

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

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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 Ghost, 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 the Lord, 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, Matt. 22: 37—40; Mark 12: 29; Luke 10: 27; Deut. 6: 5.

All that Scripture teaches is *love*. "Every one that loveth," says John, "is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love," And, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 Jn. 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, kindness, 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 of 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, written for your own good, 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 by sincere repentance, to the praise of the Lord and the salvation of your soul. If there be 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 person else 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," Matt. 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 (which you call the human nature in Christ) had no Father.

Observe, whether you are not one of the spirits, of whom John says, "He that believeth not God has made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son," 1 Jn. 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, 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

you boldly proclaim to the public, that he is not; that he had no father, according to his humanity; that he is 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, Jn. 1: 47; of John the Baptist, the holiest born of woman, Matt. 11: 11; of Martha, the hostess and servant of the Lord, Luke 10: 38; of Peter the faithful shepherd, Jn. 21: 6; John the apostle whom Jesus loved, Jn. 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 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 success-

fully 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," Matt. 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 us all 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 Jn. 2: 23; keep them under the wrath and curse, Jn. 3: 36; whereby you keep them out of God, and God out of them, 1 Jn. 4: 15, so that they do not overcome the world, 1 Jn. 5: 4; for they do not believe that Jesus is the 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, Matt. 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 *Corycaeus*, 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 no teacher, nor apt ever to become one,

whereby you will, perhaps, deprive him or his poor children of their whole welfare, nay, of thousands, if the Lord in his providence does not prevent it. The Spirit of the Lord does not enjoin you thus to act toward the innocent.

Dear Micron, if you would have had a single drop of pious blood in your veins you would have had mercy on the poor, innocent, unworthy servant; whom you thus, alas, repay before the whole world, for his faithful services of love willingly shown 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 yours into the city, furnished them 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 every where they try innocently to take my life, out of mere hatred of the truth. By which doings you surely can not teach unto 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 reins, 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, miserable man, must be your blind and imprisoned Samson whom you make to play and dance before the princes of the Philistine, as a mockery and derision, although I never, in my life, spoke an indiscreet word against the 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; admonished them to 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 Ghost, a living grain of the bread of Christ, and an heir to eternal life, and for such an 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, which example he has commanded all his chosen children to follow.

Again, If he remain impenitent, and his life be taken, one would do nothing else but unmercifully rob him of the time of repentance, of which, in case his life were spared, he might yet avail himself; 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 that the son of man, who says, "Learn of me," Matt. 11: 28, I have given you an example, Jn. 13: 15, follow me, Matt. 16: 24, is not come to corrupt souls, but to save them, Matt. 18: 11; Luke 19: 10.

Behold, this was the foundation of my innocent words which I at that time spoke to you 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 thus enviously to write 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; Jn. 8: 11; as also, faithful Paul, who did no 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 found them to

be wise in counsel, honorable, and master of their passions, 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 any body in their bloody doings; but 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 of 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, but ornaments and decks his unrighteousness, boldness, pomp, splendor, avarice, robbery and tyranny with the name magistrate; for whosoever would be a christian, must follow the Spirit, word, and example of Christ, no matter whether he be emperor, king or anything else, Matt. 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 saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked," 1 Jn. 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 longsuffering 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 conversation is in heaven, Phil. 3: 20. It is manifest that you are a deadly enemy to their poor souls and do not deal by 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, "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool, &c., Matt. 5: 33—35. And you, Micron, say that nothing but light-minded, false oaths are hereby prohibited, as if Moses allowed Israel to swear light-mindedly and falsely; and that Christ, under the New Testament only forbade it; notwithstanding that all intelligent readers know that it was not merely *allowed* Israel to swear truly, but also commanded them 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 be such a glorious thing and honor to God rightly to swear by the name of God, as you dare boldly lie against your God, then tell me why the wisdom did not say, You have heard that it hath been said to them of old, thou shalt not forswear thyself, thus I say, Thou shalt do likewise? while he says, Moses commanded not to forswear thyself, but I say unto you, Thou

shalt not swear at all. O God, what pity that such plain words of the Son of God are thus lamentably adulterated and daubed over with the foul mortar of serpentine 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 the oath of Moses, which was also an oath of truth, and sworn by the name of the Lord, which you use and highly recommend to the reader, and commands us to the true, yea and nay; and as I know to a certainty that his word is the truth, and his commandment life eternal; therefore I am sincerely frank and bold thus to teach it, truly believing that he will not deceive us by his doctrine, Jn. 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, at 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 yea and nay, unto death. Of this we are convinced.

