam and make Christ Jesus not only of the sinful and accursed flesh of Adam, Abraham and David, but also, a gentile of the gentiles, namely, a Syrian of the daughters of Bethuel and Laban, Gen. 24; 29:18, a Canaanite of Rahab, a Moabite of Ruth, Mat. 1:6 and an Ammonite of the mother of Rehoboam, of the Son of Solomon, 1 Kin. 14:21.

[CHCoG: This racist criticism of Mary's genealogy is horrifying. With the possible, but unlikely, exception of Rehoboam's mother, these remarkable women all became sincere worshippers of Jehovah. Remember, Jehovah God is in control, and HE chose each of these women to be in the line of ancestors leading to Mary, and thus to Christ. And think on this: Bethuel and Laban were relatives of Abraham, not unrelated Syrians. And so we only have three foreign women spread through a line of 84 ancestors from Abraham to Christ, and they are at least twenty-seven generations back. Mat. 1:1-17. This surely does not make Christ merely a "gentile of the gentiles" as Menno so crudely states. And given Menno's total focus on the male line of inheritance only in other parts of his writing, it seems odd that he would have such concern about the women 'used' to promulgate the male seed. Remember, this is the exact Mary that Jehovah God chose, of all the women in the world, to place the male DNA, soul and spirit of his Son within, and He called her Blessed among women. Luke 1:28.]

They make a creature of the unclean, sinful flesh and seed of Adam their seat of grace and sin-offering, their High Priest, Mediator, Advocate, Intercessor and Reconciler and falsely call him the Son of God. I say falsely, for they publicly confess that he had no father. They call them their Lord and God, yet they still say and write that he is of earth and not of heaven. They worship, honor and serve him as they do the Father himself. Oh, abomination!

They garble and break the Scriptures, because they do not believe the testimony of John, that the Word was made flesh. They adulterate the plain confession of the angel of God, concerning the Father and the Son himself, of John the Baptist, of Peter and of all the apostles, of Paul and of all the Scriptures, which unanimously testify that the conceived, born, suffering, whole Christ, outwardly and inwardly, visible and invisible is inseparable, the first and only begotten Son of God.

They break and contradict the whole gospel and the precious epistle of John in which he testifies more than sixty times that Christ confessed himself to be the Son of God and confessed God to be his Father. Also, frequently, that he went forth from the Father, that he was sent and came from heaven.

They garble and profane the Holy Scriptures quite lamentably, heap one abominable flattery and fictitious explanation upon another. Christ, say they, has taken on himself our human nature of Mary; then there are two sons and natures combined into one person and Son. Now the Son of God has put on the flesh and blood of Mary, dwelt in this, placed his tabernacle or tent in this.

One of their learned writes, "That the Son of God has brought all his attributes to the son of man." Another writes, "That the man Christ was God's *adoptivus filius*, that is, the adopted and well-pleasing Son of God." Still another, "That the one nature in Christ was quite divine and the other half divine and half human." Some write, "That the divine nature also suffered." Others write and say, "That he only suffered in his human nature and not in his

divine nature.” Micron says, “That Mary’s blood became our flesh in her; that Christ’s flesh is of our flesh and that, notwithstanding he is of earth and of Adam’s seed, he is still called heavenly, on account of certain virtues,” and other like anathematic words and self-conceited glozings and abominations, of which not a word is found in the Scriptures.

Is it not a pity, no, a horrible thing, to wade in such pure, still waters with such filthy feet and thus to obscure the precious and bright sun of righteousness with such infernal exhalations of the anti-christian doctrine? Rev. 9:2. And that for no other reason than that they do not trust the testimony of John and of the angel; do not believe the Almighty power of the Father, judge everything according to nature and not according to the Scriptures and attribute more to Mary than belongs to a true mother, according to the ordinance and word of the Lord.

From which it incontrovertibly follows and is manifest, according to the doctrine and testimony of John, that they, alas, have neither the Father nor the Son; “Whosoever denies the Son, the same does not have the Father,” 1 John 2:23, that the wrath of God abides on them and that they shall not see life; for they do not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God; that they must die in their sins; for they do not believe that it is he, John 8:24. They do not vanquish the world, they are not in God, nor is God in them; for they do not confess that Jesus is the Son of God, 1 John 4:3. Oh! How well it would be if these poor people would take heed, rightly confess Christ, the Son of God and give him his due praise and honor.

[CHCoG: Yes, Micron denies that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, even though Christ himself says that he IS the Son of God 11 times in the Gospels. But Menno denies that Jesus Christ is also truly the Son of Man, even though Christ himself says that he IS the son of man 84 times in the Gospels. The truth is simple.

Jesus Christ is both the Son of God, for God is his Father, and the Son of Man, for Mary is his mother. This does NOT make two sons, but one, just as each of us have one father and one mother, and yet we are each one single person who is a unique combination of the attributes of our two parents, though in Christ's case both he and his father are extraordinary, and in many ways so was his mother.]

OUR DOCTRINE AND FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, TOGETHER WITH THEIR PROPER CONTENTS, FRUITS, END, AND PROMISE.

OUR foundation and faith is that, according to the Scriptures, in power and truth, the whole Christ Jesus, visible and invisible, outwardly and inwardly, mortal and immortal, is the first and only begotten Son of God, Heb. 1:6; John 1:14; 3:18; 1 John 4:10, as the angel, John the Baptist, the apostles and all the Scriptures confess him to be; that he is the ineffable, {eternal} Word, by which all things are created, ineffably come from heaven and that, by the power of the Holy Spirit he became man in Mary, the virgin, who was promised to a man of the house and generation of David, named Joseph, above all human understanding and that, according to this flesh he was generated in her and in due time born of her, an only, undivided person, Son and Christ, God's true and natural Son, by virtue of his origin; and Mary's supernatural son, by virtue of his conception. I say supernatural; for it was not brought about by the will of man. It was promised that he should be born of the generation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and

David; as it also happened; that he is, also, by reason of his mother, [who became] Joseph's wife. [Christ is] called in the Scriptures the righteous branch of David, a rod out of the stem of Jesse, the fruit of the loins of David, represented by the literal Solomon; that he is the Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, our Immanuel, our God, Jehovah is Our Righteousness, The Wisdom of God, the Lord of David, the Strong and Mighty God, who in the beginning founded the earth and made the heavens; our new and spiritual Solomon, [who will be] seated upon the new spiritual throne in the new and spiritual kingdom and reign of David. [He is] God's true Son, I say, by reason of his Father; Abraham and David's son, by reason of his mother; an only, undivided Son of God and Mary, gone forth from the Father, come down from heaven; conceived in Mary, born of her, a true man, like unto us, poor children of Adam, in all things except sin; that he hungered and ate, thirsted and drank, tired and rested; that he was made in the likeness of men; that he has fulfilled the law for us; that he sought the lost sheep; taught the kingdom of God and that he confirmed his sending by miracles; and that he, at last died the bitter death, innocently, for us who were guilty (when we were yet ungodly and enemies). He has thus purchased, sanctified and cleansed us by his own blood and not by the blood of another; that he has reconciled us with God, our Father, yes, made us kings and priests. He was delivered and resurrected from the bonds of death and ascended to his Father, where he was before and that, by his precious innocent blood, he became our only and eternal High Priest, Intercessor, Mediator, Advocate and Reconciler, with God his Father. [Jesus Christ] is our Lord and God, whom we, in our weakness, should honor and praise because of his ineffable love and merits, even as we honor the Father himself, Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6; John 1:3; 3:13; 8:23; 16:28; 1 Cor. 15:47; Eph. 4:10; Mat. 1:20; Luke 1:23; John 1:14; Rom. 1:3; Gal. 4:4; Luke 1:30; Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:12; Rom. 1:3; 9:5; Mat. 1:18; Luke 2:7;

3:23; 2 Tim. 2:8; Jer. 23:6; 33:16; Isa. 11:1; 1 Kin. 5:5; Psa. 89:37; Mat. 1:16; Luke 3:23; Acts 2:30; Isa. 9:6; 7:14; Mat. 1:23; Isa. 40:3; Jer. 23:6; 33:16; Prov. 8:12; Bar. 3:36; Psa. 110:1; 24:8; Heb. 1:10; Isa. 9:5; Luke 1:28; John 16:28; 6:32; Eph. 4:10; Mat. 1:18; Luke 1:31; John 1:14; Luke 2:7; Gal. 4:4; Heb. 2:14; 4:15; John 4:6; Phil. 2:7; Mat. 5:17; Rom. 8:3; Eph. 2:13; Col. 2:13; Ezek. 34:23; Mat. 18:11; 4:17; John 2:11; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:19; Heb. 9:12; Eph. 2:15; Col. 1:20; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; Mat. 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6; John 20; Eph. 1:20; Mark 16:19; Acts 1; John 6:62; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 3:1; 5:1; 6:20; 7:24; 8:1; 9:11; 10:11; Rom. 8:27; Heb. 7:25; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1; Heb. 9:11; 12:24; John 20:28; 5:22.

We confess and believe that, as the Almighty, eternal Father, through mere grace and love, has, in the beginning, created Adam and Eve by Christ, his Mighty {eternal} Word, Gen. 1:27. He, also, now by pure love and grace, has again raised them and all their seed (since they fell) by the same word, now incarnated by his Almighty power and that he has again accepted them as his children, John 1:14, that we may give the eternal honor and praise to God, for his grace, by his Word or Son and not to the sinful flesh of Adam, of which they are.

And behold, such a confession concerning this matter leaves the whole Scriptures unbroken and unchanged. Not an inconsistent flattery, nor an adulterated Scripture is found, as is, alas, the case with the confession of our opponents.

The Almighty, eternal [Jehovah] God ~~alone~~, retains his glory and honor, by his Word or Son. The Father remains the true Father of the whole Christ, the mother the true mother and the Son the true Son of both his Father and his mother, which Son is from above and not from beneath, who is from heaven and not of earth;*

* [CHCoG: Until this point Menno has given an excellent, true and scriptural account. But where does the Bible say that the incarnated Jesus Christ is ONLY from heaven, and is NOT of the earth too? Menno does not, and cannot, quote a scripture that says this. Part of the miracle

pure of the pure God, an only Son and person, the Potentate and Lord of heaven and of earth, the Savior of all the world, in whom all the present and future promises are fulfilled and by whom they are given and received. Eternal praise be to his adorable, glorious and exalted name, Amen.

All those who can thus firmly believe this miraculously high work of the ineffable, great love of God and who can confess, with Peter and all the Scriptures, that Christ Jesus is the true Son of the true and living God, they have both the Father and the Son, 1 John 2:23. They vanquish the world; they are in God and God is in them, 1 John 4:15; they are freed from the wrath of God and have eternal life. They acknowledge the severe justice and the merited curse which came upon Adam and all his descendants through Adam's disobedience. Therefore they fear God, bury their sins and turn from evil. They also acknowledge the inexpressible love of God, so richly shown to us in Christ Jesus; they enter into newness of life with Christ, Rom. 6:4 and they believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God, John 3:18.

Honorable reader, take heed. I warn you in sincere and faithful love; for it avails eternal life or eternal death. If you are not quite blinded you must observe the deceit of Micron by these "Thirty-one Differences," "Forty-five Unscriptural Confessions, explanations, fictitious glozings, adulterated and garbled Scriptures," and by these "Fourteen insolvable, blasphemous inconsistencies;" and you must observe that his inconsistencies, together with the foundation of their confessions concerning this matter, which I have faithfully and plainly set, forth, are nothing but anti-christian deceit of the old serpent; and that our foundation and faith, on account of which we must, alas, hear and suffer so

and mission of Jesus was to combine heaven and earth. Not by becoming carnal and sinning, but by restoring those on earth into what God wanted them to be: His righteous children. And when Christ returns to rule on earth, He is preparing it for when the New Jerusalem comes to earth, uniting Heaven and earth for the rest of eternity.]

much, are the firm, immutable, invincible rock and stone of the eternal truth which the holy apostles and prophets, together with all the pious witnesses of God in the primitive, uncorrupted church, before the man of sin entered in and was seated in the temple of God, who cannot bear this foundation, as may be seen, 1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 1:7, [which is] confessed by us.

Not a single Scripture is adulterated or broken by us. We make use of no glossing. No inconsistency is the result. It is the plain Scripture and its foundation which we present to the reader, as you may feel and see.

OF GENESIS 3:15,

“I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN YOU AND THE WOMAN, AND BETWEEN YOUR SEED AND HER SEED.”

MICRON, in his writing, reports that I said that we should not understand the seed of woman, Gen. 3:15, in a carnal, but in a spiritual sense only. To this I reply unreservedly, that the assertion is without foundation. For never in my life was it my intention that I would exclude Christ from this promise. For, as deceived Eve was a literal woman, thus also, was the deceitful serpent a literal serpent, through which the devil deceived her. For Jehovah said, “Upon your belly you shall go and you shall eat dust all the days of your life,” Gen. 3:14, something which the devil, who is a spirit, could not do. If we are to understand the seed of woman as a generative seed, as does Micron, then the seed of the serpent must also be understood as being a generative seed, between which two the enmity would solely exist; for the one seed must be after its own kind, for the reason that it is of one name. In that sense

only the literal serpent was vanquished by Christ. Understand rightly what I write.

On the other hand, if the serpent is a spiritual serpent (as it indeed is) represented by the deceitful serpent, then the woman must also be a spiritual woman, represented by the deceived woman and thus, again, the seed is after its own kind; for as the serpent is spiritual, so her seed is also spiritual, which is falsehood, John 8:44, of which alas, she begets such children as write such deceiving, lying, infamous and partial books as Micron and Herman have done in this instance.

In the same manner, as the woman is spiritual, Eph. 5:25; Rev. 12:6; 19:7, thus her seed is also spiritual, the truth of which is that (eternal glory be to God for his grace), she begets such children as walk in the truth, sincerely speak the truth and for the sake of the truth, willingly submit to death with yes and no.

And behold, between these two, the children of truth and the children of falsehood, there is an eternal enmity. The seed of the woman vanquishes—and that by sincere, firm faith—in christian patience by the Spirit and word of the Lord; yet it receives many stings in the heel from the vanquished seed of the serpent. For their name is slandered, their doctrine is ridiculed, their life is hated unto death, their effects are stolen, their flesh is burned and they are drowned and must expect to be daily bitten by the venomous, blood-guilty seed, as I, in my weakness, have experienced for more than twenty years.

Behold, if we understand it in such a sense as we have here shown, the spiritual things remain spiritual, carnal things [remain] carnal and the Scriptures remain unbroken. But the Lord save me from excluding Christ from the promise by this. For I am aware, by the grace of the Lord, that Christ is the power, the beginning, means and end of the whole promise and that he will remain such forever. For he is the spiritual husband of this spiritual woman, John 3:6; Rev. 19:7; Eph. 5:25. His Word is the seed of woman, which Word is himself, as he says, “Just what I said to you from

the beginning,” John 8:25. He spoke and taught the truth and he is the truth, John 14:6. He spoke and taught love and he is love, 1 John 4:8. In short, he spoke of wisdom, righteousness, holiness and deliverance and he is himself Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption, 1 Cor. 1:30.

He alone is the victorious Prince and triumphant Conqueror who was promised [to us] by those words, who has bruised the serpent’s head for us and also we in him, by him, as Paul says, “In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loves us,” Rom. 8:37. And “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” Phil. 4:13, and, “Who is he that overcomes the world, but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” 1 John 5:5.

Inasmuch as it is manifest from all this, that Christ and his Spirit, word, wisdom, truth, righteousness, sanctification, peace, deliverance and all other attributes can never be separated in power and truth; and as it is manifest that where the one is the other must be also, therefore I will not leave it to the judgment of Micron and Herman, but to the judgment of the impartial reader, whether I exclude the man Christ, in whom our salvation is, from this promise and say that it should only be understood spiritually, notwithstanding the allegory is spiritual in him, as Micron reports.

It has always been my understanding that he was by this promised to us from a woman and have so stated it in some of my books; yet Micron must thus misquote my writings, as alas, he often does. I would not know for what reason I should contradict it, as he is not here promised from a man, but from a woman, Isa. 7:14, from a virgin; from which we must deduce that he was not to be the impure seed of a mortal man, but the Son of the Most High.

Behold, here you have our incontrovertible reply, founded on the Scriptures, to all the unfounded, wordy, sophistic and powerless arguments which Micron and Herman adduce in their writing about the seed of woman.

I do not see why the godly women, of which he writes and to whom he complains, should not submit to this, as I allow their husbands and lords, whose honor all virtuous and honorable wives should gladly maintain, and each to themselves in her sphere, according to the measure of eternal truth, that which their God the Lord, has allowed them himself, by his word, by the works of his creation, according to his divine pleasure.

I will not say anything about what shame Micron commits against all honorable women by his unseasoned writing; I do not delight in chiding and upbraiding. It suffices me to assert the foundation of our doctrine, to the praise of the Lord. He must once in a while maliciously pierce me, that he may by this the more embitter some hearts against me and that he may make truth still more hated and abhorred through our hated name.

MICRON'S CONFESSION,

IN HIS NARRATIVE, THAT CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD, AND OF MAN.

Micron writes: Jesus Christ is called the son of God on account of his eternal and ineffable generation by God the Father, according to his divine form. Thus he is also called the son of man on account of his being born in the fullness of time from a human being, from Mary, according to the flesh or human nature, Mat. 1. HACILLE.

Answer. I would here faithfully advise the kind reader to earnestly consider my reply to Micron's confession and to judge it with a frank, impartial heart. I trust, by the grace of God, that if he does so he will discover the adulteration and deceit of our

opponents in great clearness; and he will see, on the other hand, that the truth is with us.

In the first place, if we compare the verbal confession which he made to us with his confession in writing, he appears to be as slippery as an eel. For at the time of the discussion he confessed repeatedly before us all that the crucified Christ Jesus had no father or near father; and yet says so at different places in his writing. Nevertheless he now comes and writes, but without the truth, that they repeatedly confessed before us, that the Son of God died for us. He repeats the same song, but he sings it to the unintelligent and to a little better tune.

It would sound too much out of tune to bluntly forsake the crucified Christ Jesus and say that he had no Father, as he did before us.

In fact, I do not know what to say or to think of this man. Now the man Christ is the Son of God, then again he is not; now God is his Father, then again, he had no father. For he writes pointedly that the man Christ, who died for us was generated not from God, but from the seed of Mary and that he had no father. If he is then of her seed, and is not generated by God and if he had no father, as he says, then it is plainly falsehood, lies and deceit to say that the Son of God died for us. If we take the best view as to his meaning he can be no more than an adopted, or a nominal Son. [This is] without truth, let him glose the matter over as much as he can. I will leave the impartial reader to consider whether this is a simple and plain reasoning according to the truth, or an equivocal and dark argument of falsehood.

Now observe, first, his equivocation together with the unconformable, wavering, light-minded foundation of his doctrine and his intolerable error; to teach that the crucified Christ Jesus was not God's own true Son, but merely a nominal Son, as was heard. I do not see what greater blasphemy one could commit. Yet he is [regarded as] a good teacher and writer and that for the

reason that he has so finely, but falsely, portrayed Menno as the old heretic.

Secondly is missing. * * * *

Thirdly, so long as they do not prove to us by the Scriptures that the Son of God is called the son of man and the son of man [is called] the Son of God for the reason that there was a union of the two, as they frequently assert without the Scripture, so long [as] they mistake the truth as often as they call the Son of God the son of man and the son of man the Son of God; for the name is given, as Micron himself confesses, in truth and in fact. And how this assertion of his agrees with it, the reader may consider. To mock man is disreputable; but to mock God is too abominable and blasphemous.

Fourthly, so long as they do not prove to us by the Scriptures, that such union took place, as they assert, so long it is the lies and deceit of the old serpent, as it is not according to Scripture. For it is manifest that it is no union, as they call it, but a fearful division of the most holy and undivided person of Christ, whereby he manifestly makes two persons and sons in Christ, which are born of two different persons, at two different times, in two different forms. He robs the crucified Christ Jesus of his beloved Father and the Father of his only begotten, beloved Son; he makes the greater part of the most holy flesh of Christ of gentile origin; he esteems the man Christ no higher than an adopted or nominal Son of God; he points us to an unholy, sinful, accursed offering, to an impure seat of justice, High Priest, Savior, Mediator, Advocate and Christ of the unholy, sinful, accursed and created flesh of Adam; that in fact, he makes Mary both the father and mother of Christ; that he breaks and disputes the whole Scriptures, together with the ordinances of God concerning generation; and that he includes so many abominable inconsistencies in Christ that a feeling heart is pained that way, when the matter is earnestly considered.

Behold, upon such a foundation has Micron built his false doctrine of the union of the Son of God, which he teaches all through his book, in so many smooth sentences and garbled Scriptures. It is easily perceived what kind of an abomination that Babylon, the mother of whoredom, pours from her golden cup, by her messengers and servants. Woe unto those that drink of it; for she will so enchant them that they will become drunk and fall.

THE SON OF GOD, ABRAHAM AND DAVID

HOW CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, IS ALSO THE SON OF ABRAHAM AND DAVID, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.

IF we would have the true understanding of Christ being also the son of Abraham and David and not break or go beyond the Scriptures, then we must keep in view the ordinances of God and as it is manifest that Christ Jesus is not in truth confessed to be the Son of Joseph, but the Son of God, by the Scriptures, therefore it may be easily discerned how or in what manner Christ is also the Son of Abraham and of David and why he is thus called in Scripture, because of his human birth, as Paul says, "To Abraham and his seed (that is, his sons), were the promises made. He does not say, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one and to your seed, which is Christ," Gal. 3:16; Rom. 1:3; 9:5; 2 Tim. 2:8.

In the same manner we should consider also that both the evangelists, Matthew and Luke, count the genealogy up to Joseph and not to Mary. Luke makes no mention at all of Mary, but says, "Being (as was supposed), the son of Joseph, which was the son of

Heli,“. &c., Luke 3:23. Mark what the evangelists mean. From this it is plain that they do but show the generation of which, according to the promise, is born he who is forever the Jehovah, Immanuel, Savior and Lord of the world.

For, if such a man as was Christ, should have been begotten through human seed, as our opponents say he is, who was to be the Deliverer of the whole world, as is Christ Jesus, then the Scriptures would point to the one of whom he was generated and originally came and not to the one of whom he was not. For the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of truth, which teaches and instructs rightly. According to the foundation of the learned, our salvation would not be attached to the Scriptures, but to an uncertain meaning. For it is manifest that there is not a word found in them which shows that Mary was of David's generation. Luke says that she was a cousin to Elisabeth who was a daughter of Aaron, Luke 1:5, 36.

[CHCoG: Menno is entirely mistaken in this, and although many so-called learned agree with him, it is mostly due to lack of attention to the scriptures. As we pointed out earlier, the two genealogies in Matthew and Luke are only the same until we come to King David. From David on they show two distinct and different genealogies. The Aramaic Peshitta explains why: the Matthew genealogy is actually that of Mary, and the final Joseph mentioned in Matthew is Mary's father. The Greek translator mistranslated the Aramaic 'guardian', which can mean either father or husband, as husband, which added to the confusion. Mary, through her father Joseph, is descended from David's son Solomon, while Mary's husband Joseph is descended from David's son Nathan. These different genealogies are present in all versions of the Bible manuscripts; please check your Bible and you will see this is true. Also note that the Matthew genealogy does NOT state "as was supposed" because it is Christ's actual genealogy. Joseph was a common Jewish name, and it is not that

surprising that these two men both had the same name. And why were both genealogies given? So even those who would only accept Mary's future husband Joseph as Christ's father would still have to acknowledge him as a descendent of David. But now read the following statements of Menno, and you will see how disastrously this misunderstanding has affected his view of Christ's incarnation.]

Kind reader, understand me. I do not mean that Mary was not a daughter of David, but I say that the Scripture does not say so: But, inasmuch as our opponents found their whole structure upon the ground that the man Christ was to be a natural seed and son of David and that by Mary, therefore they must have the sure testimony of the Holy Scriptures whereby they can prove it to be as they assert, before one can accept such an important thing concerning the salvation of all the chosen. Since it is founded on mere presumption and not on the Scriptures, it may be that she was a daughter of David and again, it may be that she was not, inasmuch as they did not follow one rule in regard to marriage, as may be seen by sacred history and whereas it has nothing to do with the matter and was, according to the evangelists sufficient that she was the wife of a son of David, that the promise might be fulfilled in the generation to which it was promised, as was frequently said, therefore I do not contradict it in the least that she was a daughter of David. But a sure testimony of the Holy Scriptures, on which the foundation of eternal salvation should be built, they can not adduce, to prove their doctrine.

If they should say that $\text{\textit{\text{H}}}$ [she] was to be a virgin, according to the word of the prophet and that therefore, $\text{\textit{\text{H}}}$ [Christ] could not be of the seed of man, then I would answer in plain words that they by this pronounce their own sentence: that Christ was not the natural seed and son of Abraham and David, but their supernatural and promised seed. For he was not of one of Abraham and

David's sons, but of one of their daughters, who was a virgin and knew no man, but was promised to one of David's sons, begotten of the ineffable, {eternal} Word of the Almighty, great God, which she conceived by faith, John 1:14. Being the first and only begotten, true Son of God, on account of his eternal Father and the promised, given, and born son of Abraham, Judah and David, on account of his mother, who was a daughter of Abraham and the wife [CHCoG: daughter] of Joseph, the son of David, as heard, Heb. 1:2; John 1:14; 3:16; 1 John 4:16.

[CHCoG: Again, Menno can only see that Jehovah God was Christ's Father, making him truly the Son of God, BUT NOT that Mary was truly Christ's mother, and through her, he was truly a son of Abraham, David, etc. And perhaps Micron claims that Christ had no father because she remained a virgin until after Christ's birth. This refers to the fact that though one of Mary's eggs was impregnated by DNA provided by Jehovah God and placed there by the Holy Spirit, there was no sexual intercourse, so she was still a virgin. But as Jehovah provided the male DNA required to fertilise her egg, he was truly Christ's father.]