As it is manifest that they so faithfully adhere to their undeceiving yea and nay, which Christ has commanded us, Matt. 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 ever conform to this yea and nay, always spoken truthfully, before God and man; and, as these same people are now troubled on that account; therefore I will herewith leave it to the consideration of all impartial, reasonable

readers as also to yourselves, whether I and our beloved brethren are deserving of such innocent bloodshed 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: or, whether those are deserving of being called deceivers by you, and your like, tickling, and blood-thirsty preachers and writers, who teach the powerful doctrine as taught from the lips of the Lord; and whether all such valiant witnesses and saints of Christ who would rather die than willfully transgress the word of the Lord, or confirm aught further than by yea or nay, are deserving of such treatment, whereby you open the doors wide, to the rapacious rulers to rob such pious souls, and to the blood-thirsty, 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 bloodshed, the oath and other matters. But now, alas, things are inverted, that there may be something invented wherewith 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 yea and nay, as commanded of God, instead of that confirmed by that which is forbidden? For they can punish those who are found false in their yea and nay, as well as those who commit perjury by forswearing themselves.

I trust that no person is so confused but he knows that the ordinances of God, which are of heaven, should not give way to the ordinances of men, which are of earth, but that the earthly ordinances of men should give way to God's ordinances, if they would be christians and do according to the truth.

Therefore it would be well for you to observe, first, that you by your writing concerning *the oath* make 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 thyself; but that under the New Testament one should not swear at all. James says, That we should not swear "neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath," Jas. 5: 12 (mark, he says, neither by *any other oath*), and you gloze it, by the infatuation of the serpent, that it is not so, but that we may swear to the truth, &c. And thus the eternal Wisdom himself, and his holy witness James, alas, must be your disciples and servants.

Secondly, that you condemn the innocent, and clear the ungodly, both of which are an abomination in the sight of the Lord, 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 advantage, Jude 16.

Thirdly, that you cause great tribulation to the pious hearts who are born of the

truth and faithfully walk and seal it with yea and nay, with their possessions and blood, and thus load the 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 drunk 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, also have, alas, exerted yourself to garble my words, as if I had cited the words of David (who does not delight in false doctrine neither has sworn deceitfully, Ps. 24: 4), in my article concerning *swearing*, 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 said psalm, as is plainly shown by your false, defaming tongue and hand, toward me, 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 yea and nay, 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 *verily*, 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 me, not by the flattery of the old serpent, but by the word of the Lord, Matt. 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, *Verily*, 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 thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear (mark) by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth," Gen. 24: 2.

Again: "By the life of Pharaoh (mark) ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither," Gen. 42: 15.

Again: "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name" (mark), Deut. 10: 20.

Again, Christ says, Neither by heaven, nor by earth, neither by Jerusalem, neither by thy head, Matt. 5: 34, nor by the temple, nor by the altar, Matt. 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, *verily*, 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 yea, and nay, 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 be, is so hated as I, persecuted man, am hated of 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, old, infirm man, quite contrary to all truth, as also contrary to the virtuous, pious nature of the divine, christian love which would curtail nor harm none, 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; mercifully to punish the impenitent, and to admonish them in love, as Christ admonished us; and scrupulously to stand by their yea and nay, as the true Teacher and Executor of the New Testament, the ever 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 if I had been a tyro in the church for three or four months, I would probably have done about as I now did, 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 has kept me these twenty-

one years in one doctrine and foundation of faith without any change, notwithstanding that I was unworthily 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, willful 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, ye that work iniquity, Matt. 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 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," Ps. 116: 11; Rom. 3: 4. I trust that I would submit to be killed before I should willfully 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 stiff-necked 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 of the devil; and Christ Jesus was called by them a wine-bibber and glutton, Matt. 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, 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 affrighted at me, then you would think that the cause of Christ was already lost. Thus blind is poor, foolish flesh 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 with-

out 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; something of which there is but a very faint hope, because you so willfully 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, nay, 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 an one as I have here written.

Secondly, you prove yourself to be an open corrupter of the Holy Scriptures. For you write, "That Christ is of David's seed, Rom. 1:3; 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; and 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 *praeterito*, 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.

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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 to what you have already come. It appears as if you had 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 there would be sung. But of what reward you are now deserving, and must expect in due time from God the Lord, 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 here said.

First, you have made yourself to be an open, perfidious falsifier; for you call on God as a witness (which in my opinion is 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 we. 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 hitherto, 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 therewith, and rendered it as if I should have said, that you had sought your own honor and praise by your writing, 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 thus to write.

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. 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 God who tries the hearts and reins; 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 killeth the soul, Wis. 1: 11; that God will destroy the liars, Ps. 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 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 thereby 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 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 yet you 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 lightminded 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 be not idolatry we may truly say that the Scriptures deceive us.