I will now conclude with all the passages of the Holy Scriptures which treat about the seed, fruit and branch of Abraham and David, with the following remarks. Inasmuch as the Savior, King, Prince, Conqueror and Prophet, graciously promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and David, Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; 49:20; 2 Sam. 7:12, was, in due time, born as a true man of one of their daughters, according to the promise, Luke 2:7, to whom the kingdom and throne of David was promised beforehand by Isaiah and again at his conception, when it was already fulfilled in the letter by the angel, that he was to reign forever in this, Isa. 9:6; Luke 1:29, which kingdom and throne he

did not receive literally, but spiritually, for it was then already fulfilled. His kingdom is eternal, Luke 19; and shall not be left to other people, Dan. 2:44; and as he is acknowledged all through the Scriptures as the first and only begotten Son of God, which he could not be if he were generated of impure human seed, as our opponents say and not of God; and as his house or temple which he builds, is not a literal house, of literal wood, stone, metal, gold and silver, as was the perishable house of Solomon; but as it is built of living precious stones, of the imperishable gold and silver, 1 Cor. 3:12, upon the immutable foundation of the holy apostles and prophets, put together by the Holy Spirit, Eph. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:4, 19, therefore it is by this manifest that the promise made to David, should be understood in the old, literal form, as fulfilled in Solomon and in the new spiritual being, Christ, 1 Kin. 5:5; Psa. 89:37; 132:11; for if we measure the genealogy of his blessed flesh the most minutely, in the line of David, then we find that he was no more than the son of the daughter of David, while there is not a word in all the Scriptures to prove that she actually was one of David's daughters.

[CHCoG: As shown above, the scriptures most clearly DO prove that Mary was a daughter of David. But there is another error in the above paragraph: Christ is not fulfilling his role as King of Kings merely 'spiritually', but is indeed returning to fulfil it literally, and it will be far, far greater than anything Solomon achieved. Mat. 23:3-44, Rev. 11:1-19 and 1 Thes. 4:13 to 5:11 give us some insight into the conditions leading to Christ's Return to establish God's Kingdom on earth. Rev. 14:1 to 19:21, Mat. 21:42 to 22:14 and John 14:1-18 show the judging of this earth and the setting up of Christ's rulership, with us at his side. Christ's kingdom will last for a thousand years, and then it will merge into the eternal Kingdom. Rev. 20:1 to 22:21.]

Behold, such a foundation has the strong argument of Micron, as he boasts, that the gates of hell will not prevail against it, something which they doubtlessly will not; for they would rather strengthen and aid him in such a cause; it is the strongest fortification and shield of hell, as may be clearly seen by John. But it takes a heavenly gate to prevail against it, the strong Spirit and word of the Lord, against which neither the gates of hell, nor the devil can prevail.

Whosoever desires to have more information upon this subject may impartially examine our reply to John A'Lasco, and by the grace of God, he will find the true foundation and meaning of it.

And behold, thus our foundation and doctrine remain firm and invincible; that Jesus Christ is the only, first-born and undivided Son of God, Heb. 1:6; John 1:49; 3:16; 1 John 4:9; Rom. 8:32, by whom he has created heaven and earth and the sea with their fullness, Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:9; John 1:1; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; and that he is not the impure, sinful, accursed, earthly seed of Abraham and David, as our opponents philosophize it.

Truly, he is the new Melchisedec, the King of perfect righteousness and of eternal peace, whose Father, mother and generation, according to the true foundation of the Holy Scriptures are unknown to the whole world, the glorious Prince and wise Lord, the peaceful Solomon, who is seated upon the spiritual throne of his father David, prepared for him by his eternal Father. He shall reign in eternal glory forever over the house and kingdom of Jacob, Isa. 9:6, 7; Luke 1:29. Consider whether we do not rightly teach you in accordance with the Scriptures.

CONCERNING THE TWO NATURES IN CHRIST,

HOW IT SHOULD BE RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.

MICRON criticises my sixth point and remarks concerning my saying, That God's Son did not die for us according to their doctrine, is caused by a misconception on my part; that I do not, or will not, understand the union of the two natures, the divine and the human, into one person, Christ; and says, That in both discussions they have repeatedly stated that God's Son died for us.

To which I reply thus: First, that they can not truthfully say that they stated [even] once, during the discussion, that the Son of God died for us. For they have distinctly asserted, all the time, that the man Christ had no father, or as Micron sometimes said, that he had no near father and repeats it in different places in his book, as anyone may read and see.

O, dear Lord, what a terrible abomination that mortal man and an earthly creature dares to so boldly lie against his own conscience, that he dares to so lamentably belittle the King of all honor, to so unrestrainedly deceive the poor souls and commit such great deceit and shame against the word of the Lord! O, that they could see what they are doing!

Secondly, I reply as I did before him, that not a word can be found in all the Scriptures about this union of the two sons, of God's Son and the son of man, in one person, Christ, which he, generally, artfully calls two natures and which he compares to the union of the body and soul of man.

That the body and soul of a living man are one person, is as clear as the light of the sun.

But, that such a man, body and soul, which is a perfect person, was thus united into one with the Son of God who is eternal; or, that the eternal Son of God thus united himself with the son of man

(which two sons they call two natures, without Scripture), may be read in the flatterings of Micron, but we do not find it written in the Scriptures. You may further consider what kind of a Christ they teach you, by comparing this criticism of ours with the Scriptures.

Thirdly, I say that if Micron desired to deal with the readers as a faithful teacher, he would not make use of such equivocal and dark reasoning, but would express and explain his foundation and meaning without any duplicity and say that the eternal, immortal Son of God put on a temporal, mortal son, body and soul, of the flesh and blood of Mary and that he has by this delivered us; for this is, in this matter, the proper meaning, sense and understanding of all their writing, flattering and teaching, as their public confession, before us all, clearly testified and implied, as was heard.

But now he deals unfaithfully; for he means two actual sons, of which one was divine and the other human and calls them but two natures, that the unsuspecting reader may not be offended at the harshness; which nature is but a property of him who possesses it and which is not the one himself who possesses it. For, if one sees a man, he does not say that is a human nature, but that is a man; for the property is not the being itself, but the being possesses the property. And if Christ had but the properties, namely, the natures and if he had not the being itself, which are the substances, then he was neither God nor man; for the natures are not the being itself, but the being possesses the nature. Therefore it would be becoming in Micron to deal unequivocally and not to deceive his readers and hearers by such incomprehensible, strange words, that they might comprehend the foundation of his doctrine and understand what he means. For we teach in such a manner that it may be understood.

But it would offend the thoughtful reader to thus boldly confess and teach that there are two Sons in Christ and say that the crucified Son was not God's Son, but a sinful, accursed man, of

the sinful, accursed flesh or seed of Adam. And therefore they must fix it so as to retain their honor and name with the world and enjoy their salaries and liens at ease.

Behold, thus we must, by virtue of the Scriptures, lift the fine cloak of the Babylonian whore, which Micron and the preachers would keep down by their glozings, wrong explanations and adulterated Scriptures, since they live off her table, that you may rightly observe and see their infamy, loathsome diseases, lumps and deadly leprosy, understand it spiritually and that you may, in the fear of your God beware of it.

I cordially admit, however, that Christ had two natures; but not in such a sense as Micron believes, but in a scriptural sense; in this manner Peter writes to the church of God and says, You are partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1:4; whereby he clearly testifies that there are two natures in a christian; the one, the human nature with which he is born from Adam and the other, the divine nature of which he partakes by faith, in the birth, which is from God, by the Holy Spirit.

If there are, then, two natures in one christian, as there are in truth, why then not in Christ? For, as he is the only and true Son of God, having no other origin but of God, then he must also have the nature of the one of whom he is, this is too plain to be controverted. That he had the divine nature he has proven by these manifest, apparent attributes of a true, divine nature; as by his perfect righteousness, truth, holiness, love and miracles.

As he had the divine nature, I say, on account of his divine origin, thus he also had the unblemished, pure, human nature (like unto the nature of Adam before his fall) and that by reason of his true humanity. For as truly as he was the Father's Mighty Word from everlasting, so truly he also, in the fullness of time, became a true, passive, mortal man, John 1:14; 1 John 1:1. And as he thus became a true man he must also have had the property of a true man, which is a true, human nature (though not corrupted), or else he would not have been a true man; this is incontrovertible.

Although the Scriptures say nothing about the two natures in Christ, yet I admit it with the above understanding; for I am sure that one can not separate the nature from anything any more than he can separate the light from the sun, the heat from the fire and humidity from water.

That he had the true, human nature as well as the divine, he has shown by the apparent fruits of the real, human nature, as by hungering, thirsting, being weary, sighing, weeping, suffering and death.

[CHCoG: And here we finally have an indication that Menno CAN understand that the humanity Christ inherited from Mary did not have to be “the impure, sinful, accursed, earthly seed of Abraham and David” that he has repeatedly ranted against. Yes, Christ can be—and is—both the Son of God and the son of man, and this in a single, undivided person. Sadly, despite this admission, Menno returns to insisting that Jesus could only inherit accursed sinful flesh from Mary.

And he hints at another part of the miracle of Christ: when he was incarnated in Mary, the former Spirit being Christ gave up most of his power and glory and became fully mortal, in preparation for dying on the cross. Phil. 2:5-11.]

Behold, thus I plainly confess according to the style and ordinance of the holy, divine Scriptures, that there were two natures in the only, undivided person and Son of God, Christ; and not as Micron does, who makes one Son of two sons and one person of two persons, without the Scriptures, which he calls two natures and according to his glozings, were born at two different times, of two different persons, in two different forms and which several natures remained distinct and were incomprehensibly

united into one person, Christ, according to his writing, without the Scriptures. Observe which of us points you to the Scriptures.

It is hardly necessary to reply to some Scriptures which he adduces, whereby he tries to prove that not the Son of God, but the son of man, suffered. Of these Scriptures, in my opinion, the strongest is that Peter says, Christ was “put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit,” 1 Pet. 3:18. For who ever suffered but in the flesh? Also, “Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,” 1 Pet. 4:1. Mark, Christians also suffer in the flesh, as Christ himself did, yet they are not one son, composed of two sons, as Micron says that Christ is.

Nobody can suffer otherwise than in the flesh, for Christ himself says, “Do not fear them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,” Mat. 10:28; Luke 12:4. Again, to the murderer, “To-day you shall be with me in paradise,” Luke 23:43. His flesh hung upon the cross and was afterward buried, from which it is very plain that it was said in regard to his immortal Spirit.

[CHCoG: There are two incorrect statements here. First, that one can only suffer in the flesh. Satan, who is a spirit being, is to be cast into the Lake of Fire and tormented there. Rev. 20:10. Can you truly doubt that his torment involves suffering? And do you believe that Christ only suffered physically when he was crucified? I think his spiritual suffering was far greater, as indicated by him sweating blood before his physical torments even began. Luke 22:44.

Second, the Bible does NOT say that we have immortal Spirits. Instead, it says that the wicked will **die**, and only the righteous will be given **everlasting life**. Mat. 10:28, Romans 6:3, Rev. 20:6 & 21:8. Once their body and soul are destroyed, it seems likely that their spirit will return to God, who will cleanse it of their

personality and memories and reuse it, completing their total and permanent annihilation.]

Again, Christ said, “Father, into your hands I commend my Spirit.” He did not cry, Father, into your hands I commend your Son with whom I have been united into one person and which was my Spirit. For one of three conclusions must be drawn from Micron’s writing. Either the indwelling Son of God whom he generally calls the divine nature and the son of Mary whom he generally calls the human nature, together, must have had one Spirit or soul and this Spirit he must have commended into the hands of the Father; or that the two remained alive at the death of Christ. First, the immortal, eternal* Son of God, which had dwelt in him. Secondly, the Spirit or soul which he had received from Mary,† or else the eternal Son of God must have become the Spirit of a mortal man, which had put on a dwelling place or tabernacle from Mary, which he offered for us, as was said in treating about the inconsistencies.

From which it follows that it is mere quicksand upon which they build their doctrine of the two natures, or two sons in Christ, according to their manner; and that it can stand no better before the power of the divine word than the stubble can stand before the fire. And thus we firmly hold our ground: that Jesus Christ is the only, undivided and true Son of God; and that he is not one Son

* [CHCoG: As shown earlier, the Bible does not say that Christ, prior to his resurrection, was either immortal or eternal. The mere fact that Christ died and his corpse lay in a tomb for three nights and three days proves that he was neither of these.]

† [CHCoG: We receive the DNA that forms our bodies from our parents, though even that is ultimately a gift from God via Adam. But our soul and our spirit are created for us by Jehovah God; our soul comes from the earth, and our Spirit comes directly from God. Gen 1:24, Zec. 12:1. Our [*Spirit, Soul and Body*](#) article explains more about this.]

composed of two different sons, as is the anti-christian, false foundation and doctrine of our opponents.

GOD IS THE TRUE FATHER

**THAT GOD THE FATHER IS THE TRUE FATHER OF
THE WHOLE CHRIST, HIS SON; AND THAT THE
WHOLE CHRIST IS A TRUE SON OF GOD, HIS FATHER,
WHICH MICRON CONTRADICTS IN MANY PLACES,
AND SAYS THAT IT IS NOT SO.**

Micron writes at some places, "That the son of man had no father, or near father." He often said so at the time of the discussion, too. Something which is so diametrically opposed to all Scripture that one must be astounded and ashamed by it.

Since he so indiscreetly denies the Father of Christ Jesus, according to his humanity; therefore, I trust I will show to the reader who the Father of Christ is, by a number of scriptural references, and by their power he must say, if he has not entirely given up, that Micron and the learned, by their writings, have lamentably deceived him and that they have taught nothing but an anti-christian foundation.

Thus spoke the angel of the Most High to Mary, when she wondered how this could be, as she had not known a man: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore that holy thing which will be born from you will be called the Son of God," Luke 1:34, 35.

This plain Scripture Micron has obscured by his infernal smoke, saying, "The angel meant to say to Mary, that her child should not be only man, (he means of her flesh), but also truly God and his Son, according to his eternal, divine being." Not a single

word did the angel say to that effect; nor did he make such a division in Christ, as does Micron. But the angel merely made it known that she should conceive and that the fruit would be the Son of God and that God would be the Father of the child. Behold, thus Micron breaks the testimony of the holy angel, which he, at God's command, bore to Mary from high heaven, that the holy thing which should be born from her would be the Son of God.

Again, the heavenly Father himself testifies of Christ Jesus, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him," Mat. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35. Here the Father proclaims him to be his beloved Son, without any division. And Micron says that he is not.

Again, Christ said unto the blind man, "Do you believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, You have both seen him and it is he that talks with you," John 9:35. Here the palpable, visible Christ, who, according to the foundation of Micron, was only the son of man, confesses himself to be the Son of God, without any division; and Micron says that he is not. Again, at another place Christ says, "What if you see the son of man (mark, he says the son of man) ascend up where he was before?" John 6:62. Here Christ himself confesses that the son of man was from heaven; and Micron says that he was of earth and that he is called heavenly, on account of some virtues, as if Christ was a nominal Christ and not Christ in truth.

Again, when Christ asked his disciples, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am?" (mark, he asks about the son of man). Then Peter said, "You are the Christ (without a division), the Son of the living God," Mat. 16:16, &c.; and Micron says that the son of man was not the Son of God.

Again, John the Baptist says, "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said to me, Upon whom you shall see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, he is the same which baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I saw and bear record that this is the

Son of God,” John 1:33. Here John confesses the visible Christ (who, according to our opponent’s foundation, was only the son of man), to be the Son of God; and Micron writes that he is not.

Again, the centurion on Golgotha said, “Truly, this man (mark, he says, this man) was the Son of God,” Mark 15:39; and Micron says he is not. Paul says, “God sent forth his Son, made through a woman,” Gal. 4:4; and Micron writes, God sent forth his Son who came of a woman. At another place, Paul writes, “He that did not spare his own Son,” Rom. 8:32. Mark, he says, *His own Son* and we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Rom. 5:10. John says, “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin,” 1 John 1:7. At another place, “He (God) sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,” 1 John 4:10, which reconciliation, according to Micron’s false doctrine, is not brought about by the blood of the Son of God, as John and Paul teach, but by the blood of the son of man, who, according to Micron, had no father, as has often been heard.

Kind reader, if you closely observe it you will find more than sixty instances in the New Testament where Christ Jesus confesses [Jehovah] God, the heavenly Father, to be his Father and himself to be his Son. And from the beginning to the end, you will not find anything about such a division and union as our opponents teach, neither in Christ’s words, nor in those of any of the holy apostles or evangelists.

Micron writes at more than one place, “If God the Father is the Father of the man Christ, then he must have also had flesh and blood.” From which it is manifest, first, that he does not allow the crucified Christ a Father. Whereby the angel of God, the Father and the Son themselves, also John the Baptist, Peter, John, Paul, Nathaniel, Martha and the whole Scriptures are made bare-faced liars and false witnesses by him, Luke 1:31; Mat. 17:5; John 9:36; 1:33; 3:16; Mat. 16:16. For they have repeatedly confessed him to be the true Son of the true and living God.

Secondly, it is manifest that all such writing is not from the living Fount of the Holy Spirit; nor from an enlightened, firm, believing heart which, without all wavering, trusts, with Joshua and Caleb, in the power and true promise of the Almighty God Jehovah; but that it is solely from human wisdom and an unbelieving, carnal heart, which can not judge but according to nature; and yet, through excessive blindness, destroys the ordinances of this same nature, which God established in the first creation.

Kind reader, take heed! The Almighty power of God, the ineffable miracle of his divine love and the undeceiving, sure word of his eternal truth should avail more than the blind intellect of our corrupted nature, if we would rightly learn to know Christ and follow and obey his holy word.

The dead body of Adam, created from the dust, became a living soul by the breath of God, Gen. 1:27 and the water gushed forth from the rock, Exo. 17:6. Yet the earth from which the living Adam was made was not a living soul, nor was the rock from which the water flowed for Israel to drink the ingredients of water. If they should now say that this was done by the power of God, by supernatural means, as is the case, then I would reply again: Thus was also brought about the miraculous incarnation of Jesus Christ in Mary, by the omnipotence of God, by which he can do anything he pleases, as the angel says, "The power of the Highest shall overshadow you;" for with God nothing is impossible, Luke 1:35.

I entertain the opinion that all those who believe, in power and in truth, that God was able, in the beginning, to create the heavens, earth and sea and the fullness of it, by his mighty word and now, by the same word, rules, disposes and maintains all this; and who believe that he is able to raise Adam and all his descendants, at the end, by the same power, from the dust and reclaim them from the uttermost parts of the earth and the depths of the sea and place them before the sight of his majesty, will also believe that this same God had the power to send his ineffable, {eternal} Word

from heaven and to let it become, by the power of his Holy Spirit, a true, passive, mortal man in Mary, as John says, “The Word was made flesh,” John 1:14. I repeat it: In Mary, for in the Father, and in heaven, before he was conceived, he was not flesh. This I have often confessed in plain language and thoroughly proved by the Scriptures. Notwithstanding this Micron is not ashamed to so garble my words as if I should have said that the Word was flesh in the Father, or in heaven. Something which I can say with a good conscience I have never thought of in all my life.

I do not see what difference there can be between the spirit of our opponents and the spirit of the Pharisees and of the false prophets. For as *they* always garbled the words of the pious prophets and of the Lord Christ and were always intent upon making them disreputable and thus, out of mere hatred and envy of the truth, make away with them by violence, falsehood and wrong; thus *these*, out of mere hatred and envy of the truth, deal with me, an old, afflicted man. Alas, they have portrayed me all through their book in such colors that I do not see how they could have depicted Leviathan and Beelzebub in more unpleasant colors than they have depicted me. Notwithstanding that, I have never in my life wished them any harm and much less done them any; but have shown them all christian faithfulness and discretion by giving them good counsel in their need, as the love which is from God teaches all true christians to do. Yet they have written this lying, infamous and slanderous falsehood against me, undeservedly, as thanks for my faithfulness, whereby they cause me to be tenfold more obnoxious in all countries than I was before. And this for no other reason in fact, than that we confess Christ Jesus to be the true Son of the true and living God, with the angel Gabriel, with the Father, with Christ himself, with John the Baptist, with Peter and with all the Scriptures and that we, in our weakness, would gladly hear and follow Christ’s word, commandments, prohibitions, ordinances and unblamable example, that we might thus be saved by his grace, which our opponents utterly hate and oppose. For they

publicly avow that the son of man, whom we confess to be the Son of God, according to the Scriptures, was not the Son of God. They contradict his express ordinance of baptism, which he taught and commanded us with his own mouth, whereby all the regenerated, believing children of God submissively testify before Christ and his church that they are prepared and willing to follow his holy word and divine will unto death.

Beloved, do observe what abomination and poisonous draught it is which they pour out for you from the Babylonian cup! The testimony of the Father remains true and immutable: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” Mat. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 9:35; 2 Pet. 1:17.

HOW THE DIVINE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.

You have heard that [Jehovah] God, the Father, is the true Father of the whole Christ and that the whole Christ is the true Son of God, his Father. We will now show you, by the grace of the Lord, by virtue of the holy, divine Scriptures, what kind of divine substance, matter, seed, or being it was of which this same Son of God and Mary was brought forth, that you may confess and see the clearness of the human birth of Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures, while the smoke of the bottomless pit is cleared away by the power of the strong word and scattered by the breeze of the Holy Spirit.

Thus John teaches us, saying, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him nothing was made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men.” . . . “And the Word (which was in the beginning) was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth,” John 1:1-4, 14.

Behold, dear reader, here John shows us, as a true witness of the truth, the divine being of the man Christ, the ineffable, {eternal} Word.

If you would have an immutable, true and firm foundation of faith and the true sense of these words of John and not be deceived by the lying seed of the old serpent, nor be robbed of your Savior by the subtle deceit of anti-christ, you must well observe and hold to these facts.

First, that God the Father is confessed to be the true Father of his Son Christ by the Scriptures, Mat. 3:17; 16:16; 17:5; Luke 1:31; John 1:45; 3:16; 5:22.

Secondly, that Christ Jesus is confessed to be the true Son of God, his Father, by all the Scriptures, Mat. 3:17; 14:33; 16:16; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; 15:39; Luke 2:48; John 9:37.

As it is plain that God the heavenly Father is the true Father of Christ his Son and that Christ is a true Son of God his Father, as is testified all through the Scriptures; therefore it is sure and manifest that we should leave the testimony of John unglozed and unbroken, where he says, “The word was made flesh.” For since Christ is God’s true Son and God the Father is Christ’s true Father, the Father must also have had his ineffable Word, by which all things were made that are made, as was heard.

If our opponents should say, “That the Word was Spirit from the beginning and could therefore not become flesh,” then you may answer, first, If the Word could not become flesh, as you say, then the power of the Father by which he can do anything he pleases is made less and his arm is shortened; and the angel bore a false testimony to Mary when he said that nothing is impossible for God, Luke 1:37.

Secondly, you may answer: If the Word was not made flesh, as you say, then all the Scriptures deceive us, which testify and teach, without any division, union, or exception as to nature, sons or persona, that Christ Jesus is God’s Son and that God is his Father, as was said.

Thirdly, you may answer: If the Word was not made flesh, as you say, then the Holy Scriptures falsely testify that he is of heaven and not of earth, John 3:31; 8:23; Eph. 4:10,* that he came forth from the Father, John 16:28, that he is the bread and Lord

* [CHCoG: These scriptures testify that Christ has come from heaven. But if you read the context, those “of the earth” refers to the Jews and to all other unconverted people, so they are not saying that Christ is “not of earth”.]

from heaven, John 6:35; 1 Cor. 15:47, that he is the Alpha and Omega, Rev. 1:8; 22:13 and other like Scriptures.

Fourthly, you may answer: If the Word could not become flesh, as you say, then one or the other of you must be wrong. Either you who say that he could not become flesh, or John, who says that he was made flesh, as was heard.

If they should further say that the Word put on, by generation from Mary's seed, as they actually do, you may answer then thus: First, Then we desire that you show to us where this is written in the Scriptures or else we say that it is the flattering and falsehood of the old serpent and not the Lord's truth.*

Secondly, you answer: By such acceptation you rob the Father of his Son and the Son of his Father. You divide Christ into two parts, into good and evil, into righteous and unrighteous, into heavenly and earthly. You point us to a sinful creature and an impure offering. You idolize the earthly and sinful flesh of Adam. You make all the pious witnesses of Christ, such as John the Baptist, Peter, &c., false and lying and yourselves anti-christ; and make the Scriptures contradictory.

Thirdly, you may answer: *Becoming is becoming* and *putting on is putting on*;[†] nor will it be found otherwise in the Scriptures. Thus when Christ became twelve years of age, he did become twelve years of age, counting from the time of his human birth. Christ became a curse, Gal. 3:13. He became such, so as to be hung between two murderers on the cross, Mat. 27:38; Mark

* [CHCoG: As we have shown several times, Christ has BOTH come from his Father in Heaven, and from Abraham, etc, through Mary. Both things must be true to fulfil ALL of the scriptures, and this results in a fundamental change in Christ; from a being with a spirit body to a being with a physical body. Menno refuses to acknowledge what came from Mary, and Micron refuses to acknowledge what came from the Father in Heaven.]

† [ChcCoG: I find this somewhat confusing. I think Menno means that becoming is to truly BE something, while putting on is like putting on a coat: it may change your appearance, but inside it you are unchanged.]

15:27; Luke 23:32. Water was made [into] wine and it was made, John 2:9; Lot's wife became a pillar of salt and she did become one, Gen. 19:26. For becoming I say, is becoming and cannot be explained in any part of the Scriptures as meaning *putting on*.

If they would still follow their intellect and say, "If the Word has become flesh, it has lost its first being by the change," you might answer, first: John has taught us that it was made flesh and he has not said a word further, as to how or to what extent it was changed; something that you inquisitive ones want to know and hear from us, without any Scripture.

Secondly, you might answer: Adam was made a living soul, 1 Cor. 15:45; yet he remained dust, for Jehovah said unto him, "Dust you are and unto dust you shall return, Gen. 3:19.

Thirdly, you might reply: We ought to believe sincerely and not intellectually comprehend. For Paul says that "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. 11:1.

Fourthly, you might reply: Paul says, That he is God and Christ says that he is a Spirit. Zophar the Naamathite says, "It is as high as heaven; deeper than hell; longer than the earth; and broader than the sea," Job 11:8, 9. And the prophet says that Lord Jehovah comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, Isa. 40:12. Also, "Thus says Jehovah, The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool," Isa. 66:1. There is no man born from Adam who is so intellectual and wise that he can measure this God and Spirit, or comprehend his being, therefore it would be well for them to abandon their high, soaring intellect to search such ineffable profundity, to humbly bow themselves under the word of the Lord and to ponder on the saying of Solomon, "It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search for their own glory is not glory," Prov. 25:27. Read also Syrach 3:21.

Kind reader, if intellect were to avail in this ineffable, deep matter and not the Scriptures, then I would ask them an intellectual question concerning their faith, from which they could scarcely

extricate themselves. It would be this: Whether or not they believe that the Mighty, ineffable Word, of which heaven and earth are full, Wis. 18:16 and which is also, the eternal wisdom and power of the Almighty, eternal Father, has placed itself out and out in such *concreto sanguine*, [solid blood] as Micron calls it at one place, as is his doctrine now? I presume they will leave the question unanswered. For if they say that it was in this, out and out, then they make a Father who has separated his word, wisdom and power from himself and placed it outside of himself.* And if they say that it was not all in this, then they make their own foundation untrue and false; for they say and teach that the Son of God (which is God's {eternal} Word, wisdom and power) has put on the son of man or of Mary and that he has united himself with it into one person.†

Therefore I repeat that it would be well for them to leave such ineffable profundity unsearched, to stay under the clouds and not to soar above heaven with their earthly, ignorant intellect. For I presume that when they have measured the height of the heavens and the depth of the abyss, have weighed the mountains and enumerated the drops of rain, then they will give me an intelligent answer and explain how this thing is, about which I asked concerning their faith, foundation and doctrine. And therefore I say that I do not at all charge my mind with this unsearchable miracle, but adduce the word of the Lord, whereby I am plainly

* [CHCoG: We have dealt with this heresy previously: Christ's Father is NEVER without his own word, wisdom and power, and all that Christ possesses has been given to him by his Father, but in doing so, Jehovah has not depleted his own infinite supply.]

† [CHCoG: To use Menno's terminology, Christ did not "put on the son of man", but truly "*became the Son of Man.*" There is no division, nor two sons. The Son of God was merged with divine DNA from his Father and the human DNA in Mary's egg and thus became a new, different and unique person, Jesus Christ, the only person able to take away all the sins of all people. He is ONE person who combines two ancestries: the Son of God and the Son of Man.]

taught that Mary, the Lord's mother, conceived the Mighty, {eternal} Word by the Father (by which all things were made that are made), by faith, Luke 1:31 and that the same [Son], by the great power and operation of his [God's] Mighty, eternal Spirit, became a true, visible, palpable, passive, mortal, pure and holy man, not of her, but in her, above the comprehension of all mankind. [CHCoG: Where does the Bible say that Christ was "not of her, but in her"? It does NOT exist. This is purely speculation on Menno's part, speculation he indulges in because he refuses to accept what the Bible says: Mary is Jesus Christ's mother, not just some surrogate incubation chamber. Mat 1:18, 2:11, 2:13, 2:20, Mark 3:31, Luke 2:33, 2:51, John 2:1-3, 19:26, Acts 1:14] And thus he who was already the first-born of every creature, and, also, according to his human form, the first and only begotten, true Son of God, was supernaturally born unto God, his Father, of Mary, [CHCoG: No. The Bible teaches that Jesus was naturally *born*; though he was indeed supernaturally *conceived* in Mary.] according to the flesh, as Isaac was naturally born unto Abraham by Sarah; Solomon unto David by Bathsheba and John the Baptist unto Zacharias by Elisabeth, Gen. 21; 2 Sam. 12:24; Luke 1:12. [CHCoG: Yes, and in every one of these examples, the child was a combination of the genetics of BOTH their father and their mother. Women are not mere incubators of male sperm.] The first and only begotten, true Son of God also became, according to the promise, a son of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and David on account of his mother (but in the genealogy of Christ, Joseph's son, Mat. 1:16; Luke 3:23), [CHCoG: We have dealt with this error previously: the Matthew genealogy is Mary's, while the Luke genealogy is that of Mary's yet-future husband Joseph, making Menno's following 'spiritual law' claim untrue.] who graciously fulfilled the spiritual law which no flesh of Adam could fulfill, for all of the descendants of Adam, in perfect righteousness, Rom. 8:2; and who innocently trod the wine press of bitter death, Isa. 63:3; Rev. 19:15, to whom the law and all the prophets point and in

whom all the glorious promises of the inexpressibly great grace and love of God are fulfilled. And thus, after he had done the service of his divine love he again ascended up where he was before, John 6:62. He has [been given] all power in heaven and upon earth, Mat. 28:18 and is, through faith in his blood, our only and eternal Propitiator, Reconciler, High Priest, Mediator, Advocate and Peace-maker with God his Father, Rom. 3:25; John 4:25; 1 Tim. 2:5; 1 John 2:1.

Behold, thus the most high, most gracious and most merciful God and Father retains his glory, praise and honor through his blessed, {eternal} Word and Son; and not through the unclean, sinful flesh of Adam, as our opponents teach and pretend.

Mark, now, beloved reader, how our opponents are deceived in this matter by their earthly, carnal intellect which would explain this miracle, not according to the Scriptures, but according to the laws of nature and therefore, do not believe that the Almighty God had the power to let his {eternal} Word become flesh and a true man; for which reason they have depicted me in such unbecoming colors, although these poor souls are doubly what they would make us to be, namely, false teachers and perverse heretics. For they say and teach without any Scriptures, that the man Christ who died for us, was not the Son of God and that he had no Father; and we say that he is God's Son and that God is his Father, according to all Scripture. [CHCoG: Please understand this: We do not agree with Micron. Jehovah God is indeed the Father of Jesus Christ, and Mary's conception was indeed a divine miracle.]

They say and teach, without any Scripture, "That the Word has put on a whole man of Mary's flesh and seed;" and we say and teach, according to the plain testimony of John, That the Word was made flesh, not of Mary, but in Mary. [CHCoG: And yet again, the Bible nowhere says, nor even implies "not of Mary, but in Mary", which Menno confirms by never being able to quote even one scripture to prove his claim.]

They teach, “That there are two different persons and sons, one divine, the other human, in the one Christ,” without Scripture; and we say that there is but one undivided person and Son, according to the Scriptures.

They say and teach, “That the visible Christ was earthly, of the earth,” without the Scriptures; and we say and teach that he is heavenly, of heaven, according to the Scriptures.

They say and teach, “That he is pure of impure Adam,” without Scripture; and we say and teach that he is pure of the pure God, according to the Scriptures.

They point us to an “accursed, sinful offering,” without Scripture; and we point to a spotless, innocent offering, according to the Scriptures.

They worship an Adamitic flesh, contrary to all Scripture; and we, the Mighty, {eternal} Word which became man by the infinite power of God, according to the Scriptures.

In short, they place their whole salvation in the unclean, sinful seed of Adam, that is, in a man, who, according to their fabulous writing and contrary to the word and ordinance of God, was generated from the seed or blood of Mary, without a father; and we, in the Mighty, {eternal} Word, which became man in the fullness of time, by which all things are made, ruled and have their being, forever, which was from everlasting the {eternal} wisdom, power and glory of God, his Father, one with God, his eternal Father and the eternal Holy Spirit, blessed forever, Amen.

Invincible and firm remains the word: “The word was made flesh,” John 1:14; 1 John 1:1. O, merciful, gracious Lord, enlighten the eyes of all the blind, that they may see your heavenly brightness and rightly confess the majesty of your honor, Amen. Dear Lord, Amen.

CONCLUSION.

HONORABLE reader, here you have our fundamental explanation and plain reply to the untrue and partial narration and anti-christian, false doctrine concerning Jesus Christ the Son of God by Micron and Herman, with which I am now and at all times willing and ready to appear before God and his angels, before friend and foe and before the whole world, unto water, fire, sword and before the coming judgment.

I would pray you all, reasonable readers, through Jesus, as if before God, to reflect earnestly on what kind of spirits and people they are who have written the "Narration" and its appendix and articles concerning us, as they have kept quite silent about the beneficence so faithfully shown to them in their need; nor said anything about the distinct confessions which they made, as above stated, whereby they had already lost the whole point in discussion, as also, that they were frequently so puzzled that they did not know what to say and as they have not written a single discreet word about me in their whole book; and from the beginning of the discussion to the end of their writing, they have only studied and aimed how they might most expertly defame me and thus make our doctrine, which is the pure doctrine of Christ, a stench to many.

In several instances they have lamentably garbled and misinterpreted my words. They have added to or subtracted from this and even changed the meaning of their own [words]. The order of the discussion they have changed, made many unscriptural glosings, adulterated the Holy Scriptures, made false witnesses of the Father himself and his blessed Son, of the angel of the Lord, of John the Baptist, of all the evangelists, apostles and of all the Scriptures, as may be seen.

However, they fill the measure of their predecessors, the false prophets, who, from the beginning, have praised and taught falsehood by hypocrisy, have hated the truth and upbraided the

faithful servants of God and defamed them; who have taken amiss the faithful service of their love, accused them before lords and princes, have hindered them in the doctrine and true religion and at last, have confiscated their goods and taken their lives. It is but little to me that they have thus trampled upon me and caused me to be a stench to many; for I am aware that I am unworthy of honor, since I am born of Adam, of impure seed, an unworthy sinner; as all those have complained, from the beginning, who were rightly overshadowed by the glory of the Lord. But, the Lord forbid that I am such an unsteady falsifier and artful rogue as I am depicted to be by our opponents through the infamous, false, indiscreet and bitter spirit of envy. Many pious people of both the Old and the New Testament had to hear this same thing with me. Christ promises us a great reward in heaven; for it is done for his name's sake, Mat. 5:11; Luke 6:22. But it pierces my soul night and day that they so lamentably blaspheme the Son of God, adulterate the Scriptures and so falsely console the poor, unenlightened souls by such open falsehood and thus encourage and keep them in their accursed blindness. For which reason I was urged to write this reply, to the praise of the Lord and to your service.

I pray, therefore, that you would earnestly consider what a pure, clear and unadulterated foundation of truth we have pointed out to you and to all the world concerning Christ. And, on the other hand, also, how plainly and convincingly we have discovered and manifested unto you and all reasonable readers the anti-christian foundation and doctrine of our opponents. Whosoever has but half sight may see where the deceit is hidden.

We now and at all times willingly offer, that if they can prove to us by the unbroken and unadulterated Scriptures, that Adam had two kinds of seed, of which one was pure and the other impure, or, that the Scriptures anywhere call that holy, pure and heavenly which is unholy, impure and earthly in itself, or, that two sons can be one Son, or, that the Scriptures anywhere mention such a union, as our opponents falsely pretend, or, that ever anyone was the true

son of another without his being generated from his substance or seed, or, that God is a God of falsehood, so that he would call the man Christ his Son, without his actually being such, then we will gratefully and diligently reconsider the matter, in all love. Behold, before God, it is the truth that I write. And, if they cannot do so (something which they surely never can), then our opponents, if they are reasonable men, should acknowledge that they have the impure, deceitful doctrine of anti-christ and we the wholesome doctrine of Christ; notwithstanding we must hear and suffer so exceedingly much.

Dear reader, if we consider the Scriptures of John the evangelist, we clearly find that the spirit and doctrine of our opponents already existed in his time. For, at that time they denied that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and that he was made flesh; something which these, also, often did in their writings and verbal discussion which they had with us. From which it is manifest that it is the roguery and deceit of the old serpent.

I would, therefore, humbly beseech all the godly, pious hearts who sincerely and diligently seek Christ and eternal life, for the Lord's sake, first, to pray for all of our opponents, both of high and low station in life, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, who ignorantly err and who are encouraged and consoled in their impenitent, reckless life, by such false teachers and writers as are our opponents, that the merciful, gracious Lord may give them eyes to see his glorious, exalted origin and rightly confess his truth, that they may not be lost with which they are so dearly bought.

And secondly, pray that the Lord may grant me and all our fellow laborers of the house of God, together with the whole church, the Spirit of his wisdom; grant that we, by his grace, may remain wholesome in doctrine; steady in faith; ardent in love; quickened in hope; unremittent in the work of the Lord; unblamable in life and patient in all oppression and tribulation; of which alas, we do not experience a little by the infamous crying

and writing of our opponents; that we may set a living example to the world; that many may see our new, christian walk in the truth and examine it, repent and thus be eternally saved.

I beseech you in the same manner not to leave our writings idle and hidden, but to send them east, west, north and south, into the hands of all men and to let many read them, that the bright sun of righteousness which, alas, has been obscured for so many centuries by the smoke of the bottomless pit of the anti-christian, false doctrine, may shine forth with the power of truth and that our glorious and holy Savior, the first and only begotten, true Son of the Almighty, living God, the always blessed Jesus Christ, may be rightly confessed by many, in his glory.

To this only and eternal Savior, together with his heavenly Father and Holy Spirit be the praise forever, Amen.

MENNO SIMON.

October 5.



A LETTER.

From Menno Simon to Margaret, wife of Rein Eden.

CHOSEN beloved sister in Christ Jesus, Mercy, grace and peace be to you! 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, your will be done. By which we commit ourselves to the Father to deal 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 [Jehovah], 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 do not have 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, has concluded all under sin. There is no man on earth, says Solomon, who does righteously and does not sin, Eccl. 7. At another place it says, "A just man falls seven times and rises up again," Prov. 24:16. Moses [Jehovah] says, "Jehovah, Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering 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," Exo. 34:6, 7. O, dear sister! Observe, he says, None are guiltless before God. Again, David says, "O Jehovah, do not enter into judgment with your servant; for in your sight shall no man living be justified;" "If they sin against you (for there is no man who does not sin);" "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 do, that I do;" "In many things we all offend;" "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us," Psal. 143:1, 2; 1 Kin. 8:48; Isa. 64:6; Mat. 19:17; Mark 10:18; Rom. 7:19; 1 John 1:8.

As it is plain from all these Scriptures that we must all acknowledge ourselves to be sinners, as we are in fact; and as no one has perfectly fulfilled the righteousness required by God except 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 [appears to be.] We must all acknowledge, whosoever we are, that we are sinners in our thoughts, words and works. Yes, if we did not have the righteous Christ Jesus before us, 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 [of God, are] banished, accursed and adjudged to eternal death; but in and

through Christ you are justified and pleasing unto God and accepted by him in eternal grace as a daughter and child. In this all the saints have consoled themselves, trusted in Christ, esteemed their own righteousness as unclean, weak and imperfect, and 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, Mat. 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.” Yes, [he died] when we were yet ungodly and by this 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, shall we 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 with this 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 is the staff and consolation of your weakness, as we have, in former days, according to our small gift, often shown you from the Scriptures.

Yes, 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. “By this we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit,” 1 John 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 [we will] sing hallelujah! and praise his name in perfect joy. Your husband and children I commend to him who has given to them to you and he will deal 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.



A VERY SINCERE EPISTLE TO MARTIN MICRON

AS

**A NECESSARY REPLY TO HIS INDISCREET
FALSEHOOD, ABUSE, AND FALSE
ACCUSATIONS, CONCERNING THE
MAGISTRACY, SWEARING OF OATHS, &C.,
WHICH HE HAS PRESENTED FOR THE
PERUSAL OF THE WHOLE WORLD, TO THE
DISGRACE OF THE HOLY, DIVINE WORD AND
OF HIS (THE LORD'S) CHURCH; AS ALSO
SERVING AS A MIRROR TO HIS ERRING SOUL,
THAT HE MAY LEARN TO KNOW HIMSELF,
AND MAY KNOW, TOGETHER WITH THE
READERS OF BOTH OUR WRITINGS, HOW
WICKEDLY HE HAS ACTED AGAINST GOD
AND MAN, THAT HE MAY MAKE CONFESSION,
REPENT, AND BE SAVED.**

BY

MENNO SIMON.

*“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is
laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.*

THE pure, true knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Son of God in truth; a new, regenerated and understanding heart; a new, impartial, true hand and tongue; a new, godly, unblamable life in the fear and love of God; together with the unadulterated, pure and good disposition, nature, fruits and unction of the Holy Spirit, I wish to Martin Micron from the inmost of my heart, to the enlightenment of his soul, from him who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift, through Jesus Christ, his beloved, chosen Son, our Lord and eternal Savior, Amen.

A VERY SINCERE EPISTLE TO MARTIN MICRON.

ALL Scriptures teach and enjoin, honorable Martin, that we should love Jehovah our God, with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength and our neighbors as ourselves. On these two commandments, says Christ, hang all the law and the prophets, Deut. 6:5; Mat. 22:37-40; Mark 12:29; Luke 10:27.

All that Scripture teaches is *love*. “Everyone that loves,” says John, “is born of God and knows God. He that does not love does not know God; for God is love,” And, “He that dwells in love, dwells in God and God in him,” 1 John 4:7, 8, 16. Without this love, it is all vain, whatever we may know, judge, speak, do or write, 1 Cor. 13:1. The property and fruit of love is meekness and kindness. Love is not envious, not crafty, not deceitful, not puffed up nor selfish. In short, where love is, there is a christian also.

Since we are pointed to love by the Scriptures and cannot be christians without love and as you do not only call yourself a

common layman, but also an exemplary teacher; therefore you have done quite wrong not to have taken into consideration the commandment of love, in the fear of God, before you published your false, infamous, ambitious, anti-christian “Narration” and book.

You have manifested yourself before God and man in such a manner as though you had never in your life, felt and confessed the least particle of the pure, unadulterated nature of love, as I shall show and explain, by the grace of the Lord, in an impartial, sincere conscience, by this my admonition, out of love for the divine honor and the holy word; as also, out of love for your poor soul, that you (if there is yet a spark of life and a faint light left in you,) by such showing. [It is] written for your own good, [that you] may be induced to see your ulcers and deadly wounds and yet be cured by the heavenly medicine of the Lord’s Spirit and word through sincere repentance, to the praise of the Lord and the salvation of your soul. If there is yet any reason left in you, reflect upon what I tell you.

First, it is manifest and cannot be successfully denied by you nor by any other person that you have by your writing made a liar of the Almighty, great God, the God of heaven and of earth, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who can neither lie nor deceive; for he testifies of Christ and says, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” Mat. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35; 2 Pet. 1:16; and you say that he is not; for you have verbally confessed to us and you write so yet at different places, that the man Christ (who you call the human nature in Christ) had no Father.

Observe whether you are not one of those of whom John says, “He that does not believe God has made him a liar; because he does not believe the record that God gave of his Son,” 1 John 5:10. Beloved Micron, reflect and see if I do not write the truth.

Secondly, it is manifest that you have also made a liar of Christ, who is the {eternal} truth, by your writing; for he confesses

more than sixty or seventy times, in ~~John~~, [the New Covenant] that he is the Son of God and that God is his Father; that he came from heaven and that he was gone forth from the Father; that he is the only begotten Son, &c. and yet you boldly proclaim to the public that he is not; that he had no father, according to his humanity; that he is [only] of the flesh and seed of Mary, of earth and the natural son or seed of Abraham and David.

Observe and see if you are not one of the false teachers and prophets who forsake the Lord who bought them, 2 Pet. 2:1. Dear Micron, reflect and see if it is not the truth that I write.

Thirdly, it is manifest that by your writing you make false witnesses of the heavenly messenger, the angel of the Most High, Luke 1:31; of the humble, plain Nathaniel in whom was no guile, John 1:47; of John the Baptist, the ~~holiest~~ [greatest man] born of woman, Mat. 11:11; of Martha, the hostess and servant of the Lord, Luke 10:38; of Peter the faithful shepherd, John 21:6; John the apostle whom Jesus loved, John 13:23; 21:20; and of Paul the chosen vessel, Acts 9:15. For they all unanimously testify—and that without any division whatever as to humanity and divinity—that Christ Jesus is the Son of God; and you publicly proclaim that he is not [God's Son] according to his humanity.

Observe and see whether you are not a servant of the abominable beast which opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and his tabernacle and them that dwell in heaven, Rev. 13:6. Dear Micron, reflect and see if I do not write the truth.

Fourthly, it is manifest that you have made such witnesses of your own brethren who were present at the discussion (and, who, alas, did not know much about the matter), as those were who testified against Christ, Stephen and Naboth (that is, if your brethren agree with your unjust, partial charges; which I hope they do not); for as those testified out of hatred of the truth against the righteous, to please Jezebel and the Scribes, thus these, out of hatred of the truth, testify against me, to please you and those of

your faith (I speak of the guilty ones), to defame me thus. Notwithstanding that, they heard your confession concerning the seed of woman, on which foundation your whole doctrine is built; also, concerning the two Sons in Christ, that the crucified one should have had no father; again, that you could not successfully maintain the purity of your Christ; that you could make no reply to the Scriptures we have read; that you tried to shelter behind an unscriptural question, which we answered in such a manner that all your refuge was cut off and that you had to turn from one thing to another. One would reasonably suppose, if they were people of common self-respect who sought the honor of God and your salvation, as we supposed them to be at first meeting them, that they must charge you before all men that you have, out of mere hatred and envy, spoken partial, devilish falsehoods and not the impartial, godly truth, to defame your neighbors and that you have done so to your own eternal shame. But it is an old proverb: "As the shepherd goes, the sheep follow." Christ truly says, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Mat. 15:14. Dear Micron reflect and see if I do not speak the truth.

Fifthly, it is manifest that you lamentably deceive all your readers and hearers who believe your writing and that you kill their poor souls. For it is known to the Lord, who has eyes as a flame of fire, to yourself and to all of us who were present, that in fact your cause was lost. Yet you console them with devised lies, as is the way with all false prophets, whereby you rob them, according to John, of both the Father and the Son, 1 John 2:23; keep them under the wrath and curse, John 3:36; whereby you keep them out of God and God out of them, 1 John 4:15, so that they do not overcome the world, 1 John 5:4; for they do not believe that Jesus is the [true] Son of God.

Observe and see if you are not one of those who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, as the Lord says, Mat. 23:13. Dear Micron, reflect and see whether it is not the truth I write.

Sixthly, it is manifest that you have, with your writing acted toward some of us and also toward myself personally, not as an honest, virtuous, godly, pious christian, but rather as a dishonest, shameless, indiscreet and blood-thirsty *Corycæus*, or informer. For it is a fact that you have, without the truth, registered a poor, innocent man (whom you well knew), as a teacher, who is not a teacher, nor apt to ever become one, whereby you will, perhaps, deprive him and his poor children of their whole welfare, yes, of thousands, if the Lord in his providence does not prevent it. The Spirit of the Lord does not enjoin you to act thus toward the innocent.

Dear Micron, if you had a single drop of pious blood in your veins you would have had mercy on this poor, innocent, unworthy servant; whom you thus, alas, repay before the whole world, for his faithful services of love willingly shown to you and yours with sincere, christian intentions.

In the same manner you have acted toward the others who furnished you with a dwelling place, victuals and drink, who solicitously led your [followers] into the city, furnished them [with] situations and showed them all manner of kindness, in pure love. Let the Christian reflect and judge according to the Lord's Spirit and word, whether this is the work of unadulterated, christian love, which wishes harm to none, much less does it.

Besides, you have also nearly pointed out my place of abode which I had enjoyed until that time (of which Herman, also, had to deprive a poor child), while you are well aware that everywhere they try to take my innocent life, out of mere hatred of the truth. By which doings you surely can not teach righteousness, nor instruct the ignorant. And the work in itself does not prove to be the reasonableness and love of a regenerated christian, but it rather shows an unmerciful, cruel, envious, hateful, ravenous, blood-thirsty heart and the bitter mind of an informer, as all the reading world must judge and say.

Whether you have done this by the merciful, compassionate, faithful, unadulterated and pure Spirit of Christ, as a pious, virtuous man, or by the unmerciful, tyrannical, faithless, false and unclean spirit of anti-Christ, as an ungodly and shameless spy, to cause me, an old, afflicted man, some trouble, I will leave to the consideration of your own soul, as before God who tries the hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Observe and see if you are not one of those who say in their hearts, It is hard for us to see him; for his life does not conform to ours. Dear Micron, reflect and see if it is not the truth I write.

Seventhly, it is also manifest that you encourage and strengthen the rulers in their impenitent lives, not a little, by your writing, who are, as a general thing, quite obdurate, proud, ambitious, puffed up, self-conceited, pompous, selfish, earthly, carnal and in part, blood-thirsty. And, that you may the more gain their favor and praise, I, a miserable man, must be your blind and imprisoned Samson whom you make to play and dance before the princes of the Philistines, as a mockery and derision, although I never, in my life, spoke an indiscreet word against these rulers, or against their office and service.

I have, from the beginning of my ministration, fraternally warned them in my writings in faithful, unadulterated truth, from my soul, against the corruption of their souls; advised them to live a godly, penitent, christian life; pointed them with the Scriptures to the unblamable Spirit, word, commandments, prohibitions, ordinances and example of Christ; and, when you proposed your Pharisaical, Herodian question concerning the Magistracy, I said nothing more to you than that it would hardly become a true christian ruler to shed blood for this reason: If the transgressor should truly repent before his God and be born of him, he would then also be a chosen saint and child of God, a fellow-partaker of grace, a spiritual member of the Lord's body, sprinkled with his precious blood and anointed with his Holy Spirit, a living grain of the bread of Christ and an heir to eternal life. For such a one to be

hanged on the gallows, put on the wheel, placed upon the funeral-pile, or in any manner be harmed by another Christian, who is of one heart, spirit and soul with him, would look somewhat strange and unbecoming, according to the compassionate, merciful, kind nature, disposition, Spirit and example of Christ, the meek Lamb, an example he has commanded all his chosen children to follow.

Again, If he remains impenitent and his life is taken, one would do nothing else but unmercifully rob him of the time of repentance, during which, if his life were spared, he might yet avail himself. [It would] do nothing but tyrannically offer his poor soul, which was purchased with such a precious treasure, unto the devil of hell, under the intolerable judgment, punishment and wrath of God, so that he would ~~forever~~ have to suffer and bear the tortures of the unquenchable burning, the consuming fire, ~~eternal~~ pain, woe and death. Never taking into consideration the son of man, who says, "Learn from me," Mat. 11:28, I have given you an example, John 13:15, follow me, Mat. 16:24, for he has not come to corrupt souls, but to save them, Mat. 18:11; Luke 19:10.

Behold, this was the foundation of my innocent words which I spoke to you at that time in sincerity of heart, according to the style and Spirit of the gospel of Christ, to which words you give this hateful color before all men, saying, "That I make many pious rulers murderers of men; that I protect and encourage the rogues in their wickedness." I will leave it to your own judgment what kind of a spirit prompted you to write thus enviously about my plain words. O, Micron, you carry this thing too far. For what else do you do by your writing, but upbraid and blaspheme Christ Jesus himself, whose example I follow in this matter, for pointing to the adulterous woman, who was already adjudged by the law of Moses, to repentance and letting her go unpunished, Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22; John 8:11; as also, faithful Paul, who did not further punish the Corinthian, who, according to the Mosaic and human law, was deserving of death, than with separation, whereby he won him unto God; something which he could not have done had he

been killed. Dear Micron, reflect and see if I do not write correctly.

I do not doubt in the least but that all reasonable men who shall read my writings, if they have any scriptural knowledge at all, will say that I have not spoken unreasonably, but truly and christianly, although I have to hear from you such a base greeting.