Whether so many confessions and recollections are consistent with a sincere, pious, constant, and wellfounded teacher and writer (as you want to be), who, out of ambition falsely denies it all, I will herewith leave 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 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, drink-

ing, 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 thereof, was not prompted by an humble, converted, and contrite heart; not 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 are best known your seeking) 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, Matt. 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 the eternal wisdom, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and his Holy Ghost, together with the apostles of Christ; nothing but change their words, doctrine, commandments, institutions, ordinances and practices, as if they in themselves were not essential and right, yea, powerless, vain, and useless, and thereby 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 Father and Son, 1 Jn. 2: 22, 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 Jn. 4: 3; that it is anathema, Gal. 1: 8. You teach us a gospel which was not taught us by the apostles of Christ. It shows that you rob God of his honor, and are a murderer of souls, Jn. 10: 1, which Christ Jesus has purchased at such a great price, 1 Pet. 1: 8, 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, Matt. 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 thus offers and sacrifices them to the prince of hell, for the sake of a woolen 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 possession, and even of life, by your false doctrine, because you falsely

charge, slander, defame, and trample under foot the doctrine, which is the clear, pure, unadulterated, powerful, saving and regenerating doctrine of Christ, as being heresy and deceit, and the faithful children which are thereby converted from unrighteousness unto righteousness, and from the dumb idols unto the living God, as being 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, suffered 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; 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 that 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 per-

son, 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 an 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 liars 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 every one judge who cordially seeks God, according to the word of the Lord. Matt. 7: 15; 15: 13; 16: 6; Jn. 10: 1; Rom. 16: 16; Gal. 5: 8; 1 Tim. 6: 3; 2 Tim. 2: 3; Tit. 3: 9; 2 Jn. 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 thereto. 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 speak they of the world, and the world heareth them," 1 Jn. 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 explana-

tions, adulteration of the Scriptures and flatterings. "For by the law, is the knowledge of sin," Rom. 3: 20, thus this epistle will discover 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 be not dilatory (if you would not die in your ungodliness) in coming before the throne of grace, the ever blessed Christ Jesus, with a broken, contrite, repentant spirit, in an 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 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 hitherto.

So long as you do not do as here pointed out, 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, 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, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire! 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, impatient, 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, annihilates the designs of the ungodly who storm this holy mount, and de-

stroy those who hate his truth and are inimical thereto.

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 there practice their religion, 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, at once, lost his voice; 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; for 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 believeth, 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, 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, no longer to 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 thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" Ex. 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, nay, 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. For, although the reckless, rough world may say amen to your cause, yet it 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 if you do even 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, Jn. 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 believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," Jn. 3: 18. Neither partizan-ism 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 be not born of God; do not become of divine disposition and nature; are not urged by and possessed of the Holy Ghost; do not sincerely repent; if you be not in Christ, nor Christ in you, then, according to the doctrine of John, you are one of those who have no God, 1 Jn. 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 Jn. 2: 24; and you will walk as he walked, you will not willfully 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, Jn. 3: 21; 8: 12; you will follow the true shepherd, and will enter in at the right door, Jn. 10: 2; you will walk upon the true road; remain in the truth, in the right vineyard, Jn. 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 any thing 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 are 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 manifest 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, be not lost in your case.

I would herewith commend you to Almighty God. He will bestow upon you according to his great grace, as I would like to see you receive. No more hereafter, however much you may cry and write, unless you be converted into a better mind, and I constrained and urged to do so by the godfearing.

Nor shall I hereafter solicit a public discussion with any person, and that for this reason, 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 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, in their publications, sworn against us; which two things we did not so positively know heretofore as we do now.

Inasmuch as I plainly see that there is but 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, 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 admonish 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 unto you 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, Matt. 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 by night and day, uses many means, with flesh and blood, as falsehood and false doctrine, lusts of the eye, imprisonment, banishment, confiscation, bloodshed, 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 off 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 brethren 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, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love 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 of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will

of God, abideth forever," 2 Jn. 2: 15—17. Friend Micron, again be warned; repent, pray to God for grace, and earnestly reflect upon that which I have written. And be not angry because I have thus sharply reprov'd 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 herewith 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 Ghost 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 so to defame and calumniate us, and so garble our words, that we, with truth on our side, are rejected by the world, and they, with falsehood on their side, are honored by the world; therefore I pray all impartial readers not to be offended at their saying, "Menno has not truthfully written this or that."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

have the Scriptures and truth on our side.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

clearness, according to the pure doctrine of the holy apostles, evangelists, prophets, and of Christ himself. In Christ, 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 eateth it dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper, Isa. 59: 5; it is the spiritual dung with which Ezekiel had to bake his bread, Ezek. 4: 12. In short, it is the horrible, abominable draught of the golden cup of the Babylonian whore, drunken with the blood of the saints, with which she has made drunk all who dwell in the earth, Rev. 17: 4.

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

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