Profane history shows that the Lacedæmonians, who were gentiles, did not practice capital punishment; but they imprisoned them and put them at labor. There are instances that when some of them showed natural piety and they found them to be wise in counsel, honorable and master of their passions, they were called to high offices. They were not urged by the blood-thirsty spirit of murder, as is the case with some of the preachers and writers who dare boast of the crucified Christ and his office or service, who do not only imprison and take the life of those who are guilty according to the justice of the world, such as thieves, murderers, wizards, &c., but also the sincere, faithful children of God who sincerely seek Christ Jesus and his holy truth and walk unblamably before the world, to deliver them without mercy into the hands of the blood-stained beadle to be tortured, drowned, burned, or put to the sword, out of mere hatred of the truth, because they shun their deceiving doctrine and false religion, according to the word of God. O Lord!

That I write the truth in regard to this matter is shown to you and all the world, not only by the Papist and Lutheran writers, but also by the books of your highly esteemed predecessors and brethren, John Calvin, Theodore Weselin Beza and John A'Lasco, which were prepared to be printed; but by the contradiction of some people, were again recalled.

Beloved Micron, if you and they were born of God and urged by the Spirit of the Lord; if you had tasted the sweet word of God and the fruits of the future world, you would never have thus troubled the pious as you have done by your untrue, false writing; nor would you encourage anybody in their bloody doings; but

would point them to the meek Lamb and let the dead bury the dead. Ponder upon what I mean.

I cordially agree with you that the office of the magistrates is from God and that it is an ordinance of God; but I deny that one is or can be a christian and not follow his Prince, Head and Predecessor, Christ. [He merely] ornaments and decks his unrighteousness, boldness, pomp, splendor, avarice, robbery and tyranny with the name of magistrate; for whosoever would be a christian must follow the Spirit, word and example of Christ, no matter whether he is emperor, king or anything else, Mat. 22:21; Rom. 13:1; 1 Tim. 2:1; Tit. 3:1. For these following admonitions apply to all alike: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," Phil. 2:5. "He that says he abides in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked," 1 John 2:6.

Behold, you show by actual facts that you speak and teach to tickle their ears and the lusts of their hearts, inasmuch as you again point them to the vengeance of the Mosaic law and not to the long-suffering of Christ and thus you encourage them in their vain, proud, pompous and unmerciful, carnal life which is so little in keeping with the life of an innocent, contrite, humble, merciful, compassionate, pious and regenerated christian whose citizenship is in heaven, Phil. 3:20. It is manifest that you are a deadly enemy to their poor souls and do not deal with them as becomes the service of a true messenger of God. For they build the wall and you daub it with untempered mortar, Ezek. 13:10. You cry peace, peace, while there is no peace, Jer. 8:11. Beloved Micron, reflect if it is not the truth I write.

Your unscriptural adulations concerning the oath show that I write the truth. For Christ says, "You have heard that it has been said by them of old time, You shall not forswear yourself, but shall perform unto the Lord your oaths; but I say unto you, do not swear at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, &c., Mat. 5:33-35. And you, Micron, say that nothing but light-minded, false oaths are prohibited by this, as

if Moses allowed Israel to swear light-mindedly and falsely; and that Christ only forbade it under the New Testament; notwithstanding that all intelligent readers know that Israel was not merely *allowed* to swear truly, but was also commanded to do so, Lev. 19:12; Deut. 10:20.

If the Israelites, then had the same liberty in this matter that we have, as you have it and if it is such a glorious thing and honor to God to swear rightly by the name of God, as you dare boldly lie against your God, then tell me why Christ did not say, You have heard that it has been said to them of old, you shall not forswear yourself, thus I say you shall do likewise? For he says, Moses commanded not to forswear yourself, but I say unto you, You shall not swear at all. O God, what pity it is that such plain words of the Son of God are thus lamentably adulterated and daubed over with the foul mortar of serpentile flattery, merely to suit the rulers who are but of dust; as Musculus and you have done! How little you have pondered upon the Scriptures which say, “We ought to obey God rather than men,” Acts 5:29.

Inasmuch as it is very plain that Christ Jesus, the teacher of righteousness, forbids us [to use] the oath of Moses, which was also an oath of truth and sworn by the name of Jehovah, which you use and highly recommend to the reader, [while Christ] commands us to use the true yes and no. I know for certain that his word is the truth and his commandment is life eternal; therefore I am sincerely frank and bold to teach it, truly believing that he will not deceive us by his doctrine, John 17:17; 12:50.

I cordially rejoice that such faithful children in truth are found, who are prepared to seal the holy commandments and testimony of the Lord with their possessions and blood, notwithstanding I have to hear so much on that account at your hands. Nor am I in the least doubtful but that they, on the day of Christ, will have a part in my crown; for they, for a testimony against you and all the world, suffer for reproving your deceiving, lying hearts and tongues in

faithful love, that you may be brought to reflect; notwithstanding that they, alas, are called such detestable people by you.

If they were no more faithful to truth than Herman and you have shown yourselves to be towards me, then they would not so valiantly adhere to their true yes and no, even unto death. Of this we are convinced.

As it is manifest that they so faithfully adhere to their undeceiving yes and no, as Christ has commanded us, Mat. 5:37; Jas. 5:12, that they would rather forsake their possessions and life than to transgress this commandment; and their whole mind and life always conform to this yes and no, always spoken truthfully, before God and man; and, as these same people are now troubled on that account; therefore I will leave this to the consideration of all impartial, reasonable readers and also to yourselves, whether I and our beloved brethren are deserving of such innocent blood being shed because we lead them by the assistance and power of the Lord, by virtue of the word in the Holy Spirit, from falsehood unto truth, from unrighteousness unto righteousness, from darkness unto light and from the old, sinful life of ungodliness unto the penitent, new life of godliness, to which Moses and Christ, together with all the prophets, apostles, sacrifices, commandments, prohibitions, ceremonies and sacraments unanimously point. Are they who teach the powerful doctrines as taught from the lips of the Lord deserving of being called deceivers by you and your like, tickling and blood-thirsty preachers and writers? Are all such valiant witnesses and saints of Christ, who would rather die than wilfully transgress the word of the Lord, or confirm anything farther than by yes or no, deserving of such treatment, whereby you open the doors wide for the rapacious rulers to rob such pious souls and to the bloodthirsty, to murder them.

Dear Micron, if you were one of the true messengers and servants of Christ, as alas, you boldly boast, you would reasonably be expected to point the magistracy who have, as a general thing,

high and proud minds and are quite carnal in their life, to the true, sincere repentance which avails before God; and to teach them the Spirit, mind, nature and word of the Lord; for then the unction itself would teach them, without even the counsel of man, how they should conduct themselves in regard to the delicate matters of blood-shed, the oath and other matters. But now, alas, things are inverted, that there may be something invented with which to charge us before the blind world and cry that we are unfit to live. O, Martin, your scorpion's sting and lion's teeth are too sharp and envious; for your venomous, deadly stings and bites are, alas, too numerous!

Say who is wronged because we can not conscientiously swear because the Lord has forbidden it, if we testify to the truth when required and make use of no deceit?

The oath is required for no other purpose but that we shall truthfully testify. Can the truth not be told without being sworn? Do all testify to the truth, even, when under oath? To the first question you must answer in the affirmative and to the last in the negative.

As the oath is not the truth itself to which one testifies, or as the truth is not established by the one that takes the oath, why can not the magistracy, then, accept the testimony confirmed by yes and no, as commanded by God, instead of that confirmed by that which is forbidden? For they can punish those who are found false in their yes and no, as well as those who commit perjury by forswearing themselves.

I trust that no person is so confused that he doesn't know that the ordinances of God, which are from heaven, should not give way to the ordinances of men, which are from earth, and that the earthly ordinances of men should give way to God's ordinances, if they would be christians and live according to the truth.

Therefore it would be well for you to observe, first, that you by your writing concerning *the oath* make you ignorant or false teachers of Christ, the Son of God and of his holy apostle James.

For Christ's foundation and doctrine is that Moses had commanded not to forswear yourself; but that under the New Testament one should not swear at all. James says that we should not swear "neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath," Jas. 5:12 (mark, he says, nor by *any other oath*) and you gloze it, by the infatuation of the serpent, saying that it is not so, but that we may swear to the truth, &c. And thus the {eternal} Wisdom himself [Christ] and his holy witness James, alas, must be your disciples and servants.

Secondly, you condemn the innocent and clear the ungodly, both of which are an abomination in the sight of Jehovah, Prov. 17:15, whereby you strengthen the hands of the evil-doers and daub the wall with untempered mortar, Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 13:10, as was once said. Beloved, reflect and see if you are not one of those whose mouths speak great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of [your] advantage, Jude 16.

Thirdly, you cause great tribulation to the pious hearts who are born of the truth and faithfully walk and seal it with their yes and no, with their possessions and blood and thus load their innocent blood upon yourselves, Rev. 17:3.

John saw the finely attired whore upon the scarlet colored beast, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. And whether or not you, in your heart, have drank or do drink such a draught of blood with her, I will leave to the omniscient Judge and to yourself. Dear Micron, reflect and see if I do not rightly point out your sores.

As you did not fear, but diligently exerted yourself to adulterate, obscure and break the Lord's express word for the purpose of pleasing the magistracy; thus you have also, alas, exerted yourself to garble my words, as if I had cited the words of David (who does not delight in false doctrine nor has he sworn deceitfully, Psa. 24:4), in my article concerning *swearing*, [written] for the purpose of proving that under the New Testament we should not swear. While I adduced these words for no other

purpose, as my words plainly imply, than to show that but little attention was alas, given to the piety implied in the words of the said psalm, as is plainly shown by your false, defaming tongue and hand, toward me, a poor man, who, alas, has or finds but little consolation from the children of men.

Besides, I had written a note in the margin of the page, in plain words, that it was spoken by David in a spiritual sense; and that under the New Testament we were to use yes and no, instead. You have spared nothing to make me ridiculous and obnoxious to the reader.

In the same manner, you have not avoided to call me inconsistent, because I wrote that we should not swear at all in regard to temporal matters, because Christ did not use the word truly, in worldly matters, but merely in his doctrine, &c. I know of nothing that I wrote which you did not wrongly explain and garble. I wish that you would once consider, in the fear of God, what kind of a spirit it is that thus taught you. My saying that one should not swear at all in worldly dealings, was taught to me, not by the flattery of the old serpent, but by the word of the Lord, Mat. 5:37; Jas. 5:12.

But that I made an exception in regard to the doctrine, I did it to aid the reader, for the purpose of showing that Paul and Christ did not make use of the terms, *Truly*, and, *God is my witness* (which the learned would construe into an oath for the purpose of making a foundation for their doings), in treating of temporal matters, but in their teachings only.

If this matter is to be strictly weighed in the balance of the holy, divine word, in such a manner as to keep unanimity between all the Scriptures, then it should be observed that the oath and some affirmations are not of the same form in the Scriptures. For it is manifest that an oath was always sworn by God, or by something else and is so sworn yet, which is not the case with an affirmation, as Paul and Christ used in their teaching. Abraham said unto his servant, "Put, I pray you, your hand under my thigh;

and I will make you swear (mark) by Jehovah, the God of heaven and the God of the earth,” Gen. 24:2, 3.

Again: “By the life of Pharaoh (mark) you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here,” Gen. 42:15.

Again: “You shall fear Jehovah your God; you shall serve him and you shall cleave to him and swear by his name,” (mark), Deut. 10:20.

Again, Christ says, Neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by Jerusalem, nor by your head, Mat. 5:34, nor by the temple, nor by the altar, Mat. 23:16, 18. Read also Jas. 5:12. Again, neither with the world, nor by God, nor by the gospel, nor by a cross, &c.

Behold, thus an oath is always sworn *by* something. But this is not the case with an affirmation which is made without an oath.

An affirmation may be made without an oath; but an oath cannot be made without an affirmation. And thus Christ and Paul often affirmed their words with strong testimony, but did not swear to them. For nowhere did they say, “This we swear or affirm by the truth,” or; “By God,” or, “By our soul,” but solely, *truly*, or, *God is my witness* and other like affirming words.

As I thus humbly, plainly and strictly abide by the holy word, commandments, and prohibitions of the Lord; and, as I point my neighbors, who would do things in the fear of God, honestly to yes and no, as the mouth of Truth has commanded me and all true christians to do; and as I sincerely strive to instruct, according to my small talent, the poor, blind world in the true, divine knowledge, through Jesus Christ without any respect of person and to point out the falsehood of anti-christ and the old serpent, according to the truth, thus to lead them to eternal peace by his grace. And as the doctrine shows its fruit in many, as may be seen; therefore it is that they are so enraged at me, that neither Turk nor Tartar, neither tyrant nor fiend under the whole heavens, no matter how ungodly he is, is so hated as I, a persecuted man, am hated by the world through this defaming, false, blood-thirsty writing and crying of the learned, who, for the sake of their bellies,

teach the broad, easy way, with all the false prophets. He who created me knows what love I bear to you and all my enemies and slanderers. If I could serve you with my life, unto righteousness, I would at all times be willing and prepared to do so, by the grace of God. This I write with a good conscience, as if before God, in Christ Jesus.

Dear Micron, do consider how you, out of mere hatred of the truth, treat me, an old, infirm man, quite contrary to all truth, and also contrary to the virtuous, pious nature of the divine, christian love which would curtail or harm none, and to the dishonor of the Almighty, great God. But what will it benefit? The innocent, defenseless Lamb must be hated and murdered in his members.

I will let you teach and counsel (as you will not be convinced) your church, the world, to fight and retaliate as did Moses and the patriarchs, according to your manner. Teach them to punish, scatter, imprison and destroy their enemies; to adjudge the criminals, no matter whether they repent or not, as you write. Teach them also to swear and be sworn, after the manner that Moses commanded the Israelites. But I shall and will, by the grace of God, faithfully teach and counsel all truly regenerated children of God and followers of Christ, both rulers and subjects, according to the sure word of the holy gospel, to use no other sword than the one Christ Jesus and his holy apostles used, to be merciful unto the penitent sinners, as Christ is merciful unto us; to mercifully punish the impenitent and to admonish them in love, as Christ advised us; and scrupulously to stand by their yes and no, as the true Teacher and Executor of the New Testament, the always blessed Christ Jesus himself, has distinctly commanded and taught us with his guileless mouth; no matter what the consequences to my person may be. Dear Micron, reflect and see, if I have not rightly pointed to the Scriptures; and consider, also, by what Spirit you have slandered me. True is the wise man's word: "Who is able to stand before envy?" Prov. 27:4.

Eighthly, it is manifest that throughout your book you have labored with all your might to make the truth of Christ, taught by us to the measure of our talent, obnoxious and hateful to the reader and hearer, by my person and to make the falsehood of anti-christ, taught by you, pleasing and taking, by your own person. You have so presented the matter, but alas, not with God's Spirit, that [even] if I had been a tyro in the church for three or four months, I would probably have done about as I now do, according to your untrue, partial writing.

But thus the righteous Lord makes manifest unto the unsuspecting and innocent, the impure Spirit, heart, bitterness, ambition, hatred, envy, falsehood and infamy, as also their false doctrine of all such people who so cover up their ravenous heart with a sheepskin, as you do, that they can scarcely perceive it. The venomous, deadly arrows and lies directed against me show to the whole world what kind of a spirit is in you. Now it is Menno's inconstancy, anon, his ignorance, or deceitful intellect, or artful roguery, Menno's lies, &c. and you also say that I should have changed my doctrine. In short, I do not know what you wrote that was not written to the dishonor of God, of the saints, of the truth, of the church and of myself.

I thank my God, with joyful heart, that by his grace he kept me these twenty-one years in one doctrine and foundation of faith without any change, notwithstanding that I was unworthy when called to my hard service, in such perilous, dark, erring times, as all those will admit who have walked with me in Christ Jesus during the time of my pilgrimage; who have from the beginning read my humble works and books and heard my admonitions.

It may be that I am an ignorant, coarse and unintelligent man, but I have never in my life boasted of great intellectuality, learning, arts and science; but I do boast that I, in my weakness, seek the praise of the Lord and the salvation of my soul and that I have learned so much in the school of God, by his grace, that I know that the whole, undivided Christ is God's first and only

begotten and true Son and that those who contradict this are the spirits of anti-christ; that all blasphemers against God, profaners against the saints, adulterers of the Scriptures, wilful liars, public defamers, enviers of the pious, ambitious, blood-thirsty men are ungodly persons and not christians. Again, that all those who hear and follow Christ and submissively, obediently and conscientiously follow his word, ordinances and unblamable example in faith, by virtue of the new birth, are the children of God and that they shall forever inherit the kingdom of honor. I trust that I shall stand before the throne of High Majesty in his grace, with this my gross ignorance, which is wisdom in the sight of God, but hidden from the world, while all high minded and bold hearted, who are so wise in their own sight, shall hear: "I never knew you; Depart from me, you that work iniquity, Mat. 7:22. My dear friend Micron, take heed.

Again, I trust that I shall be found innocent before the Lord and his judgment of the charge, *artful roguery*, which you prefer against me; for I have dealt with you with no more artful and roguish of heart than those do who, daily for the sake of the testimony of Christ and of their consciences, are, with a glad and joyous mind, martyred; notwithstanding this I have to hear from you this unkind, false charge made before all the world. But the Lord will be our judge.

Again, as to the charge of falsehood, which you prefer against me, this is my plain answer: I am also concluded in the word, "All men are liars," Psa. 116:11; Rom. 3:4. I trust that I would submit to be killed before I should wilfully lie, be it slightly or grossly. I hate falsehood. I hated falsehood, even before I knew of whose seed it was. I shall also, in my old age, by the grace of the Lord, avoid it, so far as possible, since I know its origin or father.

O, Micron, Micron, how precisely do you treat me as the false prophets and stiffnecked Jews, out of mere hatred of the truth, treated the good Jeremiah, saying, "Come and let us devise devices against Jeremiah," and not pay attention to his words, Jer. 18:18.

John the Baptist had to hear from the Pharisees and Scribes that he was possessed by the devil; and Christ Jesus was called by them a wine-bibber and glutton, Mat. 11:19, that he cast out devils in the name of Beelzebub, as they said, Luke 11:15, that they might by these means lead the ignorant, reckless people from the truth and keep them in their leaven and vain, false doctrine. Just so you treat me, an infirm man, out of mere hatred of the truth. For if you could but daub me with so much filthy falsehood, that they would be frightened at me, then you would think that the cause of Christ was already lost. Thus is the poor, foolish flesh blind which is not overshadowed by the brightness of the Lord.

You may fulfill the measure of your fathers, so long as the hand of God does not intercede, yet I am assured in my heart, by the grace of the Lord, that as Jeremiah, John and Christ remained Jeremiah, John and Christ however much they were belied by their enviers and persecuted by them, out of hatred against the truth, I also, by the merciful grace and power of God, will remain the same Menno Simon in Christ which I was, in my weakness, for more than twenty years, however infamously you may belie me and depict or portray me, out of hatred against the truth; as also, that as the false prophets, scribes and Pharisees were inimical to truth and were blood-thirsty men and therefore died without God, you also are without God and his grace and that you, together with all false hypocrites, will receive your reward, unless you sincerely repent. [But this is] something of which there is but a very faint hope, because you so wilfully suppress the truth in regard to our discussion, tell so many falsehoods, so wittingly adulterate the Scriptures and act so deceitfully against your neighbor in his absence; something which no regenerated christian will or can do. For the word stands firm. Reflect and see if I do not truly point out your errors.

Ninthly, it is manifest that you have committed against yourself and your soul, which was purchased at such a precious price, the grossest kind of shame and injury; for these reasons, first, because

by your writing you have made yourself an open accuser, reprover, no, a teacher and instructor of God the Father, of Christ the Son, of Gabriel the angel and of all the apostles and saints of the New Testament. The Father confesses Christ Jesus to be his beloved Son, without any division; Christ confesses the Father to be his Father; and the angel and the apostles together with all the other witnesses unanimously testify the same, in regard to the visible, palpable, dying and resurrected Christ; and you boldly say and write that he is not. I will leave you to consider, in the fear of God, whether you are not such a one as I have written here.

Secondly, you prove yourself to be an open corrupter of the Holy Scriptures. For you write, "That Christ is of David's seed, Rom. 1:8; that he is of a woman." whilst all the unadulterated texts have it: Born of the seed (that is, of the generation) of David. Born of a woman, as may be seen by the Lutheran and Zurian translations.

Thirdly, you write, "That Christ has partaken of the flesh and blood of the children," Heb. 2:14; though the text says nothing more than "flesh and blood" without the addition of, "of the children;" if we accept of the Scriptural meaning of the pronoun, *eorundem*, that is, of the same.

Fourthly, you write at different places, "That Christ has taken on him Abraham's seed" (in *præterito*, that is, in the past tense), while the text says, He *takes on him* (in *praesenti*, that is, in the present tense). Whosoever does not believe it may read the text, Heb. 2:16.

* * * *

Since it is manifest that you have premeditatedly adulterated the holy, divine Scriptures and made yourself a translation and Scripture (as Tatian made himself a gospel, as you write) of your own, that you may the better maintain your anti-christian doctrine before the unsuspecting and ignorant, therefore I will leave it to the judgment of all the impartial, reasonable readers of all the world what kind of a teacher and writer you are.

O, dear Micron, consider what you have already become. It appears as if you have nearly lost both the Scriptures and common sense by the deadly disease of your ambitious and envious partiality. If you should thus defame his imperial majesty and his son Philip, as you have defamed the heavenly Father and his blessed Son Christ, in your writing and should plainly say, No, king Philip is not the son of the emperor; but he is the son of another person and is only *called* the son of the emperor; if you should, besides, adulterate their public mandates, sentences and commandments, as you have done the adduced Scriptures and the plain ordinances, word and commandments of Christ concerning baptism and the oath.; and moreover, should deride, upbraid, scorn and belie their sworn courtiers and faithful servants, because they honored and respected the emperor as the true father of Philip and Philip as the true son of the emperor and because they faithfully respected and obeyed their mandates, sentences and policies, O, Lord, what ado there would be made about you and what blood-songs would be sung. But what reward you are now deserving and must expect in due time from the Lord God, because you so lamentably blaspheme the Emperor of all emperors; the God of heaven and of earth and his blessed Son Christ Jesus, because you adulterate and break their heavenly mandates, ordinances and explicit and plain commandments and because you so lamentably slander, upbraid, belie, hate and persecute their faithful servants by your indiscreet writing I will leave to Almighty God and his judgment. Dear friend, ponder upon what is said here.

First, you have made yourself to be an open, perfidious falsifier, for you call on God as a witness (which in my opinion is [almost] the same as an oath), that you have given a true narration of the discussion; and the first thing you wrote in your book is an untruth. For you write: "A true Narration." And how quite untrue it is, God knows, as also you yourself and us. We have also partly touched on this, above, in the description of the discussion.

Secondly, you have quoted in your book my first words and very brotherly admonition: “If you now hear more powerful truths and surer foundation from us than you have heard until now, then you ought not to seek your own praise and honor; but you ought cordially to seek the honor and praise of the Lord, &c.,” and have coupled a gross falsehood with it and rendered it as if I had said that you had sought your own honor and praise by your writings in England. Something which, at that time, I had never thought about; for I knew no more about you than I would have known had you never been in the world. Yet, you garble my words to make it appear so. I will leave yourself to judge whether it was the Spirit of truth and of godly, faithful love, or the spirit of impure falsehood and faithless envy which inspired you to write thus.

Thirdly, you write, “That Herman Backereel had already proved to me that Mary was a daughter of David.” It seems that you are not at all ashamed to tell a falsehood, if it can but make your cause apparently true. He who can prove to me, by virtue of the Scriptures that Mary was a daughter of David, must have a Bible and Scripture different from ours; for it can not be found in our Bibles and Scriptures. [CHCoG: We do not know what ‘proof’ Herman used, but as we have shown above, the Matthew genealogy is that of Mary, and it shows that she is indeed a daughter of David.] I asked no proof of you nor of Herman, as it was irrelevant. And now you make it falsely appear that I should have said that she was not and that Herman proved to me that she was. This is certainly a falsehood.

Fourthly, you write, “That you frequently confessed to us that the Son of God died for us;” while I dare say and testify with a good conscience that you never touched upon it during the whole discussion. But when I asked you at the last discussion, whether you did not still call the man Christ (who you said had no Father) the Son of God? you answered, *yes*. When I asked again, why you called him so, what kind of an answer I received to that question

was related above. Yet you dare falsely write down, "That you frequently confessed it to us," as has been heard.

Though you were not ashamed of telling gross falsehoods against us before men, because you are aware that you can not sufficiently abuse us in the sight of the world, which is your church; yet one would reasonably expect that you would be ashamed to do so before ~~your~~ [the] God who tries the hearts and minds; and that you would remember that it is written, that "A thief is not so bad as a man accustomed to lies;" "for he can never attain to honor," Eccl. 20:27, 28; that the lying mouth kills the soul, Wis. 1:11; that God will destroy the liars, Psa. 5:6 and that their part will be in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21:8.

Fifthly, you write, "That you maintained the purity of your Christ against us;" while, before the Lord, before you and before us all, it did not occur otherwise than I related in the narration of the first discussion, concerning the inconsistency that you had in an impure Christ.

* * * *

I was also surprised at the fact that there was not sufficient common sense left in you to consider that you might have made it so by your partial writing and gross falsehoods, that many of the readers and particularly of those present at the discussion, might suspect you of writing falsehoods out of mere partiality and might by this leave your church. But the spirit of wisdom, alas, has not kissed the dwelling place of your soul, nor greeted it with the friendly lips of its truth.

Fourthly, you have also made yourself a very unsteady, wavering and inconstant person, whom one can not overtake on one foundation and doctrine. For, at the time of the discussion you confessed, "That Christ, from everlasting, was born of the Father; that he was, also, from everlasting, seated, divided and separated from the Father." Now you have changed yourself and you write that he remained in the Father. Mark your first change.

Secondly, you confessed two Sons in Christ; and now you say there is but one; yet, in fact [there are] two, if we impartially consider your doctrine.

Thirdly, you confessed that the crucified Christ who died for us was not God's Son; and now you write that you frequently confessed that he was. Mark your second and third changes; and you yet write that he had no Father. Whether this is *Simplex veritates oratio*, the word of truth is plain, as you write. I will leave yourself to consider. It must be admitted that if one can not see light-minded unsteadiness and false duplicity in this, he must be quite unintelligent and blind.

Fourthly, you confessed, "That Christ should not be worshipped according to his human nature;" and now you say, "That he should be." Mark your fourth change; yet you confess that he was an earthly man, of earth, who was born of Adam's seed. If this is not idolatry we may truly say that the Scriptures deceive us.

Whether so many confessions and recallings are consistent with a sincere, pious, constant and well-founded teacher and writer (as you want to be), who, out of ambition falsely denies it all, I will leave with this all impartial readers to judge.

Fifthly, you have made yourself, before all intelligent persons, a very proud, self-conceited, bold and ambitious boaster, because you sing such great triumphs and glory in your book, while it is manifest to God, to yourself and to all who were present that you had already lost the whole point in the discussion. It would also be manifest to the whole world, if you had but impartially told it as it happened; for you confessed two Sons in Christ and that the crucified one was not God's Son, as you, in fact, do yet; whereby you had already finished the discussion. You could not answer a word to all the Scriptures I read, whereby I testified unto you that the Son of man, the visible, palpable, eating, drinking, suffering, dying and arisen Christ, was also God's own, true Son, nor could you reply a word to my four convincing answers, with which I

overcame your unscriptural question concerning the birth from everlasting, separation, &c., all of which you have left out of your "Narration."

Neither did you say anything about the union of the two sons, which you generally called two natures in our discussion, which is now your strongest scripture, although, in fact, it is not found in the whole Bible. For if you had made mention of it at the time of the discussion, you would, by the assistance of the Lord, have received an answer. And, besides, having told such abominable falsehoods, you have changed the order of the discussion, garbled my words, misinterpreted them, abbreviated or added to them at pleasure and changed your own, whereby it is manifest before God and man that your discussion with us and particularly the account of it, was not prompted by a humble, converted and contrite heart; nor by the Spirit and love of Christ, but by an ambitious, self conceited, proud, obdurate flesh and mind. I will leave it to the all-knowing God and to yourself (to whom your seeking are best known) as also, to the pious reader, who walks in the truth, whether this is not the truth. O, friend, teach yourself before you undertake to teach others. Behold yourself, inwardly and outwardly, in the clear mirror of Christ and his holy word, that you may realize what an ignorant teacher and unfit christian you are before God.

Sixthly, you have also made of yourself a false prophet and teacher, a deceiver of men, an apparent hypocrite and ravening wolf in sheep's clothing. Do not take it amiss that I call you such and tell the truth. For how can you teach a more false doctrine than to teach that God the Father is not the true Father of the whole Christ; and that the whole Christ is not the true Son of God; to make the angel of God, John the Baptist and all the apostles of God false witnesses; to make Christ, the {eternal} truth, a false teacher; for he says that we shall not swear at all, Mat. 5:34 and you say that we are allowed to swear to the truth; to make the baptism which was commanded by Christ and taught and practiced

by his holy apostles a false baptism; and to want to teach a different doctrine and practice, of which not a word is found in all the Scriptures.

Dear Micron, if you would follow good counsel, you would at once quit your writing. For make it as you will, it is certain that you by your strongest arguments and best points do nothing, in fact, but supersede and teach [against] the {eternal} wisdom, Christ Jesus, the Son of God and his Holy Spirit, together with the apostles of Christ. You do nothing but change their words, doctrine, commandments, institutions, ordinances and practices, as if they in themselves were not essential and right, yes, powerless, vain and useless and by this you show that *you* are their teacher and master. Beloved Micron, take heed. The more you write the more manifest you make your own shame and false doctrine and the greater you make the guilt of your deceit. My friend, let yourself be warned.

You console the poor, blind people with falsehood, deprive them of both the Father and his Son, 1 John 2:22, and lamentably adulterate the word of the Lord; from which it is very plain that you forsake the Lord who has purchased us, 2 Pet. 2:1, that you are prompted by the Spirit of anti-christ, 1 John 4:3; that it is anathema, Gal. 1:8. You teach us a gospel which was not taught to us by the apostles of Christ. It shows that you rob God of his honor and are a murderer of souls, John 10:1, which Christ Jesus has purchased at such a great price, 1 Pet. 1:8. [You are] a messenger of darkness who transforms himself into an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11:14.

Do not take it amiss, that I write the truth. I repeat, a ravening wolf in sheep's clothing, Mat. 7:15, who devours the souls of men by a false explanation of the Scripture, under a fictitious semblance of truth, robs them of the truth and then offers and sacrifices them to the prince of hell, for the sake of a woollen rag and a piece of bread. Not to mention that you cause so much trouble to many a chosen saint of God, deprive him of possessions

and even of life, by your false doctrines, because you falsely charge, slander, defame and trample under foot the [true] doctrine, which is the clear, pure, unadulterated, powerful, saving and regenerating doctrine of Christ, as being heresy and deceit and [claim] the faithful children which are by this converted from unrighteousness unto righteousness and from the dumb idols unto the living God, are deceitful, sectarian people, before the erring, blind and carnal world of blasphemers, blood-preachers, messengers of the devil, blood-thirsty tyrants and covetous robbers.

O, Micron, friend, how good it would be for your poor soul (if you do not sincerely repent) if you had never been born. What have you, miserable man, allowed your ambitious, proud, evil flesh to do, that you, for the sake of a little breeze of vain honor, which you can enjoy but a short time in this confused evil world, have committed such abominable blasphemy against the Almighty, eternal and great God. You have so lamentably defamed his holy apostles and faithful witnesses; so grossly profaned the Lord's word; so deadly deceived the people; so unmercifully caused trouble to the godly and pious and you have heaped such great guilt and sin upon your own, poor soul by your writing. Surely your whole book is nothing but a plain declaration and manifestation of your own shame and anti-christian doctrine, both for the present and future world, which discovers, proclaims and publishes your abominably great abuse and error unto all men who seek the Lord. Friend Micron, reflect and see if I do not rightly point out your very dangerous wounds and deadly sores, according to the Scriptures.

Lastly, you have made yourself a shame and dishonor to all the rest of the preachers who are your fellows in doctrine and service, in the sight of all the pious of the world. For, as you migrated from Flanders to England; from England to Friesland, for the sake of the gospel, as is said; and as you do much writing and disputing, lead a reasonable, civil life before the world; are not particularly

considered as an adulterer, wine-bibber or coxcomb; in short, as you are finely clothed in sheep's clothing, &c.; therefore you are probably looked upon and considered as an exemplary person, head, light, or at least, as one of the principal of them. And you are yet in truth found to be, before God and all intelligent persons, such a one as we have partly shown you to be in this epistle, by your own writings. Therefore we will let the reader consider in the fear of God, what we should think of the others who are not thus covered with sheep's clothing, but who grasp, eat, drink and lead a pompous, ostentatious, careless, easy and carnal life, who fear neither God nor devil, who sell the souls of men for a trifle, who gladly accept liens and easy times and still are in the same doctrine, vocation and service with you. And what we should do in regard to attending the preaching of both you and them (on which account they would bite their own tongues for madness), I will let everyone judge who cordially seeks God, according to the word of the Lord, Mat. 7:15; 15:13; 16:6; John 10:1; Rom. 16:16; Gal. 5:8; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 2:3; Tit. 3:9; 2 John 1:7; 2 Cor. 6:14; Rev. 18:4.

I am very much surprised that the other preachers, part of whom (though they do not want to be upon the narrow path with Christ and his chosen ones) are naturally intelligent, do not reprove you and stop your slanderous writing, as it is a shame to them as well as to yourself; for never was your anti-christian foundation and doctrine concerning Christ, the Son of God, made so manifest as it was by your bold assertions and blindness and by my necessary reply to it. All those that have eyes may see what fearful unbelief and abominable foundation and doctrine you have. Still, you will remain good teachers in the sight of the world, for it is such they seek and desire. John truly says, "They are of the world; therefore they speak of the world and the world hears them," 1 John 4:5.

Behold, dear Micron, I have placed the clear mirror of truth before the eyes of your conscience and properly dissected the

invisible members of your soul. Now open your eyes and you shall see what kind of a man you are and how greatly you are spiritually diseased; from which spring all these obnoxious exhalations, such as upbraiding, lying, defaming, false explanations, adulteration of the Scriptures and flatterings. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin," Rom. 3:20, thus this epistle will reveal unto you how deadly you are stung by the serpent and how he has corrupted you, before God, by the accursed venom of his evil nature and poisoned your whole life.

If the merciful Lord, by his loving kindness, should make you feel and know your abominable shame which you have committed against God and man by your slanderous writing, which, I fear, you have until now, by your great blindness, hatred, ambition and self-love, but little noticed, then do not be dilatory (if you would not die in your ungodliness) in coming before the throne of grace, the always blessed Christ Jesus, with a broken, contrite, repentant spirit, in an [un]adulterated faith, with a changed, penitent and new heart; for he is the spiritual brazen serpent, raised unto all of Adam's children (who are poisoned in Adam) as a wholesome sign. He is the man who can cure you of all the deep wounds of your diseased soul. He is the Physician in Israel. With him alone is found the ointment and medicine of eternal life. And if you would commit yourself to him and follow his advice, that you may find help and health for your diseased soul, you must give yourself up to him; obey his word, will, commandments and prohibitions; deny your selfish, ambitious, false, partial, envious, vain, wrathful flesh which leads you to this abominably false writing. Become little in your own sight; lay a better and christian foundation in your heart; quit your flattering, adulteration of the Scriptures, idolatrous sacraments and all hypocrisy; truly seek and fear the Lord and his holy word with sincerity of heart; reconcile your neighbors whom you have wronged through pernicious falsehood, with tears, in sincere brotherly love and by other writings publish to the world that through mere hatred against the truth, you have

causelessly still more defamed their name, which was already hated too much for the truth's sake; something which, I fear, you will hardly do unless you become a more godly, penitent and pious Micron than you, alas, have been until now.

So long as you do not do as pointed out here, it is manifest that you without cause hate your neighbor and are inimical to him, out of hatred of the truth; and are therefore separate from Christ, and with the murderers. O, friend, reflect and repent. Take heed, lest you forever destroy your precious soul for the sake of a little temporary and vain praise! But a short time and Micron is no more! O, the sentence, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" Mat. 25:41. Oh, oh, what a sentence!

Friend Micron, in faithful love I warn you. Take heed, I pray you. I have known several persons who were prompted by a like spirit of bitter zeal against the Lamb and his chosen ones, who were adjudged and punished by the Lord, who does justly and properly rewards the unjust before the eyes of men.

It is about eighteen or nineteen years since that highly esteemed man, who was much respected by the world (whose name and country I will not mention), wickedly advised that they should destroy me together with the pious. His words and ungodly thoughts were hardly finished until the avenging hand of the Lord was laid upon him. He dropped at the table; and thus in a moment his blood-thirsty, impenitent, ungodly life was ended in a terrible way. O, fearful judgment!

About the same time it happened to another man who thought that he would so set his trap that I could not escape, that he at the same meal he was eating while speaking these words, was suddenly struck by an arrow from the Lord, stricken with a severe disease and thus had to give an account before the Lord. He was buried within eight days from the time he spoke these words.

Another who was to become an officer to the emperor at a certain place thought that he would destroy this people, if there

was any virtue in the imperial army. He came to the place where he was to be situated and serve in his capacity; and four or five days thereafter the bell was tolled and the requiem sung over him. Behold, thus God, the Lord [Jehovah], annihilates the designs of the ungodly who storm this holy mound and destroys those who hate his truth and are inimical to it.

In the year 1554 three of our brethren were at Wisburg, in Gotland, for the purpose of earning a livelihood. A preacher of the city named Lawrence, who was of the spirit of his father the devil, cried after them in the street, hooted at them and said that they should not practice their religion there, if it were to cost him all that was surrounded by his clothes, meaning his body and soul. A few days afterwards he conversed with one of these brethren in the presence of another preacher who was not unreasonably minded. He behaved outrageously. The great Lord, in the presence of both of them, smote him so that he lost his voice at once; and within twenty-four hours he was a corpse. O, terrible punishment and judgment of God!

A case almost similar happened the same year at Wismer. They had accepted a crier named Doctor Smedesteet, who said that he would rather have a hat full of our blood than a hat full of our gold. He persuaded the magistracy, who gladly hear such makers of pillows, "To proclaim, just before cold winter, to the poor children to clear the place before St. Martin's day; or else they would be put where they would not like to go." Smedesteet was very joyous that he had accomplished the fulfillment of his heart's desire, but to his sorrow the same day the Almighty, great Lord laid the hands of his wrath upon him and within seven days the Lord took him away by a severe illness; yet the blind, obdurate world does not observe these things.

In the year 1555 in the same city there was a preacher named Vincent, who lives there yet, who was never tired of upbraiding and slandering. On the day they call the Lord's ascension-day, he read the Scripture, "He that believes and is baptized shall be

saved,” Mark 16:16. He said he would upbraid and slander us so long as his mouth would open. The same hour the strong Lord closed it and bound his tongue. He fell down in the pulpit and was carried by some of those present as a punished one into his house as a dumb man. Behold, thus he may punish those who would touch the apple of his eye and harm it. If I were to relate all the incidents which in my time befell the enemies of the saints, it would require a separate volume. Therefore I advise you in sincerity of heart, to no longer oppose such a strong and avenging God and Lord. I tell you in Christ that it will be too hard, yes, too hard for you to kick against the pricks, Acts 9:5. For his name is Sovereign Lord, Mighty Prince, Isa. 9:6. “Who is like you, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Exo. 15:11. His arrows never miss and when he calls we must appear. None can escape from him and avoid his wrath. O, Micron, take heed.

Good friend, if your battle was against me, as you perhaps think it is, you would already have won it. For the whole world, in this matter, is on your side, yes, the serpent himself; and against me; for this foundation is the only weapon, according to the doctrine of John, which is to conquer his kingdom, the world. But the battle is not against me, but against the truth itself, against the Father and his blessed Son, against the whole Scriptures and against those who dwell in heaven. Therefore take heed. Although the reckless, rough world may say amen to your cause, yet that will not be the case with the Most High, whose glory, honor, truth and testimony I, according to my small talent, uphold, by his grace and assistance.

And even if you do deprive me of my honor, reputation, body and life, which I have already long deemed of little consequence for Christ’s sake, in the sight of the world, which are not concluded under Christ’s prayer, John 17:9, though, thank God, I have never harmed you, nor wished you any harm. Still, God the Father will remain the true Father of Christ and Christ the true Son

of God; and you will have to turn from your impure, anti-christian doctrine to the unadulterated, pure doctrine of Christ, or else you will be one of those of whom it is written: "He that does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," John 3:18. Neither partizanism nor disputing will prevail against God and his word. He is the one who will have the praise and his word is the doctrine which will remain the truth. If you do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that his testimony and word are true and that his ordinances are the true ordinances; if you are not born from God; do not become of divine disposition and nature; are not urged by and possessed by the Holy Spirit; do not sincerely repent; if you are not in Christ, nor Christ in you, then, according to the doctrine of John, you are one of those who have no God, 1 John 2:22.

But if you have Christ, if you actually believe that he is the true Son of God, then you have both the Father and the Son, 1 John 2:24; and you will walk as he walked: You will not wilfully tell a falsehood; for you are born of the truth; you will not hate; you will not defame: you will not inform against your neighbors; and you will wrong no person. You will seek the salvation of others and not their corruption; you will reprove their sins; you will rightly teach and not deceive them, for the spirit of love which does justly by God and man will dwell in you and prompt you.

If you have Christ in truth, you will walk in the light, John 3:21; 8:12; you will follow the true shepherd and will enter in at the right door, John 10:2; you will walk upon the true road; remain in the truth, in the right vineyard, John 15:1; build upon the true rock, Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:5; you will not adulterate the word of God; for your spirit is one with the Spirit of Christ; your faith will be one with his word and your life, though in weakness, one with his life.

You will seek the praise and honor of the Lord and not your own; you will confess Christ as your Savior, at the risk of life or death by all the world; all your pleasure will be in the law of the

Lord and your whole life in his fear; your thoughts will be pure and all your words well-seasoned; your daily combat will be against the world, the devil and your own evil flesh; and you will, by your honest, virtuous life, set an example to all the world; the cross, taken upon yourself for the sake of the Lord's word and testimony, you will patiently bear; and, if you should thoughtlessly think, say or do anything wrong, you will sincerely lament it. In short, you will prove by all your actions that you are a chosen child of God, born of the heavenly seed of the holy Word and that you have become a live member of the body of the Lord.

Behold, dear Micron, such penitence and reformation I sincerely wish you; and I would like to see it truly manifested in you, in power and truth and that I then, for the sake of the testimony of Jesus, together with you, would have to make a sacrifice of my blood, to the praise of the Lord and to the edification of our neighbors. I repeat it: Repent; that the precious treasure given for us is not lost in your case.

I would with this commend you to Almighty God. He will bestow upon you according to his great grace, which I would like to see you receive. No more after this, however much you may cry and write, unless you be converted into a better mind, and I am constrained and urged to do so by the god-fearing.

Nor shall I solicit a public discussion with any person again and for these reasons: First, because I have these many years, desired it by numerous written and verbal requests and have never been granted it. From which it is manifest that they care but little about the glory of God and the souls of men.

Secondly, because your principal teachers and exemplary men, as John A'Lasco, Calvin and Theodore Beza, whom you confess to be your most worthy and most beloved brethren, are men of blood. That this is the case is testified to by their own books, as also by old Seructus of Geneva and Joris of Paris, who was burned in England.

Thirdly, because your brethren, the Welsh church, as they are called at Frankfort, have sworn against us in their publications; which two things we did not so positively know before this as we do now.

Inasmuch as I plainly see that there is only deceit, faithlessness, blood-thirstiness and perverseness found among the children of men wherever one may turn himself; and as nothing does nor can avail on earth but the praise of Christ and the salvation of souls; therefore I will let Babylon, with its false preachers, impure doctrine, idolatrous baptism and supper, together with its false religion and impenitent, vain, easy life, be Babylon and will, with the holy prophet Habakkuk, stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower and thus clearly sound the trumpet of the holy, divine word from the walls and gates of Jerusalem, according to my small talent and faithfully awaken the citizens of the eternal peace, to joyfully to sing the lovely Hallelujah through the streets, with grateful, joyous hearts, to the honor of God, Heb. 2:1; to attire themselves, before God and the world, in the shining white raiment of the saints, in sincerity of heart and purity of doctrine. I will faithfully advise them with careful, pious Esdras and say, My people, hear my word and prepare yourselves for the battle and evil things, &c., 4 Esdras 16:41. With holy Paul, "Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day," Eph. 6:13. And with Christ himself: Watch and pray, Mat. 24:42; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36; 1 Pet. 4:7. For the prince of darkness, with his whole force and kingdom, besieges the city of God, storms it by night and day, uses many means, with flesh and blood, falsehood and false doctrine, lusts of the eye, imprisonment, banishment, confiscation, blood-shed, tyranny and violence. Whosoever does not constantly pray and fear the Lord can not stand.

I will let Babylon be Babylon. Those who are piously inclined will leave their ungodliness and wed themselves to Christ; for truth is revealed and the repast is prepared. Blessed is he who enters in

with sincerity of heart and saves his wedding garment. I would sincerely warn all the chosen children of God, the sincere faithful brothers and sisters of Christ, with beloved John, our most beloved brother and fellow in tribulation, in the kingdom and in the patience of Jesus Christ and say, children, “Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is of the world; and the world passes away and the lust of it; but he that does the will of God abides forever,” 2 John 2:15-17.

Friend Micron, again be warned; repent, pray to God for grace and earnestly reflect upon that which I have written. And do not be angry because I have thus sharply reproved you. I have done so truthfully and to the honor of God and to the benefit of the reader, as I reprove the whole world, without respect of person, that you may rightly learn the brightness of Christ, see and feel your foul sores, be healed by the Lord’s medicine, sincerely repent and be eternally saved. I commend you to the gracious, merciful God and Father, for the enlightenment of your blind soul and the reformation of your sinful life, by his blessed, first-born and only true Son, Christ Jesus, by the manifestation of his eternal Holy Spirit unto more righteousness. “Open rebuke is better than secret love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful,” Prov. 27:5, 6.

MENNO SIMON.

October 16th.

A HUMBLE PRAYER TO THE READER.

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

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

[CHCoG: Though there are several things that we believe Menno has misunderstood, we do not accuse him of being deliberately untruthful, as we remain convinced that he was sincere, and did all he could to honourably defend what he believed to be true, and that the vast majority of what he believed is scripturally correct.]

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

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

Secondly, I pray them not to take it amiss that I also referred to John A'Lasco. It was not done through hatred nor disfavor; but zeal for the glory of God and of Christ his Son and for the honor of eternal truth and for the sincerely desired salvation of your souls, have urged me to do so; because Micron says, "That they are of one mind in doctrine," and I do not see that one could believe, teach, write, speak, hold, or feel more abominably concerning the crucified Christ than he does in his defense against me. Besides, I hear that he, also, has become a man guilty of blood, notwithstanding he verbally confessed to me that none should be harmed on account of the faith. But now, as I hear, it is claimed that [the death] was not on account of faith, but on account of disobedience. As the foundation is quicksand so are their assertions. Let the rulers command things in keeping with the gospel of Christ and neighborly love; and if we refuse to obey them, then we are culpable. I will leave it to the judgment of all reasonable rulers, as before God in Christ, whether it is in accordance with, or contrary to the Scriptures, to expatriate the poor souls because they fear God; confess the crucified Christ to be God's Son; receive the holy baptism according to the commandment of the Lord and the doctrine of the apostles; affirm

their testimony by yes or no, in accordance with Christ's command and because they lead a penitent, pious life in righteousness, &c.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

clearly, that they may, with all the saints, flee from the future judgment and that they may, in the day of his appearance, stand before the throne of his Majesty in eternal joy.

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

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

Let none believe me; but believe the [Biblical] truth which I have, according to my small talent, placed before you in invincible power and clearness, according to the pure doctrine of the holy apostles, evangelists, prophets and of Christ himself. In Christ, be warned. Your poor souls are lamentably deceived by the doctrine of our opponents; for it is the smoke from the bottomless pit, Rev. 9:2, which obscures the bright sun, Christ Jesus and the air of his holy word; it is the falsehood of the old serpent; its egg and brood; he that eats it dies and that which is crushed breaks out into a viper, Isa. 59:5; it is the spiritual dung with which Ezekiel had to bake his bread, Ezek. 4:12. In short, it is the horrible, abominable draught of the golden cup of the Babylonian whore, drunk with the blood of the saints, with which she has made drunk all who dwell in the earth, Rev. 17:4.

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

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

Read attentively and judge impartially, Amen.



A PLAIN AND CONVINCING PROOF,

**FROM THE SCRIPTURES,
THAT**

**JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE, PROMISED,
SPIRITUAL DAVID, THE KING OF KINGS, THE
LORD OF LORDS, AND THE TRUE, SPIRITUAL
KING OF SPIRITUAL ISRAEL, THAT IS, OF HIS
CHURCH WHICH HE HAS BEGOTTEN AND
BOUGHT WITH HIS OWN BLOOD. FORMERLY
WRITTEN TO ALL THE TRUE BRETHREN AND
FELLOW-CHRISTIANS, SCATTERED HITHER
AND THITHER, AGAINST THE ABOMINABLE
AND TERRIBLE BLASPHEMY OF JOHN VAN
LEYDEN, WHO PASSED HIMSELF FOR THE
JOYOUS KING OF ALL, AND AS HAVING
BECOME THE JOY OF THE MISERABLE; HE
PLACED HIMSELF IN THE STEAD OF GOD.**

**BY
MENNO SIMON.**

**“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid,
which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.**

TESTIMONY AGAINST JOHN VAN LEYDEN.

Grace, peace and mercy, from God the Father, through Jesus Christ, be with all true brethren and fellows scattered hither and thither.

MAY the eternal, merciful God, who has called us from darkness into his marvelous light, who has led us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, keep us upon the right way, that Satan by his wiles will not deceive us and that no root of bitterness springs up among us to make confusion and many by this be made unclean, as is, alas, now the case to some extent. And thus it must be that sects will arise among us that the tried [and true] may be made manifest, 1 Pet. 2:9; Col. 1:13; Heb. 11:15; Deut. 29:18; 1 Cor. 1:18.

Let none be offended by this. But let all give heed to the word of God and abide by it, that they may be delivered from the strange woman, as Solomon says (by which woman we should understand all the false teachers), “Even from the stranger which flatters with her words; which forsakes the guide of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God,” Prov. 2:16; 4:6, 7. This is the true nature of all false teachers.

First, they forget the pure doctrine of Christ and choose a strange doctrine. They enchant others so that they can not believe the truth and use smooth talk, as Paul says, “By good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple,” Rom. 16:18.

Secondly, they leave their Master, Christ, [the only one] whom they should hear, as the Father testifies of him, saying, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear him,” Mat. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35. But all false teachers forget this voice from the Father, and they leave their only Master, Christ Jesus; for they

are not of his sheep, so they do not hear his voice, Mat. 23:9; John 10:26.

Thirdly, the false teachers forget the covenant of God. They pay no attention to that which we should give the most heed. As Christ reprovably said unto the Pharisees, "You pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy and faith. These ought you to have done and not leave the other undone. You blind guides which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," Mat. 23:23, 34; and as Paul said, "The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of unfeigned faith; from which some having swerved, have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; but understanding neither what they say nor what they affirm," 1 Tim. 1:5-7. Thus all false teachers forget the covenant of God by which they are bound to him, as is, alas, the case with many at present, who have forgotten all upon which they were baptized, namely, the cross and would recommend and make use of the sword. May the Almighty God save all true christians from this and may he give us the wisdom and intelligence to keep the covenant of God and to be always mindful of what kind of spirit Christ wants his disciples to have, Luke 9:55.

Grant that they may beware of this strange woman; for her house is inclined to death and her ways to corruption. All those who enter in unto her will not come out again, nor do they get on in the way of life. And this strange woman now reigns extensively and she deceives many, as did and yet does the prophetess Jezebel and as the serpent deceived Eve. Therefore we will, by the grace of God, uncover some things, that those who are yet blind may become seeing and that when they acknowledge anti-Christ to be an abomination standing in the holy place, they may see all [her] deceit, Rev. 2:20; Gen. 3:13; Mat. 24:15; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:7; Dan. 9:17; Rev. 17:18. And that, as they will not drink of the cup of the Babylonian whore, they may beware of the venom of the serpent and that if they are bitten by the serpent, they may become

aware of it and get rid of the venom by looking on [Christ,] the true ‘serpent’ and be thus cured. All of which God must give us, Num. 21:6; John 3:14.

We would not have written, but it became necessary; partly because we can not tolerate their shameful deceit and blasphemy against God, that a man be placed in Christ’s stead; partly because we are not allowed a verbal, scriptural defense against such deceit and abominable heresy concerning the promised David and other articles. But it is the nature of all impostors and erring spirits to flee from the word of God, as Christ says, “For everyone that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are fashioned in God,” John 3:20, 21. Therefore he that flees from the light, that is, from the word of God, manifests that his deeds are not fashioned in God.

But if there are some who can not yet see this they need the eye salve which is spoken of in the revelation of John, Rev. 3:18. O, God, what perilous times these are! How the prophet Baal conspires with the Moabite king against the Israel of God! Num. 24; 25.

The Egyptian sorcerers, how they stand against the true Moses! Exo. 6.

The lying Pashur, how he is heeded because he prophecies prosperity, of which nothing is realized! Jer. 20; 2 Tim. 3.

How the false Hananiah deceives the pious children of Israel and makes them trust in falsehood! Jer. 28.

The Almighty God shall raise a Jeremiah to reprove the deceiver of the people, who shall speak nothing but that which God commands him to speak and Jehovah will place his word in the mouth of this Jeremiah as a fire and all false teachers as stubble, that truth may prevail, Jer. 1:17.

And if ever so many prophets of Baal be raised, yet the Lord will leave behind a ~~Mieron~~ [servant] who shall promulgate the true

word of the Lord. But sufficient of this. We shall commence the matter to the honor of God and to the edification of the church.

In the first place, it is incontrovertible that Almighty God has made his Son, Christ Jesus our Lord, King of his faithful church [and will make him King] of all the earth. That Christ [Christ's Father] is the King of all the earth is abundantly testified to by the Scriptures; particularly the prophet David, who says, "Jehovah most high is terrible; He is a great king over all the earth," Psalms 47:2; and, "God is gone up with a shout, Jehovah with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises, sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing praises with understanding. God reigns over the heathen; God sits upon the throne of his holiness," Psalms 47:2, 6-8; [Revelation 7:10, 22:1].

Therefore, as true as Christ is God, so true he is King of all the earth. [CHC CoG: Yes, Christ is God's Son, and he will be made the King of all the earth when he returns. Luke 19:12-28, Acts 15:14-18, 1 Cor 15:22-28, Rev 11:15 & 20:6.]

Paul testifies this to the Ephesians, saying that God, the Father, "raised him from the dead and set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And he has put all things under his feet and gave him to be head over all things to the church," Eph. 1:20-22.

Christ testifies of himself that he is a mighty King, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," Mat. 28:18. Paul says that Christ is the express image of God, upholding all things by the word of his power, Heb. 1:3.

Thus Christ is the king of all the earth notwithstanding the wicked may deny it. Therefore the prophet says, "Jehovah reigns; let the people tremble; he sits between the cherubim; let the earth be moved," Psalm 99:1. Still they can do nothing more than the Lord allows them to do, John 19:11; and none can withstand him.

The mountains melt as wax before Jehovah, the ruler of all the earth, Psa. 97:5.

Further, that Christ is king of his believing church is clearly testified to by the Scriptures. Thus speaks Isaiah, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," Isa. 9:6.

The house of Jacob is generally understood as [being] the believing church. Of this, Christ is king, as the angel clearly testified; and as Jeremiah says concerning Christ, that he would be a king who would reign and prosper, Jer. 23:5. Also Isaiah says, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment," Isa. 32:1.

As Christ is king, both of all the earth and of his believing church, as we have shown by the plain Scriptures, according to the grace received by God, how can John Van Leyden call himself the joyous king of all, who has become the joy of the miserable?

If he would be our king and our Lord, then Paul and Isaiah must stand back. Paul says, "For though there are those that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there are many gods and many lords), for us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him," 1 Cor. 8:5. Isaiah says, "Jehovah is our judge, Jehovah is our law-giver, Jehovah is our king, He will save us" Isa. 33:22.

Behold, as true as Christ is our judge and as sure as he is our law-giver, it is as sure is he our king. Where, now, is John Van Leyden? O, abominable blasphemy against God, that a man should call himself the joyous king of all, while it is written, O Lord, Jehovah God, Creator of all things, who is fearful and strong and righteous and merciful and the only and gracious King," 2 Mac. 1:24; who alone is good, who alone is a mighty king, who

alone is righteous, omnipotent and eternal, who delivers Israel from all evil. Paul says, "I give you charge in the sight of God, who quickens all things and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession: that you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in his time he shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords," 1 Tim. 6:13-15. Again, it is the greatest blasphemy a man can speak, that John Van Leyden asserts that he has become the joy of the miserable.

Christ became our joy at his birth, according to the testimony of the angel to the shepherds, saying, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord," Luke 2:10, 11; the words of David accord with this, "Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart. Rejoice in Jehovah, you righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness," Psalms 97:11, 12. "Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all you lands. Serve Jehovah with gladness; come before his presence with singing, know that Jehovah is God. It is he that has made us and not we ourselves: we are his people and the sheep of his pasture," Psalms 100:1-3. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice," Phil. 4:4. Thus all the Scriptures advise us that we shall rejoice in [Jehovah God and in] Christ, our Lord; for it is he of whom the patriarch Jacob prophesied that he would be the expected one of the people, that is, the one for whom the people of God should look with great desire, as Christ also testifies, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad," John 8:56.

Christ is the true Melchisedec, king of Salem, that is, the king of peace; who has made peace between God the Father and the human race, Hebrews 7:1. He is the pious Isaac who by his sacrifice has reconciled us with his heavenly Father; and his sacrifice

remains worthy forever, Heb. 10:10; 9:12.* He is the true David, who has slain the great Goliath and has taken away the blasphemer of Israel, 1 Sam. 17:49; Eccl. 47:4. Yes he has caused great rejoicing, as it is written, “The Spirit of Lord Jehovah is upon me (says Christ), because Jehovah has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of Jehovah and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness,” Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 4:18, 19. Behold how clearly it is shown here that Christ has become the joy of the miserable, in whom all pious christians rejoice, saying, Rejoicing, we will rejoice in the Lord; our souls shall be rejoiced in the Lord; for he has clothed us in raiments of righteousness and surrounded us with the mantle of righteousness, as a bride ornamented with bracelets. To this the prophet Zechariah admonishes us, saying, “Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King comes unto you; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass and upon a colt, the foal of an ass,” Zech. 9:9; Mat. 21:2. And God’s prophet says, “Praise Jah! Sing unto Jehovah a new song and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in their Maker: let the children of Zion be joyful in their king. Let them praise his name in the dance; let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp,” Psal. 149:1-3.

* [CHCoG: I find this an odd comparison to use, as Issac, though perhaps willing to be sacrificed, was never actually harmed, while Christ truly was tortured and sacrificed, and for the sins of ALL of us, making Christ’s actions far beyond Issac’s. The better comparison is Jehovah and Abraham, who were both willing to sacrifice their son of Promise. Heb. 11:17, Jas. 2:21.]

Thus did all the saints of God, as did David, who says, "Our soul waits for Jehovah; he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him; because we have trusted in his holy Name," Psa. 33:20, 21. And, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation," Isa. 25:9. By this we may see how all the saints have rejoiced in God. And how can we rejoice in a man, for it is written, "Do not put your trust in princes, nor in the son of a man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in Jehovah his God," Psa. 146:3-5; who helps the miserable and raises up the crushed. "He is their mighty protection and strong stay, a defense from heat and a cover from the sun at noon, a preservation from stumbling and a help from falling. He raises up the soul and lightens the eyes, he gives health, life and blessing," Eccl. 34:16, 17. As Christ has become our joy, so everyone may judge for himself what an abomination it is in the sight of God that a man would [claim to be what] Christ our Savior is. Is it not an abomination standing in the holy place? And what is worse yet, this John Van Leyden is not satisfied with passing himself as the joyous king of all, who has become the joy of the miserable; but he also claims to be the promised David of whom all the prophets testify; and he does not admit that Christ is the one who was promised.

Of such a mind are all false prophets and anti-christs. That they have on their heads names of blasphemy and crowns like unto gold, by which is meant pride, as may be seen by the Babylonian whore who was arrayed in scarlet color, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication; for she says in her heart, I sit as a queen and shall see no sorrow, Rev. 17:4; 18:7. But our Lord can not tolerate it and says, "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah," Isa.

13:19. Therefore, her plagues shall come in one day, Rev. 18:7. And not Babylon alone, but also all anti-christs shall be destroyed, together with their deceit and false writings, as Christ says, "Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up," Mat. 15:13.

And a greater anti-christ than he who passes himself for the promised David can not make his appearance, for the promised David is Christ, as the Scriptures abundantly testify. He that has ears to hear, let him hear.

First, the prophet Hosea says, "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince and without a sacrifice and without a sacred pillar and without an ephod or teraphim; afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek Jehovah their God and David their king and shall fear Jehovah and his goodness in the latter days," Hosea 3:4, 5.

It is incontrovertible that this king David can be none other than Christ Jesus, whom all must seek who want to be saved, as it is written, Seek Jehovah and you shall live, Amos 5:4. Isaiah says, "Seek Jehovah while he may be found, call upon him while he is near," Isa. 55:6. For this reason David says, "I sought Jehovah and he heard me and delivered me from all my fears," Psa. 34:4. And Christ, [from] the wisdom of God says, He that finds me finds life and shall have the pleasure of the Lord. And what other king should the children of Israel have than Christ Jesus, the true Melchisedec, king of Salem, which is the King of peace? Heb. 7:1; of whom the whole number of his disciples have testified thus: "Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest," Luke 19:28; 2:14.

The Jews despised Christ—this King—and therefore they were blinded, yet they shall return and come to Christ, their King David, as Paul testifies, saying, "That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this

is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins,” Rom. 11:26; Isa. 59:20. As Israel is yet to be converted unto Christ, it follows incontrovertibly that this King David whom Israel shall seek can be no other than Christ.

Therefore every righteous person will understand in what terrible error those are who do not believe that by David, we should understand Christ, but [instead look for] another man. And of such, Christ says, “I have come in my Father’s name and you do not receive me; but if another shall come in his own name, you will receive him,” John 5:43. But those who, with Jerusalem, will not receive Christ, will also be destroyed with it; and those who, with the Pharisees, oppose Christ and yet think that they are enlightened, shall also be blinded with the Pharisees. Let all pray to God for wisdom and they shall understand that Christ is the true David, Luke 19:7; Isa. 6:10; John 9:12.

Again, Jeremiah says, “It shall come to pass in that day, says Jehovah of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off your neck and will burst your bonds. Foreigners shall no more enslave them. For they shall serve Jehovah their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them,” Jer. 30:8, 9.*

Now the commandment of the Lord is, “You shall worship the Lord your God and you shall serve only him,” Mat. 4:10. Therefore this king David is none but Christ, which the Father has raised unto us, saying, Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. And the christian church acknowledges no other king, no other Lord but Christ. Therefore all the saints say, “Jehovah is our defense; and the Holy One of Israel is our King,” Psalms 89:18. Now who is the Holy One but he of whom Isaiah testifies, saying, “For

* [CHCoG: As a true descendent of David, it may well be that Jesus Christ is to become directly King over Israel. It is also possible that the resurrected King David may himself be made the direct king over Israel, and Jesus, as King of the entire earth, will be the ultimate king over Israel. But we will have to wait until the Millennium begins to see exactly how Jehovah God will set this up.]

thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy,” Isa. 57:16. And “These things says he that is holy, He that has the key of David,” Rev. 3:7. Thus speaks Jeremiah concerning Babylon, “Recompense her according to her work; according to all that she has done, do unto her; for she has been proud against Jehovah, against the Holy One of Israel,” Jer. 50:29.

Thus the Holy One of Israel is none but the true God and Lord, Christ Jesus; therefore none can be the King of his believing church, but Christ, as the Spirit of God testifies through the prophet Micah, saying, “Jehovah shall reign over them in mount Zion, from then on, even forever,” Micah 4:7. Who else is this Shepherd but Christ, of whom was prophesied, “Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come with strong hand and his arm shall rule for him; behold, his reward is with him and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young,” Isa. 40:10, 11.*

Christ testifies of himself that he is this shepherd, for he says, “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep,” John 10:11. Christ truly pastures his sheep; he is the door to the sheep-fold; all who enter into the fold through him shall be saved; he shall go in and out and find good pasture. Therefore David says, “Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters,” Psa. 23:1, 2; and the apostle Peter says, “For you were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Caretaker of your souls,” 1 Pet. 2:25. Further, Lord Jehovah says, My servant David shall be a Prince among them. Let none be offended at God the Father calling his Son Christ his servant, saying, “Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my elect, in whom

* [CHCoG: Or is this saying that Jehovah God—Christ’s Father—is ultimately in charge, but his right hand—Jesus Christ—will be placed in charge and rule for him, under his authority, as 1 Cor. 15:23-28 and Eph. 1:17-23 show?]

my soul delights,” Isa. 42:1; and at another place: “Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased,” Mat. 12:18. At still another place, the Father speaks concerning Christ, “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many,” Isa. 53:11.

Therefore this servant {David} is Christ; and he is the Prince of the christians. And who else should be a prince of the church of Christ but Christ, as Paul testifies that he alone is the Prince; and as the prophet says, “You Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the ancient days,” Micah 5:2.

Lord Jehovah speaks further through the same prophet, “So they shall be my people and I will be their God and David my servant shall be King over them; and they shall all have one Shepherd,” Ezek. 37:24. We have therefore clearly proven by the Scriptures that God the Father has placed no other king over Zion than his Son Jesus Christ and that he gave him an eternal kingdom. Therefore it is needless to go over this again; and that Lord Jehovah says, “David my servant shall be King over them and they shall all have one shepherd,” is also understood to be said in regard to Christ; for no man can be our *only* shepherd; and although God gives “some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers,” Eph. 4:11; yet the *only* Shepherd is Christ and nobody else, as may be plainly understood from the words of Christ, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and *one* shepherd,” John 10:16.

All the believing are the sheep of Christ and there is [will be] but one fold, of which Christ is the Shepherd. From this it must follow that Christ is the only Shepherd and that no one else can be the only Shepherd. For this reason Peter calls Christ, the *chief* Shepherd; and Paul says, “Now the God of peace, who brought our Lord Jesus up from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep,

through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." Heb. 13:20, 21; 1 Pet. 5:4.

Thus Christ is the only Shepherd; for all the believing must hear his voice and the voice of no other. From this it follows incontrovertibly, that he is also the promised David, according to the words of Lord Jehovah, "David my servant shall be King over them; and they shall all have one Shepherd." Besides this God says, "My servant David shall be their Prince forever." I trust that none are so ignorant (unless he is mad and accursed), as to understand these words as having reference to some man, that a man shall be our eternal Prince. For it is written that God alone is eternal and alone immortal and that he dwells in a light to which none can come. [CHCoG: Except those that are resurrected and transformed as his children, for God will come up to them and wipe the tears from their eyes. Rev. 7:17. And though we are not eternal, in that we have not always lived forever, yet we will be given everlasting life, along with King David. Gal. 6:8, John 6:40] No man can be our eternal Prince; but Christ is our eternal Prince and his kingdom is an eternal kingdom, as it is written, "Your throne, O God, is forever," Psa. 45:6; Heb. 1:8. Paul and Peter say that Christ's kingdom is eternal; and the angel said to Mary, "The Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end," Luke 1:33. Again the prophet says, "His seed shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever as the moon and as a faithful witness in heaven," Psa. 89:36, 37. From this all must be convinced that our eternal Prince is none but Christ, therefore our promised David is none but Christ.

Fourthly, it reads thus in one of the Psalms, "Then you spoke in vision to your Holy One and said, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found

David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him,” Psa. 89:19, 20. Who is this mighty one on whom God laid help but Christ Jesus, who has all power in heaven and on earth, to whom God has submitted all things and to whom are committed all things pertaining to the church? Mat. 28:18; Heb. 2:8; Eph. 1:22.

On this Christ the Almighty God has laid help; for we are helped and saved by him, as Christ says, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed,” John 8:36; and Paul says, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin, and he condemned sin in the flesh,” Rom. 8:3.

Christ is the strong Samson who ~~broke the jaw bones of the lion~~; [CHCoG: killed the lion with his bare hands; Jud. 14:5-6] he is the pious David who slew the giant Philistine with whom none of the Israelites dared fight, 1 Sam. 17; he is the chosen one, whom the Father has chosen [even begotten] as his own Son, saying, “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen,” Mat. 12:18. This chosen one the Father has exalted from out the people, inasmuch as he has placed him as King of his holy mount Zion, as the Prince who shall rule his people; for this reason the church acknowledges him to be their head and to be the most exalted of men on earth, saying, “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste,” Cant. 2:3. Further Jehovah says, “I have found my servant David; with my holy oil I have anointed him,” Psa. 89:20.

This anointed David is Christ; for he is the truly anointed, to whom God the Father speaks, “Your throne, O God, is forever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of your kingdom; you have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows;” Christ says, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me.” Peter also says, “God anointed Jesus of

Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power,” Heb. 1:8, 9; Psa. 45:6, 7; Luke 4:18; Acts 10:38.

If anyone should yet be in doubt (something which is impossible, in view of such plain Scriptures), then let him consider the following words, “He shall cry unto me, You are my Father, my God and the Rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth,” Psa. 89:26, 27. Christ is the first-begotten Son of God. As Paul says, God the Father has predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And to the Hebrews, “When he brings the first-begotten into the world, he says, And let all the angels of God worship him,” Heb. 1:6; Rom. 8:29.

Therefore, as truly as Christ is the first-begotten Son of God, so truly he is the servant David whom the Father anointed with the holy oil, that is, with his Holy Spirit.

Again, the Lord says concerning his servant David, “My mercy will I keep for him forevermore and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure forever and his throne as the days of heaven,” Psa. 89:28, 29. This seed is the children; for it further reads: “If his sons forsake My law and do not walk in My judgments, if they break My statutes and do not keep My commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My loving-kindness I will not utterly take from him, nor allow My faithfulness to fail.” Vss. 30-33. Now it is manifest that this should not be understood as having reference to the carnal children of the figurative David; for they committed themselves to idolatry and quite forsook the law of God. For this they were often punished, and, at last, cut from the olive tree as unfruitful branches, Rom. 11:21. [CHCoG: It is likely that this prophecy will be fulfilled during the Millennium, and prior to the White Throne Judgement at its end, as then there will still be flesh and

blood humans living under God's Government, though led by the now immortal David and Christ Jesus.]

Nor did the worldly kingdom of David remain unbroken; but it was destroyed; as the holy patriarch Jacob and other prophets prophesied. And to understand it as having reference to the carnal children of David is contrary to the epistle of Paul to the Romans, as he there says, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Nor, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall your seed be called." That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed," Rom. 9:6-8; therefore we should not understand this seed as having reference to the carnal children, but to the spiritual seed, of which it is written: When my servant shall have given his life as a sacrifice then he shall have seed and live long. This seed are all the true children of God, which are born again, "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God," 1 Pet. 1:23. [CHCoG: As noted earlier, this will be the situation AFTER the Millennium, when only the regenerated and transformed sons of god remain, who will not sin anymore.]

Christ says, "Behold I and the children whom God has given to me," Heb. 2:13; and these children of God abide in eternity; eternal joy and peace shall be upon them. They shall always reign with Christ and Christ their King has an eternal kingdom and his throne shall be as the days of heaven. This psalm quite agrees with the words of the prophet Nathan, which he spoke unto David promising him Solomon. As we must not understand the words of the prophet Nathan as referring to Solomon alone, but rather as referring to Christ (although the words in a literal sense are spoken in reference to Solomon), thus we should not understand the words of the psalm as referring to carnal David alone, but rather to the true David, Christ Jesus. And this the following text strongly implies, which speaks of the peace of Christ. This is our confession of the promised David.

We might, by the grace of God, write a great deal more to show that Christ is our promised David; but we presume that sufficient has been written for the intelligent. We do not serve the contentious. Let them cry. Let them make unto themselves a different king, yet Christ will remain the eternal King reigning in his believing church. He is the Lord. He will not give his glory to another. He will have incense which shall be sanctified unto him. And whosoever shall make such incense for himself, his soul shall be rooted out from Israel, Exo. 30:36-38.

None shall succeed in exalting himself as Christ and opposing the truth. They may make a disturbance, but Moses and Aaron will gain the victory. Jannes and Jambres must give way and be shamed, 2 Tim. 3:8. Korah, Dathan and Abiram may rise against Moses, but they shall perish with their confederates, Num. 16:32.

A proud Uzziah may rise and appropriate the glory which is not due to him, but he will be smitten by God, 2 Chron. 26:16.

Hophni and Phinehas may for a time make the people transgress and turn them from the true religion, but they shall obtain their reward, 1 Sam. 2:12; 4:11. Let everyone take heed and remain in Christ. Sufficient of this.

By the grace of God we will also write a little about warfare, [showing] that christians are not allowed to fight with the sword, that we may unanimously leave the armor of David to the carnal Israelites; and the sword of Zerubbabel to those who build the temple of Zerubbabel in Jerusalem, which was a figure of them and a shadow of things coming. For the body itself is in Christ, as Paul says, Col. 2:9.

Now we should not understand that the figure of the Old Testament is so applied to the truth of the New Testament that flesh is understood as referring to flesh; but the figure must answer to the truth; the image, the being and the letter, the Spirit. [CHCoG: Unsure what the last sentence means.]

If we take this view of it we shall easily understand with what kind of arms christians should fight, namely, with the word of

God, which is a two edged sword, of which we will, by the assistance of God, say a few words, Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17.

Whereas the eternal God has raised his Son Christ, a Prophet unto us whom we shall hear; and whereas Christ testifies of himself that he is our only Master, therefore it is incontrovertible that we dare not accept any other doctrine but the doctrine of Christ. No *strange* doctrine which is contrary to the doctrine of Christ and that which the apostles by the Holy Spirit have written and taught unto us, I say, we dare accept, Deut. 18:16; Acts 3:22; 7:37; Mat. 23:9. For there may be no strange fire offered unto God. Christ will not tolerate the leaven of the Pharisees, Lev. 10:1; Mat. 16:8.

Moses had to make the cherubims of pure gold, Exo. 25:18. "The words of Jehovah are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times," Psal. 12:6.

Our Lord does not suffer his doctrine to be adulterated; he punishes all false doctrine, as he spoke about Jerusalem, "Your silver has become dross, your wine is mixed with water," "and I will turn my hand upon you and purely purge away your dross," Isa. 1:22, 25. Thus God hates all false doctrine; and therefore the apostles advise us that we shall abide in God's word alone, as John says, "Therefore let that abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If that which you have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, you also shall continue in the Son and in the Father," 1 John 2:24. Paul says that we should beware of those who raise contentions and are offended at the doctrine which he preached, that they should be separated [from the believers]. Yes, so strongly does Paul urge his doctrine that he says, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed," Gal. 1:8. Thus Paul teaches in all his epistles to beware of a strange gospel and to abide in the doctrine which is not his, but that of the Holy Spirit, according to the words of Christ, "For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you." Mat. 10:20. Now the Spirit of God speaks

thus through Paul, “My brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Therefore put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, with which you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,” Eph. 6:10-17; 1 Thes. 5:8. At another place: “For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. And having a readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled,”* 2 Cor. 10:4-6. He that is not blind will understand with what weapons the christian is to fight, namely, with the word of God; with this they will be well armored. For thus speaks the holy church: “Behold, his bed which is Solomon’s; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel; they all hold swords, being expert in war; every man has his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night,” Cant. 3:7, 8; that is, each one is armed with the sword of the Spirit against all the wiles of the devil, against all false doctrine. Concerning Christ it is written, “Gird your sword upon your thigh, O most Mighty, with your glory and your majesty. And in your majesty ride prosperously,

* [CHCoG: And when will our obedience be fulfilled? When we have been resurrected and transformed. So our vengeance will only come when we return with Christ to establish His Kingdom on earth. Rev 19:11-16.]

because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and your right hand shall teach you terrible things. Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; thereby the people fall under you," Psa. 45:3-5.

Here the Scriptures say that Christ shall have a sword. What sword shall Christ have? This he himself tells us in the "Revelation," in these words, "Repent; or else I will come unto you quickly and will fight against you with the sword of my mouth;" Rev. 2:16.

If Christ fights his enemies with the sword of his mouth, if he smites the earth with the rod of his mouth and slays the wicked with the breath of his lips; and if we are to be conformed unto his image, how can we, then, fight our enemies with any other sword? Does not the apostle Peter say, "For even unto this were you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps: who did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, did not revile again; when he suffered he did not threaten; but he committed himself to him that judges righteously?" 1 Pet. 2:21-23; Mat. 16:24. This accords with the words of John who says that he who abides in Christ walks as Christ walked. 1 John 2:6. Christ himself says, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23. Again, "My sheep hear my voice . . . and they follow me," John 10 27. And this is the voice of Christ, "You have heard that it has been said, "An eye for an eye; and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you that you are not to resist evil: but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also." Mat. 5:38-39.

Again, "You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy: But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be children of your Father who is in heaven, for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the

just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore be perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect,” Mat. 5:43-47; Rom. 12:20; 1 Pet. 3:9; Luke 6:34; 1 Pet. 1:15. Behold, this is the voice of Christ. All those who are his sheep will hear his voice. But those who are not his sheep will not hear his voice, as Christ said unto the Jews, “You do not believe because you are not of my sheep.” John 10:26 The Pharisees thought they had Moses and the prophets, they also had a semblance of holiness; but they did not hear the voice of Christ, therefore it was all in vain. Thus it is with all those who do not submit themselves to the commandments of Christ.

[Salvation] is not in the leaves of the tree, but in the fruit. And which is the right kind of fruit, Paul clearly testifies, saying, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,” Gal. 5:22, 23. Here we are not taught to take up the carnal sword, or to repay evil with evil. But rather, as Paul says at another place, “Recompense no man with evil for evil. Provide honest things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as it lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, do not avenge yourselves; but rather give place unto wrath: For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord. Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good,” Rom. 12:17-21. And how can christians fight with the implements of war? Paul plainly says, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” Phil. 2:5. Now, Christ Jesus was minded to suffer; thus, all christians must be so minded.

Christ did not allow Peter to defend him with the sword. How can a christian, then, defend himself with the sword? Christ would drink the cup which the Father had given him; how then, can a

christian refuse to drink it? Mat. 26:51; Luke 22:50; Mark 14:47; John 18:11.

Or does any person expect to be saved by other means than those which Christ has taught us? Is Christ not the way, the truth and the life? Is he not the door to the fold, so that none can enter into the fold but by him? John 10:9; 14:6.

Is he not the Shepherd of his sheep, whom the sheep should follow? Is he not our Lord and Prince? And who is it that would be above his Master except he that would not suffer as he has suffered. Who is it that would be above his master except he that is not satisfied with his Master's doctrine? Let everyone take heed. It is forbidden to us to take up arms. Mat. 10:24; John 13:16; 15:20.

Paul says, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates; to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no man, to not be brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men," Titus 3:1, 2. And the holy apostle James says, "Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of our Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. You also be patient: establish your heart; for the coming of the Lord draws near. . . . Take my brethren the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering, affliction and patience. Behold, we count them happy who endure. You have heard of the patience of Job and have seen his end in the Lord; that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful," Jas. 5:7-11. If we are to be long-suffering until the coming of the Lord, then it is surely forbidden to fight, inasmuch as the Lord has not yet come.

And if we are to take the prophets as an example to bear with persecution, then we must put on the apostolic armor and the armor of David must be left behind. How would it comport with the word of God, that one who boasts of being a christian, should lay aside God's spiritual weapons and take up the carnal ones, for

Paul says, “The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach and patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose them; if God perhaps will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will,” 2 Tim. 2:24-26.

All of you who would fight with the sword of David and be the servants of the Lord, consider these words, which show how a servant should be minded. If he is not to strive, how can he [wage] war? If he is to be gentle to all men, how can he then hate them and do evil unto them? If he is to be apt to teach, how can he lay aside the apostolic weapons? If he is to teach he will need them. If he is to instruct in meekness those that oppose, how can he destroy them?

If he is to instruct in meekness those that oppose truth, how can he angrily punish those that do not yet acknowledge the truth? Paul says, if God perhaps will give them repentance. But some will not wait for that and even if they do it with good intention, they still with Uzzah lay their hands on the ark of God. 2 Sam. 6:6, 7. Therefore I fear that it will not be left unpunished. And if they with Saul, saved the best beasts of the Amalekites for sacrifices unto God, yet it will not please the Lord; for it is contrary to his word. He has pleasure in obedience and not in sacrifices. 1 Sam. 15:1-23.

But now some say the Lord wants to punish Babylon and that by his christians; they must be his instruments. O, God! It would be well if we would leave the Lord to do his works and remember the words of Ecclesiasticus: “Do not seek out the things that are too hard for you, nor search the things that are above your strength. But what is commanded to you, think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful for you to see with your eyes the things that are in secret. Do not be curious in unnecessary matters,” Eccl. 3:21-23.

For many things are shown to men above their understanding and presumption has caused many to fall and hold their understanding in vanity. It would also be well for those who ask, with the disciples of the Lord, when the kingdom of Israel is to be restored, to observe the answer of the Lord: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power," Acts 1:6. But they forget this, and cry: 'God will shortly punish and destroy Babylon. To do this the christians must be his instruments.' And this they make the simple believe; for which reason we will adduce some Scriptures. It is true that God will punish Babylon, but not by his christians; for thus speaks Jeremiah: "Jehovah has raised up the spirits of the kings of the Medes; for his device is against Babylon to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of Jehovah, the vengeance of his temple." Again: "Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains of it and all the rulers of it and all the land of his dominion. And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of Jehovah shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant," Jer. 51:11, 28, 29.

I am aware that this was fulfilled against the Babylon in the Chaldee country, though the Roman Babylon shall not escape the same plague; but I have adduced this for the service of the advocates of the sword who want to prove by this Scripture of Jeremiah that the christians shall punish Babylon, while the prophet clearly testifies that God has done this by heathen hands and that it is his will that it shall be done [again] by such, as is shown by Rev. 17:16: "The ten horns which you saw upon the beast, these shall hate the whore and shall make her desolate and naked and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God has put it in their hearts to fulfill his will and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

Thus it may be plainly understood from these words that the Babylonian whore shall be destroyed, but not by christians; and

also, that christians should not destroy. A Theudas may rise up and cause a disturbance, but he shall not succeed, Acts 5:36. There may rise up a Judas in Galilee and cause a riot, but he shall perish and all his followers shall perish and be scattered. Let every person beware and diligently observe the Scriptures and he shall see that the Lord himself will punish and destroy all his enemies who will not submit to him when he comes again. For Luke says, "It came to pass, that when he returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading;" and when his servants had given an account, he said, "But bring those enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them here, and slay them before me," Luke 19:15, 27.

This Scripture clearly testifies that our Lord Christ must first come again before all his enemies are punished. And how Christ will come again he himself testifies, saying, "For the son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works," Mat. 16:27. Again, "For as the lightening comes out of the east and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the son of man be." "And then the sign of the son of man shall appear in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," Mat. 24:27, 30; Mark 13:26; Luke 17:24. The two angels also testified how Christ would come again, saying, "You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven," Acts 1:11. From this it is plain to everybody how Christ shall come; therefore, when you shall see Christ come in this manner, then you may rest assured that all the enemies of God will be punished; and do not suppose that it shall be so before his coming again, for you will find yourselves mistaken; or else God's word must be false, which

is impossible. Luke also says that our Lord has received the kingdom.

Of this Daniel says, "I saw in the night visions and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of Days and they brought him near before him. And there was given to him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away and his kingdom is that which shall not be destroyed," Dan. 7:13, 14. Here observe from whom Christ receives this kingdom, that you may see what abominable deceit it is that some say that John Van Leyden could take the kingdom and that he who has taken it will [then] give it unto Christ, as David gave the kingdom unto Solomon.

Further, the evangelist says, That Christ will take account with his servants, which will not be until the day of judgment. Paul says, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad," 2 Cor. 5:10. Jesus says, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account for it in the day of judgment," Mat. 12:36. Then the faithful servants shall enter into the kingdom of their Lord; then the wicked shall be punished and all whose names are not found written in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire; for they would not confess Christ to be their king, but worshipped the beast and his image, Rev. 20:15; 13:8. [CHCoG: Remember that there are two resurrections, and two judgements. The first is for Christ's disciples, and they are judged by Christ, and this happens when Christ returns as King. The second resurrection is for those who were not Christ's disciples at the time of his return, and they will be judged by Jehovah after the Millennium of Peace ends. Rev. 20:4-13, 1 Thes. 4:13-18.]

This parable some adulterate and say, "The enemies of God must be destroyed before the coming of Christ and therefore we

will be the instruments to do so.” But they must come to shame; “For thus says Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall you be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and you would not. But you said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall you flee; and we will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift,” Isa. 30:15. O, that the advocates of the sword would observe these words! Yes, those who would be the angels to root up the tares! For Christ told the parable with a different understanding, saying, “The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels,” Mat. 13:38, 39. Inasmuch as the christians are the good seed, how then can they be the angels or reapers; or if they are the reapers, how can they be the seed? These two are quite different things, the seed and the reapers; its plainness is incontrovertible.

It is true that the christians are sometimes called angels.* But when reading of angels, we cannot always understand it as meaning the believing. There are also other angels of which it is written: “Who makes his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire,” Psa. 104:4; 103:20; Heb. 1:7. Christ will come with these angels, as Paul says, “The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that do not know God and that do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 2 Thes. 1:7, 8. These angels will be the reapers who, at the end of this world, that is, in the [first] day of judgment, will root up all tares and cast them into the lake of fire. Until that time the tares will be left among the good seed; let none think that we should root up the tares now, or that we should now separate the goats from the sheep. “When the son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit

* [CHCoG: Angel derives from a word meaning ‘messenger’ or ‘envoy’. An angel is thus not always a spirit being in heaven, but can be anyone who God uses as a messenger.]

upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left,” Mat. 25:31-33.

These words are as clear as the sun, yet some do not understand them, so that we may well say unto them, “O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only want I learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?” Gal. 3:1-4.

What avails it that you have left Egypt if you again look back to Egypt, that is, to darkness and leave the true light, yes, are desirous after the flesh of Egypt, that is, human doctrine and are not satisfied with the bread from heaven? Exo. 14:11; Num. 14:2.

What does it avail that you have gone away from Pharaoh, if you are slain by Amalek on account of your disobedience; that is, because you fight against the will of the Lord? What does it profit that you have gone through the Red Sea with the children of Israel, if you do not enter into the promised land with Joshua and Caleb, by firm faith in God’s word? How we are to enter into the promised land, in the eternal kingdom of God, is testified to by Paul and Barnabas, who taught the churches that they had to enter into the kingdom through many tribulations. Acts 14:22.

Christ has not [yet] taken his kingdom with the sword, but he entered in through much suffering. Yet they mean to take it now by the sword! O, the blindness of man! But it must be thus, that those who will not confess Christ to be their only Shepherd, so they may be pastured by him, will have to eat of the pastures which are trampled upon; and those who will not draw the crystal-

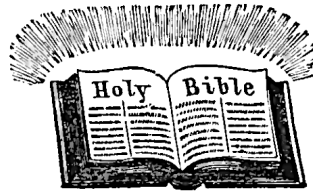
* [This sentence was: *Whether you are baptized on the sword or on the cross?* It cannot be derived from the manuscripts for this passage.]

clear water from the fount of the Savior will have to drink the polluted water which the false shepherds have made impure with their feet. And that because they have done double evil to the children of Israel: They have forsaken the living fountain of the Lord, and have made fountains of their own which appear beautiful, but they provide deadly water. Therefore I advise all beloved brethren, yes, I pray you by the mercy of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, to give heed to the word of God and do not forsake it; for you have seen your Master Christ with the eye of faith, and you have heard his voice, saying, This is the true way, walk upon it, go neither to the right hand nor to the left.

Let everyone of you guard against all strange doctrine of the sword, of opposition and of other like things, which is nothing short of a fine cover, under which lies hidden an evil serpent which has injected its venom into many. Let everyone beware of it!

Let everyone behave himself in accordance with the example of the divine word, which he has received from the apostles, by faith and love. Let everyone remember that Christ was taught to you in no other way but through tribulation. Abide in it. For Christ is an upright being; he is the light of the world. He who follows him shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life, Psa. 67:1. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, be gracious unto us and enlighten us, that we on earth may acknowledge Christ's way and his salvation among the Gentiles.

All you who have tasted the kindness of the Lord, love him. Our Lord upholds the upright. Be of good cheer and do not doubt, for the Lord will strengthen the souls of all who patiently wait for his coming. "Jehovah reigns; let the people tremble; he sits between the cherubim; let the earth be moved," Psa. 99:1. The Jews scorned this King and they became blind.



SHUNNING AND SEPARATION

A KIND
ADMONITION OR INSTRUCTION
FROM THE WORD OF GOD,
HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE DISPOSED;
AND CONCERNING THE SHUNNING AND
SEPARATION OF THE UNFAITHFUL
BROTHERS AND SISTERS, EITHER DECEIVED
BY HERETICAL DOCTRINE, OR LEADING A
CARNAL, SHAMEFUL LIFE.

BY
MENNO SIMON.

“For no other foundation can any man lay than what is laid,
which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3:11.

A KIND ADMONITION.

Menno Simon wishes all true brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ the grace and peace of God our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ his Son, our Lord, who loves us and cleanses us of our sins by his blood. To him be glory, now and forever, Amen.

Hear, believe and fulfill God's word and you shall have everlasting life. Do not judge until you have perused and well understood this.

SINCERELY beloved children in Christ Jesus, you are aware with what diligence, yes, how sincerely I have of late advised most of you, according to the word of the Lord, by many Scriptures, flowing from a lovingly inclined and moved Spirit, as you yourselves have witnessed. I seek nothing (of which God is my witness) but the salvation of your souls; teaching nothing, desiring nothing, admonishing you to nothing but only that your most holy faith and works may be powerful and fruitful before God; and that your life and walk may be found before God, before his angels and before all the world, as holy, pure, sober, chaste, temperate, humble, gentle, kind, mild, merciful, righteous and unblamable, in conformity with and obedient to the gospel of Christ, a shining light, that in all your doings you may express Christ Jesus whom you have put on, if you have rightly put him on, as I trust; and thus show in your life his divine and heavenly image after which you are created, Col. 3; Eph. 4.

You know that I do not desire your money, silver and carnal gifts, although I am blamed of it by the infamous, lying world. I beseech all of you and would with much solicitation, anxiety, tribulation, sighing, weeping and pains, teach you such faith, love, spirit, conscience and walk that you can stand before the righteous judgment of God and that in Christ Jesus.

I do not doubt, most beloved brethren, that you well know (if you are born with Christ, from God the Father through the heavenly seed of the divine word), that you must be conformed unto Christ in mind, spirit, courage and will, both in doctrine and life, as Christ Jesus is conformed unto the nature and image of his blessed, heavenly Father, to which he was so conformed that he did nothing but what his Father did, John 5; that he taught nothing but the word of his Father. John 7. In the same manner with those who are begotten by the living, saving word of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ; they are, by virtue of their new birth, so conformed unto Christ, so like unto him, so really implanted into him, so converted into his heavenly nature, that they do not teach nor believe any doctrine but that which conforms to the doctrine of Christ. They do not make use of any religious ceremonies except Christ's ceremonies, which he has taught and commanded in his holy gospel; for how can the natural branches bear fruit different from that of the vine itself from which they budded forth? John 15.

As there is nothing found in Christ Jesus but solely the holiness, wisdom, brightness, righteousness, power, love, peace, mercy and truth of the Almighty Father, thus you have in the same manner partaken of his being and goodness, because you are regenerated with him and renewed by the same Father.

Behold, such regenerated and godly minded brethren live unblamably, even according to the measure of the rule of the holy gospel of Jesus Christ and his apostles. Therefore he kisses them as his beloved, chosen ones, with the mouth of his peace, Cant. 1 and calls them his church, his bride, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, from which he begets, with inexpressible pleasure, by his powerful seed and his holy word; the children of God, the children of the promise, the children of righteousness, the children of truth and the children of life eternal. But [those] of the Babylonian, Sodomitic, whoring, adulterous, idolatrous, bloody, unbelieving, blind and unclean whore with which they have, for centuries, lived in adultery by the use of wood, stone, gold, silver, bread, wine,

false doctrine and the very vain, accursed works of their own hands, contrary to Jesus Christ and his holy word, he will not beget them, Rev. 17 & 18.

Therefore I advise all our beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord, so precious as is Christ Jesus to you, never to let it go out of your mind, but always to remember for what purpose you are called, taught and baptized. Remember the covenant of the most high God into which you voluntarily entered; into which you have voluntarily desired and accepted; being taught by the word of God and operated upon by the Holy Spirit; and remember that according to the doctrine of Paul, you have voluntarily buried in baptism, all your avarice, uncleanness, pride, hatred, envy, abuse of the sacramental signs, idolatry, gluttony, drunkenness, sensuality, falsehood, deceit, &c. and that you have arisen with Christ Jesus into newness of life, Rom. 6, if you are rightly risen with him. This new life is nothing else but righteousness, unblamableness, love, mercifulness, humility, long-suffering, peace, truth, yes, the whole, gentle life which is taught by the gospel and was found in Christ Jesus.

O, brethren, how far are some of us, alas, yet distant from the evangelical life which is of God! Notwithstanding that they stay out of the other churches and are outwardly baptized in water, they yet are carnal and devilish minded in all things, thinking perhaps, that christianity consists of outward baptism and the non-attendance of the [false] churches. No, beloved, no! I tell you, as truly as the Lord lives, that outward baptism, nor staying away from the churches, nor supper, nor being persecuted, avails before God if we do not obey his commandments, 1 Cor. 7; if our faith does not manifest itself in love and the new creature, as also Christ Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God," John 3:3. At another place he says, "Truly; I say unto you, Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Mat. 18:3. But the regenerated and converted, that is

the believing, are rightly baptized in accordance with God's word; for they bury their sins in baptism and arise with Christ into newness of life, Rom. 6; they are spiritually circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, Col. 2; they put on Christ Jesus; they show by the washing of regeneration that they are born again; for it is the washing of the new birth, Tit. 3.

These regenerated ones use the true Supper; for they proclaim the death of Christ until his coming again, 1 Cor. 11; their pleasure is in the church of the righteous, their works are nothing but brotherly love from one heart, one soul and one spirit. Yes, one undivided body, fruitful, serving and common in Christ Jesus, which are symbolized by the outward cup and the outward bread, 1 Cor. 10.

These regenerated ones shun all false doctrine, all idolatry, all improper usage of the sacramental signs in the church or out of the church; they seek only the true teachers who are unblamable both in doctrine and in life; the true religion, as taught and expressed in Christ's word, namely, the dying unto the flesh, Rom. 12; Gal. 5; the service of the afflicted, Mat. 15; the visiting of the widows and orphans. As James says, they seek to keep themselves unblemished and unspotted from the world, Jas. 1. These regenerated ones bear the cross of Christ with gladness of heart, [and are] so established in Christ Jesus that they can not be separated from the eternal truth and love of God by false doctrine, nor by horrible torments, always remembering their Lord's word, where he says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven," Mat. 10:32.

All their thoughts are chaste, gentle, peaceful, heavenly and of the Holy Spirit; all their words are wisdom, truth, doctrine, admonition in grace, well seasoned, the words of God and words spoken at the right time. They are spirit and they are life. In short, all their works are love, mercifulness, righteousness, piety and are done in the fear of the Lord.

Behold, brethren, this is the true nature and mind of the children of God, who are by grace converted in their hearts and with Christ are born of God the Father. Therefore I beseech you as my sincerely beloved brethren, by the grace of God, yes, I command you with holy Paul, by the Lord Jesus Christ, who at his coming will judge the living and the dead, to diligently observe each other unto salvation, in all becoming ways; teaching, instructing, admonishing, reproving, threatening and consoling each other as occasion requires, not otherwise than in accordance with the word of God and in unfeigned love, that we may all grow up in God and become united in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, into one perfect man and according to the measure of the gift of Jesus Christ, Eph. 4:7.

Therefore take heed. If you see your brother sin, then do not pass by him, as one that does not prize his soul; but if his fall is curable, from that moment endeavor to raise him up by gentle admonition and brotherly instruction, before you eat, drink, sleep or do anything else, as one who ardently desires his salvation, lest your poor, erring brother becomes hardened and corrupted in his fall and perishes in his sin.

Do not act so unfaithfully as you have until now done, as to not make the transgressions of your dying brother or sister known to those within the church before those without; but rather exhort them and seek by prayer, by words and by actions to convert him from the error of his way, to save his soul and thus to stop the multiplying of his transgressions, Jas. 5. Take heed, brethren, take heed! Do not allow any defamer among you, as Moses taught, Lev. 19, nor a double, lying, roguish, nor backbiting tongue; and do not consent, lest you fall into the wrath of God. Let everyone take heed how, where, when and what he speaks, lest his tongue blaspheme his God and his neighbor; but always remember the words of Ecclesiasticus, "Honor and shame is in talk and the tongue of man is his fall," Eccl. 5:13.

But brethren, if those of years of understanding who were with us [and were] baptized by the urging of the Spirit into the most holy body of Jesus Christ, which is the church, again withdraw themselves from the body or church of Christ, actuated either by false doctrine or a vain, carnal life, no matter whether it be father or mother, sister or brother, husband or wife, son or daughter, or anyone else, for God's word applies to all flesh, without respect of person, Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2; Eph. 6; Col. 3, if he or she do not heed the admonitions of the brethren, which is given with sorrow, tears and a compassionate spirit of love, but continue in their Jewish [unchristian?] doctrine, namely, of sword, kingdom, polygamy or similar deceit; again, in the doctrine of the infamous confession, of shamelessness in exposing their persons and similar unnatural, inhuman actions; again in the doctrine which is opposed to the cross of Christ, such as [claiming that] uncleanness is pure to the pure and thus having communion in fruitless works, as the hearing of the preachers of the world, infant baptism, the worldly supper and similar abominations. Again, [if they] continue in drunkenness, avarice, adultery, fornication, unbecoming words, &c., have nothing to do with such, nor eat with them, as Paul has taught and commanded us in plain words, 1 Cor. 5.

But if he affectionately receive the admonitions of his faithful brethren, if he confesses his fall, if he is sorry, promises reformation, show signs of penitence and acknowledges his transgression, then, no matter how he has transgressed, receive him as a returning, beloved brother or sister, but beware, lest he is mocking his God; for the acceptance of brethren does not avail if we are not accepted by God. Beware, I say, lest his hearing the admonitions, his sorrow, his promise of reformation and his penitence is not sincere before God; for God searches the hearts and minds and he knows all inward feignedness and thoughts of men, Jer. 17; John 2; Rom. 8.

If his hearing the admonitions, his sorrow, promise and penitence are not sincere and from his heart, but merely

indifferent, feigned, spiritless, hypocritical, just because he does not want to be outwardly thrown out of the communion of the brethren, he is still cut off by Christ and is a hypocrite in the sight of God. Nor will he be looked upon nor judged by God as being anything else. For God is the righteous Judge and does not judge according to the outward appearance, but solely according to the inward intentions of the heart.

Say, beloved, inasmuch as this is the case, what does it avail to go by the mere name of a christian brother if he does not have the inward, evangelical faith, love and unblamable life of a true brother of Jesus Christ?

Or what does it avail to partake of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ with the brethren if we do not have the true symbolized fruits of this Supper, namely, the love of the brethren and the peaceable unity of faith in Christ Jesus? Or does it avail anything outwardly to converse in the communion of the brethren, if we are not inwardly in the communion of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ?

Therefore, brethren, no one is cut off by us, or ejected from the communion of the brethren (judge rightly) but those who have already ejected themselves from Christ and his communion, either by false doctrine, or by a blamable life. For we do not wish to eject any, but to accept them; not to cut them off, but to restore them; not to reject, but to win them back; not to afflict, but to console them; not to condemn, but to save them. For this is the true nature of a christian brother. Whosoever renounces evil, be it false doctrine or a vain life and conforms himself to the gospel of Jesus Christ, unto which he is baptized, neither shall nor can be ejected or cut off by any of the brethren.

But those whom we cannot raise up and admonish unto repentance by tears, threatening, reproof, or by any other christian services and divine means, we should reluctantly separate from us, sincerely deploring the fall and damnation of such erring brethren, lest we also be deceived and led astray by such false

doctrine which eats about itself like a cancer, 2 Tim. 2; lest we corrupt our flesh, which is inclined to evil, by the contagion; and that we may thus obey the word of God which commands us to do so. Thus the separated brother or sister, whom we can not convert by gentle services, may, by means of the separation, be shamed unto repentance, 2 Thes. 2 and acknowledge what he has become and from what he has fallen. Thus the ban is a great work of love, notwithstanding it is looked upon by the unintelligent as an act of hatred.

Brothers and sisters, this separation or ban, so earnestly taught and commanded in the Scriptures by Christ Jesus and his holy apostles was instituted to be practiced for these causes and reasons, first: For false doctrine, Mat. 7:16; Rom. 16; 2 Tim. 2; 1 Tim. 6; Tit. 3; Phil. 3; 2 John 1; again, for sinful, carnal life, Mat. 18; 1 Cor. 5; 2 Thes. 3; 2 Tim. 3; again, that we should admonish them (understand, those that will be admonished), Mat. 18; Tit. 3. Therefore take heed and watch your own soul, lest you despise the word of God in this necessary matter of separation and transgress his ordinances; but that you in every respect practice upon and uphold it with divine wisdom, discretion, gentleness and prudence, in the case of those who have gone aside from the evangelical doctrine or life; not with austerity, nor with cruelty, but rather with gentleness, reluctance and with sorrow and pity for the diseased members who are not cured, in whose case pains and labor avail nothing, who should be cut off with the knife of the divine word, lest the others be corrupted and lest the abominable scurvy is imparted to the other sheep. Yes it should be done in such a manner that the erring sister or brother may be made ashamed at heart and thus be won, as was said above. And if there is any moving of the Spirit, any spark of life; or any fear of God in such a sister or brother, their heart will surely quake and tremble; for by the admonition of the word of God and by the testimony of his own conscience he will acknowledge that he has cut himself off from the communion of Jesus Christ, by his vain, carnal life and

that he has again entered into the communion of the devil; and that therefore his lot and part shall not be with the blessed souls in heaven, but with the damned in hell unto eternity,* unless he convert himself.

May God, the merciful Father, save all his chosen children who have entered into his holy covenant and communion from such a fearful fall, obduracy and separation, Amen.

All the apostate sisters and brothers who are offended and angry with us on account of this open doctrine and practice of the Christian ban or separation, will be offended more and more; for whosoever is impure will be rendered still more impure, as the Holy Spirit of the prophecies teaches, Rev. 22. For the word of God is for the reformation, righteousness and life of the pious and godly; but unto the lost it is an offense, unrighteousness and death. What! Be angry with us because we obey Scripture in this respect? Let them rather be angry with themselves; for they dare teach and live contrary to the commandment of God. If they want to renounce their heresy and reform their ungodly life, the heavenly doctrine of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ will not offend them nor make them worse, but rather urge, frighten and convert them.

If they, by their apostatic, refractory and carnal hatred, are so deprived of grace and the knowledge of God and become worse and worse, so that they see death in the eternal life and darkness in the heavenly light of divine truth, then we can claim to be clear, before God and his holy angels, from their sins, obduracy and eternal death if we do toward them that which the Lord's word has commanded us in regard to this matter. Therefore we do not desire to have communion with them, nor lot nor part, unto eternity, so long as they do not sincerely renounce their false doctrine and reform their miserable, accursed, earthly, carnal and devilish life, to the praise of the Lord. But if true penitence is found in them, in

* [CHCoG: This should read "but will die the second death in the Lake of Fire." Rev. 21:8]

good faith, as before God who sees all things, then we say, welcome beloved brothers, welcome, beloved sisters and we sincerely rejoice at the sincere conversion of such brothers and sisters. Yes, we rejoice as one is rejoiced at the restoration of an only son who was dangerously ill or at the restoration of a lost sheep or penny; and as at the reappearance of a son who was given up as lost, Mat. 18; Luke 15.

Behold, brethren, therefore I will leave every apostate brother to consider why and wherefore, with what kind of spirit and with what intention this separation or ban was so diligently practiced, first by Christ Jesus and his apostles and afterward by us who are again placed in their doctrine and practice of all christian doings, as may be easily deduced from the various Scriptures.

Well, dear brethren in the Lord, you who are baptized by one Spirit into one body and have voluntarily entered into the communion of Jesus Christ and also you who are of a good mind, inasmuch as you must shun the apostatic in accordance with the word of God, therefore, take heed, that while you shun them as diseased, foul and useless members, unfit for the body of Christ, you yourselves may be found to be sound, fit and fruitful members in Christ Jesus; and that while you shun them as children of darkness and of death, you yourselves may be children of the light and of eternal life, that the righteous sentence of God may not be pronounced against you. Take heed, lest you who shun others on account of their evil doing secretly commit worse things in the sight of God. Take heed, lest you adjudge others of what you yourselves are guilty, Rom. 2. Behold, brethren, thus the ban or separation should be practiced in the house of the Lord, that is, in God's church; nor have they any other weapon unto eternity. Of this I would have written more but defer it to some other time, if it pleases God.

Now, beloved brethren, take heed, take heed, brethren, this I advise you that there may never be any thoughts in your hearts otherwise than such as are pure, holy, chaste, heavenly and of the

Holy Spirit. “Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God,” Mat. 5:8. “The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom and his tongue talks of judgment,” Psa. 37:30. Let all your words be as if a sworn oath before God and before the world, Mat. 5; Jas. 5. Let all your actions be fashioned for God by God and in God, John 3. Measure all your thoughts, words and actions by the rule of the divine word, that the ungodly defamer who so diligently watches all your words and actions may find nothing which he can truly cast up against you, whereby he can accuse or blame you, as Paul taught and requested the church, in some instances, Eph. 4; 1 Tim. 3; Tit. 2.

It is also the nature of those who are in God to not sin, as John says, “Whosoever abides in Him (God) does not sin: whosoever sins has not seen him, nor known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is of God, 1 John 3:6-9. Therefore I implore and pray you to consider well the nature of the new birth and examine what it is in reality; namely, the divine nature and the divine image; from whom it is—that it is of God; from where it is—from heaven; and what is obtained by it—life eternal. For without the new birth it is merely the nature of earthly Adam, sin, evil, blindness, transgression, devil and the second death (I speak in regard to those of mature years), whatever we do; but in whomsoever the new birth is, there is also everything godly, wisdom, goodness, light, righteousness, truth, peace, Spirit, Christ, God and life eternal. Therefore the eternal Truth, Christ Jesus, says in plain words that we must repent and be born again, if we would enter into the kingdom of heaven, Mat. 18; John 3. For the first birth is of the earth, earthly and inclined to the earth; but the second birth is of heaven and is heavenly and inclined to

heaven, John 3. That is to say, the birth of earth makes us earthly minded and the birth of heaven makes us heavenly minded.

If this good and perfect gift of the new birth is given to us by the Father of light, by grace, then we become the chosen children of God, John 1; Eph. 1; then we are the true sisters and brothers of Christ, Luke 8, then we are conformed unto Christ, Rom. 8; then we are created after the image of God, Col. 3; Eph. 4; then we have the sign Tau on our foreheads;* then the kingdom of God is ours, Luke 18; then we are the bride of Christ, John 3, the church of Christ, Eph. 5, the body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 1; Col. 1; then Christ dwells in our hearts, Eph. 3; and then we are led by the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8. We are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy, begotten people, which is God's own, 1 Pet. 2; then we are the temple of the Lord, 1 Cor. 3 & 6; 2 Cor. 6; the spiritual Mount Zion and the new heavenly Jerusalem, Heb. 12; the spiritual Israel of God, Gal. 6. We are of the divine mind and nature; we are delivered from the [death] sentence of the law, Isa. 9; Gal. 6; 1 Tim. 3; yes from hell, sin, devil and eternal death, Eph. 2; then we have the forever blessed Christ Jesus; [and share] his word, life, flesh, blood, cross, suffering, bitter death, burial, resurrection, ascension, kingdom and eternal joy with him, received as a gift from God the Father, Rom. 8. But if we are not born again (understand, those of understanding age), then we do not have such promises.

Therefore, sincerely beloved brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling through Christ Jesus; "Therefore humble

* [CHCoG: I cannot find even one scripture that says Tau is God's Sign or Mark on our foreheads, though Rev. 22:4 says we shall have God's Name on our foreheads. God's Name, which is Jehovah, appears seven thousand times in the Bible, and he is never called Tau. Instead, it seems that the mark on our foreheads indicates that we KNOW God's Instructions, while the Sign on our hand indicates that we DO God's Instructions, including his Holy Days. Exo. 13:9-16, Deut. 6:8 & 11:18. Likewise, Satan marks those who know and keep his commandments, including his holidays. Rev. 13:16.]

yourselves under the mighty hand of God,” 1 Pet. 5:6 and sincerely deny yourselves. Fear God in all your thoughts, words and works, love and serve God and your neighbor; love God above all things created and your neighbor as yourselves, Mat. 22. Let all your meditations be in the Law of Jehovah, Psalms. 1. Keep God’s word! I repeat it: Brethren, keep the word of God which has been so often taught to you in love, both verbally and in writing.

Let your ardent prayer at all times go up to God, for all men; for emperors, kings, lords, princes, judges and for all those that are placed in authority, that God may so direct their hearts that we, if it be his blessed will, may lead a peaceable and godly life, 1 Tim. 2:2.

Do not be envious in your hearts and not inconsiderate in your talking about others, whether he is a slanderer, traitor, persecutor, priest or monk, no matter who he is; for they shall receive their reward from God. But always remember the long-suffering of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, as also, that we were all foolish and unbelieving, erring, serving diverse lusts and desires; we were also naturally children of the wrath, the same as they are. Willingly obey all human ordinances if they are not against the ordinances of God, 1 Pet. 2. Be liberal in rendering assistance to all the children of God. Receive each other without murmuring, 1 Pet. 4. Let each one work with his own hands and eat his own bread, if possible, 2 Thes. 3. Shun all manner of idleness and worldly pomp. Take faithful care of each other by admonitions, Heb. 10, as I have verbally advised you to do before and now again in this epistle.

Wash the feet of your beloved brothers and sisters who are tired [and have] come to you from a distance. Do not be ashamed to do the work of the Lord, but humble yourselves with Christ, before your brethren’s feet, that all humility, according to the divine nature, may be found in you, John 13; 1 Tim. 5.

Above all pray for your poor humble servant, whose life is sought with all diligence, that God, the gracious Father, may strengthen him with his Holy Spirit and save him from the hands

of those who so unjustly seek his life, if it be his fatherly will. If it is not his will, that he may then give him in all tribulation, torture, oppression and death, such heart, mind, wisdom and strength, that he may steadily fulfill the glorious work of God, which is begun in us by the Holy Spirit, to the praise of the Lord.

O, beloved brethren, fulfill my desire and finish as obedient children of God that which I have faithfully taught, admonished and written unto you from the word of God, to your eternal salvation, that you may also be partakers of the glorious crown, hope and joy, in the day of Christ's coming, 1 Thes. 2. "Not sluggish in diligence; but fervent in spirit," Rom. 12:11. Bless God in all his works toward us and pray him to guide your way, and let all your counsel be in him, Tob. 4. Walk fearlessly in the commandments of the Lord. Do not go beyond the gospel of Christ in any way, Gal. 1. Be firm in the way of the Lord. Overcome the world, the flesh and the devil by the most holy faith which is in you, 1 John 5. Joyfully serve each other, "In patience you will possess your souls," Luke 21:19. "Be patient in tribulation," Rom. 12:12. Prepare your hearts for the cross of Christ, so that when it comes you may not be terrified with the cowardly.

No more at present, but watch closely all the days of your lives for the unexpected coming of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, who has made us such dear creatures, [for he] bought us with his precious blood, graciously called, enlightened and regenerated us and he will crown us with the crown of glory, array us in the garment of unblamableness and give us the gift of eternal life. To God be eternal praise and glory, now and forever, Amen.

Ponder, holy brethren, upon every word which I have written unto you; read it attentively; reflect upon it diligently, understand it rightly, judge it spiritually [by the Bible] and live up to it divinely. O, brethren, then my admonition and writing and your perusal and hearing shall be fruitful.

I pray you with holy Paul, by the grace of God, not to suppress this admonition, nor to lay it away, but to read it to all faithful brothers and sisters in the Lord; as also to all the apostates who have not entirely given up, that they may be won back. Yes, not only to these, but to all men in or out of the church who may desire to hear it. The grace of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ be with all true brothers and sisters, Amen.

Again, pray for me and for all your servants in the Lord.

Beware of all doctrine and works which are not conformable to the gospel of Christ. Beware.

May [God's] grace and peace remain with all the true children of God and fellow-laborers of the promise, in the kingdom of Christ.

MENNO SIMON.



A LETTER TO A SISTER.

MOST beloved in Christ Jesus. Grace and peace.

Dear, faithful sister in the Lord. My inmost soul is grieved on your behalf. More so than I can write; for I understand from our beloved brethren that you can hardly acquiesce in the desire and prayer of the afflicted and pastorless church in regard to your beloved husband. I cannot severely reprove you for your action if I look at it in a carnal and not in a spiritual light. I also understand from the words of Lenart and Helmicht that you hoped I would excuse Lenart from serving. Most beloved sister in Christ Jesus, I trust that I, by the grace of God, sincerely love you with divine love in God; and that I am prepared to serve you and all pious

people, even with my blood if so required. But beloved sister, who am I that I should resist the Holy Spirit? You are aware that not I, but the church, has called him to this service, unknown to me. As the church so imploringly desires him; and as he perhaps can not conscientiously deny them, how could I then oppose it? I can find nothing in Lenart for which I could scripturally oppose his being called. Dear sister, I am sorry that I can not aid you in this matter; for the sorrow and fear of your flesh pierces my heart as often as I think of it; but above all, we must act in love to God and our brethren. You are called by the Lord and by the operation of your faith you have committed yourself to the service of Jesus Christ and of your brethren as long as you live; and I trust that you will willingly fulfill it even at the risk of money, possessions and life. You certainly comprehend how necessary it is. Therefore, be mindful of the days of your enlightenment and obediently and resignedly fulfill that which, willingly and without constraint, you have promised the Most High.

O, beloved sister, look at the abandonment and misery of your beloved brethren. The spiritual fathers have become betrayers of souls; the watchmen are blind leaders, and the shepherds are wolves. The walls of Jerusalem are laid waste; the stones of the sanctuary are trampled upon at the corners of every street. Great is the plague of Israel. With Jeremiah and Ezra we may well bitterly sigh and weep and let our tears flow over our cheeks, Our inmost soul must be grieved at the need of our beloved brethren, when we take to heart the very great hungering and thirsting of many pious hearts, the accursed deceiving of evil spirits and dissensions, sects and all like evils. Inasmuch, then, as the merciful Lord has gifted our beloved brother with his divine knowledge, has enlightened him with his Holy Spirit and gifted him with speech and wisdom, so that the brethren are pleased with him, sincerely love him and desire his talent; and if you, for the sake of your flesh and blood should oppose this and not acquiesce in this, it would seem to me as being nothing else than that if you should see your brethren in

imminent danger of life, should see them in fire or water, suffering, want and misery, you would not assist them at your own peril. Dear sister, love your brethren as Christ Jesus has loved us. If, for the sake of your brethren, you should be deprived of your property, remember that Christ has, for a time, left the glory of his Almighty Father and the company of angels, that we might obtain an eternal inheritance in heaven. So long as we live we shall have enough of the necessities of life if we fear God, depart from evil and do righteously.

Yes, sister, be of good cheer. The eternal Truth has promised us salvation if we seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. The necessities of life will be provided for us. If you are then solicitous for your husband's flesh, remember and believe that our life is measured by spans; that life and death are in the hands of the Lord; that not a hair falls from our heads without the will of our Father. He protects us as the apple of his eye.

Elijah, David, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Peter and Paul, have all evaded the hands of the tyrant and none could injure a single hair of their heads so long as the appointed day and hour had not come. For so long as the Lord has more pleasure in our life than in our death, they cannot injure us; but when our death is more pleasing to the Lord than our life, we can not escape from their hands. O, beloved sister, if our beloved brother should not serve our brethren, yet he has already committed himself to danger of death, tribulation, misery, scorn, persecution, anxiety, robbery, water, fire and sword years ago. And if he had not committed himself to the cross by baptism, and if he could pass through all cities, countries and nations unmolested, you do not know at what moment he would have to put off his tabernacle of clay and appear before his God. Therefore, beloved, faithful sister, be strong in the Lord; be of good cheer; commend yourself to the Most high God, who holds heaven and earth in his hand; who has given you and your husband body and soul; who has called you in the word of his grace; who has purchased and delivered you with

the blood of his blessed Son; who has washed, sanctified and cleansed you with his Holy Spirit. His mercy is above all his works; he knows your going out and coming in; your sitting down and rising up. Yes, you were before him before you were formed in your mother's womb; it is he who searches the hearts and minds; he knows what our brethren seek. Beloved sister, strengthen your husband and do not weaken him; for it is required of us that if we love God we should also love our brethren. In short, prove yourself to be to your neighbor what Christ has proven to be to you; for by this only, sure and immutable rule must all christian actions lie measured and judged. Behold, worthy, faithful sister, as the church calls our beloved brother to the office and service, I cannot conscientiously interfere; or else I should love flesh, your flesh, more than Christ Jesus my Lord and Savior and my sincerely beloved brethren.

May the Almighty, merciful Father act in this measure according to his divine pleasure and guide the heart of my beloved sister so as to be resigned to his holy will. I sincerely thank my beloved sister for the gift of your love you have sent me. The Lord repay you with the heavenly riches of eternal glory. My spouse greets you with the peace of the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ be forever with my most beloved friend and sister, Amen.

Your brother in the Lord,

MENNO SIMON.

A.D. 1553.



PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCES OF MENNO SIMON.

The following is an extract from Book 16 of the *Ondergangh der Tyrannen, en Jaerlycksche Geschiedenisse* (Downfall of the Tyrants and Annual Events) by Peter Jansz Twisck, Pages 1074 and 1075, in which it is shown how wonderfully the Lord preserved Menno Simon from the cunning artifices of his opponents, as in his divine zeal for the truth he exhorted all men to true repentance and regeneration.

The daughter of Menno Simon, a praiseworthy woman, in our presence related the following incident: A certain traitor had agreed, without fail for a certain sum of money, to deliver the person of Menno or his [own] head into the hands of his enemies, expecting to apprehend him in one of their meetings; but it so happened that he was not able to accomplish his object, for whenever he arrived at the place where he sought to spy him out, Menno in a providential manner escaped.

At another time this same traitor, in company with an officer or police, as they were in search of Menno, unexpectedly met him as he was going along on the canal in a small boat. The traitor kept silent until Menno had passed them some distance and had leaped ashore in order to escape with less peril. Then the traitor cried out, "Behold, the bird has escaped!" The officer chastized him and called him a villain and demanded why he did not tell of it in time; to which the traitor replied, "I could not speak, for my tongue was bound." The lords were so displeased at this that the traitor, according to his promise, had to forfeit his own head. It is worthy of consideration, how wonderfully God, in this and in other like instances preserves his people and especially how fearfully he punishes the tyrants.

Menno had to suffer so many dangers, perils and so much misery, that in the memory of the oldest persons it is almost indescribable and afterwards he died a natural death. Notwithstanding he often with great zeal and resolution preached, conversed, disputed with and reproved the priests of Baal and opposed his opponents openly in their presence, so that a number of his fellow-laborers did not remain faithful under these severe persecutions.

Among other incidents it happened (which I have received as creditable), that Menno came into the priest's church in Eenigenburgh, a village in the north of Holland, after the pastor had performed his services and conversed with him in Latin about different papistic superstitions, with great boldness, fluency and profoundness, upon which the priest or pastor was greatly surprised and after he was through with his papal services, he had a long conversation with Menno. Menno often conversed with the priests and at one time with no little boldness, unknown, entered a cloister, conversed with the Superior, pointed him to repentance, showed him his great folly and such like things.

Although his name and a description of his clothing, person, &c., was nailed to the church doors, with the certain promise of a hundred, or several hundred guilders to anyone who should discover or deliver him into the hands of his enemies, yet God preserved him from all the designs and cunning devices of his enemies, so that it truly is as he wrote in a letter to the wife of Leonard Bouwensz in which he says, "If you regard the life of your husband, think and believe that our lives are but as a hand breadth; that both life and death are in the hands of the Lord; that not a hair shall fall from our heads without our heavenly Father's notice; he preserves us as the apple of his eye. Elijah, Elisha, David, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Peter and Paul, all escaped the hands of the tyrants and no one could injure a hair of them, as long as their day and hour had not come, for as long as the merciful Lord has more pleasure in our lives than in our death

they shall not be permitted to injure us, but when the Lord shall be more pleased to remove us, then we will not escape their hands.”



NOTE 1.—*It is due to the reader, at the conclusion of this work, to say that in the translation of the writings of Menno Simon upon the “Incarnation of Christ,” the publishers have taken the liberty to condense and abridge some parts of it and also, here and there, to leave out such parts as they considered of no importance in the illustration and explanation of the subject, and which were not edifying to the reader. But in no case have they perverted the meaning or purpose of the author. Throughout the entire work they have labored, with the translator and reviewer, conscientiously to give the true sentiments of the writer, that they might be able to present to the reader, as true and faithful a translation as possible and they hope that the blessing of God may rest upon their efforts and that a generous public will throw the mantle of charity upon any errors that in any way may have crept into the work.*

THE PUBLISHERS.

NOTE 2.—*I have carefully read and compared with the original Holland, the entire works of Menno Simon, here presented to the public and do by this bear testimony that this is a true and faithful translation of the same.*

JOSEPH SUMMERS.



INDEX TO VOLUME 2.

[The Page Numbers refer to the original English translation version of 1871. To find the approximate page in the PDF version of this edition, multiply the given number by 2.06, or better yet, do a search on the digital versions.]

A

Accusations against Menno, 94

Avery humble supplication of the poor, despised christians, 107

A letter of consolation to an afflicted widow, 113

A complaint or apology of the despised christians and exiled strangers, 115

A scriptural explanation of Excommunication, 123

Associate not with an apostate, after separation, 136

An incontrovertible confession founded on the Holy Scriptures, 139

A confession of the Triune, Eternal and true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, 179, 183

An explanation of christian baptism in the water, 189

Apostles teach baptism as Christ taught it, 210

A letter of caution on discord, 231

A clear confession, concerning Justification, Preachers, Baptism, &c., 267

A christian, in some cases may deal with an apostate, 279

—Can have no apostate as a regular customer, *ibid*

A thorough answer to Zylis and Lemmekes concerning Excommunication, 283

A humble and christian Justification, replication, &c., 297

A scriptural demonstration of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, 325

An admonition to the Preachers and how they should be minded, 340

A plain and pointed reply to the antichristian doctrine of Martin Micron, 351

Articles, thirty-one presented to the reader, 371

An epistle to Martin Micron, 403

Affirmation, 411

A humble prayer to the reader, 422

A convincing proof that Jesus Christ is the true, spiritual David, &c., 425

A kind admonition, concerning shunning and separation, 441

A Letter, 460

B

Ban, Excommunication or Separation, 69

Ban, should husband and wife shun each other on account of, 276

Banned, should we greet one that is? 277

—Are we allowed to show any charity, love and mercy to the? 278

—Are we allowed to deal with the? 279

—Are we allowed to travel with the? 280

—Who should be? ib

Ban, a work of love, 446

Baptism, concerning, 39

—Rhenanus, Cyprian, Erasmus, Zwinglius, Bucer, Oecolampadius, Luther and others, on infants, 49

Baptism, 189, 268

—In the water, 200

—No remission of sins through, 201

—Degenerated in early days, 203

—But one in the water pleasing to God, 204

—How the apostles practiced it in the water, 222

—Applied only to the believing, 227

—Infant, 269

C

Calling, Preachers, 17

- Concerning Baptism, 39
- Church of Christ and anti-christ, how to distinguish, 77
- Six signs by which both churches may be known, 81, 83
- Concerning some accusations against us, 94
- Confession of the learned concerning Christ, 97
- Conclusion, 105
- Complaint or apology, 117
- Confession of the Incarnation, 147
- Confutation, reply to the points of defense of John A'Lasco, on the Incarnation, 154
- Confession of the Triune God, 179, 183
- Christian Baptism, 195
- Children, Little, have a peculiar promise, 226
- Confession of Justification, &c., 261
- Conclusion to Justification, Baptism, &c., 275
- To questions and answers, 280
- To a humble defense, 322
- To admonition to preachers, 348
- To unscriptural confessions, 380
- Confession, Micron's, 388
- Concerning the two natures in Christ, 391
- Conclusion to reply to Martin Micron, 399
- Christ is King of kings, convincing proof, 425

D

- Doctrine of the church of Christ and anti-christ, 83
- Description of a true preacher, 120
- Difference between wilful sin and error, 277
- Discussion, How the English came into contact with us, 355
- Between Merman and Myself, 356
- Partial narration of, by Micron, 359
- Micron's confession during our second, 364
- Deliverances of Menno Simon, 451

E

- Excommunication, Ban or Separation, 69

- Scriptural explanation of, 123
- Not to shun before, 136
- Questions and answers, 276
- Error, difference between wilful sin and, 277

F

- Fourteen inconsistencies which must result and follow from the foundation and doctrine of our opponents, 381
- Foundation and faith of our opponents concerning Christ Jesus, &c., 383
- Faith and doctrine in Jesus Christ, 384

G

- Gellius Faber, Reply to, 1
- Genesis 3:15, 386
- God the Father is the true Father of the whole Christ his Son, 393

H

- How to distinguish between the church of Christ and anti-christ, 77
- Hearing the Preachers, 264
- Holy Supper, The Lord's, 270
- Husband and wife, should they shun each other on account of the ban, 276
- How the English came into discussion with us, 355
- Herman, Discussion with, 356
- How and what Micron confessed during our second discussion, 364
- How Christ is the Son of God, is also the son of Abraham and David, &c, 389
- How the divine word, in the fullness of time according to the Scriptures, was made flesh, 396

I

- Incarnation, Confession of, 330
- Thirty-one Articles on, 371
- Forty-five Unscriptural confessions of, 379
- Incarnation, Menno's confession of, 147

—Scriptural references upon, 168

—Conclusion of, 177

Inconsistencies, Fourteen, 381

Israelites received their remission of sins through the promise, 201

J

John A'Lasco, Reply to concerning the Incarnation, 143

Justification, 261

John Van Leyden, Testimony against, 427

L

Letter addressed to an afflicted widow, 113

—Of Caution on discord, 231

—Another, 232

—From Menno Simon to Margaret, wife of Rein Edes, 401

Letter, 450

Leyden, John Van, Testimony against, 427

M

Martin Micron, Rely to, 355

—Confession, in his narrative, that Christ is the Son of God and man, 388

—An epistle to, 403

Menno Simon's confession of the Incarnation, 147

—Salutation, 190

—Reasons for teaching and writing, 233

Menno Simon, Summary punishment to those who would injure him, 419

—Willing to enter into discussion, 423

—Providential deliverances of, 451

O

Our confession, 147

Oaths, 272, 409

P

Prayer to the reader, 422

Preachers, Hearing the, 264

Preachers, Their Calling, 17

- Description of a true, 120
- Preface, Reply to Gellius Faber, 3
- Preface to the reply to John A'Lasco, 141
- To the Triune God, 181
- To Menno Simon's Salutation, 191
- To Justification, Baptism, &c., 259
- Preface to Justification, &c., 298
- To the Incarnation, 328
- To reply to Martin Micron, 352
- Punishment to those who would injure Menno, 419

Q

- Questions and answers on Shunning, 278

R

- Reply to Gellius Faber, 1
- To John A'Lasco, on the Incarnation, 138
- To Zylis and Lemmekes, 283
- To Martin Micron, 351

S

- Salutation, Menno Simon's, 190
- Scriptures, A clear confession of, 143
- Scriptural references upon the Incarnation, 168
- Separation, Ban or Excommunication, 89
- Separation, Not to shun before, 138
- Shunning and separation, 441
- Shunning does not apply to necessary dealings, 135
- Shunning, Is it a command? 276
- Signs, six by which the church of Christ and anti-christ may be known, 81, 83
- Supper of the preachers, 271
- Supper, The Lord's, 64
- Swearing, Oaths, 272, 409

T

- Teachings of the holy apostles concerning baptism in the water, 200

Testimony against John Van Leyden, 427

The Confutation, 154

The foundation and faith of our opponents concerning Christ Jesus, 383

The reason Menno Simon does not cease teaching and writing, 233

The Lord's Holy Supper, 270

The Lord's Supper, 64

The Supper of the preachers, 271

The Swearing of Oaths, 272

Thirty-one articles presented to the reader, &c., 371

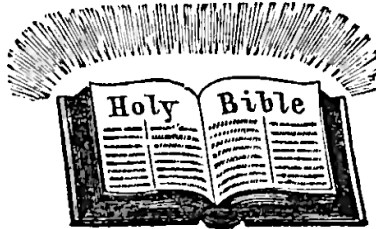
To the reader, 298

W

Warfare, 434

Z

Zylis and Lemmekes, reply to, 283



Some Other Resources Available from <https://chcpublications.net/>

Publications

The Holy Bible - CHCoG Version—This translation from the original Hebrew and Aramaic is accurate and readable, giving a clear understanding of how the New and Old Covenants are interlocked and God's message to you.

Everlasting Life is God's Gift—Does the Bible teach that you have everlasting life? If not, how can you receive God's gift of immortality as His child?

Books of Moses - Fact or Fiction Series—Are the miracles recorded in Genesis and Exodus our true history? Do the facts support Special Creation or the Big Bang & Evolution scenarios? What about the Flood, Babel and the Exodus?

Spirit, Soul and Body—What does the Bible teach about the nature of human beings? Do we have a soul? What is our spirit? What happens when we die?

Eastern Meditation and Jeshua the Messiah—Recounts the experiences of a CHCoG member who became a Christian while practising Eastern Meditation.

Fifty Years in the Church of Rome—Charles Chiniquy's classic exposure of the corruptions of the Roman church, and how he found God's Gift of Salvation.

The Ten Commandments—What are God's Ten Commandments? How do they guide us in our relationships with God, our family and our neighbours? Shows how obedience to Jehovah's Instructions would result in true civilization.

The Priest, the Woman and the Confessional—Charles Chiniquy's in-depth exposé of the Roman Church's corrupt Auricular Confessional system, which destroys the priests, their penitents and their families.

What is God's Name?—How can we know what God's Name is and how to Pronounce it? Does the Bible teach us to use God's Name?

God's Calendar and the Sign of Jonah—Shows how God's Calendar reveals that Jeshua truly kept the Sign of Jonah, His ultimate proof that He is the Messiah.

The Sabbath in Scripture—Has God's Seventh-day Sabbath been 'done away with'? What does the Sabbath mean, and does God want us to keep it?

Rome's Challenge: Why do Protestants Keep Sunday?—This Roman Catholic article proves there is no scriptural basis for changing the seventh-day Sabbath to Sunday, and shows that the Roman Catholic church made the change.

Sex, God and Families—Article exposing the dangers of sexual immorality and outlining the benefits of following God's sexual principles.

The Catholic Chronicles—Keith Green explores the meanings of the Roman Catholic Mass, transubstantiation, their concept of forgiveness of sin and salvation and what—if anything—Vatican II changed.

Free to Obey God—God's Son Jeshua sets us free! But what does he set us free from, and how does He expect us to live our new life?

Jeshua the Messiah: Is He the Son of God or Part of a Trinity?—Explores the relationships between God the Father, our Lord Jeshua, the Holy Spirit and us.

Software

Calculated Biblical Calendar—Calculates dates of Annual Holy Days, Crucifixion, Flood, Creation & allows testing the new moon visibility locally.